

BANG! *CENL Books and Audiences Network Group*

This is an invitation to add resources to the BANG! webpages:

www.cenl.org/networkgroups/books-and-audiences-network-group

Please tell us about the resources (e.g., publications, websites, images, films, audio) you have found helpful, inspiring, or useful in your work to engage audiences with books and books with audiences.

1. Your name

Peter Lester

2. Your contact details

- pablester@outlook.com
- Connect with me @pablester

3. Would you like to add a photo?



4. What is your job title, the name of the organisation you work for, or to which you are affiliated? What is your role there?

I am an independent researcher based in the UK.

5. What is your interest in the subject of books and audiences?

I am a researcher and archivist and have recently completed a PhD at the School of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester, examining the exhibition and display of books and archives. My

research interests have developed from over ten years of professional experience as an archivist working with a wide range of different users in accessing, researching and enjoying archives, including through exhibition and display.

The research that has developed out of my PhD examines the phenomenon of exhibition-making within archives, investigating how physical exhibitions are conceived and made in archives and libraries and the role that they play in reimagining new ways for audiences to experience archival collections. More broadly, the research considers the role of exhibition in wider restructurings of archival spaces and organisations, and their transformative potential in how people experience and engage with archives – and each other – within the physical space of the archive.

My research draws across museum and archive scholarship and is located within a context of critical archive studies, that is, a perspective that considers the socio-political dynamics of the archive and its liberatory potential within society. It likewise draws across such inter-related disciplines as anthropology, architecture, library studies and materiality. The research is underpinned by a theoretical framework that draws on ideas of spatiality and phenomenology, utilising Henri Lefebvre's theory of social space and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's theory of embodiment and being-in-the-world. This framework is designed to analyse how exhibitions are designed to create experiences for visitors and their wider role in reshaping the space of the archive.

The research harnesses a wide range of examples in Europe, North America and Australia, examining different themes and ideas around exhibition design. I have also examined two key case studies: Archives+ in Manchester, UK; and the Royal Danish Library in Copenhagen. My book, *Exhibiting the Archive: Space, Encounter, Experience*, which draws on and develops my PhD, is due to be published by Routledge in 2022. More details about the book can be found online at:

<https://www.routledge.com/Exhibiting-the-Archive-Space-Encounter-and-Experience/Lester/p/book/9780367746254>.

6. Recommended resources

Allyn, Nancy, Shawn Aubitz and Gail F. Stern. 1987. 'Using Archival Materials Effectively in Museum Exhibitions'. *The American Archivist* 50 (3): 402-4.

Berry, Charlotte and Lucy MacKeith. 2007. 'Colliding Worlds in the Curatorial Environment: The Archivist and the Activist'. *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 28 (2): 139-49.

Colborne, Sarah. 2010. 'Evaluating the Success of Exhibitions in Promoting Archives: A Case Study'. MA diss., Aberystwyth University.

Condé, Anne-Marie. 2007. "'War History on Scraps of Paper": Exhibitions of Documents at the Australian War Memorial'. *Public History Review* 14: 25-43.

Gelfand, Aleksandr. 2013. 'If We Build It (and Promote It) They Will Come: History of Analog and Digital Exhibits in Archival Repositories'. *Journal of Archival Organization* 11 (1-2): 49-82. doi.org/10.1080/15332748.2013.882160.

- Hackman, Larry. 2012. 'Love is Not Enough: Advocacy, Influence and the Development of Archives'. *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 33 (1): 9-21.
- Hajba, Anna-Maria. 2019. "'It's a Long Way to Tipperary": Using an Estate Collection to Develop an Online Presence'. *Archives and Records* 40 (1): 55-72.
- Howgill, Emma. 2015. 'New Methods of Analysing Archival Exhibitions'. *Archives and Records* 36 (2): 179-94.
- Lacher-Feldman, Jessica. 2013. *Exhibits in Archives and Special Collections Libraries*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists.
- Lester, Peter. 2006. 'Is the Virtual Exhibition the Natural Successor to the Physical?' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 27 (1): 85-101.
- Lester, Peter. 2022. *Exhibiting the Archive: Space, Encounter, Experience*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Matassa, Freda. 2014. *Organizing Exhibitions: A Handbook for Museums, Libraries and Archives*. London: Facet Publishing.
- Nicholls, Catherine. 2003. 'Exhibiting Evidence: A Case Study'. *Archivaria* 55: 27-42.
- O'Connor, Joan L. 1984. 'Conservation of Documents in an Exhibit'. *The American Archivist* 47 (2): 156-63.
- Pederson, Ann. 1993. 'User Education and Public Relations'. In *Keeping Archives*, edited by Judith Ellis, Second edition, 306-49. Port Melbourne: D.W. Thorpe.
- Schwartz, Joan M. 2007. 'Medieval Archive meets the Post-modern World: The Inaugural Exhibition of the Archive of the Crown of Aragon, Barcelona, Spain'. *Archivaria* 64: 199-209.
- Tetsuya, Shirai. 2014. 'Exhibitions in Local Archives in Japan'. *Comma* 2014 (1-2): 185-94.

7. How have these resources been used?

These resources focus on exhibitions within the context of archives. Exhibition is not a very prominent subject within archival studies and is usually considered within the wider context of outreach (see, for example, Hackman 2012 and Pederson 1993). Earlier articles (not listed here) have generally been framed around questions that concern the suitability of archives in exhibiting their collections but, more recently, there has been a greater focus on practical questions around exhibition design and their value to archives and libraries. These works often provide very useful information about best practice, including questions of conservation and security, as well as techniques to enhance exhibition design, particularly within the context of outreach programmes (see, for example, Lacher-Feldman 2013; Matassa 2014). Evaluating archival exhibitions has also been an important focus (see Colborne 2010 and Howgill 2015). There are fewer texts which discuss exhibitions from a more theoretical perspective: examples that consider exhibition within this wider context include Lester 2006; Berry and MacKeith 2007; Schwartz 2007; a historical overview of exhibition practice in the US, UK and Russia is provided by Gelfand 2013; in Australia by Condé 2007;

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and in Japan by Tetsuya 2014. I hope my book (Lester 2022) will provide a new perspective on exhibition theory and practice within archives.