**Reconsidering Diversity and Sculpture**

JULIA: Hi everyone, and welcome for joining us on this session for Reconsidering Diversity and Sculpture. I'm Art UK's social media manager and I'll be chairing this session. Just a bit of housekeeping first, the chat function is enabled in this session but put all of your questions in the Q&A function and questions will be posed to the panelists at the end. Closed captions are available and a transcript will be available after the conference on request. You can click the CC button at the bottom of your screen to see these captions. The session is being recorded and the video will be Mabel available on Art UK's YouTube channel. We will be hearing from two speakers and then we'll join together to answer your questions at the end. First we heard from Dr Melanie Polledri, Curator of Art Collections Management and Access at National Museum Wales. Melanie works with the Welsh and international art collections to develop knowledge through exhibitions and research as well as improving the accessibility of works. She specialises in and has written on late night 18th and early 19th century and Welsh national identity through decorative, ceremonial art subjects. Today she will speak about the unseen stories in National Museum Wales collection. Her presentation is: in a post colonial world, how do contemporary curators reclaim the collections built by their predecessors. Melanie?

MELANIE: Good morning, everybody, and thank you Art UK for giving me the opportunity to talk to you today. I'll just share my screen.

The title of my paper "Unseen, Unheard" refers to recent Amgueddfa Cymru National Museum Wales and this is forms the focus of my discussion today. Following Art UK project many sculptures from the Museum's collections have been reappraised. This includes works that are rare turn of the century portrait busts of black African people created by white male imperial sculptors. This paper colours how historical injustices can be start to regain alternative diverse voices which have been hidden for years beneath layers imperial and institutional assumptions. I'll start by looking at the problems we face before considering Amgueddfa Cymru approach and where the intervention sits within emerging policies before concluding with a short video of the display. The stories behind these works are difficult, problematic and both an institutional perspective and that we have failed to adequately address issues of the people they represent as well as those who relate to the works. Clearly we need to reconsider how best to curate these works. Amgueddfa Cymru's collection ranges from ancient to contemporary art, many collected at the turn of the 20th Century when imperial were at their height and imbued with cultural and racial bias and now sit uncomfortably with collections mindful of the fact they are a legacy of collection building policies they are a reminder entrenched in many UK museum collections today. These works along with the unseen stories significantly impact upon our understanding of British imperial identities in Wales and further afield. Just as contrast, Grant point out in their recent survey in Art History's journal public sculpture role instrumenting in sparking public debate and change. While overshadowed by recent events the role of the sculpted bust is also provocative. These works are important and they are invite to go broadening our understanding of British imperial itch and that they are need to be acknowledged as such. This raises several questions. What do they say to visitor as what they say about the institution that holds them and moreover who should tell their stories. It has frequently been said for us of us to get the most from visits to the institutions we need to something seeing of ourselves in our histories in the nation's collections, not least as this enabling a feeling of our own validation. Other than doing this, a worrying counter development is emerging, a backlash politics that leaves curatorial staff and institutions open to wider contemplation by many who feel that so-called traditional British values are being undermined. Governmentally, Wales' position is however a little different to England as man at a times actively support in and such resistance however also misses the point that in contesting established and biased histories a plethora of exciting opportunities are opened so we can tell you a alternative stories. After the events of last summer, leading to the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter campaign the question is raised as to how contemporary curators re-examine the legacy of collections built by predecessors to drown alternative stories specially some early endeavours based on assumptions of imperial property now considered at best inappropriate and at worst just -- at Amgueddfa Cymru project has been in the pipeline for a couple of years it's a resurgent activist agenda is now more relevant than ever.

Based on the simply that culture is a human right, Amgueddfa Cymru's policy in consultation with the community groups is about democratically recognise recognising a learning from art or objects in the collection and the past events that relate to them. This sculptural display intervention highlights how they are changing towards interventionist looking relatively recent exhibitions, interesting to see while provocative nature of empire was recognised as problematic, the overarching message was nevertheless distilled through a top down curatorial voice. I think now rather than relying on the institutional authoritative voice a multiple diverse voices are increasingly heard. After all as I mentioned above wan museum context the collection should and must represent to the people it serves. We should all see how our stories fit with the histories of our nation. However uncomfortable that may be for some. This display funded by the HLF Hand On Project through the Welsh Kick the Dust brings these together for the first time by engaging and empowering local youth communities from all backgrounds, but especially racialised communities. It is their input that starts to reclaim the unheard histories embedded within these sculptures and brings them to the attention of a wider diverse audience. The clarity their engagement exposes the legacy of imperial violence and hegemonic culture of 19th century white male authoritarianism. Before I talk about this I will just introduce the works and their artists. As mentioned they are rare portrait busts of men created by white male artists, Welsh Royal Academy sculptor and his friend formed part of rear-guard on the infamous. In contrast we have a Jamaican born came to London to study dentistry. However, the British Museum's collection of non-western sculpture changed career path and he decided to become a sculptor and successfully taught himself.

This is one of six Pygmies brought British public towns cities throughout the UK mainly appeared in music halls also shown at Parliament, Buckingham Palace and even Glasgow Zoo. They underwent extensive examination as this photograph here demonstrates and were treated by white Britons as curiosity. They were peddled as one of the links in the human evolutionary change leading to the perception of the ultimate human perfection, that is white man of of a certain class. In 1925 it's worth noting that initially offered the bronze bust to the national history department of the museum.

Here we can see the ideal maker and the type, that's on the right of the screen. And this was based on drawings that Herbert Ward made of the people. He would later settle in Paris and used African models there to stand in for the people he draw. Documenting the people he met. In Paris he filled his studio with a souvenirs from the travels and welcomed visitors to his studio. Ward was shocked at witnessing the treatment of the Congolese people by the Belgian the Belgian Congo free state, colonised by the Belgian King and this led to setting up the Congo Reform Society with Roger, pictured here with the beard. The society opposed the appalling practice of forced labour. In contrast, to these imperial busts we also have a more recent acquisition who famously championed the cause of Welsh miners. Alongside these other works, other works included. This includes three female sitters already on display in the Rotunda and all related to Goscombe John. Artists wife as a young woman. 13 is a marble bust of the sculptor's daughter and then we have the marble bust and while this is a general depiction of old age it was also the sitter was also the mother in law. So in approaching this project, we decided on a series of youth based workshops aimed at local communities and we set these up along with a historian and an Amgueddfa Cymru curator. We along with the workshop participants we explored these works by asking the questions: what am I to you and does it matter if it's true? Artists were invited to -- this is a circular gallery on the first floor at our Cardiff site and it mainly houses sculpture from the 1900s bees especially those by William John. The display there was outdated: "The Rotunda contains sculptures displayed on custom built plies one from a Congo who unlook the other sitters was in an unlit display cabinet."

Until this display this was the only bust of a black person on display throughout any of the museum's galleries.

At the workshop following keen discussions around race, yes or nod and colonialism, participants wrote personal and emotive responses to the works. Vote held on what the participants felt should be displayed in the galleries and what they believed should be taken off and why. Apart from the head of Paul Robison the workshop participants felt that the people represented in these works were classed as objects and identified only through association with empire, colonialism or through Goscombe John. Individuals in their own rights through their stories and experiences. Explains that: "Removal of the you busts on display and replacing them activated a different story that interacts with the other busts on display".

Their response led to the sound and vision mediation. Poetry is printed onto perspex covers and placed beneath the work. The sound installation was also introduced that gave the silent voices that literally echo around the walls. This includes reflective recordings collected by them as well as archival sound tracks. For example we can hear Paul Robison as he speaks to the miners of Porthcaul and sings songs of his tribe and workshop participants talk about their chosen works. Where next? As the museum it is our responsibility to ensure that the collections are accessible and relevant to all our visitors. After all, the collection belongs to the Welsh nation. We need to courage those who feel excluded from the museum to find out they are very much included and represented. Especially if that means and here I paraphrase who aptly puts it that by decolonialising our collections we're airing our dirty linen in public.

It is our responsibility to ensure the collections are accessible and relevant to all our visitors. After all, the collection belongs to the Welsh nation. We need to encourage those who feel excluded to find out that they are very included and represented. Especially if that means that, and here I paraphrase, Dr Zehra Jumabhoy who aptly puts it that by "decolonising the collections we are airing our dirty linen in public" to acknowledge the act of former colonies and its contemporary repercussions.

We are starting to re-examine the collections and while this is so far the only sculptural revaluation, many projects are taking off. So to end the last word goes to Umulkayr, in this brief video of the display.

>> We find ourselves here in the Rotunda room. Goscombe John who was a big supporter of the museum and who donated a lot of his works to the museum. With the British new sculpture movement which Goscombe John was a leader of was interested in naturalistic representations of the human body which is clear to see. In this famous sculpture of his, wits Greek God of dreams. The title of this work is Age. This is in fact a portrait bust of Goscombe John's mother-in-law. And one of the reasons that we will also be exploring what it means to be a specimen and the role that stereotyping, and categorising has played in Goscombe John's career. It's easy to see why this museum has dedicated this room to Goscombe John, but it's really interesting to think about how the new sculpture movement was interested in naturalistic representations of the body, especially when you look at this sculpture, which was created by Goscombe John's friend Herbert Ward. And so we come to Bokani, the sculpture that sparked it all for me. He is presented here in a glass case that is kind of a grouping of a lot of the different kinds of work that Goscombe John did. He is also the only portrait bust in this room that is currently presented not on its own custom-built plinth. Moreover, as a specimen of a type of human rather than being valued as a human being in of himself. We are seeking to close the gap between expressive art objects and the silent exhibition furniture they rest upon with this new display. These plinth covers speak to the stories of the people who rest on them. And ask questions that the placards can't hold. The space between personhood and arc types where often ignored truths reside. This sound art installation completes the redisplay and paints a series of audio portraits that hold up a mirror to the neutral tellings of history and what they fail to share. Filling the ambient space with public domain audio footage and reflective recordings done by the community collected and reworked by the artists.

>> Look at this bust. The words are conveniently thrust on what was first called a specimen. A study of the form. For this man was not considered the norm. In a world of whiteness and a world of western rightness.

>> Look at the sculpture of the Aruwimi type and the eroticism and violence they perpetuated against the African people. Think about how much the sculptors and the people of the west benefitted off them, stole from them, does that make you feel something?

>> The subject has so many links to Wales, he was even a major supporter of the Welsh miners. He supported them when they went down to London to protest.

>> My warmest greetings to the people of my beloved Wales and a special hello to the miners of South Wales.

MELANIE: Thank you.

JULIA: Thank you Melanie, thank you for giving us important insight to visibility and how it's not just about making something visible but the context in which they make those things visible and those people and all people visible in museums. Next we're going to be hearing from Dr Susannah Thompson, art historian and head of doctoral studies at Glasgow school of art. Her interest of research focuses on interdisciplinary and feminist approaches to art criticism and broader forms of art writing and contemporary art in the UK. Susannah will be speaking about the rediscovery of a Bust of Christ, her presentation will raise broad questions about the histories of sculpture and also explore why Edmonia Lewis's Bust of Christ had to be rediscovered even though Lewis was an acclaimed sculpture during her own lifetime. You can put questions for either speaker in the Q&A function and we will get to those after Susanna's presentation.

SUSANNAH: Thank you Julia and thanks Melanie for a brilliant talk. And to Art UK for this symposium. In 2015 a flurry of reports appeared online to a new discovery of an artwork of an American sculpture Mary Edmonia Lewis. The announcements were made to social media, who run the Mount Stuart itself is a huge Victoria gothic house and while it is still the seat of the Crichton Stuarts, it's been open to the public since 1989. As well as you can see its hugely impressive architecture and grounds it has an enormous collection of works of art, design and literature. Much of it amused by John Crichton Stuart, the third Marquess of Bute between 1868 and 1900. Edmonia Lewis's bust of Christ was one of his many acquisitions. So a lot of the context first of all, for those of you who may not know the work, Edmonia Lewis was the first woman of colour to achieve international recognition for her work as a sculptor. Born in New York to an African-American and African-American or West Indian father, both parents died when Lewis was a child, and she was brought up by her mother's sister in the region of Niagara until she was 12 her brother Samuel was a self-made businessman who paid for her education. Lewis studied in New York and then from 1859 in Ohio. Which had admitted African-Americans since 1835. In spite of its ethos Lewis suffered numerous incidents of racial discrimination. She was falsely accused, brutally attacked and due to these and other incidents, she left without graduating in 1863. On the advice of Friedrich Douglas to go east or abroad she moved to Boston and embarked upon her career as an artist before then leaving for Italy in 1865. It's important to note that she had no formal training in sculpture and received only basic informal guidance from established sculptures such as Ann Whitney and Edward Bracket in Boston. Lewis initially made her name in Boston through the production of portrait medallions and busts of abolitionists and civil war heroes, such as John Brown and so on and she was treated as something of a novelty by the white liberal abolitionist community in Boston. It was a success of this portrait, the leader of the first black regiment in the civil war along with monies saved from a teaching job in rich mopped Virginia that enabled her to finance and move to Italy in 1865. Although she travelled back to the USA frequently for exhibitions and sales, she would be based in Rome for the rest of her professional career, before moving to Paris, and finally to London in 1901. Where she died in 1907. So how does the story of Edmonia Lewis connect to the more questions of Bute. Why did the sculpture one of only two works by Lewis in UK public collections disappear from view? A little more context. So Lewis's relocation from America to Italy in 1865 followed by a then established pattern, from the 1820s onwards Italy had become home to a steady flow of American neoclassical sculptures. Aside from the ready access to some of the most famous works in the western cannon, Italy provided commercial opportunities for artists in the 19th century. Travel guides began to list artists’ studios as tourist destinations on the grand tour. Leading to purchases and commissions by wealthy patrons. American artists initially established themselves in Florence and from the 1850s increasingly in Rome. Italy also provided sculptors of an abundant supply of marble along with the skill and craftmanship of affordable artisans to help them carve it. For Lewis

carvers were not required in the early years of her career, she was highly unusual in completing every stage of her work unassisted in the early years. But Lewis's reasons for emigrating were, nevertheless, pragmatic if very different to those of her contemporaries. Leaving in the year that the abolition of slavery was finally achieved in the United States, she noted in a New York Times interview seeking equality abroad and I quote "I was practically driven to Rome in order to obtain the opportunities for art and culture and to find social atmosphere where I was not constantly reminded of my colour. The land of liberty had no room for a coloured sculptor. "Initially based in a studio that had been occupied by Canova that social circle were a group of ex-patriot American woman sculptors, including Ann Whitney most famously recalled by the novelist Henry James as that white flock. Lewis noted one of the sisterhood, I'm quoting, I am not mistaken was an Negris whose colour picturesquely contrasted with that of her material which was the pleading agent of her fame." Five years after she established herself in Rome, Lewis, created Bust of Christ. So again, how did this work made by a black America-Indian woman in Rome come to be in the private collection of an eccentric aristocrat on a small Scottish island. What was the link between Lewis and her patron Crichton Stuart? While Lewis began to establish herself in Rome, John Crichton Stuart, the third Marquess of Bute was about to turn 21. In September 1868 he assumed full control of the family estates from which he received an annual income of around £300,000. This made him the richest man in Britain at the time and one of the wealthiest people in the world. Crichton Stuart was a descendent of the royal house of Stuart and great grandson of John Stuart, Prime Minister to King George III. The third mar questions who we can see here, was an arc typal polymath, industrialist, writer, historian, traveller, and philanthropist. He became one of the most significant patrons of the arts of the Victorian period and was considered to be eccentric both personally and politically. Most notably and most interestingly for our purposes today, he scandalised British society by converting to Catholicism in 1868. The news of his conversion was widely reported and frequently described in the English and Scottish press as quoting a per version or defection. It was Bute's religious conversion that took him to Rome. He returned to Rome in November of that year for the opening of the first Vatican council and stayed there until summer 1870. It seems like lie then that Lewis's Bust of Christ was purchased or commissioned during this time, although there are no records linking it to Bute himself in that year. What we do know is that Bute is said to have met Lewis and to have commissioned at least one work from her between 1869 and 1870. April 1870 the eagle reported that, you can see the quote on-screen, the Edmonia Lewis has received orders for works from the marquis of Bute. Another contemporary source writing in the New York's revolution magazine noted "a fine group of the Madonna with the infant Christ in her arms and two adoring angels at her feet has been purchased by the young marquis of Bute for an altar piece. It's thought that work, the Madonna was lost in a fire in 1877 and there's no record of it in the collection today. As a result of Bute's patronage, Lewis was able to pay off mounting debts she owed and shipping unsolicited works to would be buyers. The debts must have been considerable. The news of her financial troubles was reported in Boston newspaper the Commonwealth in 1869 and in the Catholic newspaper the tablet in 1870, which presents Bute as a white saviour, a pattern of critical framing which persisted for Lewis in spite of the fact a number of her wealthy patrons in the US were African-American.

The report in the Tablet is also within the few historical records to mention the meeting between the two. Titles Third Marquess of Bute as a patron of art, it read:

"The correspondent Lord Bute is known in England from the fact of having joined the Catholic Church. I'll now introduce him as a patron of art and under circumstances that do credit to his kindly feelings." Years passed since Miss Lewis, a lady of culture, she has struggled against many difficulties this season, has been a bad one for art and the poor lady has suffered from want of patronage. History mentioned Lord Bute and he paid her a visit which resulted in the purchase of a statue of the Madonna for £300. Before meeting her Bute may have read about Lewis' studio in a travel guide, she was listed on a number of guides from 1867 onwards and read about her in paper he has known to have read which carried news of the sculpture he is. It's equally likely the society friends were aware of the work through the American expatriate society hence the mention of benevolent friends in the Tablet report. It's clear that Bute had alternatives in Rome of all places when it came to buying more commissioning Catholic works of art so his choice of Lewis is specific. I'm not trying to imply Lewis' race or gender were the reasons he became. Evidence to issuing for all his political and religious conservative, and for all the expectations of a man of his class and position in the Victorian era, Bute was unusually progressive in its attitudes towards women, jews and people of colour. Described as a conservative in name but a liberal in practice, he was an active campaigner for women's education, took an active role in his children's lives including be being present at the birth, very unusual for that period and had a close circle of friends who were women. He was a supporter of Scottish Home Rule and a philanthropist for a wide number of causes. Ultimately his link with Lewis was one of religious identity, both Lewis and Bute were described as devout Catholics. None of the works bought from Lewis with the abolitionist literary or Indian themed works which has made her name. His interest it seems was exclusively in the religious works, Madonna, Christ and Thorn which became an increasingly focus for Lewis in the latter part of her career partly due to the continued support of Catholic patrons and the broader decline in the neoclassism. While Bute's question, was widely reported, conversion to Catholicism. In a 1868 letter from Lewis' friend the sculpture to her sister she reports Lewis' decision to join the Catholic Church and it was. It's also possible that she received some at least some Catholic religious construction as a child before moving to Italy. And a number of newspaper interviews of the 1870s refer to her ago having been Catholic before she left the USA. Interviews quote her as saying she had learned her prayers unverify to do my knowledge and referenced the Jesiuts since 1700s. But regardless of were she was Catholic as a child or converted in adulthood the religion presents another facet to the personal and professional life overlooked in accounts of her work and the religious works least researched of her output possibly because a lot of them were lost. Or undiscovered. There's no question that Bute and Lewis were very active practicing Catholics from the date of the conversion to the death. Lewis is said to have been visited by the Pope and in London she was a regular attendee in Kensington. Probate for the state left to the curate and the notice of her death was published in Catholic newspaper the Tablet. She is buried in St Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery. And that was only discovered recently by historians. What of Bust of Christ? Lewis' Chris looks northern European and his hair, beard and dress look like they're drawn from a Renaissance painting. Chris' face and hair are remarkably similar to DuRa's Chris like portrait of 1500. Here Lewis' work of renne asince inspired neo classical realism with a neo medieval almost pre-Raphaelite looking Christ figure. This would have appealed to Bute a keen medievalist whose chosen architectural style for building projects was Victorian gothic. The use of white marble is of course typical of neoclassic sculpture, and the materials beloved of the Third Marquess of Bute who imported huge quantities of the marble. In the last known photograph of the work in situ placed in the hall a great central hall surround by marble pillars. Bust of Christ is the only remaining work by Lewis in the Bute collection today and the only work for which no further record can be found regarding it's purchase or commission. The work was not mentioned in any scholarship on Lewis prior to its so-called rediscovery in 2015, except for a tiny footnote in a 2012 biography of Lewis by Harry and Henderson. In 1880 a Dublin newspaper reported the sale of a marble bust of Chris by Edmonia Lewis for £3. As part of the estate of the disgraced priest of Kensington who had been instructed to leave the UK for America under scandalous; circumstances and here I think we have the connection. He was the priest credited with Bute's conversion. They had met when he was a young man studying at Oxford at a point where he had begun in earnest to consider joining him in the church. It was Kopele who baptised him in London, and he was also part of Bute's group in Rome in 1869 to 70 where we know Bute first met Lewis. In the absence of other records or other records to my knowledge, it would seem that the Bust of Christ was either bought by Bute for Caple in Rome a brought back from him in 1880 when Capelle was declared bankrupt or that the original purchase was Capelle which sling the lack of mention of it in any of the Bute records. Whatever the case, it's the only clear link, linking Bute and Mount Stuart with Lewis today.

I have shown you only a small selection of newspaper reports that link the two. He was known to be a patron. In this sense the fact that a work exists in the collection today should not really be seen as discovery as such but it is a rediscovery for audiences and researches of Lewis' work until 1989 Mount Stuart had been a private collection. To the knowledge of the current archivist the work hadn't been on display and is currently in storage. The sheer scale and volume of the Bute collection archives also presents a problem in terms of finding what might be small detailed invoices or records. As does the destruction of many works and papers in the 1877 fire. As such, it was only due to Mount Stuart social media post of 2015 and subsequent repeated posts like this one by Marilyn Richardson and this Twitter notification that contemporary audiences and researchers became aware of its existence. It's one of only two works by Lewis in a public collection in the UK. And the only one in Scotland. The other work, also a marble bust from the same year, 1870 although this was carved in 1872, is held in the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool. It's also important to note that scholarship on Lewis herself was only a reactivated quite slowly since the late 80s and increasingly from the 90s onwards due to the efforts of small handful of historians artist as curators in North America, including people like Whitney, Marilyn Richardson and others. In the UK, the late artist also made work based on Lewis' life. So in crew, the resonance of Lewis' Bust of Christ in 2021 I think has really compelling. In the context of the ongoing debate which we heard about last night, with Mary beard and Jeremy Daar and discussion today as well, in the context of the debate around public sculpture and the legacies of slavery in the UK and island, here is a work which suite waits a black woman as its author. It was owned by a man and a deeply religiously divided country who shared with Lewis a refusal to conform to societal expectations. And following the work, the highlights that Lewis' work and her influences were more complex than visual or formal autobiography or self-portraiture which is oven how the abolitionist and American inned I do not think so are framed. In conclusion I feel that this bust, Bust of Christ tells the story of marry Edmonia Lewis and her pate European John Patrick Crichton-Stuart and it holds up the promise that there may be many more works to be discovered. Thank you very much.

JULIA: Thank you Susannah and now we'll bring back Melanie as well for a Q&A period. We'll try to get to as many questions as we can. You can still put questions in the Q&A chat. And we'll get to as many as we can. We have a question from Melanie about the display that you talked about. Is that going to be on permanent display? Or will it be a temporary display?

MELANIE: The timing of this display was really hindered by COVID and lockdown. Just as we had installed it, literally within days, everything was shut. So it's certainly going to be around for quite a while. It's not going anywhere at the moment. We are hoping to develop on this and look at other works. We've got various other books in the collection as well that really need to be re-examine in a much more sort of democratic way, involving local communities and getting people on board and we're doing other works as well. What to do about Picturn, we have a huge portrait of him and there's lots of interesting work going on at the moment. And this is forming part of that. But it's certainly going to be on display for a while.

JULIA: It's great to point out that you are both giving specific examples but there's much more work to be done and it is being done to decolonise the space.

JULIA: The next question is about Lewis' training and how she was not formally trained and maybe didn't have access to models. Could you speak a bit more about that Susannah?

The next question is about Edmonia Lewis's training, she didn't have access to models and wasn't formally trained.

SUSANNAH: As I said in the talk, what was really interesting about Lewis she was one of the few people in the circle Rome to be educated to the level she was but not in sculpture. There was one drawing and we know she was interested in art but no formal training in either Rome or in Boston, so she had some help and some feedback, some critical feedback from friends, amongst her circle, but no formal training at all.

JULIA: That was in part due to her gender but also in part due to the fact that she was of black and first nation heritage, is that correct?

SUSANNAH: She didn't study art. She obviously attended Oberlin college, but it wasn't as specific, as Marilyn Richardson has done some work on her education and she left without graduating, under very difficult racially motivated circumstances. But obviously I think women in terms of gender I think women were excluded from life drawing and working from life, racially, we know that she had a very time at college, and so in general terms her education was disrupted for that reason. Specifically with art, it's more the case that she became interested in art really in terms of career after she left education.

JULIA: Thank you. I was just wondering also because Melanie your present spoke about white artists representing people of colour and Susannah your presentation talking about a person of colour representing maybe someone with more Caucasian features and how those two presentations speak together and how we contextualise those things, what needs to be contextualised and what we can say they're both works of art, we should present them in the same way, what do you think? Is there contextualising that needs to be done to separate those two?

SUSANNAH: I think for me, yes, I think the Bust of Christ, sorry to be negative about Edmonia Lewis's work, but it's not her best work. You could miss it if it was part of a larger collection. It's a small Bust of Christ amongst many other Catholic objects or religious objects. So it is the context that's interesting for me there and the story of the woman behind the work. But she was much more well-known for depictions of African-American people and for America-Indian people. So she's really renowned for works of people of colour. She's less known for works which depict white people basically, so I think this is an unusual example of Lewis's work and there are very few religious works of Lewis that are extant that we know about. The big works in the huge collections in America are mainly of her abolitionist and America-Indian themed works.

MELANIE: That's really interesting because it would be good to know who commissioned the works of non-western people and where they were intended to go for display. Because a lot of the works that we found looking at that are by white usually male sculptors, these works have had very specific roles as documenting specimens, which is really awful way to look at it. And another very active business was the life cast and a lot of non-western people but would have life casts taken of themselves. Used as this kind of sued doe scientific library of types that they would keep in there and I was just wondering how Edmonia's busts or portraits, or statues were used.

SUSANNAH: Yes in the early part of her career, she was working obviously in 1865, I think she started at 1863, so she was working initially in the lead up to the abolition of slavery. She was working in Boston, centre for abolitionist activism, she was picked up as somewhat of a novelty by the liberal abolitionist community and she made her name not through commissions initially by making the work and then selling it. The portrait of the medallions and then went on to make a bust and then tried to sell it and she was quite unusual in her circle for often making work that hadn't

been commissioned, or that had been made and then purchased. She sent unsolicited works to people she thought would be interested. Some of works were commissioned for cemeteries, altar pieces, but on the whole it was a mixture between commissions for specific people and unsolicited work she later tried to sell to art fares and hoping to raise the money to purchase them.

MELANIE: One of the reasons we included Moody's work was to offer a counterbalance of works that are by black sculptors of black individuals and we want to try and look at a positive spin as well and look at works like this and we are developing our collections with this in mind. We also have some other works by an Indian sculptor, he left his home and ended up in Scotland where he was accepted at the Royal Academy there. He had a very short life, but he was really, he became a royal Scottish, and made a huge mark in the short space, he died in his late 30s early 40s, but he was a really important sculptor and an Indian nationalist, and we have some of his works as well in the collection, which we're really keen. Incidentally, it was William Goscombe John who was a patron and that is how we have the works in the collection here. So it would be great to look at those as well and explore stories.

JULIA: That's fantastic and that's ironically a great point to end on, because we're just about out of time. But just showing that there are so many more individuals and individual artists that we can be studying and whose works do exist in public collections and it's wonderful that work is being done and as we were saying so much more to be done still. There's a lot of really great questions in the Q&A. I'm really sorry we can't get to all of them, a lot about how we use language, how we see decolonising the museum as a whole, and decolonising public spaces. We apologise we can't get to all of those. I want to thank Susanna and Melanie for your really insightful talks today. If you have RSVPed to the virtual meet up that will start at 12.30 and then the next session will start at 1.30. We hope to see you this afternoon.