

## **DR HARRIET O'NEILL**

***Nominated as a result of Council recruitment process by Amanda Jones (Chair of Council) and Matt Pope (Deputy Chair of Council)***

### **PERSONAL STATEMENT**

#### **Motivation**

School trips to Fishbourne Roman Palace and Lewes Castle fostered my interest in history and classics and were fundamental to my decision to become a heritage professional. As a Trustee of The Sussex Archaeological Society I would use my skills to further secure the long-term preservation of its portfolio of properties and collections and ensure that they continue to be meaningful to the widest possible range of audiences. I am particularly keen to build upon the Society's strong research tradition and consolidate and develop collaborative partnerships with Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and the GLAM sector. What follows demonstrates that I have the academic knowledge and practical skills to fulfil these aims.

#### **Biography, Skills and Experience**

I have a BA in Modern History from the University of Oxford and MAs in History of Art (UCL in conjunction with the British Museum Prints and Drawings Room) and Art Museum and Gallery Studies (Newcastle). My PhD in Art History was a collaboration between UCL and the National Gallery, London. I am an Honorary Research Associate of the School of Modern Languages and Cultures at Royal Holloway, University of London. This position has strengthened my academic networks and research, as has my participation in academic conferences. I have published articles on frames and framing in the literal and the abstract, the efficacy of scenographic practice as an interpretative tool for heritage spaces and the 19<sup>th</sup>-century chapel at Royal Holloway.

My current role as Assistant Director for the Humanities and Social Sciences at the British School at Rome (BSR) is particularly relevant to the position of Trustee. The BSR is the largest of the British International Research Institutes (BIRIs) and specialises in art, archaeology, history and modern Italian studies. At present the institution is realigning itself with new societal, governmental and funding agendas and so my position is a strategic one. I am responsible for shaping and delivering the BSR's research strategy especially promoting the Digital Humanities and generating grant applications and collaborative projects with UK HEIs, museums and galleries. Most recently I won a British Council grant for a collaborative project between Birmingham Museums and Galleries and the BSR and another from the UCL Global Cities programme. I am also responsible for the dynamic series of lectures, workshops and performances that take place in Rome and the UK. As a Trustee I would use this experience to strengthen the Society's academic and cultural networks with the intention of forging grant-funded collaborations.

I have held two prestigious curatorial roles which would be of assistance to the Society. At the National Gallery, London, I co-curated *Frames in Focus: the Sansovino Frame* and played a key part in the interpretation of its collections. At Royal Holloway I was responsible for overseeing the design and build of a new exhibition space and art store, preparing preliminary documentation for Museum Accreditation, coordinating a complex conservation campaign and delivering an innovative, interdisciplinary outreach programme which included exhibitions. My commitment to inclusivity, equality and diversity and ensuring research into

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heritage moves beyond the Academy underpins the content of my public talks, films, commissioning of interpretative interventions from artists, poets and musicians, teaching (school groups, U3A and university students) and walks.

Finally, I would bring valuable commercial experience to the Society. I started my career at Christie's and Bonhams auctioneers and was the youngest Head of Department at the latter. Combined, these positions have enabled me to develop a strong network of contacts in the heritage and HEI fields which would be an asset to the Sussex Archaeological Society as would my intellect, energy and interpersonal skills.

It would be a privilege to serve as a Trustee for the Society and in so doing contribute to the area I grew up in.

Dr Harriet O'Neill