

Hackney Museum “Take Over”

Between December -April 2021 Xenia ran a series of workshops called the “Take Over” project in collaboration the Hackney Museum. **As a result of the programme participants chose objects which have meaning to them and told their stories at a public “Hackney Museum Take over event”- a virtual exhibition during the pandemic**

Our workshops included:

- Introduction to Museum and Heritage knowledge-
- Social media and museums online
- Storytelling and how we share stories.
- Caption writing for museums
- Planning the launch event together.
- Sharing our objects and stories publicly

Fatima



"These carved mosaic boxes are special to me because when my mother got married she was given this box and they remind me of my mother and father. When I left Syria, I brought these boxes with me to London.

These carved mosaic boxes are made by skilled craftsmen in the heart of the old city of Damascus in Syria, which was where I used to live. Making them requires accuracy, patience and love as it takes about two months to finish a single piece. The art of mosaics dates back thousands of years to as early as 300BC.

The mosaics are delicately carved using a hammer and chisel to shape the wood. Then different types of colours of wood are inlaid such as ebony, rosewood, eucalyptus, walnut, almond, olive, and lemon with mother-of-pearl shell.

Wooden mosaic furniture are still handmade today in Damascus. Every piece is unique as they are handmade. In old Syria, there are special houses where all the furniture are made from mosaic. When I lived in the old centre of Damascus, we had a mosaic table that looked just like this box."

xenia



Tamador



"The object that I would like to share is something very special and touching. Called "Mandoula".

It is a container consisting of two parts, a mug made of wood and covered with vessel made from fronds. In which a Sudanese traditional dish called "Aseeda" is placed. It is one of the most delicious foods, especially in Darfur (the region where I came from) and is served on occasions such as weddings and Festivals.

The Sudanese recipe for Aseeda is made with flour and water, sometimes salt and oil is added. It is eaten with a soup made of dried meat , onion, oil and spices. The Mandoula experience takes you to the wide area of Sudanese heritage and the authentic Sudanese culture. My object is the outer part of the Mandoula."

Sarah



This is my kit kat mug. I use it for my coffee, but I don't use it every day as I like it to feel a bit special when I do.

It was made in 1980 - when kit kats were 60 years old - and I bought it second hand from Ebay as my first kit kat mug got broken and I'd loved it. I have many mugs with many stories but the kit kat one is my favourite as it's red and reminds me of the excitement of getting a solid finger of chocolate as a child. Another memory is of when I was much older, eating them secretly behind my daughter's pram. I would have to wait until a car drove by to mask the sound of me snapping a finger off as she is very inquisitive and would instantly want to know what the noise was - she would have been very annoyed I wasn't sharing.

No one else is allowed to use my mug in case it gets broken again. If my nephew is staying to look after the cat I hide it at the back of a cupboard. I also have a spare one tucked away behind all the other things on a high shelf. I bought it because this style is quite rare and I don't trust anyone else not to buy me a comedy shaped version if this one has an accident.

It's not a pure pleasure as I have concerns about Nestle as a company so I haven't eaten a kit kat in a long time but I do love my mug.



Mena



"This necklace is made of real pearl 22 carat gold with a lot of tiny diamonds. I inherited it from my mum, she had it since 1940, but she gave it to me before she passed away 25 years ago. This necklace is very valuable to me, not only because of what it is made of, but because it is from my dear mum. God bless her soul."

Nabila



"This suitcase, which is very old - from the 1950s/1960s - my husband had it for 22 years, and before that it was with his friend for 4 years at least."





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Xenia Women ends take-over of Hackney Museum's social media with a virtual show

by [Esmae Palmer](#) / April 9, 2021



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Hackney Museum welcomes Xenia for a social media takeover

30 March 2021



From now until 10 April, Hackney Museum's social media will be guest-curated by Hackney community group Xenia who run workshops for migrant women to support English language learning and make new friends. The takeover will end in a show and tell event hosted by Xenia and Hackney Museum.

The two-week takeover will see Xenia participants share experiences and knowledge through objects and storytelling. It will be in the spirit of the in-person Xenia sessions which have taken place at the Hackney Museum since 2016 until the pandemic meant they had to take place online.

The event on 10 April (from 11.30-12.30) will give residents an opportunity to find out more about the objects featured in the takeover and the work of Xenia from the participants.

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Hackney Museum welcomes Xenia for a social media takeover

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Dani Covender, Xenia Organising Team Volunteer said, "Through our partnership with Hackney Museum, Xenia

Impact on learners and volunteers

Virtual Xenia workshops make me feel connected to other people	100% answered "Yes"
I feel I can ask the Xenia community if I have a question	94% answered "Yes"
Virtual Xenia makes me feel more confident speaking English	83% answered "Yes"
Xenia has helped me feel more confident using technology	77% answered "Yes"
I learned about another culture by coming to Xenia	100% answered "Yes"
I made a friend from a different culture by coming to Xenia	63% answered "Yes"

Improved confidence speaking English

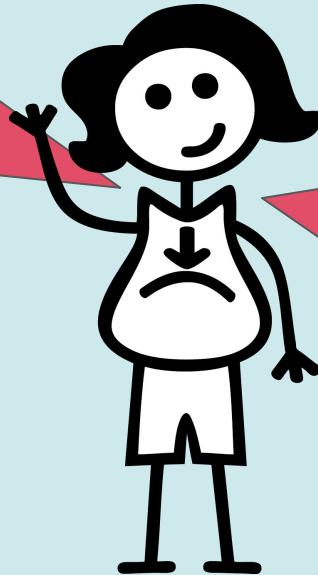
We step by step I'm trying to speak, if any women don't understand then we can draw! I like this idea because the lady speak slowly and clearly, and simple language, and we can communicate new ways.

Time by time I got to go to ESOL class, my teacher told me about Xenia and I don't know but I want to speak English because I don't speak never any English when I come to here. I go to Xenia, it surprise me that inside the museum in the small room I like it when I go to first time in Xenia I don't understand everything, I'm trying to understand for language body and read the lips, I see all the people from another country, and all women! I have two feeling about this - I don't understand, I don't speak, I don't share, I don't enter discussion - but at the same time I feel happy, I feel with my family, I miss my homeland, neighbours, friends, my country but when I came to Xenia it changed everything."



Increased cultural and civic participation

Every session the topic change, we can speak about trips, we can speak about government



I am finding it very overwhelming to read the news and everything, so Xenia has been a very important information source for me.

"Since I met Xenia I found my family. I thought 'oh, now I have found my home' "

Reduced social isolation

Increased positive social contact with people from different backgrounds:



"I know the women, they know me, we see other culture and traditions, and we change because of this. I have many friends from all the countries"

Partnership with Hackney Museum

- Sharing objects from the museum's rich collection
 - Benefit from the Hackney Museum staff's knowledge: museum curation, caption writing and museum presentation.
 - Participants were able to feel like their heritage and stories and objects were valued by the locality and shared on a large scale
- Developed confidence of Hackney Museum staff to work online, developed digital skills.
- Possibility of a loan or donation of one object in particular, for possible inclusion in an upcoming exhibition.



- Strengthened the relationship between the museum and Xenia

This project was funded by the Greater
London Authority's "ESOL plus Arts
programme" and was hosted by the
Hackney Museum

Xenia 2020-2021