

# BIRKBECK ACADEMICS AWARDED £1MILLION TO MAP UK'S INDEPENDENT MUSEUMS



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14 June 2016

*Project will further understanding of the independent museum sector's development*



*Image: Peter Barr*

[Dr Fiona Candlin](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/art-history/staff/teaching-staff/candlin) (<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/art-history/staff/teaching-staff/candlin>), Reader in Museum Studies, and [Alex Poulouvassilis](https://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/about-us/staff/academic-staff/ap/) (<https://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/about-us/staff/academic-staff/ap/>), Professor of Computer Science, have been awarded £1,012,460 by the Arts and Humanities Research Council for a new project to map and analyse the emergence, character and development of the UK independent museums sector from 1960-2020.

The project will establish a dataset of the approximately 1600 independent museums currently operating in the UK, as well as those that have opened or closed since 1960. Explaining the significance of the project, Dr Candlin said: “The emergence of independent museums, founded by community and special interest groups or individual collectors, revolutionised the museum sector in the UK. But despite their large numbers we know very little about independent museums: when they opened, or where, and whether they subsequently closed. The data will help us understand how the sector began and has developed.”

The new dataset will be made freely available on a project website and will be searchable by factors including location, date of foundation, subject matter, size, type of museum and combinations of these attributes. The second phase of the project will use the data to identify patterns in the emergence, development and closure of independent museums and to understand why these patterns have emerged.

Dr Candlin said: “Identifying patterns in the location, timing of museum openings and their subject matter will be useful to funding organisations in understanding the sustainability of museums and how best to use their resources to secure a healthy future for the UK’s museums sector”.

## Find out more

- [Mapping Museums \(http://www.bbk.ac.uk/art-history/research/projects/mapping-museums-the-history-and-geography-of-the-uk-independent-sector-1960-2020\)](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/art-history/research/projects/mapping-museums-the-history-and-geography-of-the-uk-independent-sector-1960-2020)
- [Dr Fiona Candlin \(http://www.bbk.ac.uk/art-history/staff/teaching-staff/candlin\)](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/art-history/staff/teaching-staff/candlin)
- [Professor Alex Poulouvasilis \(https://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/about-us/staff/academic-staff/ap/\)](https://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/about-us/staff/academic-staff/ap/)
- [MA Museum Cultures \(http://www.bbk.ac.uk/study/2016/postgraduate/programmes/TMAMUMEM\\_1\)](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/study/2016/postgraduate/programmes/TMAMUMEM_1)
- [Department of History of Art \(http://www.bbk.ac.uk/art-history\)](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/art-history)
- [Department of Computer Science and Information Systems \(https://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/\)](https://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/)

[Image: Peter Barr]

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