

## **ANCIENT VASES IN MODERN SHOWCASES**

### **Future possibilities for exhibiting Greek pottery in Museums**

#### **Organizers**

**Laurien de Gelder** is curator of the archaeological collections of the Greek World and the Ancient Near East in the Allard Pierson (University of Amsterdam). Her research focuses on the history of the discipline ([www.platformargos.nl](http://www.platformargos.nl)) and exhibiting archaeological collections in museums. This conference is organized as the result of a Museum Scholarship by The Dutch Research Council (NWO) (2021-2022) which Laurien received for her research project 'Spreekende Schilderingen. Een inclusieve blik op de oudheid'.

**Vladimir Stissi** is professor of Classical Archaeology and History of Ancient Art at the University of Amsterdam. Since writing his PhD (defended in 2003) on what now would be called the 'chaîne opératoire' of Greek decorated pottery in the Archaic and Classical period he has continued to publish on production, distribution and appreciation of mainly Athenian 'vases', with a focus on quantitative and contextual approaches. He is involved with field work and studies of finds in several archaeological projects in Greece and has also been active as an exhibition curator, academic advisor and trustee in several archaeological and non-archaeological museums, including the Allard Pierson.

## Bio (A-Z) + Abstracts

### Cooper, Kate

*Kate Cooper is Research Associate in the Greek & Roman Department of the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, where she has worked since 2012 researching the collection and curating displays including a special exhibition about Pompeii. Before that she was a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge where she helped curate the re-display of the Greek & Roman Gallery. She has also worked in the Greek & Roman Department of The British Museum. In addition to her practical museum projects, Kate lectures in Classical history, archaeology, and culture and has taught at the University of Toronto, York University, Toronto, the University of Cambridge, and Birkbeck College, London. Her research focuses on the collection and display of antiquities, and on archaic Greek vase painting and movement - her PhD from King's College London traced the distribution patterns of Corinthian decorated pottery. In her latest publication, the edited volume *New Approaches to Ancient Material Culture* (Brill, 2020), she considers the historical development of Classical Archaeology, and the collection and display of a controversial object in the Royal Ontario Museum's collection.*

### **“Ode on a Grecian Urn”: how should we display ancient vases in a 21<sup>st</sup>-century museum?**

Planning the display of ancient Greek vases in a museum is a complex issue that needs to carefully balance the visual impact with stories about these artefacts from an ancient and, in many ways, alien culture. Is an aesthetic approach that presents antiquities as works of art still appropriate for a museum display? Should an archaeological approach be adopted, and would this prioritise the decoration, historical context, social context, or manufacture of ancient pottery? Should the modern collection-history of the ancient objects also feature? How much emphasis can be put on didactic instruction in the museum gallery, and can current scholarly research be included? What sort of new information and display possibilities might technology offer?

This talk explores such issues, drawing on examples from various museum displays, while discussing the practical limitations relevant to museums and their collections. It aims to begin a debate about the most effective means of exhibiting ancient vases and engaging visitors in today's museums.

### **Ebbinghaus, Susanne - Angela Chang, Susan Costello**

*Susanne Ebbinghaus is the George M. A. Hanfmann Curator of Ancient Art and Head of the Division of Asian and Mediterranean Art at the Harvard Art Museums. Her research focuses on the art and archaeology of ancient Greece and the Middle East, with special interests in cross-cultural interaction, feasting, polychromy, and bronzes. She oversaw the 2014 reinstallation of the museums' ancient art galleries and (co-)organized the exhibitions "Gods in Color: Painted Sculpture of Classical Antiquity" (2007), "Animal-Shaped Vessels from the Ancient World: Feasting with Gods, Heroes, and Kings" (2018), and "Funerary Portraits from Roman Egypt: Facing Forward" (2022). She is a participant of the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis in Turkey.*

### **Hands-on Behind Glass? Ideas for Displaying Ancient Greek Pottery at the Harvard Art Museums**

How was it made? What can a vessel's condition tell us about its history? These are two of the questions we plan to address in a new installation of ancient Greek pottery at the Harvard Art Museums. Over the last several years, museums staff has collaborated with the Ceramics Program, Office for the Arts at Harvard, to recreate ancient vessel shapes and forms of decoration from selected museum objects. For the participants, these ceramics making classes have been instructive and fun, connecting us with the ancient makers and their processes, and leading to a new appreciation of the skills and time required to manufacture these objects. Other material stories that often remain untold concern conservation. Conservators at the museums' Straus Center for Conservation and Technical Studies have treated numerous ancient vessels. They have revealed evidence for historic conservation treatments, while their own interventions and decisions of what to make visible, hide, or reconstruct have been guided by considerations of what would create an optimal viewing experience. This paper will offer ideas for how to present the "birth" and "afterlives" of ancient Greek pottery in a gallery installation that works in tandem with digital tools and public programs.

## **Gerleigner, Georg**

*Dr Georg Gerleigner is (Temporary) Keeper of the Antikensammlung Erlangen (which belongs to the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg). Having received his Magister Artium degree in Classical Archaeology, Greek Philology and Ancient History from the University of Munich and his PhD in Classics from Cambridge University, he previously held posts at the universities of Kiel, Basel, Erlangen and the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities. Georg is working on the third volume of Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum Erlangen and is curating the database of Attic Vase Inscriptions (AVI) as a research associate at the University of Basel*

### **Object provenances in the Antikensammlung Erlangen: research, display, teaching**

Recent provenance research in the Antikensammlung of Erlangen University revealed that the hitherto unknown Dehn private collection, comprising inter alia a number of (fragmentary) Greek pots and hundreds of fragments thereof, which was acquired by the Antikensammlung in 1939, was sold under duress of Nazi persecution ([https://www.klassischearchaeologie.phil.fau.de/laufende\\_projekte/die-privatsammlung-georg-dehn-und-die-antikensammlung-erlangen/](https://www.klassischearchaeologie.phil.fau.de/laufende_projekte/die-privatsammlung-georg-dehn-und-die-antikensammlung-erlangen/)).

In my paper, I introduce the circumstances, results and consequences of this research, which grew out of my work on the third volume of Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum Erlangen.

I then outline a concept for a new themed walkthrough, to be developed together with students and using digital tools, through the existing permanent exhibition of the Antikensammlung which aims to allow visitors to explore the different kinds of provenance of its objects (including but not limited to the Dehn collection).

## **Griesbach, Jochen**

*Jochen Griesbach has studied Classical Archaeology, Latin and Media Sciences at the universities of Cologne, Bonn, Heidelberg and Berlin. His PhD (2006) examined the spatial relationship between Roman villas and burial grounds in the Suburbium of Rome while his habilitation treatise (2011) is about the topography of Hellenistic portrait statues. After two years of curatorship he became director of the Collection of Ancient Art (Würzburg University) in 2014.*

### **How can images on Greek vases 'speak' to us? Ancient pottery as a device of communication**

Rethinking the somewhat outworn concept of our permanent exhibition in the Collection of Ancient Art of Würzburg University I wonder what might be relevant to tell about Greek pottery to people who are not obsessed (as much as we archaeologists) by antiquity? For me the answer is imagery. The vast majority of images on ancient tableware – relatively simple in composition and extent – tried to entertain their viewers and was designed to stimulate communication. To demonstrate how these images learned to 'speak' can be helpful to anybody living today in surroundings of massive visual communication. Thus I am looking for best practice solutions to establish a narrative of the 'history of images' (ca 750 – 300 BC) and to transform the collection into a centre of hermeneutics open to all kind of audience.

## **Halbertsma, Ruurd Binnert**

*Ruurd Binnert Halbertsma (1958) studied Classical Languages, Ancient History and Classical Archaeology at Leiden University. He did archaeological fieldwork in Italy and led excursions to Greece, Turkey, Italy and Tunisia. During his studies, he became interested in the history of archaeological collecting in Europe and the specific role the Netherlands played in this respect. This interest resulted in his dissertation about the origin of the 19th century collections of Punic, Etruscan and Egyptian art in the Netherlands: "Le solitaire des ruines - the archaeological journeys of Jean Emile Humbert (1771-1839) in the service of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Leiden, 1995)". He published articles and monographs, gave lectures on his field of interest at universities in Copenhagen, Paris, New Haven (Yale) and Cambridge (Harvard). He was responsible for the renovation of the classical galleries in the National Museum of Antiquities (2015) and exhibitions on subjects like the antiquities of Sigmund Freud, the island of Corfu, the city of Carthage and recently on Cyprus.*

*Besides his appointment as curator, Halbertsma was attached to the Faculty of Archaeology of Leiden University between 2010 and 2018 as Professor of Museum Studies and History of Archaeology. He now teaches classical archaeology at the Faculty of Humanities. In 2010 he was elected Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London.*

## **Dreaming of rhythmos – New galleries for old objects, anno 2015**

The Greek, Etruscan and Roman galleries of the National Museum of Antiquities were renovated in the course of the year 2015. As leading principles for this refurbishment two concepts were chosen, which have their origin in the world of classical antiquity. For the interior of the galleries the concept of 'rhythm' was selected, from the Greek word 'rhythmos'. According to the Greek philosopher Aristotle rhythmos is an essential part of a work of art, when the artist tries to make the observer enthusiast or moved. In the interior design of the galleries the concept of rhythm is found in the harmony of colours and light, surprising displays and moments of rest and contemplation.

The overall connecting concept is derived from the Latin verb *contexo*, which means to weave or to bind together. The concept of 'context' shows the interaction between the Greek, Etruscan and Roman cultures and their influence on other, non-western communities. In view of these aspects some new acquisitions were made and loans were obtained from different museums in the Netherlands. The combination of rhythm and context tries to offer the visitor a pleasant time in the museum, evoke feelings of enthusiasm and to engage in thinking about intercultural aspects of societies.

## **Hilditch, Jill**

*Jill Hilditch (University of Amsterdam) is a ceramic specialist working in the Aegean Bronze Age and focusing on broader questions of pottery production, technology transfer and the visualisation of technological dynamics. She has most recently worked with colleagues on the Tracing the Potter's Wheel Project (NWO-VIDI 2017-2022, ACASA-Archaeology, UvA), the Allard Pierson and ArcheoHotspots to explore the communication of ceramic technology to a wider audience.*

### **From presence to perception - communicating ceramic research within the museum space**

The visual impact of displays of Greek ceramics, either as individual objects or assemblages, have long provoked curiosity about what these objects are, who made them, who used them, providing a very material or tangible view onto people in the past. As specialists, these questions frame what we do and why we do it, most recently through systematic attempts to reconstruct production sequences, yet the results of our work within academic contexts often do not reach a wider audience of non-specialists. It is important then to maintain clear and strong connections between academic research and museum display, the main context in which non-specialists encounter Greek pottery, both within Greece and beyond.

New technologies are bringing new opportunities for non-specialist encounters with pottery, allowing broader narratives of technology, mobility and materiality to be accessed by more people than ever before. As Greek pottery specialists grapple with our responsibilities to present, narrate and educate, 3D visualisation and other digital technologies are facilitating non-specialists to share in and question the wider narratives that we create.

## **Hojtink, Mirjam**

*Mirjam Hoijtink is trained as an archaeologist, specialized in cultural historical approaches of museums and collections. She is responsible for the MA Museum Studies at Universiteit van Amsterdam.*

### **Restitution and the Public**

Seen from the perspective of an object, the transfer to a museum is a drastic event. Once created to serve various meanings and purposes in contexts of religion, spirituality, embellishment, power and daily practices; its biography becomes expanded side by side to the formation of knowledge and the production of cultural memory. Requests and claims for restitution of objects, dating back to the first decades of the establishment of these institutes in the era of Enlightenment and the formation of nations shortly after, have been intrinsically bounded up with the museum practice ever since. Hence, for many objects the museum is not undeniably the final station. Post-WWII international legislation processes on restitution, parallel to de-colonization all over the world, effectively changed ethics of museums and public opinion on acquisition, conservation and ownership. The production of cultural memory in and outside museums, here and in places of the object's origin, seem to motivate respectively both the claims for restitution and the struggle museums face to abandon their seemingly untouchable position as righteous owners. When it comes to restitution, museum audiences are informed by media, or via museum's websites, rather than in the museum exhibition narratives. Next to this, ethics of the actual restitution process haven't received much attention in the museological and public debate so far. By questioning current practices of restitution, this lecture aims to open up a discussion whether these contribute to the core of the matter: the reparation of injustice.



## **Lejsgaard Christensen, Julie**

*Julie Lejsgaard Christensen is a classical archaeologist, curator and PhD Fellow at Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek. She works with museum education, dissemination, and the relation between museums and contemporary society. Christensen is currently conducting a PhD project, exploring the relevance of antiquity collections for a contemporary and diverse museum audience. The project questions museums' canonical narratives of the past and investigates multifaceted approaches that embrace conflicts and tensions between past and present, museum and society.*

*Christensen's PhD project is funded by the Ny Carlsberg Foundation and realized in collaboration between Aarhus University and the Glyptotek.*

### **Renegotiating institutional canons and conventions. A museological perspective on museums and change**

The universal validity of antiquity's Grand Narratives can no longer be regarded as a given. This is evident from recent decades of museological thinking, calling for a self-reflexive and questioning museum praxis, and from current societal discourses on representation and inclusion in cultural heritage. Thus, antiquity museums seem to be facing the inevitable task of revising their narratives and making their representations of the past relevant, engaging, and inclusive to a contemporary and diverse museum audience. But why do these changes often seem to be incorporated so hesitantly into the concrete praxis of heritage institutions?

Drawing on a current research project at the New Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen, the paper will explore how institutional history, conventions and self-perception may impede revisions of narratives in exhibitions and mediation. Furthermore, participatory praxis will be discussed as a tool for challenging and re-thinking narratives in the antiquity collection. The paper aims to advance an understanding of the internal conditions shaping museums' curatorial and mediational praxis and to suggest the possibility of regarding tensions and contradictions between past and present as the museum's conceptual spine rather than inconvenient obstacles.

## **Meyer, Caspar**

*Caspar Meyer is Professor of Classical Archaeology and Material Culture at the Bard Graduate Center in New York. His research focuses on the cultural dynamics of craft production in the Aegean city states and among the mobile pastoralists of Eurasia. Another area of interest is the history of the instruments and media which archaeologists have developed to aid the transformation of artefacts into written explanations. He previously taught at Birkbeck, University of London, and held research fellowships at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles and the Centre Louis Gernet in Paris. He is editor of *W86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture*.*

### **Containers within containers: Vitrinized museum display as a cultural technique**

Anthropologists of the senses have long argued that the emergence of the modern museum as a space devoted to visual learning corresponds to broader shifts in how knowledge is defined and evaluated and whose knowledge is recognized as legitimate. In this account, the glass-fronted display cases that became standard in mid nineteenth century gallery interiors were designed less to protect the objects on display than to discipline the behaviour of the growing number of non-elite visitors who gained access to public collections. Building on previous discussions, this paper will embrace a more object-centered approach to explore display cases as mediatory devices that differentiate 'inside' from 'outside' and endow the resulting spatial articulations with cultural meaning. If all culture goes back to the introduction of distinctions, what cultural work is performed by museum casework? Focusing on the display of Greek vases in Euro-American collections, the discussion will argue that curatorial standards have evolved through a two-step displacement of values: from the embodied knowledge of potters and painters through the visual knowledge of archaeology to the probabilistic calculations risk in modern finance.

## **Nevin, Sonya**

*Sonya Nevin is an Affiliated Lecturer in Ancient History at the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education. She was formerly a lecturer at the University of Roehampton and at Birkbeck College, London, and she has worked and volunteered in a number of museums in the UK and Ireland. Her publications include *Military Leaders and Sacred Space in Classical Greek Warfare* (Bloomsbury, 2017), *The Idea of Marathon: Battle and Culture* (Bloomsbury, 2022), and *Teaching Ancient Greece: Lesson Plans, Animations, and Resources* (WUP, forthcoming 2023). With animator Steve K Simons, Sonya runs the Panoply Vase Animation Project ([www.panoply.org.uk](http://www.panoply.org.uk)) making animations based on real ancient artefacts. Their projects have included work for the UCD Classical Museum, the Ure Museum of Greek Archaeology, and for the Universities of Oxford, Warsaw, Fribourg, and Pennsylvania.*

### **It's Alive! Vase Animation, Bridging Museums and the Wider Community. The Panoply Vase Animation Project.**

Digital technology has offered new opportunities for exhibiting ancient Greek vases. The Panoply Vase Animation Project creates animations from the scenes decorating real ancient artefacts. Winged goddesses can now be seen flying, spearmen who were still now fight, and quiet lyres come to life and are heard. This paper, by the ancient historian within the Panoply partnership, explores the vase animations, their use in museum contexts, and how vase animation offers a bridge between museums and the wider community.

## **Nørskov, Vinnie**

*Vinnie Nørskov is Associate Professor of Classical Archaeology and Director of the Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology at Aarhus University. Her research focuses on the uses of the classical past, the reception of classical antiquity, and the history of classical scholarship with a special focus on the collecting of and modern trade in Greek painted pottery.*

### **To show or not to show – the question of provenance in exhibitions of Greek vases**

The history of the study and exhibitions of Greek painted pottery is a story of images and the production of vases in Archaic and Classical Athens. Rarely do museums outside of Italy frame their exhibitions around the fact that most vases are found in tombs in Italy – if we know about their find spots. They might include the story of the collecting, especially when it involves a king, like in Copenhagen at the National Museum where the collecting history is framing the narrative of the to-be-king Christian VIII as part of the European intellectual elite. Thus, provenance as collecting history is a concept that has been employed as part of European museums' DNA as enlightening institutions based on intellectual 'heroes' that explored and saved antiquities from the unknowledgeable indigenous populations of the Mediterranean countries. However, the concept of provenance is much more complex today and the paper will explore the concept and the discussions around it as well as different approaches by museums to include provenance in exhibitions.

## **Osborne, Robin**

*Robin Osborne is Professor of Ancient History at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of King's College Cambridge. His work has ranged widely over Greek history and Classical Archaeology. His most recent monograph is *The Transformation of Athens: Painted Pottery and the Creation of Classical Greece* (Princeton, 2018). His *Athens and Attica* in the *Oxford History of the Archaic Greek World* series edited by Paul Cartledge and Paul Christesen will be published in 2023.*

### **Reflections on the display case**

When Classical Archaeology primarily told the story of stylistic change over time, it was easy for the display of Greek vases in museum showcases to replicate and illustrate that story, so that students could see what they had been told in lectures played out in the museum, and museum visitors found their viewing experience replicated in the books they bought in the museum shop as they exited. That has long ceased to be how museums display their Greek pottery, but the last generation's preference for using painted pottery to illustrate aspects of Greek life arguably only removed the pot in the showcase further from the pot at the party. As 'experiential' archaeology has acquired a more important place on the scholarly agenda, the challenge to the museum has only grown greater. If one cannot allow museum visitors to drink from the cups they see before them, how can they properly appreciate what it is they are looking at? This short paper explores some of the ways visitors might come to see something other than just themselves reflected in the showcase glass.

## **Saunders, David**

*David Saunders is Associate Curator of Antiquities at the J. Paul Getty Museum. He obtained his doctorate in Classical Archaeology from Oxford University in 2006, and his research interests include Greek and South Italian vase-painting, ancient bronzes and the history of collecting and restoring antiquities. Since joining the museum in 2008, he has curated eight exhibitions, and is currently working on a project that brings together Maya, Moche, and Greek figure-decorated pottery. He is co-editor of *The Restoration of Ancient Bronzes: Naples and Beyond* (2013); *Dangerous Perfection: Ancient Funerary Vases from Southern Italy* (2016); *Collecting and Collectors from Antiquity to Modernity* (2018), and editor of *Underworld: Imagining the Afterlife in Ancient South Italian Vase-Painting* (2021).*

### **Picture-Worlds: Developing an Exhibition on Maya, Moche, and Greek Painted Pottery**

Though separate in both space and time, the ancient Maya (Late Classic, 600-900 A.D.), Moche (300-850 A.D.), and Greeks (Archaic and Classical, 600-400 B.C.) are renowned for their production of figure-decorated pottery. The vessels provide a rich source for examining how these different peoples visualized their societies, myths, and cosmos, and I am currently co-organizing an exhibition that explores narrative imagery as encountered across the three fabrics.

While comparisons between Maya, Moche, and Greek painted pottery have occasionally been drawn, to date no large-scale museum display has set the three side-by-side. Not only were the pots produced in distinct and unrelated contexts, but the differences among the three societies' political structures, belief systems, and ritual practices, as well as their modern histories of discovery and scholarship, pose substantial obstacles to the juxtaposition of their pottery. Indeed, there is a risk that such an enterprise may only reinforce traditional assumptions about, for example, the relationship of images and texts.

In outlining the development of this exhibition, we argue that a way forward is to ask what social practices these pots enabled. Who was using or looking at these vessels, and in what settings? How did complex figurative imagery on vessels made for feasting, drinking, or ritual purposes function in each of these societies? And why was painted pottery so effective a medium? By asking these questions, the exhibition seeks to engender a collaborative exchange of methodologies among scholars, and a fresh approach for museum visitors.

## **Turner, Olivia & Sally Waite**

*Olivia Turner is an artist-researcher based at Newcastle University. She is currently working as an Associate Lecturer and Postdoctoral Practice-led Researcher based in the Fine Art Department. She is leading creative practice within the Newcastle Network for Medical Humanities. She recently successfully completed her creative practice-led PhD, recipient of the Research Excellence Academy Studentship: Between Doctor, Patient and Cadaver: The Slippages of the Visceral Body in Medicine.*

*Sally Waite is a Senior Lecturer in Greek Art and Archaeology at Newcastle University. She has worked extensively with the Shefton Collection of Greek and Etruscan Art and Archaeology in the Great North Museum, and is co-editor of On the Fascination of Objects: Greek and Etruscan Art in the Shefton Collection (2016). Her research focuses on the iconography on Athenian red-figure pottery, particularly in relation to questions of gender. She is co-editor of Shoes, Slippers and Sandals: Feet and Footwear in Classical Antiquity (2019) and is currently Principal Investigator on an AHRC-funded project 'Shining a Light on Women and Children in Antiquity'.*

### **You Echo through Time: Reimagining the Display of Athenian Painted Pottery through Lived Experience**

Newcastle University's Shefton Collection of Greek Art and Archaeology, now housed in the Great North Museum, contains some significant examples of Athenian red-figure pottery. The display is thematic with very little interpretation and the pottery is interspersed with terracottas, metal work and coins. In recent years we have been working, through a series of interdisciplinary gallery interventions, to make the Collection more relevant and accessible to museum visitors allowing for a multiplicity of narratives. In this paper we will focus on a recent exhibition You Echo through Time (2022) which was co-produced through a series of workshops with intergenerational groups of women and non-binary people. This display combined painted pottery with Natural Science Collections to shine a light on women in Antiquity through the lived experience of the workshop participants. The aim was to reanimate the pot's imagery through film, sound and writing to give voice to women in Antiquity and challenge the ways in which the bodies and voices of women have been silenced throughout history.

## **Alexandra Villing**

*Alexandra Villing (MPhil 1992, DPhil 1997, Oxford University) is a curator of the Greek collections in the British Museum's Department of Greece and Rome, with special responsibility for the Greek pottery collection. Her research centres on the interaction between Greece and neighbouring cultures in the first millennium BC, the study of material culture as evidence for ancient practice, the archaeology and iconography of Greek religion, the history of research and the application of scientific methods in archaeology. She has excavated in Turkey (Miletos, Knidos) and directs a major research and fieldwork project on the Egyptian-Greek trading port of Naukratis in the Nile Delta. For the Museum she has (co-)curated exhibitions on 'Fantastic Creatures' (2011/12) and 'Troy: Myth and Reality' (2019/20). Her publications include Classical Athens (2005), Naukratis: Greeks in Egypt (2013–ongoing), and the co-edited volumes Athena in the Classical World (2001) and Ceramics, Cuisine and Culture (2015).*

### **New life in old pots: engaging visitors with Greek pots in the British Museum**

The British Museum's large collection of Greek pottery has been a central element of its galleries from its foundation. How to integrate Greek 'vases' into new narratives is one of the questions curators face as the museum prepares to redisplay its entire collection. Special exhibitions and research projects are two of the avenues that help us explore new ideas and shape future displays. I will highlight two relevant case studies.

One is a recent special exhibition on the myth and archaeology of Troy at the British Museum, which provided an opportunity to explore new, imaginative ways of engaging visitors with the myths represented on Greek pottery. Digital technology and the use of sound and words were used to create an emotional, sensory experience that tried to make the imagery on the vessels accessible also to visitors with no or little knowledge of Greek myth. The other is ongoing research on the Museum's pottery collection using organic residue and use-wear analyses. Understanding the utilitarian role of vessels shifts the focus from pots as carriers of images to their role as functional objects in social and cultural practice, including re-uses and the vessels' post-excavation history.

The presentation will detail our approaches and experiences to date and ponder the challenges of utilising insights from special exhibitions and research into permanent displays.



## **Saskia Wetzig**

*Saskia Wetzig is a classical archaeologist. She has worked at the sculpture collection of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden since 2006. She studied classical archaeology, art history, and ancient history at the Universität Leipzig; her master's thesis was titled "Der Musenzyklus aus dem Odeion der Villa Hadriana" (The Cycle of the Muses from the Odeon at Hadrian's Villa). Exhibitions cocurated und curated for the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden include *Verwandelte Götter in Madrid* (2008) and *Dresden* (2009); *Von Schönheit und Größe. Römische Porträts und ihre barocke Aneignung* (2016); *Götter des Olymp in Potsdam* (2018/19) and most recently *Reise ins Jenseits - Ägyptische Grabkunst aus der Skulpturensammlung* (until 16 April 2023). A recent focus of her curatorial work was the reorganization of the collection of antiquities at the Semper Gallery in the beginning of 2020. Her research interests include the history and reception of the Dresden collection of antiquities.*

## **„Das Wunderbare in der Kunst und Art der Alten“ – 300 years of collecting ancient Greek vases in Dresden**

With the splendid reopening of the Semper Gallery in the beginning of 2020, Dresden's famous collection of antiquities, the "Antikensammlung", has finally found a permanent exhibition venue in the heart of the city. The ground floor of the eastern side wing now houses about 200 works of ancient art. Among them, around 30 Greek ceramics are exhibited dating from the 10th to the 4th century BC.

However, the Dresden vase collection comprises a total of about 2,000 objects, and with 1.5 % only a tiny fraction of the vases is on display, the entire scope, range and significance of the collection is not adequately represented in the permanent exhibition. For this reason, a special exhibition planned for 2023/24 will deal with the approximately 300-year history of collecting and researching ancient vases in Dresden. The focus will be on the significance attached to the vases by various collectors, connoisseurs and scholars in their so-called 'second Life', after the rediscovery of the vases. How can we vividly explain to a museum audience in the 21st century, why people have been dealing with ancient vases for 300 years, passionately collecting, researching and exhibiting them? And how can visitors best understand why these objects should be preserved for future generations to study and admire them? Questions like these will be explored in the exhibition project planned, using the Dresden ancient vase collection as a prime example due to its extraordinary quality, provenance, and significance.

## **Zimmermann, Nina**

*Dr. Nina Zimmermann-Elseify is curator of Greek Vases in the Antikensammlung der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin since 2017.*

*Previously she held posts at the Antikensammlung der Staatlichen Museen Kassel, the Educational Department of the Museum August Kestner in Hannover and as researcher at the Bavarian Academy of Science (Munich) for the Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum.*

*She published on Greek Pottery (including four CVA-Volumes as author and one as co-author), Terracottas, as well as Greek and Roman Sculpture. Her PhD from the Philipps-Universität Marburg focused on the relations between pottery and metalwork: „Beziehungen zwischen Ton- und Metallgefäßen spätklassischer und frühhellenistischer Zeit“ (Rahden/Westfalen 1998). She collaborated on the reorganisation of the permanent exhibition of the Antikensammlung Kassel in 2001. She also curated and co-curated several special exhibitions on various subjects of Greek cultural history, for example „Starke Typen. Griechische Porträts der Antike“ (2019/2020) and „Klangbilder. Musik im antiken Griechenland“ (2021/2022).*

### **Changing Contexts. The Display of Greek Vases in the Antikensammlung Berlin**

For more than one hundred years now the various exhibitions of Greek pottery in Berlin do not show the vases just as objects of art, but related to contexts – whose definition and narrative focus, however, is subject to change. The respective developments have always been determined by current, object-based research, didactic concepts corresponding to the needs and expectations of visitors and public and also by the available resources, technical solutions and architectural settings, which can be limiting factors.

According to an encyclopaedic, art historical approach, from the 1920es on Greek pottery was exhibited as a section of its own in contexts of chronology and topography. After WW II the vases were always integrated in general presentations of Greek culture using pottery as source of information for aspects of myth and life.

The current permanent exhibition of 2011 in the Altes Museum aims at a comprehensive overview of Greek culture by contextualising pottery with other categories of objects. To communicate archaeological research to a wider, international and increasingly diverse audience, a mixed approach was chosen with topographic and thematic contexts embedded in a chronological narration. Vases are integrated in the displays of various sections, highlighting selected aspects without neglecting their quality as 3D-objects or their aesthetic value.

But as multi-layered objects Greek vases have more stories to tell – and the collection is bigger than the available space in the galleries and the receptivity of the audience.

Therefore, the Antikensammlung uses changing special exhibitions to show vases of its stock in varying contexts and with new perspectives. The subjects of the special exhibitions arise from the ongoing, object-based research in the Antikensammlung and also negotiate issues of public interest and scholarly discussions. Pottery has always a different, but important role. By changing exhibitions we explore possibilities of presentation and ways of conveying information to the public.

We will use these experiences and temporary interventions in the permanent exhibition for the reconception of our whole presentation after the urging general renovation of the building. The planning process has just begun.