21/10/14

**Museums Association appoints Sharon Heal as new director**

David Anderson, President of the Museums Association and Director General of Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museums Wales, said:

“The Museums Association has achieved record membership this year; we have set our sights high for what we can achieve in the future. Our new director will bring exceptional energy and expertise to the Museums Association at a critical time when the sector faces huge challenges but also great opportunities.”

Sharon Heal will take up the post on 17th November 2014. She is currently Head of Publications and Events at the Museums Association. She has a background in journalism, publishing and event creation.

"I am delighted to take on this new challenge at the MA. I am deeply committed to the sector and believe in museums’ potential to change people’s lives. I have seen first-hand the impact that museums can have in terms of wellbeing, health, education and community cohesion. The MA will support museums across the UK to develop their work in this area.

"The MA has become more of a campaigning organisation over the past couple of years and this is crucial when many museums are facing a challenging funding environment. The MA will speak up on members’ behalf and make the case for a strong museum sector to government. To do this effectively we must also collaborate to find common cause with other sector bodies and government agencies and this will be my priority as we move forward.”

Sharon Ament, the Director of the Museum of London and a member of the recruitment panel, said:

“The MA is the single representative body for all museums in the UK, and times demand strong, innovative and positive leadership, which Sharon Heal will provide. Under her guidance the MA will seek out opportunities that will strengthen and reinforce the sector. It's a scary, difficult and potentially exciting time of extreme change - Sharon has the credentials and energy to meet those challenges head-on.”

-ENDS-

Notes

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* The appointment follows an extensive executive search across all sectors and interviews with a panel made up of MA board members, David Anderson, David Fleming, Sam Mullins as well as Sharon Ament, the director of the Museum of London.

About the Museums Association

* The MA is an independent membership organisation representing museums and galleries in the UK and the people who work for them. It has over 6,000 individual members and 600 institutional members. It was formed in 1889 and is a not-for-profit charity that seeks to inform, represent and develop museums and the people who work for them in order that they may provide a better service to society and the public.