PhD Research Showcase Speakers and Presentations

	Name	HEI	Bio	Title	Abstract
PhD Showcase Panel 1: Immersives and Collections, Sites, Archives					
PhD TALK 1	**Lynn Verschuren**	Glasgow	Lynn Verschuren is a PhD Candidate in Information Studies at the University of Glasgow. Working in collaboration with The Burrell Collection, Glasgow Museums, Lynn's research explores how immersive technologies may be used to enhance visitor engagement with late medieval devotional artefacts. She holds an MLitt in Medieval and Renaissance Studies (2015) and an MSc in Museum Studies (2016), both from the UofG. Lynn's research is supported by SGSAH's Applied Research Collaboration Studentships (ARCS).	Tears of Our Lady: Digital Engagement with Burrell's Late Medieval Collection	Late medieval devotional artefacts are inherently interactive, engaging both the body and the mind. The practice of museums, both within the UK and without, however, to present medieval objects as decontextualized objets d'art engenders an often irreconcilable distance between viewer and viewed, not just physically but above all emotively. In this presentation, I am exploring the potential of using immersive technologies in overcoming that distance, and fostering, instead, more lasting empathetic engagements with the medieval past. In doing so, I will be sharing insights into my own practice-based research that I am carrying out in collaboration with The Burrell Collection, Glasgow Museums, and in the process, will critically reflect on the challenges, opportunities and lessons learned along the way.
PhD TALK 2	**Alison Hadfield**	St Andrews	Alison Hadfield is a second-year doctoral researcher at the University of St Andrews (School of Classics and School of Psychology and Neuroscience), and the University of Glasgow (School of Information Studies). Her work, funded by SGSAH, employs interdisciplinary methods to examine how digital and sensory experiences of archaeology affect memory and wellbeing, particularly for people living with dementia.	Technology, Touch and Transmission – Object Handling in the Age of COVID	The rapid growth of digital media, including immersive technologies, has transformed access to heritage collections, offering dynamic, user-driven experiences. Although 3D digital models and virtual museums allow considerable control over navigation, perspective and scale, they present a predominantly visual narrative, diminishing the object's material, sensory and kinaesthetic properties (Eve, 2017). By contrast, an object handling session illustrates these features perfectly, sparking powerful emotional responses and recollections (Chatterjee 2010). Furthermore, memory research at the University of St Andrews has demonstrated significantly higher levels of recognition and recall after handling original artefacts, compared to viewing displays or 3D digital models (Sweetman, Hadfield and O'Connor, 2020). Multisensory stimulation in museums is particularly important for people living with dementia, improving cognitive processing and wellbeing. Dementia-friendly arts programming and reminiscence provide valuable peer support and prove that a dementia diagnosis need not precipitate withdrawal from activities that provide meaning and intellectual challenge. Until now archaeological collections have rarely been used as a stimulus (Paddon, 2013) and few studies have compared the impact of digital and physical approaches. This presentation highlights key evidence from heritage-in-health interventions and explores how the COVID-19 Pandemic has accelerated the 'wellbeing agenda' in museums and changed attitudes to technology and touch.
PhD TALK 3	**Basil Al-Rawi**	GSA	Basil Al-Rawi is a visual artist working with photography, moving image and simulation. He's in the 2nd year of his practice-based PhD at SimVis at GSA, funded through a GSA scholarship affiliated with SGSAH. His research explores the remediation of archives and narratives from Iraqi diaspora in VR.	Recomposing the Archive: remediating memories of Iraqi diaspora in Virtual Reality	This practice-led research adopts a participatory design approach to explore the creative remediation of archive photos and associated memories from Iraqi diaspora within Virtual Reality (VR). Collaborating with Iraqi diaspora in the UK, Europe, and beyond, primarily 1st generation Iraqis who have emigrated since the 1950s and their descendants, the researcher is curating an online archive of personal photographs and audio-visual accounts of memories surrounding those photographic moments. The Iraq Photo Archive (www.iraqphotoarchive.com) has gathered 104 images from 23 contributors, along with 6 oral history interviews to date. The methodology intends to give agency to Iraqi diaspora to populate the archive with images of their choice and the opportunity narrate their individual stories. The VR experience utilises a digital reconstruction of a traditional Iraqi 'Shanasheel' house as the central virtual environment and as such incorporates an element of heritage preservation. This will be a figurative and virtual home for these photographs and memories, and aims to create a platform to convey the narratives of Iraqi diaspora to the wider community. This research also experiments with different methods of remediating photographs within VR, such as the reconstruction of photos as immersive 3D environments with voice-over narrations.
PhD TALK 4	**Florence Felsheim**	St Andrews	I am currently in the first year of my PhD, which I am pursuing at the University of St Andrews under the supervision of Prof. Rebecca Sweetman (Classics), Dr Andrea Brock (Classics) and Dr Alan Miller (Computer Science).	Cognition and Religion: the Mithraic Cult in Roman Gaul	My research involves creating VR reconstructions of mithraea - ancient temples to the god Mithras, whose cult was celebrated in the Roman empire between the 1st and 4th centuries CE. I am researching cultural variations of this cult in Roman Gaul in order to study how these variations affected the cognitive experiences of the cult. VR reconstructions are of prime importance to this research as they allow for detailed simulations of Mithraic spaces. The process itself of creating the reconstructions is an act of both researching and archiving: it requires precise measures, detailed layouts, and meticulous data gathering. Therefore, this project is directly linked to the digital preservation of heritage sites.
PhD Showcase Panel 2: PhD Panel 2: Immersives and Sound, Space, Landscape					
PhD TALK 5	**Lise Olsen**	Aberdeen	Lise Olsen is a second-year Ph.D. Candidate at the department of music, University of Aberdeen. Since starting her research journey she's presented her work at many events/broadcasts, including Gwaith Sŵn's Sonic Dart, Resonance FM, 2021. Radiophrenia, 2020, Mind the Gap: Trinity College, Dublin 2019 and XR at Summerhall, Edinburgh, 2019	Immersive Soundscapes: Exploring the embodied experience of the in-between	The way we encounter reality has changed due to new media development and Immersive 3-D sound technologies. My presentation discusses theory and practice-based research to explore in-between experiences found when listening to immersive sound. The in-between has an ambiguous status, however, I consider it to be a dynamic space for creative possibilities. Examples discussed include; The Active Listening Project: This project explored immersive sound experiences for children and included sound workshops, soundwalking, and 360 sound/video. The project was delivered alongside the RSPB activities at Quarrymill in Perthshire. The Land that Forgot: An immersive soundscape for a play, written by Lesley Wilson. This ambisonic production explored an immersive experience for a live performance. The production toured in 2019, at Perth Theatre, Birnam Arts, Edinburgh's Summerhall, Aberfeldy's The Birks, and Perth's Civic Hall. The Land Beyond Our Window: I am currently developing a radio production using qualitative research to explore ambiguity, strange events, and in-between feelings. Research methods include ambisonic field-recording, Zoom interviews, and 3-D sound production to explore sound and storytelling to emanate the sound of the pandemic. By defining the in-between experiences, I can reflect on how technologies are changing our concepts of space/time, discover non-linear narrative potential, and examine the inter-relationship embodiment has between the body and the technology.
PhD TALK 6	**Lizzie Robertson**	Glasgow	I am currently in the 1st year of my PhD research in the Archaeology department at the University of Glasgow creating landscape-scale immersive sounds experiences, with Glencoe as one of my case studies. This research is funded by the Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities.	Recreating sound and place in Scottish Highland landscapes	Through immersive, interactive audio soundscapes, my research is about to creating new forms of interaction with Scottish Highland landscapes through their archaeological, historical, environmental and geological dimensions, and how this differs to representations that primarily rely on visual stimuli. As part of this practice-based research I will seek to explore the ways in which creative audio experiences, experiments and acoustic reconstructions can engage audiences with the past in emotional, meaningful ways. These immersive experiences, resting somewhere between AR and XR, can show how such technology can augment audience's experience of cultural heritage landscapes, and how immersive audio can play with the lack of visual presence versus sonic presence when it comes to interpreting such landscapes. These contemporary digital interventions will promote more nuanced interpretations of highland life that have often been subject to romantic stereotypes and a
PhD TALK 7	**Shona Noble**	GSA	Shona Noble is in her first year of study of a GSA scholarship-funded PhD at the Glasgow School of Art. She is interested in mapping cultural data and using digital technologies to explore the relationship between intangible heritage and the landscape, and how this relates to creative and rural economies.	The Digital Otherworld	This PhD research project transcends the boundaries of the physical and digital as well as the human and the 'other'. It explores the ways in which non-digital forms of heritage can be creatively rendered using digital technologies and support the dissemination of contextually situated content. With the specific focus of mapping folklore to the landscape, can these technologies enable more people to meaningfully engage with and reconsider their experience of folklore in the landscape? In the context of heritage visualisation, can the digital realm be thought of as a medium for revealing the hidden layers of information and meaning in the landscape? Is there a way of working with the technologies that is inclusive and beneficial to all? Can the use of digital technologies in this context enable more ethical tourist economies and sustain creative economies, locally? This project will critically reflect on the use of digital technologies in not only becoming a new access point for folkloric content, but assess its ability to support the potential genesis of new folklore and encourage its use in support of local economies. Ultimately, it seeks to reframe the heritage of place so that it is outward looking, and the stories are told by the communities themselves, in ways they choose to tell them.
PhD TALK 8	**Marly Muudeni Samuel**	GSA	Marly Muudeni Samuel is a first-year Ph.D. candidate at the Glasgow School of Art, School of Simulation and Visualisation. Her PhD is funded by the UK Global Challenges Research Fund through the One Ocean Hub, a five-year collaborative research programme aiming to integrate ocean governance for equitable and inclusive sustainability	The intersection of technology and ocean cultural heritage: A Namibian case study	My research explores ocean communities in Namibian coastal towns that are part of a social ecological system and have long-standing cultural links and emotional connections with the ocean. Nonetheless, there is unrealised potential to benefit and learn from heritage and emotional connections with the ocean for sustainability and to enable livelihoods and enhance communities through knowledge preservation and ocean literacy. The research examines ocean cultural heritage, integrates local communities' knowledge, and improves digital cultural heritage and knowledge preservation through extended reality (ER) technologies. It uses research through design and transdisciplinary research as overarching methodologies coupled with participatory design and community-based co-design methods. These methods will help reveal cultural heritage, beliefs, ocean knowledge, and emotional connections between people and the ocean, working towards examining how technology can empower and be a positive disrupter in documenting and preserving ocean knowledge and heritage. The research postulates that by utilising extended reality technologies, ocean cultural heritage and knowledge can be documented and preserved in a fun technique that complements ocean literacy and provides new avenues for ocean benefits and sustainability and allows stakeholders to learn and experience ocean knowledge and cultural heritage.