

The Mindful Museum of Me...

An extra special warm Hello from the Horniman Museum and Gardens, South London and Maudsley NHS Trust Recovery College and Ldn Dares Drama Co.

During these unchartered times there can be pressure to 'do things'. Not everyone has the privilege of turning a pandemic into something fun or productive. There may well be days when following this activity is the last thing you want to do and that's totally fine. For when the mood takes you, we're here for you and this activity is to help turn your home into a new space for you, a sanctuary and even a surprising space.

Your home is also a museum, a collection of objects that show how you live. There will be everyday objects that show the practical ways you live your life, objects that show your likes and interests, objects that show memories and hold great meaning. If a curator from the distant future time-travelled back and walked into your home and studied the objects – they could paint a pretty good picture of who you are and how you live your life.

We all have connections to objects.

The Horniman Museum is filled with objects that tell us how people all over the world live their lives, and you, and I, and your neighbours, and people all over the country are no different!

So, it's a good time to relax, find a quiet moment and explore **'The Mindful Museum of Me'!**



Here is your guided tour of The Mindful Museum of Me...

Step 1



Setting the scene

This is all about clearing your mind and focussing on your own mindfulness

- ❖ Turn off the news and the TV or radio. Put your phone aside – this is your time.
- ❖ Get dressed mindfully, pick an outfit that makes you feel good, think about everything you're doing while getting dressed – the materials, the textures.
- ❖ Have a nice spot of breakfast, eat mindfully – really think about the presentation of the food, think about the flavours and textures as you eat slowly. Focus completely on the food in front of you.
- ❖ Play the expert: you know everything about the history of the fork, go!
- ❖ Have a cup of tea or a drink of water, find a comfortable place to sit and take a few deep breaths while looking around the space around you.
- ❖ Grab a piece of paper and pen, give yourself a timer of 1 minute. Now free scribble, doodle, draw, anything that comes to mind. Free your mind. Hold up your piece of paper, you have the first object for your museum. Name it 'Quarantine Scribbles by ...' .
- ❖ Get settled in and then we're ready to go!

Step 2

It's time to see this very familiar space with fresh eyes

Become a tour guide

- ❖ Stand up, close your eyes and take three deep breaths. Do a body scan, from your head right down to your toes. Feel your feet on the floor and be present in the space you're about to explore. When you open your eyes you will be the Tour Guide of this new 'Museum of Me'.
- ❖ Walk around your home *really* slowly and carefully. Take in each wall, floor, ceiling and piece of furniture. When you get to a part of the room you rarely stand in stop and look at the room from this new angle. If you were working as a Tour Guide what would you pick out to tell people about? What story would that object tell?

Step 3



Explore the Objects

- ❖ Find your comfy spot again and sit down looking around the room again.
- ❖ Close your eyes and point in any direction. Open your eyes and ask yourself about what you see in front of you. I see... I notice... I wonder...
For example: I see a vase, I notice it reflects the light against the wall, I wonder what times of day this happens and the different reflections it makes.
- ❖ Try this a few times to get connected to objects in the room.
- ❖ When you find an object that particularly interests you pick it up and hold it in your hands, or bring it over to where you are sitting if it's too big to hold. We're going to explore further! Discover more about the object just like a curator would. Some questions you could ask yourself are to the right. →
- ❖ Repeat this a few times and start to gather these key objects. If there's something you discovered that you really liked – write it down on a label for the object.
- ❖ Place them together – is there anything these objects have in common?

This is a museum of you, what would you call it?
You could make a banner for this exhibition

**Here are just some questions you could ask of the objects
(I'm sure you could think of even more!)**

- What colour is it?
- What is it made of?
- Is it heavy or light?
- Does it feel hard or soft, rough or smooth?
- Does it feel warm or cold?
- Does it feel fragile or strong?
- Does it make a noise?
- Has it been repaired, altered or improved?
- How old is it?
- Does it smell of anything?
- Is it made from one material or many?
- Is it a natural object or has it been made by someone?
- Is it made from natural or man-made materials?
- Who made it?
- Has it been made by lots of people or just one?
- Why did the maker choose these materials?
- How has it been made? By hand or machine?
- How has it been joined together – glue, solder, string?
- Is it made from recycled materials? If so, what was it before?
- Where in the world is it from? How did it get to you?
- What is the object's purpose?
- Has its use changed over time?
- Have you seen something like this anywhere else?
- Is it well used?
- Do you like the way it looks? Do you like the way it feels?
- Do you think the person who made it tried to make it look beautiful?
- Do the decorations or colours mean anything?
- Do you know when the first one of these was invented/made?
- What sentimental value does it have to you?
- Does it remind you of anything/ anyone?

Step 4

Missing something?

Is there something you would want to add to this collection?

- ❖ You could find inspiration from the Horniman collections: <https://www.horniman.ac.uk/explore-the-collections/> have a look through what we have and recreate your favourite pieces with a little arts and crafts magic! (a mask out of papier-mâché? A musical instrument out of kitchen equipment? Sketch one of the animals from the animal walk?).
- ❖ Let's give your museum the glitz and glam it deserves, how about making some bunting out of old newspaper for the grand opening?

Step 5



Now enjoy your museum!

- ❖ Admire your handiwork. This is You. Close your eyes and sit comfortably, perhaps put on some calming music, breathing in and out to count of 2. Squeeze muscles for 5 secs & relax (repeat).
- ❖ Look around at your museum and the space you've discovered anew.
- ❖ If you got inspired by your own museum collection, there's plenty of surprising stories and fun things to learn about our objects on the museum website – set yourself the challenge of learning something new about them.

Share your museum

- ❖ Call/ Text/ Message / Whatsapp your friends/ family with a happy memory that came up during the exercise.
- ❖ Photograph your exhibit & send it in to us. You could tweet us @HornimanMuseum

Feeling extra daring?

Push yourself out of your comfort zone from the comfort of your comfort zone with these DARES!

Dance like no one's watching

Because they're not!

Pull the curtains, turn on your favourite upbeat music and DANCE!

Put pen to paper

Write that novel! Or a poem, script, short story.

Timing your writing to do just a paragraph at a time can help – set yourself short challenges to complete.

Here are some prompts to get you started:

- ❖ Your 'Museum of YOU' comes to life
- ❖ Choose one of your objects and use this line to start: 'Having looked closer at the object they passed everyday they realised...'
- ❖ Write from the object's point of view... how does your 'fork' experience the world'? Can this make a great poem?
- ❖ Try it with an object that catches your eye from the Horniman collections.

Re-decorate

And we don't mean house DIY!

Can your bathroom become a spaceship? Or your living room a jungle?

What world does your 'museum of you' reside in? Think big!

Perhaps build a den to enjoy your museum from and house your new collection!

Body Image

Human beings experience objects through their bodies, whether it's the physical sensation of using something or transforming the body with clothing and decoration. The Horniman has many objects which celebrate the human body. While sometimes it's easy to feel self-doubt, let's celebrate our amazing bodies like countless humans have before us!

What are your favourite things about your body and why? How could you represent them in the Museum of You? We asked Dare's Ursula Joy to name 3 things she loves about hers:

- ❖ My tummy, I enjoy the squishiness feel of it and proudly enjoying my favourite foods
- ❖ My blue eyes, as they remind me of my father
- ❖ My fingers and finger nails. I enjoy painting the nails lots of different colours and wearing big rings. I recently cut my finger and watching it recover reminds me of my body's incredible ability to heal itself.

Dare to dress up

As staying in is the new going out why not dress up at home?

We challenge you to don your most fabulous or wildest look. What can you create? Can cardboard, material and rubber gloves make a costume? Do you have a frock hidden away at the back of your wardrobe that you haven't had the opportunity to wear in a while? Now's the time. If you feel like it, take a picture of you in your outfit whilst partaking in the household chores and add join in the global movement #DressUpBinsOut

Thanks for joining in and we hope you enjoyed creating The Mindful Museum of Me!

The inspiration to create this was students of SLaM Recovery College who created the Wellbeing Wander with us last year – you can find their work on the Horniman website. We've even added in some of their activities to try at home into this!

Also to explore the work that other groups and individuals have done on exploring objects have a look at our YouTube channel (youtube.com/user/Horniman) or our social media, where you can find other fun activities to take part in from your home – including arts and crafts activities using supplies you can find around the house. Share with us your homemade museums if you like.

Look after yourselves 😊