

For immediate release

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## **Dramatic installation of painted papyrus scrolls tells Londoners' life stories at the Horniman**

A dramatic new immersive exhibition featuring over 40 painted papyrus scrolls opens at the Horniman Museum and Gardens in south London this winter.

Every scroll tells a local life story through a series of painted symbols representing key chapters in the life of each contributing Londoner. Suspended from the ceiling, the scrolls float within a soundscape interspersed with the voices of their makers.

***From Birth till Death: Scrolled Life Stories*** can be seen from **Saturday 5 December 2020 to Sunday 14 March 2021** in the Horniman's contemporary arts space The Studio.

The exhibition places the life stories within larger questions about who we are today. The scrolls tell the stories of Londoners whose families have lived here for generations and recent arrivals seeking a better life. These are the everyday stories of resilience, joy and heartache that are at the centre of all our lives.

Visitors are invited to walk among the scrolls to learn about the lives of others, and to consider their own life stories and legacy by creating their own scrolls in a template provided, either in the exhibition space or at home.

***From Birth till Death: Scrolled Life Stories*** is the result of a collaborative social arts project partnership between the Horniman's Community Learning Team, artist R.M. Sánchez-Camus and select community partner organisations St Christopher's Hospice, Arts Network, Three Cs, and Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust's Health Inclusion Team.

**More**

The scrolls are a full timeline of a living person's life, from remembered past to imagined future. The work was created in collaboration with artists through participatory workshops where contributors to the project created a visual timeline, sketching out symbols for the main events in their lives and exploring how that story might be shared with a public audience.

R.M. Sánchez-Camus says: 'Bringing local community voices into a gallery exhibition is an important marker of validation for those who are often not seen or heard yet carry rich and important experiences we can all learn from. The Horniman has a rich collection of objects that tell the story of who we are as people on this earth and this exhibition contributes to that collection with the life stories of present-day Londoners.'

'Our personal collection of life stories make up the museum of self, continuously archived throughout our life. Each of us is a micro-museum, carrying the history and stories of the times we live in. And what better way to know ourselves than by understanding others.'

Julia Cort, the Horniman's Community Engagement Manager says: 'The Horniman is constantly looking for inclusive ways to bring more voices into museum spaces. ***From Birth till Death: Scrolled Life Stories*** tells engaging stories, honours people living locally and encourages new conversations.'

The project was supported with funding from the Arts Council's National Lottery Project Grants, the Horniman and St Christopher's Hospice.

***From Birth till Death: Scrolled Life Stories*** is on display at the Horniman from **Saturday 5 December 2020 to Sunday 14 March 2021**. Entry to the Horniman, and to ***From Birth till Death: Scrolled Life Stories***, is free, however visitors (including Members) need to pre-book a timed slot via the website [horniman.ac.uk](http://horniman.ac.uk) to enter the Museum. The Museum and the exhibition has a one-way system for safe distancing and there will be extra assistance for those who need more support, plus ways to interact digitally. Starting in January, the exhibition will also have participatory workshops held by community volunteers for members of the public. For more information, please see [horniman.ac.uk](http://horniman.ac.uk)

**Ends**

Horniman Press Office - Tel: 020 8291 8166 - [press@horniman.ac.uk](mailto:press@horniman.ac.uk)

**Pictured:** A scroll (detail) in *From Birth till Death: Scrolled Life Stories* – credit Horniman Museum and Gardens.

## Notes to Editors:

- For more information on **R.M. Sánchez-Camus** visit [www.appliedliveart.com](http://www.appliedliveart.com)
- For more information on **St Christopher's Hospice** visit [www.stchristophers.org.uk](http://www.stchristophers.org.uk)
- For more information on **Arts Network** visit [www.artsnetwork.org.uk/wp/](http://www.artsnetwork.org.uk/wp/)
- For more information on **Three Cs** visit [www.threecs.co.uk/](http://www.threecs.co.uk/)
- For more information on **Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust's Health Inclusion Team** visit [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/HealthInclusionTeam](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/HealthInclusionTeam)
- **Arts Council England** is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in Let's Create that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high quality cultural experiences. We invest public money from Government and The National Lottery to help support the sector and to deliver this vision. [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk). Following the Covid-19 crisis, the Arts Council developed a £160 million Emergency Response Package, with nearly 90% coming from the National Lottery, for organisations and individuals needing support. We are also one of several bodies administering the Government's Culture Recovery Fund and unprecedented support package of £1.57 billion for the culture and heritage sector. Find out more at [www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19)
- **Coronavirus restrictions and impact** – the Museum will reopen to the public on 3 December 2020, following its second lockdown closure. Social distancing and other safety measures will be in place, including a one-way visitor route, and visitors should wear face coverings unless they have good reason not to. **Visitors (including Members) need to pre-book at [horniman.ac.uk](http://horniman.ac.uk) for a free, timed entry slot.** The Horniman Gardens have been open throughout the pandemic and the Horniman is asking the public to adhere to [social distancing guidance](#) in the Gardens.
- **Opening times** – the Museum and Café are open from 10am to 5.30pm daily. Visits to the Museum are free but must be booked in advance at [horniman.ac.uk](http://horniman.ac.uk). The Gardens are open from 7.15am (Monday to Saturday) or 8am (Sunday and Bank Holidays) until dusk.
- **Every month the Horniman was closed cost around £150,000 in lost income** from ticket sales, memberships, the shop and café. In recent years, the Horniman has increasingly relied on this vital income to help care for the Gardens, fish and other animals, to run events and to look after the collections. The support of returning visitors, our supporters and their generous donations, are more needed than ever. [horniman.ac.uk/support-us/](http://horniman.ac.uk/support-us/)
- **The Horniman Museum and Gardens** opened in 1901 as a gift to the people in perpetuity from tea trader and philanthropist Frederick John Horniman, to 'bring the world to Forest Hill'. Today the Horniman has a collection of 350,000 objects, specimens and artefacts from around the world. Its galleries include natural history, music and an acclaimed aquarium. A new World Gallery of anthropology opened in June 2018 and a new arts space, The Studio, opened in October 2018. Indoor exhibits link to the award-winning display gardens – from medicinal and dye gardens to an interactive sound garden, Butterfly House and an animal walk – set among 16 acres of beautiful, green space offering spectacular views across London. [horniman.ac.uk](http://horniman.ac.uk)
- The Horniman Museum and Gardens is core-funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and since 1990 has been governed by an independent charitable trust, registered charity no. 802725. The Horniman Museum and Gardens also receives funding from Arts Council England as one of its National Portfolio Organisations.
- On 29 July 2019 the **Horniman Museum and Gardens declared an ecological and climate emergency**, pledging to place carbon reduction and environmental issues at the heart of its work. The declaration is both a consolidation of existing work and a commitment to renewed ambitions to reduce the Horniman's environmental and pollution footprint, increase biodiversity, and inspire others to do so. Find out more about the Horniman's specific commitments as part of the declaration at [horniman.ac.uk](http://horniman.ac.uk).
- **Access.** The Museum and the Gardens are both wheelchair and pushchair friendly with accessible toilets. Limited on-site parking is available for Blue Badge holders. [horniman.ac.uk/visit/disability-and-access](http://horniman.ac.uk/visit/disability-and-access).
- **Travel.** The Horniman is situated at 100 London Road, Forest Hill, London SE23 3PQ on the South Circular Road (A205). It can be reached easily by train to Forest Hill station (London Overground/Southern, travel time approx. 15-20 minutes from east/central London or East Croydon) and by local buses (176, 185, 197, 356, P4).