

The recovery of the Kuwait National Museum, Kirsty Norman, UCL

Friday 18 November 2011 5.00-7.00pm

Kuwait National Museum's collections were removed by the Iraqi government during the invasion and occupation of Kuwait in 1990-1991, and it had been thought unlikely that they would be seen again. However, thanks to UN negotiations, the collections were located, and a team from Kuwait was able to go to Baghdad in late 1991—the first representatives of Kuwait to set foot on Iraqi soil since the invasion. The result was one of the most successful museum restitution projects since World War 2. The story looks at questions including:

- how, as a conservator, does one plan for a war situation and what that might bring?
- how does one handle a complex project to recover a collection?
- how and why do we put values on heritage? The loss of Kuwait's entire archaeological and ethnographic collections was almost entirely ignored by the world media, whereas the loss of the Islamic art collection gained world coverage.



Kirsty Norman trained and worked at the British Museum as an archaeological conservator, and then freelanced in Turkey and the Arabian Gulf, Iraq, Cyprus and Hong Kong, for excavation projects, museums, and Departments of Antiquities, and for UNESCO's Cultural Heritage Division. Her principal job for much of that time was as conservator to the national collection of Islamic art in Kuwait, Dar al Athar al Islamiyyah (also known as the Sabah Collection). She was a member of the UN's Return of Property (UNROP) unit in Baghdad in 1991, reclaiming the contents of Kuwait National Museum removed during the 1990 Iraqi invasion. She continued to take part in projects in the Gulf every year until 2004, when she took an MA in heritage management in London. She is now a Principal Consultant to the Centre for Applied Archaeology at UCL, and is currently working on management planning and cultural heritage projects in Kosovo, Turkmenistan and Abu Dhabi.

Time Talk 5.00pm—Drinks and finger food from 6.00 to 7.00

Location Talk in 6C35- Drinks in Donald Horne Institute for Cultural Heritage, 7C05 University of Canberra
Please refer to the map overleaf

RSVP please for catering purposes by Monday 15 November

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