



POTENTIAL COLLABORATION BETWEEN PORTOBELLO ROAD ANTIQUES MARKET AND THE V&A

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1 CONTEXT

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Blue Sail have been commissioned by Visit London to give marketing advice to London boroughs on specific projects. This is not a full-blown consultancy project: each project receives a short 'surgery' session and/or site visit with Blue Sail, followed by a brief 'first thoughts' report and action plan.

This report was instigated by Joanna Hammond, Town Centre Initiatives Manager for Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea (RBKC). It follows site visits by Blue Sail Consultant Michael Lough to the Victoria and Albert (V&A) Museum and Portobello Road Market; meetings with representatives from the V&A and Portobello antiques dealers; and a surgery session between Joanna Hammond and Michael Lough.

This report is in four sections:

1. Current position: analysis of Portobello antiques dealers, the V&A Museum and the potential target audiences for collaborative marketing activity
2. A SWOT summary for collaborative marketing activity
3. A proposed marketing strategy for the collaboration including ideas for tactical marketing activity
4. A prioritised action plan that RBKC and its partners can use to move the initiative forward

BLUE SAIL'S BRIEF

RBKC want to explore whether there are commercial opportunities for museums to collaborate with antiques markets and auction rooms – to increase local economic activity. At its simplest this equates to 'you've seen the museum collections ... now you can buy something similar'.

RBKC asked Blue Sail to take a first look at potential collaboration between the Portobello Road Antiques Market and the V&A Museum, and to produce an initial set of ideas that would stimulate future discussions between all the parties.

2 CURRENT POSITION

PORTOBELLO ANTIQUES DEALERS

The Saturday market along Portobello Road – which comprises both street traders and specialist antiques dealers - is one of the most visited attractions in London. RBKC estimates more than a million people visit Portobello Road every year and there are more than 90k worldwide Google searches for the term 'Portobello market' every month (50k of those are outside of the UK).

Portobello antiques market claims to be the world's largest, with more than 1000 different dealers.

The antiques dealers have a wealth of knowledge and experience. Some have an international reputation. Pieces for many important collections have been sourced through antiques dealers on Portobello Road.

The antiques market takes place on Saturdays only in a number of different halls and arcades, which are currently vulnerable to the threat of commercial development.

Marketing and promotion for the antiques market is primarily delivered by PADA (Portobello Antiques Dealers Association). There is a website and promotional leaflet but the presentation is slightly old-fashioned and would benefit from a redesign. Individual dealers undertake their own marketing but generally the marketing approach is piece-meal and lacks a consistent message or identity.

There is very little street signage along Portobello Road (RBKC policy) to identify the antiques markets and direct the visitor.



Customers to the antiques market are distinctly different from more general visitors to Portobello Road. The general visitor to Portobello Road tends to be a 'sightseeing tourist' keen to visit Portobello as one of the things to do during their visit to London. They rarely buy antiques.

The lack of clear distinction between the authentic antiques dealers and standard stall holders along Portobello Road means that some sightseeing tourists feel let down by the offer, as they perceive street traders to be the antique dealers (see Trip Advisor reviews on Visit London website).

THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

Visit London lists the V&A museum as the 9th most popular visitor attraction in the capital.

The museum markets itself as the greatest museum of art and design in the world. Its diverse collections include traditional art and sculpture as well as jewellery, textiles and fashion.

The V&A is very protective of its brand; they keep a tight control on how it is used and where it is used. The V&A do undertake partnership branding activity such as window displays in shops, or branded giveaways, but these are tightly controlled and managed by the V&A.

Marketing objectives for the V&A are focused on increasing both visitor numbers and visitor spend. Types of tactical marketing activity include advertising; print; direct mail; sales promotion and brand partnerships; website and digital media; and public relations.

“Be inspired” is a key theme for its marketing campaigns.

Education is a core objective. The institution runs a comprehensive programme of seminars, conferences, talks and tutorials. V&A conferences offer an opportunity for academics, professionals, researchers and others to share the results of recent research and discuss topical issues relating to V&A collections.

The V&A also run symposiums that explore the relationship between design and other aspects of culture. Invited speakers include academics, writers, visual arts practitioners and specialists from other fields.

THE MARKET FOR COLLECTING ANTIQUES

Antiques collecting has become a mainstream and popular past time. According to the BBC, the UK antiques market is worth an estimated £2.2 billion, with over 750 auction houses and approximately 9,500 dealers across the country.

Television shows such as Antiques Roadshow, Bargain Hunt, Cash in the Attic and Flog It! attract millions of viewers every week.

Google reports that every month there are 37 million searches for the keyword ‘antiques’ (7.5 million of these are in the UK).

Antiques professionals such as Judith Miller, John Bly and David Battie have become household names; almost as popular as Britain’s celebrity chefs and gardeners. Their personalities have helped to popularise the world of antiques and encourage more people to start their own collection.

Unlike other sectors that rely on discretionary spend, the art and antiques market remains buoyant despite tough economic conditions. The quarterly arts and antiques survey produced by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors reports that for the first quarter of 2010 there were price increases (year on year) across 10 of the 11 categories. Silver and jewellery were the best performers as values increased in line with precious metal prices.

POTENTIAL TARGET AUDIENCES FOR COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITY

There is likely to be a very distinctive type of customer who will respond to collaborative marketing activity between the V&A Museum and Portobello Road Antiques Market.

This customer is neither the typical 'sightseeing' tourist to Portobello Road or the V&A; nor are they experienced antiques collectors. Sightseeing tourists and experienced antique collectors audiences are either already engaged or have their own sources of information.

We suggest there are at least two potential niche market segments who could respond positively to collaborative marketing activity and would be worth researching further:

1. Interested amateurs
2. Students of art and design

Interested amateurs

This target segment has a keen interest and understanding in the history of art and design and is interested in the idea of collecting. They will be highly receptive to direct assistance on how to begin a collection of antiques.

The majority of this segment is likely to be UK-based, with many living outside London but prepared to travel specifically to the attractions to pursue their passion / interest in antiques collection. Further research is required to measure the size and location of this market.

They are likely to be in the Arts Council England's 'Traditional Culture Vulture' audience segment¹. Characteristics of this segment include:

- ▶ Typically older – two thirds aged 45–74 – living with a partner and without any children in the household the majority report good health
- ▶ Almost exclusively from a white ethnic background
- ▶ Highly educated, with two thirds holding higher educational qualifications
- ▶ Typically affluent owner-occupiers who work/last worked in managerial or professional jobs
- ▶ Highly engaged in the arts
- ▶ Their interest in the arts extends into their hobbies
- ▶ The majority read newspapers every day; the papers they typically read include The Sunday Times, The Sunday Times Magazine, Daily Mail and Daily Mail (Saturday) – also users of the internet

¹ Arts Council England has carried out very detailed market research into the different audience segments for the arts in the UK. For more information see 'Arts audiences:insight', www.artscouncil.org.uk

Students of Art and Design

This audience will have an academic interest in art, design and antiques. They will either be currently in formal study or have recently left it. Their understanding and knowledge of art and design will be at a higher level than *Interested Amateurs* and they will have a clear view of what they like and what they don't. This audience would welcome any opportunity to get closer to and handle the subjects they have greatest interest in.

Due to the value of the V&A collections, people are not permitted to handle the objects. This has created some tension with design students. A recent report carried out by the V&A concluded that "the design world needs to apprehend objects from multiple perspectives and, in particular, hands on. To offer an object in a glass case is tantamount to tying their hands."²

The majority of this segment is likely to be based in the UK but given the global profile of the V&A and Portobello Road there is also potential for an international audience. Further research is required to measure the size and location of this market.

From our own understanding of the market as well as research carried out by the V&A Museum³ this segment:

- ▶ Will include first time and mature students, but typically younger - between 17 and 35 years – no children
- ▶ Greater ethnic diversity than national average
- ▶ Not a great deal of money to spend, but will be prepared to spend on art and design that perpetuates the image they want to create
- ▶ Want to carve out their own unique niche in the design world
- ▶ Receptive to Portobello's bohemian / art-based reputation but will shun its more popularist image
- ▶ Ambivalent towards institutions (including the V&A) and are taught to question orthodoxy
- ▶ Will engage with the V&A and other collections for ideas and inspiration; researching for special projects papers and dissertations; designing and creating objects from materials
- ▶ Will read the arts press; Time Out, the Guardian, Frieze, the Observer – will also be heavy users of the internet communicating and networking via social media

This segment broadly sits within the 'Millennials' generation (born 1980 – 2000) and in general terms this generation is best described as confident, connected and open to change⁴. It is important that marketing activity targeting this audience reflects this.

² How do HE Tutors and Students use Museum Collections in Design? Qualitative Research for The Centre of Excellence Through Teaching and Learning in Design, January 2007

³ How do HE Tutors and Students use Museum Collections in Design? V&A Museum, January 2007

⁴ Pew Research Center, 2010

3 SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Portobello Road (as a visitor destination) and the V&A are both very strong brands with world-wide recognition ▶ Both attract large numbers of visitors throughout the year ▶ Good alignment between V&A collections and antiques for sale on Portobello Road ▶ RBKC are a proactive council, who are prepared to support collaboration ▶ The V&A already has an established education programme ▶ Both attractions offer free entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The brand image of Portobello Antiques lacks clarity ▶ Portobello Road antiques market is only open on Saturdays ▶ Antiques arcades are poorly sign-posted ▶ Considerable distance between the two destinations
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There is a huge public interest in antiques ▶ Portobello Antiques Dealers can provide the 'handling experience' for students that the V&A cannot ▶ Opportunity to generate higher levels of spend from existing customers to both attractions as well as attract a new audience ▶ The V&A's marketing theme of 'Be inspired' fits extremely well with encouraging people to become antiques collectors ▶ Over time collaborative activity will strengthen the Portobello Antiques brand ▶ Opportunity for the V&A to enhance the visitor experience and encourage repeat visits ▶ Large potential target markets with money to spend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Challenge to make the connection obvious between visiting a museum and buying antiques ▶ Potential closure of antiques markets ▶ Too many 'sightseeing tourists' to Portobello Market, limiting the antiques sale opportunity ▶ Some visitor confusion between street traders and antiques traders ▶ The V&A is a tightly controlled brand that may limit collaborative activity

4 MARKETING STRATEGY

STRATEGIC AIMS

It is important to set very clear aims for any collaborative activity. These will need to be discussed and agreed by all those involved. However as a starting point we suggest:

1. To encourage key target audiences visiting the V&A Museum to also visit Portobello Road Antiques Market and vice versa
2. To increase sales of Portobello Road Antiques among the key target audiences
3. To position the Portobello Road as the world's greatest antiques market
4. To use this exercise as an example of best practice to stimulate further collaborative activity between visitor attractions and businesses within the borough and beyond.

NB For collaborative marketing activity to be a success the Portobello Road Antiques Dealers need a strong and consistent 'brand' that they can sell to the V&A and to potential customers.

By brand we mean a clear statement of how Portobello Road Antiques Dealers want to be perceived by the two target audiences. A brand is something that target audiences attribute a value to; it must communicate attributes that are important and valuable to the audience it is targeting.

This needs to be developed through consultation with all stakeholders but as a starting point we would propose that the brand name is simplified to 'Portobello Antiques Market'.

We would also recommend that the brand is positioned separately from the more generic 'Portobello Road Market', which encompasses all types of street vendor.

TACTICAL ACTIVITY

We recommend the following tactical marketing activity to help deliver the strategic aims:

Portobello Antiques Market

- ▶ Brand development
- ▶ Friday opening
- ▶ Website and digital media
- ▶ Signage and interpretation
- ▶ Targeted PR activity

Collaborative Activity

- ▶ Collaborative research
- ▶ Talks and lectures at the V&A
- ▶ Handling sessions for students
- ▶ Antique Starter Pack
- ▶ Website links
- ▶ Accredited antiques course
- ▶ Wider collaboration

Each tactic is described in more detail below, and priority actions identified in the Action Plan at the end of this report.

Portobello Antiques Market

Brand development

- ▶ As mentioned in the previous section, the Portobello Antiques Market requires a stronger and more consistent brand image before effective collaborative activity can take place
- ▶ With businesses and other stakeholders, develop and agree a set of 'brand values' and key messages for Portobello Antiques Market that can be used in all joint marketing communications activity – and that partners will use in their own marketing
- ▶ The brand needs to position itself separately from the generic Portobello Road Street Market
- ▶ Commission a visual brand identity (and style guidelines) that reflects the Portobello Antiques Market brand and can be used for joint marketing alongside the V&A

Friday opening

- ▶ Continue to explore the potential for opening the Portobello Antiques Market on an additional day; perhaps starting with every other Friday.
- ▶ This would help to distinguish the Antiques Market from other street vendors along Portobello Road and increases the collaborative opportunities with the V&A and other museums
- ▶ The additional day should attract a higher proportion of visitors interested in buying and studying antiques, and allow dealers to spend more time talking to potential buyers
- ▶ Specific marketing activity would be needed to raise awareness of the extra day and recruit the right type of visitors
- ▶ NB. This recommendation is based on our initial evaluation of the potential commercial opportunities for Portobello Antiques Market – there may be other factors (legal or political) that might prevent extending opening hours

Website and digital media

- ▶ A new website for Portobello Antiques Market that is contemporary, rich in content and helps reinforce the Portobello Antiques Market brand. This could either be a part of the larger RBKC tourism website or stand-alone
- ▶ The website needs to deliver high levels of information and content targeting the two target audiences. www.graysantiques.com is a good example of an antiques market promoting itself to different audiences and www.millersantiquesguide.com is an example of a site with good levels of content
- ▶ The website should profile individual antiques dealers, making them real people who are approachable, very knowledgeable and available to help. The 'Spitalfields Life' blog does this very well <http://spitalfieldslife.com/2010/08/05/spitalfields-antiques-market-18-2/>.
- ▶ The new site should also make a clear link with the V&A museum, promoting the institution and selling specific collaborative activities e.g. tours, talks and handling sessions
- ▶ Translate the website into different languages (as the existing PADA site does)
- ▶ To support the website, implement a proactive digital media campaign to drive traffic to the site and raise the online profile of Portobello Antiques Market. This could include: a Portobello Antiques Market blog; a regular visitor e-newsletter; update the Wikipedia page for Portobello Road to include specific information linking the Antiques Market to collections in the V&A Museum; Flickr account linked to the website for visitors to upload photographs of events and activities in the Antiques Market; introduce social bookmarking on the website; twitter feeds from individual buyers
- ▶ Tap into the digital marketing opportunities offered by Visit London

Signage and interpretation

- ▶ Clear directional signage to different arcades of the Antiques Market
- ▶ A simple, but well-presented printed map of the antiques arcades to be distributed through hotels, TIC around the country and other complementary businesses. Also available in different languages, as a pdf download from the new website
- ▶ This new map would complement the existing antiques guide and dealer listing

Targeted PR activity

- ▶ PR activity to help position Portobello Antiques Market, in the eyes of target audiences as the place to come to start your antiques collection
- ▶ Target mainstream antiques and arts publications, championing the individual dealers in press releases to highlight their expertise and encourage interested readers to make contact
- ▶ Tap into PR opportunities offered by Visit London

Collaborative Activity

Collaborative research

- ▶ Qualitative and quantitative research to test out the potential of the two target segments, and to define their location, size, profile, socio-demographic characteristics and behaviour
- ▶ The research will guide the communication messages of any planned collaborative activity as well as provide a valuable baseline to measure impact of specific tactics
- ▶ The research should also endeavour to capture as many email and postal addresses as possible
- ▶ The V&A has a large research resource who could potentially manage, deliver and report on the research

Talks and lectures at the V&A

- ▶ Develop an antiques themed series of talks and lectures within the existing V&A programme
- ▶ The series would target the 'Interested Amateurs' segment and directly relate artefacts from the V&A collection to antiques available for sale on Portobello Road
- ▶ It is important that the talks blend traditional history of art and design alongside more practical elements such as how to start an antiques collection and what to look out for when buying antiques
- ▶ Sell the talks programme to UK tour companies
- ▶ The talks would be hosted at the V&A and delivered by both representatives from the museum and relevant Portobello Road Antiques Dealers

Handling sessions for students

- ▶ Use antiques sourced from Portobello Road to deliver handling sessions to students
- ▶ Students (local and international) would have the opportunity of viewing and interpreting the collections alongside the opportunity of handling similar (but less valuable) examples. The aim of the sessions will be to improve the learning experience for students as well as encourage them to engage directly with the antique dealers in the future

Antiques Starter Pack

- ▶ Develop a joint branded 'Antiques Starter Pack' which includes basic information and assistance on starting an antiques collection
- ▶ Feature information and images from the V&A Museum highlighting the best examples of antique art and design, and guidelines on buying antiques. Target the 'Interested Amateurs' audience and act as the first step in their hobby of antiques collecting. It would make an excellent gift.
- ▶ It will encourage more visits to both the V&A Museum and Portobello Antiques Market. The strength of the two brands would make it a very attractive offer and there is nothing like this currently on the market.
- ▶ It could be produced in printed form (pocket-sized with additional space for owner's notes – sold in the V&A shop and online) and as a software application on the web and smart phones

Website links

- ▶ Consider a new section within the V&A website that deals specifically with the subject of antiques collecting – answering questions such as: why visit the V&A before you start your collection? where to look for antiques? how to spot / value antiques? etc
- ▶ Specific information could be provided by Portobello Antiques Dealers, with a link to the new Portobello Antiques Market website

Accredited antiques course

- ▶ Looking longer term, invest in the development of an accredited antiques course
- ▶ Written by the V&A and PADA the course would be delivered by a certified institution; see www.regentacademy.com for an example of a similar course. Students on the course would benefit from special access to the V&A collections as well as field study alongside antique dealers

Wider collaboration

- ▶ As the relationship develops explore wider collaboration and partnership branding opportunities. The Portobello Art and Design Market and the Museum of Brands are potential partners for wider marketing activity

5 ACTION PLAN

Action	Priority	Resource Implications	Next Steps
Portobello Antiques Market			
Brand development	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Budget would need to be agreed by antiques dealers and commercial property owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To be discussed at the Antiques Dealers meeting scheduled for October 2010
Friday opening	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ No specific resource required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To be discussed at the Antiques Dealers meeting scheduled for October 2010
Website and digital media	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Budget would need to be agreed by antiques dealers and commercial property owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To be discussed at the Antiques Dealers meeting scheduled for October 2010
Signage and interpretation	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would need to be delivered within the Council's Transport and Streetscape Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Wayfinding is a project that the Markets Development Officer is currently working on
Targeted PR activity	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Budget would need to be agreed by antiques dealers and commercial property owners ▶ Council already investing in visitor website for the borough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To be discussed at the Antiques Dealers meeting scheduled for October 2010 ▶ Ensure new visitor website for the RBKC highlights antiques traders
Collaborative Activity			
Collaborative research	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can be delivered as part of existing research gathering activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To be discussed at the Antiques Dealers meeting scheduled for October 2010 ▶ Approach the V&A in the new year
Talks and lecture at the V&A	high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can be delivered as part of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Discuss with V&A to schedule a collaborative talk / tour

Action	Priority	Resource Implications	Next Steps
		existing lecture programme	in the new year
Handling sessions for students	medium	▶ Staff resource from the V&A	▶ Place on hold until after the collaborative talk / tour with the V&A
Antique Starter Pack	medium	▶ Budget would need to be agreed by antiques dealers and commercial property owners	▶ Place on hold until after the collaborative talk / tour with the V&A
Website links	medium	▶ Staff resource provided by the Antiques Dealers	▶ Ensure new visitor website for the RBKC highlights antiques traders ▶ Wait for decision on whether to progress with new Portobello Antiques website
Accredited antiques course	low	▶ Budget would need to be agreed by antiques dealers and commercial property owners	▶ Long term plan – to be considered in the new year
Wider collaboration	low	▶ Staff resource provided by the Antiques Dealers	▶ Long term plan – to be considered in the new year