



## Tales from The Leeds Library

season 2

### S2:E9: Librarian Ann Sproat and Archivist Errin Hussey from the Henry Moore Institute

#### Transcript

00:00:14 Molly

Hello and welcome to Tales from The Leeds Library, the Leeds Library's podcast series in which we talk to members of our extended community about their lives, their work and their relationship to books, libraries and literature. Founded in 1768, the Leeds Library is the oldest surviving subscription library of its kind in the UK and throughout this series we'll also be diving periodically into the library's rich history to find out what makes us and our members one of the most interesting and unique cultural institutions in Leeds and the UK.

I'm Molly Magrath, the projects assistant at the Leeds Library and today my guests are Ann and Errin from the Henry Moore Institute's Library and archives. Ann studied fine art and art history with a library qualification in between and worked in public libraries and other libraries in Leeds before settling on art libraries. She is now the librarian at the Henry Moore Institute. Errin studied history and philosophy before getting an archive qualification and working in comedy Archives and Carnival archives, among others. She is now the archivist at the Henry Moore Institute. Hello, Anne and Errin, and thank you very much for chatting to me on this podcast.

00:01:23 Molly

So, the Henry Moore Foundation was founded by the artist and his family in 1977 to encourage public appreciation of the visual arts. Today the Institute supports innovative sculpture projects, hosts an imaginative programme of exhibitions and research worldwide, and preserves the legacy of Moore himself, one of the great sculptors of the 20th century. I think most people in Leeds would recognise your building on the Headrow with its shiny black facade next to the Leeds Art Gallery and it's very striking. It is a very striking and recognisable part of central Leeds. But I think fewer people are aware that the institute doesn't just consist of gallery space, but also contained a sculpture research library and archive. So, my first question is, can you both tell me a bit about what you do?

00:02:10 Ann

Hi, I'm Ann I'm the librarian here at the Henry Moore Institute Research Library. And so, I really develop and manage the library and we are a reference library open to the public. Anybody can use us. And my day is very varied really, so I can be doing anything from tracking down an elusive publication to renewing a database subscription, to grappling with the photocopier. You know the full range, but I'm not a solo librarian. We do have a team, so we have somebody who works with

the digital collections and somebody who works with the ephemera and greets people as they come to the institute.

00:02:58 Errin

And I'm Errin Hussey, and I'm the archivist working at the Henry Moore Institute, so the archive we have here is the archive of sculptor's papers and we've been collecting since the 1980s and we have about 320 collections that are about individual sculptors and businesses and organisations related to sculpture. So again, my day is very varied, full of researchers, and then also developing the collection, finding new collections and making sure they're all catalogued and accessible for everyone. And we are both based on the 2nd floor of the Institute.

00:03:34 Molly

**So, you had to go up the stairs, which again I think we have the same thing at the Leeds Library. We're just we're just on the 2nd floor, the 1st floor even, and that kind of that extra layer makes people when they come in for the first time, they're like 'Wow, I had no idea it was here!' Yeah, so can you talk a little bit about the differences between the different parts of the foundation? So obviously we have the Institute and that consists of the gallery space and the Library's and the archive. But then there's also a studio gardens in Hertfordshire?**

00:04:05 Ann

Yeah, well Moore set up the foundation in 1977 and initially that was really centred around his former home in Perry Green in Hertfordshire. And so he was thinking about his legacy and how to look after his sculpture and how to continue to show us his work and that so all that activity still goes on now at Perry Green and Studios and Gardens and so his studios were there and you can have a tour of the workshops you can go around his house, and you can see his work in the landscape as he always wanted, and so that was the early part of the foundation essentially. And then within about five years he was thinking about giving something back to the city where he had studied as a student, so he'd been an art student at Leeds Arts University - what is Leeds Arts University now, it was Leeds Art College then. He was thinking about setting up something where the general public, anybody, could see sculpture 'cause he was very aware that when he was studying here, there was nothing in Leeds in terms of contemporary sculpture that he could see. So he wanted to sort of create a space that would show contemporary sculpture and that still exists as part of the art gallery next door, there's those gallery's at the front of the Art Gallery are the areas that Moore developed essentially and he also left funding for a library. So, we were part of those early days as well.

And there's another part of the foundation, in terms of grants as well. Moore was very much about supporting sculptors so we have a grants programme that the legacy supports so that that can be any kind of project producing a book to an exhibition and that happens still to this day as well.

00:06:19 Molly

**And I think there are, you know, there's a few projects that we'll talk about later on and did they come from that grant scheme, or are they separate?**

00:06:25 Ann

Possibly separate. The grants are very much about exhibitions held elsewhere and the institute's funded as a separate....

**00:06:38 Molly**

**Yeah, and the I mean you kind of mentioned when we talked earlier that the curators come and they use the library to research the exhibition. So there's really a lot of crossover between all the different parts, which I really like and the archives as well.**

00:06:53 Errin

Yeah, so yeah Henry Moore wanted to basically, support the like we were saying the collection that was already at the art gallery. He didn't see like he said he saw a lot of copies of Greek sculpture and things like that, that he studied himself, but he didn't see a lot of developing of that collection, so that still goes on now. So we've got a great relationship with the Leeds Art Gallery and we are kind of an Institute that will put on the exhibitions but also grow the collection both in the archive and in the actual sculpture collection and the libraries they all kind of flow and a lot as well when we are collecting any part of those three we might get some sculptures that will encourage the collection of archives. If an artist is wanting to deposit an archive and then that will inform what Ann might collect in the library as well. So it all kind of flows in what we collect, which is really nice and you can see those kind of patterns and threads working together.

**00:07:54 Molly**

**I mean, that's the whole aim of an institute that works on many different levels, isn't it? That someone at the beginning of their career, you help them develop it and then hopefully one day then they become world famous. They can kind of support you in turn and you know, donate their archives. So I'm interested in both of your backgrounds. How you kind of became, so Errin how you got into archive work and Ann into librarianship. So, do you want to give me just a little kind of brief overview of your backgrounds?**

00:08:27 Ann

Yeah, I studied fine art initially and then I went on to study Art history and in between I did my library qualifications. So I was kind of in education for a long time and I was always working in libraries all the way through and so it was always an integral part of my life - libraries essentially. And you know I worked in public libraries, I worked in libraries in Leeds for a while before I moved away. And then I found sort of the ideal job and that was working in art libraries. So that brought both of my interests together. And yeah, I've stayed in art libraries all the way through. So yeah, it's been a really great journey really. I learned so much in all ways through combining the two areas, and you know, I've learned a lot about archives for Errin as well now as well. So Yeah.

00:09:29 Errin

So I got into archives, but the role of the archivist in any institute or any institution is kind of a strange one in comparison to maybe librarians and the curators because, so I started off doing a history and philosophy degree because that's where my interests were and then I kind of fell in love with the idea of archives. I remember going to the National Archives and just loving the process of it all and how things were preserved and everything like that and so I did an archive qualification then. The thing about archivists, unlike curators, is we're not subjects specialists. Our are specialisms are how to preserve and how to catalogue and so in a way it's a real benefit because I've got to work in so many different archives. I've worked in stand-up Comedy Archives, Carnival Archives and archives of individuals. And then so coming here is brilliant, I'm getting to learn so much, but I don't have that art history background. But then being able to bounce off people and work with people here who have such a great background in art history and solid knowledge, I think it's a really good kind of

team and a good way of being here and looking after the collection. So I'm so lucky I'm learning so much and I think then there's like different perspectives when you have someone who's not necessarily a subject specialist, but is coming to things fresh, learning things new so.

**00:10:53 Molly**

**That's really interesting. I really like this kind of idea of the crossover between the different kinds of work that you do, because I think you know you seem like you work a lot together and you work a lot with other parts of the institution and with Leeds Arts Museum and Galleries. But I mean obviously they are two separate roles, so in terms of the actual material that you deal with so you deal with the archives and you deal with books and objects and papers, but then you have you mentioned the ephemera and different kind of categories, so can you talk about the material that you both work with and how that's - I mean, obviously the way that it's organised is incredibly complex that's your whole job! - but I guess just an overview of how those are kind of ordered and stored.**

**00:11:41 Ann**

Yeah, well yeah, the library essentially is working with published materials. But that could be from anything from hardcopy books through to digital material. Having said that we do have some sort of honourable original born digital materials that we collect, so the exhibitions that we photographed here are stored in our digital management system. So yeah and as I say, the ephemera material, some of that probably reproduces some of the material that's in the archive, but we have a maybe a broader range of artists but less depth, whereas the archive would have a greater depth and obviously the original material.

**00:12:29 Errin**

So yeah, there's lots of crossover, so the archive is more original material from the artists themselves. But then there's a lot of crossover, so we'll often get collections that will have lots of other ephemera or duplicated material and so we'll have copies in the archive, but then we might give some to the library and that informs the artist files which people can look through freely and like Ann was saying there's a lot more range of artists and not more collections. But then there's kind of those strict lines of like secondary material and primary material, and then when it comes to sculpture itself in the sculpture collection, it's very much finished pieces. But those lines are constantly blurred, and I think especially with digital material coming in and often between sculpture and archives the lines are blurred of what the artist sees as an archive and what they see as a sculpture or a finished piece or an artwork. And those are debates that are always being had.

**00:13:29 Molly**

**Sculpture must be, I mean, in a way, it's the kind of the hardest form to catalogue because it's so to do - or even write about or produce anything that's not a kind of physical object to do with it - because it's 3 dimensional and it exists in the world in space, but you know there's still all of this written material here. That's kind of to do with it.**

**00:13:55 Errin**

Yeah, and I think that's where sometimes the sculpture, the library and the archive can be so important because there's so many artists whose work is fleeting and it's installations, and so maybe all that remains of the artwork is publications written about it, and the archive that leads up to that,

and then that could be all that exists. So we become the primary source of that information for researchers.

**00:14:23 Molly**

**And I think one of the one of the projects that really kind of delves into this. The way the art that archives work and what archives add to the way that we perceive an artist and the way that we kind of create history and document someone's life is this Paul Becker project which he told me a bit about before, which is a fake archive created by someone. So yeah, can you tell me a bit more about that story?**

00:14:49 Errin

So Paul Becker is an artist and writer and fine art lecturer at Newcastle University, or at least he was when he came here. So in 2011, so we run as part of the Institute fellowships and they can be academic fellowships and artist fellowships. So he was an artist that came in kind of with an intervention of the library and the archive and was reading all of these biographies of a certain generation of artists and a lot of what we have in the archive and like I said, the library as well and he wanted to kind of focus on, yeah, those histories, those kind of lost biographies, those lost artists. So what he wanted to do was he created a whole persona and a whole biography of this artist, like I said who had a lot of the same biography as so many artists that we have in the archives, so being born at the turn of the 20th century, wanting to study art but that being kind of halted by World War I, which is a similar experience to Henry Moore. And then he was kind of pulling on our other archives such as Gertrude Hermes and Betty Ree, and saying that he socialised with all of these people. And so he created letters and sketchbooks and drawings and even maquettes to fully form this artist. So it's a really interesting archive because it's unlike anything that's ever been produced before really, and it was just a lovely way of someone coming in and using the archive and the library and then being able to contribute to our collection. And yeah, our archive and library isn't just about these individuals, it's addressing wider discussions in in sculpture.

**00:16:50 Molly**

**I like it as a piece because I think it kind of highlights how much we are reliant on these systems of history making and archiving which are flawed. They're as flawed as the people who run them and look after them and build them. And you know that is no comment on your archival skills at all! but it's so interesting how easily these systems can be corrupted or played with. Um was it your museum podcast that I was listening to somewhere? I heard this story of a man who created, he worked with this teacher who made these fakes and then he had access to the Tate archives somehow and kind of manipulated them to increase the value of these fake artworks.**

00:17:44 Errin

Oh yeah, I don't know much about that story.

**00:17:46 Molly**

**Yeah, I don't know. It was somewhere. Anyway, that's another kind of story that shows how, I mean we have these systems to record information so that we you know we have the correct version and we can know more. We can learn more, but that means that they can so easily be tampered with and corrupted.**

00:18:07 Errin

Yeah, definitely, and I think yeah, it shows that how things have been collected in the past and it yeah forces us to look at how we're collecting in the future.

**00:18:17 Molly**

**Yeah exactly yeah. Well, collecting with an eye to preserving things for, you know, an indefinite amount of time. And I know we'll talk a bit about the digital later, but about kind of digital archiving and you know, that's not always a fool proof process. Things, you know that we can view now might not be viewable with technology in 100 years.**

00:18:39 Errin

Yeah exactly, I think we take it for granted sometimes in archives. We're often collecting things so far in the past, and we really have to look at what's being created now. I think some museums are being forced to look at this or not forced to, but like digital artworks are being created and now we have to look more at what is being created by an artist now, even yesterday I was having discussions with artists about their emails and often it's like thinking about cultural norms - I don't think any of us are saving emails. Yeah, like none of us are doing it. It's something we have to think about now. And yeah what happens is like cultural change before we can say how we're going to collect things.

**00:19:27 Molly**

**I mean I it must be interesting then that you have both quite differing backgrounds because you are probably, you can see the kind of ways that being an artist or having an interest in art feeds into the way that you collect, whereas you know I have a background in art history in English, so again, this is like the perfect intersection of exactly what I'm interested in. But maybe sometimes that kind of like real kind of love and passion for these subjects gets in the way. I don't know. Maybe that's a silly question.**

00:20:01 Ann

But I do think that when we see students come to use the library, and we often give tours and introductions to students and visitors generally. But I often think back to the time when I was a student, I think I really wish I paid attention to the things that are being shown to me and you know, actually took up the opportunities 'cause sometimes you're so busy working and you're thinking about your own things. But you know you, you maybe don't take the time to go along to that lecture or, you know, use the resources that are around you, so we're really keen to try and make sure that certainly people studying in needs know about us and make the most of the library and our team.

**00:20:41 Molly**

**Well, I mean you are a fantastic resource, and it must be so rewarding when someone like Paul Becker creates a piece of work that kind of comes from the resources that you have. So, I don't know if you have any other examples of projects or material that's been published, or anything that's come from these this institution.**

00:21:04 Ann

Yeah, I mean you've made me think straight away, but I don't want to steer this podcast to completely about fakes *but* I have to mention this and then I'll go back to some more traditional ways people have used the library and the archive, but another fellow that comes to mind who came here a few years ago it would be 2018, something like that was Sean Mensch, who came

here in a different way using the time he has this fellowship not just to use the library and archive to do the research there, but also to talk to people and find these stories about local history and these sort of forgotten characters, and that's not very much how he makes his work. So, he was here for a month. He also visited museums around the region. He went to Whitby, and he saw some exhibits of Flint objects, megalithic axe heads etc on display and in his conversations with curators and being here and talking to staff here he developed a project which was shown in the library about an artist. Well, call him an artist, no he wasn't an artist he was a sort of rogue vagabond character. Now we know him as Flint Jack, that was the title of the exhibition that we had here and Sean brought some of these objects that were in museums that were labelled made by Flint Jack and showed them in the library spaces in a kind of creative sort of museum within the library shelves. And this character, essentially in the 19th century, spent his life creating these objects and then selling them to museums. They are still part of collections around the country. And Sean also created this whole story around this figure and told his life story and presented them in these cases, as I say in the library. And it was a lot about kind of questioning the authority of the library and museums. And that's exactly what you were saying beforehand about how something enters a collection and becomes part of that history, and what do we know about it and you know all that history that surrounds it?

**00:23:29 Molly**

Well, there's obviously something in the presence of all of these archives and your boxes out there, the ephemera that that are to do with artists and their lives, that makes that you know clearly makes people question the way that we are represented in the objects that we kind of leave behind us or that we work with, makes people kind of creatively wonder how they can play with that and disturb that.

**00:24:00 Ann**

Yeah, I think it makes artists think about their record and their legacy as well in terms of how something goes down in history as being the authority on that that subject. So yeah, it is something I think the library does beyond kind of providing access to information, it does inspire people to make creative projects. And those are the projects that often stick in our minds as well because they're so fun as well for us to see come through. And you know, hear about and just you know. And it brought so many people to the Institute as part of Yorkshire Sculpture International exhibition and it was really great for the library and people still come back and say, oh, I thought I remember seeing something here. So yeah, it was a really good legacy.

**00:24:50 Molly**

It's nice, we talked to Aoife Larkin from the Art Universities Special Collections and she talked about some of the works that they had that were kind of about the collections or exploring what a book could be, or like playing with the idea of what book was and I like those bits of work that really sit midway between being a research project and being an artwork and explore that. Obviously because that is exactly the kind of middle ground that I'm really interested in. So we've talked a bit about your different roles and the way that you work with the material. But I'm really interested in how each of you acquire new material. I mean and I don't know if you have an acquisition policy?

**00:25:39 Ann**

I mean you would think sculpture would be quite a discrete area that would be manageable and you wouldn't have to think too much about you know the acquisition policy, but we've got quite a detailed acquisition policy. And it's a mixture, it's thinking about how sculptures changed and how you categorise it when it mixes with other disciplines like architecture but also you know that range as well, so you know sculpture across the world and what that means. So, the way we kind of tackle it so that we don't explode with material is we have priority areas, and that is a lot to do with our relationship with the archive so post 1850 we collect British sculpture, and we say that we try collect comprehensively which is a rather impossible task. With the ephemera collections there was a part of that idea of collecting in depth. So, the idea of that particular area is so that somebody who really is working at an advanced level can really come and dig deep and really work up that original research in terms of what they produce.

Having said that, we're also really strong on a sort of modern contemporary international sculpture, so we have another level where we think about you know students in the area who might want to sort of follow a theme through various countries and periods, and so we're good on that and we get lots of gifts from visiting artists. The artists that we're connected to through the exhibitions. We have an exchange programme as well, so we exchange with other libraries around the world. And then the grants also give us a catalogue if we've given a grant to an exhibition, so that's a growing area as well. And then the rest of the world is really kind of other different periods. We kind of just have a sort of introductory level, so somebody wants to come and study sculpture of the Meiji period or something, we might have a section that would start you off so you can start thinking about that and if we've had an exhibition or an event that's brought more material in, there might be a sort of pocket that she's a bit richer in that area for example. So yeah, so that's how we manage the sort of whole world of sculpture. And apart from all the areas where it bumps up to other disciplines and we have to decide if a video piece is sculptural or whether a film can be sculptural. Sculpture and decorative arts, sculpture and architecture, gardens, you know there are lots of ways where you may not realise you're looking at sculpture or what the history of that relationship is. So yeah, it's a big field.

**00:28:46 Molly**

I can imagine, and I can also imagine that a lot of it is keeping on top of what's happening in the world of contemporary sculpture and tracking that and keeping on top of you know, new publications and acquiring those as well as like retroactively kind of filling in any gaps.

**00:29:02 Ann**

Yeah, I mean we do both of that at the same time. We have most journals about contemporary art. We would scan the listings of what's on and try and make sure we get the exhibition catalogues of things that are being shown and then if there is a subject that's coming up, that might be an event or an exhibition, we might look back at what are holding. So, with glass for example, the show at the moment, you know we were looking at what we've got and where we, you know could sort of develop it a little bit more, and some of the artists in the show have given us catalogues, so that's really good as well. So yeah, we've enriched that area.

**00:29:42 Molly**

And then Errin, how do you go about acquiring new material for the archive? Does it mostly come through donations? Or you do you actively kind of seek to acquire new collections and material?

**00:29:52 Errin**

So, our archive focuses on British sculpture from 1850 onwards, and so it happens in various ways, various lovely ways and different relationships with different people. So often we might get funding for a sculpture or just a sculpture will become available and the Leeds Art Gallery collection will be interested in that and then an archive might come organically through that. So, we have such a variety of archives that can range from full archive of sculptors and their entire life. And then sometimes we'll have smaller ones like just about certain projects which might echo the sculpture in the sculpture collection. And so it comes from many different relationships. So, we have fellows and researchers in that might have connections with different artists who might then become interested in the archive and what it can do. And we're also often just trying to raise awareness of what we do here and why it's important to collect and how it could benefit an artist as well because we're a place where their artworks and their archive can be accessible and it can be used by researchers and academics. But certain artists will have different views of their legacy and how important it is to protect that. And so we're often trying to encourage artists to realise how important it is to keep their things and the role we can have in that. They'll there could be talks that are held here, or exhibitions that are held here and then artists will become aware of what we do and we might get their get their archive through there as well.

**00:31:35 Molly**

**It's really interesting we were talking about how you kind of decide what gets included in archive and what doesn't, and how artists might have a different view of what's valuable in the material that they work with to an archivist or to the institute in general.**

00:31:51 Errin

So we were talking about like how in depth and archive could be, what is important to the life of an artist and what would academics want to see or researches in 100 years' time. We have many collections from the 1850s onwards and we have many personal things and personal photographs and things from such a long time ago which really help inform who that person was. And artist nowadays might not think that that is valuable to who they are and their life and their artwork and like you're saying, is a receipt important? but that could be really interesting to see what they were doing and who they were buying from, who their suppliers were. And things like letters really give a glimpse into people's lives and who they were working with and things like that. But it's often really up to the artist. It's really interesting to have those conversations with artists as well, and because they could just think, well, like I did my sketches and that informed the artwork and that could be the only thing you're interested in. But we're always saying that we're interested in the whole idea of your career. How did you get to it? It wasn't just where did your ideas come from? What was your source material? So it's having those conversations of what's important to an artist.

**00:33:17 Molly**

**And is it just living artist then that are currently working that are donating their archives. Do you ever get ones from ages ago and is there a difference in the way that you kind of think about that material or work with it or process it or store it?**

00:33:34 Errin

Yeah, definitely so if we're working with living practising artists, sometimes it's often the archives from their early work that they're looking more to donate the ones that they've kind of nicely packaged in their minds or physically and are kind of finished with it and are happy to give. So they're often curated really by themselves and you know, a lot of artists that are practising could

also be using their archives actively throughout their careers. And it's really interesting when we get full collections at the end of an artist's life, such as we have the archive of Helen Chadwick, which is 135 boxes that came to us from basically her house and her studio, and everything has been kept in its original order, and you can see how she was using her early work in her later work. So, 20 years later she was using things and going back to them, so it's great both ways really. You can have such an active conversation with living artists, getting them to kind of think about how they want to be remembered, and then other archives come to us like that. And people are able to just delve in and see it as it was. And as the artist was living through it. So, it's such a range.

**00:34:58 Molly**

**It's really interesting this idea of self-archiving and self-editing in that way. I suppose it's far more attached to your ego really than like a final finished, you know, exhibition that's slightly different than a personal archive and yeah, I guess some artists might be more comfortable than others. I think about this piece all the time, it's a Andy Warhol's time capsules where he, he was like a real hoarder, and he just like put everything in boxes and sent them away to a storehouse and then like 100 years later – not 100! - you know like years later they were opened by the Andy Warhol Museum or something and then archived. And it's just loads of rubbish. But also, you know really interesting objects as well.**

00:35:44 Errin

It's like a lot of artists, especially like I said from 150 years ago. I'm sure they never thought that any of their material would be in an archive let alone yet so many years later, and I think the idea of archives are constantly, I think in more people minds now you've got, I mean art archives have existed for a long time. National record offices obviously have existed for a long time, but even things like football clubs are now looking at their archives. And big institutions are looking at their own legacies. Even museums are looking at their own histories, and so it feels like it's more in the mind of artists now. That's some of the things we've collected safe in the past 30 years it kind of feels like the artists weren't thinking necessarily and weren't maybe self-curating, but it's so interesting going forward and having that having that.

**00:36:40 Molly**

**Yeah, I wonder what you think that you can't, I mean the ephemera as well that you have for people researching, I'm wondering what you both think that you can't tell from an archive, from someone personal archive, as opposed to what you can. 'cause obviously you know there's a million and one things you can learn from someone's you know personal objects, but I'm wondering what you kind of, what you can't tell about someone's work?**

00:37:09 Ann

Well, what you make me think of in that question is the national life stories. Interviews that we're involved in here at the Institute. You can access through the library as well. It's a project run by the British Library to interview not just artists, but fingers crossed society as it were. And it's very much like a social history project as well, in that they really go into depth about somebody. You know what it felt like to be in a certain exhibition and those kind of relationships with people they had. And sometimes I know that may come through in letters etc. But to hear an artist speak about some of that is fascinating as well, and they don't often think it's important that you know why are you asking me about the, you know, kind of the way the studio looked or felt or how cold it was, and it's those kind of memories are quite interesting in terms of the feeling of a moment of

for an artist in making a work and you know what might have affected how they make decisions as it were so I think that's important.

00:38:26 Errin

Yeah, I think it's those personal touches. We had an event recently where we were talking to families about their family members who were associated with sculpture in our collection, and they were talking about another family member doing an interview and doing an impression because the artist was never recorded. But they did an impression of their mother like and her accent and how she had these little terms. And it's like those are the things that you don't always get. And so, and that's another thing, like the archive can only tell you so much, so we're always trying to feed back to the library. And those interviews are so amazing for people to sit and to listen to get that kind of personal touch. There's something about the voice that, those experiences that might not be written down. How he said that how the studio felt might not be something that they've ever written down. I mean, I've never written down how it feels to work in an archive, so you know this recording itself adds to add to that.

00:39:28 Ann

I mean we all have those images in our collections where we've recorded a Street View for no reason, and then you know you look at it 20 years later and you think that's really interesting. It wasn't the one where it photographed something important to you but it's the kind of background things that you walk past every day or something, so that sort of information is it's, you know, can only be sort of recorded from the artist when they're alive.

00:39:55 Molly

I think I'm so fascinated by these artist files. I think they're so interesting. But I mean so in general the library, or libraries in general and archives in general, and I say this with so much love and affection for them: they're not super glamorous places. They're not necessarily what you would, you know, quote unquote, call, fun. But actually, they are really amazing repositories of information. And yeah, they're incredible, and especially, you know this institute, which is free to use. It's an amazing resource, so I'm kind of interested in what you both think are the ways that we should be engaging people in in these libraries and archives, and I guess also what the barriers are for people in accessing them or becoming interested in them.

00:40:55 Ann

I mean, it's something we think about and talk about a lot and it's you know it's constantly something on our minds. But I, I suppose thinking as the staff as a team, we work to really inspire people to think about sculpture broadly. So, there's a lot of movement between people coming in to see an exhibition downstairs and seeing something there and thinking 'wow' and you know then our information staff are always telling people to come up to the library. You know there is an archive here? so you know that kind of movement in terms of people who may want to follow up on it. And as I say, we might just have a few, you know, general interest in what the library is about, so it is difficult because we are tucked away above the galleries and there is a sort of staircase that looks like you're heading for some offices, but you know if people can get the sense that we are open to anybody, you can come along you can spend time you don't have to have anything particular to look at. You can just come and see the space and be in the space, and you know, just use it as a place to think about, not necessarily sculpture even, just art in general. See where it takes you. It's a place to discover as well. Think it's very. It's very a creative, inspiring

place as well, and it it's calming. It's really good for your mind to take yourself out of the moment and think about something you haven't really thought of before and just browse the books.

00:42:30 Errin

Yeah yeah, I think yeah there's always that. We obviously love archives and libraries. And like I said, both of our experience is being in them for so many years. But you forget, sometimes we try and always remember that it's not necessarily true that everyone has been to an archive before. I meet people, a lot of researchers every week have said 'I've never used an archive, by the way, so let me know if I'm doing anything wrong' and there is that little bit of a barrier. But like I said, it's so nice here, it's such a wooden little haven in the middle of the city to come and explore the exhibition and then just find this lovely, safe, calm space upstairs to explore anything you know and just ask those questions or just explore on your own. You don't have to know exactly what you want to see. We can always help you if you have one little subject area that you'd like to explore. Anything, really, we're always here to help and we try and get things out on social media and things like that, just to become more accessible.

00:43:36 Molly

**Well, that's I mean that's a real value in grounding your experience of an artwork in knowledge about it, because I think you know when you walk into a gallery, and maybe it's a big white cube, and you know you have these artworks, which maybe you don't understand immediately, it can make it quite inaccessible and feel quite distant and like this amazing thing that you are not part of, whereas you know when artworks are attached to a library or attached an archive, grounding a sculptor's work in their everyday objects makes it more real and more accessible and more understandable. And that's a really amazing resource to have.**

00:44:23 Ann

And it's not just. I mean, we have audio-visual material as well. So people can watch past events and talks and listen to talks here and you can sort of surround yourself in the subject with that and just look at the images. And as I say, you don't have to be an expert in to find your way around our library in particular is Open Access as well, which is, is a real a real boon at the moment. I mean to go to a library and just be able to wander the shelves. It's really great for discovery in terms of finding subjects that you didn't realise you were interested in.

00:44:58 Molly

**And clearly that really quite holistic way of experiencing art and working with art was part of Henry Moore's vision. But I wanted to quickly talk to you guys about digital. Digital is really interesting because it wasn't, it just wasn't a thing when the institute was kind of first developed. So, I guess working with that is a whole separate thing and I think with heritage and archives and libraries there's often this kind of misconception or expectation that everything is available digitally. And is exactly the same as it is physically and one just replicates the other, whereas actually it's more I would say about enriching and you know doing different projects and sharing, so I'm wondering what your thoughts are and how you kind of bring digital media into the work you do?**

00:46:01 Errin

Yeah, so the library is doing a lot so I will let Ann talk about that. But in terms of the archives, I think it was especially really present in the pandemic when researchers were suddenly all over the world

and all grounded, and it was very much like 'can we get this information' and I think just generally with the 'Google age', more and more academics are expecting everything to be online and so it was an interesting time to respond to enquiries and ideally we'd love everything to be digitised and digital, but unfortunately it's not. But we're trying to get that way so it can be more accessible to people. And in terms of digital collecting, it's just a constantly evolving thing in archives, and I think the whole archive profession is like what is everyone else doing? like how are you storing all of this? This, but we're very open to those developments. And we have some computer drawings even in our collection. So thinking about new ways that artists are creating and how we can support that and also thinking about digital material that we can digitise before it's not viewable anymore, and being able to show and make it accessible to people. So and like we've seen earlier, there are some artworks such as installations that only exist now on AV, and so it's really important for us in our role that we're digitising that and we're the centre of how people can access that. And it throws up loads of interesting debates I think in the archive world about loaning as well. We have a lot of digital material like audio and then video that might be the only existing copies, and it's like how do you loan that? What's the original piece? Can another museum hold a copy of that? And is that OK? Is that the original or what is? What is the audio-visual? What is the digital thing you know?

**00:48:04 Molly**

**That's so interesting. Yeah, I think the whole world is kind of having that debate really, aren't they? With NFT's. Yeah, yeah.**

00:48:17 Errin

I decided to ignore that concept until I really need to. Yeah, but it's just constantly in nearly every meeting that comes up about acquiring new things, it's always 'But what about digital?' And we're rethinking our collections development policy over at Leeds Museums and Galleries and how to incorporate the digital into that, so yeah it's forever evolving. People are more demanding but that pushes us to make sure that we are up to date with how to store things, how to make them accessible.

**00:48:54 Ann**

See I would say the archive's done lots. The library sort of transitioned in certain areas into working with digital materials so you know we've always photographed the exhibitions and talks have been recorded and then that became a digital activity essentially. So, we developed this digital management system where that is stored essentially. And that's available for anybody to look at who comes to the Institute. And then there's this whole how things go online, kind of using social media. So we're kind of sort of chartering a new course now there. So, a lot of it is working with the actual speakers about their rights, you know whether they want to put their material online. So we're doing what we can and trying to encourage that and then. But we've also tried to sort of showcase our collections so in the room we're in now, we have lots of special collections. The older material the artist books, and so we've tried to sort of choose items from there that people can't really get a sense of from a library catalogue, and they can't come in here and browse this bit of the library, so we kind of showcase those through digital media and maybe looking more to make films that kind of excite people and entice people in and we've done a little bit of that already, but we hope to go forward with that a bit. And it's all about that trying to develop curiosity and interest and people just knowing that we've got it. So yeah, getting it out there in that way. But yeah, I think we're at the early stages of it, really.

**00:50:35 Molly**

**Thank you so much for chatting. To me this has been so fascinating and it's nice to actually, we are for listeners we are recording this at the Henry Moore Institute in the library or the archives, even so it's nice to be on the road – ish - even though we're about 5 minutes away. Finally, I mean finally, finally, how can people find out more about you guys? So obviously the Henry Moore Institute is on the Headrow, very recognisable, but how can people find out more about the work that you do?**

**00:51:07 Ann**

**Yeah, well you come to the institute. We obviously we have a presence online through the website and through social media and our events. You can sign up for newsletters through the website as well. That'll be about events at the Institute. But yeah, just come in as well and don't think it's you know something that's not accessible to you. Take the leap and go up the stairs and you know you would be welcome to use the library and we're open every day. So even on a Sunday there's some opening hours as well so and there's no appointment needed for the libraries, but slightly different for the archive.**

**00:51:45 Errin**

**Yeah, so we're a bit more restricted, but we have kind of a personal experience with booking people in, so we're open in the library five days a week, ten till five, and it's appointment booked through me. But in that way, we get to discuss what you'd like to see and kind of run through all of that, so it's an appointment, but you get a lot out of booking the appointment. So yeah, and it's a great experience to have that flow of coming to the library and then you might discover things that you'd see in the archive, and we try and get things out on social media as well. And we're doing more video content. So yeah, follow us on all social medias and through the website we try and put more content online all the time. So yeah, we're here. We're always here. I'm ready to answer any questions.**

**00:52:36 Molly**

**Fantastic, well, let's wrap it up there. Thanks so much guys.**

**00:52:41 Molly**

**This has been a podcast from the Leeds Library. Links to more information about our guests and any works talked about can be found in the description. If you'd like to find out more about the Leeds Library and any of our upcoming events, please visit our website at [www.theleedslibrary.org.uk](http://www.theleedslibrary.org.uk) or you can follow us on Twitter, Instagram or Facebook at the Leeds Library. Thank you for listening and keep your eyes and ears peeled for more tales from the Leeds Library in our future episodes released every Wednesday.**