**Awards**

A project looking at ‘micromuseums’ – small, independent museums devoted to single subjects and themes – by Dr Fiona Candlin, Senior Lecturer in Museum Studies, has won a 2012 Leverhulme Research Fellowship. Dr Candlin has begun touring the British Isles to visit these museums, many of which are located in private houses. The objects they contain are rarely conserved or labelled, but these museums do, however, offer visitors the chance to talk to the curator, to handle objects and to enjoy a different ambience to major museums. Her work will consider how an analysis of the sites, displays and practices might provide fresh perspectives on established debates, and prompt new avenues of museological enquiry.

Sue Jackson, Professor of Lifelong Learning and Gender, has received a Doctoral Programme Award for 2012–2013 from the Higher Education Academy. The Award was given for research into the impact of retention strategies on part-time mature students. Despite most higher education institutions having developed retention strategies, knowledge is sparse about the impact of such strategies on all students, and particularly regarding mature students studying part-time. Professor Jackson says: “In the new world of higher education, with high fees but with student loans now also accessible to part-time students, it is more important than ever for policymakers and practitioners to take seriously matters of retention.”

The Leverhulme Trust has awarded a three-year Major Research Fellowship to Chandak Sengoopta, Professor of History, to support his research into acclaimed Indian filmmaker, writer and designer Satyajit Ray. Professor Sengoopta will be writing a comprehensive biography of Ray, using rarely accessible manuscripts and archival material made available by Ray’s son, Sandip.

“While much has been written about Ray’s films over the years, there is no critical study of all his major creative endeavours,” says Professor Sengoopta. “I plan to give prominence to the many incarnations of Satyajit Ray that have been forgotten or underrated by the West.”

A team of researchers led by Helen Saibil, Bernal Professor of Structural Biology, has been awarded a £2m European Research grant to further its studies into how proteins and membranes interact. The grant will enable the use of the latest imaging technology to create 3D images to help understand how pathogens and the immune system carry out their functions. Both the immune system and pathogens use proteins to penetrate cellular membranes in order to kill target cells, or allow passage of pathogenic organisms such as malaria parasites. The five-year project,
Membrane Attack, is part of a collaboration with Leicester University and Monash University in Australia.

Annette Karmiloff-Smith, Professorial Research Fellow at the Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development, is part of a consortium of teams from four London research institutions to have been awarded £2.5m from the Wellcome Trust to research the links between Down’s syndrome, learning disabilities and dementia. A five-year interdisciplinary research project by the new London Down Syndrome Consortium (LonDownS) aims to understand why people with Down’s syndrome are much more likely than the general population to develop dementia. The researchers will work with US and European colleagues to develop similar assessments for babies and adults, focusing on individual differences and subgroups within Down’s syndrome. The research will examine these groups at cellular, genetic and cognitive levels to explain why the Down’s syndrome behavioural and cognitive profile varies so much.

Staff at Birkbeck’s Institute for Criminal Policy Research are one of 13 research teams from 11 European countries being funded in a three-year €2.7m project to help develop new ways of tackling emerging forms of Europe-wide crime. The FiDUCIA (‘trust’ in Latin) research will look at alternatives to arresting and punishing offenders involved in trafficking of drugs and alcohol, people trafficking, cyber-crime and crimes associated with the policing of migrant and minority groups. A central idea for the project is that public trust in systems of justice is closely related to our ability to build a peaceful and harmonious society, as this translates into respect for public institutions and compliance with the law.

Recognitions

William Rowe, Anniversary Professor of Poetics in the Department of Iberian and Latin American Studies and Co-Director of the Contemporary Poetics Research Centre, has been awarded an honorary doctorate by the Catholic University of Peru, in recognition of his contribution to the study and understanding of Peruvian literature and culture.

Professor Gabriel Waksman, Head of Birkbeck’s Department of Biological Sciences and Director of the Institute of Structural and Molecular Biology at Birkbeck and UCL, has been elected to the Fellowship of the Royal Society. Fellowship is made up of the most eminent scientists, engineers and technologists from the UK and Commonwealth. The main focus of the research conducted in Professor Waksman’s laboratory is to gain insight into the structural and molecular basis of secretion in Gram-negative bacterial pathogens, which cause infections in humans.

The British Psychological Society’s 2012 Spearman Medal has been awarded to Dr Angelica Ronald, Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development and Director of the Genes Environment Lifespan laboratory. Given annually to an early-career psychologist for outstanding published work, the Medal was awarded in recognition of Dr Ronald’s work on autism.

The Academy of Social Sciences has conferred the award of Academician on Edward Melhuish, Professor of Human Development and Director of the Institute for the Study of Children, Families and Social Issues. Professor Melhuish’s research looks at communicative development in childhood, with particular regard to environmental influences, such as parenting, pre-school care and education and their long-term consequences both for the individual and for society. His two major studies, the Effective Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education project and the National Evaluation of Sure Start, have had a significant influence on the development of early years policy in the UK.