

Museums Journal: blog



Home grown

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Who needs the Guggenheim when you've got Mostyn?

A [recent article in The Guardian](#) by former Plaid Cymru MP Adam Price argued that it made sense to develop a Guggenheim outpost in Wales.

After a recent visit to [Mostyn](#), a contemporary art gallery in Llandudno in north Wales, it seems to me that developing a Guggenheim in Wales makes no sense at all.

The idea for a Welsh Guggenheim came after [Finland rejected plans for a Guggenheim](#) in its capital Helsinki. Some of the concerns centred on the costs of developing and running the gallery. These worries could also apply to Wales.

Also, one of the locations suggested for a Guggenheim was Swansea, where the [Glynn Vivian Art Gallery](#) will reopen next year following a £6m redevelopment. The [Guggenheim Foundation](#) was not keen anyway so it seems the idea is dead in the water.

I went to Mostyn to interview its Italian-born director [Alfredo Cramerotti](#). Under his leadership, the gallery is combining an international exhibition programme with support for the contemporary art scene in Wales through initiatives such as the [Artes Mundi visual arts exhibition and prize](#).

The gallery is also part of a £5m arts programme for under-25s funded by the [Paul Hamlyn Foundation](#).

And Cramerotti hopes to address local concerns by using artists to interpret the history of the Mostyn building, which started life in 1901 as a gallery for female artists then went through various other uses (a world war one drill hall and a piano showroom among them) before reopening as a gallery in 1979 following a campaign by a group that included the artist [Kyffin Williams](#).

Mostyn added an impressive extension by Ellis Williams Architects that opened in 2010. The gallery now gets about 80,000 visitors a year – and that's in a town with 18,000 residents.

I came away from Llandudno thinking what Wales needs is another couple of Mostyns, not a Guggenheim.