Museums and Innovations

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Edited by

Zvjezdana Antos, Annette B. Fromm
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We dedicate this book to Dr. Daniel W. Papuga, ICME President (2004-2007), so knowledgeable and endlessly kind, who died 18 May 2015. This volume will stand as a lasting memorial of that most cosmopolitan man we are proud to have called friend.

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INTRODUCTION

ZVJEZDANA ANTOS, ANNETTE B. FROMM AND VIV GOLDING

The authors of *Museums and Innovations* explore innovative ways of presenting cultural heritage primarily in ethnographic and social history museums through recent permanent, temporary, and mobile exhibitions. From the vantage point of their work in museums of different sizes, their goals are to prompt critical debate about new ways of thinking and working in museums with regard to how we might work collaboratively for a more equitable future. Another reference point throughout concerns the "difficult" histories rooted in colonialism.

Essential political issues related to power and the strong influences of the museum are addressed in each section, especially with regards to the presentation of particular cultures and communities. Individual authors argue that collections need to be constantly interpreted and reinterpreted in order to extend knowledge about the collected objects, the originating communities of makers and users from which they emerge, and, most importantly their biographies of travel to museums. It is often taken for granted that the museum is defined by its collections, but the authors contend that a contemporary museum should not simply offer its visitors elements of the past. They believe that one of the most important questions museums face today is how to promote contemporary relevance and prompt new meaning making with objects.

Ethnographic and social history museums have been at the forefront of exploring new methods to attract visitors' reflections of the past, the present, and the future in ways that Sharon Macdonald (2013) terms "past presencing" (Macdonald 2003). This term, it seems, points to the complex role of museography today which explores who we are as human beings, where we came from, and how we might work together to promote social justice and human rights at local and global levels. In short, *Museums and Innovations* examines how museums can positively impact global society. Implied are more difficult tasks than simply displaying the functions of

objects and how they were made according to the rationale of the traditional ethnographic museum.

Questions raised by some of the authors herein concern new ways to present the complexity of identities; by doing so, they give intercultural and transcultural contexts to the collections with which they work and show the dynamism and changes in society. They ask to what extent, if any, it is the new museum's role to influence communities and government, to act as agents of social justice, and help address social needs. The authors observe that museums have been challenged by the need to modernise collections and displays, as well as to "turn" towards their audiences. They note that the quality and sustainability of a visit has become increasingly important. Visitors' understandings of the museum as a place of dialogue are paramount in the twenty-first century. Museums are a place where individuals will consider diverse questions and gain new knowledge(s) of themselves and "others." The changing understandings and subtle distinctions, and the difference between memory and heritage specifically where community memory has become importantly defined by the intangible heritage are recognized here.

In other words, museums are no longer widely presented as local; rather, they acknowledge a wish to connect and present their collections and their communities in association with new political trends. Individual authors agree that museums have to be provocative. They have to play an active role in society and they react naturally to global events by staging exhibitions and organising various public programmes and wide-ranging dialogues to serve diverse community needs.

The chapters in *Museums and Innovations* evolved from discussions at the 2014 Annual Conference of the International Committee for Museums of Ethnography (ICME), an International Committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM). The conference of the same name was held in Zagreb, Croatia. Sixteen presentations from internationally respected practitioners (curators) and academics that address aspects of the theme in thought-provoking and challenging ways were selected for inclusion in this volume.

The chapters of *Museums and Innovations* are divided into six sections to guide readers through terrain that is familiar to anthropologists and is becoming more accessible to a wider museum readership. Edenheiser opens Part One with "Exploring Identity and Community," discussing new approaches towards displaying ethnographic objects in Germany. Her argument is to place ethnographic collections into their historic, colonial past and use their problematic history as a major thesis for permanent exhibits. Recent exhibitions at the World Cultures Collection at the Reiss-

Engelhorn-Museen (REM) in Mannheim and the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (SKD) are examined. These two museums have tackled current interpretive practice issues by reinterpreting and reframing well-known artefacts which illuminate specific national dealings with colonial history, the position of museum ethnology in public debates, interconnections with art history, and the cooperation with "source communities" in the context of the ethnographic museum.

Quinn analyses the role museums in Ireland and the United Kingdom have in promoting intercultural dialogue between ethnically and socially diverse communities in order to address topics associated with social justice. She views this approach as a paradigm in which culture, heritage, and the meaning of objects can be renegotiated by diverse cultural groups, leading to greater cross-cultural identification, a sense of belonging, and social inclusion. Quinn draws upon working examples and theoretical discourse to explore how the integration of intercultural dialogue into the core function of the museum can enable the development of more socially inclusive museums.

The role of the small museum in a small, stigmatised community is addressed by Vella and Cutajar. Local residents as well as an active tourist population form the audience of the Bir Mula Heritage in Bormla, Malta. In the process of reinvigorating the museum's public programmes, the authors expose much of the intricate history of the historic house. Input from community members contributed to the development of new interpretive material. The authors explore which practices help to empower residents living in the area while building positive self-identity at the same time. The activities of Bir Mula Heritage Museum

Bir Mula Heritage are shown to be capable of providing and facilitating inclusive museum pedagogy; practices at the museum aided in the amelioration of the community's identity among the residents and outsiders.

Perić's contribution is a case study of the ongoing project, initiated in 2006 by multimedia artist Vladimir Perić at the Museum of Childhood in Belgrade. The author illustrates how the museum's extensive collection of objects, mostly sourced from flea markets, can be studied and defined from the perspective of various disciplines including anthropology, ethnology, and social history. The collection's relationship with contemporary art, however, brings about an unconventional fusion of academic and artistic approaches in which the curator and collector/artist challenge, innovate, and complement each other's practice. This chapter explores how the artistic contextualisation of heritage and memory objects provokes new engagements in the (re)construction of past narratives and

identity.

The authors in Part Two, "Communicating Heritage and Intangibility," present case studies of community-based museums in Serbia, Croatia, and Italy, documenting and presenting the heritage of three very distinct museums and communities attempting to innovatively strengthen identity. The Open Air Museum (OAM) "Old Village" in Sirogojno, Serbia, as described by Krstović, began a radical transformation beginning in 2010. Located on Mt. Zlatibor, a rapidly developing tourist area, the museum changed its institutional philosophy to preserve the local cultural heritage. Through the development of exhibits described in Chapter Five, the overall "sense of place" has been improved and critical attitudes about the ongoing processes of change were facilitated.

Awareness of engagement with the management of intangible cultural heritage is a relatively recent development as part of the daily functions of many of the national, regional, and local museums in Croatia. The Istrian Ethnographic Museum Centre for Intangible Culture (IEMCIC) has led the way in highlighting this phenomenon and has produced some innovative and practical safeguarding measures for the region. Buletić writes about two examples recently implemented by the centre. The first concerns education workshops with local high school students, a group frequently excluded from other museum education programmes. Young people were introduced to research and documentation activities then created an exhibit and publication with the information they gathered. Research, documentation, public performance, and participative engagement with the local community led to the second case study, which continues to protect intangible cultural heritage associated with St Martin's Day celebrations. The annual programmes on the feast day associated with wine-making draw upon family-owned wineries rather than larger producers to ensure local involvement. A number of participatory activities aimed at recalling a repertoire of traditions and passing them to the next generation create a festive atmosphere and a multi-sensory experience.

The origins of the Lucca Museum of the Risorgimento can be traced back to just after the end of World War I. Because of the inevitable growth of the collections, the museum was forced to open in a new space with renovated exhibits. Between 2010 and 2013, new exhibits were designed specifically, keeping in mind conservation standards, universal accessibility, and storytelling using twenty-first century technology. Tranfaglia and Giostrella address the new approaches to the exhibition of historical and ethnological artefacts using multimedia technology as a means to communicate to new audiences.

Objects in the Valencian Museum of Ethnology are associated with rural farming activity and everyday life. Experience gathered from visitors' opinions during the almost thirty years of the museum's lifetime made it clear that the institution was generally considered as a space of "Valencian identity" or "nostalgia," in other words, "how simple and happy life was." Segui starts Part Three, "Transformations," with a description of efforts to change the museum into a dynamic, socially active place and what still remains to be accomplished. In Chapter Eight, he presents another perspective of challenges to introduce a new museography and emphasise the heritage value of the museum's collection.

Oleszkiewicz writes about the transformations of exhibits at the Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum in Kraków, Poland, which enable visitors to enter into a dialogue about the past and confront the present. "The Re-newal" of the museum's permanent exhibition, "Polish Folk Culture," used new methods to show and interpret spring rituals and refocuses the exhibits on chronology to create a multi-layered story. One layer was designed to affect visitors' aesthetic senses and draw them into the experience of spring renewal. Other layers provided information and the expansion of knowledge. The second case study, "Passages and Returns," was a temporary exhibition constructed from memories and talks drawn from over forty stories elicited from museum staff and others. It provided an open-ended narration which enabled visitors to discover, experience, and reflect upon their own experiences. The varied viewpoints and associations expressed in the stories allowed the museum to illuminate the hidden life of objects and the people behind them. In both examples, Oleszkiewicz shows how the museum strove to learn whether ethnographic collections contribute to life today or whether they are simply petrified as silent witnesses forever.

The Helsinki City Museum has faced the challenge of relevance that is common to many other city, historical, or any kind of museum, for that matter. Harju documents the planning and writing process for the Museum's four-year (2014-18) Exhibition Policy, which focuses on exhibitions. Rather than list the next five years' exhibits, the plan's goal was to develop general guidelines to create a consistent and interesting exhibition programme. This chapter in Part Four, "Participation and Social Justice," emphasises the contributions of stakeholders from the entire museum staff to the formulation of the new practices instituted by the exhibition policy of the Helsinki City Museum.

The everyday activities of museums increasingly have more to do with visitor inclusivity and audience participation in the interpretation of

cultural heritage. Creating public spaces for audience participation has become their task, thus offering museum staff the opportunity to better understand visitor experiences, interests, and expectations while giving the visitor an opportunity to participate in the life of the museum. In Chapter Eleven, using data collected from participant interventions at the Estonian National Museum (ENM), Aljas asks which conditions are necessary for museum audiences to participate as mediators of cultural heritage. Several different participatory practices in museum exhibition halls and online environments are analysed from the perspective of how they relate to the museum's collections.

Media, both screen-based and interactive, have been used in science and technology exhibitions for a long time; more recently, they are also becoming fixtures in social and cultural history museum presentations. Media are considered to appeal to audiences with new (preferred) ways of accessing information about the present and past. They also help museums to compete with a range of other audio-visual attractions. In addition, some commentators argue that they can help "democratise" museum presentation by de-emphasising the authority of collection specialists, as they create spaces for plural or alternative interpretations of objects and ideas, and even facilitate meta-level reflection on the nature of presentation. Masson starts with the latter argument to explore some of the challenges posed to exhibition practice, focusing on a recent presentation by the Amsterdam Museum (formerly the Amsterdam Historical Museum) to show how the use of media may at times appear to complicate the realisation of post-modern ideals. In doing so, she argues that this friction is caused not by the use of AV media as such, but rather, on the one hand, by concurrent pressure on the museum to propose a coherent identity for a city and its inhabitants, and on the other by the assumptions it makes about how visitors wish to be addressed and what they can(not)/will (not) do or invest during their visit.

The limited levels of cultural participation by the migrants to Moscow and their unwillingness to participate in the cultural life in their newly adopted city are the focus of the first chapter in Part Five "Developing New Practices." Grinko and Shevtsova report upon their research, which exposes this conclusion as a negative myth. The "School of Russian Language" regularly takes migrant students to different age-appropriate museums in Moscow as part of the educational process. The authors' analysis of the children's attitudes about the city's museums they visit contradicts the official versions of their cultural participation. Their data shows that child migrants, and occasionally their parents, enjoy museum visits because they provide, in part, a cheap leisure activity. The authors

propose that their research could be useful for museums in other cities that want to increase the cultural access of established and recent migrant populations.

In Chapter Fourteen, Wild and an Haack argue that effective exhibition space need not be restricted to the "safety" of the four walls of a museum building, reflecting upon the essential aspects of creating and undertaking mobile exhibitions in public/semi-public spaces. Their discussion is illustrated by two examples. The Museum of European Cultures, Berlin, used a nine-seat microbus and a small bus stop shelter to house a travelling exhibition about the culture, politics, and day-to-day life in the Republic of Moldova. The MOLDOVAmobil introduced passers-by to a country that is mostly unknown in Western Europe with videos, audio stations, slide shows, and booklets. In the temporary exhibit "Fearful Visions-Visionary Ideas," 20 young Europeans were given the opportunity to express their own visions for a common future as Europeans. Among the questions posed by the authors through these two provocative exo-museum projects was: How can a museum act and interact outdoors, leaving the "safety" of the museum building behind?

The two final chapters that close *Museums and Innovations* address "New Voices and (Re)interpretation." Van der Zee mines the collections of the recently embattled Ethnographic Collections of Ghent University to explore the role played by the museum's founder, Prof. Frans Olbrechts, in the study of world arts. She focuses on Olbrechts' approach to ethnographic objects and the concept of "primitive" to translate them into an actual approach towards our non-Western material. In the face of recent efforts by museum curators and anthropologists to start a dialogue with source communities, the author argues that Olbrechts' contextual approach towards the aesthetic object, although developed 60 years ago, remains relevant today. Indeed, his views are currently being reassessed by the Ethnographic Collections of Ghent University.

Icke-Schwalbe addresses the current trend to challenge everything about academic sciences, especially the questioning of the theoretical frameworks and practices developed in middle Europe during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She acknowledges that academic rigour and debates/contentions are welcomed as a necessary part of dialogue and practice. Ideology and science benefit from critical examination and the analysis of new knowledge and discoveries which enable a shared understanding and agreement with regards to terms, names, and subjects. This final chapter contributes to the long-standing discussion of whether the name of the International Committee for Museums of Ethnography (ICME) should be changed and why. ICME's

internal discussion is yet another example of current discussions in the world of ethnographic museums and academia which shows a crisis in the understanding of the terms “museum” and “ethnography.”

As editors and authors, we offer these chapters as models which illustratively inform about practices and innovative approaches to the presentation of cultural heritage particularly in ethnographic and social history museums. ICME, under whose sponsorship the chapters in the book were initially presented, was created in 1946 as “an international platform and network for museums of people and culture …” (ICME n.d.).

In symphony with the activities of ICME members, represented here is a fair mix of discussions about museums which emphasise the interpretation and display of peoples living outside of Europe in European museums. Other papers address the research, documentation, and representation of traditional and contemporary cultures in Europe within the original scope of ICME. Of significance is the critical approach to issues relating to contemporary life and current issues in museology-at-large expressed by all of the authors. This volume is by no means presented as the final word on innovation; we hope it will serve to encourage more critical and creative praxis from international museum professionals and concerned members of the academy.

PART ONE

EXPLORING IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY

CHAPTER ONE

ENTANGLEMENTS: COLONIAL HISTORY, ART, AND "ETHNOGRAPHIC OBJECTS"— EXAMPLES FROM GERMAN MUSEUMS

IRIS EDENHEISER

Same, Same or Different? Recent Developments in Ethnographic Museums in Germany

During the past decade, several ethnographic museums in the German-speaking countries have been redesigned and reopened or will do so in the near future. The most famous and widely discussed is the Humboldt-Forum, presently one of the largest and best-funded by the German state cultural projects. This museum, due to open in 2019, brings the collections of the Ethnologisches Museum, one of the richest ethnographic collections worldwide, into the heart of the capital opposite the Museum Island.[1] As part of the project planning, a series of experimental temporary exhibition modules, many with an artistic leaning, has been created to test new forms of presenting ethnographic objects (Humboldt-Forum 2015). The permanent exhibition halls, however, will continue to reflect the traditional regional organisation of the collections. This same principle was followed by the Grassi Museum für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig, which re-opened its regional galleries between 2006 and 2009.

The overall general tendency to invite artists and designers to work with ethnographic collections has also been the leading principle of Clémentine Deliss, former director of the Frankfurter Weltkulturen Museum, who offered challenging perspectives of "the ethnographic museum" re-framing the institution as a "post-ethnographic museum" (Deliss 2012; Deliss and Mutumba 2014). The Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum-Kulturen der Welt in Cologne re-opened its permanent exhibit very successfully in 2010 and was named European Museum of the Year

in 2012. For the permanent display, this museum has followed its own special exhibition approach since the 1980s, concentrating on thematic rather than regional galleries. Grand human themes such as “rituals,” “living spaces,” “religion,” “death and afterlife,” and so forth, are presented with a strong focus on a visually overwhelming scenography (Engelhard and Schneider 2010). In Switzerland, the Museum der Kulturen Basel caused a public debate when it re-opened in 2011, making contemporary anthropological concepts like “agency,” “knowledge,” and “enactment” the leading threads of the exhibition and singularising objects in a “white-cube”-setting, thus creating a strong resemblance to presentational modes in art museums (Museum der Kulturen Basel 2011; Hauser-Schäublin 2012). The Völkerkundemuseum der Universität Zürich, which was refurbished in 2014, returned to the roots, so-to-speak, of the ethnographic analysis of material culture and focused on the skills that go into the production and the use of objects (Flitsch 2014; Flitsch et al. 2014).

These recent developments have brought new attention to ethnographic collections in the German public perception. The scope of this chapter does not allow for a broad overview of all of these highly diverse approaches to exhibitions with so-called ethnographic objects. Instead, I will focus on two personal curatorial projects, one past and one future exhibition, which address two main themes of these current debates and which have also addressed the underlying goals of the 2014 conference of the International Committee for Museums of Ethnography. In the first part, drawing on the example of the World Cultures Collections at the Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen in Mannheim, I argue for a historicisation of ethnographic collections, especially with regard to their colonial past. To date, none of the museums mentioned above has turned towards the problematic history of ethnographic collections as a major theme of their permanent exhibits with the exception of Frankfurt, which in a special exhibition project gave voice to artistic rather than academically-grounded historical interpretations of the collections. In the second part, I reverse the dominant tendency of inviting art and artists into ethnographic museums and instead talk about the anthropologising and politicising of art works and art exhibits.

Historicisation of Ethnographic Collections

The colonial past of ethnographic collections has only recently come into focus as part of a rising academic and public awareness of Germany’s colonial history in general (Conrad 2012; Conrad and Osterhammel 2004;

Speitkamp 2005), as academic and popular dealings with the Nazi regime and World War II have strongly dominated German historical discourse. Germany was a so-called late colonial power and is now reappraising its colonial past. In the public debate surrounding ethnographic museums, which was ignited primarily by the above-mentioned plans for the Humboldt-Forum, the critical post/de-colonial position of questioning the legitimacy of acquisition and representation politics in colonial contexts during the formative phase of ethnographic museums and beyond, and, therefore, their *raison d'être*, has become a strong voice (Bose 2013; Kaschuba 2014; Kohl 2014; No Humboldt21! 2013). These critiques have been uttered largely by external actors; they were rarely developed from inside ethnographic museums. The Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt is a recent exception (Deliss and Mutumba 2014). Arguing that it is time to deal with these issues from inside the institution, the World Cultures Collection at the Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen (REM) in Mannheim, is currently planning to bring the collections back into public awareness through a new presentation, after almost a decade of closure. In the process, the aim will be a thorough analysis of the collections' histories with a focus on stories of colonial entanglements stored in the objects and the archives associated with them. This reframing adheres to scientifically grounded historical research rather than artistic research and practices that have been applied elsewhere with wakening and trail-blazing effects.[2] In some instances, however, the latter were pursued in an almost unconscious gesture of delegation of responsibilities, as if art *per definitionem* would be more unbiased and its grasp on "ethnographic objects," *a priori*, more legitimate (Leeb 2013, 55).

The Mannheim World Cultures' object and photography collections and archive are steeped in colonial entanglements on various levels. They speak of provincial actors from Mannheim and its surroundings that were involved in global colonial politics and trade; Theodor Bumiller, a Lieutenant of the *Kaiserliche Schutztruppe* in Deutsch-Ostafrika (German East Africa) and a local celebrity in Mannheim is one example. He wrote the official diaries[3] of several military expeditions in Deutsch-Ostafrika, which are now in the archive of the World Cultures Collections at the REM together with a dozen photographs in which Bumiller staged himself in colonial master poses. Furthermore, he also brought home a vast collection of East African objects, which were later successively donated to the museum by him and his widow, Emilie Bumiller-Lanz.[4] One of these objects, a large and plain ivory tooth with no carving (IV Af 3040), illustrates another aspect of colonialism of which the collections speak: the agency of local indigenous actors in the colonies and their diverse

strategies of dealing with European powers and their representatives. The ivory tooth was a gift, which Bumiller received from the hands of Tippu Tip, a powerful Madagascar-born ivory and slave trader who built himself a vast trade monopoly throughout East Africa. In the wake of colonial wars, suppression, and the destruction of traditional social institutions and authorities, he stepped into local power vacuums and became one of the most influential and wealthiest actors in East African colonial society (Hahner-Herzog 1990). Precious gifts, such as ivory, communicated great wealth and power, while at the same time assured the goodwill of the beneficiary towards the giver in future economic and political relationships.

The collection also includes a diverse range of material from the expedition of Franz and Pauline Thorbecke into the Bamender Grassfields in Cameroon, then Deutsch-Westafrika, in 1912–13. Included in the collection are water colours by Pauline Thorbecke showing King Njoya of Bamum and the Queen Mother Niapundunke among other members of the court, as well as a great number (around 1,300) of objects such as the helmet mask *tu nkum mpelet* (IV Af 4888) from the treasury of the King. Njoya followed what can be called an appeasement politic with the German colonial powers. By accepting their authority and submitting to new trade rules, he hoped to establish a peaceful relationship that would leave the social, political, and religious worlds in Bamum somewhat undisturbed by the more violent upheavals of colonial intrusion (Geary 1994; Oberhofer 2009).

Other ways of resisting the German colonial power were practiced in Namibia, then German South-West Africa The military reaction by German troops to the Herero and Nama uprising lead to the genocide of these two ethnic groups, leaving thousands dead (Kößler and Melber 2004; Zimmerer and Zeller 2004).[5] The Mannheim collection houses a seal imprint of Samuel Maharero and a letter by Jacob Morenga, leaders of the Herero and Nama during the uprising, as well as many objects of Herero material culture which entered the collection through the hands of Germans who held military offices during the wars between 1904 and 1908.

In addition to telling stories from the former German colonies, collections and exhibitions reveal German colonial entanglements and networks beyond the boundaries of the country's own oversea territories, such as the involvement in the suppression of the Boxer Uprising/ Yihetuan Movement in China between 1899 and 1901, which is told with objects acquired from the imperial palaces in Beijing and other places.

Last but not least, self-reflection of collection and exhibition strategies in Mannheim can be inaugurated. For example, the documentation of the colonial exhibit in 1937 illustrates how exhibitions supported colonial purposes. By "mining the collection" (Wilson 1994) and tracing stories of colonial situations which are attached to these objects and their biographies, a consequential historicisation of an ethnographic collection is pursued. Objects are no longer used as mere representatives of extra-European, monadic cultures with clear-cut boundaries and frozen in time.

Anthropologising the Art Exhibit

In 2010, the Staatliche Ethnographische Sammlungen Sachsen (SES, Stately Ethnographic Collections of Saxony, Germany) became part of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (SKD) with the aim of forming close interconnections between the art and ethnographic collections. One of the first major projects which resulted from this fusion was a cooperative project with the Vatican Museums about the so-called "Indian Museum" of the Dresden-born, neo-classically influenced sculptor Ferdinand Pettrich (1798–1872). In the 1830s, Pettrich lived and worked in Washington, DC and Philadelphia creating 33 plaster-cast images of Native Americans who had come as delegates to the capital to negotiate treaties for land and peace.[6] These works, owned today by the Vatican Museums, were shown at the Albertinum in Dresden, an art museum which houses modern and contemporary art as well as a famous sculpture collection. The exhibit was called "Tecumseh, Keokuk, Black Hawk: Portrayals of Native Americans in Times of Treaties and Removal."[7] In naming it this way, a statement was made that the artist's subjects, and less the artist himself, were the focus of the exhibit.

Pettrich's depictions of Native diplomats were interpreted as late neo-classically influenced, naturalised, and exoticised versions of Roman Emperors. To show these works without commentary as one would usually do in the "white-cube"-setting of the art museum seemed out of place for this subject. We wanted to visualise the political context during which Pettrich created his works and also integrate Native voices with those events. In 1830, the Indian Removal Act had just been passed by Congress. It was determined that Native Americans living east of the Mississippi River were not to be part of the US-American Nation and that they had to move west of the river. The Cherokee Trail of Tears was one of the results of the forced resettlements. Pettrich's work itself hardly talks about these upheavals in Native lives, and when it does he does not give the causes. The art-works themselves do not transmit the political context.

Thus, a variety of strategies were deployed to provide visitors with contextual material.

At the exhibition entrance, the stage was set by putting the text of the Indian Removal Act next to a drawing book by Pettrich, showing an antiquised Native fighting a sea monster. The two perspectives on the art works, looking at artistic strategies of antiquisation and exotification, **and** the political realities were thus introduced at the same time. The sculptures were presented in the main hall in a highly aesthetic way. One could have easily given in to an aestheticised, exoticised perception of the works. Along the walls, however, quotes by some of the Native Americans who Pettrich portrayed and also Euro-American politicians and artists were installed, like a leitmotif, referring to the political context. In this way, the life-changing and threatening situation for Native Americans at the time was clearly shown. In addition, throughout the exhibit, object labels for the individual sculptures conferred information about the actual person portrayed and much less about art-historical issues.

In Pettrich's lifetime, the individual bust was one of the most prestigious personal objects of bourgeois and noble men alike, indicating a certain position in society and personal accomplishments. To parallel this meaning with Native art and visual culture, we chose objects from the same time and the respective tribes which communicated similar achievements, such as high social position, power, and prestige inside Native society. They were objects that would also be inherited in the family, as busts in European contexts were handed down. Native objects in the exhibit included a buffalo robe with the achievements of the bearer, a so-called war shirt, and a bear-claw necklace.

The most famous work in the exhibit was "Dying Tecumseh."[8] The Shawnee Tecumseh was one of the most influential politicians, military leaders, and visionaries in Native American-Euro-American history. He tried to achieve his dream of a pan-indigenous confederation in opposition to the United States government by military means. Tecumseh died in the British-American War in 1813 (Sugden 1998). Pettrich portrayed him as the dying hero who had fought bravely but whose cause failed.[9] To integrate a contemporary Native and at the same time more hopeful perspective on him, parts of the film "Tecumseh's Vision"[10] were shown in a separate media room. The film featured Shawnee and other Native American scholars speaking about the meaning of Tecumseh to their identities as Native Americans today.

Black Hawk was another Chief who Pettrich portrayed. His life-memories which were dictated to an interpreter (Black Hawk 1833) are today understood to be the first written autobiography by an American

indigenous individual. Like the film about Tecumseh, an audio station in a separate black box room was installed, where the voice of an actor reading Black Hawk's experiences while travelling to the east, to Washington, was heard, directly contextualising Pettrich's visual depiction.

Last but not least, the contemporary work *Ghost in the machine*, a plaster cast of Myron's antique Athena tied to a refrigerator by Jimmie Durham,[11] was positioned at the exit of the show. Pettrich's representations of Native Americans with their neo-classical influence are deeply rooted in European art history, strongly leaning on the classical age; Durham's installation took on these European foundations with a very ironic twist.

Through the course of the preceding text, I have looked at entanglements in two ways. Both "ethnographic objects" and art-works are deeply entangled in colonial grand histories and personal encounters, which can be worked out by historicising ethnological collections and by anthropologising (and also historicising) art and their display. But what also becomes entangled during the process of researching and exhibiting these objects are the disciplinary perspectives from which we look at the items in question. By collaborating with colleagues from other disciplines, we can tell different and, at best, richer and deeper stories about the objects themselves, their new lives in differing contexts, and their makers and users.

Notes

[1] The Museum für Asiatische Kunst currently shares the museum complex with the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum Europäischer Kulturen in Berlin-Dahlem and will also be part of the presentations in the Humboldt-Forum.

[2] Compare artistic interventions in ethnographic museum settings, critical of allochronic, ahistorical, authorless, culturalising and ethnofying (re)presentations of objects, people, and cultures, and without indigenous or other minority self-representation, e.g. James Luna's performance *The Artifact Piece* (1986) in the San Diego Museum of Man or Fred Wilson's installation *Mining the Museum* (1992) in the Maryland Historical Society.

[3] "Expedition nach Mpwapwa" (1889); "Expedition nach dem Kilima Ndscharo" (1891); "v. Wissmann'sche Seeen-Expedition I, II" (1893–94).

[4] The museum documentation is not clear on the total number of objects from Bumiller: 1,064 can be attributed to him with fair certainty.

[5] The estimates of the victims of the genocide vary greatly as there are no precise numbers for either the pre-war Herero and Nama population or the losses during and in the aftermath of the war (Zimmerer 2004: Fn. 16, p. 245).

[6] See the exhibition catalogue (Edenheiser and Nielsen 2013) for further information about the artist, his body of work, and the circumstances of their creation as well as basic information on the individuals portrayed.
[7] The exhibit was co-curated by the art historian Astrid Nielsen, curator at the Skulpturensammlung (SKD), and the author, then curator for The Americas at the Staatliche Ethnographische Sammlungen Sachsen (SKD).
[8] For the exhibit, the plaster version was on loan from the Vatican Museums. The Smithsonian American Art Museum houses a marble version of this work.
[9] The model lurking behind the image of the Native leader is the classical "Dying Gaul" of the Capitoline Museums in Rome.
[10] "Tecumseh's Vision" is part 3 of the television series *We Shall Remain* (USA 2009).
[11] Jimmie Durham is a Cherokee-born artist; he is not officially enrolled in a federally recognised Native American tribe (König 2012, 126).

CHAPTER TWO

INTERCULTURAL MUSEUM PRACTICE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE BELONGING PROJECT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

MARGARET QUINN

Museums have striven to address their changing role in society in recent years. In the wake of changing migratory patterns, accepted notions of why the museum exists and what and who it represents are now being renegotiated. New stories, experiences, and peoples present a challenge to exclusive and dominant national narratives and cultural memory. At the same time, museums now consider their impact on social change and social justice as an ethical imperative; embedded within this change of emphasis is the potential contribution museums can make to the needs of interculturalism.

This chapter explores the potential of new museological practices as a means of engendering social change and addressing social justice issues within society by challenging visitors to renegotiate existing perspectives of different cultural communities through an intercultural paradigm. Intercultural museum practice signals a movement away from older forms of diversity representation and multicultural approaches to represent diverse cultural communities. Instead, interculturalism represents a move towards a paradigm of practice which is dialogical in nature and challenges those involved to think beyond simplistic cultural representation. Intercultural museum practice is focused on the end goal of achieving cross-cultural understanding and identification between and amongst different cultural communities. In order to interrogate intercultural engagement, this chapter examines an example of best practice that addresses issues of racism and social justice through the creation of a platform for intercultural dialogue, engagement, and self-reflection.

The Adoption of Interculturalism

The expansion of Europe and lifting of border controls, as well as the social and economic mobility of different national groups have resulted in a stark rise in migration on a previously unheard-of scale. Changing country demographics produce and reproduce a rich tapestry of people, cultures, communities, and practices. Cultural diversity has increasingly become the primary descriptor for the societies in which we live, so much so that UNESCO has termed cultural diversity the "common heritage of humanity" (UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity 2011). Cultural diversity is not solely composed of patterns of different cultural groups living side by side; it also involves the inter-diversity that exists within cultural communities. This growth in migration has led to the formation of "super-diverse" (Vertovec 2006, 1) societies, a term which encompasses the heightened levels of migration and settlement of migrant communities and the "diversification of diversity" (Ibid.) within multicultural societies. Such variables as country of origin, language, patterns of residential distribution and segregation, differing forms of inequality, and recognition of cultural and religious identity are included in this paradigm (Alibhai-Brown 2000), as well as a diversity of practices, belief systems, and behavioural norms.

Multiculturalism was adopted across Europe as a means of rejecting monocultural models of ethno-cultural management and abandoning value systems that promote processes of assimilation of minority cultural groups into the dominant national culture. Multiculturalism has become a civic and legal framework in which cultural diversity is celebrated and minority cultures are assured protection, freedom of cultural expression, and freedom from discriminatory practices. It also provides the additional provision of "cultural accommodations" to ensure equality of representation and redress for discrimination (Joppke 2003, 4). Multiculturalism, however, has been widely criticised for its focus on difference as a basis for the celebration of diverse cultures and the inability of the model to explore cultures beyond superficial aspects such as food, art, and traditional practices (Alibhai-Brown 2000), leading to a lack of understanding of the diversity within cultural communities and the points of similarity between cultural groups. In particular, this inability of symbolic multiculturalism (Barrett 2003, 12) to delve deeper than the surface features of culture to explore illiberal cultural practices (Kymlicka 2012, 4) and shared histories has further reinforced the idea of cultural communities as incompatible and inextricably different. This has led to diverse cultural communities living segregated or parallel lives (Cantle

2001), with little or no contact between them, and perceptions of different cultures based upon stereotypical images. At a political level, Angela Merkel points to the "failure of multiculturalism" (Weaver 2010) to create a peaceful, cohesive society where people of different cultural backgrounds live side-by-side, while David Cameron argued in Parliament that the nature of multiculturalism has threatened the collective national identity of Britain.

The concept of interculturalism has been referred to since the 1980s, particularly in French and Dutch responses to multiculturalism (James 2008, 2). As a model of ethno-cultural management, interculturalism promotes intercultural dialogue and interaction as a means of creating social cohesion and identification between cultural communities. Meer and Modood (2011, 177) refer to interculturalism as:

> […] something greater than co-existence, in that Interculturalism is allegedly more geared towards interaction and dialogue than multiculturalism. Second that Interculturalism is conceived as something less "groupist" and more yielding of synthesis than multiculturalism. Third that Interculturalism is something more committed to a stronger sense of the whole, in terms of such things as societal cohesion and national citizenship. Finally, that where multiculturalism may be illiberal and relativistic, Interculturalism is more likely to lead to criticism of illiberal cultural practices [as part of the process of intercultural dialogue].

At a European level, intercultural dialogue as a means of promoting social cohesion and tolerance was first identified at the Third Summit of the Head of State and Government in 2005. The Faro Declaration on the Council of Europe's Strategy for Developing Intercultural Dialogue (2005) (Council of Europe 2008, 8) situated intercultural dialogue as a viable political and civic means of promoting peaceful co habitation and intercultural understanding among and between different cultural communities (Council of Europe 2005). Similarly, intercultural dialogue was identified as a primary objective in the Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World (2007) as a "main instrument of peace and conflict prevention" (Council of Europe 2007), while the findings of the Report of the Group of Eminent Persons of the Council of Europe (2010) (Council of Europe 2010) pointed to an increasing threat to social cohesion and civil liberties of diverse communities across Europe.

These policies and reports provided the basis for the development of the Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (2008), which was developed as a "conceptual framework and guide for policy makers and practitioners" (Council of Europe 2008) with regards to the nature and potential of intercultural dialogue and how it can be

implemented in the political and civic sphere. The White Paper identified five policy approaches for the promotion of intercultural dialogue, including democratic governance of cultural diversity, participation, intercultural competencies, and spaces for intercultural dialogue to occur.

In practice, the policy recommendations turned into initiatives, such as the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities Programme, an opportunity that provides a framework for cities to foster intercultural dialogue and engagement through existing shared spaces and civic institutions such as schools, libraries, and museums (Council of Europe 2013). The programme reinforces the importance of shared space, education, arts, and cultural programming, illuminating aspects of shared history, culture, and identity.

Changes in Museum and Cultural Practice

Changing ethical considerations in the cultural and museum sphere have prompted a renegotiation of the role of the museum and its responsibilities to the audiences it serves (Sandell 2007). The result is a movement away from the more traditional role of the museum as primarily concerned with the preservation and protection of material culture and the transmission of formal education, towards a new museology focused on moral activism (Ibid.), democratic participation (Marstine 2011, 11), and a commitment to address social justice issues within society (Sandell 2007). These themes are now thought to be part of the core function of the museum and something to be achieved as part of an ongoing process rather than an end goal.

The change in attitudes in museums has engendered a renegotiation of older forms of museology within which minority cultures have been represented through ethnocentric lenses. Older forms of representation, which amount to the "othering" or marginalisation of minority cultures, have their roots in colonial discourse and offer essentialised images of non-Western cultures as less socially advanced or civilised than dominant Western cultures (Walker 1997; Basso Peressut 2012), as exotic beings (Bloomfield and Bianchini 2004, 98), and fixed within traditional settings or cultural roles (Bhabha 1983).

The movement towards a multicultural approach to engage with cultural diversity was driven by a need to facilitate a culture of tolerance, understanding, and social cohesion within society. Situated within what Bennett terms a "discourse of difference" (2006) the influence of multiculturalism on museum and cultural practice is characterised by an exploration of cultural communities in terms of what differentiated them

from other ethnic groups and the majority cultural community (Witcomb 2003, 86).

The difference-based approach shaped the way museums and cultural institutes addressed cultural diversity wherein forms of representation were often exhibited as a showcase of diverse cultures displayed within the boundaries of one-off "celebratory" (Bennett 2006) events such as Diwali or the Chinese New Year, or as temporary exhibitions. Representations such as these offer limited opportunities to develop cultural literacy concerning other cultural communities and are characterised as a form of symbolic multicultural engagement. Termed the "saris, steel drums, and samosas" approach by Alibhai-Brown (Kymlicka 2012), these forms of engagement seldom move beyond superficial modes of representation; they present cultural communities as homogeneous and provide no opportunity for cross-cultural identification or dialogue between cultures. Another approach found within this model is the promotion of "knowledge-orientated multiculturalism" (Bodo 2012, 182), which is characterised by the exhibition of migrant communities filtered through the dominant cultural perspective for consumption by the majority "local" community. Within this context the relationship between local and ethnic communities is presented as one dimensional for the purpose of educating the dominant community to appreciate and tolerate another culture.

The development of cultural programming for the purposes of creating a sense of belonging or re-dressing the under-representation of migrant or minority cultures is also prevalent within the multicultural framework. This usually takes the form of exhibitions or programmes that look specifically at a minority community or situate the minority culture in relation to the dominant local culture. These forms of representation are problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, even within the context of co-curation with a minority cultural community, curatorial authority almost always remains with the museum or cultural institute. This means that the form of representation of minority groups is still filtered through the perspective of a dominant culture and, by extension, the multicultural agenda of the museum. Within this context, the representation of diverse communities is rooted in dichotomies of "us and them" (Nederveen Pieterse 2005). Secondly, when presented within a dominant historical narrative of a nation or place, the inclusion of migrant or minority groups is often presented within the context of contributors to the dominant culture rather than equally integrated members of the community.

These forms of representation and engagement illustrate the meaning behind the then Director of the Commission for Racial Equality Trevor

Phillips' speech in September 2015 when he stated that Britain was "sleepwalking into segregation" (Phillips 2005). The focus on single-identity cultural work within the museum sphere promotes the idea of essentialist identities and contributes to the formation of segregated cultural groups within society. The lack of opportunity for cross-cultural engagement and representation creates a culture wherein our main point of reference for each other is rooted in our cultural differences, without any real sense of the diversity within cultural groups or the deeper cultural practices of characteristics that bind a cultural community. The absence of deeper forms of engagement has created a context for broadening social divisions and reinforcing negative stereotypes (Karp et al. 1991; Pearse 1997).

In the United Kingdom, there are now frequent examples of museums that are moving away from cultural programming that adopts a difference-based perspective towards an intercultural approach to museum and cultural engagement. The latter is situated within dialogical paradigms (Bodo 2012, 182). Intercultural museum practice is based upon the welfare model of museum engagement as presented by Mark O'Neill. According to O'Neill, power relations are renegotiated to place the individual at the centre of the museum's work as an active player, not a passive recipient. New forms of community collaboration in the development of culturally focused exhibitions or the interpretation of culturally specific collections often emerge (Iervolino 2013). Within these roles, individuals from minority backgrounds play a central role in activities such as reinterpreting objects. Rather than simply providing an ethnographic perspective, they also offer a personal approach and social history to objects including narratives and everyday uses (Clifford 1999). A movement toward what Hooper-Greenhill terms "post museum" (Hooper-Greenhill 2000) has followed in which museum staff share power (Lynch 2011) with groups in society that have traditionally been underrepresented in both the museum and society-at-large.

Additionally, intercultural museum practice is underpinned by a commitment to impact social justice initiatives within society. Based largely on human rights principles, the intercultural museum has been transformed into a space for "moral activism" and the museum's role transformed into an agent of social change (Sandell 2007). The primary purpose of the intercultural museum is to break down existing social power relations and contribute to the achievement of social justice issues outside the museum walls, rather than simply exhibit and explore aspects of culture. In this sense, the exploration of culture is often secondary to the central purpose of achieving aims, such as addressing racism, poverty, or

discrimination. As such, museum exhibitions and programmes are often developed along thematic rather than ethnographic lines and concentrate on exploring elements of cultural exchange and similarities between cultural communities or they explore the impact of a particular theme in a range of different cultural communities.

At the core of intercultural practice is the focus on creating a platform for intercultural dialogue and interaction between diverse cultural communities. This practice involves adopting a "culturally pluralist and anti-imperialist stance" (Shi-xu 2005, 72) to foster dialogue and enable the development of cultural competencies with participants who act as tools to challenge pre-conceived notions of culture and "otherness" and create awareness of pluralistic identities. Intercultural dialogue within the museum and cultural sector thus creates a space in which all individuals come together as equal players and where cultural misunderstandings and misrepresentations can be renegotiated. Objects and personal narratives play a central role in achieving intercultural dialogue and act as a catalyst for the exploration of commonalities between cultural communities. Within a dialogical paradigm, cultural heritage and the objects and intangible narratives that characterise it are not fixed signifiers of one cultural heritage. They are "renegotiated, reconstructed in their meaning, and made available for all to share in a common space of interaction" (Bodo 2012).

The dialogical nature of intercultural programming has promoted the view of the museum as a third "intercultural" space. This symbolic "third space" (Bloomfield 2007) moves beyond Clifford's notion of museums as "contact zones" (Clifford 1999, 438), where colonial encounters occur between different cultures within structural imbalances of power relations, towards spaces which are not under the ownership of any specific culture of civic politics. Intercultural spaces are designed as "micro publics" (Wood and Landry 2008) or spaces for intercultural interaction and engagement; they provide the opportunity for individuals to renegotiate and explore their personal and cultural identity and sense of belonging within society.

The Belonging Project, the Belfast Migrant Centre

The Belonging Project is a photographic project developed in 2014 by the Belfast Migrant Centre, a part of the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM). Northern Ireland has for some time experienced a rising problem in racism and race-oriented hate crimes; at the same time, there has been a lack of government policies relating

specifically to race relations[1] and the protection of ethnic minority communities from discrimination. The scale and ferocity of racially-motivated crime and other incidents led to Northern Ireland earning the title of "race hate capital of Europe" in various media outlets in 2004 (Knox 2011, 387).

The Belfast Migrant Centre is on the front-line in dealing with issues of race hate, discrimination, and racial abuse. One of the primary functions of the organisation is to provide support and advice for migrants and individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds dealing with incidents of racial abuse or mistreatment and to facilitate access to police and other social facilities. The Belonging Project was developed in response to the growing trend towards discrimination and racially oriented hate crimes in Northern Ireland. The purpose of the project is to illustrate the personal journeys of migrant individuals coming to and settling in Northern Ireland. Concentrating predominantly on ordinary personal stories, the aim is to allow the similarities and points of mutual identification to shine through personal narratives and allow visitors to connect with them.

The Belonging Project provides an example of intercultural museum practice situated within the cultural and community context. Participants from migrant backgrounds in Northern Ireland were invited to give their personal narratives of travelling to and living in Northern Ireland; they were photographed with a personal artefact which served to illuminate their personal narratives and to further reinforce the individual nature of migration. The project also acts as a point of identification between the visitor and the participant.

Participants were recruited to the project through an open call via the NICEM website. As it developed, recruitment continued via word of mouth. The recruitment drive grew organically; existing migrant or ethnic minority cultural or arts groups were not approached. This method impacted the project outcomes in a number of ways. First, because existing cultural organisations were not used to recruit participants, individuals approached the project independently. Emphasis was placed on the individual narrating their own personal stories, relatively unencumbered by broader cultural or communal influences or dominant cultural narratives. This gave each individual the space and freedom to explore their own journeys without reference to their cultural background and to portray elements of plural and multiple identities. Secondly, this form of recruitment limited the potential risks associated with relying upon cultural gatekeepers. Cultural gatekeepers are often cultural elites or those who hold power and influence in a community who could potentially constrain community members within "cultural scripts" (Kymlicka 2012,

5), wherein a dominant cultural narrative replaces the individual narrative, or images of "groupness" (Joppke 2003, 5) in which individual community members are portrayed as belonging to a collective identity. The Belonging Project provided a platform for the representation of individual narratives derived from a wide range of migrant and ethnic backgrounds through which the portrayal of singular identities and experiences overtly challenged the perception of cultural communities as essentialised and homogeneous.

Elements exhibited in the project exemplified co-production between the project team and the participants, with evidence of ownership of the project given to participants. All objects displayed in the images were selected by the participants with little input from the project team other than the directive that the items represent their personal journey and settlement in Northern Ireland. Similarly, participants were not presented with a list of questions to answer for collecting personal narratives. They were asked to narrate their story and given prompts when necessary. In this sense, it can be argued that the engagement between the participants and the project team enabled the former to take ownership of the project and present their own voices and stories in a process which could potentially impact their lives and communities.

Personal narratives provided the opportunity for cross-cultural identification and increased understanding between individuals and groups from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Themes that emerged were universal experiences which are accessible beyond the structures of race and cultural belonging, such as immigration, experiences of homesickness, changing friends, and family relationships. The exploration of such themes addressed issues of cultural misunderstanding and the perceptions of migrant communities as existing in a dichotomous relationship with local, national communities.

Each participant was photographed holding a personal belonging that held significant meaning to them. Objects chosen ranged from those which held cultural significance, such as traditional clothes, to artwork. As the project progressed, the items selected tended to represent the more-ordinary aspects of the individual's everyday life. They served to transmit a particular meaning concerning the everyday normalcy among minority communities to audiences and challenge notions of cultural difference. In the later phases of the project, objects collected from both the participants' home countries and from Northern Ireland were displayed, such as combs, cooking utensils, and books; they represented a sense of place and belonging in both cultural spaces. The articles went beyond cultural structures which held personal meaning to the individual and linked their

journeys from their original homes to Northern Ireland. This use of everyday objects extended the potential for shared identification and meaning between the individual participants and the exhibition visitors. A basis for continuing intercultural dialogue within the context of the exhibition and workshops was established.

One participant in particular selected her Nokia phone which she had brought to Northern Ireland from her home country. She had since upgraded to a newer model and no longer used the phone. Her original phone, however, had immense personal meaning. First, she had used this one during her journey to Northern Ireland and a number of personal messages to her from her friends and family remained on it. More significantly, the phone held a voicemail message from her father before he passed away. These experiences, which many can identify with, illustrated the potential for shared meaning (Falk and Dierking 2000) between individuals from different cultural backgrounds based on common points of similarity. Grief and personal loss are experiences that transcend cultural boundaries and impact the individual on a basic level of human emotion; they are accessible to all individuals regardless of ethnic and cultural background.

The Belonging Project also established community-based workshops which travelled to different locations around Northern Ireland in association with the exhibition. The locations selected ranged from parliament buildings in which governmental legislation relating to the management of cultural diversity and construction of social cohesion is developed, to civic spaces in which diverse communities lived and interacted on a daily basis. Of particular significance were workshop locations in areas with high rates of racist and sectarian crime and attitudes and where traditionally segregated residential patterns exist. In these sorts of contexts, the exhibition and workshops acted to transform the spaces from segregated civic spaces to intercultural third spaces. Neutral zones were created in which identity and perceptions of difference could be explored and negotiated through dialogue and interaction.

The workshops largely adopted a dialogical approach (Bodo 2012) to engage community participants using the personal narratives and images as catalysts to spark dialogue. The content of the workshops was thematically based instead of exploring the experiences of any one particular cultural community. Focus was placed on topics such as identity, stereotyping, and notions of shared experience. This allowed for the exhibition to emphasise themes of anti-racism and community cohesion while avoiding “ethnicising” (Johansson 2014, 129) or “othering” any particular migrant community. An exercise to explore elements of the

narratives and images that workshop participants identified with on a personal level started each programme. An open dialogue about cross-cultural identification and cultural exchange followed. The notion of cultural categorisation (Fusco 1994) was discussed along with how pre-conceived notions of difference were developed and whom they serve; this included exploring the influence of family, community, and media such as television through which representations of gender, ethnicity, and economic status difference are presented from an early age. The dialogue returned to the exhibition to explore how assumptions about the individuals in the photographs were later disproved when explored in connection with the lives and identities of the participants. Overall, the workshops aimed to challenge participants to think about how pre-conceived notions of others are developed; the development of intercultural competencies was facilitated and participants were provided with the tools to recognise and renegotiate their own perceptions of "otherness."

Conclusion

The progression of museum and cultural approaches to representation and engagement with cultural diversity closely mirrors changing attitudes and models of ethno-cultural management at governmental and civic levels. The adoption of multicultural approaches in the museum and cultural sector was appropriate during an epoch characterised by monocultural values and discrimination against migrant communities. These models provided a structure through which cultural diversity was celebrated from a positive perspective as an enriching contribution to the national culture. The notion of cultural difference, as reinforced through a multicultural perspective without adequate progression can, however, have negative impacts on the perception of different cultural communities and on nurturing social cohesion in multi-ethnic societies.

Within the context of intercultural programming, the central focus on achieving social justice through dialogue and interaction engenders a movement away from emphasis on the exclusivity of cultural characteristics. Themes which impact broader spectrums of cultural groups are explored. The focus of the Belonging Project was on dispelling stereotypes and misconceptions that lead to racism against migrant communities. The project can potentially influence a number of cultural groups in Northern Ireland including local communities.

The adoption of a dialogical approach to engagement between diverse cultural communities in a workshop context provided a framework in

which participants had the opportunity to develop cultural literacy concerning other cultural communities and, more importantly, could acquire intercultural competencies. These skills are cultivated within a context comprised of mixed cultural groups where the process of dialogue challenges the renegotiation of perceptions of others, our notions of others derive from are questioned, and new meaning emerges from the interaction.

The adoption of a constructivist approach to meaning making within a dialogical paradigm illustrates how objects and personal narratives are employed to effect changes in attitudes towards others. Perceptions of migrant communities are also confronted. Engagement with personal objects and narratives, particularly those loaded with emotive or familiar qualities, allows the viewer to create meaning from personal identification. For example, the Nokia telephone is a familiar object, easily recognisable in Northern Ireland. This object exists beyond cultural structures. The addition of the emotive personal story associated with the object is recognisable on a very personal level to participants. These variables promote an understanding of and identification with the participants on an individual level beyond perceived barriers of culture and ethnicity. I argue that the Belonging Project has the potential to effect real impact on Northern Irish society. The adoption of intercultural practices in the development of cultural diversity programming for the museum and cultural sector has the potential to engender greater impacts in achieving the goal of improved race relations and social cohesion within the broader society.

Notes

[1] For some time Northern Ireland has not had a Race Relations Policy, the first policy being removed by OFMDFM and the second consultation policy having been released in late 2014.

CHAPTER THREE

SMALL MUSEUMS AND IDENTITY IN SOCIALLY DEPRIVED AREAS

JOHN VELLA AND JOSANN CUTAJAR

Introduction

This chapter analyses the functions of a small museum in a region which has for decades been labelled as socially deprived (Borg 2012; CACRC 2013). According to Watson (2009, 8), small museums "develop directly from the community they serve." They revolve around the return on investment in the locality in which they are ensconced. Small museums, according to Watson, do not belong to or depend on state or institutional funding, and thus are free to act on the objectives set by their curators. Museums that are non-state or non-institutional face different challenges or limitations, namely challenges of resource self-sufficiency and self-sustainability. In spite of these, they have more impact on the community in which they are embedded since they tend to promote the interests and heritage of the people living in the area.

This chapter will examine the particular effects that Bir Mula Heritage Museum had on the Bormla community and whether it helped improve the community's idea of itself. The museum was established with the objective of promoting the tangible and intangible culture in the area. The purpose behind this exercise was twofold. On the one hand, the curator felt that residents needed to safeguard the heritage which had not been destroyed during World War II or after this era when huge swathes of land was used to build social housing. A number of initiatives taken by the museum's staff to promote heritage in the area will be analysed. Some of these projects were created with the goal of enabling residents to appreciate the heritage by which they were surrounded. It was hoped that this appreciation would then lead to investment in themselves and the community. Another objective was to create events to attract tourists and visitors to the area so that they could learn about this tangible and

intangible heritage. The main intention was to use these events to promote tourism in the locality.

Bir Mula Heritage Museum

Bir Mula Heritage Museum, the small museum under discussion, is situated in a residential area of Bormla. The house in which it is located is over a thousand years old, dating back to the Arabic period in Malta. A number of changes have been made throughout the ages and different owners have left their imprint on the structure of the building. The building was restored in the 1990s and during this restoration a number of artefacts were found on site. These include chert tools, red ochre, Neolithic sling stones, animal and marine creature bones, as well as pottery thousands of years old.

From the outside, Bir Mula Heritage Museum appears to be a house typical of the area. The main attractions of this museum consist of atypical architectural features, the graffiti found engraved on its stone, and the collection of artefacts associated with the site. The museum houses other objects which were donated by residents or visitors or bought by the staff.

The museum building is an artefact itself. Different areas demonstrate how stone was cut, trimmed, dressed, and treated to prevent erosion over time. The building consists of three storeys, with the rooms built around a central courtyard. The lower storey, which would now be considered a basement, was at one time a kitchen and a laundry room. There are indications, namely a huge, stone-hewn water container, that these same rooms had previously been used as a farm. The storey above the basement contains a number of rooms, one of which was used as a birthing room, as indicated by the arch placed in the doorway. The third storey consists of a huge room which, in the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries, was a *piano nobile*, or principal floor, used by the upper-class owner of the house. This room has access to an adjoining smaller room with indications that had been used as a chapel. Sometime in the seventeenth century, some rooms on this level were removed to create a patio and look-out platform. When the house was bought by a merchant in the seventeenth century, the belvedere was built so that he could go on the roof to check if his ships had sailed into the harbour. The fortune of the house waxed and waned, depending on the economic situation in the area. After World War II, it fell into disrepair until it was bought and restored in the 1990s.

The people who inhabited or worked in the house often left graffiti etched in the stone. These graffiti include wind roses, an Ottoman Sipahis (soldier), and a number of maritime vessels from different periods, such as

a galley dating from the fifteenth century found in what used to be a chapel. Symbols used by the KnightsTemplar were also found, as well as coats-of-arms, flags, and names. Some of these graffiti have been preserved thanks to the pomegranate or prickly pear-based tinctures applied to the stone to prevent it from weathering away.

This building now houses a number of exhibits of artefacts which were found on site, donated to the museum, or purchased. These include stoves and ovens dating to the seventeenth century onwards, ice boxes, pots, steamers, irons, bed- pans, and others. A section is devoted to bread-making tools, another to pharmaceutical, electrician, sailmaking, and carpenter tools. There are also spaces devoted to artefacts linked with World War II, the feast of the Immaculate Conception (the titular feast of Bormla), and Bormla across the ages. One of the personages linked with Bormla is highlighted: namely Dom Mintoff, the architect of the social welfare system in Malta.

The museum was founded in 1997 by the Vella family as an independent, private, grassroots museum. As a private museum, Bir Mula Heritage Museum does not have access to state or other institutional funding. It has, however, managed to survive and remain active at a time when national and large institutional museums faced a downward trend in both visitor numbers and event attendance.

The museum management carries out socio-cultural events and activities both at the museum and in locations close to it. These activities include arts and crafts festivals, art exhibitions, guided tours, ghost tours, public lectures, courses, seminars, small conferences, and film festivals. The museum staff work in close cooperation with local groups, residents' associations, the local council, heritage personnel, and academics on social as well as cultural issues related to the area.

Background

Prior to World War II, Bormla was a thriving city where trade, services, and arts and crafts necessary to support maritime activity in the area were rampant. The decolonisation of Malta led to the dismantling of the local dockyard. This, together with de-industrialisation, led to massive unemployment among the population in the area. The community's only pride was expressed through the celebration of various religious events (Cutajar 2014). The small local museum also helped to raise self esteem, as shall be shown. Bir Mula Heritage Museum is, therefore, located in an urban region which has a high component of socially disadvantaged persons and families living there (Borg 2012; CACRC 2013).

The Museum: Exclusive or Inclusive

Individuals or groups who suffer from multiple deprivations and are marginalised are classified as socially excluded (Watson 2009). Museums can be used as vehicles for social inclusion. The role of museums as a means to combat social exclusion was recognised by various entities at international, national, and regional levels. Case studies show that museums are not simply formal educational institutions; they also serve as places which offer visitors the opportunity to socialise and interact with others. They help to increase interest in education and further learning and add value to school curricula which can help to improve the local quality of life and social skills (GLLAM 2000).

Kelly (2006) points out that museums which help to raise appreciation of place and culture can lead to community pride, which is essential when it comes to promoting heritage preservation. The cultural heritage displayed in museums can help people become cognisant of their roots in time and space, which can help to construct individual and community identities (Marcoevíc 1996). Dodd and Sandell (2001) argue that museums contribute to an exploration and affirmation of a sense of identity both for the individual and the groups at risk of exclusion or marginalisation.

New museology places an emphasis on education and social inclusion. Shared and common meanings, context, experiences, discourse, and values can help a community come together and act socially and politically and, consequently, facilitate initiatives for local development (Ballesteros and Ramírez 2007). Community identity is largely constructed by and mediated through local heritage, as identities help people to "act, create and communicate," and through their "symbolic, open, political and dynamic" nature "guide and stimulate [society] as catalysts of social action" (Ibid., 677).

Kelly (2006) argues that small regional and community museums contribute to social capital much more than the larger national museums, since the latter tend to be disconnected from the community element. Small museums give space and place in their narratives, texts, exhibitions, and displays to voices previously excluded and absent from the large institutional museums (Cameron 2003). Nonetheless, the advantage of small local museums according to Bourdieu (1989) is that "the closer the agents, groups or institutions which are situated within this space, the more common properties they have" with the community under discussion.

Museums can also help promote social interaction between locals and visitors. This interaction. in itself. can help attract tourism to the area

which, in turn opens up opportunities for further employment and entrepreneurship (Kelly 2006).

Methodology

For the purposes of this chapter, a qualitative approach was used to find out whether Bir Mula Heritage Museum succeeded in attaining some of the issues mentioned above. To do this, the events and activities in which the museum's staff formally or informally engaged will be examined. The objective of this analysis is to find out how the museum impacted the local community and whether the presence of the museum helped to change residents' and visitors' perception of the area. An analysis of visitors' feedback will be used to determine if the museum succeeded or failed in its mission.

Ethnography was deemed to be the best way of conducting this research. Participant observation and textual analysis were the main means of collecting data. For the textual analysis, various sources referring to the museum were analysed. These included comments left by visitors in the Visitor's Book and others made on tourism/travel blogs and websites such as TripAdvisor and social media. Articles and reports from the print media were also analysed. In addition, note was taken of the programmes, series, newscasts, and documentaries in which the museum was mentioned or featured. The keyword which guided the internet search was Bir Mula Heritage, though some other derivatives (such as, for example Bir Mula Heritage Museum or Birmula) were also used by those leaving comments. Visitors also left comments on the museum's website and in the activity archive where posters and material dealing with specific events and activities were stored. This study takes into consideration the museum's permanent and temporary exhibitions, formal and informal pedagogic activities, and interpretation exercises conducted at the venue and/or the area close to the museum.

Appreciation of the Museum

Bir Mula Heritage Museum was originally established to encourage local community members to become interested in heritage, as noted above. Free admission helped attract a number of residents who visited the museum because it was a place which helped "evoke local pride and identity" (McManus 2006, 6). They did not feel alienated by the artefacts on display because they were familiar with the majority of them. A good number of these visitors had used them or similar artefacts when they were

younger, or they had seen people making use of them. The elderly especially dragged grandnieces and grandnephews along to show them the artefacts on display and explain to them how these were used when they were young. Some of those who visited the museum donated artefacts they had at home because they were afraid that the younger generations would throw them away when they died. These consisted mainly of tools used by carpenters, sailmakers, and pharmacists, or war-related paraphernalia. Others came to ask information about some of the artefacts on display because they happened to have similar objects at home and did not know what they were or how they were used.

Some of the local visitors who came were more interested in the building itself. Stonemasons and architects were especially interested in the way the building was structured, the various interventions that had occurred during the ages, and the ways the stone was dressed or cut to build the house. An architect pointed out that the format of some of the arches used to shore up the building was not very common in Malta, and that this was an engineering feat to enable the stones to respond to earth tremors during earthquakes without causing structural damage. Stonemasons studied the way the stones were dressed and the type of liniment used to help against stone erosion over time.

These interactions between visitors and museum staff meant that the transfer of knowledge was two way. As a museum, Bir Mula Heritage fulfilled its role as a learning tool and a space bringing together individuals (Exell 2013). Some who visit the museum return with a treasured artefact for museum staff to assess, or ask museum staff to visit their characteristic houses because they would like information on certain details/structure.

Legends Tell the Building's History

Local visitors recounted a number of stories about the building and neighbourhood in which the museum is located. Some of the visitors who grew up in the neighbourhood recounted childhood experiences of the house or the neighbourhood. They spoke about the people who used to live in the building and how they used the different storeys. Other information was elicited from people who had actually lived in the house but had migrated to Canada, the United States, and Australia when they were young. They spoke about a "library" in the basement which was reached through a flight of stone steps. Others recalled that there had been a round table made of stone in the middle of the courtyard. This turned out to be a Roman olive mill donated to a priory by the previous owner of the building.

Most of these personal narratives called for further investigation to verify whether there was any truth in these stories. Historiography, cartography,[1] old photographs, and archaeological excavation reports were perused to locate the building in time. Artefacts found *in situ* were a critical source of data to construct a basis for the history of the building. These helped in dating the site and trace developments therein. The onsite finds, together with material recorded in nineteenth century reports, gave the museum staff a strong foundation on which to base interpretation and narratives. Consequently, these experiences led both the museum curator and other academics to revisit historiography about the locality. The discoveries at Bir Mula Heritage Museum demonstrated that certain facets of history of the locality had to be rewritten.

Charles Mizzi, an investigative journalist who conducted research on the neighbourhood, found that local residents referred to the building as "the house of conspiracies." It seems that in the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries secret meetings were held there. Mizzi learned this story from a house-bound woman who had never visited the museum. The numerous graffiti of a cross purported to be the emblem of the Knights Templar along with a secret drawer hewn in one of the walls were found when the house was being renovated. When this drawer was opened, pieces of parchment, coins minted in 1787, and the wax used to seal messages were found.

A number of legends, some of them backed by evidence, are linked with this house. It is said that secret meetings took place between the Ottomans and the Knights of St. John's envoys in 1565**.** Among the narratives that Mizzi heard was that the Knights Templar held secret meetings in the basement to decide which knight would be backed when the reigning Grand Master died. Other stories speak about the clandestine meetings held there between 1798 and 1800, wherein the conspirators sought to find ways to evict the French army ensconced in Birgu and, as a consequence of which, the house was ransacked and set on fire.

Visitors also recounted the tale of a young knight who fell in love with a lady from Bormla who lived in the building which now houses the museum. One day, the knight and the lady disappeared and some say they were killed and their bodies hidden inside the building. Others say that the ghosts of the couple still haunt it. Although attempts were made to verify this story, no skeletons have been found. Residents from the area, however, ask the staff whether they have encountered the ghosts.

Bir Mula Heritage Museum collects this information and narratives and tries to verify them against historical facts. Visitors feel proud when their knowledge is disseminated through the museum.

Written in Stone

As noted above, a number of graffiti were unearthed when the building was being restored. Some of the symbols used were not familiar to museum staff so professional advice was sought. Researchers interested in graffiti were invited to give their expert advice on the images. For example, some graffiti near the front door seemed to be written in Paleo-Hebrew. According to Professor Benjamim Tsedaka, Head of the Israelite Samaritan Information Centre in Israel, the message was not in Paleo-Hebrew but in another language. Another graffiti script contained Phoenician or Neo-Punic letters, but experts could not explain how or why they came to be carved. They conjectured that perhaps people wanted to leave a message and used a language that was not common to the majority population. The fact that these graffiti were so close to the front door might suggest that it might be a prayer to protect the residents from harm.

Another interesting graffito, which is quite uncommon on the Maltese Islands, was the figure of an Ottoman Sipahis found on one of the stones found in the *sala maggiore*. The design shows that whoever carved it was very familiar with the uniform and accessories used by the sixteenth-century Ottoman Janissaries encamped in Bormla during the siege of Malta in 1565. The graffito might have been made by Ottoman soldiers themselves. In fact, a notation in a diary of a Knight of the Order of St. John dated 1565 documents that Ottomans occupied the houses in Bormla (Balbi de Coreggio edn. 2005 [1568]).

Some of the graffiti probably depicts events linked with the history of Bormla. Images of fourteenth- to nineteenth-century maritime vessels, the coat of arms of the Grand Masters, Templar Knight crosses, and navigation symbols were carved on the stones. Visitors are intrigued by the graffiti, and often use knowledge acquired from areas of their lives to give them meaning. Though the museum constructed its own interpretation based on research and consultation, visitors are allowed to interact and share their own interpretation, which provides for further learning for all involved. The interaction, opinion sharing, and dialogue between museum staff and visitors provide for a negotiated and accepted narrative about the house.

Publications and the Media

Due to the fact that there is little information about the cultural heritage of Bormla on tourist websites and texts, the museum staff took initiatives to publish tourism-related material and information about a number of

historic sites found in the area. The Bormla brochure and map were published in 2000 by the then Minister for Tourism; the event was covered by the media and helped raise further awareness about the museum and local cultural heritage in the locality. In 2014, Bir Mula Heritage Museum published the first ever set of postcards featuring Bormla since those by Geo Fürst a century earlier.

Previous negative local images and stigmas were counteracted by the appearance of the museum in the media. As a consequence of this publicity, the Malta Tourism Authority offered to promote the museum on its official website. Thus, journalists visited the museum and wrote features about it, which led to a number of visitors from outside the locality also visiting. Through Bir Mula Heritage Museum, the locality began to be listed as a tourist attraction. Kelly (2006) argues that museums have to raise awareness and appreciation of the locality in which they are to be found and this is what Bir Mula Heritage Museum did. It plays an important role as a tourist attraction and acts as a tool to promote tourism within the locality, one of the means needed to revive economic activity and investment in the area.

Inclusive Museum

Bir Mula Heritage Museum's mission is to promote cultural heritage appreciation among local community members and visitors. It is also used as a space where NGOs and concerned individuals meet to promote the area on social, economic, and political levels. A number of NGOs and social groups hold meetings at the museum when they do not have a place of their own. The Cospicua (Bormla) Residents Association (Abela 2005; Attard 2004; Fenech 2006) was one of the groups which initially met at Bir Mula Heritage Museum. The primary objective of the participants who attended these meetings was not to visit the museum, but they often did so prior to or after their meetings (Falk 2009). Eventually, this NGO became known as the *ARC-Assoċjazzjoni tar-Residenti tal-Cottonera* (Cottonera Residents' Association) and helped to safeguard the interests of residents living in Senglea, Bormla and Vittoriosa, the Three Cities. Ballesteros and Ramirez (2007) note that shared and common factors help a community to come together, act socially and politically, and come up with initiatives for local development. These and other groups have met at Bir Mula Heritage Museum to discuss and take action over how the neighbourhood could be improved and keep an eye on so-called government instigated regeneration projects, which have done little to ameliorate the community's standard of living.

The museum also provided the *Fondazzjoni Bormliża għal Persuni b'Diżabilita* (Foundation for Bormla Disabled Persons) with space to organise activities. Members of this group, supported by relatives and friends, have set up a live Nativity scene and play at the museum for a number of years. This activity permitted disabled persons and their families to interact with the public and gain self-esteem as museum visitors expressed recognition and appreciation of their talent.

These initiatives were possible because the museum was detached from any form of structural pressure and dependency, practices which national and institutional museums may not adopt because of their nature (Coffee 2008). Bir Mula Heritage Museum also promoted social inclusion by collaborating with pressure groups and national agencies concerned with social and community work, including collaboration with *Appoġġ*, a national agency which provides psycho-social welfare services. These joint efforts contributed to what Dodd and Sandell (2001) saw as the identity affirmation of individuals and groups at risk of social exclusion.

Bir Mula Heritage Museum also helps promote the talent of emerging artists and artisans, especially those who cannot afford to exhibit in establishments which charge fees that some of the participants are not in a position to pay. Maltese and foreign established artists exhibit their work at the museum and collect donations for charitable purposes. These and other activities permit interactions with the local community at the museum. Most of the activities held in Bir Mula Heritage Museum were not-for-profit, but for the community's benefit.

Some of the exhibitors and emerging artists benefitting from the free-of-charge space offer were unemployed youths, single parents, elderly, ex-convicts and ex-abusers, disabled persons, and those from local handicrafts and artisan cooperative which had no premises to exhibit. The museum, later used by more established Maltese and foreign artists to collect funds for charitable purposes, allowed "socially disadvantaged" exhibitors to feel proud and gain higher self-esteem, since they were exhibiting on the same level as established national and international artists. Analogous activities permitted the local community to interact with the traditional "exclusive" museum community and feel included in the museum's cultural events. This sort of interaction was impossible at state-owned or other private galleries since exhibiting and participating in them involved paying exorbitant prices, which was not possible to most artists and groups. The functions of Bir Mula Heritage Museum validate McManus's (2006) argument that most of the activities of a museum are not-for-profit but for the community's benefit.

Bir Mula Heritage Museum as a Didactic Tool

Bir Mula Heritage Museum was established for educational purposes. This goal is attained through the object- or history-related activities which lead to interactive and personal pedagogy among visitors. But the staff did not stop there. From the initial school outreach, the museum ventured further and designed certified vocational and specialisation courses for licenced tourist guides to equip them with information about the tangible and intangible cultural heritage in the locality.

Bir Mula Heritage Museum organised a series of public lectures, seminars, and courses about local history, and Japanese culture and craft. Local residents and others who attended these lectures had the opportunity to interact with lecturers, which would not have been possible because of the social divide (GLLAM 2000). These activities helped in the capacity development of different individuals from the locality.

Through its exhibitions and educational programmes, Bir Mula Heritage Museum departed from a "function based model" concentrating on collections, to a "communicative" branch of museology (van Mensch 2004, 4). Formal educational curricula and public museums do not leave space for working-class or socially-excluded individuals to explore their culture (Howard 2003). Small museums have the chance to experiment and create their own methods and approaches to meet the local community's needs, and reach out to minorities within the community. This can occur because museums serve as a social space presenting the community with shared commonalities (Bourdieu 1989). As an independent museum, it can reach out to the socially excluded by building a personal knowledge base from its community.

Activities are chosen to attract the socially disenfranchised, such as exhibitions dealing with local religious or sporting events, including the annual traditional Passover table and art exhibition during Holy Week and Easter Sunday. Locally known as *Mejda ta' l-Appostli*, the Last Supper display at Bir Mula Heritage Museum is based on the Essene Passover tradition. One of the goals of setting up this display emerged from the need to attract visitors who would not necessarily visit a museum, such as those with a passion for religious exhibits. The exhibit takes visitors through other exhibits where they could see and interact with historic artefacts. The approach adopted helped undermine the idea that museums are necessarily elitist (Howard 2003; Macdonald 2003). The museum provided the socially disenfranchised with the opportunity to further their learning and in the process build their self-esteem (Marcoevíc 1996; Kelly 2006).

In addition, the museum holds a number of external events in the area. These include a series of art, crafts, and culinary festivals. Initially, they were organised with the help of University of Malta students studying tourism. The Malta Tourism Authority through Bormla Local Council eventually funded the art and crafts festivals. Outdoor festivals were used to encourage individuals and community groups to publicly exhibit their talents, crafts, and arts to the general public including tourists who would in turn be invited to join guided tours of heritage sites around the area.[2] Entertainment and education were the main intentions behind these festivals.

Negotiated Histories

The museum's collection, originally a family collection, has been enriched with donations from local people. The artefacts, utensils, tools, photographs, or other musealia,[3] most of which were new to the curator, led to a negotiated form of interpretation and presentation. Local visitors looked at old photographs and identified people and events caught on film. Thus, the museum gathered information about people, places, and events which was not recorded in histories elsewhere. Every interaction between museum staff and visitors is a source of oral history, which should be recorded, preserved, and transmitted for future generations. In fact, most of the building's history as well as the interpretation of the artefacts on display are based on a negotiated process which takes place between visitors and staff as well as research.

Bir Mula Heritage Museum did not back down from its primary objectives to negotiate and mediate the interpretation of the museum content (Desvallées and Mairesse 2010). Oral histories were analysed against documented facts and research conducted by various historians while keeping in mind the fact that historians past and present can be subjective rather than objective. In fact, the museum realised that even the local community's interpretation could be subject to biases and subjectivities.

Museums: Size Matters!

According to Kelly (2006), small community museums contribute to social capital much more than larger national museums. As noted earlier, this may be due to the high degree of agency that small private museums enjoy, when compared to larger institutional and national museums. The fact that Bir Mula Heritage Museum is self-funded means that it is

autonomous. Decisions are not answerable to a central authority. Their agency, however, is affected by lack of funds (Kelly 2006).

Conclusion

This case study about Bir Mula Heritage Museum in Bormla, Malta, shows that the functions and practices of small museums in stigmatised communities can help empower residents by adopting objectives that first and foremost put the needs of the community first. By providing different activities and learning opportunities, small museums in one way or another can help residents build a more positive self-identity, which serves at the same time to assuage the stigma linked with minority groups.

Bir Mula Heritage Museum was capable of providing and facilitating inclusive museum pedagogy which helped to ameliorate the community's identity among the residents and outsiders. The museum achieved these goals by involving the community, giving them a place, and enabling them to voice their needs. Apart from this, Bir Mula Heritage Museum promoted and raised awareness about local heritage among national and international visitors, putting Bormla on the tourism map.

The functions of this particular small museum within a socially deprived area were essentially community-oriented; they revolved around the objective of a return on investment in the locality in which the museum is entrenched (Watson 2009). The museum was free to act on its objectives. It faced various challenges and limitations, but its impact on the community was noticeable. This study, thus, proves that small museums succeed in impacting positively on the communities in which they are located.

Notes

[1] The earliest available cartography collection for the Maltese Islands dates from the Great Siege of 1565. Only a few maps show details before that date.

[2] In 2008, Bir Mula Heritage Museum and the Youths for the Environment (University of Malta) held the first *Art, Crafts and Cuisine* Festival. Between 2009 and 2012, Bir Mula Heritage Museum in conjunction with the Bormla Local Council organised the *Cospicua Bastions Festival*, the *Bormla Culturefest*, and the *DockFest*. In 2014, Bir Mula Heritage Museum organised the World Tourism Day involving the Malta Tourism Society, the Malta Union of Tourist Guides, the University of Malta, students, artists and crafts persons. This event was supported by the Ministry for Tourism, the UN-WTO, and the Malta Tourism Authority.

[3] In the Bir Mula Heritage Museum context, musealia extends to items which are usually discarded as they are no longer useful to the user and includes items which

would not be collected by larger state museums or traditional museums. Bir Mula Heritage Museum collects them because they are not replicable or are rare or obsolete, for example, tickets, receipts, and craft-tools.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE MUSEUM OF CHILDHOOD: ART INTERVENTION AS A TOOL FOR INTERPRETING HERITAGE AND HISTORY

MILICA PERIĆ

Introduction

Many modern and contemporary artists have been using museum collections or archival documents as fertile grounds from which a material, a relationship, or a frame of reference for their artistic creation is drawn. They have taken a wide-ranging approach to utilise found and appropriated objects and archival materials along with their attached history. In such a way, archiving and collecting became important contemporary art practices, and the dynamic relationship between academic disciplines such as ethnography or anthropology and contemporary art was established and developed.

In the post-Yugoslavian period, when official historical narratives are often blurred, changed, and manipulated, some artists have chosen to use collections, documents, and archival data and objects to create works that memorialise, question, or confront diverse aspects of this specific political and socio-cultural context. The material that artists appropriate and reconfigure is often intentionally displaced by institutions or individuals. Serbian contemporary artist Vladimir Perić frequently employs techniques of appropriation and recontextualisation of discarded material with historical significance in his pluralistic practice. His preoccupation with discontinuity and the elusive nature of the past, history, memory, and identity reached its most complex approach and practice in the Museum of Childhood project.[1] He started this project after the completion of two earlier ten-year artistic phases. From 1986 to 1996, Perić worked under the pseudonym *Talent*; he was a founder of the artistic group *Talent Factory* from 1996 to 2006.

Perić is very well known in the domestic context of contemporary art as a passionate collector of fragments from everyday culture which he transposes into an artistic perspective and artworks of sensible and witty data-driven visual and conceptual analysis. In the case of the Museum of Childhood, he sought objects that he could use in his artworks. These are objects which equally embodied appropriate aesthetic values but which inevitably held a historical background in relation with the context in which he grew up. The museum project slowly developed from Perić's artistic need to gather material for his artworks while at the same time he assembled artifacts which illustrated and interpreted the complex layers of childhood. The Museum of Childhood became a project which integrated different elements including the passionate collecting of discarded objects, mostly found at flea markets, information gathering, and research of narratives from both "macro" and "micro" historical perspective, and museum-like practices such as the organisation and documentation of the large collection. The Museum of Childhood also employs art intervention as a tool to invent the "counter-narratives" and to generate new readings of the collected objects and archival material, playing with conventional notions in the artistic fusion of facts and fiction.

Both Elsner and Šola clearly describe the influences that explain why Perić used the term "museum" for this ambitious project. Elsner (1994, 1) writes about the impetuses to create permanence, "desire and nostalgia, saving and loss, the urge to erect a permanent and complete system against the destructiveness of time." Šola (2011, 133) also gives a clear opinion about one role of the museum: "More than a mechanism to establish, defend or impose a certain identity, [the] Museum is rather a mechanism of confronting with oneself, a mechanism of introspection and interpretation."

The Collection of the Museum of Childhood

The collection of the Museum of Childhood reflects the vibrancy and diversity of modern and recent history in the framework of youth. Childhood is a social phenomenon (Frønes 1994, 145); it is a socially constructed concept, culturally and ideologically transmitted and influenced by family and society (Zornado 2001, 139). The collection which seeks to illustrate childhood is, accordingly, heterogeneous and can hardly grasp all the complexities and contexts interconnected with the category of childhood.

Multiple and complex layers of the construction of childhood are present in the Museum of Childhood. The fusion of approaches, including

the one which organises the collection by means of the subjective experience, emotions, and memories of the collector on one hand, and a more holistic understanding of childhood as a category that can be defined by various theories within disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, ethnology, and history on the other, makes this concept and the museum's collection complex and broad. The objects in the collection are familiar and drawn from popular culture, being even globally recognised, which insures that the public-at-large can identify them. Objects which are obscure and less familiar, drawn from highly personal knowledge and memory, are also included, and they engage with memory that functions in several interwoven dimensions, i.e. individual, local, national, regional, and international.

Certainly the collection could not be created and maintained as the concept of an "empty attic" that would be filled with childhood-related objects; this is too complex and, thus, a potentially endless topic. Instead, "boxes" were created and certain criteria were introduced to provide the definition of walls for the boxes. This introduction of systematisation provided the artist and the author with a constant dilemma akin to that of a curator or archivist who works within institutional frameworks, who has to select, classify, and discard objects in order to create a collection or an archive with expected qualities.

Generally, the whole *fundus* of the Museum of Childhood has been organised into five major collections or topics with categories and subcategories that indicate specific themes within the broader phenomena of childhood. The research potential of the objects is inevitably present and significant. The museum's collections are being used as source material to study the diverse phenomena of childhood as comprising a category which functions as a narrative of society and history between individual, intimate, and wider contexts. However, the collection is not only defined through its historical and documentary context; the Museum of Childhood is considered a place for the creation and use of objects in scenarios alternative to ones that present objects as documents within historical narratives. Instead of being a disciplinary concept, the collection of the Museum of Childhood has become a source for artistic shaping and constructing the meaning of objects and images.

Art to Interpret the Collection and History

The Museum of Childhood tends to provide a parallel understanding of the value of objects within the collection. The study and research of the objects and the layers of history absorbed by them are engaged to produce

certain knowledge. At the same time, the experiments and surprises of contemporary art activities transpose the objects into dialectical constructs of historicity and fiction within an artistic context. The experiments discussed here are considered as the transformative process for the collection's objects; this process introduces narratives based on both historical fact and subjective interpretation. To carry a feeling about something or someone when leaving the museum instead of positive knowledge, can have a far more significant effect (Šola 2011, 105).

No activity and interpretation in the museum and similar collections-based institutions are objective or free of bias. As Foster argues, "every archive is found yet constructed, factual yet fictive, public yet private" (2004, 9). In institutional museums, a guiding principle is to be as objective and factual as possible. Museums do present objects in new circumstances, but they try to intervene as little as possible and to interpret them in a way that disseminates knowledge based on the proven methodologies of academic research. Use of heritage in museums for a wide range of purposes from educational to scientific is surely present, but it is not generally characteristic that an artistic or freer approach is present in all phases of musealisation, from collecting to interpretation. Surely it is necessary for museums to continue as public places which attempt to make it possible for everyone to experience original material; but alongside this kind of public apparatus for the production of knowledge based on academically verifiable data, it is also important that alternative scenarios exist.

Instead of using a solid methodology or approach, the practice in the Museum of Childhood is quite a fuzzy field combining various tactics. For example, the techniques of selection and arrangement employ organising principles as in archival and museological practice. Museological and curatorial methods of systematisation and documentation of the objects are applied to organise the collection and govern its development in a proper quantitative and qualitative direction. Ethnographic approaches of "following the object" or "following the story" might also be drawn upon in an attempt to grasp the complexity of the contexts involved in the production, use, and discarding or donating of the object.

Collection, accumulation, fragmentation, and interpretation, as artistic strategies, are employed to construct assemblages in which the historical values of the used objects are fused with artistic sensibility and personal reflection toward them and the past and society. By putting diverse, abandoned objects and their narratives and discourses together, artistic interpretation surpasses explanatory modes or pressures of being "objective." This kind of artistic interference can employ a wide range of

interpretational techniques, from personalisation to provocation. In this way, alternate understandings of the present and past are potentially generated or a more vivid way of dealing with heritage is allowed.

It should be added that a large number of the works in the Museum of Childhood are deeply rooted in the Yugoslavian social and cultural context. Appropriated objects serve as "found arks of lost moments in which the here-and-now of the work functions as a possible portal between an unfinished past and a reopened future" (Foster 2004, 15). However, the works attain a universal significance which is comprehensible without knowing the historical connotations. This opens a space for dialogue on the level of more common elements shared by many cultures, such as the categories of childhood, history, memories, identity, or loss.

Contemporary Artistic Intervention as a New Way to the Past: Using Collections and Archival Materials

Several projects at the Museum of Childhood provide illustrative examples of the way that artistic intervention has used objects and archival materials, primarily photographs, to produce narratives that blur boundaries between fact and fiction, artistic and museum ethnography/ anthropology practice, and collective and personal memory. These were a manipulation of well-loved childhood toys, and re-purposed historic photographs.

Fig. 4.1. Mickey Mouse rubber toy, on the left in the condition when found at the flea market. Production: “Biserka” Factory, Zagreb, SFR Yugoslavia, 1968, product number 155. (from the Collection of the Museum of Childhood).

Within the large collection of toys of the Museum of Childhood is a Mickey Mouse rubber toy (Fig. 4.1). It is one of the eleven different models of rubber Mickey Mouse toys produced at the "Biserka" Factory in Zagreb (Fig. 4.2). The factory, established in 1956, specialised in the production of toys, games, and balls. As a result of the Civil War in the 1990s and post-war events, the factory has stopped working. Thus, the possibility of reconstructing relevant data, which would ideally come from the source itself, was inevitably made more difficult.

Fig. 4.2. One of several types of toy packaging from the "Biserka" Factory. (from the collection of the Museum of Childhood).

Relevant production data can be identified on the die-cast label on the reverse side of Mickey Mouse's ears such as the location and manufacturer ("Biserka" Factory, Zagreb, SFR Yugoslavia), the year (1968), and the article number (155), referring to the number of the product in the line of the entire toy production within the factory. In situations where the date of production is not indicated on the toy, this product or article number allows us to determine an approximate period of production. Also indicated is that production was done with license from the Walt Disney Company. Marked on the back of the neck is the number of the mould 4; numbering of moulds was introduced in order to create a system which made it easier to extract and change moulds with some kind of error.

The "Biserka" Factory was the only Yugoslavian toy factory which had an official license from the Walt Disney Company. It is not known exactly when the license was obtained, but some conclusions can be drawn indirectly. The models of other rubber toys in the collection of the

museum, which are marked with item number 58 and number 69, date from 1960. It can be concluded that during one year the factory produced about 12 different rubber models. The lowest model number of a Disney toy in the collection is 31, which means that this model probably dates from 1958. Therefore, the beginning of the official license could be dated to that year, but could also quite possibly date from the year the factory started operating.

Each Mickey Mouse toy in the collection of the Museum of Childhood is different, not only because of the distinct conditions in which they were kept and used in their original context and where they were found after being abandoned by their owners, but also because of variations that originated during production. Such factors include the change of workers on the production line and who painted parts of the toys by hand. Another factor was the availability of regular colours, blue for trousers and yellow for the t-shirt. Some toys were painted with colours that were not standard for the given model; such models were much less commonly circulated.

The toy was produced by casting rubber in a two-part mould. Different techniques were used for adding colour, such as air gun, hand-painting with a brush, hand-painting with templates, and dipping the figure in paint. Use of the two-part mould was most likely abandoned in the early 1970s when it was replaced with the technique of expanded rubber. This model belongs to the "golden period" of production, when the factory had mastered the necessary technology. In the early models, a certain primitiveness is noticeable. However, after 1970 changes in technology because of the need for a greater quantity of products led to a decreased quality and aesthetic aspect of the toys. The technology and design of the figure inform us about the industrial achievements of that time, and about values and aesthetic concepts which arrived in the post-war wave of globalisation.

Disney characters were active factors of the popular culture of the twentieth century. The Disney brand was present in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in the period before World War II, primarily in the field of publishing, in the form of comic books and magazines with stories of Disney characters (Zupan 1999). It was only after World War II that the socialist transformation initiated rapid industrialisation and liberalisation and the policy of "balance between East and West" allowed for greater impacts from the West. Globally recognised items, such as Disney products, increasingly began to influence the design of visual and popular culture, production, consumerism, and daily life. They existed in everyday culture and childhood, as seen in comic books and newspapers, film and

television, toys and literature, as well as in additional products intended for children such as notebooks, and sticker albums.

Fig. 4.3. Children with rubber Mickey Mouse toys (from the photo archive of the Museum of Childhood).

Rubber Mickey Mouse toys, as well as many other toys manufactured in the "Biserka" Factory, were part of childhood in post-war Yugoslavia, most intensively from the 1960s to the late 1980s in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. These toys are an important testimony to private history, everyday life, childhood, and play (Fig. 4.3). They also serve as source material to explore the broader social context, development, and political position of industrialisation, economics, and consumer culture in Yugoslavia. A particular theme for research and dialogue using the Mickey Mouse toy as an embodiment of the "Disneyfication" of childhood and society (Vučetić 2011, 186) could reveal more of the prominent elements which framed the culture and society of that time. "Disneyfication" was certainly part of the context of ideological pluralism in socialist Yugoslavia, wherein climate of balance "based on the idea of Yugoslavia as a meeting point of the East and the West, but belonging to neither" (Mihelj 2011, 27).

In the life of every collector, there is a dialectical tension between the poles of disorder and order (Benjamin 1969, 60).

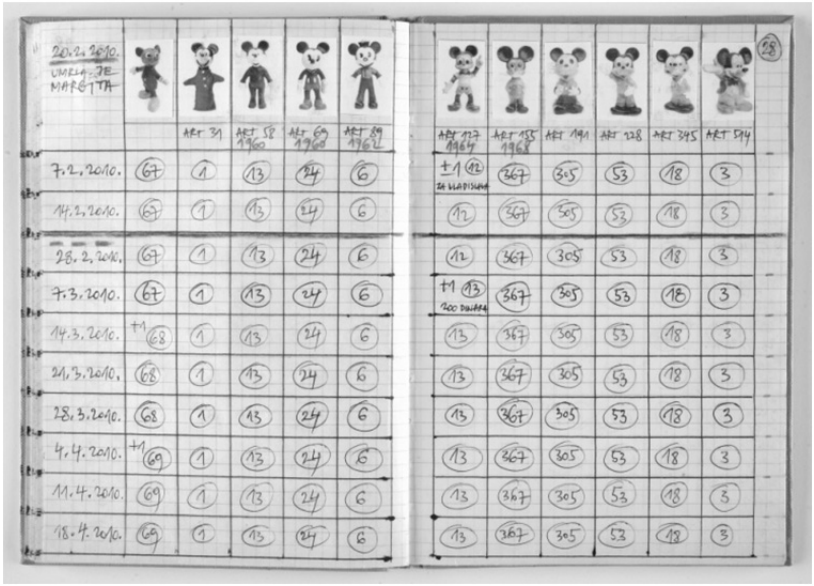

Fig. 4.4. Detail from the Mickey Mouse Journal. (from the collection of the Museum of Childhood).

The rubber Mickey Mouse toy in the collection of the Museum of Childhood is equally an historical document and an element for artistic creation. The artist began to collect this Mickey Mouse figure at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Since 2004, he noted the dynamics of collecting such toys as this and others produced at the "Biserka" Factory in the *Journal of Mickey Mouse* (Fig. 4.4), in which he documents the ongoing ten-year practice of regular weekly visits to flea markets and the acquisition of Mickey Mouse rubber toys. In all, 463 Mickey Mouse figures with article number 155 are currently in the collection of the Museum of Childhood. Collected objects have been repurposed as artistic material, for the installation, *Three-dimensional Wallpaper for Children's Room* (Fig. 4.5*)*.

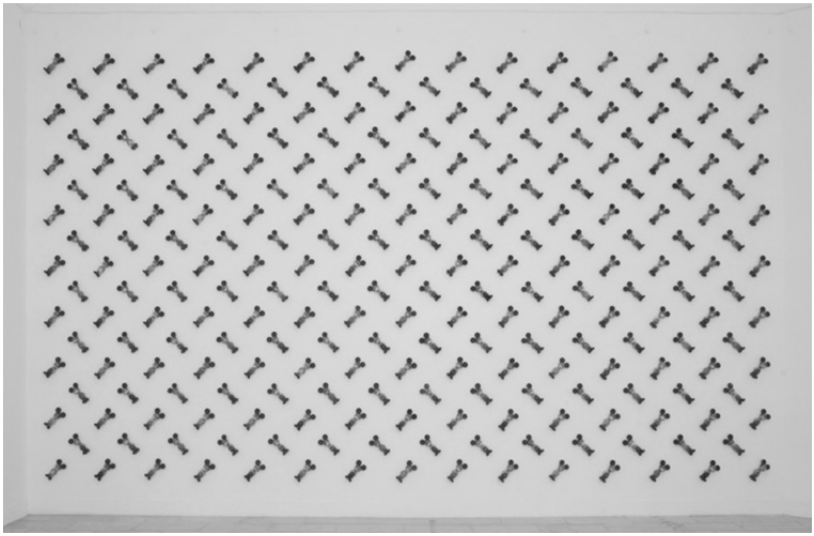

Fig. 4.5. *Three-dimensional Wallpaper for Children's Room-pattern Mickey Mouse*. (2013). "Nothing Between Us," National Pavilion of Serbia, 55th Venice Biennale. (from the Museum of Childhood documentation).

The accumulation of the same object leads us to consider the significance of the object to the artist. A cheerful childhood cartoon hero found in the form of abandoned toys at the flea market represents evidence of the absence and destruction imposed by historical events for the author. These include the Civil War in Yugoslavia in the 1990s when the massive degradation of human and existential rights and, hence, every other positive value took place. Also included is the post-war period and its atmosphere of prolonged and encouraged individual losses, migrations, and conflicts, all of which had a destructive effect on collective cultural memory and identity. The artistic context of excessive accumulation and repetition gives a different kind of reading to these abandoned objects. They are returned to a public space as transformed material that unveils a personal response to the complex past, history, memory, and identity and commemorates loss while indicating a critical treatment of testimonies. Work with the Mickey Mouse figures is both mnemonic and allegorical, speaking of how the past is manifested in the present and how it influences an individual. It is built through contrasts in the formal features as well as in contextual dimensions.

The process of arranging these objects, embodiments of childhood innocence as well as the destroyed state of innocence, beliefs, and a certain

way of life, into precise mathematical patterns reaches a metaphorical wholeness and harmony which failed to exist in reality. The personal response to loss is juxtaposed with clean exactness, grid formations which depend on repetition to produce patterns of cohesiveness, and variation of the same object to produce a visual dynamic. A synthesis between dialectical polarities such as chaos and order, or tumultuous experience and harmony, is attained in both visual and semantic dimensions, making this work simultaneously reveal and conceal the suspended memories and emotions related to the wartime and post-war experiences.

Pattern is used to deliberately drain us and blur the contextual meaning and emotionally charged narratives of the figures. This ambiguity or "joyfully distressing" nature of the installation, as the artist often put it, is what engages our perception to involve both feeling and thorough intellectual inquiry in the history behind the charming imagery. This aesthetic engagement and pleasure can facilitate contemplation and deepen the understanding (Bassnett 2009, 250) of the author and for the viewer.

Even though the objects hold personal and cultural resonance in the context of Yugoslavia, viewers who do not share these experiences are not excluded because universal dimensions such as identity, memory, nostalgia, and loss initiate a state of deep reflection about remembrance associated with sites in childhood and the past. In that way, viewers do not need to identify themselves with objects and their particular history in order to be moved emotionally. The engagement of viewers through affective response, as Bassnett argues, can be particularly important in relation to issues that are difficult to grasp (Ibid., 244). Also, by means of the globally recognised Mickey Mouse image, one can reflect on mutual and distinct elements of different cultures and contexts, as well as the altered positioning and meaning of the same element in various cultural situations.

In this work, where "official," forgotten and "invented" histories have come together, the artist managed to connect what cannot be connected in reality in response to his own experience of loss. He also succeeded in associating objects that can be considered as historical or heritage artifacts with a constellation beyond the objective framework of interpretation. By introducing the personal and emotional context alongside the cultural, political, and social significance of the object, he provided a new lens for history and provoked a deeper understanding of the multifaceted relation with the past.

Two Projects from the Museum of Childhood's Photo Archive

Memories Taken Over

The project *Memories Taken Over* (2006–ongoing) is a reflection on photography as one of the most important media for preserving, archiving, and forming personal and collective memory and history. Amateur photographs collected at flea markets are repurposed to show the conceptual preoccupation of the artist with collecting and arranging documented memories. An archive of childhood, everyday life, and private history is re-interpreted through processes that include the video *Sofia*, an intervention focused on a single disturbing narrative of an anonymous person; the video *Trio*, a photomontage composed of historical photographs; and an arrangement of photographs using thorough cataloguing methods akin to those employed by academic researchers and curators.

Appropriated photographs were assembled into groupings each representing a specific theme or motif (Fig. 4.6). By selecting and arranging several thousand photographs, approximately 90 universal motifs and situations emerged. Through this process, visible signs of commonality and parallels reinforced interconnection and dialogue between otherwise apparently disconnected histories. The artist was engaged more in a re-interpreting intervention than in invention.

> […] He rearranged found photographs in a way which resembles classification in family photo albums, but not with an aim to make a chronicle of connected history. Instead, he wanted to merge contexts which are among them unknown, through mutual moments, in order to build a total integration, never feasible in a diverse category of reality. It is a metaphorical album of childhood(s), a chronicle which at the same reconstructs, constructs and transforms the reality (Stojanov 2014, 2).

Fig. 4.6. Rocking horses. (2006). “Memories Taken Over.” (from the collection of the Museum of Childhood).

Injured Parties

In the multimedia installation, *Injured Parties,* the artist incorporated found photographs with visible signs of deterioration. Carefully selected and cropped portraits of children were placed in strict succession, which served as a visual apologia for the disappearance and injuries the children on the photographs endured in several situations (Fig. 4.7). These were times when the photographs became meaningless and no one preserved them as a personal memory. Then, a new layer of “injury” occurred in the form of the physical deterioration of the abandoned material that took place in the surrounding of a flea market among other debris. In the gallery space, the artist, himself, added a new layer of injury to the image through the intervention of scratching and physical damage to the portraits to emphasise the notion of destruction and oblivion.

Fig. 4.7. Injured Parties. (2013), (detail of the installation from the documentation of the Museum of Childhood).

The installation considered the relationship between appearance and disappearance, not just of photographs as documents of meaningful moments in history, but also the fracture of memories, concepts, and fragments of the past which had faded for different reasons. In such a situation, where sites of discontinuity and voids in the archive and memory had been created, recollecting and rearticulating the abandoned documents otherwise disconnected from either private or collective historical narratives create a field of new historical configurations and manipulations. Any archive is a product of the social processes and

systems of its time, and reflects the position and exclusions of different groups or individuals within those systems (Breakell 2008, 5).

This installation was part of the exhibition *History=Second-Hand Future* which explored how the past informs the present and how the selected images support or alter the narratives of the past which we construct and embrace. Communicated in the exhibit was the concept of "truth" in history, which was reconstructed based on selected fragments of the past, using criteria that often privilege certain kind of documents/ objects. The exhibition commented on how objects and their involvement in historical narratives are shaped by their past and the path they have taken. How the actual need or capacity of the researcher, private collector, artist, society, or others can simultaneously and significantly influence or alter the very process of preservation or deterioration of the object/document was also taken into consideration.

It can be argued that the whole concept of the Museum of Childhood raises the question of collective and individual relationships toward the preservation of certain parts of heritage. In the context of history, which has been rewritten often, the Museum of Childhood rearticulates abandoned and discarded objects and experiences. Emphasis is placed on the question of what one society or an individual considers important enough to preserve and what is defined as insignificant, or unsuitable, in order to construct collective or personal historical narratives and memories.

Concluding Thoughts

The practice at the Museum of Childhood is simultaneously "diagnostic," that is valuing historicity, and "prognostic,"[2] bringing history to the present. The museum collects abandoned and forgotten documents of the past, and puts them in the field of open interpretation. In such a context, the historical reading and artistic reconfiguration of the collection are in a state of constant flux and mutual influence.

A balance between historicity and the requirements of artistic creation demands an integrated approach to acquisition, collection organisation, and interpretation which derives from both academic and artistic research. The Museum of Childhood is trying to maintain a fluctuating relationship between academic disciplines, rather than comply with compact and solidly demarcated approaches.

This hybrid model which mixes contemporary collecting, art, curatorial practice, and heritage can be discussed as defining a museological framework by which it can be described. This model is a manifested

expression of critical museology, if we follow the definition that critical museology is crucial for developing new exhibitionary genres, telling untold stories, and rearticulating knowledge systems (Shelton 2013). It can also simply be taken as a lens for thinking about future trajectories of museums/collections and their cooperation with artists in order to challenge the narratives and techniques of institutional presentation and authoritative concepts of interpretation.

Even if museums with collections of ethnographic/anthropological/historical value cannot allow such an extreme departure from their institutional integrity and disciplinary concept, the Museum of Childhood can provide a paradigm for the collaborative work between artists and museums. It can serve as a guide for other museums to embrace new possibilities of experimentation in visual representation, employ some artistic strategies, and cooperate with artists in order to provide a more vivid and enlightened interpretation. Multiple positioning of ethnographic/anthropological/historical objects with subjects and practices in the contemporary artistic field in this way certainly goes beyond the authoritative and explanatory context of interpretation and the tendency toward entertainment and commerciality.

The Museum of Childhood provides a source for creating new relationships and shaping new cultural, historical, and social meanings of found objects onto which often personal and intimate emotions and experiences are projected. It is not a melancholic escape or a simple sentimentalisation of the past; instead, manipulation is employed as a technique of investigation and confrontation of the past. The strength of this subjective reflexive position, integrated with artistic sensibility, is that it engages the author, as well as the viewer, in an interrogative mode. Both the context and the self are questioned in relation to shifts and transformations that occur over time and changing history.

The Museum of Childhood, a space where art practice and cultural heritage has come together makes a significant contribution to the innovation of museum practices. Work undertaken by the museum expands the discursive space of museum heritage and its use within museological practice, contemporary collecting, and contemporary art strategies. Several elements, including numerous types of objects, passionate collecting, artistic and curatorial practices, and different institutional and architectural frameworks, have been brought into relation with each other, often without a certain sense of how their fusion will appear at the end. Thus, in the Museum of Childhood the conceptual and operational boundaries between museological/curatorial and artistic categories are blurred; practices are exchanged and influenced by each

other, demonstrating the potential of interdisciplinary dialogue and collaborative work, from which both the academic and artistic fields can benefit.

Notes

[1] The Museum of Childhood, located in Belgrade, Serbia, is an on-going project based on the large collection of childhood-related objects, mostly found at flea markets. It was initiated by the artist Vladimir Perić in 2006. I became involved in the project in 2011 and since then, the two of us have developed the museum, fusing the approaches of museum-like practice and contemporary art. Our goal is to provide a permanent public space for the Museum of Childhood in the near future.

[2] The terms were used by the curator Okwui Enwezor during the panel discussion relating to his 2008 exhibition "Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art."

PART TWO

COMMUNICATING HERITAGE AND INTANGIBILITY

CHAPTER FIVE

PROVOKING MEMORIES, CREATING ATTITUDES

NIKOLA KRSTOVIĆ

Introduction

Museums must provoke people's memories. They must come out of safe institutional frames, those secure and even seductive boxes which hide curators and museum staff. Everything needed to accomplish both already exists. In museums, we, the experts simply need to develop ways of interpretation and, to some extent, marketing and visitors will come and be animated. We will say: "And our mission is completed." But in times when a museum attempts to be a proactive, social player functioning as a public service for the development of skills, knowledge, wisdom, awareness, empathy, tolerance, and countless other virtues, something is wrong when we remain satisfied that people come. The numbers and figures are not everything, of course. The old division remains: *we* (museum) and *they* (visitors), *we* (past) and *they* (present), *we* (giving) and *they* (receiving). Actually, too many dichotomies comprised of *we* and *them* exist. It is obvious that *all of us* cohabit the story in the twenty-first century.

Museums have these extraordinary powers for engaging people and transforming them into treasurers of personal and collective memories, and are part of communities aware of the heritage that belong to all, regardless of it being part of a museum collection. Artur Hazelius, the founder of Skansen, the first open air museum, brilliantly remarked that, "The museum is all around; Skansen just has a public role to play" (Hazelius 1901). Following his observation, the essential question is how to reconcile the "original" museum? In other words, life itself, whose only constant is change, and the museum-institution whose only constant is a tendency to eternal immutability. I shall try to answer this question here, at least partly.

History of the "Old Village"

The “Old Village” in Sirogojno, Serbia, was established in 1980. Its primary organisational structure resembled a heritage site with loose management. In 1983, when almost 30 buildings were relocated to the site, the “Old Village” became a cultural heritage site of exceptional importance for the Socialist Republic of Serbia, which at that time was part of Yugoslavia. Its unofficial name, the Museum of Folk Architecture (Findrik 1985, 80–81), was already in professional and common use. International recognition, mostly through the Association of European Open Air Museums (AEOM), was achieved during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Jerzy Czajkowski, one of the most prominent theoreticians of that period, wrote that, “Among all the museums coming to life now in Yugoslavia, the ‘Museum of Folk Architecture’ in Sirogojno village […] has the best chance of development as well as the most interesting general conception. It is worth mentioning that the idea of creating this museum was first expressed by a woman employed in one of the factories” (Czajkowski 1980, 119). He emphasised that the originality of the process by which the newly founded institution was established and functioned was similar to the concept of ecomuseums. Indeed, the role of its founding mother, Dobrila Vasiljević Smiljanić, was quite remarkable in a socialist country, especially at that time, while the architect, Ranko Findrik, did very precise, thorough imaginative, and visionary operational work (Bogdanović 2014, 149).

The official museum institution, Open Air Museum “Old Village,” was established in 1992. The programs and activities at the museum were developed gradually. During the period of growing nationalistic feelings alongside disastrous politics and ideologies at the end of the twentieth century, the museum started to become very popular, even though the financial situation was rather bad. At the beginning of new millennium, the museum moved to the margins of the Serbian cultural sphere. It was in the process of finding its position far from the ideological premises.

Transformation in Recent Years

From the very beginning, one aspect of the “Old Village” was especially cherished: further education of the museum’s professionals. During the period of the museum’s crisis at the beginning of the twenty-first century a lot of attention was paid to the strengthening the professional capacity both formally and informally. Today, we are proud that one small, regional museum in the mountains of south-western Serbia

has a very professional staff comprised of seven highly educated individuals[1] all of whom are at least senior curators. They take leadership of the museum activities, especially in times of frequent change in management because of political reasons. Brain-storming, critical conversations, and mutual support of common projects have empowered the capacity of the museum staff and led to changes in the museum mission, strategies and long-term plans, as well as ways in which activities at the museum are produced and managed.

The transformation started slowly in 2007 and continued progressively leading to the 2012 EU Heritage Award ("special mention of the jury" for raising awareness about cultural heritage) and a nomination for the 2014 European Museum of the Year (EMYA). Nevertheless, the crucial question remains as to what the characteristics of the recent change at the "Old Village" are. The simple answer is openness and a true willingness to adjust professional mindsets to the diverse voices coming from people. The best way to explore philosophical changes that took place in the "Old Village" is to review some of the museum`s recent activities.

Houses of Mt. Zlatibor

The temporary exhibition project *Kafanas* or *Taverns* (from 2007) was based on extensive field research, engaging local community and actually inviting visitors to be part of the exhibition design. The project "*The Private Houses of Mt. Zlatibor, Nineteenth Century to the Present"* expanded this research methodology and the way it communicated with the local community. It was planned to last for two years (2007–08) but due to pressure from the local community and outside interests it was prolonged for six. The management and structure not only of the project but also the museum were deeply influenced by this change in plans. In order to understand the "Houses" project it is necessary to understand the mindset and general atmosphere of the environment and mountain where the "Old Village" museum is situated.

Mt. Zlatibor is the tourist centre of south-western Serbia and one of the most renowned destinations in the country. The central place, a small town with 2,500 permanent inhabitants where mountain identities are concentrated in all of their cultural, social, and historical varieties is also named Zlatibor.[2] During the 1990s, and especially in the last fourteen years, the small town of Zlatibor has become the field of investment architecture and philosophy which is primarily visible in the proliferation of tourist apartment complexes. With no clear strategy for development, new structures and mega-structures began to destroy the town landscape

including numerous traditional houses and villas, along with the sense of local identity.

In contrast to the rapid development, the "Old Village," which is located about 20 km west of Zlatibor, has been seen as the institution that preserves and presents the traditional folk buildings and lifeways of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In other words, it was commonly understood that historical themes of interest for the museum should end exactly at the time when the rapid development started. Thus, a kind of artificial division made the museum's mission completely irrelevant in the contemporary environment. The first challenge was how to overcome this gap. The second was how to implement all of our theoretical knowledge on a practical level and make both local community members and numerous tourists[3] aware not only of the museum`s existence and relevance but also of the great local building heritage.

The museum staff decided to disregard chronological boundaries and reach out towards their own contemporary community. Dealing only with traditional folk buildings in this situation was insufficient; research into twentieth century architecture and building references all over the mountain was thus justified. The museum, via the curatorial department established a kind of public-private partnership, even though it never was officially considered as such, with local Informational and Communication Technologies agency *Krug* [Circle] managing the most relevant web portal for tourist information about the mountain. The common mission of the museum and *Krug* was to shed new light on representative examples of the architecture of private houses, especially in the context of their rapid disappearance. Thus, extensive field research which created a network of people who, in the past, had been passive sources of information, started. It was a layered but fluid structure including anyone and everyone interested in their own permanent or temporary dwelling place. Some elements of this approach are embedded in the initial concepts of Georges Henri Riviere and Hugues de Varine including new museology and ecomuseums, sociomuseology, and museums of neighbourhood (Varine 1973; Riviere 1985; James 2005). We called it "door-to-door museology" because the research progressed literally door-to-door and house-to–house in order to meet all those people and to compile an extensive database of local knowledge and stories. The outcome between the idea and the practice developed a bit differently.

To start with, the initial authors photographed some ninety "representative" buildings and chose around half of them as "final choices." The goal for the network we thought would be created was to collect addition information that was the purely "aesthetic." Actually, it

was obvious from the very beginning that we did not truly believe in the ability of the people in the network to decide on their own; we actually relied on the power of the museum, curatorial authority, and academic approach. The furthest we could have gone in applying this methodology was a kind of game with local community members whose aim was to develop a personal and intuitive *sense of place* or "mental mapping"[4] (Gould and White 1974) similar to the principles of "common ground."[5] We asked the owners and users of houses and villas to sketch the interior, exterior, and environmental living spaces by hand, just as they imagined them. The results confirmed our presumptions that living and dining rooms, as well as terraces, balconies, and patios ranked very high; on the sketches they were enlarged. Other accented spaces on the drawings were connected with local roads and streets leading towards shops, doctors, parks, and recreational centres. Even with this game to "melt the ice" of "our" and "their" communication, we did not move far from the focus on houses and building design.

Somewhere during the door-to-door research approach, the situation changed dramatically. We concluded that the knowledge of the team, three curators, two acting as associates, and two members of *Krug* was too strict, predetermined, and full of prejudices compared to the constantly growing network of people from different backgrounds, such as architects, artists, lawyers, professors, teachers, crafts-people, builders, furniture makers, politicians, and "ordinary" people with great memories of their neighbours, relatives, friends, parents, and grandparents. Collected were some 150 original and usable items including architectural plans, drawings, photos, and documents. The number of oral histories about the houses grew rapidly; much of the data were verified in the local archives and local Geodetic Institute and with privately held documents. The self-organised team started to question our "curatorial" 30-and-something "final" choices as well as our approach. Another relevant and more local, human, and intimate approach was introduced by the "network" which consisted of some 50 and 350, direct and indirect members, respectively. They wanted to speak not only about the buildings and architecture, but also about social changes that happened over time. These included intimate and private destinies, relationships with local government(s), ideologies and wars, and migrations of people to and from the mountain. For the local community members, the houses were not the final goal but the perspective through which they could shine a new light on the cultural landscape of the mountain. This provided a breath of fresh air for our traditional curatorial approach. To be honest, this approach was a much

more challenging perspective, being a kind of hypertext in which the buildings were just the front-page.

This was the crucial shift. Suddenly "our" practice became the practice of all those involved. It was the moment when the team of authors gave up the authority which was based on the institutional affiliation. Another notion expressed by Artur Hazelius was put to the test. "The museum is not the creation of a scientist, but a poet, artist, and dreamer" (Hazelius 1901). Of course, none of the five "original" authors who initiated the project were among the "three" that Hazelius mentions, but we felt the energy of many dreamers who wanted to be involved in the awareness raising movement. This story might sound like a romanticisation; in fact, emotions and nostalgia were the forces that drove all the actions of the project.

The material collected, and in some cases classified, was disseminated to about 180 of the participants in the network as part of a very simple and attractive initiative, "voting for the most interesting/beautiful/notable houses of Mt. Zlatibor." The members of the network and five experts were in charge of engaging as many people as possible connected to the mountain in any way. Each of the "voters" was given a chance to decide which houses and narratives would be used in the catalogue, web-portal, and exhibition in the museum itself. The museum exhibition was considered the most ephemeral model and, thus dedicated primarily to the tourists visiting the museum. It was designed with 24 panels with photographs and short texts. The exhibition catalogue, which would have a longer life than the exhibition, was appropriate for a diversity of stakeholders, though it still had the potential of limited outreach especially because of the number of pages in the printed edition: there was only space for 16 houses in the publication. The web portal was considered a long- term model with the potential of an even more diverse community being involved.

The "voters" understood the demands of the museum and *Krug* very well. After a month of voting, mostly via our paper dossiers of the proposed houses some 900 votes were collected. The results were very interesting. For example, the house of Duke Jovan Mićić,[6] dating from the start of the nineteenth century and destroyed during World War II, was selected for all forms of representation. The few surviving photos, a small scale model from the local library, and a magnificent carved wooden door, now part of the Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade, are the only material artefacts connected with the building. The collective memory of the historic person and the significance of his house were, however, still alive and important to the local community members. The other important

house was President Tito's villa, which was proclaimed as architectural cultural heritage with the ridiculous name, House of the President of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) Presidency, which is still in use today. The community members also remember the legitimate heirs of the house. All the papers documenting that the house was built in 1937 by Belgrade businessman Aleksandar Pavlovic and his French wife, Andre, were donated to the museum. Milutin Borisavljević, who lectured in aesthetics at the Sorbonne and was one of the most prominent Serbian architects of the time, designed the villa. It was confiscated in 1947 and assigned to the National Broadcast Service (RTS) in 1974. Today, however, it is closed to the public.

Many myths about Tito and his residency in the house during and after World War II are very interesting. The variations of the stories and memories could not be verified in written sources. Moreover, the narratives of this and many other houses and villas from the inter-war years served as starting points for many other stories. Some have shed completely new light on life at the mountain. The stories about five beautiful wooden houses owned by Jewish families that were burned and destroyed during World War II and about Jewish customs and suffering are good examples. They roused the question of the meaning and significance of the part of the town named Jewish Hill today. Stories about the local aero club and about the presence of the common practice of Nordic skiing with the story about Henrik Angel, a Norwegian who taught this sport locally, and, more serious questions about the confiscation of property, nationalisation and Communist politics after World War II; the devastation of tourism due to the political decision for Mt. Zlatibor to serve as a "quarantine" area between 1950 and 1955 for those suffering from tuberculosis, and new waves of investments between 1960 and 1975 under the leadership of one of the most prominent urbanism experts, Ms Jovanka Jevtanović, who perfectly organised the development of the mountain centre as a chess board are some among many others.

After the museum exhibition and catalogue "vanished" almost immediately, the web portal became the remaining means of communication (www.zlatibor.rs/kucezlatibora). The "human network" slowly started to fade away after several workshops with children and adults were held in the museum. The museum exhibition panels could be seen on Zlatibor's most popular promenade and served as a gathering and starting point for free-tours during the summers of 2008 to 2011. Some of the network members gathered on the promenade acting as guides. By the end of 2008, it was obvious that web portal was being visited more. Many people contacted the web administrator in order to add new stories or offer

other documents and to correct information published on the site. This additional input was named "Re-Action" and added as a new link. Of course, all the new information was checked as much as possible, or added as a potential source called "trivia."

In 2009, something new happened. Garmin, the leader in global positioning, through Info-team, its representative in Belgrade for southeastern Europe, decided to include this project as free-to-download application, named Notable Houses of Mt. Zlatibor in their navigation system. Now the "exhibition" could be accessed with a car or from a pedestrian tourist route. Visitors to the area could, and still can, easily download the application and visit all the houses, receiving texts and images while walking or driving.

The calm atmosphere of the mountain centre started to be more and more electrified with the rapid pace of the latest investment cycle in the last fifteen years. It was clear to many that the situation was approaching the condition of a real estate balloon. The first signs of economic crisis shocked people. Apartment sale advertisements appeared everywhere but the investment agenda and building paradigm had not changed clearly enlightening the future that could easily transform a place of 2,500 people which increases in high season to approximately 100,000, to a ghost-town during the low season. In contrast, the exhibit web-portal became increasingly popular, with some 1,000 daily visits. Of course, some misunderstandings existed alongside the popularity. Some members of the community began to ask if they could sell their house/villa via the web portal because "it's one of the most beautiful or prominent houses on the mountain," or if they could add info about their residence for renting "because it's a good commercial."[7]

All the fuss about the newest investment cycle lasted until 2012 when the museum decided to apply almost the same methodology as that used in 2007 and produced the exhibition "Zlatiborer for a While," which basically dealt with shifts in the identity of the mountain community. At that time, the list of primary key-words which exemplified the community was transformed from "holiday," "air," "nature," and "skiing" to "investment," "apartment(s)," "property," and "nature." The only word repeated on both lists was "nature." The approach of the exhibit was to illustrate the disrespect of the environment and nature and the disparagement of existing local traditions and customs in the face of uncontrolled investment and building plans. Also presented was the "importance" of real-estate trading and fake social status derived from owning a property in a desirable location. Represented was the pseudo-urban psychology of creating one`s own "habitus."

"Zlatiborer for a While" was a shocking exhibition with a catalogue detailing many of the contemporary phenomena that were rapidly changing and destroying the social structure and sense of place of the area. It was based on documents, evidence of wrong choices, questions about political and economic decisions, doubts about the ongoing development models, and personal stories of some people who sold their properties and others who bought their own "piece of paradise" (Krstović 2013, 19). The exhibition opened at the Open Air Museum "Old Village" in Sirogojno in 2013. Paradoxically, because of the 120 year celebration of organised tourism at Mt. Zlatibor at the same time, the earlier exhibition "The Private Houses of Mt. Zlatibor, Nineteenth Century to the Present," opened in one of the most prominent galleries in Belgrade. These exhibits were two sides of the same coin; parts of the discussions introduced by them were transferred as quite serious issues to the local parliament.

Love Affairs

The 2012 exhibition, "Love Affairs," brought together a provocative collection of local stories with a universal message; the project was led by two curators from the "Old Village" and an anthropologist from the Institute of Ethnography in Belgrade. All the experiences from the "Houses of Mt. Zlatibor" project and another previous museum project, "HerityFair: My Personal Heritage—My Secret Treasure," which established a network of institutions of southwestern Serbia, were taken into consideration. "Love Affairs" was also an example of inter-institutional cooperation of all the museums from the HerityFair network and the Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade. Some 120 people directly or indirectly participated in the creation of the exhibit`s content. Again, all those involved were a great source of inspiration and ideas.

The final exhibition and general outreach of the entire idea and concept were quite successful. The organising concept was that the museum would deliver strong and provocative messages about many contemporary issues dealing with love, emotional relationships, and marriage. One specific issue related to marriage in the exhibit was marital fraud and betrayal; it was presented using the unofficial but typical Serbian concept of paradox, "laugh and cry at the same time," ("Смејем се и плачем истовремено!") Because of the lack of funding, the renovation of the museum's educational centre was at a standstill when this exhibit was planned. The empty building, which consisted of large ground-floor space and five separate rooms on the upper floor, was perfectly suited for the exhibition narrative. The project team had to think and act quickly. The results was

one of the most-visited exhibitions at the "Old Village" ever, with excellent evaluations and feedback.

The Design and Messages

Visitors entered the exhibition through a dark room with provocative Kinsean[8] statistics about "how faithful we are" in our relationships for the purpose of "just keeping in mind" the statistics. After the introductory, dim room, visitors moved through a pair of sheets with faint blood stains into a large white space. The barely visible stains were typical evidence of the wedding night in traditional culture, symbolising entering the "sacred" space of marriage. The white exhibition space consisted of several areas in which diverse aspects of culture connected with love affairs were shown. The evidence or artefacts were all hidden behind the white sheets/curtains, and they could only be seen through tiny holes in the fabric. Different kinds of evidence were included, such as symbolic items and objects connected with someone's story or complete scenes made of models. The latter were particularly interesting and funny because they were based on real situations and circumstances; they represented real-life, intimate memories. The models were made to look like enlivened three-dimensional illustrations by Brankica Žilović Chauvain, a Serbian-French artist based in Paris. The most interesting situations and stories were the so-called everyday situations. For example, one showed a priest arranging a meeting with a local widow while saying mass and a city woman seduced a young peasant. An improvised movie hall where several Serbian cult films were streamed and a small screen where scenes from numerous television shows and stage plays focused on "crucial moments" contributed to the unique and "seductive" atmosphere of the exhibition space.

Some elements of the content were controversial. One of the most provocative parts of this section was the extensive exposition of recordings of traditional, short, erotic, "tricky" oral poems collected in the nineteenth century by Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, the founder of modern Serbian language. Their extremely explicit language in particular drew attention. The other contentious segment of the exhibit was a new, partly visual, partly textual interpretation of three of the most famous medieval epic folk poems which still remain very prominent. Though they have different, even opposing, narratives, all the main characters are connected with the ideas of love and betrayal. The poems also shed universal light on characters' actions, thoughts, fears, and dilemmas. They are a perfect catalyst for questions of ethics connected with emotional relationships in

contemporary societies; they provoke visitors to think of themselves and evaluate their systems of values and beliefs and their positions on love and trust. The general values and characters' emotional statuses, however, have been per/in-verted by the deliberate accentuation of generalisations. The main characters were labelled with formulaic oppositions such as hero or coward, whore or saint, and manipulative or honest. Of course, the exhibit planners knew that the general public was aware that none of these terms fit the truth, and pointed out the existence of "grey" space where the polemics and debates should be concentrated.

Different social phenomena were presented and divided into separate galleries on the upper floor. The rooms were designed as scenes from everyday life with labels explaining the context. Unlike the exhibits on the ground floor which had a witty and funny atmosphere, the upper floor was emotionally demanding and quite disturbing. In one gallery, early twentieth-century prostitution and brothels were illustrated with reference to modern trafficking problems; in another, family violence and its devastating impacts to society and its values was shown. The subject of the third room was nineteenth-century love magic and witch-craft with their counterparts in the twentieth century. The fourth room was dedicated to a specific custom in the mountain areas of Balkans when a husband had the "exclusive right to kill his wife in cases of discovering her infidelity."[9] This scene served as an exaggeration to point out exclusively masculine stereotypes and gender roles, some of which persist today. The fifth gallery was inspired by the personal story of one couple from the 1950s whose passionate but secret relationship destroyed the lives of everyone close to them. To contemporise the context of their communication and dialogues, the labels in the fifth gallery were transformed into different forms of digital communication.

Many local and national stereotypes, opinions, and social and cultural interpretations were questioned throughout the exhibition "Love Affairs." The team of authors felt free to publicly present these attitudes because of the great support from all involved in the content creation process. A number of colleagues from the museum, members of the local community, and people familiar with the planned exhibition were concerned about the reactions and feedback resulting from it. These fears were shattered by the 867 evaluations returned and more than 17,000 visitors in the two months of the exhibition's duration, the great majority of whom expressed satisfaction with the museum's courage to speak about today's everyday life issues. More than 70% of the evaluations said that the exhibition was actually educational, giving an average mark of 4.53 out of 5. A very small percentage of visitors was offended by the context and the language used

(2.13%). Most of the visitors, however, thought that the language on the labels and descriptions was authentic and did not beautify the reality but depicted it realistically.

The "Old Village" and Moving Forward

The new methods used by the Open Air Museum "Old Village" to interpret heritage and approach public development innovations are focused on several future projects. First, the museum staff have started a new guidance system in the permanent exhibition with complete inclusion in the web portal via QR codes, in both Serbian and English. Some space will be freed up for new concepts using guides and developing diverse stories and narratives which will be told through first- and third-person interpretation. At the same time, the space was opened for the web portal to disseminate information about contemporary issues related to local communities and societies in general. The museum planned to analyse these issues in 2015 and 2016 using blogs and text messages from many interested parties who have previously cooperated with the museum. The main focus points considered are the dichotomies of contemporary false dilemmas in rural/urban and private/public contexts and also issues related to ecology, green building, and organic agriculture and cuisine.

Some of the projects were started in 2014, such as "Frontiers in Retreat," the artists-in-residence project in partnership with the GRAD European Centre for Culture and Debate in Belgrade, with partners from Scotland, Spain, Lithuania, France, Finland, and Norway. Through contemporary art and its involvement with environmental problems a sense of eco-awareness is being developed. During September and October 2014, four artists from Barcelona, Helsinki, Marseilles, and London responded to the museum's permanent collection and delivered art installations which questioned themes such as human relationships with nature, small floral or fauna details that we take for granted, and food animals, among others.

The other program started in 2014 is "Tradinnovation/Faces of Rurality." This project consisted of two parts. The first was an open-air exhibition about and in front of seven houses relocated to the museum during the 1980s. These were typical mountain cottages originally made for different uses, now serving primarily for the accommodation of participants of summer schools, programs, and conferences. Their exteriors remain authentic, but the interior design was modernised. Their function and existence have always been considered secondary to the museum. The aim of this project was to place the houses in a museological

and heritage perspective. The exhibition "7 houses, 7 villages, 7 stories" was developed in collaboration with the Faculty of Architecture, University of Belgrade, and EAT Knowledge.[10] It referred to the contexts and values of diverse mountain areas, connecting past and present, and the use of eco-materials in contemporary building. The other part of the "Tradinnovation/Faces of Rurality" project was a ten day workshop for master students in architecture who gave seven interpretations of the exhibition "7 houses, 7 villages, 7 stories."

To Conclude or to Prelude (Again): Museum OFF Boundaries

Creating attitudes refers both to the roles of local communities and the museum in the local, regional, and (inter)national environment. It means not only audience building or constantly empowering the staff; it is also about a permanent, introspective process which leads to the objective positioning of the institution in society. As a small museum primarily oriented towards local community members and tourists, the "Old Village" is aware that day-to-day contact with the natural and human environment is essential to keep our feet on the ground, with mindsets firmly planted in the present and among the emotions of contemporary people. On the other hand, by being mandated to take care of cultural monuments of exceptional importance, the museum's message must be universal. This means that our focus is on developing models of values that are transferred from the past to the present and the future. Universal also addresses the transfer from personal to collective and vice-versa, from intellectual to emotional and vice-versa, from real to virtual and vice-versa, and from utilitarian to simply beautiful and vice-versa. In order to deal with those shifts, we museum professionals should not be afraid to ask for help from our neighbours and local supporters, even including the international scene. The most important issue at hand is to question the traditional boundaries and institutional limits of the museum. The challenge is to expand from our secure museum backyard and meet people in their own environments, stimulate diverse common grounds, inside or outside the institution, and provoke or inspire diverse thoughts, ideas, and initiatives. Without a doubt, they will all be part of the institutional mission eventually, one way or another.

Notes

[1] On the staff are two PhDs in anthropology/ethnology and one in museology and one MA in anthropology/ethnology.

[2] The name of the mountain centre usually leads to great confusion. The first name of the settlement was King's Water because the Serbian King Alexander opened the fountain in 1893. This act represents the beginning of tourist development at the mountain. After World War II, the name was changed to Partisans' Water in order to align with the ideology of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In 1991, the name was changed back to King's Water, but soon after the name of the (now) small town was changed to the more generic Zlatibor in order to clarify the association with the name of the mountain. The municipality name, however, is Čajetina; it is a very small town as well as the administrative centre. The Village of Sirogojno, where the "Old Village" Museum is located, is some 25 km away from the town of Zlatibor, but still on the mountain Zlatibor.

[3] Over 250.000 tourists visit Mt. Zlatibor making for over one million overnight stays per year. http://www.zlatibor.org/turizam/zlatibor%20&%20turizam.htm.

[4] This concept was promoted by two geographers, Gould and White, through a questionnaire which aimed to identify the interests of the local community in the most important categories of cultural heritage. The result was that locals valued their "own" heritage and local environments very highly, equal to or even more than national heritage. According to Gould and White, the ideal locality is about the size what most of the people perceive as their own. See Peter Gould and Rodney White, *Mental Maps,* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974).

[5] Common Ground is internationally recognised for playing a unique role in the arts and environmental fields, distinguished by the linking of nature with culture, focusing upon the positive investment people can make in their own localities, championing popular democratic involvement, and inspiring celebration as a starting point for action to improve the quality of our everyday places. Sue Clifford, *From Place to Place: Maps and Parish Maps*, London: Common Ground, 1996; http://www.commonground.org.uk: "Whether you live in a town, a city or in the country, there are some things around you which are part of your daily round. Wherever you are, it is the detail and overlays which have meaning to you and which give your area its own local distinctiveness."

[6] Duke Jovan Mićić was the founder of the nearby village, Čajetina, which is now the administrative centre of the municipality and mountain.

[7] Based on the statements of the web-site administrator and mails received.

[8] Alfred Charles Kinsey was an American biologist, professor of entomology and zoology, and sexologist who founded the Institute, now known as the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction, in 1947. Kinsey's research on human sexuality, foundational to the field of sexology, provoked controversy in the 1940s and 1950s. His work has influenced social and cultural values in the United States, as well as internationally.

[9] The story of this "custom" was introduced in *Lepota Poroka* [The Beauty of Vice], the 1986 cult movie by the Montenegrin director, Živko Nikolić, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0091398/.
[10] www.http://eatknowledge.org and www.http://blog.eatknowledge.org

CHAPTER SIX

ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITY: INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND EDUCATIONAL AND PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES IN ISTRIA

MARIO BULETIC

Introduction

Awareness of the phenomena of intangible cultural heritage is a relatively recent topic of interest that national and local ethnographic museums in Croatia address on a daily basis. Many other institutions, individuals, and groups, along with ethnographic museums, find meaning in what safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (ICH) presumes. Some practical approaches to the process of safeguarding intangible culture developed by the Istrian Ethnographic Museum's Centre for Intangible Culture (CENKI) can be considered innovative in this particular geographical area. This chapter introduces two specific cases of purely practical work, from the elaboration of an idea, to methodology, and finally, the reflective moment relative to the results.

The first case study focuses on educational workshops for university and high school students held between 2012 and 2014. The latter target group is often excluded from the wide variety of educational programmes that museums offer. The main goals of the workshops organised by the centre were to introduce students to research and documentation processes, engage them in their own research projects, and lead them through the entire creative progression. The final results were eventually published in a small booklet and, in one instance, used to organise an exhibition.[1]

The second case study examined here is interwoven with different aspects of practices considered indispensable for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. The research activity, documentation, public

performance, and, most important, the participatory engagement with the local community are illustrated in the case study. The participatory programme created by the Istrian Centre for Intangible Heritage in 2010 and organised every year since, focused on the celebration of St. Martin's Day, day when the must[2] is traditionally and symbolically baptised and turned into wine. Local small-scale wine producers and curious guests are invited to participate in the event, which is characterised by storytelling, music, and feasting.

ICH: A Local Overview

The definition of the term Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), as established by UNESCO in 2003, has been generally accepted by professionals who work with cultural awareness and the safeguarding of heritage. ICH has also begun to be recognised outside of closed circles. In 2009, the two-part singing and playing in the Istrian scale, a traditional singing practice characteristic of the Istrian region and the north Adriatic coastal area and islands, was inscribed in UNESCO's *List of Intangible Cultural Heritage*.[3] Two years after this significant international recognition, The Ethnographic Museum of Istria (EMI) founded the Istrian Centre for Intangible Culture (CENKI), with support from the regional government.[4] The idea of a centre whose activities are dedicated to the research, documentation, safeguarding, and popularisation of Istrian intangible culture, however, had already existed. The celebratory moment of this particular singing practice was a good argument to formalise the idea that had been maturing for some time and to establish the centre.

The majority of both the local and national population, however, does not fully understand the multi-layered meanings presumed by ICH and the necessity for safeguarding it. Even if the formal elaboration of the concept embraces a variety of people's everyday practices, it is still hardly understandable and recognised by those who should be the direct beneficiaries of actions that safeguarding of such phenomena implies. Further inconvenience is brought by the inevitable institutionalisation of ICH. Institutions that deal with ICH often cultivate their own interpretation and understanding of ICH and the process of safeguarding. Such interpretations are not always innovative or in line with the original aim of the convention. Those who rapidly recognised the importance offered by ICH issues were individuals or entities related to the tourist business and from the political domain; they were inspired and moved by their own agendas and interests.[5] The relationship between tourism, politics, and heritage is certainly an interesting issue that deserves a more

profound analysis. However, we will have to leave this theme for a moment and focus on our two case studies.

How, then, do we approach the notion of ICH with reference to local people? How is the idea of ICH used for the active engagement and participation of local people within museums and the activities at the new Centre for Intangible Culture? I will illustrate two different activities that the centre conceived so it could act proactively and fill some gaps left between theoretical definitions and practical implementation concerning ICH.

Educational Activities to Document and Interpret ICH

Workshops at Juraj Dobrila University

The concept and all practical phases of the educational workshops from 2012–14 were developed and conducted by Nuša Hauser, documentation manager and the person responsible for most of the activities at the Centre for Intangible Heritage, and the author, the curator at The Ethnographic Museum of Istria, respectively. Workshops started in 2012, in collaboration with the department of Humanities of the Juraj Dobrila University in Pula. The character of the workshop was both theoretical and practical. The main objective was to introduce students to basic notions of ICH and focus attention on how elements of intangible cultural heritage are reflected in our everyday life. In addition to concrete examples of professional research by ethnologists/anthropologists, historians, and a sociologist, different approaches, topics of interests, and research methodologies when dealing with ICH phenomena were presented. The topics addressed by the researchers were:

> traditional music and the process of nomination for the UNESCO list of ICH industrial working culture from the anthropological perspective of coal mining questions of historical memory based on testimonies from survivors of WWII concentration camps the use of different tools in qualitative research, from collection of data to its analysis critical reflections and pros and cons of the ICH concept with possible dangers, especially when used within the tourist sector

These research-oriented, theoretical lectures served as a motivational trigger for workshop participants. The idea was to cover all research processes, from the elaboration of the idea and choosing the research methodology, to fieldwork, data collection, data analysis, and presentation of results. Participants worked individually and in small teams.

Fig. 6.1. Workshop at Juraj Dobrila University, Pula (2012) (author's photograph).

At least two concrete, positive outcomes came from the university workshop. First was a student who chose to elaborate and portray the life history of a man who was a famous local blacksmith using his camera. Afterwards, the student expanded the work and used it as the final project for his graduation thesis. Second, the other group's research topic took the perspective that university students from other parts of Croatia have of the local population based on their first impact experience as "outsiders." Pushed by the workshop mentors to think critically and question socially constructed "truths," the students' research results produced a vibrant Internet discussion. The majority of the informants did not have very positive opinions about the local population. They pointed out the exclusiveness and cold attitudes toward individuals who were not from Istria. Perspectives such as these, however, contradict the dominant political discourse that defines Istria and its citizens as an open multicultural society with a high level of tolerance. The students' text did not try to make pretentious conclusions; they admitted that the lack of deeper research and analysis was evident in the results. Their text, however, sparked a discussion on a few local web portals. The reports by one journalist about the workshop results and the final texts generated

comments by a significant number of readers who confirmed the concern of the students. A majority of the comments provided no room for tolerance and comprehension for persons coming from other parts of the country.

The hidden goal of the Juraj Dobrila University workshop was fulfilled. The notion of ICH was used and its range was amplified beyond just thinking about possible intangible phenomena that need to be preserved or revitalised. ICH was also used as a tool to encourage critical thinking and active engagement to document such phenomena in one's living place.

High School Workshops

A similar concept was used for the next two workshops. The principal changes were the target group of participants and the conceptual emphasis of the practical segments. The 2013 high school workshop was organised for third-year students in two different Istrian high schools in Pazin and Labin. Compared to the workshops designed for university students, this project took a more ambitious approach. In this instance, the groups were comprised of two classes of 25 to 30 students, most of whom were 17 years old. The aim of the workshop was to lead the students through the research process, including the documentation and analysis of intangible cultural phenomena that are found in their everyday lives. The next step was the elaboration of research results, with presentations in the classroom followed by writing a short essay. The students were also encouraged to think about material aspects of the intangible phenomena they were researching; they had to collect material objects and find the way in which intangible cultural phenomena could be presented and expressed through other media. This led directly to the highlight of the workshop, the collaborative making of an exhibition.

In order to achieve all of the objectives, it was important to have a well-structured workshop methodology. After an introductory lecture about ICH, anthropology/ethnology, and ethnographic research methods and documentation tools, five themes were proposed, as follows:

> public space, as agent of communication and relationships of the local community identity symbols, sources, inspirations, and interpretations music/fashion/youth life-styles, differences triggered by affinities food stories, preparation, and consumption in everyday life and specific moments traditional crafts and professions, as reflections of individual or collective identity

The students formed groups based on the specific topic in which they were interested. The workshop leaders guided them through the research process and assigned new tasks to complete following each meeting. Assignments included conducting simple bibliographic and Internet research, fieldwork observation, documentation, and the collection of objects. Working on the exhibition concept was the high point of the students' engagement. Two classes from the different schools met to organise the exhibition. Because they researched the same five topics, the results were more than compatible and merged perfectly into one exhibit. The exhibit, *Odakle smo/Di dove siamo* [Where are we from?], was a result of their ideas, texts, collected objects, and audiovisual documentation. All were designed in the centre's exhibition space with just a touch of our practical guidance and experience.

Fig. 6.2. Workshop with Mate Blažina high school students, Labin (2012) (photograph by Nuša Hauser).

Intangible cultural heritage, as a concept, is often understood by local and national institutions as traditional culture, mostly linked to the rural area and way of life. Safeguarding of intangible heritage, as an instrument of action, is frequently interpreted as protection and conservation. The

workshop leaders tried to emphasise that ICH is about not just the way of life of our ancestors, but also today and us. During the workshop, students were consequently encouraged to think about what is important to them and to look into their own living traditions and the relevant cultural elements of their everyday lives.

Fig. 6.3. Personal items collected from youngsters in Pazin, detail from the exhibition *Odakle smo/Di dove siamo* (2013) (author's photograph).

It was obvious that the workshop leaders did not expect ground breaking essays and a breath-taking exhibition from the student work. The most important objective was to guide them through the practical learning process that would serve to clarify the sometimes vague and abstract concepts used in our profession; in this case, questions about ICH in particular, and other general, practical, and theoretical issues to which our daily efforts as museum curators and ethnographers are dedicated.

The results exceeded our expectations. Enthusiastic student works revealed their interests, research abilities, and analytical capacities in the process of observing the local collective memory in relation to daily life. Among the topics which came to light were town squares and the principal stages of everyday life. Individuals interviewed stressed the historical importance of such places and expressed their perplexities about today's use of such important spaces and hopes for a better future. When the students explored professions and work, they were very conscious of the important role any job has in one's life and identity. Sensitivity to listening

to different perspectives emerged; stories from a farmer, a mechanical worker, and a lawyer served to accomplish that objective. The life story of a woman who worked as a seamstress led to the conclusion that global trends in the economy and mass production and the fast-growing consumer society are making this profession and other handcrafts disappear.

Students also questioned if objects and gestures charged with strong symbolic meaning are taken consciously or these are somehow imposed and mediated by other social processes. Immersion in musical preferences, youth trends, and fashion showed an intergenerational picture about how these aspects of daily life reflect on groups and individuals. The students' focus was pointed to individual and group identity and life philosophies and social relationships in the context of musical preferences, youth fashion, and trends, such as where they hang out, movies they like, and other popular culture amongst youngsters, in general. Food stories described the preparation, consumption, and social moments of traditional foods in families not originally from Istria. These stories also explored the background of a traditional type of pasta and why it has disappeared from our tables. Change in traditions was illustrated by the narratives of how and when typical ravioli was prepared in the past in comparison to how it is prepared and consumed today.

Fig. 6.4. Kitchen table with ingredients for making *šurlice,* a typical local pasta, from the exhibition *Odakle smo/Di dove siamo* (2013) (author's photograph).

In 2014, the high school student workshop differed in several ways. Only one class of students from the same grade level participated. They concentrated their research on one location, Pula, Istria's largest town. In addition, the proposed themes changed slightly and it was not possible to make the exhibition. The workshop leaders introduced two different main topics which students explored. The first was games, considered as a process of creativity, transformation, and continuity. The second was dedicated to Lungomare, a specific site in Pula, the town's most popular promenade along the sea, a place that triggers individual and collective memories and a significant space for the local community for different social and communicative moments in its daily life. Short interviews, fieldwork notes, bibliographic and on-line resources, pictures, and videos were used to describe particular elements of each theme.

"Games have existed since ancient times and are common to all cultures" is the observation made by the group that researched this topic. Moreover, they affirmed that, "games are an indispensable part of life because they facilitate the social interaction and serve to teach more general rules and ethics of behaviour" (from student work; Buletic and Hauser 2015, 77–79). Interviews with individuals from different generations emphasised the great dynamism and change that has occurred in popular games. In a relatively short time, digital technologies have radically changed how young people and others conceive of games and the act of playing.

The students explored the rules and roles, language, situations, and other particularities relative to common games, such as rubber/elastic band skipping and marbles, before the arrival and predominance of digital games. These recently forgotten games take us to the opposite pole of semi-professional, on-line video-game playing, for example, the *League of Legends*. Based on students' personal experiences, the passion for computer games was introduced as changing from a simple leisure and free-time hobby, to a framework for socialisation which influences personal choices, to becoming a profession.

Fig. 6.5. Rubber-band skipping (2014) (photograph by Lena Simović).

The historical overview of Lungomare and its particular features interwoven with personal memories, thoughts, and experiences allowed the students to understand its significance. The etymology of specific place names and infrastructural changes in the area that students explored illustrated social and cultural changes during the last century in Pula. Personal memories that were collected added the human dimension to the place and time, from the period of Italian administration between the two World Wars, through the socialist Yugoslavia era, and since 1991 when Croatia became an independent nation. Other students focused on ordinary daily activities and the way community members have lived and used the space. Examples of everyday life included going to the beach, taking walks, participating in sports, drinking a morning coffee, enjoying the sunset, taking part in an evening party, looking for intimacy with a loved one, or being socially engaged in the preservation of the place. The socialising element, as well as the personal need for leisure moments or physical activity, emerged as constituting a dominant dimension of the place. A variety of micro activities have created a multiplicity of social relations, influenced personal and group identities, and generated habits. They have shaped local particularities, stories, urban myths and legends, and other intangible expressions.

Feedback from high school students and teachers confirmed the necessity of activities, such as the centre's workshop project, as alternative and complementary programmes alongside standard school curricula. The practical approach to themes related to local culture and peoples' ways of

life in standard school programmes is often not represented. Simplistic overviews of such issues where the stereotypical perspective of culture dominates an inclusive and critical way of thinking about one's own and other's cultures comprise the only content provided in the classroom. This educational workshop of the Centre for Intangible Heritage of Istria, thus, found meaning and a fertile field of action.

No Label Martin: A Participatory Practice

Branding the Tradition

The first impact on visitors who come to Istria is visible at the Slovenian border with Croatia. A large welcome billboard greets them with, "Welcome to Istria—a land of good wine." Undoubtedly, wine production and consumption are deeply rooted in local culture. Winemakers (*vinari*) include individuals and families who own small vineyards and produce wine for their own needs. In addition, some families make wine for themselves and sell part of the annual production directly from their cellar to the consumer. Many of these transactions take place without a paper trail. Larger producers, primarily comprised of family-owned wineries, have in the last 20 years transformed traditional winemaking into a profit-making profession. Investments in modern technology, growing knowledge of each phase of the winemaking process, and marketing have contributed to this change. The circle of the wine story in Istria is closed with large-scale industrial production.

Today, local food and drink are elements that remain an important niche in the global market. Local, "authentic," and traditional, in the sense of "genuine" ways of production have been combined with modern techno-ecological standards and attractive graphic design, to create a recognisable *brand* and a commodity which is combined with picturesque landscapes and local myths and legends. They are all ingredients that contribute to experience a unique and sensation-filled holiday. In the case of Istria, wine is no exception. There, like elsewhere, the wine industry became just another element of the lifestyle and social status. Although not representative of Istria as a whole, winemaking is an in/out category, a trademark or a brand of the new social, political, and economical local elite.

The goal of the Centre for Intangible Heritage's programme, No Label Martin [*Martin bez etikete*], was to involve and confer importance on small-scale wine producers, individuals, and families who make wine for their own needs and as their secondary, often black, economic activity.

The concept of the project arose shortly after the centre was inaugurated in Pićan, a small medieval town in central Istria. Fifty-five inhabitants live in the old town and around 2,000 live outside the walls, in the municipality. In the town there is a small grocery shop open until noon, a post office, and a kindergarten; no bar, restaurant, or a public place of that kind exists. Not much goes on in Pićan during the year, so the centre's idea was to involve the local community in making a public event. This was also a strategy to get to know each other and let community members know more about the programmes of the centre. Our initial work explored local festivities and celebratory moments that are or were important to the community. We learned that, years earlier, as in many other places throughout Istria and Croatia, the town celebrated St. Martin's Day, the day when the must was traditionally and symbolically baptised and turned to wine. Somehow, the celebrations stopped. The festivity was called Lazy Martin [*Leni Martin*] because it was normally organised a week after November 11, when St. Martin is honoured. The centre staff revived the idea of Lazy Martin and proposed that the local municipality organise a storytelling event dedicated to the small-scale wine producers. They would be the principal actors in the event, accompanied with homemade, unlabelled, non-commercial wine provided by local producers and bought by our guests. Food, a typical thick bean soup [*pažul*], and music would be part of the event. The objective of No Label Martin was to embrace different aspects of practices considered indispensable for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Among these were research, documentation, public performance, and, most important, participatory engagement with the local community, which was intentionally far from the mainstream wine elitism.

Decanting Stories: No Label Martin

The intent of the first annual No Label Martin event was to simply gather local inhabitants for a good time. As everyone got to know each other, the centre could present its goals with ICH, especially with regards to giving priority to the participation and inclusion of local communities in its activities. We started by knocking on doors asking who was the right person to participate in a storytelling evening, or "story-decanting" [*pretakanje priča*] as we called it. The topic of the evening was to be the tradition of winemaking. Even though it was not an easy task to explain why we considered community members important instead of some well-known and established wine producer, different generations of local winemakers were convinced to participate. Winemakers from other parts

of Istria were also invited to discuss distinctions in the winemaking process in different areas due to soil, microclimate, grape varieties, and other factors. After an hour of "story-decanting," all participants and guests extended the evening by socialising, tasting wine, and celebrating in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere. The central concept of this programme continued annually, focusing on different themes each year.

The importance of a local tavern [*oštarija*] and its location speaks for itself. As mentioned above, Pićan no longer has a tavern; many inhabitants complain that it would be nice to have a place where people could go for a drink, to socialise, play cards, eat something, or just spend time. They recall when the last tavern closed and never reopened its doors. This pattern is a general problem in the entire region; traditional taverns are disappearing and being replaced by impersonal or trendy bars, restaurants, agritourism, or other businesses primarily dedicated to tourism.

The next step for the centre, therefore, was to explore the collective memory represented by the local tavern. It was a place of memory and identity, of social rituals and habits, a daily point of departure or arrival, a venue to escape to or hide in, to have fun in and share, with a glass of wine its trademark. The daughter of the last tavern owner [*oštarica*] in Pićan was identified. Her story was documented; pictures and other documents from the three-decade period when her mother operated the tavern were collected. Former customers were invited to the exhibition of collected photographs where, together with the daughter, they shared memories of the tavern and the tavern owner, Marija Cokarica. A typical tavern was recreated in the place where the event was held. Visitors enjoyed typical card games, *mora*,[6] and singing and dancing, and an unlabelled wine-drinking contest continued until late in the night.

The following year, conflict arose when Slovenia officially protected the name of one particular variety of red grape, *teran*, at the EU level. This grape is also the most common variety grown in the Croatian part of the Istrian peninsula. With this action, commercial wines produced in Istria could no longer be labelled with the name *teran*. At the time of this writing, the naming problem is still unresolved and the situation remains on hold. Big wine producers and politicians were shocked by the Slovenian action, almost at the level of a diplomatic scandal. The centre staff reached out to document the opinions of *unlabelled* winemakers in Istria who laughed and made fun of politicians and such decisions. Although they found the move to protect the name *teran* pretty stupid, they didn't feel at all affected or concerned. They would continue to call their wine what they had always called it, and sell it by the "forbidden" name without using it on any label! Centre staff contacted winemakers in

different parts of Istria and filmed them talking about this problem and their winemaking experience, in general. A short video/field report served as motivation for them to participate at the centre event. The video also stimulated a discussion during the event (About Teran, Wine 2013). During the fieldwork, participants were interviewed and filmed primarily in their wine cellars [*konoba*], another crucial element related to wine. This is a space, *par excellence,* with all kinds of tools, old and new wine barrels, hams and sausages, and wardrobes full of forgotten objects, containers of inexhaustible memories. The wine cellars were the inspiration for the theme of the No Label Martin 2014 programme, Cellars and Winemaking Tools. Members from Istrian de Dignan, an ecomuseum in Vodnjan/Dignano, collaborated with the centre to prepare the event. The winemaking process at the ecomuseum was documented from the harvest, to crushing, pressing, fermentation, and decanting. The entire process was done in the traditional way using old tools, according to instructions from elders in the community. These tools, together with photographic and video documentation (Vin de Ua 2013) made during all phases of wine production, were used in the exhibition designed and organised for the No Label Martin event. In addition to the ecomuseum group, a few individuals from Pićan selected other tools used in the winemaking process to complete the exhibition; they also presented a very local voice at the event. No labels were used to describe objects in the exhibit. "Decanting stories" supposed that the individuals who loaned the tools would tell the audience the stories related to respective objects. A catalogue also helped to guide visitors through the exhibition.[7]

Fig. 6.6. Genaro Cinkopan in his wine cellar, Pićan (2014) (author's photograph).

The centre staff never knew what shape the public performance of the "Decanting Stories" would take until the show began. It was impossible to predict what the participants would say or how the audience would react. The improvisatory character was inevitable, and inspiring, although a certain dose of control was also required. In order to encourage a coherent and meaningful dialogue between the participants and the audience the role of moderator was fundamental. The same person was always engaged to fill that part. Roberta, a gifted woman and locally known poet, who makes a living as construction worker, filled this role with great sense of humour and the capacity to keep the narration flowing.

Fig. 6.7. No Label Martin 2014 exhibition and event. (author's photograph).

Other wheels in the mechanism without which No Label Martin wouldn't function included Silvano, a local man dedicated to whatever was needed from small to large repair jobs, including even volunteer fireman and gravedigger. Since the first edition of No Label Martin he has been responsible for making the superb bean soup [*pažul*] served to the guests. Starting the day before, Silvano made the necessary preparations, cooking the *pažul* on a small fire all the next day. The master of logistics was Matej, a local young bank accountant who was also committed to the

organisation of any kind of event in the municipality. Obtaining tables, chairs, glasses, bread, and wine, together with other small, invisible, but indispensable tasks, was his responsibility. No Label Martin has become an important moment recognised by the local community where everyone can find a place, thanks to Silvano and Matej and the good will of other residents who support the event in many ways.

Conclusion

Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage does not mean simply inscribing a certain phenomenon on UNESCO's list. More important, as the outcomes from the educational workshops and the No Label Martin public events of the Istrian Centre for Intangible Culture suggest, is the stimulation of awareness and the engagement of community members in everyday social life practices. One of the possible ways to achieve these goals is, certainly, through inclusive, educational, participatory, and collaborative projects.

The role of mediators between the museum ethnographers and all of the participants who, directly or indirectly, took part in the projects discussed here emerged spontaneously. It was the appropriate position to encourage the articulation of thoughts and actions of all who participated in the activities. Their engagement was stimulated for the benefit of the general public and also allowed the centre to create new spaces for participation and moments recognised as important in the life of the local community.

In an environment where it is impossible to eliminate the dominant flow imposed from above, the projects of the centre were able to be free of often manipulative discourses and policies that use local culture, traditions, and ways of life, i.e. heritage, by putting them into boxes which serve particular agendas of the moment. From our point of view, success reduced the dominant stream and took a detour from it by using the oars of critical thinking.

Loyalty towards political power is not always compatible with professional challenges and ethics in a highly politicised society, such as the one in which we live. Threats represented by blind allegiance to political discourses put professional standard practices, such as inclusiveness and other socially responsible trends, at risk. This fact is well known to the centre and the Ethnographic Museum, and probably too many other similar institutions around the world as well. Standard practices and trends are the only acceptable values to which museum ethnographers who work for the public benefit should dedicate their

exclusive loyalty in all phases of work, including: exhibitions, research, collections, learning and participative practices, and also establishing public and institutional policies. The exclusive adoption of this philosophy and approach, in my opinion, would be a totally innovative approach, and strong basis for other innovations, in institutions that deal with culture and ways of life in this particular micro reality.

Epilogue

Annette B. Fromm, one of the editors of this book,[8] wrote in an email that, "It is so difficult to give a case-study-based conference paper, then a few years later publish it-as the program has continued." This epilogue documents the continuity of the programmes described and analysed in this chapter and proposes possible future directions for both.

Two more sessions of the high school intangible cultural heritage workshops have been held. The 2015 workshop was with students in the Zvane Črnja High School in Rovinj; the 2016 edition was conducted in the high school in Buzet. The plan was to organise the workshops around the same themes and compile the students' findings in a printed publication, as was done with the previous results. The main theme this time was the intangible culture of minorities, a concept which is often understood only in terms of national or ethnic minorities. Our goal was to go beyond this definition and include other possible groups that in particular social and cultural contexts are considered, or perceive themselves, as minorities. Different role-play games about minorities were successfully employed in the classrooms, generating interesting discussions with and between the students. Their research proceeded in two directions: they explored aspects of ICH in the two national minorities, Italian and Albanian, and also concentrated on individuals with physical disabilities or from the gay community. The possibility for students to explore other topics in which they were interested was also an option. Several students chose to explore phenomena from their own cultural heritage such as, local dialects, or the relationship between traditional and modern fairs, especially the local carnival. All of the results were published in the form of short texts and posters.

The 2015 No Label Martin programme in Pićan was dedicated to women, specifically to different roles women have in the wine making process. The experiences of women who participated in the programme were quite different: from different roles in the context of family-based traditional winemaking to female seasonal workers in industrial wine

production. A small exhibition, along with storytelling, live music, and a feast were the main ingredients of the programme.

Positive feedback from participants in both of the more recent programmes yet again proved the value of continuity. Participatory practices are still not common in the local museum environment in Croatia. The lack of staff and shortage of economic resources contribute to this slow rate of change. Thus, in our context, participative methods are still defined as innovative. In addition, the reality reveals that basic museum activities, including exhibitions and object conservation, are at risk. The strategy adopted by the Istrian Ethnographic Museum's Centre for Intangible Culture focuses on the present as creatively as possible with the resources available. The future of programmes such as those introduced in this chapter, like other basic museum activities, enters into a relationship with the future of museums, in general. They strongly depend on local and global cultural and economic policies and trends. In conclusion, with all good will to make an impact and influence the surrounding society with our museum activities, we are neither politicians nor prophets, simply ordinary museum practitioners.

Notes

[1] Digital editions of the workshop results can be found on the webpage of the Istrian Ethnographic Museum's Centre for Intangible Culture: http://www.cenki-cecii.com/produkcija/publikacije.

[2] Must is freshly pressed grape juice that contains the skins, seeds, and stems of the fruit. Making must is the first step in the process of winemaking.

[3] General information about the two-part singing and playing in the Istrian scale with a slideshow and official video presentation is available on UNESCO's official ICH Register List:
http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00011&RL=00231/.

[4] The primary activities of the Istrian Centre for Intangible Heritage are available on the official webpage: http://www.cenki-cecii.com.

[5] This kind of dynamic concerning the use of ICH and "cultural heritage" as a concept is well illustrated with a process that Rajko Muršić defines as "heritisation," a situation characterised by a constant tension between the private and public spheres, "*oikos* vs. *polis."* This process leads to an inevitable "manipulation of heritage" on different levels, pointing to specific questions on each level: in politics (the question of representation), aesthetics (the question of valorisation), economy (the question of ownership), ideology (the question of appropriation), and education (the question of responsibility). Muršić questions if the meaning of heritage is not just the preservation of objects, knowledge, and practices but also of social life of those objects, knowledge, and practices. Does

"heritage," with its new given social meaning, "stimulate the public (the common) or is it imposed above the public (and the common)?" (Muršič 2014).

[6] The most typical card games in Istria are *briškula* and *trešete*. Both games or their versions are very common in Italy (Italian, *morra*) and other Mediterranean countries like Spain and Portugal. *Mora* is an ancient game played in different countries similar to the rock-paper-scissors game. Each player simultaneously reveals their hand, extending any number of fingers, and calls out a number. Any player who successfully guesses the number of fingers revealed scores a point.

[7] A digital version of the exhibition catalogue is available on the Istrian Centre for Intangible Culture webpage: http://www.cenki-cecii.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/MARTIN-BEZ-ETIKETE.pdf.

[8] I am grateful to Dr. Annette B. Fromm for her suggestions and help during the writing of the final version of this article.

CHAPTER SEVEN

LUCCA MUSEUM OF THE RISORGIMENTO: NO EMOTION, NO COMMUNICATION!

CLAUDIA GIOSTRELLA
AND ELISA TRANFAGLIA

Introduction: The origins

The origins of the Lucca Museum of the Risorgimento can be traced back to shortly after the end of World War I when the Lucca Provincial Veteran's Federation began collecting materials documenting the local community's role in the process of the unification of Italy. The Risorgimento is the historical period dating to the eighteenth century that led to the formation of the state of Italy. At that time, Italy saw the diffusion of the ideals of the French Revolution, the abolition of the old absolutist states, and the formation of new broader organisations, all of which favoured the birth of a new political class and national cultural sentiment.

Fig. 7.1. The main entrance of the Lucca Museum of the Risorgimento. (photograph courtesy of the Provincia of Lucca).

The museum is located in two rooms on the ground floor of the Palazzo Ducale of Lucca, in the Swiss Court. Its collections include historical, ethnographic, and artistic artefacts from the local area, dating from the Risorgimento period to World War I. The first version of the museum, the "War Museum," opened in 1925 with assistance from public and private donations. It was established at the Porta San Donato Fort, one of the gates of the famous fortified ring of walls around the city of Lucca. Four years later the museum was transferred to Villa Guinigi, where it remained until 1951 when the Monuments and Fine Arts Office took over the property. A lack of adequate exhibition space led to a period of neglect until the mid-1980s. Thanks to the presidents of the National Veteran's Association, most of the exhibits were saved and the museum was reopened in May 1989, in the Palazzo Ducale, its present location.

The emotional involvement of the community was the driving force for the construction of the museum bringing a powerful and continuous exchange of memories from its origins to the present. Since its founding, the collection has grown considerably with donations of documents, letters, written declarations, photographs, engravings, paintings and sculptures, soldiers' uniforms, and personal objects, such as water bottles, cigarette cases, bags, flags, furniture, and numerous weapons. Despite the engagement and total commitment of the Veteran's Federation, the museum suffered many setbacks before reaching the status of a modern institution that "acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purpose of education, study and enjoyment" ICOM Statutes 2007).

The museum's original location was inappropriate and provided little for the needs of a changing society. Too many objects were displayed in small glass cases with no care given to preservation issues. The artefacts were shown piled up in such a way that it was difficult to see everything and understand their real historical value. The communicative function of the museum was equally inadequate. Little information allowed visitors to identify the real significance of the objects (ICOM Key Concepts 2009, 28-30, 61-64). For these reason, after a long period of renovation coordinated by the Provincial Authorities of Lucca, Promo PA Foundation, and the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism, with contributions from the Tuscan Regional Authorities and Cassa di Risparmio di Lucca Foundation, the Museum of the Risorgimento reopened again on March 17, 2013, the anniversary of the Italian Unification.

The Renovation Project

Today, the role of the museum in contemporary society has been redefined. The old image of museum as an icon of an untouchable "memory treasure chest" has been replaced with the active role of "Agora," a place of learning, intercultural exchanging, social meeting, and civil and identity development. A significant number of highly qualified professionals took up this challenge and carried out the renovation project of the Museum of Risorgimento, carefully approaching the new *museal* perspectives (Ibid. 48–50) which include new kinds of users, new ways of creation and dissemination of knowledge, and new teaching methods and learning mechanisms.

The horizontal organisation of the working group created a friendly and collaborative climate; it was an experiment with the same model of democratic relationship and communication that is one of the educational goals of the new Museum of Risorgimento. The different expectations, body of knowledge, points of view, socio-cultural backgrounds, abilities, life management skills, and linguistic code of every member of the working team promoted a remarkable sharing of knowledge during all phases of the renovation project. The initial main questions guiding the approach of the renovation project were:

architectural: How to renovate the old, historic building using new standards and criteria for museum structures?
preservation: What, how, and why restore the objects?
exhibition: Why and how many objects would go on display?
communication: Who is the actual museum visitor and who could be the new visitor?
what are the best communicative approaches to use?

Communication and Emotion

"Communication" was the key word with which all the planning phases of the museum's renovation started, followed by "preservation-conservation" and "exhibition," which actually became active instruments of communication. The renovation project followed a different point of view from the communicative method originally used. By using the different languages of cognitive communication and emotional communication, the museum wanted to provide ways to make the visitor experience more active.

> Cognitive communication is the channel of communication that makes use of the purely symbolic elements of language: a set of symbols (words) and rules for using them (grammar) that generates consensually agreed upon meanings. […] Emotional communication, on the other hand, is the channel of human communication in which one type of information—information about the sender's feeling (or emotional state)—is conveyed to the receiver through the non-symbolic dimensions of spoken language such as tone, prosody, rhythm and silence, as well as through facial expressions, posture, and non-symbolic gestures (Geltner 2012, 2).

Cognitive communication is experienced as thought; emotional communication is experienced as feeling. Language and feelings use two different channels of transmission but they are strictly bound; the rational mind and the emotional mind work together and model reciprocally. We usually use the former to understand in a consciousness way; this intellectual state of mind defines reality in a logical way. The latter is illogical and made up of raw emotions and emotion-driven thoughts caused by the feelings we experience. The two minds are not adversarial or physically separate but they interact to construct mental life.

The etymology of the word "emotion" derives from the Latin verb *moveo*, "to move." The added prefix *e*, "moving from," indicates that every emotion has an underlying meaning of action. Emotions are essentially pulses of acting, consistent responses to internal or external events which have a particular significance for the organism. They directly condition the mental activities and can be effective instruments of education and learning mechanisms. Recent neuroscientific research[1] points out the relationship between images and the emotional reactions they arouse. Contemporary art frequently uses this kind of communication, transmitting an expression of feeling and stimulating emotion in the viewer.

The ability to monitor one's own emotions and those of other people, discriminate between different feelings and label them appropriately, and use this information to guide thinking and behaviour has been defined as *Emotional* Intelligence (Coleman 2008). The primary role of promoting superior performance in individual, practical, and relational skills has been studied for its application to education. Emotional Intelligence has been explained and experimented with in schools using a series of successful practical experiences and projects that have increased the social, emotional, and educational skills of both students and teachers.

The "emotional teaching" assimilated in childhood and adolescence can shape the emotional reaction and competence and help individuals to live capably with their emotions. For this reason, the validation of

Emotional Intelligence has to be seriously considered by public educational institutions. The lack of Emotional Intelligence results in the absence of empathy, understanding, and compassion, and difficulty in managing interpersonal skills.

Why not use museums as instruments for "emotional teaching?" History museums have great educational and social functions. The knowledge of history plays a fundamental role in raising the civil consciousness of a nation and the intellectual growth of younger generations. The experiences, conquests, and mistakes of our ancestors can teach us to live in the present in a better way and make the right decisions for the future. The real value of remembrance is the underpinning behind memory; why we remember historical facts is more than recalling the details. The aim of the renovation of the museum was to emphasise its social and educational role and to give new life to the transmission of memory with a special concern for young people.

The Museum of the Risorgimento was conceived to lead visitors to discover the origins of the Italian Nation, through an historical excursion from local to national events. Every Italian knows the facts of the Risorgimento from their history studies at school. One of the educational aims of the museum is to not simply teach history but also illustrate the events with no political conditioning and social conformism. Visitors learn to locate and understand historical facts as the museum serves as an alternative instrument for decoding the present.

Preservation and Conservation

The New Setting: Communicating Conservation

The preservation needs of the objects in the collection gained prominence at the museum's new location. For example, the use of particular mounting procedures increased the value of the artefacts and communicated the fragility of their unique heritage. In addition, the museum was identified as an effective venue to inspire the care and conservation of tangible and intangible heritage. Thus, individuals working on the renovation of the museum provided lectures about aspects of the restoration of objects, a series of public conferences for community members, and meetings for public school students. This outreach proved an efficient way to gain audience participation and communicate the significant role of the preservation and protection of cultural heritage.

The participation of many professionals involved in the renovation project has been a great opportunity for sharing specific knowledge.[2]

Historians, architects, art historians, conservators and restorers, and administrative specialists were all involved in periodic meetings from the beginning of the executive project to the third and final planning phase. They represented different points of view and summarised the best display methods following the highest levels of conservation standards. The role of the restorers in the executive project was decisive in identifying alternative and attractive displays for some very fragile objects.

The Museum collection includes material that holds more symbolic than historical value. In the exhibition itinerary, it also has an extrinsic, emotional communicative function, comprising primarily the personal belongings of soldiers, for example an original, well-preserved piece of bread, part of the daily rations for which every World War I soldier waited, or leather items of apparel, a gas mask, uniforms, and extremely fragile flags. Other artefacts in the collection, such as a pine branch from the grave of Giuseppe Garibaldi, letters with dried flowers folded inside, old postcards, and press clippings, illustrate the remarkable expansion of devotion for the Risorgimento's heroes across the country. Giuseppe Garibaldi, especially, captured the "most typical signs of a people's hero: love of country, personal courage, impartiality, modesty, love for life, the charisma of a victorious '*condottiero*'" (Pertini 1982).

The Exhibition

The Multimedia Room: Emotion through the Eyes, the Ears, and Touch

The visitor's first glance upon entering the museum is captured by the original signatures of the main protagonists of Risorgimento: Giuseppe Mazzini; Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour; Vittorio Emanuele II, King of Italy; and Pope Pius IX. These personalities are introduced through the intimate aspects of their calligraphy. The exhibition itinerary begins in the entrance hall with a tactile map of the museum, an outstanding model of creative design, engraved on a unique piece of white Carrara marble. Each gallery is represented with texture and a map legend drawn to scale guides the visitor through the route.

The journey continues in the multimedia room where the visitor dives into a captivating narration of the sequence of events which happened between 1815 and 1918. The process of national unification and the story of the leading actors of Risorgimento are told by three main characters who symbolise the men and women responsible for the movement: Luigi, a romantic volunteer of the Second War of Independence and the

Expedition of the Thousand; Maria, his partner and narrator of the story, is the spokesperson of women's conditions; and an unnamed young patriot who anticipates the "Italy that will be." Frames from nineteenth century iconography and famous films, combined with popular patriotic songs and songs of Garibaldi's army support the thoughts, feelings, and hopes of the storytellers. Words, images, and sound are used creatively to describe fundamental historical landmarks in the birth of the Italian nation.

The presentation in this introductory gallery is designed to physically absorb and emotionally immerse visitors in the narrative. The storytelling in the video is structured impressively and descriptively. The music is evocative and the sound waves have been calibrated to help understand the story. The multi-speaker stereo system, equipped with surround-sound features along with life-size images of the narrators, is positioned to intensify the emotional impact of the experience. Their passionate recitations lead visitors to identify directly with the characters and their feelings. The multimedia form of communication only appears to be unilateral; the public cannot possibly interact with the narrators. The visitor, however, is personally involved in answering many questions posed by the three main characters. Maria leaves them with an assertion that opens many questions, "now that Italy has been made, it's time to make Italians."

The visitor leaves the multimedia room aware that Maria's final words mean that the process of unification is only beginning. Consequently, instinctive questions follow: is the unification process finished or is it currently underway? Who are the Italians now? The visit to the museum continues in the Main Gallery, where some of these feelings are found:

the identification of the visitor with one or more of the character of the video
empathy and compassion with the characters' feelings, both positive and negative
understanding the real lifestyles of the soldiers
emotional involvement with patriotic ideas

The Main Gallery

The Main Gallery is an open space with four key display cases and two smaller cases dedicated to specific themes. A timeline above the cases composed of green, white, and red lights, the colours of the Italian flag, links the objects on display to the dates, places, events, and most significant figures of the period. It provides an overall view of the cultural, social, and political process of renewal that led to the formation of the

Italian state. A selection of historical and literary quotes helps to evoke the "spirit of the time." The visitor inserts themselves into this orderly and comfortable environment in which they freely explore the museum.

Fig. 7.2. The main gallery of the Lucca Museum of the Risorgimento. (photograph courtesy of the Provincia of Lucca).

The first case contains the museum's most important object, the original "Carbonari" flag. The word "*carbonari*" means "charcoal burners," groups of secret revolutionary societies founded in early nineteenth century Italy. Members of the Carbonari, with their patriotic and liberal ideals and those influenced by them took part in important events in the process of Italian Unification. The display of the flag was quite difficult, taking into consideration the need to address microclimate standards of light and temperature for the protection of the fabric. These conditions were carefully studied and the display was designed to give the best view without reflections from lights.

The second case is dedicated to Giuseppe Mazzini, the important politician, journalist, and activist in the Italian Unification. After a period of political activism in the Carbonari, Mazzini distanced himself from their ideals and began to develop the Giovine Italia project, based on a republican principle of one nation made up of free and equal citizens. Placed between the portraits of Giuseppe Mazzini and Giuseppe Giovannetti, a Lucca-born soldier and one of the many local heroes, is the original equipment of a Tuscan Civic Guard officer, comprising helmet, epaulets, and sword knot. Giovannetti organised the Tuscany military corps which participated in the First War of Independence in 1848.

With the third showcase, the visitor can identify themselves in the role

of a *garibaldino*, a volunteer soldier who served in one of the numerous formations that the "Hero of the Two Worlds," Giuseppe Garibaldi, founded, led, or inspired by his ideals. Garibaldi was known as the "Hero of the Two Worlds" because of his military enterprises in Brazil, Uruguay, and Europe. Personal belongings, including a typical red cotton flannel shirt, old photographs of Garibaldi after being wounded on the Aspromonte Massif, original letters written by the "Hero," and images of famous local *garibaldini* make this showcase the most evocative in the museum. For this reason, it takes the central place in the exhibition path.

In the final display cases, history up to World War I is told chronologically using a few impressive objects such as a gas mask, an original cotton bag, and a small piece of bread called *il sedicesimo*, the one-sixteenth of the daily ratio of a frontline soldier. The objects are rolled up in rusted barbed wire to recall the brutality and harshness of the frontline. Two additional small cases are located here; one is dedicated to an important personality of Lucca's territory and the other to the women in the Risorgimento.

The Women's Corner

Women participated actively in the Risorgimento. Side by side with their partners, sons, and fathers women were the focal points of attraction for cultural and social exchange. Many used their social position to host clandestine, passionate cultural debates in their drawing rooms. Often, their homes were places of exchange of information. Their houses became a sort of intelligence service and educational centres for young people where the values of love of country and fraternity were enthusiastically nurtured.

The importance of women's participation in the political movements of the second half of the nineteenth century has been underestimated for a long time. The image expressed emphasised only their domestic and family role, but the function of many women in the cause of Italian liberation was more active; they were nurses, observers, journalists, and even brave and fearless fighters, who often wore the *tricolore*, the Italian flag, hand-sewn by themselves.


Figs. 7.3 (left) and 7.4 (right). Women's case and Maria, sewing a *tricolore,* the Italian flag. (photographs courtesy of the Provincia of Lucca).

Women like Maria, the female narrator in the introductory video, identified themselves with the ideals of freedom and emancipation. The limitations imposed on nineteenth-century women caused them to reflect on their collective identity. Maria's words, questions, and feelings are aimed to stimulate the audience to delve deeper into these matters, encouraging personal introspection and research.

The women's display includes objects that belonged to influential women who actively contributed to the local history. Typical personal objects such as an original nineteenth-century lace parasol and small glass perfume bottles are shown alongside books, letters, and an old inkwell to best define the delicate but strong influence of women.

Design Aspects and Communication: The Importance of Details and Comfort

To be incisive places of knowledge, museums must offer visitors the best, comfortable environment to promote understanding, intellectual curiosity, and, simply, an enjoyable time. Visitors who are physically at ease, welcomed, and able to easily orient themselves in the museum can gain additional benefits from their visit and have superlative learning experiences. For these reasons, design is one of the most impressive instruments in the vocabulary of museum communication; it facilitates understanding and contributes to the preservation of the collection with an experimental approach of human experience and perception. The best results are achieved with emphasis on the user, the use of basic research

methods to solve problems, and the collaborative nature of design with other disciplines. Exploration, collaboration, and intuition are the three main words that guided the design project of the Museum of the Risorgimento.

Attention was paid to details for the accurate and custom-made needs of every single object. Lights which correctly illuminate the artefacts and safeguard conservation needs while providing for the viewing of all text panels were prototyped and tested.

Figs. 7.5 (left) and 7.6 (right). Mounting techniques of drawings and documents (author's photographs).

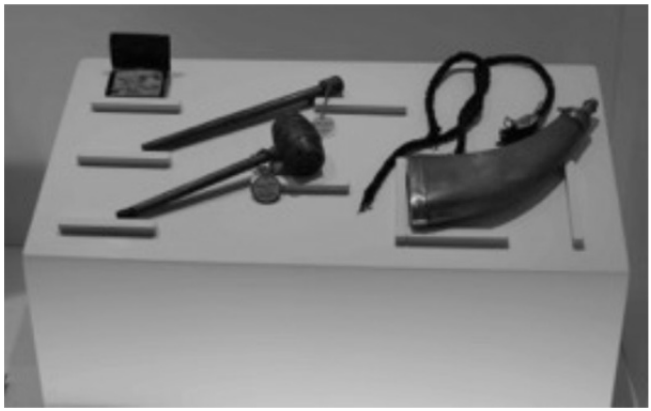

Fig. 7.7. Objects on display. (authors' photograph).

In the renovated museum, digital technology was utilised different formats and different locations to more effectively tell the story of the Risorgimento. Some technological forms were placed next to the objects in the vitrines; others were located on the walls or near paintings. Many communicative tools were used in unconventional ways, enhancing the importance of the exchange of knowledge about historic artefacts in continuous dialogue between past, present, and future. Digital technologies were placed side-by-side with old objects; original short films and documentaries were shown on tablets beside the real objects or next to images the same size as the tablet, such as the portrait of a dying Giuseppe Mazzini, a copy of the famous painting by Silvestro Lega.[3] Tablets juxtaposed with artworks created a symbolic example of interactive media communication. New visual media with old representations and reproductions of reality, thus, generated a hybrid communication.

Design for All

The term "Design for All" is used to describe a philosophy for creating environments, products, services, and interfaces working without the need for adaptation for people of all ages and abilities in different situations and circumstances. Easy-to-use, accessible, affordable products and services improve all citizens' quality of life, permit access to the built environment and services, and provide user-friendly products. It is not an issue of only quality of life, but also a necessity for many aging or disabled persons. The origin of Design for All lies in the battle of people with disabilities for barrier-free accessibility, and comes directly from the broader universal accessibility concept. "Design for All is design for human diversity, social inclusion and equality" (European Institute for Design and Disability) was written in the EIDD (European Institute for Design and Disability) Stockholm Declaration to enable all people to have equal opportunities to participate in every aspect of society. To achieve this, the built environment, objects, services, culture, and information, which are designed and made by people to be used by people, must be accessible, convenient, and comfortable for everyone to use and responsive to evolving human diversity.

In a museum design project, universal accessibility is a basic target as an instrument of social and democratic education, conscious involvement, and sharing, and to eliminate psychological barriers between different people. In the Museum of the Risorgimento, the Design for All philosophy was behind all the new structural renovations and communication tools

and structures. The tactile map at the entrance respects the rules of Design for All; the height and angle of the panel and the thickness of the incisions permitted free access to the necessary information for disabled visitors and children. The educational text panels were also mounted at the correct angle suitable for reading. The typeface design of the printed colour selection, and size were studied to give the best readability to people with visual impairments. The vertical height and inclination of the text panels inside the showcases were placed so someone in a wheelchair or a child could see the objects and read the captions easily. With respects to lighting, standards such as distance and reflectivity were also considered.

The design of the multimedia room, including the inclination of the panels, the size of the screens, the rear projection of the life-size images, and the position of the audio, puts the visitor in the centre of the story. The video in the multimedia room has subtitles in both Italian and English in order to involve visitors with auditory disabilities and non-Italian speakers. The main characteristic of the narration is the clear and universally understandable message, a "narration for all," which is suitable for people of all ages, from different cultural backgrounds, and with distinct physical abilities. The aim is to reach visitors who can take away the emotional experience and retell the significance of the stories heard while at the museum.

Conclusion

The result of the new location, in contrast to the original site of the Museum of Risorgimento, resulted in another approach to the display of historical and ethnographic artefacts. The museum now presents a vital and relevant story; through multimedia experiences, visitors are immersed into a pathway where creative license in the arrangement of primary and secondary sources makes the museum more attractive to younger visitors. After a rigorous, scientific study of exhibition techniques, the primary sources can, "speak for themselves in ways that cannot be captured through the filter of a secondary source" (Sreedharan 2004, 302). They have become the most direct connection with the past and the present when all virtual communication skills are used. The museum is no longer a passive container of objects but initiates visitors' emotions.

Objects, documents, correspondence, and diaries are connected with the feelings, thoughts, and actions of the individuals with whom they were directly involved. The visitor, upon entering the multimedia room, experiments with an immersive path that enhances the evocative power of the museum's collection. An object can tell a story by itself or be a part of

the whole story; in the video, the actors refer to many of the items that are shown in the exhibit cases. The objects on display in the Main Gallery do not separate the real world and the imaginary world of the video but share the same emotions experienced in the multimedia room.

The visitor assembles a personal composition of historical notions, reprocesses the emotional experience together with traditional knowledge, and is stimulated to increase and examine their knowledge beyond the visit to the museum. The use of unconventional communication methods helps to expand the visitors' knowledge through direct and personal emotional perception, first in the multimedia room, and then with historical material in the Main Gallery, permanently linked with subjectivity and objectivity.

If only one child who visits the museum remembers a few words of the actors in the video or understands the terrible conditions of a soldier during World War I after seeing the display of the gas mask and the small piece of bread, the museum will have reached its goal. The processes of thinking and remembering start from an emotional stimulus. Marguerite Yourcenar wrote that the aim of a writer is to communicate an impression that will be impossible to forget. The Museum of the Risorgimento has wholeheartedly adopted this attitude and strongly believes that one of its tasks is to communicate sentiments that will be impossible to forget, because we are convinced that without emotion there is no communication.

> "*Se comprendere è impossibile, conoscere è necessario* [...]"
> ["If understanding is impossible, knowing is imperative [...]"]
> (Levi 1976, 257).

Notes

[1] See Di Dio, Cinzia et al.2007. The authors used the functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) technique to explore if there was an objective, biological basis for the experience of beauty in art or if the aesthetic experience was entirely subjective.

[2] The project and the artistic direction were curated by Francesca Velani of the Promo PA Foundation. The executive project and the set-up were curated by Francesca Velani and Elisa Tranfaglia. The general administrative coordination was under Jessica Ferro from the Provincia di Lucca, the building renovation was curated by Marta Giannini from the Provincia di Lucca, the scientific direction was guided by Luciano Luciani, and the direction of cataloguing and restoration was under by Antonia d'Aniello from the Italian Ministry of Culture Heritage and Activities and Tourism.

[3] Lega was one of the leading artists of "Macchiaioli," a group of Italian painters active in Tuscany in the second half of the nineteenth century. They were

republicans or anarchists who met at Caffè Michelangelo in Florence to discuss art and politics in a patriotic and anti-academic way. Some actively participated in the wars of Italian Independence. Characteristic of their painting technique was the use of pure colour stains (in Italian "*macchie*" from which the name "*macchiaioli*" derived.

PART THREE

TRANSFORMATIONS

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE VALENCIAN MUSEUM OF ETHNOLOGY: THE PERMANENT ROOMS

JOAN SEGUI AND FRANCESC TAMARIT

Notes about the History of the Permanent Rooms at the Valencia Museum of Ethnography

The Museu Valencià d'Etnologia (Muvaet) is located in the city of Valencia, in Spain. It was created by the Diputación de Valencia, a regional administration in 1982. The original idea was to create a museum devoted to recover, study, and defend Valencian traditional culture. After the end of the Franco regime and at the beginning of democracy in the mid-1970s, regional identities re-emerged across Spain. Catalans, Basques, Galicians, and Valencians expressed the need to recover their cultural distinctiveness which had been repressed during the dictatorship. Such claims had a political as well as a cultural impact, especially in those areas which kept their own language including: Basque in Basque Country, Galego-Portugués in the Galician area, and Catalan in Catalonia, the Valencian lands and the Balearic Islands. As happened elsewhere across Europe, the need for the reaffirmation of cultural identity often finds expression in the creation of new ethnographic museums which have the goal of revealing identity.

At the same time, the rapid transformation of rural societies was well underway after the 1950s. This meant an increased degree of migration to urban, industrialised areas that led to the total loss of original cultural bases. Thus, the abandonment of rural areas and the swift technological advances led to the redundancy of traditional tools and occupations not only in the countryside but also in the case of specialised urban trades. Overall, a significant part of what was known as "Valencian culture" and "Valencian identity" changed in a moment of political rejuvenation, when democracy and regional identity returned to the Spanish civil arena after being absent for decades.

From the opening of the Museu d'Etnologia,[1] its curatorial team was involved in several attempts to build a gallery where the museum collection, which was being created at the same time, was shown on a long-term basis. When the museum opened, its visitors were offered the first permanent exhibition which tried to "trigger awareness about the value of the ethnographic heritage of the Valencian culture" (Grau 2011, 40). This exhibit was replaced with a temporary show, *Del Gra Al Pa* [*From Grain to Bread*]. The exhibition explained the process that linked the cultivation of wheat to the production of bread, essential practices in Mediterranean traditional societies. *Del Gra al Pa* was open to the public from 1986 to 1993. Two years later in May 1995, the museum staff opened yet another new exhibition. Their aim was to present traditional life in Valencia with three foci: domestic life, the source of raw materials, and techniques of fabrication. This exhibition was dismantled two years later in 1997. Thus, from the moment of its opening in 1983 until 1997, Muvaet organised three exhibitions that were either conceived as permanent initially or became semi-permanent because of internal work dynamics. All three exhibits closely reflected the museological fashion of the times.

Permanent versus Temporary Galleries: A Constant Dilemma

In addition to the experience with permanent exhibitions, the Muvaet team also was involved in a large number of shorter-term temporary exhibition projects. By 1995, a new director, Enrique Perez Cañamares, joined the museum; his mandate involved the creation of an intensive temporary exhibitions programme. Between 1997 and 2002, 64 such displays were produced with material drawn from loans from other museums, the museum team's projects, or production collaborations. Throughout this period, which lasted until 2009, the programme of temporary exhibitions was based, whenever possible, on presenting/representing subjects that were *a priori* highly attractive to the general public such as: wealth and power with, "The Tsars and their Peoples;" exoticism with, "Ali Bey," and "Tunisia, Land of Cultures;" or a romantic past with, "Memories of the Past," and "The World of the Old School."

The strategy of the frequent, short-term exhibits continues even at the most innovative institutions (Alcaide et al. 2010, 188; Roigé 2008). At Muvaet, in fact, it had a positive impact. The number of visitors increased in response to the frequent change of temporary exhibitions and the

attractive cultural activities that complemented the exhibitions. The intense production activity allowed the museum team to carry out many museological experiments and rapidly improve production techniques. Media presence expanded as activities at the museum increased; some of the projects also had national and international relevance.

The hyperactivity of production, however, revealed weaknesses which affected the museum and its team. The intensity of the temporary exhibitions programmes required a huge quantity of time be devoted to production. This factor prevented the museum team from developing other important aspects of their work such as organisation of the collection, research, and publication. The museum's dependence on temporary programmes became its reason to "exist." When there was a change in political leadership this became a problem. The economic crisis, already evident in 2009, led to budget restrictions for cultural activities. Thus, the number of temporary exhibitions and associated programmes were drastically reduced. In this context, museums without permanent exhibitions, such as Muvaet, had less to offer the public. Finally, through all of those years, the lack of permanent galleries weakened the museum's didactic offerings. Very few education programmes were presented along with the temporary exhibitions. The museum was, in fact, losing contact with, school children, one of the main public sectors of concern.

Muvaet's Permanent Exhibition Project

As early as 2002, before the economic crisis, the team at the Valencian Museum of Ethnography began to realise the necessity for a drastic, strategic change (Grau 2011). The feeling for such a need at that time did not arise from the economic issues alone, but also included other factors. The absence of a consolidated didactic programme and the lack of time for other curatorial tasks, such as conservation or research, are only two. Other issues were related more to the institutional dependence of the museum, including the loss of control over the management of museum spaces.[2] The increasing feeling of the museum team that the public and the responsible government officials equated the lack of permanent galleries with the "non-existence" of the museum itself was more significant. Under these circumstances, producing the permanent exhibits became a key goal.

The Project

A discursive scheme was created to develop the permanent galleries. Concepts to be represented focused on Valencian traditional culture

emphasising a geocultural approach rather than a classical anthropological perspective: Traditional Cities, *La Ciutat Viscuda*; Irrigated and Marshy Lands, *Horta i Marjal*; and Dry Lands and Mountains, *Secà i Muntanya*. Once the main storyline was determined, the team almost immediately began to develop the production. Once again, however, political dynamics were placed in front of the exhibit project. After the 2003 election, the new political appointments responsible for the cultural area of Diputación de Valencia brought new projects to all of the museums. The projected plan for Muvaet was to find a new home. Muvaet shared a building, known as The Beneficiencia Cultural Centre, with the Prehistory Museum and other cultural units. The proposal was that each museum deserved its own building. Muvaet had not yet finished planning the new permanent exhibits, and thus it seemed logical that the Ethnology Museum would move to a new location. At that time, planning for the "Cities" section only was underway. When it was completed toward the beginning of 2004, "Cities" was presented as a "monographic room of traditional life in Valencian cities" (*Secà i Muntanya* n.d.) not a permanent gallery. The rest of the project was not developed at that time because it was only a matter of time before the museum was going to be relocated elsewhere.

Two years of looking for a new building proved unsuccessful. Towards the beginning of 2007, with new elections on the horizon and the economic crisis in the air, it became clear that the museum would stay in its current location indefinitely. Once new political leadership was in place, the final impulse to complete the permanent galleries project of the Muvaet was felt.

The *Horta y Marjal* Rooms: One Story, Different Museologies

By the end of 2007, temporary exhibitions still dominated the bulk of its cultural activities; the first permanent gallery at the Valencian Museum of Ethnology had been open to the public for some three years. The museum team used this section of the permanent exhibition as a lab to test public reactions. The museum's visitor book became an excellent tool to document useful comments. The permanent exhibition on traditional cities was built upon classic and solid museology. Most of visitors gained "nostalgic" impressions from the black and white pictures, the old furniture, and other objects that apparently transported them to what seemed to be "happy past times." Elderly people primarily found themselves comfortable in such an atmosphere, as "it brought them memories of their past." An important part of the exhibition's museology

used a rather naturalistic approach and was built with real parts of demolished houses from the city of Valencia itself. The interior of a room or a set table was used by the designers. Thus, the visit played an important role in the recreation of images of the "past" to which the exhibition intended to refer, and continues to do so.[3]

When the project started again in 2007, the museum team decided to retain this already well-established permanent gallery. It was going to be developed from a pre-established museological scenario. In the process of planning the new galleries, several questions with regards to evaluation arose among the curators as to whom, aside from the already established audience, the new permanent galleries would be aimed at and how they could be reached. As "nostalgia" was clearly one of the main attractions of the Cities exhibits, what other concepts could be utilised to create an exhibition about traditional culture? More importantly, would it be possible to actually erase nostalgia from the perception of our visitors? Could this be the way in which we would attract a larger public, such as younger people or tourists? Was either of these groups, *a priori*, interested in the traces of Mediterranean traditional culture?

The team finally began working in the *Horta y Marjal* galleries in September 2008. The same internal discursive scheme with four basic thematic areas used in the Cities exhibitions was repeated in two galleries comprising 500 metres. They are: the spaces, to inhabit, to work, and co-existence. The first gallery emphasised contemporary museology to distinguish the change of museological orientation, almost to "force a break," from the Cities exhibitions. A team of theatre and graphic designers with little experience in exhibitions designed the space on the basis of a "white cube," an atmosphere that "wrapped" everything that was chosen.[4] It was conceived of as a metaphor of the actual spaces in Valencia next to the Mediterranean, including wide open, brightly lit irrigated land and marshy areas. The museological guidelines for this gallery were to use a limited number of objects to express a maximum of three "force" ideas which constituted the base of the discursive scheme in each section.

The main goal of the second gallery was to provide visitors with an idea of the scope of the collections at Muvaet, a museum devoted to Valencian traditional life in rural farming areas in particular. Irrigated lands (*horta*) still constitute the apex of Valencian farming culture because of the economic value, high rates of population, and symbolic meaning in Valencian culture, in general. The richness of typologies, forms, and functions of farming tools is exceptional across the Iberian Peninsula and perhaps also the Mediterranean. A more classical approach to the exhibits

in this room was sought; thus, a different team of designers was chosen. The main idea was to reproduce a museum storage depot. Museological design was based on a row of classical vitrines. Inside, objects related to different aspects of farm work were displayed, primarily emphasising irrigated fields. In addition, a large, long case was used to display objects related to other spheres of rural life, such as beliefs.

Fig. 8.1. A view of the *Horta y Marjal* exhibition. (photograph courtesy of the Museu Valencià d'Etnologia).

In between both galleries a small area was designed to serve as a new technologies space. Here, a set of touch screens allowed visitors to immerse themselves into three types of information included in the *Horta y Marjal* collections: object information, photograph information, and oral memory testimonies. The museological result was certainly diverse. This variety of exhibitionary perspectives, a conceptual room, a classical space focused primarily on presenting objects, and a technology-based area was, in fact, reinforced by the reality that several diverse teams were involved in the actual exhibition development.

Phase Two: The *Secà y Muntanya* Rooms

After the opening of the *Horta y Marjal* galleries, funding was received to produce the final section of the project at Muveat: the permanent galleries devoted to traditional culture in the unirrigated (*secà*) and mountainous (*muntanya*) areas of the Valencian country. The main discursive scheme of the four thematic areas used in the other two sections was retained in this exhibition. The original proposal was to retain the same museological planning used in the *Horta y Marjal* exhibits; the first space was to be mainly scenographic and the second would emphasise artefacts using classic museum displays.

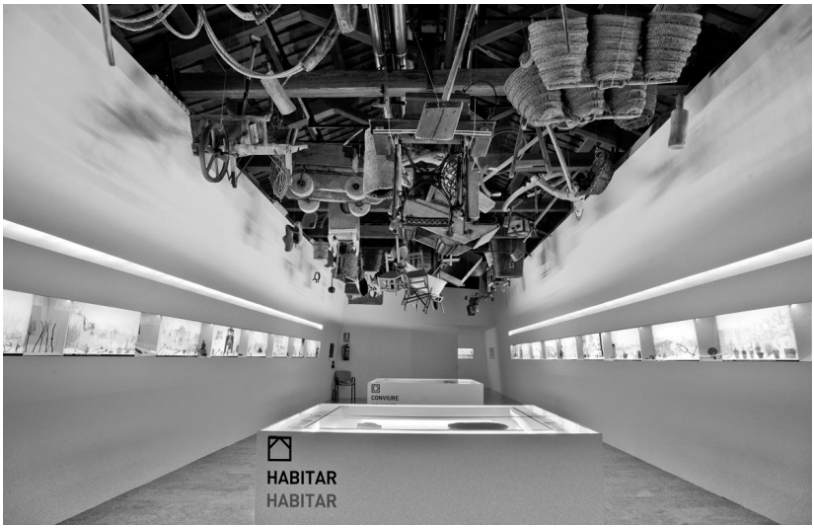

Fig. 8.2. Objects were displayed suspended from the ceiling in the *Secà and Muntanya* permanent galleries. (photograph courtesy of the Museu Valencià d'Etnologia).

Experience gained in the development of the Cities and *Horta y Marjal* sections of the permanent galleries, allowed for the introduction of some museological improvements in this area. For example, more information was made available in the first gallery, the most scenographic, by using an alphabet tool. Concepts in the exhibit were organised and presented in alphabetic order. One original idea in the second gallery was to develop displays in vitrines similar to those displayed in the *Horta y Marjal* space. Unfortunately, some plans were radically changed when the funding ran

out. At first, the lack of support forced the team to re-evaluate the possibility of no exhibit at all. Finally, it was decided to create the design internally. The idea emerged to hang objects from the wooden ceiling, thus avoiding the need to build expensive vitrines. Contextual information was displayed on both sides of the gallery. As a result, except for the woodwork panels with contextual information, this part of the exhibition was achieved with a small budget.

Concluding Notes: The Challenge of Discursive Schemes about Our Own Cultures

Discursive museological plans developed by ethnographers or museum professionals about their own cultures have been defined through a series of characteristics. Alonso Pongo and Diaz González (2008, 79) point out some topics usually found in such schemes. They include a tendency to create a rather static image of the past, a decontextualised accumulation of objects, with little or no material value, and an important presence of identity.

In this respect, and bearing in mind current social dynamics, those aspects of life which, in fact, affect everyday life of urban populations in Europe and much of the world lead to some questions. First, to what extent is the discursive scheme of particular aspects of traditional societies valid for modern urban populations, considering that because of migration and population movement processes, only a part of these populations is directly linked with that "traditional past"? Second, to what extent can classic museological projects create an emotional response other than nostalgia in today's visitors to ethnographic museums? And finally, if we are inside a globalised society, how should we represent or explain the values and forms of our traditional society so they are properly understood by contemporary visitors?

These are central questions that surely affect the museological planning and story-telling in ethnographic museums with collections based on local cultures in Western Europe. Alcaide, Boya and Roigé (2010, 7) point out that a new generation of museums is overcoming this problem by focusing not on the "tradition" but on the "society." From these theoretical scenarios, the Valencian Museum of Ethnology team created the permanent galleries discussed above. The proposed discursive scheme and the museological solutions chosen to present that approach attempted honestly to provide some kind of answer to the static and grey vision of Valencian traditional and popular culture. Thus, questions such as "identity," "object," or "process description" were either central or

peripheral. Other perspectives were also introduced, such as "a global view" or the comparison of certain topics "traditionally and today."

In the *Horta y Marjal* and *Secà y Muntanya* permanent galleries, museology was purposely intensified. In a calculated move, the intention of the Muvaet team was that an exhibit should become the protagonist "almost becoming an object by itself" (Alcaide et al. 2010). Adding "breaking" design was like adding salt to a recipe: good up to a certain point yet often difficult to discern. Because it is a permanent exhibit, it is true that, at times, like in the "white cube" of *Horta y Marjal*, the protagonist approach to design overcame the information itself. An effort to improve was certainly accomplished in the *Secà y Muntanya* exhibit, however, where a much- better design-information equilibrium was achieved.

Good, modern design has definitely attracted more and younger visitors, as well as tourists, to the Muvaet. The claim of the right of museums to use "modernity" and "coolness," usually on the part of modern art museums, is also applied to a museum devoted to traditional culture and has worked to some extent. Feedback from visitors has been generally positive. Because it is a permanent exhibition, time has allowed some museological mistakes to be corrected, and thus the exhibit is constantly improved. On the other hand, the objective to eradicate nostalgia, a goal set at the beginning of planning the *Horta y Marjal* and *Secà y Muntanya* galleries, clearly failed as it still appears in the opinions and comments left by visitors.

Ethnology is focused on important social topics that are frequently of interest today. They are often distant from the classical exotic or nostalgic themes. On the other hand, museums with collections of traditional cultures in Europe are full of objects which lack prestige, and either derived from value or exoticness; they are perceived as old fashioned places. Such museums need to increase their social value from other, supplementary sources. Design, especially the effects of comparison or technology can thus be helpful to call attention to potential visitors. Museological approaches need to be serious and offer good fun at the same time. Modernity does not mean to be excessively dependent upon the new; it is meant to attract contemporary visitors. Visiting an exhibition continues to be a powerful and attractive tool. The "museum experience" remains a very particular and difficult supplement to learning. To retain this attraction, however, ethnographic museums such as the Valencian Museum of Ethnology urgently need to connect with their visitors' intellectual or thematic interests and serve as aesthetic and fun pursuits.

Notes

[1] The official name of the museum was *Museu d'Etnologia* until 2002, when it was changed to *Museu Valencià d'Etnologia (Muvaet)*.

[2] The museum had de *facto* more than 1,500 m^2 available in several galleries. The problem was that these spaces were often used for purposes different from those related to the museum goals, for instance the annual fiscal campaign of the economic authorities.

[3] Several discussions by the team were carried out about the chronological framework to be followed. As it happens with ethnology exhibits in general, often no clear chronological boundaries are described, and thus it was decided that no object or information after 1940 was going to be displayed. The date was chosen because the socio-economic transformation at that time totally changed what was considered as Valencian traditional culture.

[4] Eusebio López, Salvador Bolta, and Teresa Martín.

CHAPTER NINE

EXHIBITIONS IN ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUMS: PRESENTATION, NARRATION, OR DIALOGUE

MAŁGORZATA OLESZKIEWICZ

Introduction

The Ethnographic Museum in Kraków was founded in 1911 due to the efforts of its current patron, Seweryn Udziela (1857–1937), a teacher, curator, and subsequently long-time Director of the Museum. Udziela began establishing his rich collection which forms the core of the museum at the end of the nineteenth century. His collection included more than 80,000 artefacts, 200,000 archival items such as photographs and manuscripts, and 30,000 books in a specialised library. The museum collection continues to expand with the inclusion of modern objects. Most recent acquisitions, however, are from the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries, as well as some older materials dating to the seventeenth century. The current staff sought to find a variety of modern paths of access to the museum's resources; thus, they have been involved in developing a kind of encounter where visitors enter into a dialogue with THE FORMER-THERE, while at the same time acknowledging the community of human experience, dealing more easily with THE PRESENT-HERE.

In this chapter, I will address the recent efforts of the museum to strive beyond its original practices and the questions which have arisen. The focus will be on two specific exhibitions. First, I discuss a change in one of the aspects of the museum's permanent exhibition, and then the dialogic approaches of a recent temporary exhibition will be presented.

Polish Folk Culture: The Permanent Exhibition

"Polish Folk Culture," the permanent exhibition at the Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum in Kraków (MEK), presents a story about

the life of the rural population in Poland from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. The interiors of peasant houses and workshops, e.g. an oil mill or pottery workshop, installed in 1949 enabled the museum to show authentic folk art objects and rural crafts in their natural environment, highlighting their original functions. In addition, a classic gallery presentation arranged in 1969 and modified in the 1980s and 1990s displays costumes, rural community and family rituals, rural economy, crafts, and annual rituals and customs, as well as exhibiting traditional folk art.

Museum staff started to consider changes to part of the permanent exhibition that is dedicated to the annual spring rituals in 2011. During several creative internal sessions, it was concluded that the essence of the rites of spring is renewal. At the profane level, it is the rebirth of the force of vitality in people and nature; at the sacred level, it is expressed as the Resurrection of Christ. On a more mundane level which relates to everyday life, the widespread preparations for the spring Easter holidays, including cleaning, and renewal of the entire surroundings, such as washing the external walls of houses, especially in the countryside, came to the fore. This fragment of the exhibition was titled RE-NEWAL. Moreover, the title corresponds with the Museum's approach to the subject and the realisation of the exhibition. After all, this change of approach to presenting spring rituals differently than before was a search for innovative forms of museum expression. The museum sought to RE-NEW its basic work with exhibitions.

The challenge was how to interpret something which is elusive and intangible, namely folk beliefs manifested in rituals, and transfer them into matter: into the image. The first step was to retreat from the current method of presenting events in accordance with the annual and church calendars. Thus, the emphasis was shifted from a chronology of events to the ceremonial sense of phenomena. Rather than describing activities, the question "why?" was posed. Such thinking was bound to lead to a change in the layout of the exhibition, moving away from the current narrative arrangement including exhibit, signature, photograph; exhibit, signature, photograph; exhibit, signature, photograph.

The process of RE-NEWing the arrangement of the exhibition also meant deciding on a new way to select the museum stories on display and seek fresh forms of communication. Keeping in mind that it was part of the permanent exhibition, the message still had to be addressed to a very broad and diverse audience. Accordingly, a multi-layered story was decided upon. The first, exterior layer provoked an impact on the visitors' aesthetic experience. Upon entering the gallery, visitors would feel the

aroma of spring freshness and experience the magic of spring renewal. Other layers of the exhibition were stored on various media devised to provide and expand on information for the more inquisitive visitor, such as tablets, printed guides, templates/decoders of meanings, and archival photographs.

Springtime means nature awakened, movement, sounds breaking the silence of winter, and above all, re-creation in the fields, and direct contact with the earth and nature. The gallery was arranged to arouse associations with open spaces outside the house. Walls covered with square, pale-coloured wood panels were intended to produce a compelling memory of the wooden sides of peasant cottages, scrubbed clean white before Easter. The rounded edges of the panels placed visitors outside of the houses. This impression was enhanced by a light-green illumination emanating from the walls, evocative of the ground covered with fresh spring grass, though the floor was still wooden parquet.

Fig. 9.1. "Re-newal" exhibition in the Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum,Kraków (2011) (photograph by Marcin Wąsik).

In the centre of the gallery was the *axis mundi* of the museum's space: a dead tree trunk. Starting at its base, more and more life was directed upwards; it began to turn green like nature being reborn in the spring. Its shovel-like leaves pierced the ceiling painted in colourful stripes with their

life force. Filled with the colours of spring and summer, these surfaces could be interpreted in various ways, most often as the stripes of ploughed fields. The tree itself was not coincidental either; it was inspired by "trees of life," toys with ritual significance which could be bought only at spring church fairs in Kraków at the end of the nineteenth century. Several of them are preserved in the Ethnographic Museum in Kraków as valuable artefacts, having no counterparts in other museums or private collections.

The exhibition narrative was meant to create an image of a coherent, unified world of spring renewal expressed through folk beliefs characteristic of traditional Polish peasant culture at the start of the twentieth century. The exhibition did not have clearly separate, distinct thematic parts. Thus, a rigid fourfold division both in the technical and plastic layers was avoided and segmentation and linearity were alluded to. Instead, other elements to organise and divide the space were introduced.

The four corners of the world were represented on the four walls around the tree. Each corner contained a leading, main theme announced by the title printed directly on the wall in large letters, for example: Easter eggs: "Give us a treat … a few eggs, please"; Easter palms: "It's a willow that beats … not me"; characters from the spring ritual groups: "Who be ye?"; and the Kraków spring church fairs, Emmaus and Rękawka: "Why are you lingering, going to Emmaus?" These are quotations from the orations of spring ritual groups or notes from field studies at the start of the twentieth century drawn from the museum's archives. Several short phrases concerned with the ritual function of Easter eggs and Easter palms also taken from the archives were placed on the gallery walls. The use of authentic, archival material on a par with the original artefacts strove to achieve uniformity and consistency of the image. The narration was removed from the voices of the curators. The goal was for representatives from the past, from the FORMER-THERE, to speak to museum visitors.

Graphic motifs were also positioned on the walls, serving as "links" between the themes; on the contrary, they further enhanced the permeation of all components. Such "links" were patterns on Easter eggs and the sun, branded on a nineteenth-century wooden toy axe from an Emmaus stall, among others.

Spring rituals in the Polish countryside a hundred years ago were attempts to secure benefits for the family and the farm. They included ceremonies to procure abundance, fertility, and health at the beginning of the new planting season. Easter eggs and Easter palms were props in these customs and rituals. Thus, the viewers' attention was drawn to both the magical function of the eggs and themes and motifs placed on them. In this story, the egg occurs as a gift, as a code, and as a wish. Easter palms, in

turn, were shown in their original function. As objects of the magic of spring renewal contained in plants from which they were made, only the two, oldest Easter palms were displayed to consciously resign from the abundant decoration that modern Easter palms have. In this way, through their maximum simplicity, all the organic aspects of palms were extracted and attention was drawn to the meanings encoded in them.

Printed on the wall, like water reed pollen flying in the wind, were the names of the plants from which Easter palms were commonly built in Poland in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. A modest cross, made from hazel and willow sticks that originated from an Easter palm blessed in church on Palm Sunday protects sown fields against destruction by lightning.

Fig. 9.2. Easter palms, in the “Re-newal” exhibition, Kraków (2011) (photograph by Marcin Wąsik).

A similar role, adding health, vitality, and prosperity, was played by mediators from spring ritual groups who came to the houses with good wishes. Instead of mannequins posing as "spring carolers," original life-sized characters taken from early twentieth century archival photographs were imprinted on the wooden wall.

A modern artistic design was developed for the sake of the exhibition. The most important role here, however, was played by authentic

photographs, texts, and above all, artefacts. Most significant was the museum's richest and oldest collection, a large selection of Easter eggs unique in Poland. One of the oldest eggs in the collection, a "monastery" egg from 1880, was displayed in a separate showcase, to emphasise its antiquity, uniqueness, and artistry. Copies of objects or arrangements of ceremonial situations using mannequins were not displayed, as they had been in the past. The advantage of the RE-NEWAL exhibition was that the story was told using only the "real thing."

The multi-layered imagery presented in the RE-NEWAL exhibition deliberately departed from a linear narrative. It opted for a story about the old, elapsed but coherent world. In the first, outer layer, visitors had the opportunity to gain basic information about the rites of spring; they entered into the atmosphere of spring renewal which ensured that they also had an aesthetic experience. By showing the most precious artefacts from the valuable collections of MEK, such as Easter eggs and toys that were sold in the late-nineteenth-century Kraków spring church holidays like Emmaus, this aspect of the exhibition was a kind of visual presentation.

Unfortunately, as frequently happens, the original exhibition plans had to be modified for economic reasons; the realisation of the entire exhibition proved to be too costly an undertaking. Nevertheless, one part opened with the title "RE-NEWAL, an Exhibition in Process." The two walls not covered with boards were retained for visitors to leave comments using pencils. This experiment was accepted by the majority of MEK visitors, especially young people. Here, MEK guests were allowed to feel this as their own, more "domesticated" space. Even if a visitor's statement was confined to writing their signature, this very gesture showed that they were looking at the exhibition with a different eye, accepting its space, feeling good in it, even delving into its content more willingly. Thus, the effect of having a kind of a specific dialogue with visitors was obtained.[1]

Passages and Returns: A temporary exhibition

The temporary exhibition, "Passages and Returns," was part of a two-year project Małopolska Passage obligé, co-financed by the European Union and the Małopolska Voivodeship Regional Operational Programme. It was built especially for the interior of the Maison de l'Artisanat et des Métiers d'art in Marseilles, where it was presented as *Passages et repassages. Collection du Musée d'Ethnographie Seweryn Udziela* early in 2011. Later that year, after the adaptation of its scenario for the interior of the House of Esther, it was shown at the Ethnographic Museum in Kraków where it was titled "Passages and Returns: Commemorating the Centenary

of the Ethnographic Museum in Kraków." A third version of the exhibition with minor modifications was shown at the Museum Europäischer Kulturen in Berlin in the spring of 2013. The title in Berlin was changed to *Alt vertrautes-neu entdecken*.

"Passages and Returns" was an exhibition from memory, from conversations and meetings. It was to be a presentation of Małopolska, but it was realised that an exhibition of artefacts representative of Małopolska from the collection of the MEK would be a trivial display of beautiful objects. Therefore, a different path was chosen. The content was prompted by the team of employees and associates of the MEK who participated in a workshop session which involved asking the questions "what childhood thing/event/atmosphere spontaneously emerges today as something important?" and "how does this experience continue to shape me?" Seemingly banal and ordinary events emerged from the recollections and flashes of memory. When invoked today, however, they hold important personal significance. Included were the smell of apples on the porch of the village teacher's house; the image of a father brushing his shoes; managing a plough alone aged twelve; sitting on a small stool and listening to fairy tales; a trip with a grandmother into the woods for mushrooms; making dumplings together; and watching the procession on Corpus Christi. The title "Passages" referred to the childhood memories that we carry in ourselves; events and stories we have lived through. "Returns" are the values gained from them which remain in us today, even if we do not remember them every day. They come back through memory, when we return to the other side of ourselves, to our childhood.

Over 40 stories that emerged were used as yarn to weave the fabric of the exhibition by the eight-member team, comprising people of different experiences, characters and specialisations.[2] There was no single curator who was solely responsible for the final shape of the exhibition. What is more, in this case, a visual artist who contributed to the substantive content of the exhibition was one of the team members. She took into account the ideas of other team members and offered tangible, visual solutions. Everyone felt strongly connected to the exhibition, and everybody contributed a significant part towards its creation. The result was a polyphonic museum statement. This polyphony was maintained throughout the entire arrangement of the exhibition, and its multiplicity of stories, viewpoints and associations. One goal of the planning process was to incorporate the voices of visitors into the exhibit's polyphony so they would also get a chance to create their own image.

"We all possess things. We do not even guess which worlds they can open" was a motto used as a thread holding together the work on the

exhibition. Artefacts were triggers or signs associated with the memories evoked during the initial workshop. The world of human experience emerged from focusing on things and what they represented. Surprisingly, their apparent banality showed that everyday life can be unique; even the importance of small items and handmade things was noticed. Plato's notion that each thing has a shadow was transformed into the message, and that what stands behind things are people, was repeated. The people, of course, were those who created and used the items referred to. Thus, things also have memories; things can remember. An ordinary item such as a kitchen table made several decades ago by a craftsman-carpenter conveys a memory of its manufacturer. The tabletop, cut and stained over the years, carries in itself the memory of everyday events, private meetings, and gestures such as modelling dumplings, handed down from generation to generation.

The next stage in exhibition planning was the selection of artefacts from the rich collections of the Ethnographic Museum in Kraków. Here, the key was intuition. Objects which resonated with the memories evoked at the workshop were chosen. Dating back a hundred years and speaking of the everyday life in Małopolska at that time, they testify to the creative, personal "taming" of the world. Their role was to show the imagination of the people from Małopolska, which was expressed through objects, and what they tell us about life in the universal sense about our present. The theme of time revolving in the present without stepping into or arranging the past served as the central focus of the exhibition. The things and installations were to evoke associations and memories and situated them HERE and NOW. The first version of the exhibition displayed in Marseille addressed audiences from different cultural circles. Therefore, it served as a kind of a footbridge or gangway where people from different parts of Europe and the world could easily meet to find traces of their own everyday lives, memories, and existences.

Remembering the recipients of the exhibit's message, it was desired from the very beginning that the exhibition not leave them as passive viewer-spectators. The exhibition was not composed as a story but rather as a meeting or as a conversation: instead of a narration, a dialogue was proposed. Upon entering, the audience was able to go to the other side of the looking glass, which was governed by different laws, as Alice did. There, no sequence, rules, or logical order existed, and nothing excluded each other. For this purpose, a border between our world and the world of the exhibition was constructed. It was composed of multiple screens on which collection items were placed in transformed and rescaled graphic form, including enlarged straw insects, keys, and a miniature chair. The

viewer went through this "forest" in order to enter the world of things in a new time and space where one can be both adult and child.

Therefore, the goal was for the audience to evoke in themselves the often forgotten child who carefully looks, examines, and discovers. They would see their reflection in the faces of others. They would experience, go through, and arouse the reflections in themselves. At the same time, the linearity of the exhibition was left behind. Nothing was imposed, no "sightseeing directions" were suggested; the viewer was given the choice of which way they would like to direct their steps. But the expectations of those who did not necessarily want to follow their own path were also considered. The opportunity to follow their own footsteps by looking into a specially designed folder which explained curatorial choices and gave information about the artefacts was provided.

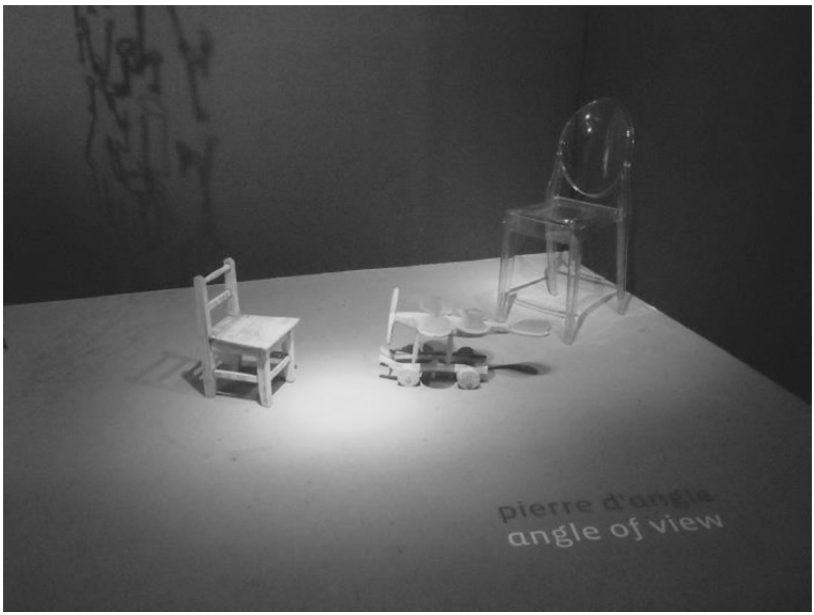

Fig. 9.3. "Angle of View," "Passages and Returns" exhibition. Marseilles (2011) (author's photograph).

The exhibition consisted of separate stops, composed as distinct metaphors, entireties of everyday things, and transformed by artistic expression and works of art by folk artists, shown in the context of their everyday lives. Using contemporary graphic forms and new technologies

in this arrangement, attention was drawn to what was not obvious in the objects on display; their metaphorical, poetic meanings were revealed, directing attention to the life hidden in the objects and the people behind them.

The following are several examples of attempts to establish a dialogue between the curators and the visitor, between the artefacts and the audience. “Angles of View,” one of the stops, showed two chairs, a little, wooden child's chair from the past and a contemporary, plastic one for adults. An unusual toy made by a grandfather for his grandchildren was placed alongside them. On the one hand, this wooden, moveable construction could be used by a child as a trolley for riding on. It could also remind the viewer of an airplane or sled, or even a dragonfly. On the other hand, this unique work of an adult man could have expressed his longing for flying, and for freedom. In this simple composition two perspectives, a child's and an adult's, of the same object were presented. Are we able to evoke the child in ourselves, as the author of this toy did? Sitting on a chair and playing with a toy, how many visitors asked themselves: “but where is my own little wooden chair I used to sit on as a child and listen to my grandmother’s fairy tales?”

When painting a picture on glass from the underside, little details that will be seen on the front are drawn first, and then more details are added, broadening the view. Finally the background, complementing the whole picture is painted. What was astonishing was the discovery that this is how our memory works, evoking recollections of smell or sound first and then adding details of an image which slowly emerges from oblivion. Thus, in “The Image of Memory,” layered images on the glass, a metaphor for the memory mechanism, were expressly shown. Standing in front of “Image of Memory,” visitors could examine their own memory and ask themselves, “does it really work like this?” Perhaps more questions could be asked when visitors realise how fragile the glass is. Does our memory work in the same way as painting on glass, and is it also so fragile?

Heródek, Karol Wójciak (1892–1971), a self-taught folk sculptor created amazing sculptures with huge, astonished eyes using large pieces of wood logs, transforming them into Our Ladies and Christs. These were set in a kind of a meadow, as if by the hand of that recluse in his natural surroundings to create “Non-distant Worlds.” Usually shown in a gallery as separate pieces of art, here the sculptures had returned to their natural environment. Can the viewer accept this situation? Is it easier to experience folk art in this way, looking directly at the multitude of amazing eyes of the sculptures?

Fig. 9.4. “Non-distant Worlds,” sculptures by Heródek, Karol Wójciak (1892–1971). “Passages and Returns” exhibition, Marseilles (2011)
(author’s photograph).

A wardrobe painted in an almost comic story, a glass wardrobe, the deconstruction of a wardrobe, and dowry chests of solid wood with locks and keys are at the centre of “Get Changed.” In their interiors were elements of peasant festive costumes from the start of the twentieth century including men's jackets of heavy cloth, white shirts forming a snowy surface, and women's corsets with attached pouches resembling coral reefs. Here, visitors were encouraged not only to try on contemporary regional costumes used on festive occasions by the highlanders from Podhale, but also “change” their thinking about things. Is a costume a sign, fashion, custom or rather the interplay of colours, the beauty of design, and a work of art?

Adult and children's hands appeared on a floured table, making dumplings together. Amazing characters emerge from the darkness including sculptures of a witch, a devil, and a forest man. A table, the “Point of Communication,” juxtaposed life with the real and transcendental, the present and past worlds, to show daily activity and gestures transmitted between generations which became private tradition. This stop influenced the visitors in the strongest way. Hands making dumplings on a floured table aroused curiosity and created associations

with visitors' own domestic work around the kitchen table. At the same time, in this particular part of the exhibition, the table, the centre of every home hearth connecting generations of a family, was shown in a disturbing, slightly threatening environment, in which an incredible energy appeared.

"Transmissions" presented photographed portraits of people from Małopolska from a hundred years ago, and mirrors in which visitors could see their reflection. These are the people who created and used the things on display. Standing in front of them or nearby, visitors could ask themselves, "Is there a thread that connects us?" "Can we, in our contemporary times, standing next to them, be portrayed in the same poses?"

Fig. 9.5. "Transmissions," "Passages and Returns" exhibition, Kraków (2011) (photograph by Marcin Wąsik).

"Passages and Returns" was constructed from objects used in everyday life, from little, seemingly trivial things which were surprising for their richness. "Re-newal" was made to display intangible heritage, annual spring rites and customs. Seemingly different exhibitions, permanent and temporary, with various curators and designers, in fact have a lot of common.

During the distinct work on the two exhibitions, and on display,

artefacts from the historical collection of the MEK took centre stage to play the role of main actors. Both exhibitions were built on "real things" only; no copies or artificial arrangements highlighted the most precious and valuable specimens. The exhibitions were thus in the best sense of the word, presentations of the exhibits. Neither represented the presentation of the historical past. Objects on display were to be viewed from our modern perspective. Moreover, most interesting was how they could impact people today. In the case of both exhibitions, answers to the question of whether ethnographic collections help us live were sought. Can ethnographic collections constitute a leaven, an inspiration, a fire, or are they stilled forever, living on as only silent witnesses?

Modern design was also used to tell the museum stories but not as background only, like in former exhibitions-presentations. In these expositions, the storytelling played a very important role. In addition, the exhibitions were constructed as narratives but the curators did not want to be interpreters. They remained in the shadows. Their voices were given to the people from the past, who "stood behind the things," people who created and used things, people who celebrated feasts, people who performed the customs and rites a hundred years ago.

The most important aspect was the dialogue between the exhibition and the visitors. Was that goal achieved? If it was not to the fullest, it was to a large extent. Interactions were observed, such as the frequent tracking of designs on Easter eggs through a magnifying glass, expressing admiration of those patterns in the "Re-newal" exhibition, and a joyful and cheerful trying on of Podhale costumes in the "Passages and Returns" exhibition. A more in-depth dialogue enabled visitors to discover the value of their own heritage and to experience face-to-face encounters with their ancestors.

Generally, the exhibitions did not leave visitors as passive viewers-spectators. It was impossible to view them with a cold eye. For some, the participation in an exhibition was an unpleasant blow. A new narrative and a new method of design arrangement were perceived as blasphemous, breaking the previous idea of the museum. For others, a visit to the exhibition became a revelation, a refreshing look at old, familiar things. It became a source of wonder and deeper experience. Most of the guests appreciated the ideas that the museum proposed, perceiving these innovative solutions in the form and content of the exhibition as a little risky, but certainly new and interesting.

Notes

[1] The exhibition was first described in 2014, as part of the ICME Cconference on Museums and Innovation. When this text was completed in 2016, the exhibition "Re-newal" had ended and all the components found themselves in their place. There is no longer a place where visitors can speak with a pencil on the wall, as this experiment remained only in that text.

[2] The team of authors consisted of: Antoni Bartosz, Ph.D. at the University of Paris IV Sorbonne, expert in medieval French literature, Director of MEK; Bożena Bieńkowska, Deputy Director of MEK; Grzegorz Graff, ethnologist, curator of MEK; Dorota Gruszka, a Polish philologist and curator of many exhibitions, associated with the publishing house Znak; Anna Mokrzycka, visual artist; Ewa Rossal, ethnologist; Małgorzata Szczurek, ethnologist and Romanist, publisher, founder of the publishing house Karakter; Małgorzata Oleszkiewicz, ethnographer and curator of MEK.

PART FOUR

PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

CHAPTER TEN

THE HELSINKI CITY MUSEUM'S NEW EXHIBITIONS POLICY

JARI HARJU

Introduction

In the spring of 2014, the Executive Board of the Helsinki City Museum approved the museum's first Exhibitions Policy for 2014–18. The museum has had a written Collections Policy since 2003, which recorded the chief goals of collections work and the necessary measures to reach them. Discussions about exhibitions, however, had not previously led to similar documents. This chapter will present the process from 2013 to 2014 that led to preparing the 2014–18 Exhibitions Policy of the Helsinki City Museum. The specific goals of the Exhibitions Policy will be outlined first, followed by a description of the concrete stages to prepare the policy and the content of the final document. An overview of the implementation of the Exhibitions Policy at the museum concludes the discussion along with a detailed description of one specific component: the role of the museum in preparing the Edla skateboarding video.

What Does the Exhibitions Policy Mean?

The 2014–18 Exhibitions Policy serves as a strategic document compiling the general approaches and lines followed in exhibition activities. The policy does not contain the exhibition programme for the following years, but it assists the Helsinki City Museum to make decisions about messages conveyed to the public with the exhibitions. Exhibitions are one of the museum's main means of presenting cultural heritage; they are by no means the only or even the most efficient method. The Exhibitions Policy, therefore, takes a standpoint on when an exhibition is a sensible way of showing the history of Helsinki and what practical and organisational limitations and parameters exist for producing exhibitions.

It is no less important to emphasise that the production of exhibitions and the associated resources came from strategic decisions. Because it was impossible to do everything, explicit choices were necessary. The audiences of the exhibitions, in this case, were the museum's primary consideration. The museum needed sufficient knowledge about who visits its various exhibitions and venues. Over the years, data has been collected about visitors and, as a result, the distribution of the museum's audience according to age, gender, and educational background had been documented. This data, however, did not lead to understanding why visitors come to exhibitions. Information on their motives and needs was essential in order to consider the foci and directions of the Exhibitions Policy. When we knew our audience better, we were able to plan our exhibition offerings to respond to their needs better.

The Exhibitions Policy an aid to decision-making. It was not written as a manual for planning or creating exhibitions. Since 2004, the Helsinki City Museum has applied a process description of preparing exhibitions which describes and schedules the resources needed to construct them. The purpose of the process description is to identify and amend the parts of the process that cause friction and problems. While the Exhibitions Policy did not have to reconsider the flow of the process of preparing and mounting exhibitions, considerations of available resources and competency have not been completely bypassed.

Until the time of the current Policy, exhibitions at the Helsinki City Museum were prepared on a project basis because the organisation did not have a separate exhibitions unit. Thus, resources including personnel hours and funds were dispersed among different units of the museum according to the exhibition in question. Considerations of resources in the long term were not the responsibility of any particular staff member, because the leaders of the individual exhibition projects were primarily interested in carrying out the project at hand. Owing to the project-driven nature of this work, adding to and developing competencies functioned better at the level of individual professional members of the museum staff rather than at the level of the museum as a whole. Project descriptions have given the museum a clearer perspective of the shortcomings and problems of the exhibition process, but did not provide sufficient means for solving problems alone. The Exhibitions Policy defined concrete foci and guidelines that would also facilitate the work of developing the exhibition process.

How was the Exhibitions Policy Developed?

Although the need for an exhibitions policy was unanimously recognised by the staff of the Helsinki City Museum, one of the biggest challenges was to ensure that this painstakingly prepared document would not be buried among countless other strategy papers on the museum's server. So often the work of preparing similar strategies is unfortunately carried out by a small group of people behind closed doors and then presented to the rest of the staff as a completed paper. Following a brief discussion about the matter after the presentation, everyone returns to their work and carries on just as before.

In order to avoid a similar fate for the current Exhibitions Policy, a questionnaire to collect material for the policy from the entire museum staff was developed. The goal of this first stage was to include everyone, not just those participating in the planning and creation of exhibitions. Exhibitions are an important part of the museum's work and almost everyone in one way or another is involved in their development. The views of a financial planner responsible for billing, the museum's IT planner, or a museum host serving the public were considered to be as equally important with those of a curator responsible for content or a conservator attending to the condition of objects.

In November 2013, the questionnaire, consisting of 14 statements requiring responses on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Agree completely, 5 = Disagree completely), was sent to all of the personnel at the museum. It was drawn up quickly because the statements were about themes of the discussions from the past few years. Because the Helsinki City Museum employs almost 100 people, the replies were processed according to the museum's units. Each unit was instructed to prepare a joint response. As a result, only seven composite replies had to be processed instead of 100. The questionnaire and the process of preparing the Exhibitions Policy were presented to all the units of the museum before it was distributed.

After receiving all of the replies at the beginning of 2014, I again met with my colleagues in their individual units. The most important stage of the questionnaire now followed, and it was, of course, interesting to see how the replies of the various units were placed on the 1–5 scale. But even more important was the discussion of what was revealed from behind the individual figures. A reply in the middle of the scale could tell of either complete agreement or of views evenly divided among opposites at both ends. The same results from different units were occasionally explained in very different ways. As a whole, the discussions at the unit meetings

provided considerably better evaluations from which to compose the Exhibitions Policy than the analysis of numerical results alone.

In addition to asking for comments to the 14 statements, respondents were asked to rank the three most important statements, in other words the topics they thought must absolutely be in the final Exhibitions Policy. Even though this request also produced a clear spread of results among the different units, three core themes outranked all the others. The museum's personnel considered a customer-based approach, the popularisation of knowledge, and the provision of resources for exhibitions as the most important topics.

Discussions in the units also revealed that new and interesting viewpoints could be offered by very surprising parties. Administration and customer services were conventionally regarded as mainly support units from the standpoint of planning the content of exhibitions; therefore, their input remained quite limited. Individuals in customer service, however, have the best contact with museum visitors through their work. To completely bypass this information would have indicated immense disregard for the professionalism and experience of these colleagues. The discussion that was carried out in this administrative unit, in particular, convinced me of the success of the decision to direct the questionnaire to the staff as a whole.

Initially, a survey aimed at the public was also planned for the autumn of 2013. Completing this survey within the set timeframe, however, proved to be considerably more challenging and time-consuming than thought, and it was abandoned. Supporting this decision was the fact that in 2014 the Helsinki City Museum planned to conduct a customer survey among different groups of visitors. Even though those results would not necessarily influence the Exhibitions Policy during the spring of 2014, a customer-based approach became a central consideration in preparing the strategic guidelines of the Helsinki City Museum.

The Content of the Exhibitions Policy

The work of writing the Exhibitions Policy began after the responses to the staff questionnaire had been discussed in the unit meetings. The goal at the outset was not simply a summary of the results of the questionnaire. Instead of a scholarly analysis, clear definitions of guidelines and choices were the expected outcome. Work on the new vision statement of the museum in early 2014 also aided in focusing on the preparations of the Exhibitions Policy. After all, it was necessary that the policy support the

new vision statement and provide concrete guidelines for exhibitions activities.

The Exhibitions Policy is comprised of three sections, each consisting of a concise explanatory text approximately two pages long followed by a list of goals and related measures. The goals and measures are the core of the Exhibitions Policy; they provide tangible strategies and measures for developing exhibition activities in 2014–18. The Exhibitions Policy lists a total of 11 goals and 23 specific measures. The purpose of the explanatory texts is to provide background and give reasons for the listed goals and measures.

Section one focuses on how the Helsinki City Museum can understand and serve exhibition visitors better. The museum has five exhibition venues in different parts of the city; each one has its own profile and visitors. In the future, our goal is to be more aware of the needs groups of visitors to each museum venue and plan what is offered to each target group (Teräs and Teräsvirta 2013, 15–17). The goals of the first section of the policy include: more efficient analysis of visitor feedback and its broader distribution within the museum; collect information from potential visitor groups; define target groups more specifically; create a specific profile for each museum venue.

The second section of the Exhibitions Policy establishes guidelines on how and with whom the Helsinki City Museum produces exhibitions. A major challenge identified was to develop a functioning system in which ideas for exhibitions are reviewed critically and processed into actual exhibition projects. New ideas for exhibitions were not the problem; they are suggested by both the museum's personnel and many outside parties. Without critical discussion, however, the exhibition programme can easily become unfocused and diffuse. When the museum develops an exhibition with a specific target group in mind and with sufficient information about their needs and visitation habits, the policy will make it easier to plan. Decisions about the kinds of collaborative projects in which the museum should participate would also be facilitated. Included in the goals of the second section are: optimise the handling of exhibition ideas and proposals; clarify the objectives and methods of participatory practices, and plan a proactive collaboration strategy in exhibition matters.

The third section of the policy focuses on the available resources and competencies of the Helsinki City Museum. While resources and competencies provide a framework for activities, their further development must be adapted to the goals of exhibition activities. The new customer-based approach calls for allocating resources differently. It doesn't necessarily require additional resources if it is possible, by the

same measure, to cease using or terminate something that already exists. The Helsinki City Museum had plans to relocate to new premises at the end of 2015, and it would open its new exhibitions and other public services in the spring of 2016. The relocation will give the museum an excellent opportunity to consider and renew its whole range of services. The goals of the third section are, increased visibility and impact for the museum outside its walls; improved capability for the museum to react quickly to current issues; improved competencies for the planning and mounting of exhibitions; and a review of the organisation.

The Exhibitions Policy was approved by the expanded Executive Board of the Helsinki City Museum in May 2014. The explanatory text and the listed goals and measures received positive feedback in discussions about the plans. The absence of economic goals, however, was a point that was discussed at some length. Because of the project nature of preparing exhibitions and the lack of a separate exhibitions unit, this topic did not appear in the policy. Reserved resources were allocated in accordance with specific exhibitions in the budgets of the various units and no additional interest in considering the structure of costs was expressed. On the other hand, there was pressure to increase outside funding. These decisions will be considered from the perspective of all the activities of the museum and not only the exhibitions.

What Will Follow?

As already stated, the greatest challenge for the Exhibitions Policy was the problem of how to transform goals and measures agreed upon on paper to be part of the daily routine of the Helsinki City Museum. The positive attitude towards the questionnaire and the ensuing discussions in the units showed that the preparation of the Exhibitions Policy was not regarded as an unnecessary and separate project from the museum's everyday work. On the contrary, many in the museum staff seemed to realise how their own work was connected to the long and complex process of preparing exhibitions.

In the autumn of 2014, for the first time, it became clear who was actually responsible for furthering concrete measures projected in the new policy. The scheduling of measures in the Exhibitions Policy was still quite general, and not all of the 23 measures were initiated at the same time. As the planning of the new Helsinki City Museum progressed, however, many of the measures included naturally found their place on the agenda. One of the starting points for planning the new City Museum was

viewing all museum activities critically, which thus represented a good time to evaluate the various programmes of the museum.

The exhibitions steering group, consisting of the heads of each unit and the producers of all current exhibition projects, monitored the Exhibitions Policy. The steering group was originally established to support the work of the exhibition producers. The list of measures was reviewed in August 2014, and the schedules and areas of responsibility were specified.

The measures consisted of very distinct components in terms of their extent and the amount of work required. In some cases, fairly simple technical decisions were needed with regards to who was responsible for handling a particular matter. For example, in connection with measure number 12, the audience services unit considered how feedback from customers can be made available in better ways to the whole museum. The opposite extreme in terms of extent and amount of work was represented by measure number 23: reconsidering the organisation of the museum. This task involved not only exhibitions but also the museum as a whole, including broad and thorough considerations of organising the museum's resources to best correspond to challenges in the present and the near future.

As mentioned above, some of the measures were launched as part of planning future exhibitions at the new City Museum. Work such as the collection of information from potential visitors, considering the profiles and target groups at the museum's different venues, experiments with participatory practices, and seeking means for reacting quickly had already began in the spring of 2014.

The Edla Skateboarding Video: An Example of Implementing the Exhibitions Policy

The Helsinki City Museum opened its new permanent exhibition of the history of Helsinki at its new premises in the spring of 2016. A four-member working group was appointed early in 2014 to plan the new exhibition. During the spring of 2014, the group focused on studying the needs and desires of its target audience. The working group also sought new ways to include residents of Helsinki in creating the exhibition content, who offered the museum these new opportunities for participation. The team realised that planning must leave room for randomness and seize opportunities when they present themselves.

As early as the autumn of 2013, I happened to meet Vesa Korkkula who had come to see the museum's large collection of photographs, which he planned to use in his new skateboarding video. He is an active and

passionate skateboarder who also makes skateboarding videos of himself and his friends. His typical videos show a group of skateboarders in action in different parts of the city. Vesa came to the museum with a slightly different idea for a new video, which would include old photographs of Helsinki to add, as he put it, chronological layers. The problem, however, was that the fees to use the photographs were too high for the producer of a non-commercial video.

After two meetings, I became convinced that the Helsinki City Museum should join forces with Vesa. The Museum would provide the photographs for the video without any fees and, in return, be allowed to use excerpts of the video in its new exhibition. My anticipations were fulfilled when the Edla video, an interesting combination of skateboarding and urban documentation, was released in May 2014 (Korkkula 2014). The video offers completely new perspectives of familiar views of Helsinki as the camera recorded skateboarding with a fish-eye lens from a low angle. The old photographs play a supporting role; in quick flashes, they give an idea of how the city has changed from the perspective of skateboarders. The layers of history are present, but as fleeting moments instead of historical facts.

The Edla video records the history of Helsinki from the point of view of a particular group of local residents, thus differing fundamentally from the mainstream of documentation of contemporary life that the Helsinki City Museum has conducted since the early 1970s (Harju 2013, 218–22). In normal cases, the museum would have decided what to document and how it would be done. Next, the results would have passed critical inspection by museum professionals, who were concerned with high standards in terms of content. They lack, however, a perspective and the edge that perspective would bring. The fascination and strength of Edla lies in its subjective nature. If the Helsinki City Museum had, as an outsider, documented the culture of skateboarders, the results would have been completely different.

The Edla video is excellently suited to the foci and guidelines of the 2014–2018 Exhibitions Policy of the Helsinki City Museum. It has illustrated how adding the voice of the city's residents to the exhibitions was best accomplished by giving them an opportunity to speak, without the explanatory interpretations of museum professionals. The Helsinki City Museum does not have a strong tradition of including local residents in exhibition content. In the preparations for the new City Museum, museum staff is now prepared to experiment with innovative methods that will increase opportunities for local people to influence the content of exhibitions. The novel inclusion of excerpts of the skateboarding video is

not a very radical change. It is a small step, nevertheless, towards a museum whose professional staff have the courage to leave room for the views of non-professionals.

Evaluation

In the autumn of 2013, it was estimated that there were two significant risks associated with the preparation of the Exhibitions Policy. The first concerned delimiting the whole work as a sensible entity that could be achieved within the schedule provided for it. The second had to do with what would happen to the Exhibitions Policy after it is completed and approved. As already pointed out, strategy papers are buried and forgotten far too often without having any effect.

The process of creating the 2014–18 Exhibitions Policy of the Helsinki City Museum was an overwhelming success. Because the proposed themes had been discussed at the museum for several years they were well known to everybody. The questionnaire addressed to the whole museum staff proved to be a good decision in many respects; it motivated many members of the staff to consider the museum's exhibition activities from different perspectives, giving everyone an opportunity to state their views, and, above all, allowing all to participate in a shared, topical discussion. The questionnaire and the discussions that followed also gave me, as I was writing the Exhibitions Policy, a clear idea of the elements that needed to be considered in the exhibitions activities as well as models for solutions that colleagues had in mind.

At the time of writing, in autumn 2014, it is too early to assess the future of the Exhibitions Policy. Several measures were launched and the first results were achieved. Nonetheless, one or two years are necessary before any concrete results yielded by the Exhibitions Policy can be assessed. The realisation of the aims of the Exhibitions Policy and the success of its measures will be monitored regularly in the future. A follow-up procedure carried out once a year will ensure that the goals will not be forgotten. Where necessary, the aims and goals will be amended if they appear to be unrealistic or even incorrect. The annual follow-up meeting will also address the measures that have been achieved. The actual reporting on the latter will occur in other contexts since the individual measures such as working groups, units, or the Executive Committee, are carried out at various levels of the museum organisation. The goal of the annual follow-up meeting will be to summarise an overview of the measures already reached.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

PARTICIPATION IN THE MUSEUM: DIVERSE AUDIENCES AND THEIR MOTIVATIONS AT THE ESTONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM

AGNES ALJAS

Introduction

Currently, most museums and cultural institutions are experimenting with strengthening public participation by engaging audiences in discussions, most often using social media, web environments, or spaces for facilitating participatory activities. Participation is often seen as the social glue that brings together different views, improves dialogue between institutions and audiences, and increases the importance of culture and heritage. The adoption of participation is not easy for organisations or their audiences, particularly as public understanding of cultural institutions is still based on professionalism, expertise, and education. In the context of this article, I will follow the idea of museum transformation through participatory opportunities. Participation is defined as the manner in which museums share some functions, power, and responsibilities with the public who, in turn, contributes to the activities or content of the museum.

The notion of participation has been raised in many conceptual debates. Carpentier argues that democratic theory still holds a privileged position in the theoretical discussions (2011, 124). He integrates democracy theory with the access-interaction-participation (API) model so that participation can be conceptualised as either minimalist or maximalist. Minimalist participation relies on the assumption that the political does not necessarily reach beyond the realm of conventional politics, and that professionals should be in control of the structure and processes allowing

them to homogenise audiences whenever necessary. The maximalist approach, however, is based on the idea that the political is an underlying dimension of the social and that participation, ideally, entails power sharing, heterogeneity of audiences, and also allows for structural changes (Ibid. 17–22, 69).

The influence of participation on museums is often minimalistic. Runnel et al. (2014) point out that while museums can be very open and invite participation and participants into some areas of its activities, access to other areas may be restricted. Tatsi and Aljas (2012) analysed the impact of participatory interventions on Estonian National Museum (ENM) collections. They concluded that ethnographic museum collections, with a history of at least eighty years of inclusive methods of collecting, typically include contributions from the public; these collections are influenced by the minimalist participatory mode.

Whenever museum participatory interventions are designed, questions regarding who they are relevant to or why participants get involved emerge. These issues will be addressed below after a discussion of the notion of museum audiences and the concept of motivation, based on the case study ENM's participatory interventions and their participants in the years 2007 to 2013.

Museum Audiences

People have different assumptions, expectations, and understandings of the museum. In the context of museum visitor studies[1] since the 1990s, Stylianou-Lambert sums up the developments of how various approaches have led to a paradigm that presents the museum as an "open work that is completed by the visitor" (2010, 137). Recent studies categorise audiences by their motivations for visiting museums and also by their behaviour in museums (Falk 2009). Different museum service users have been classified in a spectrum from inactive to creators, similarly to media user types (Kelly and Russo 2008; Simon 2007). Beyond the classical site visit, studies acknowledge that the museum experience starts well before the visitor steps through the door of the building.

Runnel et al. (2014) have conceptualised visitors on the basis of their different relationships with museums, ranking five distinct groups of audiences on a pyramid structure. The more connected people are to the museum, the higher they appear on the pyramid. "Public," at the bottom, refers to the large number of people not connected to the museum but who have the potential to be so. "Audiences" are conceptualised as groups who, while being aware of the messages of the museum, do not go to the

museum and seldom use its resources. “Visitors” are the most traditional group in studies of museums; they are the people who enter the building. “Users” utilise the online resources and spaces of the museum as well as visiting. “Participants” rank highest on the pyramid. They are defined as the group of people with whom the museum is willing to share a small amount of decision-making power and who are seen as the most desirable group which the museum seeks to engage. This group needs the most attention from the institution in order to maintain an ongoing relationship (222–3).

People in the different groups, with their multi-layered identities and interpretive strategies, are dynamic; they are motivated to shift their position. This article seeks to understand what motivates users to change positions and their relationship with museums. In order to answer this question the participatory interventions held by the ENM and will be mapped, and what motivated participants from different audience groups to make changes will be analysed.

Motivations for Participating in Museums

The reasons behind public engagement with museums are often difficult to define because of the confusion about the conceptual nature of motivation, which inevitably tends to involve a discussion of psychology. Psychologists view the source of motivational differences as being at their origin, defined as extrinsic or external and intrinsic or internal motivation (Russo and Peacock 2009). Examples of intrinsic influences are generally positive feelings of enjoyment and curiosity, as well as personal needs and interests. Extrinsic influences, such as penalties, social pressure, and the positive nature of incentives, are more negative. When the motivation is intrinsic, the task is rewarding and Haley Goldman (2004) thus argues that the extrinsic influences of incentives or social pressures are not necessary.

People are usually motivated by a combination of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, depending on which takes priority. This argument creates a link to self-determination theory, which presumes that the public is by nature active and self-motivated. Social conditions and processes, however, have an impact on what individuals do and how they feel while acting and, as a consequence, the social environment supports, directs, or thwarts their activities (Ryan and Deci 2000). Csikszentmihaly and Hermanson (1995) contend that the publics' relations with museums are mostly motivated by intrinsic rewards; therefore, museums should capture visitors’ curiosity, correlate to their own lives, and encourage new and

alternative perspectives. Should these aspects be fulfilled, the museum experience would be intrinsically rewarding.

Museological research has long explored the motivations of audiences from traditional museum visits to the uses of online services (Peacock and Brownbill 2007; Ellenbogen et al. 2007, 188; Salgado 2008; Fantoni et al. 2012). Active involvement and the motivation to do so have been parallel topics in the development of participation theories. Nielsen (2006), an Internet usability expert, proposes five elements which can motivate people to participate and overcome participation inequality:

ease of participation
participation should be a side effect of a visit
participation should involve the concept of editing as opposed to creating
participation should be rewarded afterwards
participation should promote high quality contributions

Museologist Simon (2010, 17), citing Shirky (2008), sees that social conditions as motivating factors for participation come from the institution's clear and open expressions of *promise*, *tools*, and *bargain*. Where participants would like to see their contributions is integrated in a timely, attractive, and respectful way. In the context of memory institutions, Lepik (2013) has mapped the preconditions of participation and argues the importance of financial, social, educational, political, and cultural capital, information literacy, and social identity.

ENM's Participatory Interventions

The Estonian National Museum (ENM) has used participatory ideas to organise much of its daily work in recent years.[2] Runnel et al. (2010) state that ENM, as a set of words and as an institution, carries several meanings and thus, several obligations. On the one hand, "Rahva" [National] means state-owned. The ENM is the primary, and largest, representative museum of the Estonian state and nation. On the other hand, the Estonian name for the museum can be translated to mean "a museum of the Estonian people," encompassing the different ethnic groups who live there and also the ethnographic nature of the museum. All of these meanings come together in the complex set of expectations present when reinventing the Estonian nation in the twenty-first century for the opening of the new museum building in 2016, which will ensure public interest in the museum's activities.

Ethnographic museum collections have traditionally been formed through contributions from community members. The engagement of the public in the ENM dates from at least the 1930s with the foundation of the Correspondents' Network. Annually, the museum circulates an open call for stories on subjects deemed important to the current museum research topics or exhibition production. The regular participants are primarily elderly people from different parts of Estonia who send thousands of pages of written responses, to the museum sometimes accompanied by photographs, films, and objects.

Since 2007, more than 30 participatory interventions have taken place at the ENM. They have been analysed on the basis of the influence of participation on the institution as well as on the museum professionals, exhibitions, collections, visits, and participants. The actions were planned so that the participants' personal experiences and opinions on everyday life could be related to museum activities and existing heritage to contribute to rethinking their relationships with the museum. The interventions incorporated different designs, topics, and processes of involvement that reflected the conditions and possibilities of participation in the Estonian cultural heritage context.

For the purpose of this article, ten actions were chosen to reflect different aspects of participation; they were aimed at various audience groups and had diverse designs. Some were offered online and some offline. Each interaction had distinct purposes and, therefore, different amounts of work were involved in their undertaking, from long commitments to brief encounters; some of the actions were successful and some were not, as illustrated in the examples below.

1. Estonian Moments (2007–2013)

The Estonian Moments webpage was created by the museum to collect photographs representing contemporary Estonian everyday life. Every year the museum issued a themed call, including an open theme, requesting the public contribute their photographs. Because the upload process was not as easy as uploading pictures to social media, the number of donor photographers has depended on the subject and has ranged from three to thirty. Participation required the completion of different metadata slots, including theme, time, place, and action. If pictures were accepted into the museum collections, the best quality version had to be uploaded in place of the web version. Altogether, approximately 1,500 photographs have been uploaded, of which 589 were accessioned by the collections.

Comments about the photographs by the photographers were used in the analysis of participant motivations.

2. Donate a Day to the Museum (2009)

In order to build on the tradition of the Correspondents' Network, and to encourage new groups to contribute to the archive, a participatory intervention was designed for the ENM's 100th birthday. April 14, 2009, was used as an opportunity for a mass appeal to the public for "donations." Descriptions of a "typical day" in writing, through pictures, videos, or mobile mapping resulted in 450 diverse submissions. One of the project's breakthroughs was that the contributions came mainly from younger people. Participants' cover letters and comments about the stories and photographs were used in the analysis.

3. Exhibition "With 1,000 steps …" (2009)

In 1993, the exhibition "With 1,000 steps …" introduced the museum's vast photographic collection; in order of accession, every 182ndphotograph was chosen and 1,080 reproductions were exhibited. The exhibition was organised again in 2009. Then, visitors were invited to use Post-it Notes and pens to add free-form comments to a photograph of their choice. This simple technology made participation easy, almost a by-product of the exhibition visit. Over 80 comments were posted monthly, which indicated that visitors were ready to participate not only by rating pictures but also by occasionally attempting to initiate debate and interact with other visitors' comments. Comments on the exhibition photographs and feedback from the visitors' book were analysed

4. Museum Night: comments (2010)

The 2010 Museum Night event asked visitors to comment on the ENM's permanent exhibition. This action was not successful, as only 17 responses were received. Although it was expected that the work contributed by participants would be the same as the "With 1,000 steps …" exhibition, communication with Museum Night exhibition visitors was unsuccessful. Comments on the exhibition were used in the analysis of participant motivations.

5. Create Your Own Exhibition 1: Voters (2010)

The Create Your Own Exhibition project was launched in the winter of 2010. A public call invited people to submit exhibition proposals. Each entrant could propose an exhibition idea and choose from one of two forms. The first used the participant's own materials, the second used museum objects. The agenda of the open curatorship exhibition competition was to draw new audiences to the museum's collection interpretation. Extensive public communication was followed by a new decision-making model in the form of an online and offline, public vote open to all in the museum. In all, 569 individuals selected their favourites from 33 exhibition proposals.

6. My Favourite from ENM's Collections (2011)

This intervention examined communication between the museum and handicraft makers, who are probably the largest group of museum object collection users. It took the form of a competition which invited them to interpret the collections; it also provided information about their perception of the museum. The competition involved choosing an actual or digitised object from the museum's collections and either making a copy, or using the original for inspiration to create a new version of that object. In all, 54 new objects were presented to the museum by the different handicraft makers; each item required time-consuming preparations, and some took two months. Interviews with nine participants were used in the analysis.

7. Regretted Purchase (2012)

Many interventions occurred in conjunction with "Shopping Fever," an exhibition about contemporary consumption. One asked visitors to share stories and objects relating to regretted purchases. Letters and comments relating to 44 submitted objects, and 50 stories, were used to analyse motivations.

8. Take a Picture of What You Eat (2012)

This action was initiated in association with the "Shopping Fever" exhibition. The public were asked to upload pictures of the food they eat. Communication and web communities related to food and cooking were

involved. In all, 711 photographs along with short descriptions were uploaded.

9. Create Your Own Exhibition 2: Railway Gardens: Curators (2013)

The winners in the third year of the open curatorship programme, were two students who produced the exhibition, "Railway Gardens." Life in the so-called no-man's land next to railways was interpreted through objects, photographs, and films they collected. Interviews with the curators traced their attitudes to the museum and their before-and-after thoughts about making an exhibition.

10. Create Your Own Exhibition 3: Railway Gardens: Visitors (2013)

At the same time as the "Railway Gardens" exhibition, visitors were asked to share stories related to the subject. In all, 47 stories written on the exhibition wall were used for analysis.

Analysis Principles to Understand Motivations

Qualitative analysis of the feedback material from the interventions at ENM consisted of two phases. The first consisted of close readings of the participants' motivations which appeared in the stories, cover letters, comments, or interviews after each action. In order to analyse motivations, their articulations were collated and categorised, based on the combinations of 11 intrinsic and extrinsic reasons as follows:

Personal motivations:
related to personal interest and curiosity, subjects of own life
museum, heritage, exhibition, personal interest posed questions, to which participants seek answers or gain new knowledge or information, alternative or new perspectives for personal benefit
testing personal skills and knowledge, sense of challenge
fun

Personal social motivations:
opportunities to express ideas, opinions, comments
opportunity to have dialogue, find solutions to problems, help others
chance to gain respect and visibility within a community
shared sense of identity and belonging

Personal institutional motivations:
documents about yourself in the museum, for the future
getting institutional recognition
getting a reward after participation

In addition, six conditions for an environment that motivated participation were mapped. They translated Waterson's (2006, 334)[3] incentives for online users into museum centred categories:

participation is made easy or, in the case of web-intervention
corresponds with participants' information literacy skills
participation as side effect
communication in intervention is supportive and encouraging
participants' needs are noticed and responded to
participation has influence on museums or its collections, participant is
being part of museum activity
previous experiences with museum

After the first analysis of motivations against interventions, the first aggregation was made; there was a clear correlation between the level of motivation and the level of workload. In other words, variations in motivation did not correlate with the interventions, but with the amount of work and time people were willing to invest to participate in the museum's activities. Three categories emerged from the data:

Participation with a heavy workload required participants to be involved in time-consuming preparations, and creative approaches, and to display sufficient confidence in their skills to create exhibitions, handicrafts, and storytelling.

Participation with a moderate workload required participants to have the necessary resources to respond to an intervention, in which they wished to participate, e.g. uploading daily meal photographs required the resources to take and upload an image and the ability to comment on the photograph online.

Participation with a light workload required participants to react spontaneously to a call and spend a short amount of time tagging, commenting, and voting.

In the next section I draw together the participants' main motivations in the museum activities. The focus is on the first category, participation with a heavy workload. The analysis of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and how the participatory environment supported the motivations uses

interviews with participants in the intervention "My Favourite from ENM's Collections" (Teppor 2011).

Motivations for Participating

The participatory intervention "My Favourite from ENM's Collections" was organised by the museum together with online handicraft communities. Handicraft makers chose one object from the museum collections, the ENM's permanent exhibition, and the databases of collections, for example, www.muis.ee, vaibad.erm.ee, or the publications. They then made an authentic copy or used the original as inspiration to create a new version of the object.

Participation is also a method for analysing audiences. Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt et al. (2014) have used different interventions to analyse and understand the changes in relations between audiences and museums. The first goal of the ENM was to introduce the craftspeople to the vast Internet databases of museum collections and, thus, expand the use of objects beyond the well-known museum pieces. The second goal was to analyse how the participants reacted and gave new meaning and use to the original museum objects.

From a theoretical viewpoint, participatory actions can be successful only when peoples' subject positions are intertwined (McAfee 2000, 159–60). Participation needs to be personal for the individuals. Indeed, cultural heritage, memories, and the past are not necessarily part of everyday life. Therefore, it is a challenge for museums to involve the public in taking part of heritage formation and the dialogue related to heritage. For the participants in the "My Favourite ..." activity, however, daily hobbies were closely related to the museum collections. The handicraft makers were frequent visitors to the museum and users of the collections. Thus, using the Internet databases to find favourites for many participants was a familiar activity.

Motivating Participatory Environment

For the people involved in different actions, the most-important aspect of a participation environment is that the process is easy, that the tasks correspond to their skills, and that the design is user-friendly. Skills can be defined as information literacy and language-oriented, photography-oriented, or handicraft-oriented skills. The participants in the interventions also deemed that a supportive, encouraging, and reliable environment was

an important aspect, and that their motivations to participate were supported by a clearly stated purpose and outcome.

The intervention, "My Favourite …" process took place online, as is normal with web community competitions where people upload their handicraft pictures. An offline option was also offered. The entry consisted of an object, or a photograph of the object, and a description of it with reference to the original museum piece from the ENM collections. The entries could be seen on the museum webpage, where news about the competition was also constantly updated. Information was also distributed via the handicraft forum Isetegija.[4] In the end, personalised versions and new meanings of 54 objects were submitted by professional or hobby handicraft makers. This response was evaluated by the museum as a good result; it showed that the participatory environment was able to support and have close contact with all the participants involved.

Personal Motivations

The analysis of participants in different actions confirmed the notion of Csikszentmihaly and Hermanson (1995) that intrinsic motivations, which come mostly from personal interests and connections with the topic, are the most important. Pleasure in doing an activity and any sense of accomplishment, therefore, inspires participation. Active involvement also means self-expression and self-reflexivity for the participants. Irrespective of whether the feedback comes from the briefest comment or the longest of heavy workloads, the source is a personal perspective, a personal context, and a contemporary point of view. The new knowledge people gain from participation was also listed as an important motivator, especially in terms of the time and resources consumed.

The most common answer to the question about reasons for entering the competition for participants of "My Favourite …" was related to the motivation to test one's skills:

> I am a self-taught person. And thus I thought that it is a good opportunity to test myself. It coincides with my interests. Anyway, I have already visited the Estonian National Museum to see their collection of bowls, it is good to have such specific task with set timeline, so I thought to give it a try and see whether something comes out of it or not […] it is just such a challenge. I did not enter so much to compete, winning some place was not a major issue for me, and it was totally irrelevant. I am simply happy that I managed to fulfil the task I set myself. (W., aged 21–34).

Personal Social Motivations

In the context of the ENM interventions, social motivations were the most influential at the level of public self-expression. The light workload level accompanied by spontaneous reaction mostly correlated when the topic was relevant and people could express their opinions. A similar type of motivation was apparent in the moderate workload category when personal expression and personal interest in the subject and interacting with others were influential.

Opportunities to gain feedback from or have dialogue with others were not considered to be important museum activities. Becoming involved with a museum was often related to social activities, and, theoretically, participation was often seen as at least connected to communities of practice (Carpentier 2011, 223). In the context of the ENM interventions, only at the heavy workload level did social motivations start to play a more important role, because participants in "My Favourite …" found it important to interact with similar persons, find solutions, or help each other. Community existence and the sense of being part of the activity also became more important. For participants of "My Favourite …," it was also important to motivate people for the possibility of presenting their work in a real exhibition.

Personal Institutional Motivations

The greater the time and effort involved in the participation process, the greater the correlational importance between the source of motivation for the participant and the institution. Many participants in "My Favourite …" also stated that if some other museum or group had asked them to join in, they would not have done so. The authority of the ENM, specifically its support and recognition, was mentioned as one of the key motivators for entering the contest.

> It is great that an institution which is so important […] and famous all over Estonia […] organises a contest […] well what can I say […] would it had been anybody else, I probably wouldn't have participated.
> (W., aged 21–34).

> This is the thing with ENM, that when you tie yourself with this trade mark […] then even in other places you would probably get a little "credit confidence," if I may put it that way. (W., aged 21–34).

Nielsen (2006) proposes that the notion of a reward is an important feature for motivating participation. In the context of the ENM interventions, rewards were always mentioned and provided by the museum. The handicraft makers sought recognition of their skills and practical knowledge; many had high hopes that their work would become part of the museum's collections as documents of themselves for the future. The name ENM added importance to participation, but other aspects associated with the ENM, such as the museum's vast collections and past personal experience, could not be underestimated. They may be even more important than the name. Participants in the light workload category did not see the importance of institutional recognition. Comprehension of museum activities and goals and the museum's position in public space were also influential in motivating people to take part in the participation activities.

At the same time, the significance of the museum as the keeper and interpreter of national heritage and its initiative to cooperate with hobbyists was acknowledged. While the museum was seen as a partner, the interviews with the handicraft makers clearly indicated that it had a monopoly on truth when it came to quality, interpretation, and approach in contrast to the handicraft forums and local initiatives. Thus, contrary to the expectations of the museum, the entries were mostly not very original. On the other hand, participants made objects that they thought the museum would like. Thus, the choices were mostly traditional and based on the most frequently used collections, for example, ethnographic textiles and the reuse of their ornamentation.

In addition, the clear motivator for participants was future co-operation with the ENM. Hobbyist handicraft makers, as users of the museum collections, publications, databases, and exhibitions, had many ideas about new ways to collaborate with the museum. Both they and the museum were interested in valuing and popularising Estonian handicrafts and cultural heritage together. The museum's interpretative strategies of cultural heritage were seen as based on scientific research and knowledge. The handicraft hobbyists saw their approach to interpreting heritage as a communicative process, during which they find and recreate the meaning and values of heritage bringing it to a contemporary context and making it understandable for the public.

Closing Discussion

Participation in museums is always affected by organisational structure, which through its objectives and practices supports more

minimalist or maximalist participation in the access-interaction-participation (AIP) model. This case study of the Estonian National Museum's participatory interventions is an example of minimalist participation. In this instance, some power sharing with participants existed; their content creation was personal and formats were unrestricted. Several organisational and structural changes were influenced by participation. On the whole, however, the museum maintained control of the topics of interaction. The analysis of participants' motivations indicated their interest to widen the AIP model which borders on access, interaction, and participation.

Questions of who the participants in the ENM museum-led participatory interventions were and what motivated people to participate have been examined here. The culture-consuming public is now numerically greater and comes from more socially and geographically diverse backgrounds than ever before. Audience groups have different relationships with the museum, as shown above, which influence the groups' perceptions as either passive consumers of information coming from the museum or as creators and interpreters of cultural heritage. The number of participants in the participation group is always smaller than the other categories due to the fact that the museum's participatory activities are both intensely personal and based on the maintenance of close contacts. With regards to whom the participants were and what motivated them to become involved with the museum, the analysis of the different interventions indicated that it did not matter what the individual's relationship to the museum was before taking part in the intervention. The important aspects were that the topic was personally relevant and that the institutional image, communication, and participation design were appropriate.

Incentives to join in the museum audiences were analysed through the concept of participatory motivations, which presumes that audiences are active if the topic is relevant to their everyday lives. The differences in reasons to take part were categorised by the amount of work and time that participants needed to invest in the museum.

The stimuli for taking part in participatory activities were predominantly emotional and personal. On a theoretical level, the participatory social goals are often in focus, but the case of the ENM's participants showed that they were also often overestimated. In contrast, the participants' wishes to cooperate and gain recognition from the institution were more important, an element often underestimated as a motivator in the literature. Each experience was the synthesis of an individual's motivations and how the museum was perceived. Whether or

not the participatory environment satisfied the needs and interests was also considered the consequence of motivation. The time and effort involved in the process and the length of commitment correlated with the degree of importance any relationship with the museum holds as a motivator. The analysis of the participatory intervention with heavy workloads "My Favourite …" found that the museum's image, previous contacts with the museum, and recognition of personal skills and knowledge by the institution were all important motivators. If the motivations were related to rewards, then a major stimulus was the hope that their contribution would become part of the museum's collections, which are characterised as stable and future-oriented. In addition, and not to be forgotten participants found that co-operation with the ENM was a rewarding experience.

Contrary to the social nature of participation, social reasons were surprisingly not influential in bringing people together to discuss a shared interest in museums. One explanation for this is that the ENM did not promote the concept of social motivations and the designs of the interventions did not consider public intercourse as significant. Another explanation is that participants found it more important to interact with the museum rather than with other participants. The most important aspect of social motivation could be interpreted as public self-expression. On the other hand, the participatory interventions did not support the museum's intended role of bringing diverse views to dialogue; they took the form of discussions with the museum. Being a participant did not make people either more critical of or dialogical in the museum context, because the topics the participants chose to be involved with related to their own experiences, contexts, and assumptions.

Notes

[1] Eilean Hooper-Greenhill has claimed that visitor studies have been used as an umbrella term in museum studies for a range of different forms of research and evaluation involving museums and their actual, potential and virtual visitors, which can be collectively termed the "audience" for museums (2011, 363). In this chapter, I use the notions of audiences and audience studies taken from media studies.

[2] Interventions and the analysis of interventions were undertaken in the Estonian Science Foundation's (ESF) project "Developing museum communication in the 21st century information environment" (2008–12). Many of the research group members worked at the ENM at the same time or were post-doctoral or doctoral students of communications studies at the University of Tartu. The researcher's position came from auto-ethnography and production ethnography (see Tatsi 2013, 33).

[3] Psychologist Patrick Waterson discusses the motivations in online communities summarised in the following basic desires: (1) Seeking information for personal benefit; (2) Opportunities to exchange ideas and find solutions to problems; (3) Fun; (4) Opportunity for dialogue; (5) Opportunity to help others; (6) Chance to gain respect and visibility within a community; (7) Seeking to build social cohesion within a group; (8) Shared sense of identity and belonging; (9) Raise profile with peers; (10) Commitment to shared values and norms resembling basic desires (Waterson 2006, 334, in Russo 2009).

[4] Isetegija [one who makes it oneself] is the forum of handicraft hobbyists on the website isetegija.net. Photographs of handicraft items are uploaded, blogs with descriptions of the processes of making the items (techniques and materials) are kept, and handicraft hobbyists hold discussions, learn, and get inspiration from each other. Handicraft-making contests, auction sales, and other activities are also published on the website.

CHAPTER TWELVE

MEDIA IN CONTEMPORARY HERITAGE PRESENTATION: THE CASE OF THE AMSTERDAM MUSEUM

EEF MASSON

Introduction

In September 2011, the Amsterdam Museum opened a new permanent exhibition entitled *Amsterdam DNA*. In the museum's promotional materials, the presentation was characterised as a "three-dimensional travel guide," leading the visitor through the city's history (Amsterdam Museum 2011).[1] The exhibition was centred on seven animated films, projected onto large, transparent screens, which together explicated its main narrative trajectory. Although historical objects were also on display, those films, along with a number of other screen-based audio-visual representations, provided the main attraction and incited the visitor to proceed.

The case of the Amsterdam Museum is symptomatic of recent developments in the heritage field. The use of media in museum contexts is, of course, hardly new; it has been argued, in fact, that the history of the modern museum coincides with the development of recording media (Henning 2006a, 74). During most of the twentieth century, science centres and museums for technology and natural history, in particular, exemplified this tendency (Griffiths 2003; 2008; Huhtamo 2010). More recently, however, media are also becoming fixtures in institutions focusing on aspects of social and cultural history.

The ongoing mediatisation of heritage presentation is motivated by a number of things. Museum professionals and academics alike are convinced that media strongly appeal to today's audiences, especially youths, who have developed new and preferred ways of accessing information about the present and past (Urban 2009; Black 2012, 3). At

the same time, media are taken to help museums compete with a range of other audio-visual attractions. The latter argument is particularly relevant at a time when public funding for the sector is no longer self-evident (Van Hasselt 2012, 42*)*. In addition, their use is also justified with reference to contemporary, post-modern exhibition ideals. Commentators argue that media can help to "democratise" museum presentation by de-emphasising the authority of collection specialists and making room for alternative or plural interpretations of objects or events (Witcomb 2003, 102–27) or by allowing visitors to direct their own learning (Widbom 2002, 17). Over the years it has even been suggested that media, by highlighting the status of exhibitions as "interfaces" with collections, reveal what Michelle Henning calls the "workings of the museum" (2006b, 310), thus facilitating or even encouraging reflection on the very nature of presentation (Thomas 1998; Witcomb 2007).

In daily museum practice, however, it is not always evident how media can be of service. Focusing on the example of *Amsterdam DNA*, a recent presentation from the Netherlands, I will show how their use at times appears to complicate, rather than further, the optimisation of the aforementioned ideals. In doing so, I argue that the difficulty is caused not by the characteristics or user possibilities of AV media as such, but rather, on the one hand, by concurrent pressures on city museums to propose a coherent identity for a city and its inhabitants, and on the other by the assumptions we make about how visitors wish to be addressed and what they can/cannot or will/will not do or invest in during their visit.

The Exhibition: *Amsterdam DNA*

At the time of its opening, *Amsterdam DNA* was advertised as an "entry point" to the city and its residents, geared primarily towards busy tourists seeking a quick introduction to its various attractions of cultural and historical interest.[2] The exhibition, therefore, is rather small-scale, and patrons are expected to complete their visit in about 45 minutes (Amsterdam Museum 2011). Its two main spaces are divided into seven sections, each of which deals with a particular period in Amsterdam history, from the Middle Ages (1000 CE) up to the present. The red threads running through the exhibit are four values positioned in introductory texts as ingrained in the DNA of Amsterdam's inhabitants: entrepreneurship, free thought, creativity, and civic responsibility.

At the time of its inception, the exhibition was conceived as an experiment in the use of modern interactive media (Van Hasselt 2012, 40). Upon entering a section of the exhibition space, the visitor is invited to use

a personal QR code, printed on the cover of a paper guide, in order to activate a one-and-a-half-minute animated film. The image is projected onto a large screen, located centrally in the room.[3] The code identifies the visitor's language, which is used in the voice-over narration audible through headphones. The remainder of each space is filled with artefacts of all kinds: everyday utensils, applied art objects and paintings, historical documents, and the occasional scale model of an object or building, either historical or purpose-made. In addition to activating the seven films, the visitor can also use headphones to listen to sound fragments or soundtracks to archival films shown on smaller screens, or operate the touch screens located on the panels marking the edges of the exhibition space.

Both their prominent position in each room and the way in which their *modus operandi* is brought to the visitors' attention suggest that the seven projected films constitute the main exhibition "text." Watching them and listening to their commentaries only confirms this initial impression. The films are there to offer the viewer a preferred reading of the objects in the surrounding space that are also represented or alluded to in the films themselves. The clips identify their historical significance or provide interpretations of the phenomena or events they are considered to reference. In addition and in light of the associated themes, they establish relations between each section of the exhibition space via labels. Presumably it is difficult for the target audience to infer those relations from the objects themselves, except perhaps in terms of a vague notion of historical coincidence stimulated by references to concurrent international events. A series of pronounced narratives built up through identification of the historical incidents, circumstances, and attitudes that together have come to define Amsterdam and its inhabitants is the result.[4]

As Andrea Witcomb observes, the recent displacement of museum objects by media is accompanied by an increasing emphasis on narrative (2003, 117). Philosopher Hilde S. Hein's discussion of objecthood claims that the tendency towards story-centredness, which she relates to present-day museums' involvement in the fabrication of experiences, coincides with a shift in the function of the objects on display. She argues that they are no longer valued primarily for their connection to a specific historical moment, maker or user, previously a marker of their authenticity, but rather for their corroborative power. They serve as evidence, supporting a story told in more generalising terms (Hein 2000, 51–68). *Amsterdam DNA* illustrates this argument; objects are functional simply by "being there," regardless of anything else they might also do. If visitors first watch the films, which they are strongly encouraged to do, they *need* not

subsequently consider each of the objects placed or hung nearby. A quick glance will allow them to recognise at least some of them from their animated representations on screen. Judging by the presentation's overall organisation, the underlying assumption is that for the target audience, this will qualify as a worthy exhibition experience in itself.

Many commentators consider the growing importance of stories to hold rich potential for museums. It has been argued that narrative approaches, facilitated by the use of media, enable a democratic and pluralising form of meaning making (Mintz 1998, 25–7; Hanks, Hale and MacLeod 2012), and in the process allow for highlighting the fundamental interpretive role of the museum (Witcomb 2003, 117–119). However, as the above case illustrates, actual practice does not always bear this potential out. In the past, this fact has been attributed to the circumstance that museums not only have an educational role to play but are also subject to pressure to compete with other with commercial attractions, which narratively speaking, are often geared towards complete closure (e.g. Hooper-Greenhill 1992, 211–215). In what follows, I propose two additional explanations.

The Essence of Amsterdam

The first is that many so-called "city museums" feel they have a crucial role to play in the construction of an identity for a city and its inhabitants. The Amsterdam Museum is the reincarnation of a former "historical" museum. Like city museums elsewhere, it has recently decided to drop this epithet in order to foreground its contemporary relevance (Spies 2011, 3). Today's city museums primarily see themselves as meeting points and platforms for discussion among local people; their ambition is to act as some sort of "binding agent" between the city's residents (Van der Ploeg and De Groot 2006; Van der Horst et al. 2011, 30–9; Kistemaker 2011, 9). Heritage, in this context, serves a highly instrumental purpose. It is treated as a means of identification with broader communities and used as a vehicle for the transmission of citizenship ideals.

In exploring discourse on the role that city museums see for themselves, a friction is revealed. These museums emphasise the importance of visitor participation even more than other contemporary heritage institutions. Directly or indirectly, a relationship is established between the civic participation that the museum seeks to encourage and the active role visitors should play in the construction of an exhibition experience and, by extension, in attributing meaning to the realities upon which it reflects (Van der Horst et al. 2011, 46; Kistemaker and Alberts

2011, 60 and *passim*). Yet, at the same time, city museums also feel the need to function as clear reference points for the identities that visitors are to construct. In order to do so, a Dutch vision statement argues, they need to tell "a sharp story" (note the singular) inspired by a "city's profile," suggesting, indeed, that such a profile is pre-given and undisputed (Ibid. 62). Some even advance that, in the event of a city which either lacks a clear image or suffers from a bad one, the museum has the opportunity to provide or substitute it through reference to historical situations or events (Kahn 2006).

The use of media in *Amsterdam DNA* attests to the fact that the friction between the two impulses may at times be difficult to negotiate. Although primarily targeting tourists, the exhibition as a whole seeks to project a coherent identity of a city and its residents. By hinging its overarching narrative on the notion of a metaphorical cultural DNA, it implies that there is such a thing as the "essence" of Amsterdam, captured in a series of characteristic features, behaviours, or attitudes, generally, although not always, presented as laudable and desirable.[5] Sections of the exhibition, however, also demonstrate that the tension between city museums' attempts to involve visitors, both physically and in terms of what they contribute to the interpretive process, and their desire to unilaterally construct a clear "city profile" cannot always be easily resolved in the latter's favour. One component of the presentation that is particularly revealing here is a series of "interactive" displays embedded in the walls of the exhibition space.[6]

Six of the seven rooms in the exhibition feature a small touch screen, connected to software initialised by the visitor's QR code. The main menu on each display contains four animated pictures based on historical representations loosely inspired by the sub-themes for the separate rooms. Upon clicking one of the animations, the user will score a value of 100% on either one of the four DNA markers. On the sixth screen the software will generate an average of the values scored previously, suggesting that the visitor's DNA contains a particular ratio of entrepreneurship, free thought, creativity and/or civic responsibility. The aforementioned friction in this case entails that neither of the museum's aspirations is easily gratified. On the one hand, user participation in the construction of an exhibition experience is concretised as the making of a highly intuitive choice between a number of predetermined options. The meanings of the available choices are also predetermined. In light of the wider presentation, the display serves to reinforce the conceptual scaffolding for the overarching exhibition narrative. In other words, there is no demonstrable relationship between interaction with the medium and an

active partaking of the interpretive process.[7] On the other hand, the display also complicates the exhibition's foundational premise that the four DNA components are very specifically part of the make-up of Amsterdam's population. After all, users of the application will inevitably achieve the highest score for one of those, regardless of which city in the world they feel the strongest allegiance for. Thus, the display suggests that those ideals are in fact universal, and universally desirable.[8]

The Media User as Browser

The second aspect of media use that I will briefly explore revolves around the assumptions the exhibition makes about the visitors it addresses. In positioning its audience in relation to the presentation, *Amsterdam DNA*, like any museum presentation, makes inferences about the people it "speaks to." This includes assumptions about the particular cultural experiences they can build on (Henning 2006a, 109) or their preferences as consumers of visual spectacles of all kinds (Noordegraaf 2004, 243). In what follows, I focus on the inferences the exhibition makes about its patrons as users of screen media.

According to the promotional materials, the visitor that *Amsterdam DNA* addresses is a busy one. The guest imagined here is one with little time to spare, and therefore, most likely, little patience to consider the propositions which the exhibition makes through media, among other things. They are also a browser, someone used to deciding what to look at, listen to, or manipulate. As I mentioned earlier, the attribution of a hierarchically higher position to the seven introductory films in the presentation suggests that consideration of any of the objects, documents, or models that are also on display is optional. The same applies to any of the graphic or written elaborations on the specific subthemes introduced in the purpose-produced shorts. Some of these are proffered in the manner of trivia, for instance the series of historical units of length bearing the names of body parts, introduced on a wall chart in the room dealing with the seventeenth-century world presence of Amsterdam merchants.

At the same time, the exhibition's visitor is also one with a strong predilection towards modern screen media. Again, the construction of the main exhibition text through large-scale projections is a case in point. Another sign is the presentation's inclination towards film and broadcast media, in lieu of objects or paper documents, in those sections of the exhibition that historically coincide with their widespread availability. The specific media viewer projected by *Amsterdam DNA* is one who has the habit of exploring media intuitively and proceeds by trial and error, rather

than by "reading the manual." The DNA touch screen displays, for example, exemplify this. At the time of my visits to the exhibition, the only way for patrons to know what the screens were for, was to touch them and see what happened.[9] Media use, in other words, was and still is characterised as a highly embodied practice, with the user actively exploring the affordances for action that the medium offers (Hale 2012, 198).

In as far as explorations of this kind do not have a clear role to play within the construction, or reconstruction, of a more overarching exhibition narrative by the user, he or she is also portrayed as *homo ludens*, one attracted by the playful aspects of media practices. A telling example is the installation which allows the visitor, seated on an early twentieth-century bicycle, to slowly start a short video clip visible on the opposite wall by making cycling movements. By using the bicycle bell, he or she can switch between moving images of Amsterdam cyclists in the past and the present (Van Hasselt 2012, 45). The exhibition does not suggest that this particular action leads to more insight into the development of Amsterdam as a modern city, the thematic focus of the exhibit where the installation is located. One could even argue that the bike and images function rather as "props," rather than the pieces of evidence mentioned earlier or items that help create the atmosphere of a particular place and time (Hein 2000, 65). Other examples of this include the use of an abundance of paintings and luxury decorative art products which together illustrate Amsterdam's economic and cultural prosperity in the seventeenth century or the marked absence of objects in the World War II section, which are conceived of as some sort of a *Denkmal* to local victims of the Holocaust.[10]

Yet despite their haste and eagerness to play, the visitors are also characterised by the exhibition as people who need clear answers to their questions *also* from their media. This is most evident again from the seven purpose-produced films, and in particular their use of spoken commentaries. As one of the presentation's curators puts it, these function as what used to be known locally as the "A texts" of the exhibition. These are the texts that introduce the themes of each section, in line with the overarching conceptual principles. As it turns out, the voice-over commentaries are, on average, slightly longer than even the texts that would otherwise feature on the museum's walls (Van Hasselt 2012, 43). In other words, the use of media here does not go hand-in-hand with a reduction in the amount of information given; quite the contrary. Again, this seems part of a wider tendency. Julia Noordegraaf argues that "[despite] the disappearance of explanatory text panels in favour of

interactive multi-media displays, the total amount of information being provided in museum galleries has only increased" (2004, 247). In *Amsterdam DNA* the unambiguousness of this information is further underscored by the concurrent use of a highly visual language made up of pictograms, on the panels that subdivide the exhibition space. Reminiscent of Otto Neurath's Isotopes, these images, likewise, serve to communicate simple messages, often statistical information, understandable regardless of an addressee's native language (Henning 2007).

Presumably, then, the museum visitor inferred here actually requires a great deal of guidance in their interpretive activity because he or she is hasty and easily distracted by the lure of playful interactives. This assumption could be informed by a fear, transpiring in the discourse of museum professionals and museologists of the past 15 years that users might get lost in their attempts to make sense of what they see or even be in danger of misinterpreting it (Mintz 1998, 32; Cameron 2010, 85). This threat seems to become more real as media are used more intensively. For initial verification of this claim, one might start by comparing the use of screens in *Amsterdam DNA* with that in some of the older sections of the Amsterdam Museum's permanent exhibition, dating back mostly to the 1990s.[11] Here, media are used, but to a lesser extent. More importantly, they are put to the service of a different kind of storytelling.

In terms of topics discussed, the older parts of the exhibition show a good deal of overlap with *Amsterdam DNA*. Moreover, they are organised according to a similar chronological and thematic logic and display roughly the same categories of objects. The screen media they feature are of two basic kinds. On the one hand, there are those that provide access, sometimes interactively, to one or more short archival clips that take on the function of historical traces, much like the objects also on display. On the other hand, there are a couple of screens showing purpose-produced films. Unlike the films in *Amsterdam DNA*, these items do not take a central position in the presentation, nor do they always serve to establish the connections between the items placed in the surrounding space. In some cases there is no explication even of how they relate to those, or to the overarching theme of the room in which they are placed. A few of them have a contrapuntal effect; they challenge and perhaps even undermine whatever message the combination of objects in the larger space might seem to convey. This is true, for example, of a video on slavery in the food industry in a display about the material circumstances of Amsterdam's affluent residents in the mid-nineteenth century. In addition, the older parts of the permanent set-up also cut off fewer interpretive options. The interactive screens, in particular, are telling.

Rather than leading users, on the basis of a single choice, to one in a limited series of predetermined outcomes, they offer them a variety of stories and experiences without necessarily drawing conclusions as to what they might mean. Last but not least, those same sections also contain more “meta-textual” elements serving as brief verbal reflections on the status of a display.[12]

It is important to note that the visitor addressed here, much like the addressee for *Amsterdam DNA*, is a browser, someone happy to "shop around" for impressions and information. This particular browser, however, is one who is given much more responsibility in determining how the items on display matter historically, establishing relations between them, and, in general, contributing to the construction of an exhibition narrative. Taken together, the above observations suggest that the visitor addressed is one both able and willing to use their interpretive freedom and critically consider perspectives in relation to each other perhaps even someone who can be swayed to consider how historical arguments are constructed. The question, of course, is whether this still corresponds, or ever corresponded, to the attitudes of actual visitors; after all, the museum must have had its reasons to decide on a new presentation strategy.[13] However, the same point can also be made with reference to the newer exhibition, which seems to grant its visitors fewer abilities or lesser willingness in this respect. Whichever is the case, it is clear that, of the two set ups compared, the older one tends to use media, in however limited a manner, in ways that respond more obviously to the requirements set by advocates of a fundamentally democratic and self-aware exhibition practice.

Conclusion

As my case analysis suggests, in daily exhibition practice it is not so easy to use media in ways that live up to the promise of an open, epistemically, relativist presentation practice (Cameron 2007, 53) that they are supposed to provide. In this chapter, I explored two factors that potentially complicate such ambitions, taking my cue from *Amsterdam DNA*, the first in a series of presentations that will together constitute the new Amsterdam Museum. One of those was the museum’s desire, due at least in part to political pressure from outside the institution, to propose a coherent identity for Amsterdam and its residents, a desire that at times conflicts with the principle of creating interpretive openness in exhibition design. The second, discussed at greater length, was the set of assumptions the museum makes about the visitors it primarily addresses, specifically in

their capacity of media users. The patrons envisaged by the exhibition are able and willing to do some things, such as explore media intuitively, but not others, for example decide on the hierarchy of meanings assigned to historical events, people or phenomena. In the comparison of this exhibition with older displays, a shift is visible in terms of how people are supposed to behave, not only as users of media but also more broadly in terms of how they consider information and learn from it.

Regarding this interaction with media, a particularly revealing source is *The Virtual and the Real* (1998), an early collection on new media in the museum edited by Selma Thomas and Ann Mintz, a historian-filmmaker and a museum director, respectively. The contributions to this volume tend to approach media from the perspective of the audience. But, in doing so, they make the assumption that the members of the audience are highly unlikely to do or consider anything outside of their usual comfort zones. Overall, media are seen by the contributors not primarily as tools for challenging the visitor, but as means to facilitate an exhibition experience that aligns with existing preferences. Thus, a conflict emerges with the role of educator which is also assigned to the museum, and specifically, the museum's responsibility as a builder of critical and literate consumers of media (Thomas 1998, xi).

Of course, considering the increasing pressure on heritage institutions to become self-sufficient, it is hardly surprising that indulging the visitor ultimately becomes the most attractive of the available options. Judging from the above, museums are still in the process of finding a balance between a range of (often competing) concerns. The intensive use of media, a relatively recent practice for many of those institutions, may in the process have disturbed a relative equilibrium, established as postmodern ideals became more ingrained in museum practice. There is a lot of potential for it to be restored, however, as some of the more-recent presentations at the Amsterdam Museum confirm.[14]

Notes

[1] "*Als een driedimensionale reisgids voert deze presentatie je […] door de Amsterdamse geschiedenis*." (Amsterdam Museum 2011).

[2] At the time, posters inviting visitors to "Experience the story of Amsterdam—Your Entry into the City" (in English) were displayed on billboards throughout the town. Promotional texts discussing the repositioning of the museum, in which *Amsterdam DNA* was a first step, also identified the exhibition's role as a guide to local historical attractions (Amsterdam Museum n.d.).

[3] The exhibition trailer on the museum's website is a mash-up of fragments from all seven films and gives an impression of the animations used; commentary,

however, is absent here. See http://www.amsterdammuseum.nl/en/dna/amsterdam-dna.

[4] The general direction of this reasoning, towards a present condition, is further underscored by the chronological build-up of the exhibition and the somewhat teleological formulations used, e.g. "Towards a Modern City" in the section title for room 5.

[5] Occasionally, the exhibit or its accompanying materials point out to the viewer that those attitudes also have their downsides. For instance, the print exhibition guide mentions that the Dutch entrepreneurial spirit also resulted in "oppression, slavery and war," and one of the films mentions that Amsterdam owed its prosperity to the fact that everything including people, not just goods, would be sold. However, in addition to the fact that such remarks may escape the visitors' notice in the course of a 45-minute tour, those pointers do not amount to an invitation to challenge the essentialist premise as such.

[6] The term "interactive" is used here not as a media theoretical concept, but as part of the discourse of the museum itself (Van Hasselt 2012).

[7] For a more profound discussion of what is sometimes called "mechanistic" approaches to museum interactives, see Witcomb (2003, 128–164) and Henning (2006, 82-92). Their critiques go further than the warning of Laura van Hasselt, one of the exhibition's curators, who also references Witcomb (2006) in her piece (2012, 42).

[8] It should be pointed out here that curator Van Hasselt, in a conversation with the author (Amsterdam, May 1, 2014), indicated that the museum itself considers the touch screen displays the least successful feature of the exhibition. However, in light of my objectives, it is a useful example as it illuminates a number of key frictions that more museums have to deal with.

[9] At the time, it was pointed out to me that some form of instruction would be added to accommodate those for whom the screens' use was not self-explanatory (Van Hasselt, conversation with author).

[10] The use of objects and documents in the World War II section is limited to just a few highly meaningful items for contemporary Amsterdammers, such as a ticket to Tram 8, a symbol to this day for the deportation of Jewish inhabitants, or a miniature version of an Anne Frank statue located on one of the city's market squares. In addition, the visitor can also use headphones to listen to excerpts from Frank's diary.

[11] Information obtained from Van Hasselt (conversation with author).

[12] A very simple example of this would be the remark, in the aforementioned display on living affluently in nineteenth-century Amsterdam, that the interiors shown are reconstructions, merely approximating what a real one might have looked like.

[13] The museum is planning to gradually replace all displays dating from before the inception of *Amsterdam DNA* over the next few years (Laura van Hasselt, conversation with author).

[14] An example is the exhibition about Jacob Cornelisz van Oostsanen, a sixteenth-century Amsterdam artist, organised in the first half of 2014 in collaboration with Stedelijk Museum Alkmaar.

PART FIVE

DEVELOPING NEW PRACTICES

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

CHILDREN OF MIGRANTS IN MUSEUMS: PROBLEMS, PREFERENCES, AND NEEDS

IVAN GRINKO AND ANNA SHEVTSOVA[1]

For the first decades of the twenty-first century, migrants became a very popular theme in museology and museum planning (Cimoli 2013; Gourievidis 2014). Even museums that weren't linked directly to migration started to explore this topic and organise new programs to attract migrants. The situation showed the need for analytical research on this new audience. In this chapter, we provide a qualitative analysis of the preferences and needs of migrants in museums based on the experiences of select museums in Moscow.

According to sociological research, migration usually appears in the top five on the list of problems in Moscow. At least 30% of the population of the capital is considered to be migrants; they are believed to be the primary danger, even preceding corruption, bad ecology, high prices, and crime (Foundation of Public Opinion 2013). According to the United Nations, the number of international migrants in the Russian Federation in 2014 was 11.2 million (International Migration 2015), bringing the total national population of the country to 143.5 million. They form the second largest migrant population worldwide percentagewise after the United States. Over the last four years, the influx of migrants to Russia has increased by 37% (Ibid.).[2] The growth of migrant populations constituted 93% of the total national population growth, or 296,000 people, in 2013.

The target audience of this analysis was international migrants in Moscow. In the capital, the situation is more complicated than in the rest of the country. The total population of Moscow in 2013 was twelve million, including one million international migrants. An additional 1.5 million migrants live and work in the Moscow region. Moreover, only 720,000 of all international migrants have temporary residence permits and only 320,000 of them are officially employed in Moscow in compliance with all bureaucratic formalities. In addition, only 2% of

Moscow's population, approximately twelve million people, is indigenous to the city; in other words, their grandparents were born in Moscow.

This situation has troubled the Moscow government, which regularly organises programs aimed at facilitating cultural adaptation and decreasing xenophobia; the effectiveness of these programs, however, has been negligible. One of the programs, "Migrants in the Museum," was initiated in 2012. After the first year, nothing substantial had been accomplished. The head of the Museum Department of the Moscow City government provided the following interesting explanation: "We've made an experiment: some Tajiks were invited to the museum but they said that [they] would go only if we pay them 400–500 rubles (€10)" (Shatalova 2013). The second official reason for the failure of the program was: "We cannot look for migrants at building yards. If they are obliged to study [the] Russian language and are brought to [the] museum, we will be ready to accept them" (Ibid.). Of course, the mass media did not miss the opportunity provided by these failures and immediately started complaining about migrants. "Our government should not waste time on still-born cultural programs for migrants but should work out a new visa program with hard and fast rules of control" (Romanov 2013). In this chapter, we analyse the situation with migrants and museum programs to see if it is real and what the main emphasis of projects dealing with this particular audience should be.

Statistics collected by the Moscow Institute of Sociocultural Programs tell us that only 13% of Moscow's population regularly goes to museums (Samodin 2013) and only 20% visit exhibitions once every six months. These statistics are why we can state that migrants' "accepted patterns" make them infrequent museum visitors. But does this mean that we should stop analysing the relationship between migrant populations and museums?

Because there are many types of migrants, we chose children from families of foreign migrants (6–17 years old) with zero or entry level Russian language from the "Schools of Russian Language" (RLS) for the research group. RLS schools are structural divisions of general education institutions; they provide one-year intensive Russian language instruction to children of migrants as well as socio-cultural and language adaptation. Intensive teaching and special methodologies help children learn Russian "from scratch" to gradually become involved in the educational process and adapt to Moscow school requirements. Because the RLS are state-funded institutions, education provided by them is free.

In the 2012–13 academic year over 30,000 children of international migrants and over 40,000 children from Russian regions studied at

Moscow preschool, secondary, and secondary professional education institutions. The Russian Language Schools operate in each educational district of Moscow. In the 2012–13 academic year, RLS functioned in six educational institutions in Moscow, including two evening schools. Every year new students are enrolled; in the 2013–14 academic year, 336 children enrolled in RLSs, and in 2014–15, 370 children.

The general selection for our research project was about 3,000 children (370–710 annually from 2006 to 2013) from eleven schools. These children were from 28 countries including Kyrgyzstan (31%), Tajikistan (16%), Azerbaijan (10%), Uzbekistan (7%), Vietnam (15%), Afghanistan (8%), Syria (4%), Cuba (1.5%) and even Somalia (1%) (Grinko and Shevtsova 2015). We also worked with focus-groups comprised of eleven teachers and supervisors from the RLS.

The links between the RLS and the museums were facilitated during times when the schools scheduled excursions. The educational process in all the RLS includes excursions to theatres and museums during holidays, such as New Year's Day, Easter, and Nowruz. Students visited museums three times per year on average. This gave us the primary question: "Do children like it?" The answer was, "Yes." Their parents also liked the museum visits. For example, the mothers of these children, many of whom never left their district, often joined school excursions. The choice of museum visited depended on the school and the teacher. According to data collected from the focus groups, many reasons were deciding factors for the choices, including:

location (not far from school, in the city centre, near underground)
agreements with educational district/school
price of ticket/paying capacity of parents
age of children
educational program
interests of children (games/video/interactivity)
friendliness/tolerance of the museum's staff
interests of the teacher.

The popularity of the museums varied according to the age levels of the children. Children from six to ten preferred the following museums and some specific exhibits:

Moscow Zoo
Darwin Museum (Museum of Natural History)
Central Museum of the Great Patriotic War (1941–1945)
(open air military exhibition)
House of Fairy Tales "Once upon a time …" "*Zhili-byli*"

(Children's Museum)
Museum of Naval History (Submarine B-396)
Central Museum of Armed Forces
Museum of Nomadic Cultures, private (yurt)
"Russian Gift" Exhibition Centre
State Museum of Eastern Cultures
Museum of Moscow History
"Lights of Moscow" Museum
Moscow Subway Museum
State Historical Museum.

Interestingly, military museums take precedence with this group. Children are always happy to touch a real tank or a submarine. In addition, only one special children's museum, The House of Fairy Tales, is included. The lack of children's museums may confirm two hypotheses: the deficit of children's museums or their absolute dysfunction. Significantly, the House of Fairy Tales is not a museum in the classical sense. First, it is a commercial project, and second its main function is to use Russian folklore to engage children.

The next age group, 11 and older, basically preferred the same museums with some distinct differences, which reflects the growing interests of the age group. The list of their most popular museums includes:

Darwin Museum
Central Museum of Great Patriotic War (1941–1945)
Museum of Naval History (Submarine B-396)
Memorial Museum of Astronautics
Tretyakov Gallery
Polytechnic Museum
Central Museum of Armed Forces
State Museum of Eastern Cultures
Museum of Nomadic Cultures (private)
Borodino Battle Museum Panorama
Planetarium
Museum of Moscow History
Paleontological Museum
Museum of the Underground
State Historical Museum
The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of Education.

The main problem with this list is obvious. Museums that could mould an image of the country/city and national/local identity are absent or very

unpopular with the older children. The latter category includes the State Historical Museum, the State Museum of Literature, Museums of Moscow Kremlin, the All-Russian of Decorative-Applied, and the Folk Art Museum. The imbalance created by the popularity of military museums simply proves the worst stereotypes about Russia and does not help to change the national image. Visits to these museums have no effect on the cultural adaptation of migrants or on shaping national identity among the young in Moscow. The popularity of the Darwin Museum was predictable because of its approach to students, including a comfortable space with many attractions, multimedia, simple guides, and interesting child-oriented exhibitions.

It is very important for young people to be interested in their own traditional cultures. Thus, both groups include the private Museum of Nomadic Cultures and the State Museum of Eastern Cultures in their list of favourite museums visited. Moreover, and not only for children, the State Museum of Eastern Cultures organises special excursions for working migrants.

The visits to the museums are not the end of the RLS museum program. Following the field trips, children have a lesson to develop their social and linguistic skills. They create paintings about the museums' theme with commentary, they answer questions about the exhibitions, and they practice "storytelling" and write short essays. Homework after the classroom lessons is usually "to tell your mother about the museum." We believe these assignments are very effective tools that draw migrants to the programs in the museums.

What are the main problems that occur with the children of migrants in Moscow's museums? The immediate answers are usual and predictable. The first response from the organisers is that "It is very expensive." In 2013, the average price for an admission ticket in Moscow museums was about €7 and the monthly salary of a working migrant was about €350–400. The actual problem every major city has with transport also influenced the choice of museum and decision of where to go. Other problems were linked with museum exhibitions and services, such as:

very big exhibits do not hold the children's attention
lack of games, no films, no interactivity
cannot touch anything
labels are incomprehensible or unreadable
lack of café with inexpensive food.

Two very specific problems also created roadblocks to the museum visit program. Guides often cannot adopt their presentations to a special

audience, even if they were informed about them beforehand. In addition, sometimes children from RLS met with unfriendly comments from museum personnel, who openly stated “go and learn Russian,” or “there goes the neighbourhood

The majority of these problems are actually not unique except for the racial and geopolitical narrow-mindedness among museum workers. All the other issues would affect any visitor regardless of age, gender, or ethnicity. Also, and importantly, the majority of children’s desires were universal. They wanted to “touch,” play, and sit on the floor. These needs can be satisfied without enormous financial expense once the concept is accepted and there is a willingness to work.

In addition, we cannot ignore the fact that museums as social and cultural institutions are very close to children. The students in the RLS programs gleefully fantasised about museums that they wanted to visit. In this list you can find:

museum of cartoons
museum of “something I can play”: planes, dinosaurs, butterflies
elephants, robots
Lego, dogs etc.
museum “where we can touch, look, and play”
“where we can sit on the floor”
“museum about my people”
“museum about holidays”
“museum about Muslims.”

The last three points here illustrate the deficiency of museums in Moscow. The capital of the Russian Federation still has no modern ethnographic museum with the purpose of guiding decisions and the prevention of ethnic conflicts. This deficit stood out during our research (Grinko 2012).

Many schools have their own small museums. Two examples are the Museum of Russian-Azerbaijani Friendship in School №157 and the Museum of Nomadic Culture in the “Arc” School. In these cases, one of the student assignments is preparing and organising excursions at the museums for their classmates and other guests of the school.

In conclusion, relationships between the children of migrants and the Moscow museums absolutely disproved official reasons for the failure of the “Migrants in the Museum” program. The lack of visitors in Moscow’s museums can be linked with their ethnicity or nationality, but this does not mean that museums cannot use new audiences as a resource for development (Lord and Lord 2001). Any migration provides new

opportunities in all spheres and the museum profession has to realise how best to address and attract this audience.

Notes

[1] The authors want to extend their gratitude to Susanna Aroutunian, Tatiana Krivoruochko and Tatiana Shorena, members of Laboratory for Sociocultural and Linguistic Adaptation of Migrants (Moscow Institute for Open Education) for their help during our research.

[2] Despite these facts, there is no special museum of migration in the Russian Federation.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

MOBILE EXHIBITIONS IN PUBLIC SPACE

BEATE WILD AND JAN AN HAACK

Public Space

Ground-breaking presentational formats are not exclusively the result of advancements in technology and design. A critical examination of conventional concepts of the exhibition room might also lead to innovative exhibition formats. This chapter will contribute to an ongoing debate about how to extend the exhibition space beyond the museum and its established audience by canvassing two crucial aspects: public space and mobility. The objective of the expansion of the museum is to make the presentation of cultural considerations and contexts also available to non-visitors who do not find their way into the institutions. For this purpose, we have to reflect on *how* and *where* exhibitions can be introduced to non-visitors.

One example of how to bridge the gap between the museum and non-visitors is the *Long Night of Museums*. The first of these festival-like events was held in Berlin in 1997 (Museums of Berlin and Kulturprojekte Berlin); it has since been adapted by cities around the world. Although the concept has proven to be highly successful in attracting extensive audiences on a short-term basis, its impact on mid- to long-term audience development is negligible. A recent study of the *European Night of Museums* in Bucharest found "that even though it aims to increase the number of museum visitors at least for the near future, that doesn't happen at all. Instead, it is seen as a stand-alone event that attracts more and more participants every year by offering all the advantages a museum cannot seem to offer on a normal workday" (Dumbrăveanu et al. 2004, 59). Thus, while the *Long Night of Museums* is successful in its own regard, museums do not seem to profit from the event by attracting new long-term visitors.

In order to attract non-visitors successfully, we have to leave the confined space of the museum behind us. How are spaces outside the museum chosen in order to position a discourse prominently and make an exhibition and its political implications relevant to a broader audience? Depending on the subject of an exhibition, different locations which usually carry little to no cultural connotations might be suitable, such as boulevards, recreational areas, shopping streets, or busy plazas. In public spaces such as these, an exhibition has the chance to "grab" passers-by and surprise them. In addition, semi-public spaces like department stores, shopping malls, and arcades may be considered as suitable venues for exhibits outside the museum. They offer an infrastructure similar to that of museums, such as a confined, monitored space with reliable power, which enables an almost museum-like presentation and reduces organisational overhead.

Such exhibitions, however, are usually experienced in an incidental manner and "passively consumed" while passing by, instead of facilitating a profound and active examination of the subject matter on view. How can the interest of an audience that seems to be saturated with "cultural input" to a certain extent be aroused? How can we (re-)connect with an audience to mediate the relevance of cultural contexts for society? Participation, in its broadest sense, seems to be the issue here (Gesser et al 2012). In addition, the discourses themselves have to be brought out of the museum to places that carry an immediate meaning or association. Otherwise, the inevitable distance the museum keeps to its objects might transfer from the visitor.

Two projects illustrate how this reference to space can be re-established and charged with meaning by effectively occupying the public space. Within the context of the project *Berlin Route of Migration* (Raiser 2011), four red shipping containers were installed in locations that were significant to Berlin's history of migration. Each container displayed objects and micro-histories, conveying aspects relevant to the history of the respective spaces. In this first stage, memories were interrelated with specific places. In a second stage, permanent media stations are planned to "mark the spot," offering information on the locale's history. The second example, the exhibition *Paradiesapfel* (Henze 2014), positioned interventions in the Sanssouci Palace gardens in Potsdam in order to mediate the multi-faceted aspects of the landscape architecture of the palace gardens. Different subjects that the visitor might miss were presented in their relevant locations.

Mobility

As soon as the cultural focus is on multiple locations or a specific route, the concept of mobile exhibitions, not to be confused with the classic travelling exhibition, plays out its advantages by occupying multiple public spaces and, thus, interrelating with them. The extended range of such projects enables them to reach a broader and more heterogeneous audience. Exhibitions like the *Danube Project*, the *Via RegiaMobil*, and the *Wandering Buoy*, all executed by private organisations, demonstrate the versatility of the concept.

Danube Revisited (The Inge Morath Foundation 2014) invited nine female photographers to follow the tracks of Magnum photographer Inge Morath, who started to travel the path of the Danube in 1958. Inge Morath's historical photographs were shown in their respective points of origin utilising a sky-lighted lorry as an exhibition space. The exhibition also was constantly updated and complemented with the work done by the accompanying photographers along the journey in 2014. The project focused on the diversity of perspectives and transformations, and also "supported the under-represented female voice in documentary photography" (The Inge Morath Foundation 2014).

The *Via Regia* has connected Galicia, Spain with Wroclaw, Poland and other Eastern European cities since the Middle Ages. This network of Royal Highways was the subject of an indoor exhibition in Görlitz, Germany in 2011. Prior to the actual exhibit, the *Via Regia Mobil*, (2011), a mobile "exhibition teaser," was created and sent on a four-month journey from West to East along the original Royal Highways. It was presented in public spaces such as markets, busy streets, and plazas in 40 cities. The personnel of the *Via Mobil* discussed the historical and current significance of the Via Regia as an East-West connection with passers-by.

The *Wanderboje*, *Wandering Buoy* (Peschken and Pisarsky 2009) is a mobile sculpture that connects geographical locations with history by re-telling and presenting micro-histories. Places whose significance might not yet be established in collective historiography are made visible though this exhibit. Individuals are encouraged to submit personal histories regarding a corresponding location. The *Wandering Buoy* then "marks the spot" and tells these individual micro-histories via an LED news ticker installed in the buoy. Recent topics include the Berlin Wall and the history of the city of Basel.

All of these projects have in common that they make productive use of the tension between space, audience, and the subject of the exhibition. But how can a relationship be established between audience and space if they

are two thousand kilometres from each other? The following project achieved this by combining mobile and associative elements to bridge the distance.

MOLDOVA*mobil*

The Republic of Moldova is one of the poorest countries in Europe. Currently it has a population of around three million and faces a decline. One third of the population, primarily the middle generation, has migrated to Western European countries for work. The children who have been left at their grandparents' homes in Moldova are called "Euro-orphans." Society is split between Western and Eastern orientations, creating profound conflicts between the generations.

How can this country be presented in an exhibition? How can different aspects of day-to-day life be revealed to a Western public? The usual way of presentation, such as exhibiting picturesque photos on glossy paper in nice glass frames would not be adequate for a country which faces serious political, economic, and social conflicts. The MOLDOVA*mobil* (Wild and Koch 2010) exhibition team decided to create a completely different kind of exhibition room, and used a nine-seater Mercedes Sprinter to place emphasis on the dominant topic of migration.

This kind of micro-bus, or *Mashrutka* as it is known in Moldova, is a very common form of public transport in the region. Moldovans rely on it for local and regional transportation, making it the most important means of public transportation. *Mashrutkas* also serve as a postal delivery system and are used by migrants working abroad to send parcels to families left behind in Moldova.

The micro-buses in Moldova are usually richly decorated by the bus drivers with devotional objects, sports merchandise, and other personal items. In order to visually resemble the Moldovan original, our micro-bus was enhanced with some very typical elements, such as cigarette packs, covers of Moldovan popular music releases, sunglasses, sunflower seeds, devotional pictures, and, of course, the number of the bus line.

Fig. 14.1. Bus station Chişinău (2009) (©photograph by Research Team MOLDOVAmobil, Gregor Husemann, Roland Ibold, Katharina Koch).

More than two kilometres of cables had to be installed to transform the micro-bus into a multimedia exhibition space. Audio stations presented interviews collected during various ethnological field researches in Moldova. Visitors listened to the original recordings in Moldovan (Romanian) or Russian. Additionally, a German translation was provided.

Slide shows and videos visually introduced passers-by to the country, which is generally unknown in Western Europe. Small booklets offered supplementary information about different aspects of Moldovan culture, politics, economy, and history. A small bus shelter with actual press articles from the Republic of Moldova was placed close to the bus, thus expanding the exhibition space beyond the micro-bus. In May 2010, the mobile presentation tour finally began in Berlin, moving to a new site weekly. The MOLDOVA*mobil* visited various districts in Berlin; stops were made on public squares, at the kerbside, in interior courtyards, and in school yards. When the exhibition closed for the evening, lectures, discussions, performances, and films complemented the information programme about the Republic of Moldova.

Fig. 14. 2. Bus shelter in Berlin (2010) (© Beate Wild).

The tour continued to Leipzig, home of the Moldova Institute, and Mannheim, twinned with Chişinău, capital of Moldova. Finally, the micro-bus and its technical installations were handed over to the Republic of Moldova and thus made available to local NGOs, enabling them to present their projects to a wider public especially connecting urban and rural spaces. Thus, the circle of dialogue which defined the whole project was complete. With the initial field research, a dialogue in Moldova began which asked citizens to talk about their country, their life in Moldova, their fears, their hopes, their wishes, and their European perspectives. These views and opinions were presented to exhibition visitors in Germany who were engaged in a dialogue about this small and little-known country. The final step of the project continues to seek a longer-term social dialogue while contributing to stimulating a more open and informed democratic society in Moldova.

Fearful Visions—Visionary Ideas

Fourteen days, twenty students, and one vision. In a workshop and a resulting travelling exhibition, Europe's youth faced its anxieties and fears

about the future. *Fearful Visions—Visionary Ideas: Europe's Youth on the Move* (Eichmann et al. 2013) was developed by the Network for Intercultural Communication e.V. (NIC). This exhibit project encouraged young people to think about their fears and hopes for the future in times of financial crisis, unemployment, and climate change.

Fig. 14.3. Workshop in Berlin (2013) (© NIC e.V.).

The project was a joint-effort of the Museum Europäischer Kulturen, Berlin, the collaborative research centre, Mobilized Cultures at the University of Potsdam, and the Institute of European Ethnology at the Humboldt University, Berlin. European students between 18 and 27 from many disciplines were invited to apply.

Fig. 14.4. Exhibition in Berlin (2013) (© NIC e.V.).

In cooperation with experts from academia and cultural organisations, students were asked to develop their visions of a European comfort zone. The results of the workshop were presented via different media, among them videos, photos, and audio points, in a mobile exhibition space presented in four European cities from August to September 2013. The aim of *Fearful Visions—Visionary Ideas: Europe's Youth on the Move* was to give European youth a voice in the public discourse.[1]

Eight different exhibition components were developed by the group: an interactive map of fear, a postcard project, a short film, a participative game, a photography project, an exhibition guide, a participative blog, and a sound installation.[2] The mobile exhibition visited Berlin, Oranienburg, Warsaw, Madrid, and Pinto. This participative approach included providing European youth with the means to express themselves publicly by imparting the resulting exhibition to the public, thereby creating a dialogue between our group and the public. Another central aim of this approach was to encourage visitors to contribute to the exhibition.

Fig. 14.5. Exhibition in Madrid (2013) (© NIC e.V.).

For example, visitors could participate in "The Visionary," a game similar to Scrabble which was developed by the project's participants. Photos documenting participation could be downloaded afterwards from the project blog. Another project, the interactive blog "Positive Participation," invited visitors to take part in a collaborative narrative, which presented a fictional conversation between a sceptic and an enthusiast of the European Union. The experiences from the exhibition and the statements and positions provided by visitors were used as a starting point for discussions with academics, politicians, and artists. Thus, the dialogue was sustained beyond the frame of the project.

Conclusion

These very different examples show the versatility of the concept of mobile exhibitions. They also clearly share several characteristics. First, mobile exhibitions reach out to non-visitors. By leaving the confined space of the museum, it becomes possible to bring an exhibition to people who usually would not visit a museum. A mobile exhibition space is multi-functional and, therefore, multi-use. Depending on the context, the subject

and the mode of the exhibition, the mobile exhibition space can be modified to fit the desired context. It is also cost-effective, since the material expended is usually less compared to classic exhibition spaces. Challenges that had to be overcome for a successful mobile exhibition also became evident. The personnel at the exhibitions have to be highly committed. As we leave the safe space of the museum, prospective visitors to the exhibit have to be actively engaged, drawn into conversations, and guided through the exhibition. In a similar vein, the mobile exhibition is challenging for the visitor.

He or she may react defensively when confronted with an exhibition in an unexpected location. For example, we observed that visitors were reluctant to enter an exhibition installed in a van, although objects presented outside of the vehicle caught their attention. Michael Pfaffenthaler offers an interesting explanation, arguing that the interior of a vehicle is usually perceived as a private space (2013).

Fig. 14.6. Dialogue in Berlin-Pankow (2010). (© Beate Wild).

Finally, a higher bureaucratic effort has to be considered. For example, special permissions must be obtained to exhibit in a public space. In addition, insurance policies may be more expensive and regulations

associated with permits may be more complicated. On the other hand, mobile exhibitions open up new possibilities for exhibiting in public space. They are not just modified or upgraded travelling exhibitions, but a new and additional format that can either stand alone or complement an existing exhibition concept. The new format of mobile exhibitions gives us the means to negotiate issues not just *for* an audience but also *with* the audience. Participation is not limited to the exhibition's development, rather it begins here! By breaking out of the conceptual "safe room" that is the museum as an institution and challenging the conventions of how content is traditionally conveyed and consumed, the mobile exhibition can re-configure the public space, and even repoliticise the public space.

Needless to say, mobile exhibitions are more maintenance-intensive than traditional exhibitions and confront curators and exhibition personnel with new challenges: a more active interaction with visitors, unfavourable weather-conditions, and particularities of the chosen exhibition space have to be taken into account. But these obstacles should not prevent one from "culturally occupying" public space for, and with, the audience to re-negotiate public space as a locale that enables dialogue, exchange, and multi-perspectivity on an equal footing. The reward of these efforts could contribute to returning museum culture to the attention of a broader public perception.

Notes

[1] "Fearful Visions—Visionary Ideas: Europe's Youth on the Move" was funded and supported by the European Union's Youth in Action programme. https://www.jugend-in-aktion.de.

[2] For an online version of the different projects, see http://intercultural-network.com/comfortzone2013/participants-exhibition-projects.

PART SIX

NEW VOICES AND (RE)INTERPRETATION

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

A DRAWING OF A "*TRUBLJA*": THE GHENT UNIVERSITY ETHNOGRAPHIC COLLECTIONS AND PROF. F. OLBRECHTS, FATHER OF WORLD ART STUDIES

PAULINE VAN DE ZEE

In order to survive in the museum world today, it is inevitable that museums and collections merge. Ghent University supports one museum actively engaged in this process. A recent inventory proved the university's rich heritage (Vanpaemel et al. 2014)[1] and confronted it with the requirement to open all of its collections to the public. As a result, Ghent University will bring them all together into a new museum with the goal to strengthen its scientific identity and add additional prestige to the institution. The opening of this new museum is planned for 2017, when Ghent University will celebrate its bicentennial. One of the problems of amalgamation is that existing collections in a state of flux often lose their "face." Museums are places where sustainability is central. Individual character, which was formed by the people who "made" each museum makes all the difference. Yet, in the case of Ghent University, the narrative of the umbrella museum starts with the founders of the different academic collections. Museum "founders," however, are often considered to be quite boring and stuffy. Where are the people with insights or ideas that can be transcribed into actual times? Perhaps we might be able to smuggle our "own face" into the new museum at Ghent.

Professor Frans Olbrechts (1899–1958), the man who founded the Ethnographic Collections of Ghent University, is my hero. He is also considered the precursor or even founding father of world art studies, which has been an up-and-coming discipline since the 1990s. In the 1930s, Olbrechts promoted the brand new idea including non-Western art in the same circuit as Western art, and introduced a new course at the Art History Institute in Ghent. Fortunately, Olbrechts was a pioneering adventurer,

brimming with ideas, and a revolutionary in many ways. As I am now giving him a role in the new museum narrative, we have to get to know him better. His early years as an academic are especially relevant to this story.

Frans Olbrechts, Hero of the Ghent University Ethnographic Collections Narrative

As a young student of German philology at the Catholic University of Leuven, Olbrechts was brilliant. In 1925, he was awarded a grant for his doctoral thesis which concentrated on "*Een oud Mechels bezweringformulier*" [*An Ancient Manuscript of Conjuration Formulae and Medical Prescriptions*], published in 1702. The grant allowed Olbrechts to enroll in Columbia University in New York to study folklore and ethnology with the famous anthropologist Franz Boas. He did fieldwork among the Cherokee (1926–7) and worked on the so-called *Swimmer Manuscript*, a diary with 137 healing formulae written in the script or syllabary created by Sequoyah by a medicine man named A`yû^{n}inï (literally, "he is a swimmer") (Holsbeke 2001, 66–7).[2] This study offered Olbrechts the possibility to make a cross-cultural comparison in which traditional European and non-Western concepts of diseases, causes, and healing were examined. Inspired by Franz Boas' book *Primitive Art* (1927), however, Olbrechts' scholarly activities gradually focused more on art. Only 70 years later, Olbrechts' idea of cross-cultural comparison was adopted by John Onians (1996), who suggested cutting across lines between Western and non-Western cultures in order to broaden traditional art history and transform it into a discipline concerned with arts worldwide. In the meantime, Olbrechts quickly integrated into the group of post-doctoral students and anthropology scholars around Boas, including Benedict, Kroeber, Lowie, Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, and Sapir. He discussed themes with them which later became important to him, such as the role and personality of the artist and the phenomenon of acculturation. Olbrechts could have stayed with the group but he decided to return to Belgium, where he first worked in the Royal Museum of Art and History in Brussels. In 1932, he started to teach at Ghent University (Holsbeke 2001).

For the narrative of the new University Museum, the story of Olbrechts as a young professor in the 1930s is most inspiring. From 1932, he taught "primitive art" at Ghent University, using a holistic approach in which he combined anthropology and art history to gain insights into non-Western art. Because he attached importance to education, Olbrechts wrote

scholarly editions as well as popular books about African art. These more colloquial books were highly appreciated and published in large numbers. His fame in Flanders was largely a result of these books.[3] A popular approach to the story of Frans Olbrechts is recommended for the new museum.

Three events during the 1930s were pivotal to Olbrechts: the founding of the ethnographic collections at Ghent University, the exhibition of Congolese art in Antwerp based on the method he applied to the study of non-Western art at Ghent University, and the Ivory Coast collection expedition conducted by Ghent University. In 1936, Olbrechts merged two existing collections: the *Musée des Antiquités de l'Université* which included materials from Indonesia and Guatemala and Colombia, and the collection of *l'Institut de Biogeographie*.[4] Thus, objects which were given, purchased, or acquired through exchange were brought together for his "Ethnology Museum." He wanted to create a new opportunity to develop a laboratory collection for his students. Olbrechts was very busy at that time; in the same year, he also entered into preliminary talks about the creation of a museum dedicated to non-Western arts and cultures in Antwerp. City authorities invited Olbrechts to organise a large-scale exhibition with the municipal collection of Congolese objects in the Antwerp Vleeshuis Museum. For Olbrechts, 1938 was an important year. He opened the exhibition "Kongo-kunst" (Congo Art), showing off as many as 1,525 objects. The exhibit focused on a new approach, form and function. "Kongo-kunst" was the basis for his most influential book *Plastiek van Kongo* (1946). The style analysis introduced by Olbrechts later became known as the "Belgian Method."[5]

Olbrechts also made preparations to organise the first public-private sponsored collecting expedition at the same time as curating the Congolese exhibition. Significantly, the expedition was the first in which collected objects would be documented in situ. In 1938, two of his former students, Pieter Jan Vandenhoute and Albert Maesen, were sent to the Ivory Coast. The expedition was largely financed by a number of Antwerp patrons and collectors, with whom Olbrechts became acquainted while setting up the Congolese art exhibition. The Vleeshuis Museum in Antwerp also cooperated in the collecting expedition. Vandenhoute and Maesen assembled some 1,500 objects during their fieldwork. They noted, when possible, the names of the artists and information about the use of the objects. Like Boas, Olbrechts believed in the possibility of understanding the "other" through intensive fieldwork and participant observation. The two fieldworkers combined studying stylistic qualities with contextual examination, long before art historians became interested in this approach.

In 1947, Olbrechts became the director of the Royal Museum of Central Africa in Tervuren, a function in which he had to act according to the colonial policy. This caused him to gradually dissociate himself from his work as an academic. He gave up fieldwork as a necessary condition for collecting for the museum (Vandenhoute 1968, 42, 45; Petridis 2001a, 14, 172, 176; Veirman 2001, 243, Van Beurden 2013, 481, 486).

Perspectives of Time in Olbrechts' Approach

In this chapter, I will focus first on perspectives of time in Olbrechts' approach, and later on aesthetics. Central to the aspect of time is the attempt Olbrechts made to reconstruct an art history of non-Western art by studying style elements. Professor Olbrechts taught in the Department of Art History and Archaeology at Ghent University, and, therefore, tried to embed his lectures into the existing approach. At that time, non-Western art was regarded as "timeless," as if styles never changed. Of course, Olbrechts, a connoisseur who was the first to study African art in depth, knew better; he consciously aimed to compare objects which were collected in past decades with similar objects made recently. Olbrechts focused on art traditions in Congo. He was eager to know more about the designs on the objects collected earlier. To gain insight into the changes of these designs, he needed pictures or drawings of objects in older collections. In pre-digital times, Olbrechts maintained a worldwide network by writing and visiting people in museums. Through comparative research in European and American museum collections, Olbrechts was able to reconstruct changes in art production.

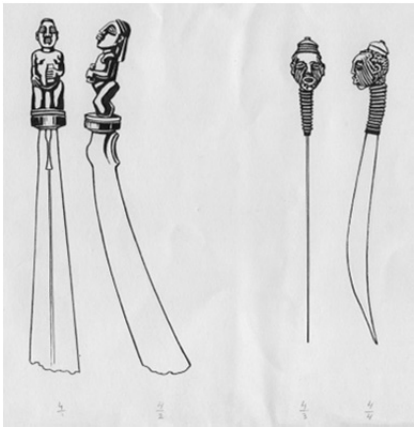

Fig. 15.1. (above) and Fig. 15.2. (below). Drawings of horn, knife, and cup made by Zdenka Sertic, collected by Dragutin Lerman. (©Etnografische Verzamelingen Universiteit Gent/Wim Verbeiren).

Before World War II, Olbrechts paid a visit to the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb. A letter to Professor Milovan Gavazzi, the then director of the museum, dated to 1940 was found in a forgotten box and documents his visit. At that time, Olbrechts developed a style analysis for the "Plastic arts of Congo." Drawings of a knife (Fig. 15.1) a horn, a cup (Fig. 15.2), and *trublja* from the Lerman collection in Zagreb were also in the box. Dragutin Lerman was a well-respected cartographer who worked in King Leopold's crown domain, Congo from 1882 until 1896. He spoke the local languages and collected a series of nearly 500 indigenous objects. Olbrechts had asked Gavazzi in an earlier letter to send him drawings to compare to two similar objects in Ghent. Gavazzi, in exchange, asked Olbrechts to interpret photos of two objects of the Zagreb Museum. Olbrechts and Gavazzi, subsequently, became good friends.[6] Although written earlier, the book on the exhibition, *Plastiek van Kongo* shown in Antwerp in 1937–8, was not published until 1946, after World War II. Because of the war, Olbrechts' pioneering work was already superseded the moment it came out. The objects from the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb (Fig. 15.3), however, were not included. Despite this dramatic turn, the effort was useful and Olbrechts' morphological analysis was adopted internationally by scholars including Wingert (1949), Gerbrands (1951), Bodrogi (1961), Newton (1961), Burssens (1962), Kooijman (1963), and Van Baaren (1968). It is remarkable that, except for Paul Wingert and Herman Burssens, the other scholars specialised in Oceanic arts (Petridis 2001a, 129).

Fig. 15.3. Horn (*trublja*) collected by Dragutin Lerman, on display at the Ethnographic Museum Zagreb. (author's photograph).

Reconstructing non-Western art history remains pertinent today, as Western museums are treasuries of the art history of other cultures. Yet, objects often continue to be presented as aesthetic and "timeless," without mention of a date of manufacture on the labels. This practice persists because many items were collected without documentation. Museum records frequently lack information about where, when, or how they were made; it is also unknown if objects were actually used. Because style changes are recognisable, however, artwork can be dated approximately by comparing it with similar objects which have collection histories. Furthermore, the scattering of this material throughout Western museums is a history of its own, which has now become more interesting.

The search for collecting history has become relevant again because the Diaspora of objects preceded the human Diaspora. In the process of globalisation, people from non-Western cultures are showing interest in their cultural heritage, which survives in Western museums. Museums realise that they have to share knowledge of art history with individuals who are from the places their collections come from. The objects connect them with their roots. Their interest in cultural heritage also broadens the attention sphere; not only the objects in Western museums but also the cultural knowledge of their makers has become important. The sharing of information gained from studies of the artefacts contributes to the maintenance of cultural knowledge. The prevailing view is that this knowledge under threat of being lost has driven the need and intention to preserve it. Yet interpretations of non-Western cultures will differ, as constructing heritage is merely the result of an evolving process of selective and subjective value adding. In this process, the information provided by museums remains helpful. Museums contribute to the "making" of history and heritage, for, as we all know, the need to pass the past on to future generations is universal.

Perspectives of Aesthetics in Olbrechts' Approach

Olbrechts concern was not limited to the temporal nature of non-Western art, and he also contributed to concepts of aesthetics. Olbrechts' view of aesthetics was that it was a key to placing non-Western art on an equal footing with Western art. Therefore, he pleaded for a contextual approach to all arts. He also paid special attention to objects made by women, such as pottery, textiles, and basketry. Sculpture, usually made by men, was more highly valued by Western connoisseurs, but Olbrechts did not share that view. He showed genuine interest in the techniques used by female artists. Are his insights still relevant? And can they be rendered into modern times?

Olbrechts' optimistic belief that all art is on an equal footing was a response to World War I. During the interwar period, the importance of art as a unique document of human civilisation and a vehicle and source of common understanding was emphasised. Even in the 1950s, one can understand Olbrechts' outlook. Western art museums, infected by post-war optimism, supplemented "universal humanism" by promoting art as the embodiment of freedom and creativity. Behind the metamorphosis of ethnographic objects into art lies the assumption that art is universal. This notion, however, was not relevant essentially because claims of universality were generally exaggerated. The philosopher Roland Barthes remarked as early as the 1950s that real differences stood in the way of true understanding. Even today, understanding the cultural reality of non-Western cultures remains difficult, if not impossible (McClellan 2008, 27, 36, 42).

On the other hand, art is always ambiguous and open to different interpretations. Thus, the perspective of aesthetics remains important. Museums such as Quai Branly continue to highlight the aesthetic qualities of objects on exhibition with no relationship to their original context. Western art lovers appreciate and show respect for non-Western art, especially since the 1950s when individuals interested in *Art Brut* created a new art world. In particular, non-Western sculpture was presented as art and its makers were considered artists. The overall approach and use of Western criteria, however, remained "Eurocentric." For example, the Western difference in valuation dating to the eighteenth century distinguished between arts and crafts, and was passed to non-Western art in the twentieth century. Ritual sculpture was considered as arts, while secular utensils were seen as crafts. Yet, such a distinction did not exist within the originating cultures. Olbrechts staunchly believed that Westerners could learn this respect for others.

The metamorphosis of ethnographic artefacts into art supposedly resulted from the act of collecting. Over time, collectors have a practical effect on art production and the art market (Phillips and Steiner 1999, 15). Western aesthetic appreciation and opinions about taste to a large extent determine the economic value of the object as commodity. The anthropologist Shelley Errington (1998, 79) thinks that art and collecting were "invented" at the same time and that one does not exist without the other. Collectors are guided by Western standards and choose objects which they associate with sculpture or by recognisable representation. They cherish the "authentic" look or the pureness of appearance. But is "authenticity" a real criterion? Most of the collected pieces were never documented, so this perception is often based on subjective intuitions; authentic objects correspond to what people imagine as "prototypes." The concept of authentic non-Western art seems a stubbornly maintained illusion when comparing aesthetic, valuable objects to less-successful manufactured items. Scholars like Sally Price (2002) consider the approach in which ethnographic artefacts are displayed as art objects as "*by appropriation*." She writes that these objects were never meant as art in their own context in opposition to what she calls "*art by intention*."

The evolutionist Dennis Dutton (2009, 86–7), on the other hand, speaks about the "art instinct." Art, according to Dutton, is not a restricted technical concept, but a natural phenomenon like language. He explains that, after World War II, cultural relativism developed into a reigning orthodoxy within academic anthropology which claimed that art historians departed from Western values. Anthropologists systematically put too much stress on the differences between world cultures, and thereby minimised many common points and universals. According to Dutton (2009, 87), the anthropologist Maurice Bloch accused his colleagues of a form of "professional misconduct." He was responding to the exaggeration of the exotic character of other cultures, and the creation of a mist in which art gradually blurred into ritual, religion, or practical interest in order to promote the idea that "they" do not have "our" concept of art. The anthropologists which he criticised rejected the search for universals by art historians and art theoreticians. But the characteristics of art as a universal, intercultural phenomenon are hard to deny; all cultures have some form of art in perfectly understandable Western meanings of the word.

Dutton (2009) refers to the work of Susan Vogel in which she argues that Baule culture has no word for art and that the Western concept of art does not exist in their villages. According to Vogel, Baule sculpture is on a par with natural objects such as lumps of clay because they are presumed to contain spirits and invisible powers. For the Baule, these powers are the

most important ingredient of their sculpture. Normally, Baule art works are hidden from view, and they cannot be seen by the general populace. Looking at them is a privilege and can be fatal for someone who is not allowed to see them. Does this mean that the Baule do not have "art" as we do in the West? According to Vogel, the Baule have masks and sculpture which have an intense spiritual and personal meaning for their owners. Some portrait-like masks and sculptures which represent "mental husbands" affect and inspire the wives. The objects allow internal artistic critiques although their magical or personal meanings are more important than their visual and technical qualities.

The same story has been told with regards to religious art in Europe which was originally meant as a way of storytelling for an illiterate public. Techniques, formal qualities, and other ways of expression only became important later and were incorporated into the art historical approach to this religious art. The aesthetic qualities of Baule masks or sculpture, produced with care, in a recognisable conventional style, go hand-in-hand with skill, artistic expression, and religious tradition. They are handled as very special objects. Do these considerations imply that the Baule have a concept of art that differs from that in the Western world? Does it mean that the Baule do not have "art" as art exists in the West? It is a question of strategy; an approach when familiarity or the exotic aspects are stressed. The point of view is crucial. I am sure Olbrechts would have agreed with Dutton.

Adopting Aspects of Olbrechts' Approach in a New Museum Narrative

The character or "face" of the ethnographic collections was formed by Frans Olbrechts who "made" them. We want our hero to be present in the new museum in Ghent as it is merged into an academic umbrella museum. Although Ghent University drew in its horns (*trublja*, meaning trouble) by closing the department of non-Western art in 2007–8, the plans for a new museum have saved Olbrechts' collection, at least for now. The next step is to safeguard his insights for the future by adapting them to the present. For the new museum narrative, the curator and volunteers aim to add new meanings to the objects collected by Olbrechts and translate his insights and ideas for contemporary times and needs. The goal is to cut across cultural relativism and once again focus on the many aspects which cultures share, on the universals expressed in all arts, and to create dialogues between non-Western and Western art objects.

Today's generations are aware that Western superiority is no longer self-evident. They have moved beyond the oft-asked question, "Do they have our concept of art?" Openness to concepts of art, in general, guides the present conversations. The human Diaspora will result in different groups learning to live together. In this process it would be wise to concentrate on the many aspects that different cultures share. The growing sense of the urgency in caring for our planet allows for a better appreciation of art in which Mother Nature, is worshipped in all her guises. The higher aspirations of art and its connection with religion are not questioned as much when ideals other than economic ones are also valued. At the same time, focus on the new "face" of the collections will be aimed at the growing notion of cultural heritage, as it helps to broaden the desired perspective.

Tradition remains relevant for everyone concerned. The search to collect history and contextualise non-Western art history becomes relevant again, as it contributes to the "making" of history and heritage. After all, this "shared heritage" requires action to start a dialogue with its source communities. Within this context, cultural knowledge becomes increasingly important. All available knowledge should receive ample treatment, lest it be forgotten as cultural heritage is the basis of the life and art of tomorrow, no matter how it may be experienced today. To quote directly from Olbrechts (1929, 3),

> "little in this world lets us profoundly feel that all humans are human; we are all shaped in the same way like art is shaped: from everywhere and from all times."

Notes

[1] Along with the Ethnographic Collections, the museum at Ghent University also includes the Archeological Museum, the Museum of the History of Science, the Museum of Medical History, the Zoology Museum, the Morphological Museum, the Botanical Garden, the University Archives, and academic collections without curators such as mineralogy, geographical maps, audio-collections of language and dialect-registrations, and early electric music-registrations.

[2] The *Swimmer Manuscript* consists of a diary containing 137 healing formulae. It was discovered in 1888 by James Mooney who brought it to Washington to translate it. When he died in 1921 the work was not finished. Because the original manuscript had mysteriously vanished, Olbrechts took Mooney's transcription with him to the Eastern Cherokee in the remote and isolated village of Kolanuyi, where ten people known as healers and four or more practiced who traditional medicine lived. With the aid of indigenous informants, he reconstructed the text of 96 formulae in phonetic script during his fieldwork from October 1926 to June

1927. Olbrechts also provided a free translation of these texts and explained their origin and how they were used. He indicated which rituals were needed for which cases and which plants or other remedies were used in the treatment. Olbrechts had also conducted earlier research into traditional healing methods in Belgium when he worked with four traditional healers to understand the 1702 manuscript (Holsbeke 2001).

[3] The first book was *Kunst van vroeg en van verre* [*Art of the past and from far away)*] (1929) The next, *Het roode land der zwartekariatieden* [*The Red Country of Black Caryatides*] (1935), was based on his travels to West Africa in 1933 when he collected for the Royal Museum of Art and History in Brussels. Olbrechts also wrote a personal report on the 1938–9 Ivory Coast Expedition to collect for the Ethnographic Collections of Ghent University as well as for the collections of the city of Antwerp. *Maskers en dancers in de Ivoorkust* [*Masks and Dancers of Ivory Coast*] appeared in 1940.

[4] The *Musée des Antiquités de l'Université* dated to 1817; its name remained in use until 1940. The natural history collection of the "*Institut de Biogeographie*" was known especially for its objects from Oceania, which were acquired in 1905 from the Berlin "Museum für Völkerkunde" when that museum sold its duplicates. The biologist Camille De Bruyne, who considered man to be a "*culture-building animal*," founded the collection in 1901.

[5] This name was given by the American art historian and anthropologist, Daniel J. Crowley in his article "Stylistic Analysis of African Art: A Reassessment of Olbrechts' 'Belgian Method.'" Crowley wrote that Olbrechts "made a start toward the formulation of a comprehensive theory of African art, and developed a method to achieve it. He deserves more followers than he had." Crowley supports this statement with the fact that Olbrechts' book was never translated into English; the French version only appeared in 1959 (1976, 49).

[6] The correspondence between Olbrechts and Gavazzi is in the National Archives of Croatia in Zagreb. The collection comprises 69 items. For more than 30 years, they sent letters and postcards to each other. The first letter dates from 1935, after theymet during a conference in Copenhagen. By reading these letters, one can follow the important moments in their careers.They congratulate each other for the books they wrote. Olbrechts even makes an effort to read Gavazzi's book in the Serbo-Croatian and gets compliments for doing so. The correspondence also shows the friendship between the married couples, who visited each other.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE TERMINOLOGICAL CRISIS OF OUR SCIENCE: ON THE WAY TO OURSELVES OR TO DECOMPOSITION BY OURSELVES

LYDIA ICKE-SCHWALBE

Recently, the discussion/contention on the subject of "ethnography" and "museums" in the name of the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Ethnography[1] (ICME), an International Committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), was ignited again and again. In *ICME News 68* (Rekdal 2013), past chair Per Rekdal even pleaded for a new name for the committee because the terms "museum" and "ethnography" in current usage are connected with the colonial past and the old "colonial mind"; he urged that the terms be refined as a matter of urgency. The following offers some reflections on the philosophy and theory of the science behind the work of ICME.

The ICME interim discussion shows more or less a crisis in the understanding of the terms "museum" and "ethnography," which is most evident in Central European countries. The "Ethnographic Museum" concept developed first in this region in the second half of the nineteenth century, when natural history museums focused on human biology from the vantage point of social and cultural expressions. Museums for ethnography were established in Leipzig (1869), Berlin (1872), Dresden (1875), and Hamburg (1879). In the academic context, this disciplinary confusion and misunderstanding has led to a vast crowd of secondary terms, which are more or less synonyms of, translations to, or taken from different languages and scripts including Latin and Greek, the basic roots of all middle-European contemporary languages. In most cases, only parts of the original subject are conveyed as technical terms. The last amusing naming proposal came from students at Berlin University's Institute for

European Ethnology around 2013. They suggested that it may be better to speak of the "*Vielnamenfach*" or "many-names-subject" instead of "European Ethnology, folklore, ethnography, social and cultural anthropology or empirical cultural sciences-for arts and humanities" (Blask et al. 2013, 142). From this contribution, it becomes evident that a serious crisis in the conceptualisation of our academic subject is real, as it has been mutilated to the point of being unrecognisable.

In modern European societies, which have experienced different political disasters following two world wars, the queries and doubts about "ethnography" primarily infiltrated from political fields and social institutions. Journalists acting on a worldwide stage have their own concepts of culture and humanities in the past and the present. Given the historical knowledge of the applied sciences like ethnography, ethnology, or cultural and social anthropology, the basic Anglophone technical term (*terminus technicus*) was lacking in most discussions. Interestingly, the academic term anthropology, including physical, social, and cultural anthropology and ethnography, was never questioned in English- or Spanish-speaking countries, or in Asia. The situation became confused, particularly in Europe after its military and later political partition into two contrasting fields of occupied nations following the end of World War II. The "Iron Curtain" between East and West Europe which went right through Germany equally forced the ideological separation of society and culture. The general orientation was to the Anglo-American world in the western sphere, and to the Soviet-Russian sphere in the east.

One of the consequences for our subject, anthropology as a comprehensive science founded in the civil society of the nineteenth century, was that physical anthropology and medicine became subsumed by natural sciences. The remaining subject areas were reduced to "ethnography" or descriptive folklore (*Volks-* and *Völkerkunde*), according to the main research subject within the Soviet Union, in order to study, describe, and register the many different nations, tribes, and people of the vast country. This change was a basic political mandate. The museum in Dresden was founded in 1875 as the "Royal Zoological and Anthropological-Ethnographic Museum." It was created as a research institution, not in response to or connected with colonial expansions. In response to this change of orientation of the science, the valuable, historic medical and physical anthropology collections were packed up and locked away. The museum was renamed the "State Museum for Ethnography," with a concentration on the culture and society of individual ethnic groups. Thus, it continued to only describe the ways of life and culture of people with their material culture, which had been saved in the museum's

regional departments along with the spiritual traditions preserved in the archives. All in the name of ethnography!

At the same time, scholars in Western Europe, who were oriented to America and American academia and methods, continued to consider ethnology to be a comparative science. Here, global discussions and different social and cultural aspects according to the progress, development, and change of the people, with new materials, mediums, and methods, moved ahead. Bernhard Streck, head of the Institute for Ethnology in Leipzig, described the "*Sonderwege*[…] special ways of German ethnology in the 20th century," and considered German ethnology to be a "Science of losers'" or *Verlierergesellschaft*, fundamentally distinct from its Western-leaning sisters in France, the United Kingdom, and the United States (Streck 2009, 268).

After the reunification of Germany, whenever I met colleagues in Köln, Heidelberg, or Munich and used the term "ethnography" it was clear to them that I came from the "Russian side." My approach was completely politicised, without taking into consideration that both, ethnology and ethnography, as terms are simply two sides of the same coin, the theory and practice of a science.

This dichotomy is the crux behind the present ICME dispute. The content and history of our academic subject have vanished. However, serious studies in theory and practice as well as improving dialogues can only bring the desired result by using a logically proven academic language with a common understanding of terms, names, and subjects. As the great Chinese philosopher Kung fu tse (Confucius) stated in the fifth century BCE political disorder is the result of spiritual mess and chaos, and both are recognisable through the falsification of terms, having lost the clear concept in their expressions. One of his central demands was the correction of names. This does not mean that names should be changed or omitted, but they must be recognised in their expressed meaning and content, as conveyed by the Latin proverb, *nomen est omen.*

The "science of man," anthropology, emerged during the Enlightenment when medical doctors, philosophers, artists, and anthropologists, in search of the biology, socialisation, and culture of human beings, came to understand natural history. The German physician, Adolf Bastian, who founded the Berlin Ethnologisches Museum in 1872, demanded differentiated ways of looking at the complex human being with a systematic approach; he proposed "ethnology" as a new science, a "sister of anthropology." He found that the human being was no longer the individual or *anthropos*, but "*zoon politicon*," one who demands social contact as a much needed prerequisite of their existence (Bastian 1881). In

1813, English physician and ethnologist James C. Prichard wrote one of the first handbooks for the anthropological and ethnological sciences, *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind*. In Germany, academic societies such as the Berlin *Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte* (1869) and museums in Leipzig (1869), Berlin (1872), and Dresden (1875) were established in search of the history of humankind. The Royal Librarian in Dresden, Gustav Klemm, developed the ideal of a "museum for the knowledge of all peoples on earth," which showed "the creation of arts and crafts from basic natural materials in near and far," in order to recognise the empirical science in humankind (Klemm 1843, 359ff.). Bastian drafted the goals of the ethnology museum, as follows: "The science of men should represent the spiritual life of mankind by the products of psychological creativity, to recognise and present the development of creations of the culture, step by step" (1881, 53–4) (translated from German).

The British anthropologist EB Tylor referred to the "culture of men" as the basic subject of ethnological research for the history of humankind, in order to realise the equality of human nature, on the one hand, and its living situations on the other (Tylor 1963, 35 f). Tylor emphasised that:

> "humanity is homogeneous by nature, although standing on different steps of the civilization. The ethnographers have to classify such details in such a way that the spreading can be recognised in geography, history and relations between each other" (Ibid. 38–9).

Museum collections in the United Kingdom demonstrated the richness and immensity of its vast empire, today's Commonwealth, collected from and for their colonies. Spain, The Netherlands, and Belgium established colonial museums because they wanted to represent their own superiority according to their social policies. Their approach, however, was not ethnography in the nineteenth century academic sense. Basically, they were not ethnographic museums. As colonial showrooms, their goal was to represent the richness and colour of the lands. Furthermore, they were closed and reconstructed in postcolonial times.

The academic discussion about the contents and the subject of anthropology or the "science of man" was vividly and honestly led; the terms "ethnology/ethnography," primarily used in the English-speaking world, were translated into the German parallel "*Kulturanthropologie*," or cultural anthropology, promoted by W. E. Mühlmann. He clearly emphasised *homo creator,* the productive, creative human who represents himself as a highly developed cultural being in space and time (Mühlmann 1962). Mühlmann considered socioculturally determined human ways of

life together with economic conditions as comprising the main research subject of ethnology or "*Kulturanthropologie*." He defined "culture" as the sum of all actions, which had been achieved for the satisfaction of their needs considering economic conditions in geographic regions and historical periods: "*Die Summe aller Leistungen* [...] *welche die Menschheit zur Befriedigung ihrer Bedürfnisse vollbracht hat*" (Mühlmann 1966, 16).

After this historical discussion, the question remains: how new, how necessary, and how convenient is the dispute about renaming ICME? If we understand the history and the academic claims for our subject, there is nothing wrong with "culture and society." This has always been the basic subject of ethnography or cultural and social anthropology. However, another topic must be considered with regards to "ethnology/ ethnography." Ethnic groups with distinct concepts of society identified by their language, customs, and religion, and in other words, their unique individual cultures, are part of the argument. If they are to be addressed as "cultures," the subject is fractured, because culture is inherent. Culture is naturally part of ethnography and ethnology. Another approach is to imagine a house with many rooms under a common roof. Museums maintain the material and visual documents of the pluralistic social and cultural development in time and space. It is imperative to recover, reinterpret, and respectfully protect these materials as witnesses for the history of mankind. This is it what ICOM and ICME stand for.

Finally, let the students of the Berlin Institute for European Ethnology have the last word. They concluded that, "ethnography grabs an important methodological field in the recent communication sciences, it is a field of research for empirical cultural science and ethnological research" (Blask et al. 2013, 115).

Notes

[1] ICME, the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Ethnography, is known colloquially as the International Committee for Museums of Ethnography.

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