



Our Greatest Artefact: the City

Essays on cities and museums about them

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This publication consists of papers from CAMOC conferences in Istanbul (2009), Shanghai (2010) and Berlin (2011). We invited participants to submit an essay based on their presentation and though each conference had its own particular theme, all the essays add up to an almost harmonious whole, perhaps by accident, but perhaps also by the kaleidoscopic nature of the artefact our authors have aimed at interpreting.

A stroll through city streets is a serendipitous exploration of an infinite puzzle that will eventually fit together, so too the essays in this book, which are a study of this phenomenon. To misquote Marx's saying, "nothing human is alien to me" – nothing urban is alien to us. Cities change, so do city museums and so does urban museology. Consequently, the sporadic references to certain pertinent concepts, some of them transferred from other disciplines, such as participative strategies or the social value of museums, fall into place when the bigger picture and the longer term is considered. In the same manner, it does not require much foresight to expect urban museology to cultivate the untapped capital of people, networks and means of communication as one of its next major issues and as a potential resource for museums as cultural and creative industries.

In essence, we are as much about a quest for relevance as about a continuous effort to make a difference to urban living. Indeed, city museums have had a pioneering role by envisioning the future while engaging with the past and the present. CAMOC aims to communicate and foster this approach, as I hope you will find in *Our Greatest Artefact: the City*.

This e-book took up a great deal of time and effort on the part of all those who contributed to its making and to them we are grateful. I would also like to thank Ian Jones and all our editors, for their voluntary efforts and endless passion.

Suay Aksoy
CAMOC President

Foreword

Ian Jones

If city museums did not already exist, they might now need to be invented to help understand and negotiate urban change.

*Duncan Grewcock*¹

City museums, by applying their special skills, have much to say that is relevant to modern society. Museums about cities need to interpret and explain urban society and the processes of change at work within it.

*Max Hebditch*²

The city as an artefact? Why not? You may not be able to put it in a display case, but it is a tangible object full of human beings of all shapes and sizes, buildings and spaces of every description, and all changing constantly, with the past running into the present and on to the future. Cities are where things happen, where revolutions take place, where decisions are made which affect our lives. They are the places people move to because they represent the hope of a better life, and they are where most of the world now lives.

You could say that the city is an artefact beyond the wildest dreams of a museum curator, except that there are museums in their thousands with these artefacts across the globe - big city museums, small city or town museums or museums with just a small corner devoted to the city. Cities matter and it would be odd if we did not have museums about them.

Fine, but what exactly is a city? One of the best attempts to define it, in my view, is by Spiro Kostof in *The City Shaped*³. He quotes Lewis Mumford, one of the early specialist writers on cities: [a city is a] "point of maximum concentration for the power and culture of a community." Then, the French historian Fernand

¹ Grewcock, D., "Museums of Cities and Urban Futures: New Approaches to Urban Planning and Opportunities for Museums of Cities," *Museum International*, no.231, vol.58, no.3 (September 2006): 40.

² Hebditch, M., "Museums about Cities," *Museum International*, no.187, vol.47, no.3 (July-September 1995): 7-11.

³ Kostof, S., *The City Shaped*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1991, 37-41.

Braudel: “The town exists as a town in relation to a form of life lower than its own... It has to dominate an empire, however tiny, to exist.” Kostof goes on to provide nine definitions of his own. Of one he writes: [cities have] “some physical circumscription, whether material or symbolic.” That is, they have defined boundaries. He quotes J.- F. Sobry writing in *De l’Architecture* in 1766: a city without walls is not a city. That might have been true of the cities of ancient Rome or old Paris, but London burst through its Roman walls centuries ago, and the walls of Paris have long gone, though you could argue that the Boulevard Périphérique is a modern substitute. In Rio de Janeiro city and countryside seem to merge, and flying over São Paulo is like flying endlessly over an urban country, with seemingly no wall and no frontier.

Cities must stop somewhere, even if they do not have walls. But where? Unfortunately, there is no common agreement on the population of cities. It depends on how you measure the city, and who measures it. Is it the administrative area? If so, London has a population of a little over eight million. If it is the urban area which stretches beyond the administrative boundaries, then it reaches a good 11 million. Moscow has a population of around 10 million (this figure is frequently quoted in lists of cities and their populations), making it a megacity. Unofficially though, if you talk to locals, there are at least 15 million living and working there, legally or otherwise, who could call themselves Muscovites.

Then there is the travel to work area. That is, the places where you live and where you work, which might be a long way apart. In the case of London this area covers much of the south east of England. There is at least one commuter who lives in Calais in northern France, but works in London - perfectly possible, if rather expensive, since the opening of the Channel tunnel in the 1990s. This travel to work area would give London a population not far short of 20 million.

One of the very best discussions on city size is by the European Commission’s Eurostat, which provides a mass of statistics on European populations⁴. To quote from one of their documents: “Cities are often analysed as distinct,

⁴ <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>

unconnected dots on a map, but this fails to represent the linkages between a city and its hinterland and between different cities.” Here is another quote from the same source: “City walls, even if they are preserved, no longer function as barriers between the people living inside and outside the city. Students, workers and people looking for healthcare or for cultural facilities regularly commute between the city and the surrounding area. Economic activity, transport flows and air pollution clearly cross the administrative boundaries of a city as well.”

For simplicity’s sake let’s say the city stops when the concrete finally fades away and at last we see green fields with grazing cows and sheep stretching for kilometres in the distance. Not very scientific, and there are a string of exceptions (Rio has a vast forest within the city boundaries where you lose sight and sound of the city), but it will do. You also could say that the city ends when people no longer call themselves Muscovites or Istanbulers or Cariocas.



Figure 1. Street art, Rio de Janeiro © Ian Jones

What about the city itself inside these walls, wherever they are located? Ancient Athens and Rome might have been fairly easy to grasp and to describe, but the modern city? “The modern city is a city of contradictions however; it houses many *ethnes*, many cultures, and classes, many religions. This modern city is too fragmentary, too full of contrast and strife: it must therefore have many faces not one.” So wrote Joseph Rykwert in *The Seduction of Place*⁵. It is hard to disagree, at least with reference to our larger global cities. They are not uniform, they are a complex mix of humanity.

Then there are the layers within the city - the arrondissement, the borough, and the invisible, but very real, walls which cross the boundaries drawn up by city administrators and which separate one area from another, the rich from the poor, which mark out the Chinese quarter, the French quarter, or where the immigrant Turks or the Vietnamese choose to live. Each has its own history and stories to tell and each is worth the attention of a city museum.



Figure 2.
Red Square, the
sacred Moscow
icon, where
even smoking is
not a good idea.
© Ian Jones

⁵ Rykwert, J., *The Seduction of Place. The History and Future of the City*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 7.

What about the iconic city? The Istanbul of the Hagia Sophia or the Topkapi; the Beijing of the Forbidden City; the Rio of Bossa Nova, Copacabana or Ipanema; Paris and the Eiffel Tower. Unfortunately, the image and reality do not necessarily coincide. A Carioca might never go near one of the legendary city beaches or to the Rio Carnival. A Parisian might never bother to climb the Eiffel Tower. They may live in a suburb or a favela, perhaps far removed from the iconic monuments or historic city centre. The tourist city is not theirs. Tourists and residents do not necessarily experience the same city. Even so, icons have power and they are icons because they mean something to us, tourist or resident, and we'd feel deprived without them. They represent our city to the outside world.

What about the soul of the city, if it has one, the city of myth, of legend, of memory? Then the sense of place, that which makes one city different from another, that which makes us want to belong? Perhaps fully to understand the city we must turn away from the academics and urbanists and look to the writers. Roy Castro on Rio, James Joyce on Dublin, Orhan Pamuk on Istanbul, Italo Calvino on cities that do not even exist. Then the painters and the film makers. The list is almost endless. Above all, of course, there are the ordinary, or not so ordinary, city dwellers who make the city what it is.



Figure 3.
Artistic fun and
regeneration in
Newcastle, an
otherwise serious
Northern English city.
In the background
is The Baltic, an art
gallery in a converted
flour mill © Ian Jones

So, the city is complicated, to say the very least and open to a hundred different interpretations. And yes, it is the greatest artefact a museum can have and there is so much of it to understand, explore and explain. Consider a statement of the obvious, so obvious that we forget it: there is nothing new under the sun. You think traffic congestion is something new, that we never had traffic jams until we invented the car? But ancient Rome had them, the roads of 19th century London were chaotic. People dislike modern architecture? So they did in 17th century London, as Christopher Wren discovered to his cost. Cities are becoming the same the world over, with the same chain shops and shopping malls and global brands. True, but the Romans exported their city models and city roads, habits and customs across most of Europe and beyond. City Walls? Nothing new there too, except they now take a different form. Paris created a new wall in 1973, the one I referred to earlier, and one of the very worst - the Boulevard Périphérique. "From its opening in 1973, the Périph. averaged an accident per kilometre a day, did nothing to reduce congestion, and created a barrier, both psychological and physical, between Paris and its suburbs."⁶ London followed in the 1980's with the M25, the world's largest circular car park.

As Marx once said, history repeats itself, first as tragedy, then as farce. He was referring to Napoleon and Louis Napoleon (who did at least transform Paris with his friend, Baron Haussman), but you could say the same about the continuing walls of Paris or the needless destruction of urban heritage across the world. We don't always learn from past mistakes, and a city museum can always whisper in the ear of the administrator - we've been here before, don't make the same mistake they did. The past is always with us, it just does not go away. That's one role for a city museum, but there are so many.

I mentioned Joseph Rykwert earlier. He suggests that "constant community participation and involvement are needed to shape our cities and to make them communicative, and this notion seems tragically to have been forgotten by the various bodies that govern us"⁷. There is one institution in Paris which could

⁶ Grescoe, T., *Straphanger. Saving Our Cities and Ourselves From the Automobile*, New York: Times Books, 2012, 118.



Figure 4.
Not the iconic
Rio de Janeiro
of Copacabana
and Ipanema, but
everyday working life
in a megacity.
© Ian Jones

serve as a model for city museums: the Arsenal. The Arsenal is concerned with the development of urban Paris, and aims to broaden public understanding of the evolution of Paris over the centuries, its condition today and its prospects for the future. It is concerned with the built environment, rather than the lives of people except in so far as they are shaped by their surroundings. It has one key ingredient: it involves people, the citizens of Paris. They are encouraged to get involved in the shaping of their city on the principle that it's their city, not that of a distant elite. It's where the Mayor places plans for Paris and for major building or transport projects for debate. No-one could rule out another Boulevard Périphérique, not least because we are not good at learning from our mistakes, nor of resisting political pressures, but at least institutions like the Arsenal or the best of city museums can put the present urban condition into its historic context: the past has shaped our present, which in turn will shape our future - and they encourage people outside the museum's walls to get involved, after all, it's their museum and their city. In fact, there are any number of city museums today across the world, a new generation, which have the same agenda as the Arsenal.

⁷ Rykwert, J., *The Seduction of Place. The History and Future of the City*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 246.

Then there is the traditional role of the city museum as guardian of city treasures, and of memory. Why not? Where else could the best bits of the city go? Do we throw them away? And how can we live without memory? Life would lose meaning. There would be no Marcel Proust, no Chateaubriand, no Orhan Pamuk, and a million other writers, and there would not be much human activity. The past is always with us and a museum which only deals with the present or speculates on the future is hardly a city museum. The past is also seductive - have a look at Orhan Pamuk's Museum of Innocence in Istanbul, which is about the city in the second half of the 20th century: www.masumiyetmuzesi.org, or the Robert Opie Collection in London dedicated to the nostalgia of half forgotten objects, like a milk carton or an advertisement for a product long extinct - www.robertopiecollection.com. So many museums are stacked with photos of old city streets, buildings which have vanished, tramways long gone, memorabilia of all sorts. They can be so rewarding and such a delight to visit. Just a small point: the past may be a foreign country, but we have been there before. Everything was modern once. Take the Carnavalet Museum in Paris which is dedicated to the city's history. It has a splendid display on the Revolution. How ridiculous were the clothes of those sans-culottes, I have often thought. Ridiculous to me perhaps. But to them? To them they were modern, this was the dawn of a new age, they were the vanguard, and no doubt they too regarded the clothes of previous generations, let alone the aristocracy, as ridiculous. It is so easy to judge the past with contemporary eyes, and, equally, nostalgia can be so deceiving - the past was not always a nice place.

Recording and celebrating the city's past is fine, indeed essential, just so long as a museum which claims to be about a city explores and bears witness to the city, not just as it was, but as it is today and as it could be. There is no one single truth about the city and that's what can make a museum an area of contention and debate, and so very interesting - there are a hundred different truths, and a myriad aspects of the city to explore. It's an endless voyage of discovery.

What we have in this publication is a series of essays on the subject of this artefact, and ways museums react to it. They are based on presentations in CAMOC conferences in three world class cities: Istanbul in 2009, Shanghai in 2010 and Berlin in 2011, each city different and each remarkable in its own

way. We begin with a discussion by Giorgio Piccinato, Emeritus Professor of Urbanism at Roma Tre University on our reactions to the modern city and modern buildings, or more precisely buildings of the modern movement in architecture - the shock of the new in other words. Why do we so often find historic city quarters so more attractive than their modernist counterparts? Why, we could add, have city museums been so irresistibly drawn to the city's past, and, until recently, rather ignored the contemporary city around them? Is it easier?

The essential historical perspective on city museums is provided by Jean-Louis Postula. He examines how city museums have developed over the years to reach a point where they get involved in society at large. We then consider city museums in the age of the internet; city museums and urban life; the literary documentary and new ways of looking at the city; the city itself as the museum, with examples from Tunis and Quebec; creating a museum about São Paulo, one of the largest cities on the planet; serving the needs and interests of city people; and the practical work of city museums. All in all, 13 contributions from countries across the world, each with its own perspective.



Figure 5.
A world without cops, a rather optimistic statement in a street in Grenoble, France
© Ian Jones

Finally CAMOC. CAMOC (Collections and Activities of Museums of Cities), one of the international committees of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), was set up in Moscow in 2005. It was a response to a revived interest in museums about cities and to a new generation of museums which, whilst following their traditional role as guardians of city heritage, were prepared to examine the contemporary city around them and, with the involvement of the people of the city, help shape its possible future. One quotation by Nichola Johnson writing in *Museum International* in 1995 sums up this approach:

The best city museums act as a starting point for the discovery of the city, which can lead people to look with fresh, more informed and more tolerant eyes at the richness of the present urban environment and to imagine beyond it to past and possible future histories⁸.

That could be a good mission statement for any city museum.

⁸ Johnson, N., "Discovering the City," *Museum International*, no.187, vol.47, no.3 (July-September 1995):4-6.

City museums, museum cities, modern cities

Giorgio Piccinato



Figure 1. A shopping mall near Rome

Introduction

The essential characteristics of the Modern Movement in architecture still inform today's practice and indeed the towers, slabs or single family homes which make up our contemporary built environment are a legacy of that period. They are not on the periphery. On the contrary, they underpin the city in which most of us live. Yet so many of us react differently to the new in our surroundings and tend to feel more at home with the traditional, the old and the familiar. What interests me therefore is the every day urban experience, shared by citizens: the man or woman in the street.

How far can we go with modernity?

How happy are we when living in a modern city? Do we feel comfortable, as we would in a more familiar setting? Certainly, we don't want to give up all the amenities of modern life, from home appliances to casual wear, but we seem less attracted by the modern environment. For instance, there are very few architects who choose to live in a modern building or neighbourhood and creative people seem to prefer old houses and districts that apparently convey a warmer feeling of belonging than new developments. Does this hide some kind of contempt towards modernity? There are indeed other signs leading in this direction. Most shopping malls, as well as tourist villages, have long offered spatial environments reminiscent of the past rather than the present, even creating a stylistic reproduction of traditional street layouts and building facades. Nor should we forget the success of the American "new urbanism" or the modest post-modernism or neo-classicism long sponsored by Prince Charles and still favoured among some sophisticated European architects. In a way, all such attitudes seem to distance themselves from the contemporary city, looking maybe for a more exclusive urban choice, such as the sort of antique furniture which is not likely to be found at IKEA.

City images: myth and reality

If we look at tourism, a basic economic resource for many cities today, we can observe the same phenomenon to the highest degree. Cities entrust their image to the historic core, quite rarely to those more contemporary parts where most people live and work. For some reason, the modern city seems unable to play

a significant role in the construction of a memorable image of the city. Tourist ads. emphasise monuments, views and environments of the past, not of the here and now. It is as if a city can find its legitimacy only through its roots, not through its most recent achievements. If cities are worth visiting only because of their past, they themselves become museums in the more traditional sense of the term: guardians of the past, engaged in the conservation of a past which appears so much more glorious because it is distant from us. The tourist industry, national and international organisations and local interests are allies in building and protecting a city that becomes everyday more separated from real urban society and its built environment. When historic cities and the tourist industry meet, however, it is the latter that sets the rules. Its economic muscle is too great and its power to divert its clients elsewhere too immediate.

The masses can go to one country or another, but wherever they go they must have efficient services and bargains to buy. In cities, they must be enabled to recognise the places, objects and costumes they have already seen in brochures, on television, the web or an app. And so it happens that historic cities are transformed by the pressure exerted by tourism, often with astonishing speed, to conform to the image or stereotype the tourists bring with them, so that they can check, in the short time they have available, that the product corresponds to the description they have been given. Such a museum city does not belong to one particular person, or to the visitors, who are offered a museum instead of a city, or to the inhabitants, driven out because of a skewed property market. It is a poor museum, where medieval houses are turned into bed and breakfasts, where global brands or fake crafts occupy the ground floors.

The exodus of the resident population eliminates that day to day surveillance provided by ordinary people on the artefacts and precious sites of cities, reduces cities to a monocultural environment and, as a consequence, the tourist experience itself becomes trivial. The cultural life of cities which have vast stores of art, culture and history becomes also oriented towards a "new" external or international public, but the ruling centres of artistic production remain those where political and economic powers are installed.

The rise and fall of modern architecture

The past is a magnet for both the resident and, especially, the tourist: does this mean a radical distrust towards the modern city? Where does this come from? Why do people seem indifferent to their everyday environment while praising what in fact is exotic? I am suggesting here that there are a number of reasons. I mentioned already the power of the tourist industry, an ever growing economic sector offering major development prospects for so many cities. Visitors are looking for what they actually miss in their own urban space: an architectural expression of values (be it private homes or public institutions), a recognition of existing varieties among individuals and attitudes, with a constant search for aesthetics as a common feature. We might blame a property industry that does not bother to respond to this kind of demand, but creating instead a market where cities consist of buildings, not of public spaces, reinforcing nostalgia for the past. Property speculation, taking advantage of a demand for more housing, whatever its quality, together with a diminishing involvement of the public realm, certainly has been a main factor in such an environmental decay.

This, in my view, marks the failure of modern architecture in its attempts to become a recognised expression of society. This is even more striking if we remember that modernity in architecture and urban design was born out of an attempt to become a testimonial to a society liberated from class distinctions. Modern architecture in its origins denied differences, hierarchies and symbols. The emphasis was on the building itself, and the prospect was for a repetition of that single building. That repetition overlooked public space and no rules or values were to be expressed in what was regarded by the movement as an egalitarian approach to living. Urban design was not on the cards for the modern movement: the struggle was for imposing on everywhere and everybody the optimum size or the best functional model. By decrying decoration or symbols modern architects offered some kind of rigid, Calvinist interpretation of society and its demands. Today we acknowledge the deep passion that marks that architecture, its civic probity and also its revolutionary aesthetics, but that first impression remained and the idea that modern architecture has no soul is still there. What I am here suggesting is that there is a real responsibility on the

part of architects for the lack of affection people have for modernity. I suspect also that many admirable buildings designed by famous architects today do not really help in attracting people to the modern city since the glamour is mainly attached to individual buildings. The design of the city itself seems a field left to municipal planners, where only quantitative standards must be applied, far from any aesthetic goal. Dull peripheries, repetitive housing schemes, careless street design mark most (if not all) modern neighbourhoods: the popular image of modern living falls quite behind our idea of the amenities of the past.

The real question seems to be: are we able to come to terms with modernity or, in other words, can we accept that same modernity we enjoy as consumers in the built environment as well? The first answer should be negative if we look at the growing success enjoyed by historic urban textures, including the fake-historic reconstruction prevalent after the second world war, more recent tourist replicas or luxury housing developments. It is clear that there is some kind of ambiguity in our relationship with the past and the present. Unwilling to give up the amenities and the seductive charms of modern living, we seem to be avoiding the challenge of a consistent spatial order. Even the present success of social networks could be taken as a substitute for real life social spaces, a further evidence of a retreat from a hostile environment towards a safer individual area.

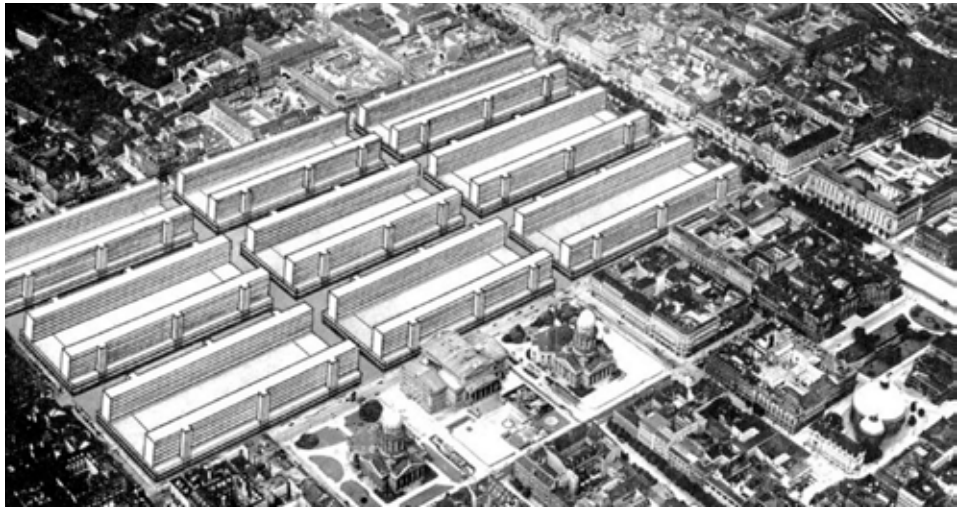


Figure 2.
Die Grosstadt
(Ludwig
Hilbersheimer,
1923)

Some positive notes

However, since I was not sure of my own thesis (what often happens to me) I tried to review the cities I have visited in order to find the necessary evidence. While most cases correspond to what I tried to suggest up till now, I also came across some exceptions worthy of specific comment. One should admit that catching hold of an urban feeling is possible only if we grasp some elements of city history and the way the city functions, examine aspects of its past and recent developments, and look at the way its citizens use its space.

Basel

The first one could be Basel. It is a city where a virtuous continuity between ancient and modern is an everyday habit, where citizens - not just tourists - go to places where modernity is expressed in a variety of ways. Theatres - traditional or avant-garde - concert halls, clubs, stadiums and cinemas offer a great number and variety of performances, and whose programmes are widely and well publicised. Then there are public and private museums, art galleries, craft and design workshops, and a university that is actually a city



Figure 3.
Basel:
A contemporary
sign in a
traditional
environment

district, where a mass of bikes are carefully aligned along the pavements and cars are hidden away in an underground car park. It helps that the obvious civic pride of the locals, car drivers and public administration, clean streets, good manners and a very efficient public transport rail system co-operate to build a highly relaxed life style. The origins of Basel's wealth are to be found in the research institutions, in great pharmaceutical laboratories, in the biggest Rhine harbour where French, German and Swiss territories meet in an infrastructural complex, impressive as well as open and visible. Visiting city art museums and galleries, one often gets the impression of getting close to well known images: we have already seen most of them in so many in books on art or in popular magazines. But Basel is also the venue for the greatest contemporary art fair (now with a branch in Miami): one can argue that here the commercial and mundane success of modern art originated. No wonder then that we find high architectural quality throughout the city. We also find the presence of many "starchitects" from the beginnings of the profession: are they too in the art market?

Chicago

No wonder that Chicago is a city where modernity was always considered the only way to live. The city is more than that - its history is that of the real America, the land of tycoons and of the great fortunes sometimes built in the most contentious way. Its history tells us of the building of a new nation, America at its most American. From the 19th century the city became a main hub and adapted to technological advances in transport and infrastructure with enthusiasm. It also experienced the fastest population growth at the end of the century, and the 1893 Columbian World Exposition (also known as the Chicago World's Fair) marked the leadership role of Chicago in the international arena. The City Beautiful movement that accompanied the Exhibition marked the advent of the new nation in the urban planning field. The world's first steel skyscraper, by Le Baron Jenney, was built in 1885 while at the end of the century Chicago was already sporting a number of buildings of that type. It is a time so vividly described by Theodor Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* or in the *Chicago Poems* of Carl Sandburg: a city where the wealth comes through violence and pain, but also within an atmosphere of hope and passion. Then the twenties, the era of "blues, booze and brothels", when the city acquires the reputation as some kind of



Figure 4. Chicago: a boat tour of modern architecture

gangsters' territory, so often seen in films and narrated by Upton Sinclair and James T. Farrell. Public corruption, private fortunes, new urban jazz styles all go along with an incredible continuity in architectural quality: architects, among so many, such as Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright who became the most significant architect in Chicago (and in the world). Fleeing from Nazi Germany, Mies van der Rohe landed up here and at the Illinois Institute of Technology which he himself designed he changed the whole American architectural scene for many years to come. Then came Gordon Bunshaft, Skidmore Owens and Merrill, and more recently Frank Gehry, Ricardo Bofill and many others. For half a century the Chicago Architecture Foundation, a private non-profit organisation, has organised an incredibly successful number of boat, walking and bus-guided tours to discover the city's architectural heritage. For over 100 years, the City of Chicago has been indisputably recognized as the world capital of historic and contemporary landmarks of modern architecture according to the Chicago Athenaeum Museum of Architecture and Design: it has become both a slogan and a popular feeling. The visitor today sees a city where modernity is (and was) a way of life, with all the changes of rhythm and perspective that go along with it. It is perhaps worth noting that Barak Obama, the America's great hope for radical change (now a little faded) started his political career here.

Rovereto

Even Rovereto, a small town of some 38,000 inhabitants in Italy's Alpine region, is showing a rare familiarity with modernity. A historic city with a well-maintained baroque centre and a few elegant Art Nouveau buildings, it seems perfectly at ease with modern visual discourse. A long standing industrial centre, dating back to the textile plants under Venetian rule of the 16th century, illustrated by a form of oriental housing for Turkish silk workers, to today's mechanical industries (now in trouble), the city economy is turning now towards educational and cultural services. For example, the establishment of a main branch of the Museum of Modern Art of Trento and Rovereto (MART), the opening as a museum of the house of Fortunato Depero, a futurist artist, and the development of local traditional vineyards started to attract tourists, to encourage people towards a better understanding of what modernity has to offer, and to help change a provincial atmosphere into a vibrant up to date life style. A number of private art galleries have opened and bookshops are to be

found all over the urban area. Also, a tradition of good civic architecture helps in keeping up a high environmental standard, and a forward looking cultural policy has produced interesting results in recent years. All over the city a good graphic standard in public and private advertisements and posters (largely inspired by Depero's style) brings some fanciful atmosphere to the town. Visitors are surprised to find an unexpected environment in a place that had been previously associated mainly with memories of the First World War which marked this land profoundly. Entering into such an atmosphere is probably largely due to the impact of MART, which is now one of the best museums of its kind in Italy, linked to prestigious foreign institutions and hosted in a new building, possibly the best work of the Swiss architect Mario Botta.



Figure 5. Rovereto: Fortunato Depero, Toys

Some wishful comments

We might certainly list other “exceptions” but the main point is to find out how it happened that in these cities modernity has come to be the norm, not the exception. What can we take from these examples? Maybe that to accept modernity in the built environment is not something that comes from a previous void, maybe that history and social cohesion provide the ground for daring innovations, maybe that the built environment is something that cannot be compared to consumer products and therefore it is less open to simple change. Maybe the fact that a satisfying environment is hard to attain means that our society has a long way to go before entering the full stream of modernity: sticking to the past seems more reassuring, even if it means accepting a dull environment all around. A successful project cannot be created all at once, the most clever design is not sufficient to convince people that a brand new environment can be as satisfying as an existing one, which is rich in memories and in well proportioned facilities. It takes a wise approach, good management and a long term perspective. Or, in other words: it is not the architect who makes the city, it is the people. When the two are in accord we get what we have called “exceptions”.

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City museum, community and temporality: a historical perspective

Jean-Louis Postula

Introduction

Since 1974 ICOM has incorporated into its definition of a museum the essential dimension of service to the society and its development. This dimension can be taken today as the determination of the museum community to contribute concretely to the improvement of the human condition. Undoubtedly, city museums play an important role in this phenomenon.

Two essential features of the definition of a city museum in the early part of the twenty-first century are usually highlighted within the literature: the relationship between the museum and the life of the present, even the future, and the importance given to the community of citizens as part of the discourse of the museum¹.

This essay is a proposal to have a historical look at the ways in which some city museums of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries considered these two specific matters. At the moment of their establishment, and during their early years of operation, what was their relationship to temporality – past, present and future – and for whom were they designed? Who, amongst local citizenry, was involved with them?

Three such institutions will be examined (certainly others could have served as well), which appear to represent a variety of methods used in the establishment of city museums. The three (in chronological order) are: the Carnavalet Museum in Paris, conceived in 1866, the Museum of the City of Brussels, in 1884, and the Museum of the City of New York, in 1923.

These reflections are based not only on iconographic documents and historical research concerning these museums, but also on a sample of period sources that shed an intriguing light on our questions in terms of temporality and community. As regards the Museum of Paris, several visitors' guides published during the 1920's and 1930's have been studied; for the Museum of the City

¹ See for example CAMOC's mission statement on its website (<http://camoc.icom.museum/about/index.php>).

of Brussels, a report released in 1884 by the then mayor Charles Buls to the communal council recommending the creation of a city museum; and for the Museum of the City of New York, a speech delivered in 1931 by John Van Pelt, Museum Trustee, to the American Association of Museums annual meeting, concerning the approaching opening of the museum's new premises.

Regarding Brussels and New York, it has to be said that these documents should not be taken as a realistic description of the museums' activities, but rather as an intention, a sort of ideal programme drawn up before the opening of the museum, showing the museal project of their founders.

First, however, an introduction to these three museums will concentrate on the context of their foundation and on describing the institutions as created: what do they look like, and what do they exhibit? It is just as well to admit that the style of exhibitions in these institutions involves a mixed bag of collections, adding up to a kind of chock-full appearance that in general characterizes the museography of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Carnavalet Museum of Paris

The Carnavalet Museum is the earliest museum in Europe devoted to a city. The decision to create a museum for the City of Paris was made in 1866 by the municipal administration, notably under the influence of the Prefect of Paris, the administrator Georges Haussmann. At that very moment Haussmann was engaged in the radical transformations that would so dramatically change the appearance of the capital, pushing the Great Boulevards through overpopulated districts, destroying many old buildings. A large segment of the population opposed these grandiose projects, and at that time there emerged the first of many "preservation movements" to come, based on a realisation of the importance of the city's heritage, and the necessity of conserving it. Somewhat paradoxically, the ruling political class, which had put this heritage at risk by turning neighbourhoods into avenues, also first advocated for a form of protection of historical material, through preservation in a museum environment. It can therefore be observed that the Carnavalet Museum was, at least in part, an effort to legitimate certain policies and to respond to criticisms

of them. As long as there is a museum whose task is to identify and conserve the most significant remnants of the city's past, the large-scale public works projects can be justified, since the process of collection and preservation will go on in conjunction with new construction.

To this end, the City of Paris bought the Hôtel Carnavalet in 1866, a private lodging dating back to the sixteenth century, located in the historic Marais quarter. The objective was to convert it into "a *Museum of the archaeology of Paris* that would collect ancient objects from monumental structures or private dwellings, luxury and everyday items, clothing, tools, arms, etc.²". For various reasons, the assembly of the main portion of the collection and the conversion of the hotel took fourteen years. In 1880 visitors were finally able to tour the Carnavalet Museum, the common ancestor of many of today's city museums.

At that time the only part of the museum that is open to the public is a section called "lapidary", consisting of archaeological pieces. Collections grow rapidly because of generous gifts. Besides, a museum guide published in the 1920's speaks of the "fairly strange odds and ends [displayed in] small galleries and dimly lighted rooms."³ The museum has created rooms devoted to Parisian clothing of different periods, to the history of French Revolution, to topography, including old maps and depictions of the city in ancient times and so on. But Carnavalet's reputation was mainly established by the many luxurious interior decorations set up inside exhibition rooms, restored from private lodgings that were demolished. These are the world's first examples of period-rooms.

Visitors are invited to travel back in time in an atmosphere that has its own completeness, although the groupings are usually recreated from pieces of furniture that were drawn from a number of different sources.

It is interesting to note that most city museums that were founded in the

² Paris Guide par les principaux écrivains et artistes de la France. Première partie: La science – l'art, *Brussels, Leipzig, Livourne and London, 1867, p. 524.*

³ Boucher, F., Dorbec, P., Robiquet, J., *Guide du Musée Carnavalet*, Paris: Frazier-Soye, n.d. [c. 1925], IX.

Figure 1.
The Carnavalet Museum
of Paris, around 1925.
From *Guide du
Musée Carnavalet,
Paris*, Frazier-Soye,
n.d. [1927], pl. IV.



following decades took the Carnavalet Museum as a model to follow. Such is, at any rate, the case with the museums of Brussels and New York.

The Museum of the City of Brussels

In 1884, a large donation, including works of art and a sum of money earmarked for the purchase of some significant old paintings was given to the City of Brussels by a wealthy collector. The mayor of Brussels, Charles Buls, was known for his support of universal education, education for the masses. He had always believed that museums had an essential social role to play, by the side of parents and the school system. Some years before, he had promoted the



Figure 2.
The Museum of the City of
Brussels, in 1887.
From *Le patriote illustré,
Brussels*, 1887
(Brussels City Archives).

project of a popular museum intended for “the instruction of the ignorant⁴”, but that project had failed to materialise. Now Buls proposed to use the donation as the beginning of another kind of museum; he submitted a report to the communal council that spoke of “the great interest the City [would have] in establishing a communal historical museum upon the model of what has been done in Munich, Frankfort, and Paris⁵”. The museum was opened in 1887, on the third floor of the Maison du Roi (King’s House) in Brussels’ Grand-Place. The King’s House was a large neo-Gothic monumental structure that had been recently rebuilt across from the City Hall.

⁴ Buls C, *Un projet de musée populaire*, Brussels: Muquardt, 1874, 5

⁵ «Legs Wilson», in *Ville de Bruxelles, Bulletin communal, Compte rendu des séances*, 1884, t. I, 185.

At that time one could see there, “just piled up⁶” in Buls’ words, many pieces “belonging to the history of Brussels, or objects made in Brussels⁷”, such as tapestries, pottery, ironwork and stained glass, very old depictions of the city, paintings and drawings of celebrations or other noteworthy events, portraits, and sculptures that had been part of various monuments in Brussels.

The Museum of the City of New York

The third museum is a somewhat more recent creation than the other two: the Museum of the City of New York, organised in 1923. The museum, which is a private institution not owned by the City, is the product of the desire on the part of members of the wealthy elite of the city that there should be a museum devoted to New York City and its Boroughs, a subject which did not particularly interest the powerful New York Historical Society, which was more concerned with American history in general. This is “the first attempt, on such a scale in America, to create a museum devoted solely to the life of a city⁸”.

Between 1923 and 1932 the museum is located in Gracie Mansion (today the official residence of the Mayor of New York) and presents exhibitions at various locations within the city. Its collections are then a hodgepodge of furniture, prints and models, and it is not immediately successful. Quite quickly it is decided that the museum needs to be housed in a larger space that would allow the collection to be more professionally managed and benefit from the latest techniques in museum curation. In 1932 the museum reopens in a new and modern building on Fifth Avenue, along Central Park.

There, the visual history of the physical development of New York and the evolution of its landscapes is presented to a great extent through photographs and printed images, with in addition a large number of dioramas and models that quickly become favourites with visitors.

⁶ Ville de Bruxelles, *Bulletin communal, Compte rendu des séances*, 1887, t. I, 242.

⁷ Ville de Bruxelles, *op. cit.*, 1884, t. I, 185.

⁸ Van Pelt J., «The museum as a guide to the life of a city», in *The Museum News*, vol. IX, n° 12, Washington, *The American Association of Museums*, 1931, 8.



Figure 3. The Museum of the City of New York. ©Jean-Louis Postula.

The relationship between time, history and the museum

It is apparent in the literature that long before the emergence of the expression “city museum” which has become common among the museum community, museums devoted to cities have always tried to define and categorise themselves.

Most of these institutions consider themselves to be primarily historical museums. The Carnavalet Museum is described as a “gallery of local history” whose purpose is to “gather together the thousand and one remembrances that make the history of Paris one of the most captivating parts of History in general⁹”. As for the Museum of the City of Brussels, it is simply described as a “municipal historical museum¹⁰”.

Not all museums accept this classification as historical. Van Pelt, author in 1931 of a text describing the project and the missions of the Museum of the City of New York, said that the museum “is no more historical than the art museum or the museum of natural history – perhaps less so. [...] All museums are museums of history, if we accept the definition which makes history apply to the future as well as the present and the past. [...] It is the museum of a city and its value should be sociological.¹¹”

As we can see, the concept of history is involved in the self-definition of the three institutions, even if only to allow them to take their distance from it. However, “history” does not mean the same thing to all these museums, and different kinds of temporality are used to display the city.

In Paris the mission of the museum is clearly directed toward the past. Visitors’ guides explain that “a distance of at least a half-century is appropriate in order to assume a historical perspective, and the museum is prepared to continue presenting the history of Paris, always under these conditions of a certain

⁹ Boucher, F., Dorbec, P., and Robiquet, J., *op. cit.*, VII.

¹⁰ *Ville de Bruxelles, op. cit.*, 1884, t. I, 185.

¹¹ Van Pelt, J. *op. cit.*, 8.

distance in time and always with the same care to vividly bring the past to life¹²”. Thus, toward the end of the 1920’s, the museum only presented events up to the year 1870. In 1926, an American visitor wrote, “It could never become a museum of the Paris of today¹³”.

The Brussels museum is intended to fulfil a similar mission, to gather things that can give visitors a good idea of the richness of the past of the city. But it adds a supplementary interest in the present of Brussels, offering educational material with regard to industrial and artisanal production. The museum places specimens of local production in its exhibits. “The durable if not immortal nature of the city¹⁴”, thought Mayor Buisson, should be reflected in the museum. In Brussels, the line of the past is traced all the way up to the present.

As for the Museum of the City of New York, it presents itself as “devoted to an exposition of what the city is and was¹⁵”, but does not wish to be a historical museum. From the beginning, the museum intended to use the past as an opportunity to talk about the issues facing New York today. Van Pelt gives the following example: “While it may be interesting to tell New Yorkers how the Indians were done out of a valuable island for a song [...], it is far more vital to teach the children of today the remedies for congested municipal districts¹⁶”. The museum has a mission to help its visitors grasp in concrete terms the issues that affect the city most directly, so that solutions to problems can be more intelligently sought.

In addition, Van Pelt says that “there are future problems that should be provided for in any city and that may be forecast by the museum.” The example

¹² Dorbec, P., *L’histoire de Paris au Musée Carnavalet*, Paris: Rieder, 1929, 90.

¹³ Page, M., *The creative destruction of Manhattan 1900-1940*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (*Historical studies of urban American*), 1999, 161.

¹⁴ *Ville de Bruxelles, op. cit.*, 1884, t. I, 185.

¹⁵ «New York City museum to open next month», in *The Museum News*, vol. IX, n° 12, Washington, The American Association of Museums, 1931, 1.

¹⁶ Van Pelt, J., *op. cit.*, 8.

he takes is that of aviation, an industry that was expanding rapidly at that time, and whose future expansion could have been predicted with some certainty. According to Van Pelt the museum has a role to play in urban planning and forecasting of trends, especially as concerns a reflection on the location of eventual new airports serving the city. However, he does not explain exactly how the museum is supposed to accomplish this task aimed at the future. But it remains true to say that the Museum of the City of New York was intended from its inception to be “more than a mirror to the past¹⁷”.

Who is the museum intended for?

Documents published by the museums reveal, sometimes subconsciously, the figure of a typical visitor to whom the museum addresses itself. This is still true today; but only visitor surveys, obviously unknown in Europe and barely known in America during the time periods we are considering, would allow one to confirm the success of a museum by checking the match between actual visitors and the kind of visitor the museum was attempting to attract¹⁸.

Catalogues from the Carnavalet Museum are not precise enough to permit a detailed analysis of such an ideal visitor. In the prefaces of some guide books, mention is made of “the modest establishment known in the past, which many Parisians no doubt still remember¹⁹”. No mention is made of foreign visitors, which would have allowed us to know if the museum was targeting a particular category of the public, tourists or city residents. On another hand, the level of erudition of visitors seems to have been a determining criterion. The curator of the museum in 1929 wrote that the public came to Carnavalet in search of “things whose nature was such as to fill with memories the Parisian atmosphere that was familiar to them, to come in contact with the men of past eras, and to relive with them, by a kind of direct contact the days they had lived through

¹⁷Baragwanath, A., *More than a mirror to the past, The first fifty years of the Museum of the City of New York*, New York: Museum of the City of New York, 1973.

¹⁸See Gottesdiener, H., (dir.), “*Études de public, Années 30*”, *Publics et Musées*, n° 8, Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 1995.

¹⁹Boucher, F., Dorbec, P., and Robiquet, J., *op. cit.*, p. IX.

themselves²⁰”. The museum does not exactly aim at the man in the street, but rather to educated persons of means, who already know something about the history represented by the exhibition and who will feel at home walking through the refined decor and the luxurious environment of the museum. The museum thus manifests an elitist character that is rather typical of museums of that period.

In his address in 1884, Mayor Buls spoke of a precise objective: the future museum would “spark the curiosity of foreign visitors, who may already have visited the Royal Museum. [...] If we can attract and hold the interest of foreign visitors, we will have made an excellent bargain²¹”. The Museum of the City of Brussels is thus envisioned as an addition to the tourist attractions of the city, and an investment the city hopes will pay off. We do not hear much in the speech Charles Buls gives about creating a museum for residents of Brussels. Still, as we noted earlier, the Mayor was always convinced of the social importance of museums, and of the notion that they need not be reserved for scholars or the rich. The project he promoted, which was in large measure carried out, was that of a museum for ordinary people, as well.

The Museum of the City of New York offered a third different approach, mentioning both tourists and residents in its mission statements: “... our great work will be to help New Yorkers and New York’s visitors to understand New York.” Nonetheless, “the museum’s principal opportunity and chief duty is to improve the life of [...] the city dwellers²²”. Tourists are welcome, but the museum exists primarily for New Yorkers, in order not only to educate but to stimulate feelings of pride in the city. Thus programmes specifically designed for immigrants are created, in order “to give to these newcomers and to their children some knowledge of and pride in the history of New York, to stimulate love for our City and help to make good citizens,²³” as James Speyer, the museum director, wrote in 1930.

²⁰Dorbec, P., *op. cit.*, 1929, 6.

²¹Ville de Bruxelles, *op. cit.*, 1884, t. I, 185.

²²Van Pelt, J., *op. cit.*, 8.

²³Page, M., *op. cit.*, 162.

Another feature of the ideal museum described by John Van Pelt in 1931 was its desire to build bridges between different social categories, between rich and poor. He suggested developing branches of the main museum: “one such branch might be a squalid flat in a readily accessible slum [...] and another should be the residence of a wealthy and cultured man, [...] in order to show the prosperous and the less fortunate how the other half lives²⁴”. This was his idea for getting different social groups who don’t often have the occasion to communicate to know each other better; it shows that the museum intended to belong to all New Yorkers, and not just to a financial or intellectual elite.

Conclusion

Through these three examples of museums, taken at a precise moment in their history, their conception, or their first years of operation, we have tried to show that cities can be musealised from various points of view and in connection with various museological approaches: historical museums, sociological museums, museums that collect remnants of the past, that depict the present of a city, or that project its future. Some museums were for the masses, and some for the elite. Some museums were intended to display a city for the benefit of visitors, and some were intended to reinforce a sense of a city’s identity for the benefit of the civic feeling of its citizens.

Museums, as institutions, are creatures of their time and belong to a determinate cultural context. The three institutions described, as well as the category of city museums, have all evolved a great deal since their creation, visually and conceptually. They have a different appearance because of the general movement of museum development since the Second World War, their tendency to form a world-wide network of sorts, and continuing changes in approaches to museology and museography.

The current emphasis on the city museum’s active role in society can be seen as the last stage of a long thought process related to the development of the missions assigned to city museums since they began to be established. A city

²⁴Van Pelt, J., *op. cit.*, 8.

museum of 1880 is not the same as one in 1930, still less the same as one in 2010. However, each of the city museums of the past generations, given the means available at a given time, has contributed in its own way to a form of social interaction and to the improvement of the urban condition.

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**This time it's personal:
city museums and contemporary urban life**
Rainey Tisdale

The CAMOC conference that took place in Berlin in 2011, with its theme “Participative Strategies in Capturing the Changing Urban World,” is part of a larger discussion that museums in general—and city museums in particular—have been having recently about our collections and whether they are serving our current needs. We have been assessing our collections—what we own versus what we wish we owned—and we are noticing a disconnect. Most of our collections were formed at the turn of the twentieth century, and we’re having a lot of trouble making them fit the stories we want to tell about our cities here in the twenty-first century. So we’re experimenting with contemporary collecting, and *participatory* collecting, in an attempt to make our collections more inclusive and more representative. This is important work and we need to do more of it.

Many of us would say the reason for contemporary—and participatory—collecting is to allow more people to see something of themselves, something they can relate to, when they visit the museum. We want to meet our visitors where they are coming from to draw them into history, instead of throwing them in head-first, without any reference points, to stories with which they feel little connection.

So if we take as a given that for city museums our most important audience is the residents of our city, what would it mean to truly meet this audience where they are at? For residents, the city is not some abstract museum concept; it’s real life and it’s personal. Because of their personal connection to the city, these residents have a different relationship with, and a different set of expectations for, the city museum than they do for the local art or science museum. Can city museums go farther than simply building a more representative collection and also frame that collection in a different way, a more personal way?

To probe this question more deeply, I will present three scenarios for reframing our collections, in the hopes that these scenarios will generate further discussion about what exactly we are collecting and how we are organizing our collections for access by the public. These scenarios are based on ways the current “Information Revolution” is potentially changing our work. And each presents a different strategy for being more responsive to personal experiences of the city.

Personal History and the Long Tail

First, can you imagine a collection focused and organized around the concept of delivering personal history to every city resident? I couldn't have imagined it ten years ago, but I can imagine it now. There is an interesting American study that I think about all the time in my work; it is chronicled in *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (Rosenzweig & Thelen 2000). This detailed phone survey of 1,500 Americans found that people have a lot of trouble connecting to the big-picture history they learn in school, but they will spend hours and hours connecting with history that is personal to them—family history, the history of their house, the history of their specific profession. The personal matters. And again, city museums are in a particularly good place to make personal connections because cities are so personal—it's the place where we live and work, where we are rooted.

Meanwhile, there has been a lot of discussion in the past five years about “the Long Tail” of twenty-first-century culture, a concept popularized in a book by Chris Anderson by the same name (2006). Anderson explains that the Internet makes available specialized information and goods that previously were hard to access, and therefore individuals are now able to customize and self-select based on very specific interests. In business this means that niche markets are now just as important as the “lowest common denominator” products that appeal to a vast number of people. In the museum field, this means that the model of the blockbuster exhibition may give way to a more flexible, diffuse system of access to objects and ideas that attract small segments of our public audience.

Within this shifting landscape, are city museums taking advantage of the Long Tail? Are they designing visitor experiences that increase the chances each person will encounter something relevant to their personal history? Imagine that I walk into my local city museum, answer a few questions about myself via a kiosk or mobile device, and receive a customized plan for my visit that looks something like this:

“Welcome to the museum, Rainey Tisdale. In our learning resource center on

the first floor we have information on all the Tisdales who have ever lived in Boston, as well as every person who has ever lived on Amherst Street. Your interests list says you're a foodie. You might enjoy the artifacts from the Marliave Restaurant in Gallery 12 on the second floor. And you live in a triple decker? Check out our temporary exhibition on Boston's vernacular housing to learn more about them.”

In order to enable such a visitor experience, city museums would have to adjust their collecting strategies toward a specific goal of brokering personal explorations. It would mean assessing the potential connections to people when we decide which objects to acquire—not just who made or owned an object, but every possible personal entry point. It would mean “tagging” our collections based on demographics when cataloging. It would mean drawing from many different databases that house related information—census records, property records. And it would mean redesigning our search engines and their user interfaces to extract these personal connections and push them out to our visitors. Right now, a great deal of information with the potential to be personal is already available, provided an individual city resident meets two requirements: she knows what to look for and she knows where to look for it. The key would be to redesign our interactions with members of the public so that people no longer need to meet these requirements in order to have a personal experience.

I want to caution that we shouldn't *only* deliver personalised history, because it's important for us to also have a collective history where we all meet in the middle. In order to ensure a bright future for our cities, city museums have a duty to encourage tolerance and civic engagement, and to discourage tribalism and narrow-mindedness. But we can certainly use personalised history as a powerful hook to draw people into the broader work we are doing. I would be interested to see a city museum experiment with this “personalised” approach and then share the results with all of us.

Hyper-Local History and Geo-Tagging

Second, can you imagine a city museum collection that provides meaning not

at the neighborhood-by-neighborhood level, but at the block-by-block level? A decade ago it would have seemed impossible for city museums to provide that kind of detail, but not any more. In the past five years we have seen an explosion of mapping projects—every facet of life has become Google-mappable. Meanwhile, as we’ve embraced the Internet to explore around the globe, we’ve also realized that we still need to be rooted in the very local—local businesses, local news, local neighbours, locavores.

I’ve been following projects like HistoryPin.com that place historic photographs on the Google map and then send you out with your smart phone to pull up these photos as you walk around the city. I share the HistoryPin mobile app with a lot of people I meet, and when they see it for the first time they always start by looking for photos from their street. Not only are people drawn to personal history; they are also drawn to personal location, and the closer to home the better. But for now at least, these hyperlocal searches often lead to frustration: in most cases the content you see on HistoryPin and other sites is from the downtown city centre and not the neighbourhoods.

I experienced a similar frustration the last time I visited the city museum in the North Carolina city where I grew up. An interactive kiosk in the permanent exhibition, developed in response to audience research that determined residents had a strong interest in neighbourhood history, provided information about the city’s neighbourhoods—history, demographics, landmarks. But the exhibition team limited the scope of the project to only 12 areas of the city, and my own neighbourhood was not included. Moreover, the information that was available for the 12 selected neighbourhoods was fairly broad. I found myself in the shoes of a discouraged visitor, wanting better representation and more detail. While many city museums have started making neighborhoods a collecting priority, we may not have realized just how far people want to zoom in, or just how important it is to push this location-based information out to our core audience of city residents in ways that satisfy their desire for hyper-local connections.

How might these issues affect our collecting plans? Could we collect with the goal of representing every block in the city? Could we assign geographical

coordinates to every object in our collection, and all the information in our databases? (The Museum of London has added a new feature called My London to its online collections search page; a selection of artifacts are mapped by borough. I clicked on Hammersmith/Fulham, where I stay with family friends when I visit London, and got 87 results, a step in the right direction.)

I once worked with a woman at Boston’s historical society whose goal was to research every house on her block so that eventually she could present each of her neighbours (all of them working- and middle-class, not wealthy) with a bound report about the history of their home. In our participatory collecting, should we recruit volunteer block captains like my former co-worker? Would such projects help members of the public build deeper connections to place? Would they build local community? I would like to find out.

Emotion/Sense History and Psychogeography

And third, can you imagine a collection that includes not just objects and images, but also emotions? Our core audience of urban residents develops understanding of the city based on many small and personal, everyday experiences that build up over the course of weeks and months and years. The kind of major historical events we often focus on in our city museum exhibitions affect these residents every now and then, but by and large, for them city change happens more at the scale of flowers blooming on the corner, a new restaurant, or a fight with a neighbour. Meanwhile, as our Information Revolution continues to evolve, the idea of what kind of information is interesting and useful to us is also changing. If a city museum exists to truly serve its residents, who’s to say these daily experiences, and the emotions they engender, aren’t just as important a part of the public record as the legacies of the city fathers or the fires, floods, and wars?

Recently I have been exploring psychogeography as a tool for city museums. Loosely defined, psychogeography is the process of documenting and mapping things that we don’t normally think of as belonging on maps, things that are very personal: emotions, memories, and sensory experiences of the city. To give you an idea of what I mean, I’ll point you to the work of Christian Nold. Among other

interesting projects, he once attached biosensors to ordinary people in San Francisco and asked them to walk around, noting what they observed and did along the way. Then he mapped this data to create a collective emotional urban snapshot, revealing the places where multiple people's heart rates spiked (2007). Another example is Jason Logan's scent map of New York City, featured in the *New York Times* (2009). Logan spent a summer weekend exploring Manhattan from end to end and documenting what his nose encountered. The resulting hand-drawn map organizes these delightfully varied smells by neighbourhood. When city museums collect oral histories, we're already dipping a toe into the world of psychogeography, because oral histories reveal so much memory, emotion, and personal connection. But could we adapt our collecting goals to take it a lot further?

Can you imagine creating urban smell banks so that in 100 years we can revisit, for example, the smell of Berlin's doner kebab shops? Recently developed odor-sensing technology might soon make such a smell bank possible. Should we be recording ambient sounds of the city on a regular basis? Should we be mining Twitter's place-based tweets as a form of vernacular urban poetry? What would it mean to have a collection of thousands of mental maps made by residents, to supplement our traditional collections of the city's formal, official maps—what could we learn about the city from these mental maps that we might otherwise be missing? Indeed, what exactly would an emotional history of a city look like? Could it help build a bridge between the lives of everyday residents and the kind of history with a capital H that we are used to presenting in our museums? I would like to find out.

These are just three possibilities for how we might re-frame our collections in order to build more personal connections between the city museum and its core audience. Each one requires not just committing to participatory collecting, but also setting a goal for where we want that collecting to take us. Moreover, these scenarios are based on an assumption that city museums exist not simply to collect and preserve the city's history but also to serve the needs and interests of city residents. I wonder if you are thinking about other possibilities of your own. If so, I'd love to hear about them.

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Involving citizens:
a snapshot of some European city museums
Layla Betti

Introduction

A city museum is an important place in which to share reflections and problems related to the city and its inhabitants. It can be a place that displays historical facts, but above all it is a special place where it is possible to discuss urban and social changes and the future of the city. Probably the most important goal of a city museum is to reach out to city people. If a city museum aims to reflect on the city and helps to plan or to imagine its future, the citizen should be one of the main protagonists. In this essay I am going to illustrate some examples of city museums, in both big and small cities.

Case studies
STA'M: Stadsmuseum Ghent, Belgium¹

This brand new museum, which opened on October 2010, is an interactive museum which strives to involve people in a number of ways. On the first room floor there is a big aerial picture of the city. It covers the whole city: not just the



Figure 1.
The first room in
STA'M with the big
picture on the floor.

¹ Interviews with the director, Maria De Waele (10/06/2011 and 21/09/2011), and De Waele et al. 2010, www.stamgent.be.

Figure 2.

The room with the sofa where visitors can create their own films. Both pictures are taken from the author's archive.



city centre but also the suburbs and the port area. It helps the citizens to figure out the dimensions of their own city, including the development of the suburbs. People find it interesting to orientate themselves on what is effectively a big map and locate the places where they live. The room is also equipped with computer programs that show the urban development of the city through the centuries up until the present day.

Apart from historical documents, maps and objects, STA'M showcases the city's history and evolution with an intelligent use of technology. In one of the concluding rooms visitors can build their own part of the city's history by selecting some short videos about city facts belonging to the recent past. After selecting the videos, visitors sit on a sofa watching "their film" on a big screen. This helps to capture people's attention and in a playful way depicts some events of the 20th century. In order also to involve immigrants, STA'M provides tours with guides of immigrant origin. STA'M cooperates with other institutions in the

city, taking part in special projects like the "Heritage Day", a Sunday morning entirely dedicated to the people of Ghent with special guided tours, and other projects, like the "Open Monuments Day" and "Museum Night". This young museum has a great opportunity to become an important centre of reflection for the city of Ghent.

Stadtmuseum Innsbruck, Austria²

Although it is small, the Stadtmuseum of Innsbruck provides a number of activities for its citizens. The museum tries to get people involved by offering activities that convey a sense of the roots of those who live and work in Innsbruck, and its emphasis is on urban living. Every month the museum circulates an historical journal where people can find information and pictures of historical documents and elements of the city's history. In addition, it organises special guided tours and publications for locals, particularly young people. As to learning, it offers a form of edutainment that conveys information and concepts through entertainment. Co-operating with the city government, the Stadtmuseum also



Figure 3.
*Primary school students attending an educational activity at the museum
Courtesy Stadtmuseum Innsbruck*

² Interviews with the director, Lukas Morscher (29/11/2010 and 28/09/2011) and www.innsbruck.at/io30/browse/Webseiten/Content/Kultur/Stadtmuseum.

takes into account the 'new' immigrant citizens and organises tours dedicated to immigrants and publishes special booklets for their children. The museum also holds debates about society and the city's urban development, where specialists, citizens and senior citizens can meet and discuss. Additionally, the museum takes into account local industrial archaeology, with debates and reflections on this topic. The Stadtmuseum also publishes historical articles in magazines and takes part in events like the 'Long Night of the Museums'.



Figure 4.
Visitors attending
the museum for
a public event
Courtesy
Stadtmuseum
Innsbruck

Muzeum Historyczne, Warsaw³

The Historical Museum of the city of Warsaw co-operates regularly with the Art Academy in projects on industrial archaeology, organising workshop to help local people understand more about it. It organises seminars with historians to debate social change. The museum gives as much importance to the suburbs as to the city centre, organising lectures and temporary exhibitions in the suburbs. There is a cinema in the museum which shows films about the city's history, and the museum also organises exhibitions in Polish cultural centres abroad to reach expatriate citizens. It offers events aimed at young people, especially

³ Interviews with Barbara Moszczyńska (14/04/2011 and 23/09/2011) and www.mhw.pl.

Figures 5 & 6.
The Museum's Night
in Warsaw: activities
organised by the Historical
Museum of Warsaw
Courtesy HMW



Figure 7.
Science Picnic: activity
for kids and families
organised by the Historical
Museum of Warsaw
Courtesy HMW



students and gives them the opportunity to become temporary volunteers. Local people are important and several institutions organise activities for them in Warsaw, such as the “Festival of Science”, the “Radio Bis Science Picnic”, lessons for Warsaw’s pupils and lectures for the “University of the Third Year”. The Historical Museum usually co-operates as a partner in these events. It also takes part in the “Museum Night” with other museums in the city.

Stadtmuseum Wiener Neustadt, Austria⁴

Wiener Neustadt is a town south of Vienna, next to the border with Hungary. In the opinion of the director of this small museum, a city museum should help to create an identity for its community. The Stadtmuseum of Wiener Neustadt also uses technology to showcase the city’s history. The curators of this museum arrange exhibitions, events, concerts and lectures to debate social change in the city. On occasion the museum is a centre of discussion about the urban issues of Wiener Neustadt. It provides activities and guided tours dedicated to people of all ages, so it is a museum open to all. It tries to be open



*Figure 8.
Educational activities
at the Stadtmuseum
Wiener Neustadt:
children’s theatre
Courtesy Stadtmuseum
Wiener Neustadt*

⁴ Interviews with the museum’s director, Eveline Klein (16/03/2011 and 22/09/2011) and www.stadtmuseum.wrn.at.

and interesting for young people in the city by offering them activities such as workshops and special exhibitions. It co-operates with the city’s Department of Integration to help immigrants feel part of the community, and in this regard it hosts concerts, lectures and debates. It also provides guided tours specially dedicated to immigrants.

Museu d’Història de la Ciutat de Girona (MHCG), Spain⁵

Girona is a town in Catalunya, not far from the border with France and next to Figueres, where the artist Salvador Dalí was born and spent his last days. A city museum is a piece of cultural equipment owned by the city. The city museum of Girona works with the other museums in the city as part of the “Gironamuseus” network which organises events like “Museums Night”, or “Museums Day”. Amongst other activities, the museum offers a dramatised tour: it is an excursion along the city’s streets with actors who relate the city’s history focusing on the most important events through the use of high drama. This allows people to discover a part of the city’s history while enjoying a walk



*Figure 9.
Guided tour for
families,
curated by the
Museum
Courtesy MHCG*

⁵ Interviews with the museum’s director, Pere Freixas (19/04/2011 and 28/09/2011) and www.girona.cat/museuciutat/cat.

and the performance. Locals can also take part in debates about changes in urban planning. In order to reach out to the suburbs of Girona, the museum co-operates with the Civic Centres, which are located beyond the city centre. There, people are invited to reflect on the conditions of the suburbs and on welcome projects for immigrant people. These projects are supported by the Cultural Strategic Plan, a document written by the administration and the museums directors which aims at helping citizens to find out about the history of their district.



*Figure 10.
Guided tour of
the Girona's wall,
curated by the
Museum
Courtesy MHCG*

Stadtmuseum Ingolstadt, Germany⁶

Ingolstadt is a town north of Munich in Bavaria. The Stadtmuseum of Ingolstadt frequently organises public debates on urban changes in the city, where people are invited to participate. These are proposed by the museum in collaboration with the Ingolstadt Historical Society. Social changes in the city are also examined by the museum through debates, exhibitions and workshops. As the Stadtmuseum does not cover just the city centre, but also the suburbs and the whole region, it also organises exhibitions in the suburbs. In order to organise its activities, the museum chooses topics of potential interest for the local people and publishes an historical review in co-operation with the Historical Society. The museum also hosts workshops in collaboration with the city's Archive, which is located in the same building as the museum. Once a month it is also possible to have coffee and cake in the museum while talking about the city and its history.

Museu d'Història de Barcelona (MUHBA), Spain⁷

Barcelona has a history stretching back over centuries and today it has a large immigrant population. MUHBA is making efforts not just to conserve the historical legacy of the city, but also to help improve the modern city and the lives of those who live in it. For example, it invites citizens to take part in debates, lectures and other events organised by the CRED (Centre of Research and Debate) founded in 2008. The topics include politics, economics, industry, etc. Another activity curated by CRED is the forum for archaeology on Barcelona's past: curators, historians and architects are often invited to meetings to discuss urban planning and regeneration. MUHBA is also interested in discovering more about how people live and it regards the cultural variety of Barcelona as one of its unique qualities. In collaboration with other organisations, it has created 'Transnational Barcelona. Connected Citizens', a project which consists of a series of exhibitions about the multicultural city and reflections on how immigrants are, in a sense, taking Barcelona abroad, with

⁶ Interviews with the director, Beatrix Schönewald during the research work and www.ingolstadt.de/stadtmuseum.

⁷ Roca i Albert 2009 and www.bcn.es, www.barcelonaconnectada.cat.



Figures 11, 12, 13.
Different activities at
MUHBA: concerts, guided
tours and presentations
Courtesy MUHBA

their social networks, phone calls and so on. Thus the museum can be seen as an agora, a real meeting place. MUHBA organises events and activities for schools, hospitals and geriatric centres, co-operating with various associations for special projects, like the “Friends of the *Fabra i Coats*” – former workers from an old factory which is now part of MUHBA.

The *Bezirksmuseen* in Vienna⁸

I cannot conclude without writing about the small district museums in Vienna. They are 23 in number, each looking at the history of its own district. There locals



Figure 14.
Display of stained glass
at the *Bezirksmuseum*
Mariahilf: stained glass
was traditionally produced
in that district.
Courtesy *Bezirksmuseum*
Mariahilf

⁸ Interviews with Heinrich Spitznagl, president of the ARGE, and many museums directors during the last three years.

are involved in creating historical exhibitions and in making projects for social cohabitation. With the staff of the museum, entirely composed of volunteers, they organise dinners at the museum, concerts, lectures and poetry during which they can enjoy particular aspects of the immigrants' home countries. This helps considerably with social cohabitation, as well as increasing respect and love for the neighbourhood and the city.

Conclusion

The museums I have described above try to reach out to city people in different ways. Of course, these cities have problems, but the museums give people a great opportunity to discuss city problems and city life. There they can share reflections with curators, specialists and – in some lucky cases – public administrators. These museums try to be friendly places where people feel confident. If the city museum is sensitive to its citizens, the city has a great source of strength to face its own problems.

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City museums in the web 2.0 era: current challenges and possibilities

Marlen Mouliou

Introduction

Once, on a visit to Brussels, I stayed in a hotel where a different artist had designed every room. My room had been commissioned to a young Romanian artist, Adina Dolcan, who titled her project “Metropolitan Feeling”. Dolcan explained her concept on a text which hung on the wall:

“When I came to Brussels I decided to make another project but after a few hours spent here, the city inspired me a lot. I felt like I was full of love, energy; I felt that the important things were just in front of me. I felt like I was becoming stronger from second to the next second. I felt in love with the diversity of Brussels, the old mixed with the new and then I decided to paint a visionary city at noon. It’s about growing with the city; it’s about being connected to it, living in it and then to take it with you in the heart and also in the room. It’s an addictive feeling, a strong relationship. You depend on the city and also the city depends on you”.

I open with this story not only because it relates nicely to CAMOC’s work on cities. Like Dolcan, when I started thinking about ways of representing cities, I had in mind another starting point. In my case, I was developing my work on the representation of city museums in cyberspace. I wanted to create a questionnaire with a long list of questions on the usability, accessibility and content of the museums’ websites, and to perform a worldwide geographical survey that would allow a quantitative statistical analysis of current city museum web trends. I very soon realised the difficulties - even the pitfalls - of this task. Cities are complex entities; our understanding of them is similarly complex, as the Romanian artist’s experience attests. Any inquiry into the issues at stake in city life demands a multi-disciplinary enquiry into the raw material (in this case websites), as well as a consideration of a variety of questions drawn from an array of different fields.

With this essay I will briefly present, i) a conceptual framework for assessing city museum websites, ii) the ideas and inspirational sources that led me to this model, and iii) a pilot example of how this framework can be useful to others seeking to understand the representation of cities in a virtual environment¹.

Outlining the frame of work: Technology – values – urban identity

The task of assessing city museum websites calls for a few obvious first things. It demands, first, a set of evaluation criteria for museum web excellence, as defined by CIDOC (ICOM's International Committee for Documentation) and/or endorsed by the judges of international web competitions². Such criteria will include i) the content and experience delivered by the site, ii) the functionality of the technology used, iii) the quality of the interface-visual design-usability, and iv) the site's success in encouraging users to engage interactively with its content.

Equally interesting and important are guidelines³ to museum web accessibility and usability, such as the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, the Section 508 Standards Guide in the USA, the guidelines of the Web Accessibility Initiative in the UK, and the 2007 Public Consultation on Delivering Inclusive Websites. While these standards are certainly significant, they are nonetheless

¹ For this pilot testing, two European Museums have been chosen, the Museum of London and the Helsinki City Museum, on the grounds that they have been previously nominated by other city museums as examples of best museum practice (see Mouliou 2008). Their websites are accessible at <http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/English/> and <http://www.hel.fi/hki/Museo/en/Etusivu>

² See for instance the Museums and the Best of the Web Annual Award, that acknowledges winners in various categories (best Audio/Visual/Podcast, Education, Exhibition, Innovative/Experimental, Long-lived, Mobile, Museum Professional, Research/On-line Collection, Social Media, People's choice, Best overall museum website etc.). For more information, see <http://www.museumsandtheweb.com/mw2011/best>

³ See Shawn Lawton 2007. Accessible on-line at <http://www.uiAccess.com/accessucd/>; Chisholm & Vanderheiden 1999. Accessible on-line at <http://www.w3.org/TR/1999/WAI-WEBCONTENT-19990505/wai-pageauth.pdf>; relevant document defining standards in the USA, available at <http://www.section508.gov/docs/Section%20508%20Standards%20Guide.pdf>; the guidelines of the Web Accessibility Initiative at <http://www.w3.org/WAI/eval/Overview.html>; and Bailin 2007, a document accessible on-line at <http://coi.gov.uk/guidance.php?page=129>

not indicative of the multi-dimensional profile of a city museum on the web. I would suggest that any discussion of the web life of city museums must be seen against the backdrop of a three-sided set: the debate on the future of the Internet and its technology, the debate on what constitutes a democratic culture and its connection with core museum values, and the issue of urban identity - especially the elements that make a city better place to live in. Time, and change through time, is a relevant concept for all the above.

The British author Charles Leadbeater distinguishes two kinds of organisations in his thought-provoking book *We-Think: Mass Innovation, Not Mass Production: boulders and pebbles*. Boulders may be old, heavy and cumbersome organisations, but even if they are in a declining phase they have tested ways of providing services (2008, xxii). Boulders are institutions such as schools, universities, or even museums, that are dealing increasingly with individuals, students, or visitors who want to be in the pebble side of business, and who search for knowledge by drawing information from a variety of sources, sharing with their peers, learning from one another. Boulders have a large internal mass in relation to their surface area (see, for instance, the vast body of collections in museums), but they tend to be introverted and defensive. Pebbles, by contrast, have a large external surface area compared to their mass; there is relatively little inside a pebble compared to a boulder, although some may be quite powerful (2008, xx). The new kinds of organisations being bred by the web are all in the pebble business: Wikipedia, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, and LinkedIn allow us to connect with similar pebbles who are friends or people with shared interests.

Web sceptics worry that the web is uprooting the authority of the experts, professionals, and institutions that help us to sort truth from falsehood, knowledge from supposition, fact from gossip. A large group of people argues, however, that the Net is good mainly as a platform for collaboration, and not just as a new way to publish information. For Web enthusiasts, the Internet's real value rises from the fact that it provides radically different options for how we organise ourselves: generating knowledge, sharing ideas, creating culture, making decisions together (Leadbeater 2008:21). Many museums have in fact started exploring this potential. The urge for city museum websites is thus to

act as mediators in a public debate about the city and its past/present/future by creating a powerful network of people who experience that city, including city bloggers and members of the local communities themselves, in all their social and ethnic diversity. These same principles have been the focus of museum theory and practice since at least the early 1990s, when scholars and museum professionals began showing significant interest in the relation between museums and communities⁴. Museums have been challenged to become more inclusive by bridging the divide between (museum) boulders and (community) pebbles, between curatorial integrity and community engagement. Nina Simon's proposition (2010) for a participatory museum, which she defines as "a place where visitors can create, share, and connect with each other around content" follows this path.

John Holden, a Visiting Professor at City University, London who works on the development of people and organisations in the cultural sector, likewise says in his report, *Knowledge and Inspiration: The Democratic Face of Culture*, that museums have started reinventing themselves "from being passive repositories of the past to becoming deliverers of social and economic value, by playing an empowering role in a more participatory, multi-cultural, engaged society" (2006, 3). Holden focuses on the central importance of museums as knowledge creators and inspiration generators, and explains their role as a service, delivering public and cultural value in the seven key areas: sustaining citizenship and civil society, promoting education and learning, stimulating creativity and cultural excellence, representing the city and its various communities, driving renewal and regeneration, and contributing to physical, mental and social well-being. In his study *Democratic Culture*, Holden also suggests that "democratic culture looks very much like political democracy... Just as in politics, publicly funded cultural organisations and the funding system need to: guard against undue influence through donations and gifts, fight against the tendency to become bureaucratised, guarantee freedom of information, engage in public debate" (2008, 32). Holden suggests that we define "democratic" in terms of

⁴ The relevant literature is extensive and ever growing. Sheila Watson's edited volume on *Museums and their Communities* (2007) gives many insights on the topic and further reading hints.

a set of universal principles including: rule of law, "upstream engagement", transparency, universalism, pluralism, equality, and freedom.

On the other hand, cities have distinct personalities, both now and in the past. City museums can and must transmit to their visitors - locals and tourists alike - the particular features of their respective cities in clear, effective and meaningful ways. City museums construct their narratives - whether chronological, thematic or conceptual - in different manners that are driven by disciplinary discourses and practices as well as by more mundane biographical accounts of anonymous individuals. What is crucial in this process of transmitting messages is the creation of relevance, for today's citizens, between the urban past and the urban present, social, imaginary, and symbolic⁵. A city's meaning is subjective, as we saw with Adina Dolcan's story. The diverse, relative, and contemporary nature of this narrative is what makes city museums exceptional within the museum sector. Recent studies of what makes any city a nice place to live in offer one potentially meaningful conceptual path to the assessment of urban narratives in city museums' websites; these generic criteria are pragmatic and important to every one of us. According to Richard Florida⁶, these generic criteria include: opportunity (economic conditions, job market, professional development, networking); basic services (education, health and safety, housing, connectivity, traffic); leadership (politics, business, diversity, access & engagement); values (tolerance, trust, self-expression, people climate/valuing people); aesthetic and lifestyle (physical beauty, authenticity, amenities, buzz/energy of the place). Bringing these key elements into the narratives presented in city museums' does not mean unconditionally deconstructing the existing museum interpretations. Rather, it allows for the possibility of raising alternative, more personal, humane, affective and thus pertinent urban issues in a city museum context, either in situ or on the web.

Let's see now if the clues listed above help us to understand the breadth and

⁵ For a sociological analysis of everyday life, see Bennett and Watson 2002.

⁶ See *Who's your City?. How the Creative Economy is Making where to Live the Most Important Decision of Your Life*, New York: Basic Books, 2008, see App. B, p.p. 332-333

depth of services potentially offered by the websites of the Museum of London and the Helsinki City Museum. In the table below, one column represents key areas of work and principles based on Holden’s work; the other contains indicative examples of good museum practice traced in the websites under study, here described as categories of actions rather than named one by one.

KEY AREAS OF WORK	RELEVANT EXAMPLES IN CITY MUSEUM WEBSITES
Sustaining citizenship and civil society	Museums show they cater to the many different interests of diverse audiences by: Building partnerships with their audiences via online community projects of different types and goals Seeking feedback by providing users’ assessment reports Offering online memberships Creating opportunities for online civic dialogue through “Decision-making”, “Ask the Museum”, “Support us” links Promoting, supporting and valuing volunteers’ work Using a welcoming, friendly and engaging language, indicative of the museum’s openness to community
Promoting education and learning	Creating learning resources with different learning outcomes for various target groups (i.e. families, schools, groups, adults, supporters of lifelong learning activities, etc.) Creating online collections Offering online games, videos and podcasts Offering and updating a FAQ section.

KEY AREAS OF WORK	RELEVANT EXAMPLES IN CITY MUSEUM WEBSITES
Stimulating creativity and cultural excellence	Providing active experiences by engaging users in creative practice (i.e. authoring possibilities via links to museum blogs and social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.) Generating online community projects and user-contributed content Establishing online fora for museum professionals and web space for teachers as a way to encourage collaborative work
Representing the city and its various communities	Contributing to civic self-confidence by creating and preserving powerful collections of objects and stories representative of the city's past, present, future (i.e. oral history community projects, links on “other interesting sites in the city”, etc.) Offering translation of web content in various languages
Driving renewal and regeneration	Supporting local economic growth in many different ways (i.e. offer a “new museum jobs link”, develop e-commerce and retail, network with Trip Advisor blogs, etc.) Following closely the city’s current news
Contributing to physical, mental and social well-being	Helping people overcome or understand everyday social problems Providing services to people with disabilities

PRINCIPLES	RELEVANT EXAMPLES IN CITY MUSEUM WEBSITES
Rule of law	<p>Showing commitment and adherence to ethical issues and codes of conduct (i.e. reference to the Kids in Museums manifesto)</p> <p>Making museum mission, learning, and other policies available online [see links “About us”, Copyright & legal issues link]</p> <p>Giving clear messages about strategic planning (i.e. capital redevelopment)</p> <p>Acknowledging and catering for different learning styles of web users</p> <p>Supporting the creation of a varied cultural infrastructure with a rich and constantly updated programme of events, museum e-newsletter, the daily updated link “What’s on” etc.</p>
Upstream engagement & pluralism	<p>Encouraging better public representation and consultation to inform decision making on web content production and ethical orientation of the museum (the “decision-making” link, wikis, blogs)</p> <p>Offering an eclectic and diverse cultural production in terms of form, content, practice, ethnicity or gender</p> <p>Providing funding not only for mainstream museum projects but also for marginal, small-scale, emergent ones</p>
Transparency	<p>Showing willingness of the museum administration for public disclosure of museum policies (see again the “About us” link), annual achievements and</p>

PRINCIPLES	RELEVANT EXAMPLES IN CITY MUSEUM WEBSITES
	<p>financial information (such as fund raising activities and corporate sponsorships)</p> <p>Presenting detailed information on major capital projects</p> <p>Releasing information on new acquisitions in the collections and recent decisions of the administration (see again the “decision-making” link)</p> <p>Advertising how to get a job in the museum together with information on the appointment criteria</p>
Freedom	<p>Supporting artistic and cultural freedom of expression</p> <p>Safeguarding against undue influence through donations and gifts</p>
Universal access	<p>Giving proof of commitment to physical, intellectual and social access to cultural life for everyone and in various ways, i.e., i) giving brochure-type information on opening hours, charges, museum location and how to get there, etc., ii) aligning with W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines by making information on collections available as well as details on accessibility policies, etc., iii) offering a Help section with information on how to configure user browsers and operating systems]</p> <p>Offering a free e-newsletter for the museum and the city</p> <p>Working with people where they are, and not expecting them to come to the museum (i.e. offering a virtual visit</p>

PRINCIPLES	RELEVANT EXAMPLES IN CITY MUSEUM WEBSITES
	of the museum, on-line registrations for programmes and events) Encouraging more cultural participation and frequent engagement with the city museum and what it has to offer (see information on cultural diversity policies) Introducing projects that will give chances to all members of society to release their talents, their contributions for creativity and innovation Providing statements like “We love kids in museums”
Equal opportunities	Putting cultural and creative learning at the heart of everyone's experience Providing socially inclusive narratives Building opportunities for community networking

Concluding remarks

Museums have been defined as cultural accelerators⁷, because they record and interpret technological and social change in ways that help us understand it and collect objects that can demonstrate it. The appreciation of change creates the need for museums not only to preserve the past but also to help people adapt to the present and future. In this sense, city museums can be considered as mega-accelerators: they are well-positioned to capture and to understand speedy urban changes. Can they manage to project these changes through their websites? Can they develop a vocabulary of relevance?

⁷ A term borrowed from communications theorist Derek de Kherkove (see Lord 2007, 5-6)

The Web provides a platform for us to be creative together on a scale previously unimaginable. It is changing how we share ideas and so how we think and organize ourselves socially. Leadbeater, who writes that his motto is “We think therefore we are”, tells us that in the century to come, “well-being will come to depend less on what we own and consume and more on what we can share with others and create together” (2008, 25-26). City museums, with their various resources—websites being just one of many—will be called on to endorse visionary philosophies and to implement daring actions if they wish to remain instrumental players in the creation of knowledge within community-oriented societies that will, increasingly, be based on the principles of participation, recognition and collaboration.

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The Megacity: Literary Documentaries and Urban Topographies in the 21st century

Prachi More

There will soon be more people living in the city of Bombay than on the continent of Australia... Bombay is the biggest city on the planet of a race of city dwellers. Bombay is the future of urban civilisation. God help us.

Suketu Mehta, *Maximum City*

The Indian-born author Suketu Mehta's call for help from God, with which he begins his *magnum opus* on Mumbai, voices a common contemporary sentiment towards the megacity¹ and a concern over what is to become of life, and of the living, in settlements of such great magnitude. Megacities pose a challenge not only to the people living within them or administrating their services, but also to those seeking to grasp, in writing, their sheer expanse, diversity and complexity. The growing body of literature dealing with the megacity today reveals a number of co-existing urban discourses, many of them marked by the rhetoric of people or groups competing with one another to produce and restructure such spaces.

This essay takes a closer look at two contemporary works on megacities – one on Mumbai and the other on London. These books exist within a contemporary tradition of urban *literary documentary*;² their authors document the megacity by walking and observing or simply by submersing themselves in its life. Their textual renderings are not mere reportage but a complex reflexive narrativisation which enacts each writer's unique encounters and experiences in the megacity. They conjure up a distinctive, personal and subjective topography of the city – an active "mapping" of territory in the urban space. This "writing" of the megacity thus actively intervenes in the production of a contemporary urban imaginary³ by adding the author's perspective and narrative to it. Within this

¹ As expanding cities with populations rising over 10 million people are known today.

² I use this classification to denote and highlight the interplay of various discursive techniques and the empirical anchorage of the texts. Here, documentary (as opposed to 'documentation') is understood as an artistic interpretation. Thus, its distortions are considered to be within the process of artistic or literary interpretation

³ A spatial metaphor used to sum up the myriad and intangible ways in which urban space is 'imagined' by city dwellers. See Huyssen 2008, 2-15.

narrative we encounter a pedagogical process. In their attempts to look beyond ideological distortions and to form their own contours of the megacity, the authors introduce their readers to new ways of 'seeing' the city. By collecting the narratives of various people living in the megacity, they make the reader aware of the multiple dimensions of experience required to grasp urban space and the issues pertaining to its continuing survival.

Mehta, the author of *Maximum City – Bombay Lost and Found*, is a New York based writer who returned to the city of his birth, Mumbai, to write about it. Mehta embeds his "city narrative" within the biographical framework of his own return to Mumbai. As he meets with (and, in some cases, befriends) corrupt politicians, gangsters, murderers, sex workers, nightclub dancers, police chiefs, Bollywood movie directors, actors and actresses, Mehta offers extraordinary insight into the underworld as well as the elite of Mumbai. His narrative portrays a schizophrenic city, filled with eccentric characters where even death is a commodity. Mehta draws his readers into this hidden world offering glimpses into a largely inaccessible part of Mumbai. Mehta traces much of the current tension between Hindus and Muslims in Mumbai to the 1992-93 riots which were sparked by the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Northeast India. He dedicates a substantial section of the book to revisiting the victims as well as the perpetrators of these events. Placing their narratives next to each other, he exposes both as victims of higher opportunistic political interests. To counterbalance this charged narrative and to give it a sort of closure, Mehta follows the lives of a wealthy Jain family who, for religious reasons, have sacrificed their 'worldly' life. Their story can be read as a reminder of the spirituality that persists in the 'madness' of the megacity, but also as a reminder of the possibility of radical change. This too, Mehta reminds us, is Mumbai – and a large part of it, at that. All these narrative strands are intricately linked into a complex portrait of the megacity at large.

With Iain Sinclair's *Hackney, That Rose Red Empire: A Confidential Report* we zoom into the microcosm of Hackney, the shabby East London borough. Sinclair's opening passage sets the tone for the rest of the book:

We are the rubbish, outmoded and unrequired. Dumped on wet pavings and left

there for weeks, in the expectation of becoming art objects, a baleful warning. Nobody pays me to do this. It is my own choice, to identify with the detritus in a place that has declared war on unconvinced recyclers while erecting expensive memorials to the absence of memory. This is a borough that has dedicated itself to obliterating the meaning of shame. (Sinclair, 7)

The almost brusque tone of this short passage offers a key to the author's alliance. While the reader cannot help but feel Sinclair's anger and sarcasm the source and object of those emotions remains obscure, intricately woven into the text. Reading further, we see that the narrator positions himself within the "we", thus metonymically identifying with both the people of Hackney and the "rubbish" that lies ignored on the street. On their behalf, Sinclair declares war on "unconvinced recyclers", developers who are trying to gentrify Hackney in the name of an expensive Olympic Park and the local borough council who have agreed to allow it. Hackney is its people, he argues; if the place loses its people, there will be no memory left. And in a place where there is no memory, there can be no shame. For the people of Hackney, the Olympic Park becomes a memorial signifying and enhancing the absence of memory of the place being "cleaned up" for the Olympic Games. The text in its entirety works in a fragmentary manner - like a collage of elements from different repertoires that can be interpreted individually by each reader through his or her personal, visual associations. The fragments of this narrative are the transcribed testimonies or oral histories of older residents ranging from seamen, gangsters and market traders to club-goers and prominent authors. Readers also learn about Hackney through Sinclair's stories from his own life in his house in Hackney. Handmade drawings which accompany chapter headings further increase the narrative's visuality, offering glimpses of different parts of the borough, some of which can be looked up on the maps provided.

Sinclair's disintegrated narrative implies the fragmentary or the multi-dimensional nature of real life while at the same time it provides valuable insights into the history and development of the microcosm in relation to the rest of the city. Rather than tell his reader what is most important or relative Sinclair relies on impressionistic memories and observations of everyday objects and life-as-lived. This authorial strategy can be read as an active refusal

to attribute importance to one particular thing, person or event; read in the context of the Olympic Park project it offers a sense of place developed from 'within' the community thus making it possible for subjects to find positions from which to 'speak'⁴ and against Hackney's media-constituted identity as a stigmatised space in need of purification.

Through their distinct approaches to contextualising the data that they document, these literary documentaries participate in a renewal of what the French sociologist Bruno Latour has characterised as an empiricism of a "new order", one that counteracts "objectified facts" or "matters of fact" by producing more complex and historically situated "matters of concern".⁵ According to Latour, science has for too long claimed to produce 'objective facts' while actually leading us away from the 'real' nature of things.⁶ Latour points to the threat of such abstract signifying practices, which assert and legitimize power by producing statistics or (notions of) natural proof – documents that, once having been produced within a system of legal discourse, claim their power and place therein and pose as truths or 'reality'. In their place he encourages instead a renewal of empiricism in order to "get closer to facts". The Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek highlights a similar discrepancy between the lived experience of the subject and the economic system. While discussing the systemic violence of global economic capitalism, Žižek uses the distinction between "reality" and "the Real" to describe the inconsistency between the lived experience of the subject (reality) and the economic system (the Real).

'Reality' is the social reality of the actual people involved in interaction and in the productive processes, while the Real is the inexorable "abstract", spectral logic of capital that determines what goes on in social reality. One can experience this gap in a palpable way when one visits a country where life is obviously in shambles. We see a lot of ecological decay and human misery. However, the economists' report that one reads afterwards informs us that the country's economic situation is "financially sound" – reality doesn't matter, what matters is the situation of capital. (Žižek, *Violence*: 11)

⁴ Anderson 1991:10-15

⁵ Latour 2004

⁶ Latour 2004. See also, Latour 1986, Latour and Woolgar 1996

We see here an ideological abstraction that disregards human concerns and the fact that capital hinges on their productive capacities. According to Latour, this approach characterises the "old empiricism" in which the economist's report provides us with "matters of fact" which determine only the situation of capital in a country while ignoring what goes on in "social reality". To counter this discrepancy, Latour urges a contextualisation of data into more relevant and durable "matters of concern".⁷ "The question was never to get away from facts, but to get closer to them, not fighting empiricism but, on the contrary, renewing empiricism." (Latour 2004: 231) Works of art and literature, such as the literary documentaries by Mehta and Sinclair which counteract this data fetish acquire their importance from the fact that they can (and should) contradict the validity of possibly misleading and supposedly 'objective' facts or documents, and problematize the absolute notion of documentation.

There is no doubt about the unique qualities of each of the books considered in this essay. Nevertheless, both are profoundly urban texts, concerned with the people who occupy the megacity – in both its public and private spheres. Both authors visit the physical locations of meaningful events and meet the people involved, gathering the testimonies they need to form a multi-dimensional narrative. Both acknowledge their explicitly subjective and reflexive positions, but nevertheless lay claim to an empirical approach well-suited to the understanding of complex mega cities. Their method of sideways-glancing presents alternative pictures or paradoxical undersides to existing narratives, while their research indirectly exposes oppressive capitalist or political interests that formalise and exercise power, often with the support or involvement of the state. This approach does not necessarily topple hegemonic knowledge systems (and perhaps does not aim to do so either). Instead, the authors try to break through dominant discourses by introducing their own narrative of the megacity. In this manner, they get caught up in the conflict between who constitutes and controls the urban space. Their counter-hegemonic discourse produces a particular discursive reality that strives to express the shared 'reality' of those who occupy the urban space.

⁷ Latour's empiricist sociological method is a "triad of description, explanation and interpretation", whereby he urges a redistribution of existing notions of 'objectivity'. See Krarup and Blok (2011)

By focusing on matters of concern these texts give us special access to the city and suggest new ways of 'seeing' the city. In the process they represent a key source of insight into the megacity and its people. The literary documentary mode facilitates a specific discursive appropriation (or creation) of "territory" in megacities within the urban struggle over power and space. In each case, the narrative itself gives us a specific 'image', that is, it provides us with the contours of the megacity. In this way, these texts provide a foundation for evaluating and shaping ongoing urban "realities", and therefore constitute essential contributions to the documenting of cities today.

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Feeling at home?
A city with room for everyone?¹
Jette Sandahl



Figure 1.
Feeling safe.
Photo by BENTS,
from the Copenhagen
Museum WALL

The vision of a green, sustainable and balanced city with vigilant protection of the built environment and a vision of becoming an inclusive and well-integrated city are central elements for Copenhagen, in its policies and programmatic planning for the city as a harmonious place in which to live.



Figure 2.
Photo by amirzainorin.
Copenhagen Museum WALL

¹ This paper is based on a number of conference presentations, and some sections will have appeared in similar forms in other publications

Empowering residents to participate in shaping and developing the qualities of urban life is a core value and motivation for the municipality. Copenhagen, says the municipality, should be a place “with room for everyone . . . where one can feel at home, trust one’s neighbour and the institutions, and be active in the local democracies.”

In this vision of participation, cultural citizenship and democracy, differences between Copenhageners are “to be seen as an asset and be actively used.... Real diversity is only possible if citizens feel they are treated equally. Copenhageners should be equal, but are not identical. People therefore need to have differentiated possibilities and opportunities. Integration is a dynamic and mutual process where all citizens... get involved with matters of the city.”

Democracy as work in progress

Democracy is always work in progress. It is never complete, never perfect, and it is always defined as much through what and whom it excludes as by what and whom it includes. The 20th century saw an expansion of *who* – in terms of



Figure 3.
The Maids' Union
1900-1910. Photo from the
Copenhagen
Museum WALL

class and gender and race – was included, and the 21st century seems to bring a radical expansion of *what* is included.

Formal, representative democracy – as it governs also the City of Copenhagen – with its foundation in abstract concepts of equality is no longer perceived as an adequate form, when it comes to creating and governing a contemporary city and exploring and ensuring the best quality of life for its residents.

The complexities of urban life are exposing the built-in shortcomings or failures of formal representative democracy and pushing municipal governments into supplementing its long- established democratic practices with extensive processes of public hearings. The model of democracy itself is stretched, pushed and pulled out into the local neighbourhoods, into apartment blocks, schools, work places, into close contact with people’s diverse, specific – and often contradictory – needs.

Democracy is a continuous process shaping our everyday lives and our relationships in basic terms of rights and of needs, in terms of responsibility and accountability, in terms of freedom and equality. It is about acknowledging and



Figure 4.
Demonstration
against
unemployment
1932. Photo from
the Copenhagen
Museum WALL

respecting the legitimacy and points of view of the other – not least when they differ from one's own - and a recognition that one's own needs are constantly framed by those of the other and have to be continuously negotiated.

While the need for social cohesion seems as acute as ever in the city, coexistence cannot be built on illusions of sameness, of homogeneity or easy harmony. It has to be grounded in an acceptance of difference, disagreement, conflict, different world views, and on people's active participation and willingness to get involved directly with each other.²

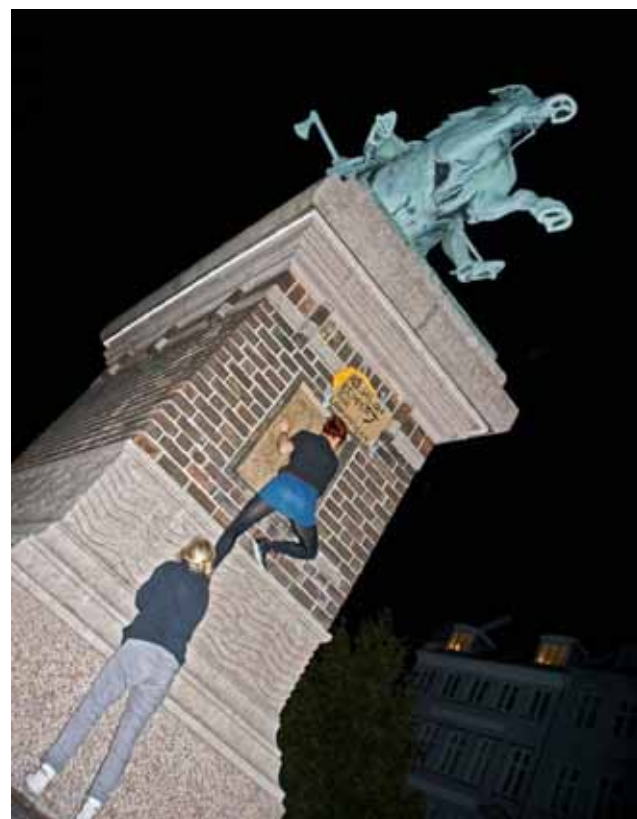


Figure 5.
Copenhageners continuously
invent new forms of activism
and ways of voicing their views.
Photo Red Dragon, Copenhagen
Museum WALL

² A poster from the Free City of Christiania – which, if any, practices radical inclusion – proclaimed ‘Disagreement makes us strong’ – an ironic, but future oriented rephrasing of the 20th century axiom that ‘unity makes us strong’.

Repositioning the museum towards cultural participation

As are cities and city governments, so museums are also being pushed, pulled and enticed into new areas or spheres of cultural democracy and participative practices.

Often lagging behind their cities and unable adequately to anticipate and facilitate the rapid and dynamic changes of the cities they serve, many city museums are being forced to examine their mission and purpose, their strategies and core values.

Since the mid-20th century, cultural policies in Denmark and in the capital of Copenhagen have called for equal access to culture for all. Most cultural institutions fail to live up to this ideal, but it is an obligation that is voiced with increasing gravity, inside and outside the sector.



Figure 6.
From the exhibition
'The City Speaks',
2012, Museum of
Copenhagen

Figure 7.
Community dig 2012.
Museum of Copenhagen.



The Museum of Copenhagen is committed to transforming its working methods to offset the systematic exclusion that is characteristic of cultural institutions as well as to creating new platforms for cultural participation. Through new partnerships, contributions are encouraged from people who have not traditionally been represented or heard as active voices in the collections or communication of the museum. The museum has begun to facilitate participation and mediation, and invite users to engage with, challenge and contest each other.

The museum is repositioning itself within and as an integral and relevant part of a contemporary, diverse, urban context. On many levels the museum

Figure 8.
Portal announcing the
exhibition 'WASTE', 2012,
Museum of Copenhagen



is deconstructing the standard narratives of chronology, of male power and privilege shared by so many other city museums, finding instead a plurality of voices and continuously shifting perspectives and multiple points of view.

Urban identities and a discourse of 'becoming'

Identity in museums has traditionally been understood or interpreted in terms of history or the past. But in real life people seem less interested in where they come from and, increasingly, more concerned with who they want to be or what is to become *of* them. Metropolitan and urban identities, individual as well as

Figure 9.
Roma at the
Copenhagen
Common 1972,
from the exhibition
Becoming a
Copenhagener.
Copenhagen
Museum WALL.



collective, are shaped as much through hopes and ambitions for the future as by memories of the past. The museum, correspondingly, must be prospective as much as it is retrospective.

The Museum of Copenhagen has gathered a series of initiatives within its divisions of research, collections, outreach, exhibitions and communication under the heading of “Becoming a Copenhagener.” While the official national identity tends to be a closed system based on historic references, where one seems to either be or not be a Dane, a Copenhagener is something one can choose to become. Urban Copenhagen identities belong to an open rather than a closed category. For many international immigrants the simple statement of ‘I am a Copenhagener’ can put an end to years of agonising over one’s Danishness or lack thereof. The exhibition ‘Becoming a Copenhagener’ opened up or released a quite sensitive and rather tabooed discussion.

Judging from its public reception, it also seems to have renewed or confirmed a public faith in the dynamic concept of ‘becoming’. The idea of an open future where one can take part in creating one’s life and identities seems better in tune with the self-images of both native-born and immigrant Copenhageners.

At any given point of time the cultural heritage of a capital or a metropolis reaches way beyond its own geographical area. The city absorbs and transforms and passes on the multifarious and hybrid cultures of the many people coming



*Figure 10.
Concert at Rust, 2010.
Photo by bobby,
Copenhagen
Museum WALL*

*Figure 11.
Waiting for the
bus. Photo mialise
2012, Copenhagen
Museum WALL*



to the city. The Museum of Copenhagen interprets current patterns of migration and globalisation against a background of traditions as old and as complex as the history of the city itself, and recognises a continuous exchange with the surrounding world as a precondition for urban growth and development. The Museum of Copenhagen is now gradually replacing the former permanent chronological galleries with shorter-term thematic and issue-oriented



Figure 12. Copenhagen Museum WALL at Kongens Nytorv, 2010

exhibitions. While the themes or topics vary from sustainability to sexual orientation to Renaissance textiles and objects vary from toys to archaeological finds to current street debris, contemporary urban issues will be present as an explicit agenda or as a powerful, structuring undercurrent.

A live platform for public involvement

Most of the work done at the Museum of Copenhagen will, at some point, flow through the interactive, digital Copenhagen Museum WALL, now well into its second and third life, on the streets and squares of Copenhagen.

The WALL has been called a declaration of faith in the city of Copenhagen. In technical terms it is a ten by two metre digital, interactive, multi-user, multi-touch screen, composed of four high definition plasma screens, mounted into a customised container, run by thirty dedicated softwares drawing on a database, and connected through a website, www.copenhagen.dk.

The WALL provides playful strategies for exploring the urban landscape and charting the personal mappings of a city. Based on local landmarks of subjective



Figure 13. Screenshot from the production phase of the Copenhagen Museum WALL, 2009

associations, of houses, trees, gardens in bloom, vacant lots, sculptures, pets barking in back yards, beached cars, eternal roadworks, a particular smell, the WALL is becoming a "map" where even the no-man's-land between quarters is full of meaning. The WALL is growing into a psycho-geographic atlas of past and present memories and emotions of the city.

While people identify or define themselves as Copenhageners, when questioned



Figure 14. A fan at a Tommy Steele concert 1958. Photo Helmer Lund Hansen, Copenhagen Museum

closer, Copenhagen identities seem to be anchored in particular parts of the city, or even at street level. By employing young people who are firmly rooted in different neighbourhoods in long term outreach programmes, the Museum of Copenhagen tries to document the patterns and flows, the secret places and sacred places of the unofficial urban spaces. Artefacts, photos, videos, stories and soundscapes are collected in an exploration of identities and sense of ownership to particular quarters from the inside.

Copenhagen's topography is that of a lived-in, well-worn city, where every corner is an intersection in a matrix of time and place and meaning. The past lives visibly in the present, also where it has long gone to ashes or is now actually physically dismantled. On the WALL chronology becomes layering rather than clear succession. Like the language of the unconscious and of dreams the cityscape interface does not know negation. It adds layers, associations, perceptions, reactions, and piles history on top of itself.

People interact with the WALL on their own chosen terms. The database structure is non-hierarchical, and anyone can invent and add their own factual and poetic tags as their personal experience and emotional realities fit into the present history of the capital.



Figure 15.
Anger.
Photo Copenhagen Museum,
Copenhagen Museum WALL



Figure 16.
Behind the wall. Photo
lunaluna, 2012, Copenhagen
Museum WALL

Behind the dreamlike cityscape lies a huge database containing historic images from the museum collection, supplemented – seamlessly - by images and comments uploaded by users. Copenhageners and other interested people contribute with images from their family albums, with new shots from everyday life as well as very ambitious and unique artistic photos from contemporary Copenhagen. Photo competitions on specific themes are conducted for the WALL by the museum, often in collaboration with other partners. Small and large thematic collections of contemporary images are donated and uploaded by libraries, schools, social institutions, and shelters. All of these photos - material that residents or other users of the WALL have found significant - are ready to be harvested and will strengthen the Museum's collection of photographic images of contemporary as well as historic Copenhagen.

Shifting paradigms for what scientific inquiry means

For the Museum of Copenhagen, the WALL serves as a hugely successful platform for empowering residents and other stakeholders in participating in the description and creation of cultural heritage, and for encouraging dialogue with and between the people of Copenhagen, residents and visitors alike.

However, as for most museums, these new participatory paradigms have had

much less impact in the museum's collecting of three-dimensional objects.

While continuous new collecting is essential for the museum in addressing current issues, and while collections, as evolving, growing organisms, remain essential for a museum's unique contribution to society, it seems, nevertheless, that collections are the most resistant to changing policies and practices.

The necessity of obsessive order of good collections management, along with the logic of museum registration and documentation systems, seem adverse to the chaos, the diversity, richness, flux and fluidity - and the people - of the city. The official registration guide for modern history objects in Danish historical collections goes better with the constancy and stability of rural society, and the craft, techniques and social organisation of the early period of industrialisation. The response of museums to the increasing and overwhelming complexity of the large conurbations is still to focus on the ordered, structured city of city planning and - an often sanitized version of - public life, and to shy away from the disorder, disarray, and awkwardness of real, everyday lives.

In the multiple, personal voices of new exhibitions and in the personal and subjective tagging of the WALL uploads, the Museum of Copenhagen has been approaching a philosophical perspective that assures visitors that "[T]ruth is no longer measured by its distance to the subjective."³

Collecting materialised feelings and condensed emotions

The museum has now set itself the challenge of testing the continued relevance in the present time of a very traditional core collection - objects from the life of philosopher Søren Kierkegaard - through participatory strategies and working methods. This 200 year-old collection will be revitalized through new, issue-based collecting, with the active involvement of residents, museum visitors, and other stakeholders. The museum will take the plunge fully into

³ Evelyn Fox (1983), Gender and Science, in Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka (eds.), Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science, Boston: pp. 207-226



Figure 17.
Is the grief and the cruelty of the break-up as devastating today as ever? Søren Kierkegaard Collection. Museum of Copenhagen

the minefield of the personal, subjective and private realm, mapped through the rich, differentiated - often tortured but never banal - concepts of love in Kierkegaard's writings.

Kierkegaard's objects - including the ring from the famously broken engagement - will be examined from both a biographical and a phenomenological point of view, tracing the objects as metaphors for and as embodiments of human emotions, as materialized feelings and condensed emotions.

In a new exhibition the original Kierkegaard objects will be encircled by new contemporary objects donated or lent to the museum by the public from their own private "emotional museums," as their contribution to the documentation of the complex forms that love takes today. Each new object will carry its



Figure 18.
Do we stay shackled to former loves? Or do we allow ourselves to celebrate liberation? Søren Kierkegaard Collection, Museum of Copenhagen

original owner's tag or stories or interpretation. The objects and stories will span parental and sibling love, friendship, erotic love and desire, longing and hope, as well as the undercurrents of seduction, submission and subjugation, rejection, absence of love, inability to love, broken hearts, broken promises and broken relationships.

With this project the Museum of Copenhagen will open a public conversation on love as it is felt and experienced at the beginning of the 21st century, but also on the - strangely silent or muted - gaps and discrepancies between the official ideals, norms or ideologies of love, and the current urban demographics.

The Museum of Copenhagen is interested in how love is playing itself out in a global context. The Museum is offering the 'Objects of Love, Works of Love' exhibition for international touring, and is inviting museums across the world to participate in creating joint or comparable contemporary collections that testify to changing or constant patterns and cultural differences and likenesses in these personal and intimate relationships, on which everyone by definition is an absolute expert.



Figure 19.
*Who provides you
with nurturance,
emotional and social
support in your life?*
Søren Kierkegaard
Collection, Museum
of Copenhagen



Figure 20. *The Bridge*. 2012. Photo Sarah, Copenhagen Museum WALL

**Of cities and their faces: pavement exhibits
and street museums in Québec City and Tunis**

Habib Saidi

Before I get to the heart of the subject of this chapter, I would like, by way of introduction, to take a little detour and tell you about a few personal experiences that started me thinking about pavement exhibits. This is an auto-ethnographic look back at another time in my life, at the walks, observations, and encounters I often made in the souks of the Medina in Tunis, the capital of Tunisia and the city where I lived before moving to Canada. At the time, I would walk through the souks almost daily, on my way to and from my job in the city centre. I naturally observed the shopkeepers, in particular the sellers of local crafts when they were opening their shops early in the morning and setting up their merchandise.



Figure 1.
Street art © Dream City Festival.

And one thing always struck me: it was the way, the techniques, and even the art with which some shopkeepers exhibited their wares. I use the word *exhibit* because, in my opinion, it is the best word to describe their approach. They did not simply and mindlessly set their merchandise on shelves. Rather, they carefully laid out their wares so as to catch the eye and bring in the customer.

Shopkeepers, as will be shown later, give life to a people's version of museographical art. They have a certain know-how that allows them to transform the façade of their shop, more specifically the front which extends out toward the pavement, into a stage where star merchandise plays the role of host and hostess, inviting passers-by to stop and come inside. In Tunisian Arabic, this know-how is called *tawjih*, and comes from the root *wajh*, meaning face, façade.

Objects that say, "Hello!"

Some shopkeepers with whom I had developed the habit of exchanging a few words as I passed in front of their display often asked me what I thought of their shop's appearance. One of them, who was very passionate about this work, told me that his products were there to wave at the passers-by, to say "Hello" to them whether or not they came in to buy something. They were also there to brighten the passer-by's day, to make it more meaningful. "You," he said to me, "what happens when you come by here in the evening when our shops are all closed? What do you think of these alleys? Do you recognize them without the objects that you see here and there along the way, without our faces and our shops that smile at you, without the odours and colours of the spices and perfumes?"

This young shopkeeper was perhaps 30 years old; he had a degree from France. After his father's death, he decided to take over the family business. He saw this way of putting the most attractive objects up front as an art form that was typical of port cities, including Tunis. In his opinion, these cities barricaded themselves behind their fortress walls when under attack by invaders, and yet at the same time opened themselves up to travelling merchants just the same as they now are opening up to tourists, by displaying their most attractive goods, by putting their best "face" forward.



Figure 2.
A gate and a face
© Dream City Festival.

"Take a look at our houses, especially their façades," he told me. "Look at the way the doors and windows are decorated with all sorts of shapes and colors. Don't they look like the mouths and eyes of faces? Many people put a great deal of effort into making the front of their house attractive; perhaps even more effort than they do for their own faces. So they have transformed the doors and windows of their homes into works of art which, in my opinion, say a considerable amount about the inside. By that I mean their identities, the way they see life, the way they open up to the world and other people, whether it be someone who is a regular fixture in the neighbourhood or someone who is passing through for the first time."

"When I walk in these neighbourhoods and see these sculpted, decorated doors and windows, I see faces that smile at me, talk to me, tell me stories about the city and its inhabitants. An open door is like a smiling mouth, an open window is an eye that is watching me. I do not take those photos that we see in tourism advertising lightly, the picture of a jasmine seller or a young woman in traditional dress standing beside one of the beautiful white-washed houses of the Sidi Bousaid neighbourhood with their pale blue doors and windows and their orange door frames. They are not simple folkloric stereotypes. They are a reminder of a language that we are in danger of forgetting, the language of our faces, so distinct, both as we see them and as others dream of them. The same is true of our shops and houses, our streets and alleys. They are places

where we show our faces, like so many sidewalk exhibits.” These excerpts from conversations I had with this Medina shopkeeper and with other colleagues of his who expressed similar ideas popped back into my head three years ago when I was putting together a research project on Tunis and Québec City¹. One of the project topics was the strategies used by public and private sectors to embellish the city and make it more attractive, not just to tourists but also to its own citizens. The hypothesis that I put forward is that these people, who include architects, urban planners, artists, craftsmen, shopkeepers, municipal employees, and elected officials, work to present their city’s most representative traits, particularly its heritage aspects. In so doing, they draw the city’s face, based on the traits and characteristics that residents and travellers readily recognize.

They thus allow the city to pose and ex-pose itself, be it through daily activities, urban planning, or popular or learned heritage staging. It is primarily these practices that create a museum-like paradigm in the city, that create a multi-dimensional arrangement of positions and ex-positions for itself and the world. Posing and ex-posing are to be understood here in two ways. On the one hand, as the manner in which objects (buildings, monuments, streets, landscapes) represent the city in their presentation as models. On the other hand, as strategies by which the various stakeholders act and interact with these objects and enable them to assume and express their exposability and, by extension, that of the city.

An open-air museum process is thus set in motion through the museumification of certain neighbourhoods, particularly the city’s historic neighbourhoods, and the establishment of what could be called pavement exhibits. These urban development practices help to conserve and display the city’s heritage *in situ*, that is to promote the heritage elements in the places where they have always been and in the communities to which they belong. As such, the museumification

¹ This project is entitled *Villes, tourisme et patrimoine : regard croisé sur Québec et Tunis* (cities, tourism and heritage: a combined look at Québec City and Tunis). It is financed by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and was conducted from 2007 to 2012. The present chapter stems from this project.

process as it is understood here is not pejorative, is not synonymous with mummification. Nor does it refer to an unchanging image of the city as an independent object to be contemplated or as a collection to be conserved in museum display cases. Rather, it refers to the positive, dynamic aspect of museumifying, that is the act of attributing museum-like characteristics to a place by opening it up to the public and equipping it with interpretive tools such as guided tours, signage, and all the other communication and popularizing techniques that make it easier for visitors to understand what they are seeing and where they are, both in time and in place. The site can then, as André Gob (2009) has stated, “be seen as a museum as defined by ICOM. It has, for all intents and purposes, been museumified.”

What really distinguishes this type of pavement exhibit is that it focuses on the spirit of a place by presenting the two dimensions of its heritage, namely tangible and intangible. What is more, they attribute a large place to historical interpretation and guided presentations that help the public to move from one exhibit to another while having the triple pleasure of watching, touching, and walking in the heart of history (Monpetit 2005).

A city reconquers of its faces

I would now like to present a few examples of this approach that have been carried out in Tunis and Québec City. The first example is that of a multi-disciplinary arts festival organized in Tunis under the name *Dream City* in the autumn 2007 and 2009. It is based on a concept that consists of different circuits in the Medina where the visitor as spectator chooses the path to follow. Depending on the path chosen, the visitor sees different contemporary works of art, performances, and films. These works of art are exhibited on the pavement in the small streets of the Medina, in traditional homes, cafés, and restaurants, or in more unexpected places such as tombs, construction sites, or busy, noisy public squares. To go from one exhibit to the other, visitors simply have to follow the red, green, blue, or yellow arrows that identify each one of the circuits comprising these exhibits.

This festival has transformed the city into an open-air museum. First of all,

Figure 3.
Dancing on a
construction site
in the Tunis medina
© Dream City Festival.



by presenting the city as a giant artefact, incarnated for the most part, by the historical centre. And secondly, by helping visitors to experience palpably the time and space of the place. Indeed, one of the strengths of this festival is that it invites visitors to fully immerse themselves in the Medina, the Medina as it is seen every day by its own inhabitants. For example, visitors can stop to taste traditional food as they walk from exhibit to exhibit. They can likewise stretch out on a couch or sit on the floor in a traditional house as they watch a short film or listen to a musician play on an old piano. They can sip tea and discuss with a craftsman. They can be immersed in a play or a dance where the artists mix with the spectators and the stage is none other than the historical site all around them.

There is another point about this festival that is particularly noteworthy. It is the relevant, beneficial dialogue that exists between the various partners involved in this event. The first dialogue worth noting is the one between the contemporary and traditional arts. This is evident in the paintings or other works of art that are exhibited beside or inside historical sites and monuments. There is also the dialogue between visitors and local residents. The residents are no longer confined to their usual role in the standard tourism circuits, namely that of a prop, a simple curiosity to be captured in a photograph. Now they are real

people who talk back and interact.

The residents see these hybrid shows as a complement to the spectacle of everyday life of which they are the heroes. They look at the visitors who, in one way or another, are part of the shows and exhibits. And finally, they watch the artists who are playing and performing in front of them. A relationship of mutual benefit has grown up between the residents and artists. Both groups play their role as objects in the eye of strangers. The residents set the stage in places and with items that are relatively stable and permanent, whereas the artists exhibit fleeting, short-lived works of art. This exchange, this give and take, has turned the Medina into a creative and harmonious “zone of contact” (Clifford 1997) between tradition and modernity, between art and its environment, between the different faces and traits of the old city, that is, the faces and traits of the artists, residents, sites and monuments.

The tendency to employ pavements, walls, building facades, and public places as exhibit sites has undergone a rapid expansion since the Tunisian revolution that began on January 14, 2011. In addition to the political protests that sprang up almost daily here and there, the country has undergone a feverish, never-before-seen museumification. One of the main expressions of this has been the organisation of street exhibits which have often been inspired by the revolution. One of the most important was *Artocratie en Tunisie*, in which the faces of ordinary citizens were put up in homage to all the Tunisians who, coming from all the different social classes, played a heroic role during the revolution. The work drew its inspiration from the photography techniques of the French urban photographer, JR. His approach involved showing photos of ordinary Tunisian citizens on the walls of large buildings, that is, in places where the portraits of dictators and regime symbols were once displayed. The young Tunisian artists who were the creators of these exhibits invaded practically every corner of the

² This exhibit grabbed the attention of the Tunisian and foreign media. It made the front page of several international papers and magazines in three different languages, namely Arabic, French, and English.

³ See Fethi Benslama, *Soudain la Révolution: géopsychanalytique d'un soulèvement*, (suddenly a revolution: geops psychoanalysis of an uprising), Tunis, Ceres, 2011.

city of Tunis as well as those of other cities in the country, displaying the faces of their compatriots. Their faces demonstrated emotions such as joy, victory, glory, humour, and enthusiasm. These images showed shining, exuberant Tunisians who were glad to have had their revolution and re-conquered their city and neighbourhoods. These Tunisians were looking outward and showing their faces, without worrying about police censorship or surveillance by informants. Quietly, Tunisians re-conquered their freedom by invading public places that were once forbidden to them and by looking right into their own faces.

In this way, the artists-exhibitors succeeded not only in placing their art in the heart of effervescent public places but also in presenting it as an agent for change. In addition to arousing the curiosity of passers-by and the local and international² media now focused on Tunis, the choice of substituting portraits of citizens for the dictator's also implicitly invited the former to become aware of the changes they had engendered, despite the state of shock they were in because of the sudden, unpredictable nature of the Revolution³.

The effectiveness of these portraits glued to walls and windows was all the greater because of the impression they gave of being etched there and even petrified. They portrayed the citizens as if they had suddenly emerged from a collective isolation to which they had been subjected and which had robbed them of their faces. These were citizens who, through their photos, gave the impression of rediscovering their own faces and staring passers-by in the eyes, trying to recognize them and talk to them for the first time after years of silence and mutual distrust. In this period where political and cultural activities of all sorts were bubbling over, the exhibit depicted Tunisia with the traits of a city that had stood up and recovered all of its strength shortly after waking up after a long nightmare haunted by censorship, fear, and terror. It is a city that has found nothing better to offer to those who liberated it from the dictator's grasp, to those who had always borne its name, to all the Tunisians without exception⁴,

⁴ It is worth noting that Tunis is pronounced Toonis in Arabic and designates both the country, Tunisia, and the capital. The name Toonsi thus signifies both Tunisians (from the country) and Tunisois (from the city). To distinguish between the two, we say toonsi from the assima (capital) and toonsi from Toonis (Tunisia).

than to carry them in her heart, waving their portraits high and echoing their cries of glory. The city was acting as a palimpsest on which they could write their new-found nobility in the form of street protests, wall slogans, and demonstrations of joy, humour, and anger in public places.

Québec City or the museum of museums

Québec City, like Tunis, has seen and is seeing changes that make it one of the more museumified cities in the world. It is worth noting that the city has a number of museums that mark the urban landscape and contribute to its vitality. By way of example, there is the Museum of Civilisation, the Museum of French North America, the Fine Arts Museum which is located on the Plains of Abraham – one of the most historic and prestigious sites in all of Canada – and the Fort Museum, which is specialised in the military history of the city. Québec City is likewise the home to numerous interpretation centres and organisations that focus primarily on promoting its urban heritage. I'm thinking in particular of the Society for Urban Heritage (SPUQ) and the Six Associates Historical Services. The Society for Urban Heritage is almost exclusively specialised in developing the open-air museum aspects of Québec City's historical quarter. The Society organises extra-muros outdoor exhibits *in situ* and circuits developed from a museo-graphical perspective, of which the best known is Circuit-Québec. The circuit is punctuated with interactive stations located at strategic spots in the Old City where they attract the visitors' attention to a monument, site, or surrounding landscape. There is an illustration at each station that describes the site as it was at its foundation and an audio recording with an accompanying historical narration. By wandering from one station to another, visitors are able to come to a comparative understanding of the different historical periods that have shaped the city.

The second organisation is a private company named The Six Associates Historical Services. It is a sort of theatre company with costumed, historical guides who practise what could be described as living history tours or sidewalk museum theatre. The members of this company are for the most part young graduates from the History Department at Laval University. Their training has led them to put the accent on the social history of Québec City. The themes

that they present often deal with social phenomena that marked the city in one period or another, such as traditional medicine and healers, epidemics in the time of New France, the fur trade during the English Regime, well known Québec breweries, etc.

Each one of the guided tours has a different theme. Wearing a costume, a historian-guide-actor plays the role of a historical character who tells stories and explains events that are related to these social phenomena and that often took place at the sites the tour group visits. These places, sites, and monuments act as backdrops that lend credence to the guide's stories and allow the visitors to project themselves back in time. They are carried away by the presentation of the actors who stand right in front of them so as to fully immerse the visitors in the historic atmosphere. The actors do this not only to create a mobile "theatrical" presentation that succeeds for the most part in avoiding car traffic, but also in communicating directly with their audience. The accent is placed in particular on facial expressions, makeup, vocal intonation, and historical storytelling. They thus implicitly invite visitors to see the city and its past as it is described and portrayed in the street, through the traits, faces, and personality of the people personified.

I would like to conclude briefly by saying that this concept of pavement exhibits and museology that I have tried to develop in this paper is probably similar to what is taking place in other cities. In other words, these activities reinforce the museum-like nature, the museumification which constitutes a common feature of most of the cities that adopt these techniques and methods to promote their heritage in situ and that, in so doing, transform themselves into open-air museums. As such, the best museum in the city is the city itself, since it is the place and environment where the past shines in the present. The city is a museum that opens up to visitors like a book. Indeed, it is a museum-book in which its visitors-readers circulate, carrying the oxygen that keeps it alive.

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The diversity of urban life and the Carnival of Hammarkullen: how global meets local in a suburb of the city of Gothenburg, Sweden

Mats Sjölin

Since 1974 the Carnival of Hammarkullen has been a yearly event held on the last weekend of May in the suburb of Hammarkullen outside Gothenburg on the west coast of Sweden. At first sight this event must appear to an outsider like a Latin American carnival. This kind of carnival has never been a tradition in Sweden. On the European continent on the other hand, the carnival tradition goes far back in history. Its origin is lost in the mists of time but known to the Greeks in 1100 BC.¹ In Greece the Patras Carnival starts on the week before the beginning of the Greek Orthodox Great Lent. Like most carnival events in the Mediterranean and the Balkans it is connected with pagan rituals. In Christianity the carnival marks the last opportunity to celebrate before Lent. The Catholic carnivals are often based on local pre-Christian rituals. In medieval Europe the carnival was associated with wild woodsmen.² In Protestant countries similar festivals like “Fastnacht” in Germany and “Vastenavond” in Netherlands, have partly pagan origins.³



*Figure 1.
Candombe performance
at Hammarkullen 2001.
Göteborgs stadsmuseum*

¹ Rector

² Kinser

³ See also UNESCO Culture Sector – Intangible Heritage – 2003 Convention: Belgium.
<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?cp=BE>. Retrieved 2009-07-29.

The carnival has been characterised by Mikail Bakhtin in *Rabelais and his world* as “the people’s second life, organized on the basis of laughter”.⁴ This “time out of time” definition is the most accepted academic interpretation of carnivals today. The carnival is seen as a celebration of “dualism, contradiction, and mixed feelings”, its events deform, deconstruct and reinterpret the world as it is and promote social solidarity among its participants. The carnival as a ritual is “vital to recreation, but it is also the life blood of revolution.”⁵

All societies have their own self-serving mythologies whose meaning is to explain their origins, justify their ideologies, and legitimise their values and norms in order to create order in the universe. The public carnival event serves the participant’s purpose to “define themselves to themselves”.⁶ The carnival’s dualistic approach to understanding what’s going on is also relevant in approaching the dialectics between the city centre and its suburbs. I will argue that urban history today is not to be interpreted as a single narrative, but understood as several competing histories. This article tries to recognise the different urban histories, memories and the diversity of urban voices. The Carnival of Hammarkullen is, in this sense, a part of this ongoing interpretation of urban life.

Late modern Gothenburg

Late modern Gothenburg was dependent on its industries. After the second world war the city’s factories expanded rapidly. The Eriksberg shipyard extended their plant with prefabrication utilities to the west and the Götaverken yard built the new Arendal shipyard further to the west of the city. The Volvo car plant was already situated in the western parts of the city. The expansion of the ball bearing manufacturer SKF was both in the factory’s vicinity in Gamlestaden in Göteborg (The Old City of Gothenburg) and abroad. For instance, in 1964, SKF bought the Italian ball bearing manufacturer Roberto Inceri Villar (RIV). SKF were amongst the first to recruit workers from Italy. In Italy unemployment

⁴ Bakhtin

⁵ Gilmore

⁶ Geertz



Figure 2.
Volvo Amazon and Volvo PV at
Volvo manufacturing plant 1970's.
Göteborgs stadsmuseum

was high after the war and most of the first immigrants came from the area around Torino where the ball bearing manufacturer RIV was located. The first immigrants arrived in 1947 and new groups were recruited in the years 1948, 1952, 1955 and 1964/1965.⁷ During the late 1960's and early 1970's new immigrants from Macedonia in the former Republic of Yugoslavia were recruited to the shipyards. Statistics are weak, official registration was prohibited, but in the 1970's a majority of blue collar workers at Volvo were registered as foreign citizens.⁸

A shortage of apartments forced the authorities to start a housing programme where one million apartments were to be built in ten years. Due to secret procurement the new suburb areas were located in the north east of the city away from the expanding industries. Thousands of immigrated workers were provided accommodation in the newly build suburbs of Angered, Hjällbo and

⁷ Beckman

⁸ Feiff C & Sjölin M.

Foreign citizens in relation to total number of workers

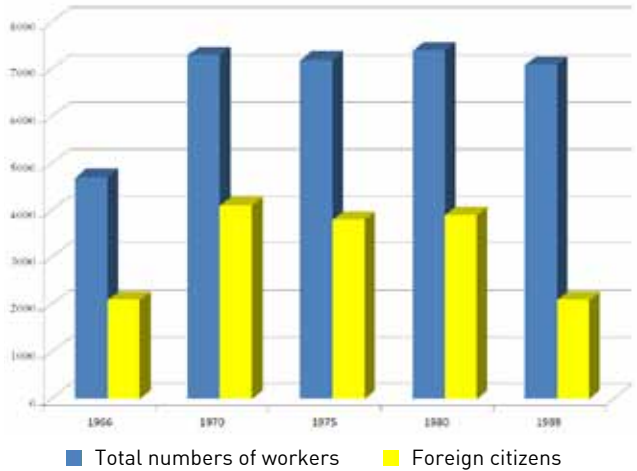


Table 1. Volvo manufacturing plant.

Kin immigration to Sweden 1980 - 2010

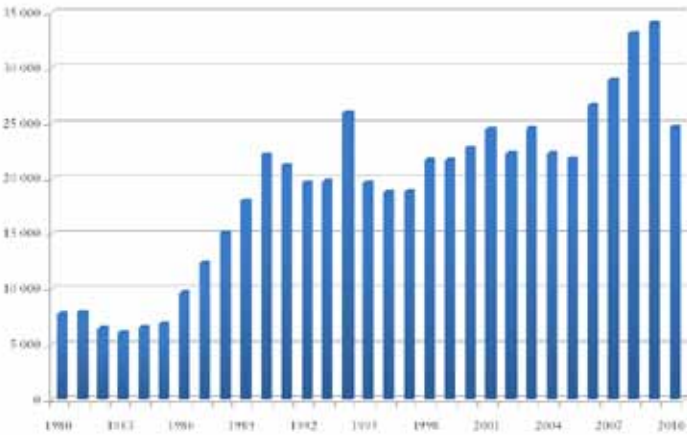


Table 2. Migrationsverket

Hammarkullen. During the 1980’s the industries and the city went into a decline. The suburbs of the north east were abandoned by most Swedish born citizens and left to people with low income or dependent on social welfare.⁹

Back in the 1970’s a small number of political immigrants from Latin America had settled in Hammarkullen. Their kin had, in the late 1980’s and the early 1990’s, started to arrive at what was the rather rundown suburbs in the north east, where rent was low. The local authorities desperately needed the revenue and gladly offered them apartments when the immigration authorities paid subsidies for the rent.

The new concrete suburb

To implement the Swedish housing programme, the construction industry needed to be rationalized. The prefabricated housing constructions, typical of the north east suburbs fit into the particular Swedish model of modernity which is based on a view of a certain social and economic rationality that co-ordinates with an imagined efficient society. The Swedish welfare state is defined as

⁹ Sjölin

a home. It has to do with more than just material safety, it’s a concept of a spiritual and emotional inclusion, a right to belong. This differs from the liberal tradition of a social contract between the state and the individual where rights and obligations must balance.¹⁰ The right for every citizen to belong is associated with being equal and, as a consequence, the formation of a homogenised society. Citizens of the Swedish welfare state are expected to be integrated into society which, on the other hand, presumes acculturation.¹¹



Figure 3.
One of the newly built suburbs to Göteborg 1974. Göteborgs stadsmuseum

Improving housing conditions was a cornerstone in forming the Swedish welfare state. It was, at the time, argued that the social environment was the source of criminality and bad behaviour in general. When the media began to report on criminality and the rebellion of young people in the new suburbs, it was to strike at the foundations of this imagined community.¹² Stereotypical tales, which are common in so many countries where there is a significant immigrant population, began to circulate about the immigrants’ appalling way of life in the suburbs.¹³ Counter narratives which paid tribute to the way of life in the new

¹⁰ Andersson

¹¹ Cadaval Olivia

¹² Sjölin 2004

¹³ Klintberg

housing areas were created.¹⁴ Both narratives served as interpretations of a new situation and influenced what was to become the carnival of Hammarkullen.¹⁵

The Spring festival that became a carnival

The Spring festival started with the organisation of spare time activity for young people in the area who wanted to show that they weren't as bad as everybody seemed to think. A typical headline describing Hammarkullen at the time was: "Where violence rules".¹⁶ They organized family activities, music performances that included local rock'n roll bands which performed late into the night. There were also political demonstrations during this first spring festival. A demonstration paraded through the residential area, demanding a place for youth recreation activities. From the beginning some of the participants were dressed in clothes associated with former popular cultural activities like Dixie and jazz music, which, back in 1930's and 1940's, was looked upon as subversive music, although later accepted by the cultural elite.¹⁷

After two worrying years when the festival was inhibited due to fighting and unrest, members of the Bolivian local community wanted to participate in what they instead wanted to call a carnival. The introduction of Latin American carnival dances, costumes and other props gave the former Spring festival a local feel. The Latin American carnival also introduced a new global political consciousness and awareness of historical events. The narratives, told in the carnivalesque tradition, were an historical interpretation of how the west colonized and mistreated the indigenous people of America. This was a new perspective on the history of the developing countries never told in Swedish schools whether they were in Hammarkullen or elsewhere in Sweden. In the 1981 carnival there was an attempt to challenge this historical approach by presenting a Viking ship and dressing up as Vikings.¹⁸

¹⁴ Jensen. Jens Jensen was an architect student who moved to Hammarkullen and documented people who lived there. The result became a book.

¹⁵ Franco P. in Green G. & Scher P.

¹⁶ Göteborg-Tidningen 1976.09.30

¹⁷ Interview with Britt-Marie Godthardt. Göteborgs stadsmuseum.

¹⁸ Documentary film of the carnival. Göteborgs stadsmuseum.

What is carnival?

Although the goal of festival organisers was to better the area's bad reputation and improve the future of the community, the festival wasn't at the beginning financially supported by the local authorities. The festival organisers wanted to construct an identity, a self-definition of living in the suburbs and turned to the young population for help in identifying the suburban and challenging the city centre media representations of a rough, concrete environment. The counterpoise ingredients were family activities oriented towards what might be defined as Tivoli pleasure activities like pie throwing, barbeques, hot dogs, traditional music entertainment like folk music and Dixie - and what was at the time described as aggressive, long haired rock'n roll bands. The community started to form its own narrative, inventing its own history and negotiating a future in dialogue with the public.



Figure 4.
Bolivian performance
at Hammarkullen 2011.
Göteborgs stadsmuseum

The construction of a suburban self, made by the majority population in Hammarkullen, left the people from Latin America to indentify themselves as being the Other. For people from countries like Bolivia, Chile, Uruguay “going out in the streets”, to a festival, was a way of feeling as if they were back home, creating a new common Latino identity, even if that was a utopian dream. In a festival participants can defy, transform and offer alternatives to everyday rules and structures. During a festival in Washington DC, USA, Olivia Cadaval recorded that people entered a utopian realm of freedom and equality in which they could imagine a different order.¹⁹

Different Latin American national identities came together in the Hammarkullen carnival to create a new Latino identity in the Swedish national context. As Cadaval concludes in her study of Latino identity in Washington DC, rituals that tell stories about a common past are central to a citizen’s adoption of an imagined common identity.²⁰ Local and global histories are interwoven into a new narrative that aims to identify a new reality.²¹ From being an aggregate of different national groups, they have become a single group united by culture and language, during the carnival. At the time of the carnival they wanted to take control over what it meant to become Swedish and to partake in the carnival, and thus the Latino identity showed itself to be adaptable and dynamic rather than static.²²

“A walk on the wild side”

Although the local community leaders of Hammarkullen never fully recognised the carnival, it became a celebration as well a political event. Community leaders participated from a distance, and unknowingly made the carnival into a festival of the Other, where the Otherness was, in negotiating terms, put up for sale. To uphold the carnival the carnival committee had to rely on different forms of sponsorship for finance. The carnival became, in the eyes of the

¹⁹ Cadaval

²⁰ Cadaval

²¹ Green G. & Scher P.

²² Cadaval



Figure 5. INTI performance at Hammarkullen 2008. Göteborgs stadsmuseum

majority a working class or an ethnic group, a jollification that, at worst, could threaten to undermine community discipline. It was therefore seen as wasteful of time, money and energy.²³ From a distance, this interpretation of the carnival served the purpose of highlighting the “normality” of the rest, confirming the reconstruction of the “average citizen” seen through the dominant Swedish homogeneity.

Treating all citizens alike is a basic concept in Swedish communal legislation. Inequity is by no means accepted. When the Carnival of Hammarkullen was then seen as a public spectacle of Otherness and difference, it was a way to maintain a dominant discourse arguing that in due course all citizens will become integrated into the Swedish welfare state. Taking the tram out to the suburb Hammarkullen to watch the carnival was looked upon as “a walk on the wild side”. Instead the Carnival of Hammarkullen’s multi cultural animated expression challenged the fundamental idea of a homogenous Swedish welfare state. The new Latino narrative, even if it was utopian, was the traditional Swedish welfare state’s dystopia.²⁴

Several times the carnival committee tried to make the carnival a part of the city’s official tourist entertainment programme, without success.²⁵ Projects financed by the city council had started a dialogue with the carnival committee which resulted in an exhibition presenting the history of the carnival.²⁶ In the 21st century the Göteborg cultural department, of which the city museum is a part, started, gradually, to engage in the financing of the Carnival of Hammarkullen.

Difference in diversity

Today the Carnival of Hammarkullen is a carnival of diversity where different groups from different parts of the world put on a performance. South American

²³ Owusu K. & Ross J.
²⁴ Eagleton T.
²⁵ Interview with Tony Parath. Committee Organizer of the Carnival of Hammarkullen. Göteborgs stadsmuseum.
²⁶ Esteban Johansson

carnival traditions co-mingle with the “Vikingarna” (Viking) parade music band, Swedish folk dancers, West coast jitterbugs, traditional Bulgarian performances and Nigerian association dancers. New outsiders have joined, and during the course of the carnival they become insiders, a new order where defining a cultural self is built on difference in diversity rather than as a minority in a majority. They carnivalise a new identity and reality of difference that reflect the multiple voices and points of view.²⁷

To relate to the Carnival of Hammarkullen, one must not perceive it as an obscure, ancient, third world picturesque tourist attraction. Instead it belongs to a modern experience whose aim is, in the eyes of the participants who live



Figure 6.
Swedish folk dancers
at Hammarkullen 2011.
Göteborgs stadsmuseum

²⁷ McGowan

the carnival, goal-oriented rather than some sort of ethnic event as society's majority has preferred to identify it. The carnival challenges a museum representation of the late modern city – is it to be something to be classified and static or goal-oriented and built on a participating approach? Instead of displaying artefacts as design objects the Gotheburg city museum has chosen the participating approach. An effort is made to include different narratives to be heard and to involve different interpretations of the city's modern history. If the Gothenburg city museum is about "we the people of Gothenburg", then the question of who is defining the "we" arises. Who defines the borders of the "community" and who decides what representations are on display in the museum?

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**The City Museum of São Paulo:
a new design for city museums in the era of the megacity**
Maria Ignez Mantovani Franco

*Figure 1.
Social and
environmental
diversity: a
slum lives
cheek by jowl
with a high
standard
building at
Morumbi
quarter, in São
Paulo. Photo:
Tuca Vieira.*



The City is a topography of the present, pointing to the future and looking back to the past.

Today, city growth averages one million people every week. In 1950 there were 86 cities with more than one million inhabitants, today they are some 400 across the world. However the most significant effect of the urban process is, without doubt, the explosion of megacities. It took one century for the urban population – around 3.4 billion – to surpass the world’s rural population, but United Nations projections indicate that by 2025 the urban population will reach 61 per cent of the total.

In the case of São Paulo, creating a new city museum requires, at the outset, that one should consider some 1,500 square kilometres, corresponding to the

administrative area, as the geographic area of study. That is, the area of the Municipality, politically divided into 96 districts where 11 million people live. However, approximately 20 million people live in the wider metropolitan area. During the last decades, studies confirmed by satellite images have indicated that two conurbation¹ axes are clearly distinguished and expanding: one extends towards Rio de Janeiro, 400 kilometres from São Paulo, and another is in the direction of Campinas, 100 kilometers away. Travelling along either axis one cannot help concluding that it is difficult to talk about São Paulo as a subject for a museum and, at the same time, ignore Greater São Paulo with its vast conurbation which is continually expanding and changing.

This theoretical model – a territorial museum – is nourished by the clear and evident notion that the city is something which undergoes mutations, a permanently pulsating being. The City Museum of São Paulo has as its artefact that very metropolis, and it requires dynamic structures capable of undertaking real time mutations, in order to cope with the oscillations of social life in the big city.

The gigantic urban area which comprises the Metropolitan Region of São Paulo and the Metropolitan Region of Campinas is the first macrometropolis of the southern hemisphere, inhabited by 22 million people, approximately 12 percent of the Brazilian population. Its factories form the richest industrial complex in Brazil. They are responsible for 65.3 per cent of the gross product of the State of São Paulo or 21.1 per cent of the Brazilian GNP (gross national product).

¹ Conurbation – a large urban area formed by cities, towns and villages that developed side by side until they merged into one urban area. (Houaiss, 2001, 826).

² In his studies to define urban planning for the northwestern part of the United States, the Scot Patrick Geddes, at the beginning of the twentieth century, defined the concept of macrometropolis as a widespread urban area, multipolarised by metropolises made up of vast conurbations. The apocalyptic term "necropolis" was also used during that period, assuming that megalopolises were doomed. From: Zanchetta, D. A primeira Macrometrópole do Hemisfério Sul. In: Revista Megacidades – Grandes Reportagens. São Paulo: O Estado de São Paulo, August, 2008: 64.

Though there is no one universal definition of an urban area, it is safe to assume that the Brazilian macrometropolis² is surpassed only by a few urban agglomerations, such as Tokyo-Yokohama, Shanghai or Mexico City. This suggests that the emerging countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America will, in the next decades, be the biggest generators of megacities.

Although this analysis tries to focus on the municipality of São Paulo as the museum artefact, one cannot deny or ignore the fact that a huge crowd moves daily along the axes that, as tentacles, connect São Paulo to its peripheral regions. Migratory fluxes have intensified along both directions in such a way that today there is social contact in São Paulo between city natives and the inhabitants of the wider urban region. The economic wealth of the State of São Paulo when considered in the general Brazilian context raises serious concerns related to this macroaxis. Besides its natural potentialities, it becomes the target of important political and economical dispute.

Modern urban planning requires multifaceted knowledge involving analysis by architects and urbanists, but it is also a fertile soil for other disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, education and museology. All the different professional standpoints converge in the study of the way of life and organisation of the populations in the megacity.

In the outer edge of the megalopolis, one can identify new social arrangements that articulate and make possible a collectively organised life that goes beyond city government initiatives. Considering the concept of multiple centralities around the core of the megalopolis itself, we see that those outer populations gravitate around other urban landmarks, new social references, new expanded centres, other forms of circulation, communication and social interaction. The word "periphery" is ambiguous since one can always ask: peripheral in relationship to what?

When we look at the global urban scenario it seems correct to state that the need to create museums about the city has never before presented itself with such intensity, especially so in the megalopolises of emerging countries. We

need to consider the sheer scale of these cities and adopt a more diversified format, multicentered, able to articulate social forces in a more encompassing way. Possibly we can make evident the fact that museums of cities, within this theoretical model, consider public interest as their priority and that they take actions that give priority to democratic access and enjoyment of the population, involving knowledge about the city where they live and work.

The City Museum of São Paulo project recommended, through exploratory interactions with young people, the adoption of the idea that São Paulo is an “Educating City”. Thus, it should consider itself as an active institution able to translate the feelings and ambitions of its population into a concrete programme for the museum.

Cities are the natural ground for multiculturalism, territories where diversities co-exist, where differences are confronted. Furthermore in Latin America and especially in Brazil, where São Paulo is doubtless its greatest expression, large cities have received multiple migratory fluxes through both immigration and emigration for most of the twentieth century. The consequences are that cities like Rio de Janeiro, Bogotá, Mexico City, Medellin, and so many others, are hybrid spaces, contradictory and multicultural.

Therefore in a large Brazilian city there is a pattern whereby newcomers rapidly find their most closely related ethnic group to which they can attach themselves, a first exercise in getting involved, in belonging; from this first welcome gesture, the newcomer will feel part of the group, but not confined to a ghetto. Members of different groups do not tend to exclude each other – on the contrary, they establish multicultural relationships, they socialise and absorb each other’s traditions and contradictions.

Considering the global scenario of intolerance between people, the multiculturalism that characterises Latin American metropolises may be one of their most powerful distinguishing features and strengths. It is possible that Latin American cities have the potential to develop new hybrid models, revealing an aptitude to adapt, possibly in a more ingenious form, to new global challenges.

*Figure 2.
Boxes used
for the
transportation
of horticultural
products
in the São
Paulo General
Warehousing
and Centres
Company
(CEAGESP).
Photo: Nair
Benedicto/N
Imagens.*



In 2003, as part of the 450th anniversary of São Paulo’s foundation, the Culture Secretary of the city proposed the creation of a City Museum of São Paulo that would value former initiatives in recording city history, but would also aim at broadening more traditional views in acknowledgement of the territorial complexity of São Paulo. The model of a city museum developed during that period is the subject of an in depth investigation and analysis in my doctorate thesis in Museology, which was presented to the “Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias”, in Lisbon. In my thesis, first conceived in 2003, the process of making sense of the urban space as a museum artefact took into account the following:

a) the underlying philosophy of the museum should be established from questions, problems and concerns addressed to the museum by city people

and should not follow a dynamic from top down, as is frequently the case;

b) the present should become the main component of the museum's philosophy and actions;

c) the museum should accept the challenge of real time interaction with different populations, looking for references representative of the present time and aiming at a collective construction of the future city;

d) the exact point when the city was founded would be no longer chosen and revered as the central starting point for the museum – on the contrary, other points of reference and other starting points would be considered through a wider notion of where city boundaries lie;

e) other forces in different areas of the wider city would be considered as legitimate and equally symbolic and important;

f) interaction would proceed with an increasing number of citizens, becoming part of networks that constitute the new logic of living – why not say surviving – in the large urban centers like São Paulo;

g) other means of communication should be explored, using modern technology, but shaping them to the intentions of each museum programme;

h) a new more humane form of discourse should be adopted that admits and digests different types of knowledge, logic and discourses, favouring a multidisciplinary architecture.

Among the various experiments carried through in association with the development of the City Museum of São Paulo, one of them became widely known: the "Expedição São Paulo: 450 anos" ("São Paulo Journey: 450 years")

The idea was to obtain a contemporary topography of the city of São Paulo. An urban journey was undertaken with an interdisciplinary character and two different routes were followed during one week. If we could attach unique

values to the "Expedição São Paulo: 450 anos", they would be the *method* and the *intentionality* of the programme. It surely was not a picturesque or naïve trip, nor was it a group of academic people looking to confirm their theses. There was detailed planning and we could count on community leaders linked to the municipal government, who indicated points to be considered in the definition of the routes to be followed by the travellers.

Suggestions on the points of interest to be included in the programme totalled 700. The co-ordination group analysed the suggestions and decided on two final routes: *North-South* and *East-West*. Two groups of travellers, of a multidisciplinary nature, were made up of anthropologists, architects, educators, psychoanalysts, archeologists, artists, photographers, filmmakers, museologists, sociologists, geographers, environmentalists, historians, planners and organisers. The travellers were assisted by a group of young students, mostly with a graduate degree in history, with specialization in museology or following the master degree in anthropology. They were responsible for approaching people to be interviewed, for distributing at the various places to be visited printed material concerning the City Museum and the journey itself. They were also responsible for obtaining authorisations for image use. Their most important task, however, was to take notes on forms specially conceived for that purpose, concerning items identified as being of interest for the future museum. Initially the idea was to make a record only and no collection had been foreseen. However, growing enthusiasm led many of the travellers to start on the direct collection of items and it became necessary to arrange for a daily reception of those items in predetermined points in the city. Items thus collected have been deposited at the Iconography and Museums Division of the Municipal Secretariat of Culture of São Paulo.

The dynamics of the "Expedição" included travelling along each route during the day and evening meetings in order to evaluate what had been accomplished and to plan what should be done along the next stretch. Every night each of the groups received a visit from a *social actor* specifically chosen. While one group heard the intense account of a homeless girl, the other received a deaf and blind woman; both tried to explain how to orient yourself in São Paulo faced with your own limitations. The two groups went by different visiting points:

slums, rap and hip hop groups, neighbourhood football clubs, samba clubs, different religious gathering places, telecentres, co-operatives, indigenous villages, social assistance, health, education and cultural centres. The city was seen from an elevated heliport at Avenida Paulista as well as from the bottom of an urban crater created by the impact of a large meteorite at Vargem Grande – at the southern extreme edge of the city – some 400,000 years ago.

The two groups went through the tunnels of the Metro, streets and bowels of the historic centre of the city, narrow passages of slums, internal alleys of low income housing projects, and even cemeteries and maximum security prison cells. Those dynamics allowed them to observe how the city subverts the use of its spaces: a football club that shelters a school, the samba club that takes care of milk distribution, a religious space where the rapper learns how to read a musical score, schools where families find adequate space for their leisure, local clubs where the elders find a suitable space for meeting their equals, the street that stages cultural events and last, but not least, the concrete slab (the “laje”)³ covering some of the houses: the most important social meeting place in the destitute areas visited.

The journey was not a comfortable promenade: violence and insecurity accompanied the travellers on both routes, though both violence and insecurity are part of everyday life in the city. The precarious conditions in which people have to live and lack of suitable public services result in a permanent deprivation. Social and environmental imbalances do not provide for a serene landscape; on the contrary, they create a scenario of conflict, and it became evident that these were territories devastated by insecurity. Contrary to those sensations that were both latent and present, the “Expedição São Paulo” was, without question, an opportunity to demolish so many stereotypes about São Paulo. Discovery was much more intense than apprehension and everyone had the strong feeling that the mission of the City Museum would be to reveal to the public – more than the

³ Houses built in the “favelas” or in peripheral urban areas may have a concrete slab as their top floor or roof; it is normally used as a space for socialising, leisure and community activities.

needs, conflicts and inconsistencies – the hard day to day life of the people of São Paulo; the fraternal generosity between equals; the social networks that assure life and survival in the city; the counterpoint between apparent chaos and the unbelievable capacity for organisation developed by the associations we visited; the environmental issues and the alternative solutions that prevent a complete disintegration of the system.

Discretely a few journalists from “O Estado de São Paulo” – one of the most important large circulation newspapers in Brazil – joined the “Expedição São Paulo”. The day São Paulo commemorated its 450th anniversary, the newspaper published a supplementary section devoted to this interdisciplinary experience, reaching 300,000 readers all over the country.

The last day of the “Expedição São Paulo” was taken by a final evaluation. Both groups met in a city centre hotel and recalled their routes, faces they met, oral statements that were recorded, photographs yet to be developed and items collected. It was a final effort towards an interdisciplinary synthesis, towards the definition of a logic that might give sense to the next phases. It was an intense working day and finally as a result of systematic observations the three founding bases were selected: territory / sociability / imaginarium.⁴

These orienting concepts formed the structural basis for the editorial organisation of all the other products connected to the “Expedição” such as: a book, an exhibition at the Olido Cultural Centre (seat of the Municipal Secretariat of Culture), a video documentary, and the creation of a database in multimedia format that consolidated all the documentation related to contemporary items collected during the journey, in view of the effective creation of the City Museum of São Paulo in 2004.

After a change of government in 2005, the project for the new City Museum was discontinued, with only a group of some small historic houses remaining in the scenario; they met neither the contemporary demands of a city museum,

⁴ Imaginarium refers to things, real and fantasy, that recurrently occupy our minds. It may include a football team, a film star, folklore items etc.

nor the scale of a megalopolis like São Paulo. Some of the questions related to the setting up and running of the City Museum are still awaiting answers. First of all, one should revisit the sequence of studies and negotiations undertaken during the course of the 20th and 21st centuries, aiming at the realisation of the project. This would allow us to produce some fundamental questions:

a) What threat to those who take decisions at a political or institutional level, is represented by creating a museum that is based on the collection of contemporary items? Why is it that collecting items produced today by society is seen, in museological terms, as more threatening than the traditional collection of cultural items that legitimate and sanctify the historical path of an object?

b) Would the model of a *historical museum* that reveres the past be safer, therefore? Would ancient objects ask less questions than their contemporary counterparts? Would the extraction of objects pertaining to everyday activities, in real time, introduce irreparable voids in our society? Or should we just allow objects, that irrevocably would fall into oblivion, to be discarded by the passing of time and then, as a consequence, we would naturally preserve those with a "vocation" to become museum artefacts?

c) Or should our selection be based on other values and criteria? Could it be the aesthetic value of the object, its social representativeness, its age, the profile of its owner, its monetary value or its intrinsic value? Those values which were adhered to in the past had been great reference points across the centuries, do they apply today to our trans territorial, globalized world? If our society struggles against its own aging, by reverting to the past, why don't we feel an identity with the present?

d) Could it be that a city museum that articulates itself upon contemporary collections is a threatening museological model by means of a simple inversion of the symbolic weight of the objects, or maybe this discourse provides an inversion of more encompassing social senses?

e) Assuming that the selection of an object presupposes a logic of discarding it, are we afraid of the power of museological manipulation of our own lives, of our

path, of our memory, that a choice of a contemporary object could determine? Are we more afraid of making a selection or of discarding? Are we less happy by living with what is retained or by abandoning what is discarded?

f) How does the museum fit into this contemporary equation? What history is it intended to legitimate? What do we want to recall, what are we allowed to forget? This new museum, shall it be a territory for new senses, new expectations? If traditional museums had the power to revere and nominate what should not be forgotten, why can't we consider that the city museum has the power of reflecting, of modifying, of restating, of heightening the present, and thus redesign, in real time, our own future? Would there be time to wait for the natural aging of objects? Wouldn't that process be much more contaminated today than it was in the past?

g) Why does our society applaud, consume and "musealise" contemporary art, building "cathedral museums" to keep it, all over the world? Could it be that art speaks about life without presenting so many threats as objects do?

h) Why is an increasing number of science and technology museums being created, making evident to the public the great themes that concern our planet's survival? Wouldn't human extinction be a greater fear than that imposed by the collection of contemporary objects?

i) Why are initiatives focused on making us aware of our common humanity across different cultures supported and implemented without hesitation in different countries? Why are *museums of contemporary history* so few in Brazil and why are they considered to be threatening? What in our life today is unbearable to the point that we don't want to remember it, to select it, to elect it and place it in a museum?

j) Why should we revere the myth of the founding fathers of the city? That wider area standing outside the city centre, outside the city walls as it were, is it a desirable and commendable object of study? Why is it that fear surfaces whenever we pierce the symbolic surrounding walls and face those vast peripheral areas where most city people actually live? Could it be that

a medieval atavism prevents us from going outside the centre, fooling those walls and delving into the complex surrounding urban mesh, nobody's land, as people refer to it?

k) Would it be possible to substitute an imitation for the object? Why not use available technology to express unforgettable feelings, gestures, tastes, odours and images? Would the fascination of motion be more stimulating than the object at rest? Does the object rest, talk or ask questions? Should we give up original items and assume a definitive adoption of virtual interaction? Following the paths of collaborative networks, would it be possible to create virtual collections and even virtual museums, rejecting the imperative logic of generating and maintaining patrimonial institutions? Why should we maintain the original when we already have frozen their images for the future? Are we not even able to modify, edit and recreate them? In the age of human clones, when the logic of ancestral relationships and heredity is openly defied, why not think of the obsolescence of the original object? Why not clone the object, reproduce it and discard it?

l) Could it be that the most important concern is related to “who” chooses the object instead of “what” is chosen? In this new model, would there be many people entitled to choose? Would the History to be told reference people so far unknown? Would silent crowds start to be given a voice? As it speaks, would that crowd use a syntax that we would not follow or understand? If that is a different syntax, many will recognise themselves. What about us? Would we remain with no connection, therefore voiceless?

The City Museum of São Paulo as subject of study and museological challenge tries explicitly to present a multidisciplinary methodology – already tested in 2003 and 2004 – that enunciates the conception of a new model of *city museum*, whose objective is the analysis of the great metropolis – São Paulo – maintaining a dialogue with the proper logic of a globalised world, but canonically erected over the founding precepts of socio-museology. Focusing on city museums, that model tries to stimulate an alternative new path, that observes and interacts with the reality that is inherent to contemporaneity, to Latin American megacities, as it endeavors to understand the dynamics, as well as the problems that characterise human life in those vast and complex territories.

A new urban cultural landmark

Zhang Lan

Introduction

The 2010 Shanghai Expo was a significant cultural landmark for Shanghai, raising its cultural power to a new level. However, what made the Expo so memorable was the extraordinary range of ideas and insights from across the world on everything from culture to the environment, to urban development, the use of scarce resources, to new technologies. Museums, and indeed all cultural organisations, can help promote the economic and cultural prosperity of cities – but how and in what ways? The Expo gave graphic expression as to what can be done with flair and imagination.

The permanent buildings, including a museum cluster, have given the Shanghai History Museum the opportunity to move to a prominent location on this vast site. The Museum will provide access both to the glories of urban civilisation and to the lessons to be learned in urban development, and it will encourage public reflection upon the relationship between people, cities and the environment. Above all though it will be a museum created by and for the people of Shanghai.



Figure 1.
The Pudong
district of
Shanghai
© Ian Jones

The Expo Legacy

With 246 participant pavilions representing countries, regions and organisations from across the world, the Shanghai Expo received over 73 million visitors during a six-month period. Aside from some beautiful memories, the Expo has left us a legacy that will continue to shape our thoughts and insights. It has also left us a culturally charged Expo Park, an area of 5.38 square kilometres straddling the city's Huangpu River.

What would happen after the Expo became a major concern of the Expo Bureau while the event was still going on. Shanghai's Expo Bureau and the Bureau of Planning and Land Resources jointly issued a report titled *A Follow-up Assessment of the Planning of the 2010 Shanghai Expo Park*. Taking into account every aspect of the Expo, the Report reviews the concepts of planning, the principles of implementation and the overall effects, including urban development concepts and technology as displayed in the Park, the general layout of pavilions, transportation and public facilities. The guiding concept of "overall planning and follow-up utilisation" in the Shanghai Expo will not only be important for Shanghai's innovation and transformation initiatives, but also instrumental in planning and holding large exhibitions and events in the future. The follow-up utilisation of the Expo site will boost the city's development and enhance its urban planning and management.

As a significant part of a city's culture, an international exhibition like Shanghai's can bring out valuable changes to the urban planning of the host city, along with cultural and artistic sites. Typical cases include the Palais du Trocadéro built for the 1878 Paris Exposition, and London's Victoria and Albert Museum which originated in the Great Exhibition of 1851. The China Pavilion, one of the permanent buildings in the 2010 Shanghai Expo Park, will be open to the public all year round. The Expo Culture Centre, now a landmark building in the Pudong District (the financial heart of the city), will continue to function as a venue for cultural activities and events. Besides "one axis, four pavilions", a number of important and culturally unique international pavilions will also be retained. In the section on the west side of the Huangpu River, follow-up utilisation has already begun. After inviting public comments and suggestions

via the internet and other channels, the Bureau of Planning and Land Resources has declared this section a museum area, which will host, among others, the World Expo Museum, the Shanghai History Museum and the Shanghai Museum of Contemporary Art.

As a hub for public cultural activities, this section, with its growing number of cultural institutions, is expected to have significant marginal effects. Visitors to the cultural centre not only take a spiritual tour, as it were, around science, history and art, but also enjoy the availability of shopping, food and recreation. The section will become a cultural community, rather than a single museum. Therefore, tourists and city residents can stay for a whole day or longer. Shops, restaurants and hotels there can gain more economic benefits, which will facilitate more input into cultural initiatives. There can be a significant "scale effect" for a museum conglomerate such as this one.

The World Expo Museum, scheduled to open on May 1, 2012, will have its permanent venue on the Puxi site. Authorized by the International Exhibitions Bureau, it will be the official museum of the Bureau and its official archive. The museum will display the splendour of world fairs as well as the history of international exhibitions and world fairs since 1851 and go on to look at future Expos. It will serve as a knowledge base about the Expo and the world's latest inventions and innovations, and as a platform for cultural exchange.

The Pavilion of the Future will become the venue for the Shanghai Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA). The Pavilion was built upon the site of the Shanghai Nanshi Power Plant. The Museum will become another case where an industrial site is converted into a modern art gallery, following the example of the Tate Modern in London, which is housed in the former Bankside Power Station which was converted into a gallery of modern art by the Swiss architects Herzog and de Meuron. The Tate Modern has attracted the attention of the world for its brilliant and innovative use of old industrial buildings. As one of the best examples of innovative urban development, it is estimated that it generates around £100 million of economic benefits for London annually.

Established in 1983, the Shanghai History Museum houses rich relics and

archives from various stages of the city's history, ancient, modern and contemporary. As a metropolitan museum showcasing the city's achievements in science, technology, culture and arts, the museum has become an important part of Shanghai's soft power. Its new venue in the Puxi section of the Expo site will become a highlight of the city's urban planning. On the eastern side of the Huangpu River, we can see the towering China Pavilion in the style of ancient Chinese architecture, and the Expo Culture Centre close to the river, with its typically modern design. However, similar landmarks are lacking on the other side of the river, except perhaps the former Nanshi Power Plant. The new venue for the Shanghai History Museum can become a centre for the preservation, research and exhibition of the city's history. It can also showcase Shanghai's achievements in science, technology and architecture in the 21st century. The new building is expected to become a new landmark as well as an important cultural institution for the city. The three museums will become new cultural centres on the west side of the Huangpu River, representing, in a sense, the city's past (the History Museum), its present (the Expo Museum) and its future (MOCA). Together with other cultural facilities in the Puxi section, such as the Sanshan Guild Hall, Children's Library and the site of the Translation Department of the Kiangnan Arsenal, these museums will constitute a brand-new cultural space, which can also become a gathering place for innovation centres, shops, restaurants and recreational facilities.

Other than displaying and preserving relics of local culture and history, the Shanghai History Museum also aims to facilitate cultural exchange, academic research, community involvement and urban tourism. The Puxi section of the Expo site, where the Museum is now located, abounds in historical and cultural resources. One of the attractions here is the site of the Kiangnan Arsenal, "the cradle of China's modern industry". The 2010 Expo adds a new layer to the richness of local history. The Museum now serves as a bridge between the past glories of Shanghai and its contemporary splendour.

The primary functions of the History Museum include: 1. to display and preserve city memories; 2. to protect and promote the spirit of the city; 3. to showcase and publicise local culture. Its secondary functions include information, cultural exchange and recreation. Some of the new insights and ideas that emerged

during the Shanghai Expo will find their way into the newly established Museum. I think the following are especially noteworthy.

First, the Expo's cultural notions will be prominently featured in the planning of exhibitions and events. The various interpretations of the Expo's theme, "better city, better life", enhanced our awareness that together with the richness and convenience of modern life, urban development has also brought us serious challenges. By displaying the history of this international metropolis, the Shanghai History Museum will provide access both to the glories of urban civilisation and to the lessons to be learnt in urban development, and, vitally, to encourage public reflection upon the relationship between people, cities and the environment. Rather than simply eulogising human achievement, the new Museum will interpret the relations between man and the natural environment, and between man and the urban environment, seeking to nourish critical consideration of the many challenges in urban development.

Second, the idea of a green, low-carbon Expo will be adopted in the infrastructure of the Museum. The Expo Park is expected to become the starting point of the city's sustainable development. In building the Museum, more attention will be paid to the use of low-carbon, energy-saving technologies, in addition to the requirements of artefact preservation. The use of low-carbon, recyclable material will be a major objective in the construction and operation of the Museum. Environmental friendliness is, first and foremost, seen in architectural design. The Expo pavilions of Madrid, London and Hamburg bring us new design concepts, such as using heat and sound resistant material for exterior walls, and maintaining indoor comfort by solar energy, wind energy and geothermal heating. The Museum will consider natural light as the priority in its lighting system and seek a balance between the preservation of artefacts and the visual comfort of visitors. Energy-saving LED lights will be used if necessary. Issues such as monitoring temperature and humidity and using visitors' body heat to save energy will have to be considered in the design of the new Museum.

Third, there will be more public participation in the building and running of the Museum. To receive 73 million visitors, the Shanghai Expo Bureau, which was a provisional agency, enlisted public help in planning, building and running

the Expo, with contributions from 20 million Shanghai residents, the world's largest team of volunteers and various organisations and people. The Shanghai History Museum should serve the people of Shanghai and public participation is vital for its success. Community involvement is an effective means to boost a city's civilisation and there is much to be desired in public participation.

Since the beginning of its construction, the Museum has invited wider public involvement and media coverage, especially in the collection and display of historical and cultural artefacts. The concept of public involvement will run through the future operation of the Museum.

Fourth, the technological means that proved to be successful in the Expo will be employed by the Museum in future exhibitions and events. Among the many technological innovations shown at the Expo, the most impressive one was the animated version of the "Riverside Scene at the Qingming Festival", a famous painting by the Chinese artist Zhang Zeduan from the Song Dynasty. The computer animated mural features moving characters and objects and is now considered a masterpiece of fusion between technology and Chinese culture.

The Museum has access to most of the innovative exhibition technologies shown at the Expo. However, most of them were designed for a short life span. Their use for museum exhibitions lasting as long as five to ten years is yet to be decided, especially in terms of reliability, maintenance cost and energy efficiency. While assessing the pros and cons of these technologies, the Museum will keep an eye on the latest ones as well.

The 2010 Shanghai Expo has left many with great memories and the spirit of the Expo continues to stay with us. As stated in the *Shanghai Declaration of the World Expo 2010*, we should continue "to promote sustainable urban development, to foster co-operation and exchanges among cities and regions, and to share experiences and lessons in urbanisation"... inspiring humankind in its enduring pursuit of urban innovation and harmonious development". The museum cluster at the Park site will be an answer to that call in the Declaration and will shoulder the responsibility to support urban economic and cultural development, innovation and harmony.

City – Museum – Monument

Presenting the city of Thessaloniki in the White Tower

Anastasia Tourta and Nikolaos Vranikas

Introduction

The basic tenets of a museological programme presenting the city of Thessaloniki in the White Tower were explored in a paper entitled “White Tower: a Symbol of the City – A New Proposal for a City Museum” (Kourkoutidou-Nikolaïdou et al., 1997), presented at a conference held in September 1997 within the framework of the European Capital of Culture, which at the time was Thessaloniki. The implemented programme was presented in 2009 at CAMOC’s conference in Istanbul.

Showcasing Thessaloniki’s history from its founding to the present and highlighting the collective memory of its inhabitants was a complex task, in that the city founded by King Cassander in 316-315 B.C. and named after his wife *Thessalonike*, half-sister of Alexander the Great, has had a continuous historical presence since that time. A cosmopolitan society in antiquity, it was the capital of a Roman province (from 164 BC to AD 330); at some periods during the Byzantine era (from AD 330 to 1430) it was second only to Constantinople, and while under the Ottomans (from 1430 to 1912) it was the Empire’s most important Balkan city. Since its incorporation in 1912 into the Greek state, Thessaloniki has been modern Greece’s second city after Athens.¹

The exhibition encompasses the city’s life from its founding to the early 1990s, when its population grew due to the influx of immigrants – primarily of Greek descent – from the former socialist countries of Europe, particularly the former Soviet Union (Darques, 2000).

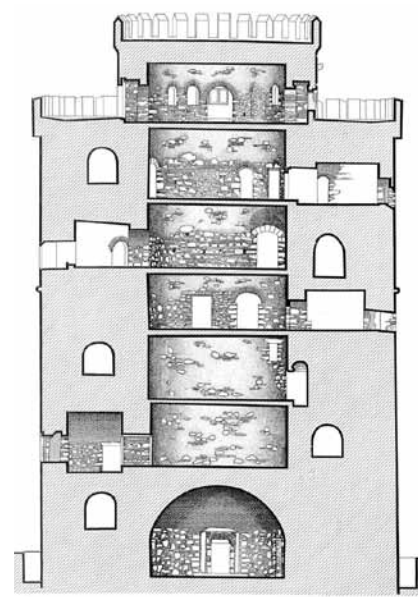
Our intention with the exhibition was not to “museify” a city which is in itself an open museum, with its archaeological sites and monuments from every period of its history, but rather to kindle the interest of visitors and encourage them to relate to the city in a different, more authentic, way. The new museum aspires to function as an “information station” which will serve as the starting-point for a different, more “conscious” tour of Thessaloniki.

¹ For more on the city’s history, see the website www.lpth.org.

Figure 1.
The White
Tower today



Figure 2.
Vertical
section
showing
the interior
of the White
Tower



History and use of the White Tower until 2002

The task of presenting the city's history became an even greater challenge when we chose to present the exhibition in a listed historic building, the White Tower (Tambaki et al., 1999). The defensive tower, characteristic of Ottoman military architecture, was probably founded on the site of a pre-existing Byzantine tower in the late fifteenth century or more likely around 1535/1536 (Kiel, 1973).

The Tower is 33.9 metres tall and includes a ground floor, five storeys and a turret extending from the top, interconnected via a spiral staircase. Until 1911 it was surrounded by a polygonal enclosure with turrets.

The demolition of the enclosure and a series of adjustments to the town plan, such as the construction of the old waterfront, which became a much-loved promenade, brought the White Tower closer to the people of Thessaloniki. Photography and postcards promoted it even further. The White Tower became the favourite spot for taking photos, and a landmark-monument of the city (Gounaris, 1997). Between 1912 and 1982, the White Tower had many uses, some of which caused irreversible damage to the building. In 1945, the White

Tower was declared a listed historic monument.

Between 1983 and 1985, the Ninth Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities of Thessaloniki undertook an exemplary restoration of the monument (Theocharidou-Tsaprale et al., 1985), which received a Europa Nostra award in 1988. Between 1985 and 2002, the White Tower was used for exhibitions. In 1985, in light of the 2,300th anniversary of Thessaloniki's founding and because the city lacked a Byzantine museum, a permanent exhibition on the history and art of Byzantine Thessaloniki (from AD 300 to 1430) was set up in the White Tower (*Thessaloniki historia kai techne*, 1986). In 1994, the new Museum of Byzantine Culture subsumed the White Tower which subsequently hosted various temporary exhibitions.

In 2001, the new museological programme of the White Tower was approved and included in the EU's third Community Support Framework.

Between 2004 and 2008, the new exhibition was prepared. It opened on 5 September 2008.



Figure 3.
The White Tower
before 1911

Problems that had to be solved

The reopening of the White Tower with a new permanent exhibition to meet contemporary museum specifications required that a series of crucial problems be dealt with holistically. These included:

1. Improving the problematic microclimate in the monument's interior with its high temperatures and humidity, especially in the summer;
2. Making all floors accessible to persons with special needs;
3. Respecting the historical nature of the monument, which the exhibition could not be allowed to jeopardize;
4. Presenting 24 centuries of the city's life in an area of only 450 m².

Solutions that were provided

1. The microclimate was improved by implementing a bioclimatic cooling model developed by the Heat Transfer and Environmental Engineering Laboratory of the Polytechnic School of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (20 Years Education and Research in Energy and Environment, 2009). In order for the model to function, it requires a controlled flow of visitors – no more than 70 persons at a time – which can be achieved electronically.
2. A relevant study excluded the possibility of installing a ramp on the staircase for wheelchairs (Vranikas, 2004), resulting in the decision to install four information stations on the ground floor, which is accessible to all. These stations offer a virtual tour of the monument and exhibition. The exhibition is presented on video and visitors have access to every exhibit. Furthermore, the information stations provide an interactive cultural map that gives information about the city's monuments, archaeological sites, museums, and cultural institutions.
- 3-4. The use of a listed historical monument imposed certain constraints on the design and manner in which material was presented.

The exhibition is arranged thematically, picking out the key factors which have made Thessaloniki what it is. Due to space limitations, information is transmitted through three complementary and interlinked levels: the exhibition in the monument itself, a website, and a DVD-ROM.

The exhibition in the monument

The monument itself forms the core of the exhibition, a first point of contact with the subject. Each floor examines a different theme throughout the ages.

Following audience research (Tourta et al., 2009), we opted for a limited number of archaeological objects and multimedia presentation, as this allows information to be condensed, avoids the need for many display structures, and thus allows visitors to take in the monument itself (Tourta et al., 2008). The exhibition structures are minimalist, featuring clean-cut lines and contemporary materials, thus maintaining a balance between the container and content, that is, the monument and the exhibition.

The following applications were used to present the themes:

- Videos
- 3D animations



Figure 4.
Ground Floor –
“Thessaloniki. Space
and time”

- Infographics
- Interactive applications
- Soundscapes
- Portable audio guide in English for use by visitors from abroad

The themes presented in each level are the following:

The exhibition on the ground floor locates the city geopolitically and economically, and refers to the personalities that determined its fate and affected its image. It also presents its cartographic history and the “Time Machine”. This is an interactive exhibit consisting of five screens with two timelines showing key dates in the city’s history as well as world events which affected its fortune, enhanced with pictures and videos. As mentioned above, this area also includes four information stations that provide virtual tours of the monument and the exhibition.



Figure 5.
1st floor –
“Thessaloniki.
Transformations”

This module considers “transformations” in the urban landscape due to historical, political, social, and religious changes and to natural disasters like earthquakes and fires. There is special mention of the evolution of the city’s fortifications and urban planning, its water supply system, and the

port from antiquity to the present. It also presents the modernization of its urban infrastructure in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in addition to the architects who contributed to its transformation from medieval to modern city. Particular note is taken of the town planning, economic, and social consequences of the great 1917 fire that destroyed the greater part of the city’s historic center.



Figure 6.
2nd floor –
“Thessaloniki.
Monuments and
history”

On this floor, the city’s story is told through the histories of selected monuments. On the floor of the main gallery, which has been configured so as to bring out the contours of the city’s historic centre and its main roads since antiquity, seven screens have been placed at the locations of seven important archaeological sites and historical monuments. The city’s history is sketched through these sites’ and monuments’ histories. Applications in the peripheral rooms narrate the modern history of the city in the nineteenth and twentieth century.

Figure 7.
3rd floor – “Thessaloniki.
A home land of people”



This floor focuses on inhabitants in various spheres of their lives; the main gallery outlines the society of the modern city through narratives of residents with different ethnic origins. There is also reference to the original homelands of Greeks who settled in Thessaloniki after the exchange of populations involving Greece, Turkey, and Bulgaria (from 1919 to 1926), and those who arrived from the former East Bloc countries of Europe after 1991. We also see how the city was perceived by visitors from overseas and by local men of letters.

In surrounding rooms, the narrative focuses on various events in the life of the city's residents from antiquity to our own time.

Figure 8.
4th floor –
“Thessaloniki.
On the routes
of commerce”



This portion of the exhibit treats commerce, products, merchants, markets, and the social consequences of the modernization of production. There is special mention of religious holidays of a commercial nature attested from Byzantine times, and on their transformation during the modern era.

Figure 9.
5th floor –
“Thessaloniki.
Leisure and
culture”



Floor five presents the city’s intellectual, artistic, and sporting life. Special mention is made of the city’s innovations in the press, radio, and television. Its progressive university is presented, while the writers, artists, and men of letters the city has nurtured are presented via an interactive biographical lexicon. There is also a reference to theatre and music in the city, and excerpts of songs written about it may be listened to.



Figures 10, 11.
Turret –
“Thessaloniki.
Flavours”

Thessaloniki is renowned for its gastronomy. Through videos which present the preparation and presentation of 19 different dishes and sweets, visitors can get an idea of Thessaloniki’s many and varied flavours, themselves reflecting the city’s cosmopolitan nature. The city’s historic restaurants and patisseries are also presented.



Figure 12.
Belvedere

The Belvedere of the tower is not merely a vantage-point, but a continuation of the exhibition. Nine informational panels placed at locations on the balcony

with a view of points of major historical importance for the city, its immediate environs, and the Thermaic Gulf inform visitors about the past and present of what they are viewing.

Generally speaking, advantage was taken of every spot of the White Tower that provides a unique view of the city.

The Website

The website (www.lpth.org) offers possibilities the exhibition in the monument cannot, including the following:

- a virtual tour of the monument and exhibition
- an interactive cultural map of Thessaloniki identical to that provided at the information stations on the Tower's ground floor
- eight comprehensive historical and archaeological articles by experts dealing with various periods in the city's history
- a selected bibliography on the city recipes for the traditional dishes presented in the turret
- useful practical information about the exhibition

The DVD-ROM

The DVD-ROM which is in fact the exhibition catalogue, offers the opportunity to view the exhibition in the comfort of one's home or office.

Using images and sound as our main means of expression, and with the aid of literature and poetry, we have tried to convey to White Tower visitors not just academic knowledge, but also emotion and feelings, because above all a city is what its people make of it.

We have not considered multimedia presentations as an end in themselves. Rather, their comparative potential vis-à-vis conventional presentation means better met the limitations posed by the historical monument; furthermore, they can contribute to exhibition visitors' feeling that their visit is both an intellectual as well as emotional experience.

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Understanding the Asian Culture Complex development in Gwangju within the city's changing social and economic environment

Geuntae Park

Introduction

The Hub City of Asian Culture is a project in Gwangju, one of the six Metropolitan cities¹ of Korea and the most important cities in the south-west of the country, which began in 2004. It is the largest cultural project in the history of Korea, with projected costs of approximately £3bn until 2023 (Office for the Hub City of Asian Culture, 2011). The project aims to establish Gwangju as a city of culture, in which various cultural exchanges among Asian countries will take place (Office for the Hub City of Asian Culture, 2007). For this purpose, the project has undertaken several main developments, including the Asian Culture Complex. Through this huge central government-led project, the government expects to create diverse cultural activities in the city and to revitalise the local economy, in particular that of the declining old city centre (Office for the Hub City of Asian



Figure 1.
Expected
image of the
Asia Culture
Complex
Courtesy Office
for the Hub City
of Asian Culture

¹ 'Metropolitan city' is an administrative system for local governance in Korea. They are important cities in terms of politics, the economy, and culture in the region. As of 2011, there are six Metropolitan cities in Korea (Busan, Incheon, Daegu, Daejeon, Gwangju, and Ulsan) apart from Seoul, which is the capital of Korea.

Culture, 2007). The project also seeks to make individuals enjoy culture in their daily lives, and to let people find their cultural and artistic potential through cultural activities and other training programmes (Office for the Hub City of Asian Culture, 2007). This paper, through investigating this development, will discuss how the perception of citizens towards the history and heritage of the city can be changed according to the city's changing social/economic environment, and what new cultural developments can learn from these changes to ensure a successful delivery of the project.

Cultural developments for urban purposes

Many examples of the use of cultural institutions for urban purposes have been observed in the UK and in other places around the world over the last few decades. Franco Bianchini (1994), one of the first academics to discuss this subject, argues that cultural policy became more important in economic and physical regeneration strategies in many European countries during the 1970s and 1980s and that culture has been placed strongly on the urban development agenda in Western Europe. More recently, Lianne Gibson and Deborah Stevenson (2004: 1) after reviewing two years of newspaper articles in the USA, Australia, Canada and the UK, also argue that there is a trend of "just add culture and stir". They (Gibson and Stevenson, 2004) identify that over the last two decades it has been one of the key local governance strategies to provide cultural resources for successful urban development. From the 1980s to the present day, the emergence of culture within the urban development context has been widely discussed by public authorities, the cultural sector and tourism sector, which makes it possible to understand this phenomenon as a 'trend' of contemporary urban development. However, this phenomenon also concerns warnings toward current 'copy and paste' strategies (Bianchini, 1994; Evans and Shaw, 2004; Miles, 2005; Richards and Wilson, 2005). Regarding this strategy, an interesting aspect is that local authorities and planners still seem to believe that following other examples of urban cultural strategies is an easy way to obtain 'success' despite lack of evidence (Bianchini, 1994; Evans and Shaw, 2004; Miles, 2005; Richards and Wilson, 2005; Janes, 2009; Bradburne, 2004). In particular, it would be challenging to achieve the success of urban cultural developments by following other examples since every project in each city will

have different environmental, economic and social statuses. It is essential to consider the unique circumstances of each city during the whole process of cultural development, and, in this context, the Asian Culture Complex project in Gwangju is interesting since it shows how people's perception of culture and heritage can be changed according to city's changing social and economic environment.

Brief overview of the Hub city of Asian Culture project and the Asian Culture Complex development

The Hub City of Asian Culture, the largest cultural project in the history of Korea, started in 2004 and will be completed in 2023 (Office for the Hub City of Asian Culture, 2011). The vision of the Hub City of Asian Culture project is to create "Asia's cultural window to the world" (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2008, p.4), and the project aims to make Gwangju a city in which various Asian cultures exchange and communicate with each other and to enable all Asian cities to grow together. The project has three policy objectives for this vision: a city of Asian arts and peace, a city of Asian cultural exchange, and a futuristic city of a culture-based economy (Office for the Hub City of Asian Culture, 2008, p.4; Office for the Hub City of Asian Culture, 2005: 6). The Asian Culture Complex is a main facility for the Hub City of Asian Culture, and is located in the site of the former Office of Jeollanamdo Province and its vicinity, which is also a heritage of the 5·18 Democratisation movement. The Asian Culture Complex is composed of five different facilities (Office for the Hub City of Asian Culture, 2008, pp.12-13; Office for the Hub City of Asian Culture, 2005: 11; Office for the Hub City of Asian Culture, 2011): Cultural Promotion Agency, Asian Arts Theatre, Cultural Exchange Agency, Asian Culture Information Agency, and Edu-Culture Agency for Children, which enables it conduct various works on a cultural agenda.

Previous image and new cultural brand: the changing urban environment and the changing perception of people toward its heritage, history and culture

Gwangju has been well-known as the city of democracy and arts (Gwangju Metropolitan City, 2011; Ko, 2002). However, in its modern history, Gwangju is best known for being the birth place of Korean democracy because of the 5·18

Democratisation movement² which happened in Gwangju. Since this movement has been one of the most tragic incidents in the modern history of Korea, it is very natural for people in Korea to be reminded of the 5·18 Democratisation movement when they hear the name of the city of Gwangju (Lee and Min, 2010). Especially, the perception of Gwangju among people outside the city shows that the 5·18 Democratisation movement is the most representative image of Gwangju (Lee and Min, 2010). It means that this movement is still a strong symbolic image of Gwangju even though it has been over thirty years since the 5·18 Democratisation Movement occurred. The Asian Culture Complex is being constructed in the main site of the 5·18 Democratisation Movement.

However, there are some changes in local people's perception. It has been found that, for people, especially residents in the old city centre, the Asian Culture Complex development and the Hub City of Asian Culture project have gradually become as important as the 5·18 Democratisation Movement for the future of the city. A survey conducted by Lee and Min (2010) identified that even though local people think that the 5·18 Democratisation movement is the most representative image of Gwangju, the citizens are more likely to have the image of the city of culture in the future. 53% of people answered that the Hub City of Asian Culture is the image they hope to develop for the future, which is more than the 51.5% who viewed Gwangju as the city of democracy, peace and human rights (Lee and Min, 2010: 67). Lee and Min also identified that the Hub City of Asian Culture is the brand that most citizens hope to have for the city. 43% of local people want the Hub City of Asian Culture to be a brand of Gwangju (Lee and Min, 2010: 69), which is much more than the 14% who want the 5·18 Democratisation movement as the brand (Lee and Min, 2010: 69).

² The 5·18 Gwangju Democratisation Movement, which took place from May 18th to 27th in 1980, was a movement in which the citizens of Gwangju rose strongly against Doo-hwan Chun's military dictatorship (The May 18 Memorial Foundation, 2011; Sim, 2007). During the movement, which has been described as one of the most tragic incidents in modern Korea, 154 people were killed, 74 went missing, and 4,141 were wounded or placed under arrest (The May 18 Memorial Foundation, 2011; Sim, 2007, p.37).

A similar finding could be observed in research conducted by the Korea Culture and Tourism Policy Institute in 2004. Local people hoped the image of the city would be revitalised through cultural tourism and cultural industries, which is one of the main goals of the Hub City of Asian Culture project (Korea Culture and Tourism Policy Institute, 2004, p.130; Office for the Hub City of Asian Culture, 2007). In addition, 34.9% of local people wanted a city of cultural tourism and cultural industries as an identity for the city (Korea Culture and Tourism Policy Institute, 2004, p.130). This is higher than the 13.6% of the city who wanted the image of human rights, which is related to one of the old identities Gwangju has kept (Korea Culture Tourism Policy Institute, 2004: 131). These survey results show that the citizens of Gwangju have shown a change of perception on their city's identity and they also show local people's demand for a new image of culture and cultural industries.

This change could be understood within the context of a changing urban environment. For a long time, the old city centre was Gwangju's core of administration, commerce, and finance. However, this began to change from the late 1990s due to the development plan of the city (Kim, 2010: 2; Kim, 2010: 23; Cho, 2010: 91). The outskirts of the city began to be developed as the old city centre faced problems of a lack of housing, severe traffic, and green space and environmental issues (Kim, 2010: 2). The city decided to develop new districts to solve these problems and the old city centre gradually began to lose its core functions and has faced a challenging situation of downfall. This became especially so after two main facilities of local governance, the office for the Gwangju Metropolitan City and the office for Jeollanamdo Province, moved out of the old city centre. The office for the Gwangju Metropolitan City moved to the new city centre in 2004 and the office for Jeollanamdo Province moved to another city, Muan in 2005. Following these movements, other public organisations also moved to the new city centre, and other main functions of the city, such as finance, commerce and education, also moved to the new city centre (Kim, 2010: 2; Kim, 2010: 23; Cho, 2010: 91). In tandem with these changes, there has been a population decrease. The population of the old city centre decreased from 1988 to 2008 by over 50% (Kim, 2010: 3) while the whole population of Gwangju increased by 28.5% (Gwangju Metropolitan City, 2010,

p.13). People in the old city centre who were interviewed for this research also indicated this declining status of the old city centre. They took these issues seriously and worried about the future of the area (Kim, Lee, Yoon and Yoon, 2011). All of them desperately wanted some opportunities to revitalise the area (Kim, Lee, Yoon and Yoon, 2011). Therefore, people in the old city centre believe that the Hub City of Asian Culture project, especially the Asian Culture Complex, is an alternative that can revitalise the area (Kim, Lee, Yoon and Yoon, 2011).

Conclusion: future of the Hub City of Asian Culture project and local community

The Hub City of Asian Culture project, which is still an early stage, has tried to bring a main change in the city of Gwangju: the finding of a new brand image. However, it is important to have a sustainable contact with local communities because it will be very difficult for the project and the city of Gwangju to change the nature of the city into an area for Asian culture without the cooperation, participation and deep interest of the local people (Ryu, 2011; Lee, 2011; Office for the Hub City of Asian Culture, 2007; Office for the Hub City of Asian Culture, 2011). In particular, as people’s perception of heritage and history has been changing due to social and economic circumstances in the old city centre, the Asian Culture Complex, which is being developed in the site of the 5·18 Democratisation Movement, needs to reflect and accommodate various local opinions. It is essential for the successful delivery of the goals of the Hub City of Asian Culture to keep local communities’ interests and to make them more engaged with the project. Since the new image of Gwangju as a cultural city cannot be obtained only through a few developments, this finding of understanding people’s changing interpretation of its history and culture will be essential for the future of the project.

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Min, J., Director, Progress Citizens Alliance, Interview with author, 10 February 2011.

Na, G., Professor, Department of Sociology, Chonnam National University, Interview with author, 11 February 2011.

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CAMOC, ICOM's International Committee for the Collections and Activities of Museums of Cities, is a forum for people who work in or are interested in museums about cities, urban planners, historians, economists, architects or geographers, all of whom can share knowledge and experience, exchange ideas and explore partnerships across national boundaries. In short, CAMOC is about cities and the people who live in them.



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