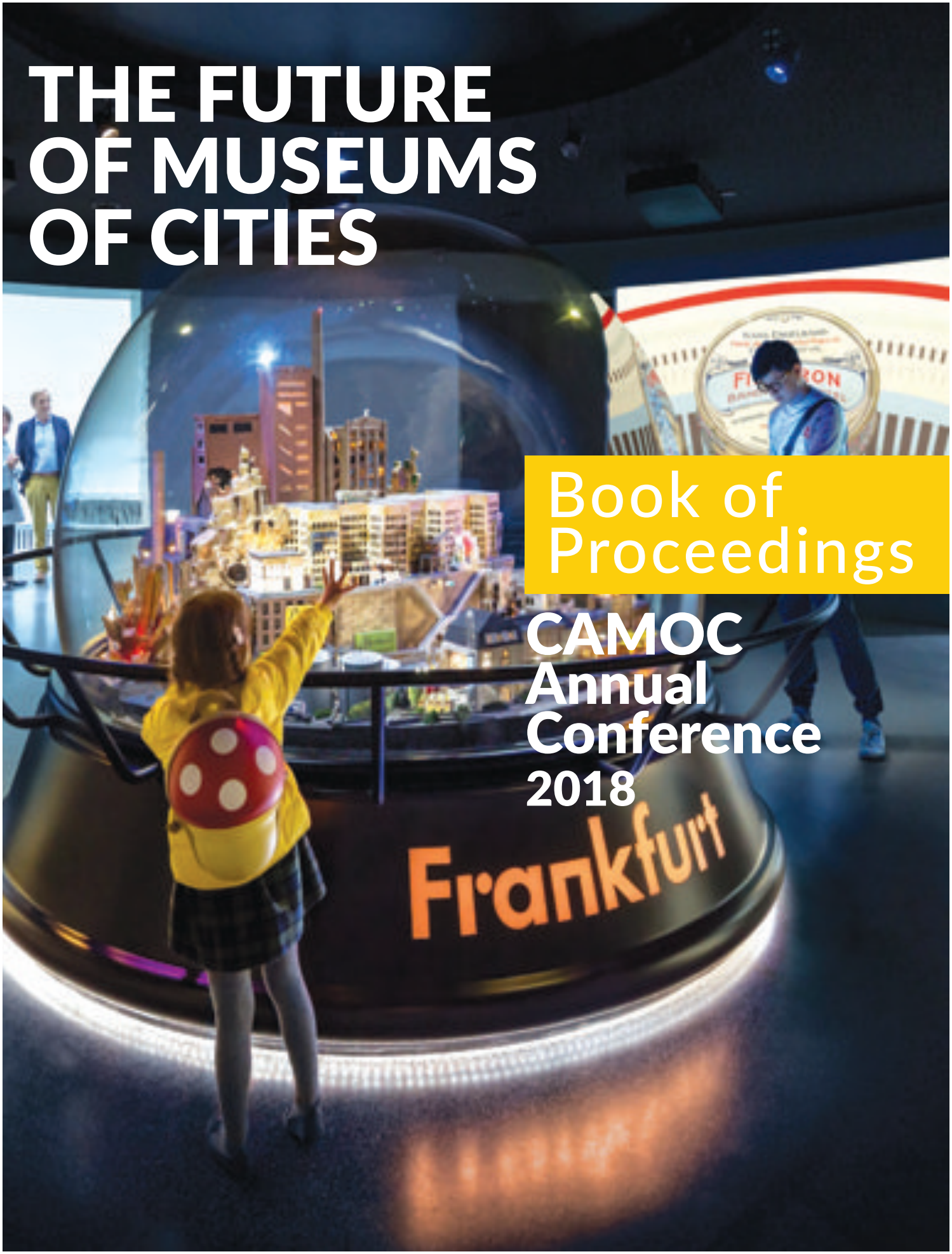
# THE FUTURE OF MUSEUMS OF CITIES




## Book of Proceedings

## CAMOC Annual Conference 2018

CAMOC ICOM international committee for the collections and activities of museums of cities

ICOM international council of museums

September 2019
www.camoc.icom.museum

ISBN: 978-92-9012-471-9

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## Camoc Annual Conference

### Frankfurt, Germany, June 2018

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CAMOC ICOM international committee for the collections and activities of museums of cities
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# Conference and workshop organizer:
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Graphic **Design:**
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ISBN: 978-92-9012-471-9

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# The Future of Museums of Cities

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HISTORICHES MUSEUM FRANKFURT. © ROBERT HALBE-LUMEN / HMF

# FROM THE CAMOC CHAIR

**JOANA SOUSA MONTEIRO**

CAMOC Chair,
2016-2019

For the last three years, CAMOC has undertaken the edition and publishing, on a digital format, of the proceedings of the annual conferences, thus granting free access to all committee members and other interested people the majority of the texts and discussions held at the conferences. We have done it for the conferences held in Mexico City (2017) and now for the one in Frankfurt (2018).

The choice of a theme and a place for 2018 was mostly focused on the concerns on the definition of a city museum and new goals: the theme was *The Future of Museums of Cities* and the conference was kindly hosted by the Frankfurt Historical Museum, which was reopened in 2017, after a decade of substantial and impressive remodelling work.

This book of proceedings remains the major memory from the Frankfurt conference: nineteen articles written by museum professionals and scholars from Europe, Latin America, North America, Asia and Australia, who were generous enough to share with us diverse aspects of the stimulating panorama of the city museums around the world, including innovative thinking, new successful practices, mistakes to avoid, and cross-disciplinary approaches. As it is stated in the opening text by our keynote Joan Roca, "the vindication of the "right to the city", as formulated in 1968 by Henri Lefèbvre and inscribed in the Final Statement of the UN Habitat III conference in 2016, has become as fundamental as it was half a century ago, if not even more so".

Throughout the four chapters – *The city museum and its professionals, In the making, State-of-the-art city museums and their practices, and Other case studies* – you can find interesting material about the quest for relevance in the contemporary city for inhabitants and guests, the framework of the city museum within cultural and urban policies, dreamscapes, urban skylines and power, how museums improve well-being, the museumification of the city space; sustainable futures for city museums, or active collecting and other participatory practices in city museums, among many other topics.

In the period between the conference in Frankfurt, in June 2018, and the present moment, CAMOC has organized a workshop in Lisbon on the definitions and goals of city museums in the world today, and now we are preparing for the ICOM General Conference in Kyoto, which will include an exciting CAMOC programme at the main conference centre and the Museum of the City of Kyoto, in addition to a promising post-conference tour in Tokyo.

I hope you will get the most out of this book of proceedings to conduct your own research and museum work. We will keep counting on your active collaboration.

JELENA SAVIĆ
The Book of Proceedings Editor

# PERSPECTIVES ON THE FUTURE OF MUSEUMS OF CITIES

**About this publication**

Museums of cities are as much about the cities' present and future as they are about their past. Therefore, all CAMOC conferences contemplate the future of cities and their museums. Back in 2008, our meeting in South Korea focused specifically on the theme of *City Museums and the Future of the City.* A decade later, with the increase of the number of museums of cities and rapid urban growth, we felt the need to focus again on the questions of the state of museums of cities worldwide, of their present and models for the future. In response, CAMOC dedicated its Annual Conference 2018 to new directions and new challenges for museums of cities and urban heritage.

Under the umbrella theme of *The Future of Museums of Cities,* we also focused on the new roles and responsibilities of this type of museums, the ways in which museums of cities can contribute to a more sustainable urban future, and the need for museums of cities to constantly redefine themselves in light of all these challenges.

Our annual meeting was hosted by the Frankfurt Historical Museum, recently reopened after almost a decade-long process through which it was remodelled as a modern city museum for Frankfurt. Thus, the choice of our meeting place resonated strongly with the conference theme.

This Book of Proceedings is the tangible outcome of our Frankfurt meeting, and it contains nineteen original texts which reflect on different aspects of museums of cities' future. The authors come from four continents – Europe, North America, South America and Asia – and from city museums (and other related professional contexts) of diverse styles and scales.

In recent years, CAMOC has mainly focused on digital publications, aiming to reach even more museum and city researchers, experts and others interested in urban life. Hence this volume is available as an e-book, free of charge, with the copyright conditions defined by the CC BY-NC-ND license.[1]

**The structure and the main themes**

Two keynote speakers and twenty-nine other speakers contributed to our Frankfurt conference, yet not all of them were able to submit full papers. Thus, the structure of this Book of Proceedings diverges from the thematic subdivision of the conference.

The volume begins by an opening article that sets the tone for the organization of the subsequent texts, an organization that places those texts on four different chapters.

The introductory article by Joan Roca I Albert (MUHBA, Barcelona, one of the keynote speakers) is centred on the *Rethinking the city and the city museum*. The author, emphasising the particular position of city museums between cultural and urban policies, systematically explores the requirements for the city museums of the 21st century, which are needed to fulfil their potential to create knowledge and heritage, social and cultural cohesion of metropolises and renovation of tourism practices.

The first chapter, entitled *The city museum and its professionals,* contains four other texts which, by following the line of exploring requirements for the city museum of the future, focus specifically on the people. Chet Orloff proposes a curriculum for future city museum experts, reflecting not only on a possible programme in museum and urban studies but also on "people skills", highly relevant for the profession yet mostly taught beyond the field of museum education. Resonating with these observations, Cristina Miedico explores human mediation in museums through a captivating story of *Oldspeak* versus *Newspeak*, reminding us of its continuing relevance in the era of extraordinary technological advancements. Also in this chapter, Sibylle Dienesch examines how to optimize organizational models for city museums,

[1] For non-commercial purposes, this license lets others distribute and copy the article(s), and include them in a collective work (such as an anthology), as long as they credit the author(s) and provided they do not alter or modify the article. More information at: *https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/*.

while Annemarie de Wildt illuminates the issue of (self)censorship in museums. On the first conference day, Annemarie organized a brief interactive session dedicated to this matter, together with Francesca Lanz, and encouraged exchange of experiences on this important subject among CAMOC members.

The second chapter of this volume looks into several museums of cities (and their projects) in the making. Valeria Pica exposes the case of L'Aquila, a small town that suffered a severe earthquake in 2009, which, curiously, lead to the discovery of new historical layers that now need to be interpreted and presented. The author also develops their theory on museum identity. Orit Engelberg and Elad Betzaleli present the challenges in the planning process for *development towns* museums in Israel, which involve painful and controversial issues linked to narrative, representation and collective memory. Different cultural contexts impose different challenges and concerns – at another world's end, in Australia, Toner Stevenson explores museums as institutions that can contribute to society through both health and cultural benefits and looks into quantifiable methods for assessing the component of "well-being" provided by museums. Paul Spies and Brinda Sommer explore the idea of participative museum through the project for the Berlin exhibition at the Humboldt Forum.[2] City museums of Rotterdam and Ghent are working together for their upcoming *Skyline* exhibition, planned to be on display in Rotterdam in 2020 and Ghent in 2021. In their article about this joint project, Paul van de Laar and Lars de Jaegher write about the background research process and the exhibition concept, which not only takes into account a historical reflection on skylines in the past, their diversity and geographical distribution, but also aims at engaging visitors in state-of-the-art debates on the future of urban developments and urban life.

The third chapter, entitled *State-of-the-art city museums and their practices*, begins with the text by Jan Gerchow about the radical process of remodeling the Frankfurt Historical Museum underwent between 2007 and 2017. The new museum now acts as a participatory museum and a point of intersection for the multitude of perspectives and standpoints of Frankfurt's residents. Song Inho presents the strategy for the sustainable future of the Seoul Museum of History, with the goals related both to the museum's fundamental mission (credibility, conservation philosophy, capacity building) and to its status within the city (communication with the city, being embedded in the civil society). While the cultural environment is unique, the lessons learned at the strategic level are relevant and applicable in other cultural and urban contexts. Joana Sousa Monteiro elaborates new approaches that the Museum of Lisbon has recently introduced on the matters of time, people and urban heritage, to sustain the different, innovative strategy for exhibitions and public programmes. This strategy involves multidisciplinary approaches to research and exhibition projects, community engagement linked to city spaces, as well as broader timeline perspectives. Elena Perez Rubiales (MUHBA, Barcelona) presents the ideas behind the creation of the museum's participative new branch in the Bon Pastor neighbourhood – revealing the city as a place of conflict, but also of negotiation and shared memory and reinforcing the model of a cohesive and inclusive museum. In the concluding article of this chapter, Nicole van Dijk (Museum Rotterdam) presents the recently developed "active collection" approach, which recognizes the importance of the "living" resources of the city and encourages active participation from the communities.

The fourth chapter contains contributions on experiences from city museums of diverse styles and scales in Russia (Ivan Grinko), Latvia (Inga Sarma) and Taiwan (Jenny Chiu), as well as on Global Education experiences conducted in the PhD programmes in Museology in Portugal (Lisbon; Pedro Pereira Leite and Judite Primo). The themes and practices presented in this chapter provide an insight into several lesser known contexts and echo the state-of-the-art approaches and thinking for the future of museums of cities.

**The next CAMOC gathering**

Our next meeting will take place in Kyoto in September 2019 at the time of the ICOM triennial General Conference. As always, the future of cities and city museums will be in our focus. This is also formally reflected in the title of the CAMOC's 2019 conference: *City Museums as Cultural Hubs – Past, Present and Future*. Almost ninety candidates submitted proposals in response to our very successful Call for Papers! The selected participants come not only from museums of cities, but also from universities, research centres and other institutions, and from diverse geographical contexts. We look forward to strengthening our international network of colleagues and expanding it to new countries and continents.

[2] The opening of the Forum is foreseen in September 2020. Source: *https://www.humboldtforum.org/en/pages/hf-en* (accessed: August 2019).

2017 PRE-OPENING. © STEFANIE KOESLING

# *KEYNOTE ARTICLE*

JOAN ROCA I ALBERT

Barcelona History Museum (MUHBA), Spain

# AT THE CROSSROADS OF CULTURAL AND URBAN POLICIES. RETHINKING THE CITY AND THE CITY MUSEUM

## ABSTRACT

A century ago, when urban modernization fully affected the historical centres of the cities, the number of city museums multiplied throughout Europe. Today, after the industrial and colonial eras, the expansion of big metropolises and the diversification of their inhabitants have created a new historical framework around the world. In a context of global powers and the difficulties faced by states to regulate coexistence and identity under these circumstances, the practical life in cities as spaces of conflict, and at the same time, of negotiation, agreement and shared memories, has become increasingly important.

Therefore, cities and city museums are taking on renewed importance in the early decades of the 21st century. *Meine Stadt, meine Geschichte* – "My City, My History" – was the slogan for the transformation of the Museum of Stuttgart, a metropolis which carried a strong tradition of immigration in the 20th century. But the empowerment of the urban majorities will not come about by just recognizing their diversity; it will also require the ability to show and explain the mechanisms of social construction of the city over time. The city museum cannot just be a "local museum"; it must act as an RDI centre, where research on urban history, representative objects and heritage, as well as landscape, feeds a laboratory of citizenship in multiple formats: from talks and seminars to exhibitions and publications, from heritage spaces to urban itineraries. The tearing down of the barriers between culture and education, the drive for construction of citizenship and the contribution to reformulate tourist practices should not be separate functions.

A new generation of city museums, lying halfway between cultural policies and urban policies, is required to go beyond providing sociocultural revitalization; they need to shape a programme for building knowledge that is open to the world and rooted in the city. City museums are required to be a portal to and mirror of the metropolis and its neighbourhoods, connecting spaces and historical narratives, as well as reconnecting centres and peripheries. Thus, the museum can propitiate the exercise of the right to the city, the basis for effective participation in urban life.

**Key words:** City museum, right to the city, urban history, polycentrism, periphery, urban heritage, knowledge hub, school museum

## Introduction

*Foundational headquarters of the Barcelona History Museum in Plaça del Rei. View of the archaeological route beneath the buildings and of the medieval Royal Palace. © MUHBA, Pere Vivas*

The first city museum was conceived in 1860 by Charles Buls and Alphonse Wauters, the mayor and the archivist of Brussels, respectively, opening twenty-seven years later. In Paris, Haussmann made the idea his own in 1866, proposing to the municipal council that the remnants from areas of the city being demolished ought to be conserved at the Hôtel Carnavalet, a museum that opened its doors in 1880. This very idea led to the creation of the term "city museum", a locale featuring objects and images from the old neighbourhoods that modernization was causing to disappear. Therefore, association of the terms "city" and "museum" started to designate an institution that had a very different profile from other museum organisations.
Prior to it, quite some time had elapsed since the atmosphere of Romanticism and Positivism, when various institutions first started collecting materials from the past, originating from demolitions in the centres of European cities. First of all, this was done by archaeological societies and other similar organisations. Then the city museums came. The majority emerged through municipal initiatives between the last third of the 19th and the first third of the 20th century, based on a concept that lay halfway between the notion of museum and that of monumental compilation.

The majority of these museums remained largely unchanged for decades, until the late 20th century, a time of growing interest in cultural heritage. They became more dynamic due to growth in tourism and because of their potential as institutions of cultural cohesion, within the broad framework of public policies. Since then, many have undergone a decisive metamorphosis, as we will discuss in reference to numerous European museums, inevitably paying particular attention to the museum that, through our professional work, we know best: Barcelona History Museum.[1]

## A new era for city museums

The change in the mission and even in the siting of city museums, since the beginning of the 21st century, has taken place under the impact of digital technologies and globalisation. As we look at the "city museum" today, it is also worth considering "museum" as the adjective and "city" as the noun, rather than vice versa. As it was the case when most of them were founded, once more physical and social urban transformations are determining factors. Although there are no detailed studies, the tendency is noted that the interest in the potential of city museums to unite a diverse body of citizens has held as much weight, if not more so, as the aim of renewing them as venues for city and tourism promotion.
In a time in which the technological revolution has given rise to globalisation and to a deep crisis in the democratic control of the state – while new imperialisms emerge – the role of cities, as a political subject and as spaces for the regulation of everyday practical life, is growing in importance. Not only are cities a place of conflict but also of negotiation and of shared experiences. In this current state of affairs, city museums are gaining relevance as a mirror for city residents, a gateway for visitors and as ambassadors of their city.

Nowadays, the way of working among innovative city museums is much more participatory than in the recent past. *Meine Stadt, meine Geschichte*, "My City, My History", was the slogan for launching the renovation of the *Museum für Stuttgart*, in a metropolis with a long tradition of immigration.[2] There is no shortage of city museums immersed in a process of reforming their structures that are striving to change the role from representing the "great past" of the elites in order to incorporate representation of the urban majorities.[3]

[1] The references to websites in the notes were checked in August 2018.
[2] According to the initial renovation project of the Museum für Stuttgart of 2013: Urban history = migration history. The city museum wants the migration history of the city as an integrated part of the city's history. Subsequently, the project was modified. Retrieved from: *http://www.stadtpalais-stuttgart.de/assets/files/newsroom/allgemein/stadtmuseum/sms-presse_stadtmuseum_museumskonzeption.pdf*
[3] In addition to the publications of the ICOM and the CAMOC, there is the recently published work by Postula, J.L. (2015). *Le musée de ville, histoire et actualités*. Paris: La Documentation Française.

## The right to the city

The vindication of the "right to the city", as formulated in 1968 by Henri Lefèbvre and inscribed in the Final Statement of the UN Habitat III conference in 2016, has become as fundamental or even more so today than it was half a century ago. However, is such appropriation of the city possible without the capacity to know it well and decipher it?

The City Museum of **Ghent**, the STAM, was renovated and reopened in 2010 with the idea of "connecting today's people with history and looking at the city's future". It has on the floor of its reception area a large-format backlit aerial photo, upon which people can walk before going to see the exhibition *The History of Ghent* or, as the Museum suggests, before going out to explore the city. "For visitors who are spending one or more days in Ghent, the STAM provides the ideal cultural/tourist introduction. For those who have been to Ghent before, the STAM sheds a new light on the city. For the people of Ghent, the STAM is an open house which invites them to take part in all kinds of activities".[4]

*The entrance to STAM: Walk all over Ghent! The physical appropriation of the urban space is considered a requisite for its social appropriation.*
*© Stadsmuseum Ghent*

City museums can play a key role in inclusive public policies, incorporating the time and space of the city's trajectory into a cultural package that is shareable among all citizens, from the oldest residents to recent migrants and refugees. They can, at the same time, influence the modalities of urban visits, in favour of more sustainable touristic practices. The tourism business urgently requires regulatory measures, but the right to the city also includes visitors, and the museum should be able to cater for them with more hospitality rather than mercantilism.

It is useful to differentiate the numerous implications of the right to the city. It is the "right to the neighbourhood", the world of local life, and the "right to the centre", the symbolic space that represents the city. It is, at the same time, "the right to the memory" – all the pasts that still speak directly to us – and "the right to history", the explanation of the city over the course of the centuries and of the heritage or its evidence that are preserved.

## In favour of urban history

The trajectory of cities, especially of large cities, is not just a copy of their country's history on a smaller scale. Cities also show a series of vicissitudes and periodisation of their own, which are sometimes counter-cyclical with respect to broader geopolitical spheres. Many economic, social, cultural and political changes of general scope have originated in a particular city: cities have their own substance as a historical subject. Hence the relevance of urban history as an organising paradigm of stories, braiding the elites and the majorities together in a plural way. However, granting their place to the subordinate classes does not mean renouncing history, but, quite to the contrary, it requires renewed historical knowledge.

To fight the fight for history is especially important at a time in which revisionism is making great efforts to blur political and social responsibilities. One gets the impression, however, that a great number of city museums have ultimately become trapped within a vague and general deconstructivism that rejects history as knowledge of the powers. Yet, they do not apply the same critical criteria to other social disciplines, such as anthropology and ethnography.

It is not even uncommon to hear curators and museologists talk in disparaging terms about a supposed *official history,* described as false and boring, and contrasting it with a supposed *popular memory*, which would be the veracious and thought-provoking expression of the collective past. It is to be feared that along this path both "history" and "memory" will become blurred, even if the intention is much to the contrary. Instead of proceeding to the systematic criticism of poorly

[4] Retrieved from: *http://stamgent.be/en/events/een-permanente-tentoonstelling* and also from: *http://stamgent.be/en/about-stam/wat-is-het-stam.*

constructed or distorted historical narratives, they opt for generic disqualification of historiography. It is always difficult to know how things have happened, but a rigorous historiography must help to know, at least, how they have *not* happened. And this historical knowledge, however limited perhaps, turns out to be essential at a time when falsehoods receive the name of *post-truth,* and while fake news camouflages the relations of power.[5]

*Field work in the Bon Pastor neigbourhood in 2018. Research on urban history has made it possible to situate the works of the museum in this 1929 working-class housing estate in a broader context. © MUHBA, Marta Delclòs*

There is no shortage of cases where the term "history" has even been eliminated from a museum's name. The Amsterdams Historisch Museum changed its name to **Amsterdam Museum** a few months before the 2011 opening of the programmatic exhibition *Amsterdam DNA*, and in Rotterdam they even championed the elimination of the concept: "The contemporary transnational city, and not the past city, has become central to the policies of the Museum. In 2010, it dropped the "Historical" in its name to continue as **Museum Rotterdam**". In other cases, the name has been maintained, but somewhat uneasily. The website of the **Historisches Museum Frankfurt** underlines the fact that, with its renovation, completed in 2017, "it has transformed itself from a museum specialising in history to a metropolitan city museum"... as if historical knowledge were not of any use in engaging citizens.

The alternative to opting exclusively for the paradigm of an ethnography of everyday life can entail the risk of reducing the capacity to construct an interrogative, explanatory and comparative knowledge of the city. Without a backbone structuring the narrative of urban history, it would be difficult to lay the foundations of a city museum capable of engaging the citizens, with a meaningful retrospective view that can broaden the thinking about the present and the future.[6] A museology that focuses solely on the link between a community and a specific territory, based on a restrictive interpretation of the Declaration of Quebec - Basic Principles of a New Museology 1984,[7] may end up as a self-referencing representation of the community. Ecomuseums have been able to satisfactorily tackle communities attached to a well-defined natural, social and cultural community, but the complexity of relations that intersect at the metropolis requires complementary treatments. The neighbourhood or the community cannot be explained without referring them to the city overall, which is the scale whereupon urban microprocesses converge with the impacts of national and global events.[8]

**Reconquering the historical centre**

The recent wave of reforms of city museums has been justified in many cases by the purpose of turning them into a symbol of the municipality and a space for citizenship at the heart of the city, and this has been carried out as importantly, if not more so, as in terms of tourism promotion, which is so decisive in the case of other museums.[9] Studies are needed in order to analyse whether these actions have had an effective impact in the reconquering of the centre by citizens, but there are indications that seem to corroborate it.

The new **Museum of Liverpool** is perhaps the most obvious case. It opened its doors in July 2011 and is located in the most symbolic and representative area of

[5] See Klemperer, V. (2015). LTI: Notizbuch eines Philologen. Stuttgart: Reclam. English translation: Klemperer (2013). LTI. Language of the Third Reich, London: Bloomsbury.

[6] This was the main theme at the founding meeting in Barcelona of the City History Museums and Research Network of Europe, in the year 2010. Urban history was adopted as the explanatory model, without renouncing contributions from other disciplines. It was attended by city museums and research centres from Amsterdam, Antwerp, Barcelona, Berlin, Copenhagen, Hamburg, Helsinki (by delegation), Kraków, Lisbon, Liverpool, Ljubljana, Luxembourg, Madrid, Riga, Rome, Stockholm, Turin and Vienna.

[7] See Davies, P. (2011). *Ecomuseums. A Sense of Place*, London: Continuum.

[8] A reflection in this respect, written between 1989 and 1994 from a secondary school on the periphery of Barcelona: Roca i Albert, J. (1994). Recomposició capitalista i perifericació social. In: Roca, J. and Meseguer, M. (Eds.) *El futur de les perifèries urbanes. Canvi econòmic i crisi social a les metròpolis contemporànies.* Barcelona: Institut Barri Besòs. 509-788.

[9] The development of museums to add value to their surrounding environment has followed various models: singular buildings (Bilbao), cultural zones (Museumsinseln in Berlin, Museumsviertel in Vienna), urban parks (Copenhagen, Budapest) and museum quarters (Amsterdam, Munich). There have also been more integratory formulas, such as the Museumsufer ("Museum embankment") in Frankfurt. See: Kochergina, E. (2017). Urban Planning Aspects of Museum Quarters as an Architectural Medium for Creative Cities, *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and* Engineering, *245*.

*The new Museum of Liverpool, inaugurated in 2011. © Jonathan Hutchins*

the city, on the waterfront of the Mersey between Pier Head and the Docks. It is reminiscent of the Guggenheim in Bilbao but, in contrast, it is oriented first and foremost towards the inhabitants of Liverpool.[10] The new museum was primarily designed with the aim of reinforcing the self-esteem of a metropolis depressed by industrial decline and the impact of Thatcherism, but without renouncing these conditions, in fact, turning them into a focus of touristic attraction.

The **Museum Rotterdam** also chose a maximum urban centrality, after experimenting for a time with nomadic museum work.[11] In 2016, it presented the opening of new premises near the City Council as a strategic option: "Here, the history of Rotterdam, the city with a young heart and an old soul, is told in new ways".[12] Some months later, in Helsinki's iconic Senate Square, the doors opened of the new main site of the **Helsingin Kaupunginmuseo**, more central than its predecessor. It was conceived as an open-access facility: "The museum offers a platform for you to think, explore and get to know this city and its history, and then relate to that and to have a personal relationship with – and maybe even fall in love with Helsinki".[13]

The **Historisches Museum Frankfurt**, for its part, reopened its main building in 2017, in a facility that had been renewed and expanded within the framework of the historicistic reconstruction of the old centre, destroyed in the Second World War. The Museum forms part of the "museums embankment" (*Museumsufer*) next to the river Main, and defines itself as "a space for information, reflection and discussion on Frankfurt, offering the multi-faceted explanations and backgrounds of the city's past as a frame of reference. As a forum for the important topics concerning the municipal society, it will contribute to the process by which that society comes to an understanding about its present and future".[14]

Meanwhile, in Copenhagen, the **Københavns Museum** is in the process of moving, having left the neighbourhood of Vesterbro to reopen behind the City Hall. Also opting for the heart of the city is the **Wien Museum**, which has an extensive network of diverse thematic centres; in 2017, construction work began at its main site in Karlsplatz, which it has managed to maintain following a long controversy over its possible move that echoed all over Vienna.[15]

More recently, renovation has reached the global metropolises of Paris, Berlin and London. The **Musée Carnavalet** and the **Stadtmuseum Berlin** are already having construction works under way. In the case of Berlin, the Museum is also responsible for preparing, at the Humboldt Forum, an exhibition on Berlin society and the world, which will "explore (urban) society and the people living within it, its living and working conditions, and the nature surrounding it. The focus will be on current issues related to the transfer of ideas, people, and things to and from Berlin".[16] Finally, at the **Museum of London**, the main building will move to the old West Smithfield wholesale market in the year 2021: "Integrating the New Museum into the wider public realm, working to establish the area as a cultural destination, and building on the opportunities of Culture Mile and the arrival of Crossrail, which will be key factors".[17]

In general terms, all of these decisions on city museums have depended as much on cultural policies as on urban policies. Their activation on a European scale in recent decades is not extraneous to the perception that these museums can play a relevant role as facilities for sociocultural inclusion, in increasingly diverse

[10] See: *http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/about/corporate/strategic-plan/index.aspx.*

[11] On the travelling museum, see Van Renselaar, I. and Van Dijk, N. (2012). The Urban Realm as Museum Laboratory. The Participation Programmes of Museum Rotterdam, *CAMOC News, 4*, 1-2.

[12] *https://museumrotterdam.nl/en/*

[13] *https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/helsinki-city-museum-opening/index.html*

[14] *https://historisches-museum-frankfurt.de/en/ueberuns?language=en*

[15] Retrieved from: *https://www.wien.gv.at/video/245762/Die-Zukunft-des-Wien-Museum*

[16] See: *https://www.en.stadtmuseum.de/humboldt-forum*

[17] *https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/application/files/4215/2646/1105/Museum_of_London_Strategic_Plan_2018-2023.pdf.*

cities. As Paul Spies stated in 2016, shortly after his appointment as director of the Stadtmuseum Berlin: "City museums can become the analysts and catalysts of urban identity. We have the capacity to speak with diverse actors and communities in the city and convince them to participate actively in its life and its culture".[18]

The new director of the Stadtmuseum Berlin presented the conquest of a new central position for the museum together with the plans to better structure the "Museum houses" around the city: Märkisches Museum, Ephraim-Palais, Nikolaikirche, Knoblauchhaus and Museumsdorf Düppel. Conquering the centre is thus part of a broader and polycentric proposal. "Each site", Paul Spies continued, "would have to have a distinctive identity, be well known and be positively anchored in the public".

**The extension of polycentrism**

On the subject of the intensification of social interest in heritage in the late 20th century,[19] many city museums started to incorporate new sites, often at the request of the municipal administration. The reasons for this expansion of polycentrism were numerous, ranging from compacting facilities to save up on resources (given that by using new technologies one single team can properly serve a set of distant and diverse spaces), to the aspiration of profiling the city museum as a consistent network of heritage sites.

*Houses in the Työväenasuntomuseo / Arbetarbostadsmuseet, the section of the Helsinki City Museum dedicated to popular housing. Photograph by Bengt Oberger, Wikimedia Commons, 2016*

The degree of integration between the different sites varies greatly. At some museums, the minor sites have few links with the urban narrative of the main site, and only form part of the "museum family" which is how, for example, they are presented in **Frankfurt** or in **Stuttgart**. These are not much different from the case of **Paris**, where in the year 2000 the Musée Carnavalet incorporated the Archaeological Crypt of the Île de la Cité and in 2002 the Catacombs, and where the website simply informs of "three places devoted to the history and memory of Paris".

In other cases, at the very least, programmatic links between various museum spaces are made explicit. For example, at the Wien Museum, which operates as a municipal organisation with twenty-two sites: on the one hand, there are those that cover the heritage and history of **Vienna**; on the other, those dedicated to culture and the arts. In **Hamburg**, the Historische Museen Hamburg Foundation brings together nine sites: a central urban history museum, the Museum der Arbeit (Labour Museum), the museums on the port and trade, the local museum of Altona and some bourgeois houses.

The articulation between venues and narratives is somewhat more intense at the Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Krakowa, with nineteen sites that trace the history and heritage of **Kraków** from mediaeval times to the present day, including two major references relating to the Jews in times of Nazism: the Old Synagogue of Kazimierz and the Schindler factory. In **Helsinki**, the conceptual link between the main Museum site and the others lies in the modernization of the city, with a bourgeois house dating from 1860, a municipal housing block from 1909, the tram depot and the Villa Hakasalmi, devoted to showing the cultural effervescence of the city in the 1900s.

In **Berlin,** as it has been said, the Museum's renovation programme defines a unitary framework for the set of its sites, and at the **Museu de Lisboa** the municipal proposal of 2015 for renovating it establishes polycentrism as a foundational option: "Museu de Lisboa is the new name of the Museu da Cidade (City Museum). It is a name that introduces a new concept: a multi-branched museum, in which

[18] Declarations by Paul Spies, 18 July 2016: Paul Spies stellt Zukunftsstrategie für das Stadtmuseum Berlin vor. Retrieved from: *https://www.stadtmuseum.de/aktuelles/paul-spies-stellt-zukunftsstrategie-fuer-das-stadtmuseum-berlin-vor*. See also the Museum's Strategic Plan: Spies, P. (2016). *Zukunftsstrategie für das Stadtmuseum Berlin*. Berlin: Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin. Retrieved from: *https://www.stadtmuseum.de/sites/default/files/zukunft_stadtmuseum_berlin.pdf.*

[19] Choay, F. (1999). *L'Allégorie du patrimoine*. Paris: Seuil.


*Call for the seminar "Reinventing the museum of the city", on the relationship between heritage spaces and historical narratives in the Barcelona History Museum, 2018. © MUHBA*

Lisbon and its stories reveal themselves under different perspectives".[20] Both Berlin and Lisbon have their founding sites – Märkisches Museum and Palácio Pimenta – far from the most frequented streets but thanks to their polycentric organisation they have other sites that are more accessible for their temporary exhibitions.

It is possible, however, to go even further in the articulation of spaces and narratives. At least, this is the objective of the work underway at the **Museu d'Història de Barcelona** (MUHBA), conceived as a "museum with its rooms across the city". The proposal is to weave criss-crossing views between some fifteen heritage sites, with great variations in size, all interwoven with each other and with a core in the foundational headquarters of the museum.[21] There are places of power and the elites (Temple d'August, Palau Reial, Park Güell), testimonies of ancient and mediaeval life, the city of minorities with the Jewish *Call*, urban areas strained to the limits by the Spanish Civil War and the post-war period (air-raid shelter, anti-aircraft battery, the archaeology of shanty towns) and the contemporary metropolis viewed from the periphery, with the counterpoint of the literary narratives at Vil·la Joana. Casa Padellàs, the organisational hub, is designed as a "shared home for urban history": Agora museum, school museum, centre for research and debate, and the exploratory exhibition *Barcelona Flashback*.[22]

**Incorporating the periphery**

The accelerated urban growth of the second half of the 20th century preceded, in many European cities, the creation of the public spaces and facilities necessary to cater for the new neighbourhoods and link them to the city. Adding to these initial shortages, there was the impact of the subsequent economic crises, to the point that the integration of the peripheries became one of the key questions for the future of European democracy. Furthermore, it is often overlooked that the social incorporation of urban majorities is a determining factor in achieving respect for the minorities.[23]

In the case of Barcelona, on which this section will focus, the chaotic city generated by decades of growth without democracy under the Franco dictatorship led to a socially broad environment for critical reflection on the city.[24] Between 1976 and 1995, in the early days of the recovered democracy, Barcelona underwent a major urban renovation, driven by citizen demands.[25] The city achieved great prestige through its actions in the public space and in the cultural facilities of its neighbourhoods, while the Olympic Games of 1992 enabled the building of infrastructures that had been pending for decades.[26] It is worth saying, however, that museums were only considered at that time as part of the cultural network aspiring to capital status.[27]

Towards the end of the century, two museum institutions from the field of art, the Fundació Antoni Tàpies and the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (Macba), were among the first to break the ice and get closer to the social and cultural networks of the periphery. They started to frequent the Fòrum Ribera del Besòs. The Fòrum was defined as "a market for ideas, and a meeting point and a

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[20] Retrieved from: *http://www.museudelisboa.pt/en.html.*

[21] Roca i Albert, J. (2017). Reinventing the Museum of Barcelona. Urban History and Cultural Democracy, *Camoc Museums of Cities Review*, *3*, 4-9.

[22] Recent experiences of overview exhibitions that can be visited in one hour include *Amsterdam DNA* and *Berlin Zeit–Geschichte Kompact*.

[23] Roca i Albert, J. (2012). Los riesgos de la nueva dimensión urbana. In: Montaner, J.M. and Subirats, J. (Eds.) *Repensar las políticas urbanas*. Barcelona: Diputació de Barcelona. 38-57.

[24] See Ferrer, A. and Calavita, N. (2000). Behind Barcelona's Success Story: Citizen Movements and Planners' Power, *Journal of Urban History*, *26-6*. 793-807. Retrieved from: *https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/009614420002600604*.

[25] In *Reconstrucció de Barcelona* (Barcelona: Edicions 62), Oriol Bohigas formulated in 1986 the principles of "recovering the centre and 'monumentalizing' the periphery" to rebuild the city after the Franco dictatorship.

[26] Marshall, T. (Ed.) (2004). *Transforming Barcelona: The Renewal of a European Metropolis*. London: Routledge.

[27] Subirós, P. (1999). *Estratègies culturals i renovació urbana*. Barcelona: Aula Barcelona.

space for dialogue". It had been created in 1993 by the Institut Barri Besòs, a high-school whose slogan was "a school rooted in the neighbourhood and open to the world". There were regular meetings held there between very diverse organisations, from neighbourhood associations, schools, health centres and other local services to universities and other cultural institutions. Most of the issues addressed were urban redistributive policies, in the fields of housing, public facilities, education and culture.[28]

The reflection on the heritage and landscapes of the old industrial quarters and of the housing estates caught on within this framework as a driving force for incorporating the social majorities and contemporary peripheries into the narratives and representations of Barcelona.[29] At the beginning of the 21st century, there were signs of exhaustion of the urban transformation model that had triumphed in Barcelona in the previous decades, which had been presented to the world with the creation of new public space and facilities all around the city and with the 1992 Olympic Games. Criticism of the municipal urban policy was spreading in the field of heritage, too.[30] It was in the midst of the citizens' defence of the factory legacy of the Poblenou neighbourhood that the city museum arrived at the scene, with the initial proposal of devoting a new site to the industrial culture, at the Can Saladrigas factory, which subsequently underwent a change in both conceptual profile and location, with the final site being the Oliva Artés factory.

The Barcelona museum has been multi-site museum since the time of its founder, Agustí Duran i Sanpere, but the leap outside of the old city centre occurred more recently. The proposal of linking together a set of heritage sites to weave an articulated view of the metropolis was intensified with the Strategic Plan of 2008,[31] which advocated a museum "with its rooms distributed across the city" as we already illustrated in the previous section. This model for a museum as a network of interconnected polarities circulates between two decisive fronts: a choral narrative with multiple interlinked hubs and a core connecting hub at Casa Padellàs, at the edge of Plaça del Rei. From the inner city to the outer city and vice versa, with the right to the city understood as the right "to the centre" and the right "to the neighbourhood" at the same time.


*Strategic vision of the links between different spaces associated with the museum, 2018. © MUHBA*

Within a scheme of public-community partnership projects – along with city districts and neighbourhood associations, local studies groups, university research teams and other organisations – the MUHBA is profiling four strategic approaches to the contemporary metropolis. All these proposals are related to heritage sites in the outlying suburbs of the municipality, alongside the river Besòs: *provide* (Casa de l'Aigua de la Trinitat: environment, water and resources), *work* (Fabra i Coats Factory: the city of the working world), *inhabit* (Bon Pastor Houses: popular living accommodation) and *urbanise* (Nau Oliva Artés: the expansion of the metropolis). Placing them along a single axis, as the *Besòs Museums Embankment*, helps to highlight their conceptual complementarity and the invitation to tour them and combine perspectives: there are other points of interest in the area.

These heritage sites, together with the museum's other sites, need to function in a joint, flexible and sustainable way, as well as in harmony with the organisations and the districts: not as static heritage venues that merely open their doors to visitors, but as hubs that incentivise research, collections and the invention of activities,

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[28] *Roca i Albert, J. (2010).* Urban Inclusion and Public Space: Challenges in Transforming Barcelona. In: *Kihato*, C.W. *et al.* (Eds.) *Urban Diversity: Space, Culture and Inclusive Pluralism in Cities Worldwide.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

[29] *Per un pla alternatiu entre la Ciutadella i el Besòs*, manifesto published in March 2001. See Faigenbaum, P. and Roca, J. (2018). *Barcelona vista del Besòs.* Edited by Jean-François Chevrier and Jorge Ribalta. Barcelona: Museu d'Història de Barcelona and La Virreina Centre de la Imatge. A review of the project at: *http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/lavirreina/en/exhibitions/barcelona-besos-view/175.*

[30] Roca i Albert, J. (2004). Ha estat mai Barcelona una gran ciutat industrial?, *L'Avenç, 288.* Clarós i Ferret, S. (2016). *Can Ricart i el patrimoni industrial de Barcelona*, Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona.

[31] *MUHBA. Pla estratègic del Museu d'Història de Barcelona,* Barcelona, 2008. Summary in English: *http://www.bcn.cat/museuhistoriaciutat/docs/muhbasstrategicplan.pdf.*

with positive effect in the heritage system, the knowledge of the museum, and, above all, the attention to schools.

**The museum and the creation of urban heritage**

Since the 19th century, city museums, mostly under municipal ownership, have nourished their collections with institutional documents and artefacts, archaeological materials and private donations. The collections are often uneven and hold few contemporary materials. So, how can we aim towards a collection that includes more recent historical times?[32] How can we ensure selection criteria in a task shared with citizens and other social and cultural organisations? The question of how to collect is crucial for city museums and, because of its specificity, it would require another paper. The debate has been proposed on numerous occasions by the ICOM and also by the City History Museums and Research Network of Europe, with a first workshop organised in 2011 at the Museum of Copenhagen by its then-director, Jette Sandahl.


*Creation of the collection for the project City and Work at MUHBA Fabra i Coats, with the participation of Amics de Fabra i Coats (Friends of Fabra i Coats), an organization made up of former employees of the factory. © MUHBA, Jordi Mota, 2014*

At the sites of the Barcelona museum in development on the eastern periphery of the municipality, the collection on city and work at Fabra i Coats is being created with the participation of Amics de la Fabra i Coats (Friends of the Fabra&Coats) and other organisations with labour-related origins. Meanwhile, the collection on popular housing at Cases Barates del Bon Pastor has been built at breakneck speed – due to the risk that everything might disappear – with the support of residents, neighbourhood organisations and the District of Sant Andreu.[33] The creation of collections takes place in parallel with the museum's action on plans for the conservation and restoration of constructions assigned to museums and their surroundings, to the point that it would not have been easy to think about the objects without thinking about the buildings and the public space.

This model of intervention had already been tested by the museum in the Turó de la Rovira, when it was decided to create, in a public park, a musealized archaeological space on the urban impact of the Spanish Civil War and post-war periods, with the remnants of an antiaircraft battery and the shanties. The intervention was awarded the 2012 European Prize for Urban Public Space, and the restoration initiative generated a series of innovative proposals that were fully integrated into the project. This was, probably, the first time that a shanty town wall was transformed into cultural heritage.[34] But, deep down, this operation is not so different to when, in the 1950s and 1960s, the Barcelona Museum became involved in the restoration of the Roman wall of *Barcino* and incorporated the new artefacts obtained through archaeological digs. Besides the need of caring for the collection, city museums add their involvement, in one way or another, in the conservation and restoration of archaeological sites, buildings and urban landscapes – they participate both in the spirit of the ICOM and that of the ICOMOS.

There are city museums that, in the field of urban heritage, exercise a broad range of competences, from objects to buildings, such as in Copenhagen and Helsinki, where in addition to taking care of the archaeology service, "the city museum acts as the building conservation authority for protected buildings".[35] One finds, in other cities, the opposite tendency: to segregate these competencies from city museums, through initiatives from municipal governments and sometimes from the museum itself. However, it does not seem to be a good idea to weaken the

[32] See Kistemaker, R.E. and Tietmeyer, E. (2010). Collecting the present. Historical and ethnographical approaches: the case of entrepreneurs. In: *Entrepreneurial cultures in Europe. Stories and museum projects from seven cities.* Berlin: Publications by the Friends of the Museum of European Cultures. Retrieved from: *http://nmuseum.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Entrepreneurial-Cultures-in-Europe-2010.pdf.*

[33] See the text by Elena Pérez Rubiales on the actions in the Barcelona neighbourhood of Bon Pastor in this volume.

[34] See Roca i Albert, J. (2018). The Informal City in the City Museum. In: Savić, J. (Ed.) *Museums of Cities and Contested Urban Histories.* 26-37. Retrieven from: *http://network.icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/minisites/camoc/MEXICO_Conf._Pro._BOOKLET_Final4r.pdf* . Also see: Roca i Albert, J. (2018).The Informal City in the Museum of Barcelona. *Museum International, 70: 3-4* (*Museum & Contested Histories*). 48-59.

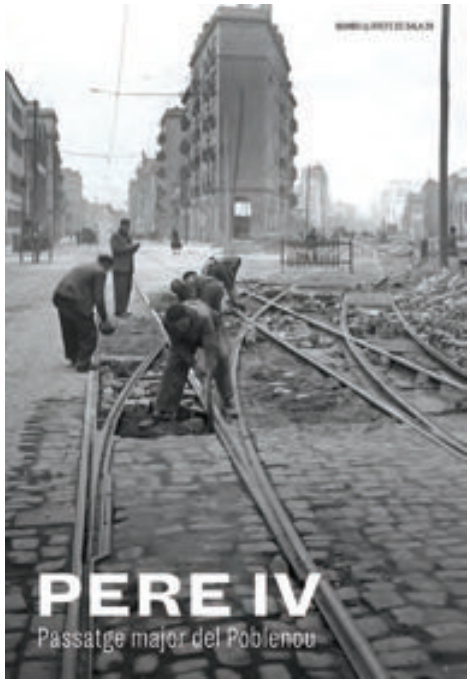
[35] The functions of the Museum of Copenhagen in terms of archaeology, built heritage and collections at *https://cphmuseum.kk.dk/en/artikel/heritage.* On Helsinki, see: *http://www.helsinginkaupunginmuseo.fi/en/pictures-objects-helsinki/buildings-and-environment/.*

tandem between cultural policies and urban policies, which is at the very origin of city museums. Especially at a time when they are trying out new outreach programmes for museum interaction with communities in the neighbourhoods and just as urban planners are proposing more integratory procedures for rehabilitation, especially in the historical centre and the ageing peripheries.

Transformations in the historical centre nearly always end up involving the city museum, whether actively or passively. On the Liverpool Waterfront, the museum and its new building are the keystone of urban regeneration, while at the Neue Frankfurter Altstadt (literally, the "new old city of Frankfurt") the museum's architects have opted to mark distances with the medievalist remodelling of its surroundings.[36] In Barcelona, the museum contributed in the mid-20th century to the historicist idealisation of the Gothic Quarter and today contributes towards adding value to a much broader range of heritage layers, including the remains, in the historical centre, of what was the main manufacturing centre of the western Mediterranean.

As we have previously stated, another heritage match is being played out on the periphery: industrial districts and housing estates have been the home of urban majorities in contemporary metropolises. However, the testimonies from factory environments and the urban peripheries, in general, require specific evaluation criteria,[37] due to their nature of being more "ordinary" than "singular", and to the fact that the memory – the "present past" – now counts for as much as the historical, formal and functional evaluation. The interest of citizens in the issue is an added incentive, as in the case of the conceptualisation and subsequent signage in Barcelona of Carrer de Pere IV - the historical axis of the Poblenou industrial quarter - entrusted to the museum by the District of Sant Martí.[38]

All in all, the city museum can play a key role in the creation of urban heritage, with functions such as historical and heritage research, advice on intervention in archaeological sites, buildings and landscapes, as well as the creation of new collections of artefacts, representations and non-tangible culture.




*Landscape guide to the street Pere IV, the booklet of a multiple-format project, 2018. © MUHBA, Andrea Manenti*

**City museums as centres of knowledge**

As an institution devoted to presenting and representing the city and its inhabitants, the city museum must profile both the key issues of urban history and their heritage remains. However, unlike museums of art, science, technology or national history, city museums do not have the academic support of university departments specifically devoted to the history and heritage of the locality: they hardly exist anywhere. Research work and studies on the city have been promoted by the museums themselves, usually in partnership with the municipal archives. The promotion of research is what may facilitate the city museum to go a little beyond the role of a cultural hub in order to also become a knowledge hub. A hub, which, based on the Kantian motto for the Enlightenment of daring to know, *sapere aude,* facilitates knowledge and appropriation of the city for the maximum number of people. This way of working, which has a positive contagion effect from exhibitions to activities, multiplies its impact if, by merging innovation and dissemination, the research is integrated into public programming (in this area, science museums have taken the lead).

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[36] Alexander, M. (Ed.) (2018). *Die neue Altstadt*, Frankfurt a.M: Societätsverlag. On the Museum: Historisches Museum Frankfurt a.M., *DBZ, 10/2017*. Retrieved from: *https://www.dbz.de/artikel/dbz_Historisches_Museum_Frankfurt_a._M._2904528.html.*

[37] Muñoz, F. (2014). Cultural sustainability: ordinary heritage and ordinary landscapes 'at work', *Eco Web Town. Magazine of Sustainable Design (SCUT, Università Chieti-Pescara), 10-11*. Retrieved from: *http://www.ecowebtown.it/n_10-11/pdf/10-11_12_munoz.pdf.* And also Muñoz, F. (2017). Urbanalization, *Mark Magazine, 68*.

[38] See Poblenou/Bcn. L'eix Pere IV i la Diagonal , *Guia d'història urbana, 11*(2013), and also Manenti, A. and Sales, L. (2018). *Pere IV. Passatge major del Poblenou*, Barcelona: MUHBA and Bit Habitat. Retrieved from*: http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/museuhistoria/ca/publicacions/pere-iv-passatge-major-del-poblenou*. The project featured the Master's degree in Intervention in Heritage and Landscape, shared between the Museum and the Autonomous University of Barcelona, and the studies of Cardiff University's EMUVE programme. In both cases the results were exhibited at MUHBA Oliva Artés, the laboratory site of the Museum for the contemporary city.

At the Barcelona Museum, a significant part of the activity is channelled through the Centre for Research and Debate (CRED), with a good reception by the citizens. This is not a differentiated department within the museum, it is only composed by a technical office to organise the talks, seminars, workshops and other open formats. Research is becoming participatory. The museum thus heightens the visibility of the social relevance of the research task, and, in a transdisciplinary environment and one of shared interests, it is not difficult to fuel the programme with contributions originating from the universities and other centres for studies, in line with the museum's goals.[39] The museum is also capable of contributing to the city's economy and its export base with its know-how in some specialised areas of heritage, from archaeology and architecture to the treatment of culinary and musical legacies.

*The museum as a school, at the MUHBA Summer Camp 2018. © MUHBA*

The city museum is thus configured as a centre for RDI in urban history, heritage and citizenship, organised into lines of research. From studies on the environment and the supply of water and food, to studies on work, housing and schooling, to lines of research on sexuality and gender, minorities, heritage and government in the city, and to research projects on technologies for representation and new educational formats, etc. The Centre for Research and Debate has thus become the silent driving force behind the MUHBA, nourishing the entire system and infiltrating it with an "investigative spirit": the educational programme is now titled *Questioning Barcelona*. The result is not an academic museum of minorities, but rather to the contrary: well-grounded concepts and narratives are essential for a reflective museum, which leads to the formulation of questions and the appreciation of works with vibrant museographies for all.

The conception of the city museum as an open city knowledge centre favours the convergence of genres, interlinking all manner of formats: digital and virtual (basis of the system), object-based (collections, urban heritage), exhibitive (permanent and temporary displays), spoken (talks, seminars, workshops), written (books, magazines), visual and audiovisual (images, documentaries), and urban (cartographies, itineraries). Finally, it is worth highlighting for a moment the specific potential of the itinerary format for city museums. The art of walking the city involves recombining formats and knowledge of all kinds, and innovations in this field could be among the most productive. We spend many hours moving around the city during our lives. The increase of the cognitive and emotional creativity of urban walks represents a small revolution, which democratises the figure of Walter Benjamin's *flâneur* and generates alternative modalities for visits by residents and tourists alike.[40]

**Mirror of and gateway to the city. Epilogue**

When economic, social and cultural flows all jump over frontiers, the relevance of cities as agents for social and cultural cohesion grows. The city museums of the 21st century must be the mirror of and gateway to the city,[41] within everyone's reach: this was the inspiration behind *The Barcelona Declaration on European City Museums* of 2013.[42]

The position of city museums at the crossroads of cultural and urban policies confers upon them a key role in the creation of knowledge and heritage, in the social and cultural cohesion of metropolises and in the renovation of tourism practices. The city museum of the 21st century should be able to be profiled as:

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[39] See *http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/museuhistoria/en/research-and-debate-centre-cred*.

[40] Roca i Albert, J. (2004). Itinerary as Art Form, Cities and Citizenship. In: *Tour-isms. The Defeat of Dissent. Critical Itineraries.* Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies. 100-113. The MUHBA offers the programme "Urban narratives. Theory and practice of the historical itinerary" to rethink touristic practices and design alternative visit modalities.

[41] See Roca i Albert, J. (2009). El Museu d'Història de Barcelona, portal de la ciudad, *Her&Mus. Heritage & Museography, 2*. 98-105. Retrieved from: *https://www.raco.cat/index.php/Hermus/article/view/314618*

[42] City History Museums and Research Network of Europe. (2013). *Barcelona Declaration on European City Museums.* Retrieved from: *https://cityhistorymuseums.wordpress.com/*

1) **Centre of knowledge**, as a hub for research and the socialisation of knowledge about the city and its trajectory and for appreciation of its cultural heritage in multiple formats: from exhibitions and installations to seminars, publications, documentaries, visits and itineraries or urban walks.
2) **Centre of *heritagization***, which creates, systematises and studies collections of tangible and intangible heritage, in connection with the archaeological legacy, the built heritage and the urban landscape.
3) **Centre for development**, as an RDI agent that innovates, together with other institutions, and exports know-how in numerous heritage specialities and as an institutional agent that contributes towards formulating sustainable touristic practices.
4) **Agora museum**, as a participatory laboratory on the city and its trajectory for everyone – young and old, inhabitants, newcomer immigrants, refugees, visitors – within an environment of respect for the right of citizenship, social justice and cultural democracy.
5) **School museum**, with the application of museum methods in schools and vice-versa. Overcoming the barriers between culture and education and between museums and schools must be a fundamental goal.
6) **Network museum**, weaving a plural and choral narrative between the set of its heritage sites, with a connecting hub that acts as a departure – or arrival – point for questioning the city and its trajectory from diverse perspectives.
7) **Dual-scale facility**, on a city scale and a local scale at the same time, as an organiser of spaces and narratives and as a connector of neighbourhoods with the city. With an appropriate institutional fit within the municipality, the museum can be an agent of sociocultural cohesion, an arrival point for visitors and a cultural ambassador for the city.

These can be the starting points for a *new urban museology* that could feed the city museum of the 21st century as mirror of and gateway to the city and its neighbourhoods, connecting spaces and historical narratives, enhancing participation in urban life, promoting a more sustainable tourism and, all in all, focusing on the cultural field in a singular way.

## BIOGRAPHY

Joan Roca i Albert was trained as an urban geographer at the University of Barcelona and is a researcher into urban history, heritage and education. He taught at Institut Barri Besòs (a secondary school in the suburbs of Barcelona), at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst in Zurich. A former director of Aula Barcelona and the Urban Majorities Project at Fundació Tàpies, he was appointed as director of Barcelona History Museum (MUHBA) in 2007.

FRANKFURT. © J. SAVIC, 2018

# *PART 1: THE CITY MUSEUM AND ITS PROFESSIONALS*

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# CONSIDERING A CURRICULUM FOR TRAINING CITY MUSEUM STAFF

## ABSTRACT

For most of their history, museums of cities have been, essentially, museums of the history of their communities. Since the 1990s, however, many progressive city museums have begun to evolve into more than history museums. Many museums of cities have now begun to take on more diverse topics than history alone, expanding their roles in their communities, and broadening their audiences. The growing missions of our leading city museums have led them into the realms of urban studies, planning, urban design and architecture, social services, sociology and ethnic studies, among others. Yet, most city museum professionals still come to their new jobs little prepared for the expansive, broadening and increasingly challenging work of the museums where they are employed and the profession they are committing themselves to.

What should new city museum staff know when they enter the profession? What kind of coursework should they embark on? What kind of pre-professional experience ought they have? In other words, how can we begin to train the next and future generations of city museum professionals?

**Key words:** Challenges, skills, new museum professionals

**Introductory notes**

In these challenging times when people of various political persuasions have trouble agreeing on what are facts and what is fake, I hope that, as CAMOC members, we can agree on at least three facts.

First, when one adds together all the museums that reflect their cities, towns and counties, there are possibly more of what we call "city" or "town" museums than any other type of museum, whether is it art, science, or history. In fact, it is my personal belief that if we attempt to count them, we may either have run out of time or, more likely, out of numbers. Moreover, when I use the word "museums", I mean museums in the true sense of the word, not galleries. Further, CAMOC member museums – and city museums that are in CAMOC's discipline – theoretically serve a wider audience than any other type of museum (I say "theoretically" because we all know that city museums actually serve a relatively small number of citizens and visitors, being far outnumbered by visitors to science and art museums). All this said, we have a great responsibility.

**The curriculum for training city museum staff: premises**

As one of CAMOC's two founders, Ian Jones points out that the ICOM's Conservation Committee, for example, represents nearly all museums, because nearly all museums have conservation issues, in one form or another. However, when it comes to the types of museums that exist worldwide, I stand by my "fact" that city museums (alternatively called local or county museums) are the most common. Even in many smaller communities, the local art or craft museums often focus on local artists, artisans and craftspersons in the work they do or have done locally.

Second, if we agree that cities are the defining artefacts of civilisation and that it is in them where the future of humankind will be shaped, we, CAMOC members, might be justified in saying that our organisations sit at the nexus of history, of place, of society and civilisation. As city museum staff, we should expect ourselves to elevate among our audiences their own perspectives, particularly as they reflect the changing course of cities today. If city museums want to establish or continue to convene and sustain the conversation between history, civilisation and our city's residents and visitors, we must continue and ever better position ourselves as learning communities, not mere centres of self-validating authority. We are keepers of big expectations and further big responsibilities.

Third, as museum professionals, we are deeply invested in the history, planning and social life of cities, as well as in how economics, politics, the environment, governance and social justice influence our cities, in whatever part of the world we come from. Although I am aware that each of us thinks about all of these fields of endeavour, I propose to really reflect on them and provide answers to the following questions: Are you a historian? An anthropologist? A geographer? An urban planner? A politician? A curator? A sociologist? An immigrant rights specialist? A museum administrator? A designer of buildings? An expert on landscape? On urban fabric?

Obviously, the answer is no, one cannot be all of these things. Each requires years of special study and training, special degrees, special examinations, and more. Nevertheless, we are in a special line of work, one that requires us, at least, to be proficient in much of the vocabulary of all those professions, to have more than a passing interest and familiarity with them, to actually be able to comfortably communicate, write, and exhibit about those diverse fields. Yet we hold more

responsibility to so many sister professions, to so many clients and patrons, to so many communities.

Whether intuitively or explicitly, each of us, as individuals and as staff members of our respective museums, has assumed these responsibilities. I want to voice a concern, however. I believe that most, if not all of us are to some degree not fully qualified for the responsibilities we wield, while hoping to perform well at our job. On the other hand, I do not think any of us is, even if that might even be possible, fully trained to fill our positions as staff members of city museums. There are, simply, too many facets to our work, too many skills to master, too much knowledge to acquire.

But, while we must accept the further fact that none of us can ever be fully trained in or be fully knowledgeable of all the realms that might be expected of us as city museum managers, I do believe that we can begin to provide those entering our profession with a degree of knowledge in the basics of what I will call "city museum management".

As previously stated, the mission of city museums requires staff to know at least something about a lot of different fields, from history to architecture, from immigration to ethnic studies. Furthermore, what should new city museum staff know when they enter the profession? What kind of coursework should they take? What kind of pre-professional experience ought they have? In other words, how can we begin to train the next and future generations of city museum professionals? Another way of asking the question is: what might be the components of a city museum curriculum?

**Training ourselves and our successors**

To begin to answer my question about training ourselves and our successors, here are some of the types of courses that, from my experience, would help educate and inform those of us working in city museums. Each of the following classes is taught in almost every university that has a programme in museum studies and urban studies. Together, I believe they provide the foundation for the administration of city museums, for whatever the size of the community and wherever it might be. I have offered a question or topic for each of the following classes that must be understood by every city museum professional.

1. Museum Studies
   - What is a museum?
   - What is its history?
   - What purpose does it have in society?
2. Urban Studies
   - What is a city? What is its history?
   - What roles have cities played in civilisation?
3. Learning in Museums
   - How does museum education differ from education in schools?
4. Culture and Communities
   - Ethnic Studies, Immigration, Housing
5. Architecture and Urban Design
6. Cultural Preservation in Cities
   - Archaeology, Historical Preservation
7. Cultural Preservation in Museums
   - Conservation, Collections Management
8. Museum Curatorial practices
9. Exhibits
   - Their purpose and creation

10. Museums and Technology
11. Community Planning
    – Working with the Public, Group Facilitation, Public Affairs, Communications, Writing, Public Speaking, Fundraising
13. Practicums and internships in city museums
14. Museum Management

These are the very basic courses. Some of the courses listed here might be taught in departments other than museum or urban studies, including public administration, geography, history and architecture. Moreover, there are many other classes that most of us have taken in preparing us for our work. I asked Eric Sandweiss, who teaches courses on, among other subjects, public history and museums, about his own thoughts on this large topic and he suggested that we also consider the work beyond the classroom (*i.e.*, internships, practicums, work-study programmes). Thus, we should consider what aspects of our profession's training might be obtained within a class as well as within a job setting, be it a city museum or, perhaps, even an area completely beyond the field, such as teaching, public affairs or public administration, management, sales, or any number of other jobs that require what we refer to as "people skills".

**Final remarks**

I want to conclude by bringing one of CAMOC's two founders, Ian Jones, into this discussion. We must never forget, as Ian explains, that a city museum's artefacts, first and foremost, are the city outside the museum walls, its people, its memories, its streets, the city as it was, as it is now and as it could be. Many citizens may know more about their place than the very curators of the museum established to collect and interpret their city's stories. This is not the case in most other museums, where one assumes that the curators know more than their visitors about the subject of their museums, be it art, science, or history. Hence, in city museums, the citizens *themselves* are not just the objects, but the subjects, as well as the teachers and the students, all in one.

Such presents the singular challenge to those of us who work in city museums; in other words, how do we manage the varying perspectives of our visitors? I described in the varying perspectives: historian, geographer, architectural historian, preservationist, sociologist that city museum staff must bring to their work. Taken together, it is a lot to know, which is why we must really think about how we train those who will follow us in our profession.

One final thought: I have long believed that museums and cities are not nouns, but verbs. In other words, they are perspectives, ways of seeing the world, through the eyes of curators examining objects and through the eyes of urban scholars studying cities. As professionals, city museum staff must look at their topic as if it is a moving, breathing, living entity. The city, after all, is a live and animate being, ever-changing, always evolving. It is never a still, inanimate object. We are akin to biologists, studying living places. Moreover, sharing what we have learned with our visitors is our ultimate aim.


## BIOGRAPHY

Chet Orloff (CAMOC Board Member 2007-2010) is a long-time ICOM member and has worked as a museum professional since 1975. He has served on numerous local, national, and international committees in the field of museums, history and urban planning. In addition to being a historian, he is an urban planner and has taught museum studies, community development and urban studies at the university level for more than 20 years. He has presented at seven previous CAMOC meetings since 2007.

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# (SELF) CENSORSHIP

## ABSTRACT

At every stage of the process of creating exhibitions and museum programmes, all of us, as CAMOC members, as people connected with city museums, within and outside an institution, have, somehow, dealt with censorship and self-censorship. Although we may work in different circumstances, we are all dealing with different groups in society, local politicians and sponsors who may influence decisions about the content of our exhibitions. Probably, we have all thought about leaving something out because it might offend and anger someone outside or inside the institution. Most of us have been in situations where we had to adapt our plans because of some sort of (self)censorship. Therefore, Francesca Lanz and I proposed a workshop on (self)censorship at the 2018 CAMOC conference.

**Key words:** Self-censorship, compromise, controversy

**Self-censorship**

Nowadays, the struggle with history, with inclusion and exclusion, the struggle to decolonise the museum, to claim the right to tell one's own story, is as fierce as it is necessary. More than ever before, groups in society, when they feel the stories are wrong or the objects or images on show are offensive, are talking back to museums. Meanwhile, city councils and tourist boards want to present a positive image of their city. In private museums, the boards of trustees hold a strong position, which includes access to funding. Politics, but also sexuality, race, religion and animal rights (and all their intersectional connections) can turn into contested issues. Museums are carrying out complicated balancing acts, figuring out how to be bold and, at the same time, still allowing artistic provocations, all the while remaining safe institutions for the public and pleasing the ones that provide the money.

**Not always happy endings**

At our museum conferences, we generally talk about "happy endings", about best practices and inspiring examples. However, in Frankfurt, we also talked about things that went wrong. Sometimes, terribly wrong. Exhibitions that were forbidden, artworks removed or even destroyed, curators and directors fired. To get the discussion started, we presented a few examples.

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, the National Air and Space Museum in Washington proposed an exhibition that would include displaying the Enola Gay, the B-29 plane that was used to drop the bomb on Hiroshima. The intention to place the Enola Gay in the museum caused a long and fiery controversy between competing historical narratives regarding the decision to drop the bomb.[1]

In 2018, the Guggenheim Museum, in New York, showed *Theater of the World, Art and China after 1989*. The exhibition's title derived from an installation by artist Huang Yong Ping: a dome shaped like the back of a tortoise with live reptiles and insects that coexisted in a natural cycle of life. The work captured the theme of the exhibition: China as a universe unto itself, forever evolving and changing into a new order. Nevertheless, it also hinted at the oppression felt by Chinese artists.[2] Following other (video) works which also featured animals, protesters were marching outside the Guggenheim and sending online threats and demands for "cruelty-free exhibits". The museum removed the works "out of concern for the safety of its staff, visitors and participating artists". In an article for the *New York Times*, Tom Eccles, executive director of the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College, expressed his concerns: "Museums are here to show works that are difficult, uncomfortable and provocative. The chilling effect of this is, of course, that museums will now look to make exhibitions that won't offend in any way."[3] Later in the year, the *Theatre of the World* was shown at Guggenheim Bilbao. For the new presentation of this artwork, the museum worked with experts in animal care. These professionals were hired by the museum to monitor the status of reptiles and insects for the entire duration of the exhibition.[4] However, one could argue that possible interventions to safeguard the life of the animals literally take the sting out of the artwork.

It may now seem that the United States has experienced more cases of (self) censorship than Europe, but this assumption would need more research than we

[1] *https://www.atomicheritage.org/history/controversy-over-enola-gay-exhibition, https://siarchives.si.edu/collections/siris_sic_11850*

[2] *https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/20/arts/design/guggenheim-art-and-china-after-1989.html*

[3] *https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/26/arts/design/guggenheim-art-and-china-after-1989-animal-welfare.html*

[4] *https://247newsbeat.com/the-guggenheim-of-bilbao-dares-with-what-did-not-show-the-new-york-culture/*

were able to do for the workshop. Our intention was to present some cases in order to inspire the participants to come up with their own experiences. Next to political controversies and animal rights, sexuality, race and religion can lead to protests. Religion is even more controversial in connection to (homo)sexuality. In 2010, David Wojnarowicz's video *A Fire in My Belly* was featured in the LGBT-themed *Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture* at the Smithsonian Institute. Religious conservatives were opposed to a publicly funded institution putting on an exhibition about gay themes in portraiture. They took particular exception to Wojnarowicz's video, which included a shot in which ants crawled over a statuette of Jesus on the cross. The work was removed.[5]

**"Not your story"**

In recent years, especially in the USA, various groups have protested against the appropriation of their history by artists. In March 2017, protesters blocked Dana Schutz's painting at the Whitney Biennial. In her painting *Open Casket,* the artist recreated the open coffin with the mutilated body of Emmett Till, the teenager who was lynched by two white men in Mississippi, in 1955. According to the protesters, a white artist should not use and potentially profit from an image of violence against a black person. The Whitney kept the painting on display.[6] A similar objection was raised against Sam Durant's *Scaffold* (2012) at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, in 2017. The wooden structure that was inspired by a gallows refers to the largest mass execution in the USA, which claimed the lives of 38 Dakota Indians, in 1862. It took place in nearby Mankato. Minnesota and Dakota Native Americans declared: "Our trauma is not your work of art".[7] After a three-hour mediation session attended by the artist, representatives from the Dakota Spiritual and Traditional Elders, the four federally recognised Dakota tribes and the Walker Art Center, it was decided to destroy the work.[8]

Sometimes, not only individual works of art or texts but also an entire museum is censored. The Queer Museum in Brazil met with protests, and the exhibition was shut down within days. The museum incited a heated national debate about freedom of expression and what qualifies as art. Later, the Queer Museum was reopened at the Parque Lage in Rio de Janeiro after a successful fundraising campaign.[9]

**Fear of offending**

Speaking about (self)censorship in an organisation like CAMOC means speaking about international differences. *Scaffold* was not felt to be offensive at the 2012 *Dokumenta* exhibition in Kassel. However, it was in Minnesota. It also implies talking about the very nature of art. In Austria, artists are allowed by law to express in artworks things that cannot be said or done outside an artistic context, such as an anti-Semitic character in a play.

Talking about censorship also means sharing personal experiences about the pressure to change something, whether the pressure is coming from without or within the institution. Francesca Lanz sent me the example of the exhibition at the Musei Capitoli in Rome, where nude classical sculptures were hidden in boxes when the Iranian president visited, in 2016. The decision was made by the board, whereas curators thought it was terrible, and the press ridiculed and denounced it

[5] *http://flavorwire.com/400366/9-gay-themed-controversies-that-shook-the-art-world*

[6] *https://news.artnet.com/art-world/dana-schutz-painting-emmett-till-whitney-biennial-protest-897929*

[7] *https://news.artnet.com/art-world/walker-controversy-sam-durant-scaffold-974612*

[8] *https://news.artnet.com/art-world/walker-sculpture-garden-to-remove-sam-durant-scaffold-977447*

[9] *https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/26/world/americas/queer-museum-rio-de-janeiro-brazil.html*

as a "submission" to principles that are against the Western culture.
In 1995, I curated the exhibition *Toen Hier* ("Then Here") about the final year of WWII. It included a photo containing, in large letters, the word HUNGER. I had selected it from an album of negatives, but when the print 2x4 meters entered the museum, we saw that the word *kut* (cunt) was written on the wall in small letters. The museum director wanted to spare Queen Beatrix, who would open the exhibition, the sight of this word. Despite protests from me and the exhibition designer, the director decided that the letter T would be retouched away. When I called her from the train on my way to Frankfurt, we laughed about it, but at the time I was furious. I thought that one should not change a historical photo and that the Queen would be very well able to handle this word. She was not consulted beforehand, nor was the Iranian president.

**Bags full of examples**

In the short time available for sharing our experiences during the workshop, it became quite clear that we all deal with cases of (self)censorship and pressure from outside and from within. All these cases touch upon the ethics of museum work. The bags Francesca Lanz and I had hung in the room were quickly filled with a variety of experiences around politics, sex, race and religion. The four groups that formed around them debated with passion, and shared their stories. All the examples shared here have been anonymised. Sometimes, we are only transcribing the statements and the questions raised.

The pressure may come from people who participate in projects, such as a lady who wanted to change her story because she was afraid of sounding anti-Semitic. A frequently raised issue was that if we, as curators and educators, could speak for "others" or, as it was also written, in what way we identify our own perspective. "Indigenous people/migrants/women/LGBTQI/ etc. should all have the opportunity to speak for themselves", as someone has written. However, who gets the voice is not always obvious. "Which party represents the "right" history?" Someone mentioned a project on colonialism, particularly, when, after months, the cooperation with activists was put to an end because they convinced their network not to cooperate with the museum. "Nevertheless, we went ahead, but it was a big pity to have done it without the people that have the expertise and the communities as well". Ownership not only applies to stories but also to objects. "Why expose the human bones of an African slave? What about the bones of your great-grandfather?"

There were examples of self-censorship as well. Not writing something that might offend a group, or not showing a photo with nudity, as parents or teachers might protest. Moreover, what if we do show things that might be shocking or offensive? Should the public be warned? We tend to warn people about sex, but do we also warn them about death and pain?

**Words matter**

In Australia, the use of the word "invasion" for the British colonisation of the aboriginal people land was met with criticism and the label was ordered to be removed. In the Netherlands, the recent publication of *Words Matter*[10] was met with praise but also with the fear of censorship. Words matter not only in museum texts but also in our events, for instance, when a visitor starts telling racist stories on a microphone during a story café. What to do when volunteers stay away because they think the people of a specific ethnic group are criminals?

[10] *https://www.materialculture.nl/sites/default/files/2018-08/words_matter.pdf.pdf*

Sometimes, we yield to the pressure from visitors, but sometimes we do not. A Jewish couple from abroad wanted an artwork removed. It was made by a Palestinian artist who had used plastic toys from a pile of construction rubble following an Israeli bombing in his work. It stayed.

We also talked about changes in norms about what is acceptable. An exhibit about the internment of Japanese American in the USA (during WWII) was censored years ago by a board of trustees. Today, hosting such a show would not be questioned.

There are many differences between countries, especially regarding religion. In 2016, Orthodox activists in Moscow destroyed sculptures by Vadim Sidur, one of the non-conformist sculptors that were not allowed to exhibit during the Soviet period.[11] According to one of the Russian participants, religious feelings are becoming more and more an instrument for censorship. In some countries exhibiting objects from other religions, even if they are part of the museum collection, is forbidden, nor can museums celebrate different (religious) feasts.

The power of (potential) sponsors was often mentioned, especially with difficult subjects. "We are a museum of the city, not of the city council", someone wrote. Sponsors can also be companies. What to do when a building/construction company the museum is doing business with is criticised because of disturbing archaeological sites? How to bring up the fact, to a bank that sponsors the museum, that they owned enslaved people during the 19th century? Outside partners bring their own opinions and sensibilities. "Can you include issues about the police when they are a partner in an exhibition about crime?"

"Thorbecke Foundation" was written on one of the notes. Paul Spies, former director of the Amsterdam Museum, was alluding to the Dutch politician who introduced the parliamentary democracy in the Netherlands, in the nineteenth century. Spies suggested an institution should be founded to deal with matters of censorship. Thorbecke pronounced: "Art is not a government affair, in so far as the Government has neither judgment nor any authority in the field of art". This statement became the foundation for the policy of Dutch national and local governments towards the arts and culture: support yes, but no interference in the content. The international examples of (self) censorship in museums, however, show that in most cases it was not (only) the (local) government that exerted pressure but also groups outside the museum, visitors, the board, or the director. The (museum) world today is far more complicated than in the 19th century.

Finally, we would like to express how the *Best Practices for Managing Controversy*, made by the National Coalition Against Censorship,[12] are very helpful. Furthermore, to include this topic in the conferences of CAMOC and other ICOM institutions is an excellent way to encourage exchange of this important subject.


## BIOGRAPHY

Annemarie de Wildt is a historian and curator at the Amsterdam Museum. She has (co)curated many exhibitions, with a variety of objects, often a mix of "high" and "low" culture and with a strong input of human stories and a focus on difficult and uneasy subjects. She has presented and written about city museums, practices and dilemmas of curating and (contemporary) collecting, prostitution, and Amsterdam's connection to slavery, as well as protest movements.


[11] *https://www.rferl.org/a/moscow-sculptures-smashed-orthodox-activists-blasphemous/27190081.html*
[12] *https://ncac.org/resource/museum-best-practices-for-managing-controversy*

# 2050: MUSEUMS HYPER-CONNECTED TO *OLDSPEAK*. THE OTHERS' VOICES FROM ANCIENT LOMBARDY

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## ABSTRACT

We are now in 2018, and 70 years have passed since *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was written, a novel in which George Orwell described a society dominated by three fundamental ideas: *war is peace – freedom is slavery – ignorance is strength.* Big Brother controls every form of information, past, present and future. Museums disappear, the only survivors are occasional temporary exhibitions that are instant propaganda vehicles for military victories, real or invented. According to the book, it is planned that by the year 2050 a single, simplified artificial language will have been perfected: *Newspeak*.

The purpose of museums is to cultivate curiosity and to preserve our memory of the past and the present. Museums allow us to enjoy the beauty and the good that humankind is capable of, to tell stories that keep us united with our traditions, that make us imagine the best possible future, to create forms of dialogue between diverse cultures, to invent alternative solutions. In front of works of art, artefacts, objects, memorials, we need ***Oldspeak***, made up of gestures, facial expressions, tones of voice, replete with words that are ancient, foreign and local, intellectual categories and vulgarities. We need human, interactive, multisensory, immersive mediation: the ability to choose the right level of discourse, appropriate to each different, individual human being who comes to the museum. This mediation must, of course, be professional, well-informed and available in different forms and at different levels. Seeing as necessary the constant presence of professional mediators is also a concrete response to the crisis of cultural and humanistic professions and to restore the modalities, rhythms and courtesies of human relations. This aim has given rise to a project entitled *The Others' voices. Foreign languages, words, alphabets in ancient Lombardy*. Despite speaking different languages, the peoples who came to Lombardy exchanged products, ideas and discoveries, and the encounters between different cultural knowledge and traditions greatly favoured local development.

Therefore, we have prepared for our public an investigation into the languages spoken in ancient times in this territory, followed by a series of lectures and guided thematic tours. We have organised meetings and teaching workshops focused on all possible forms of communication, ancient and modern, using letters, images and gestures.

**Key words:** *Oldspeak,* human mediation, the Others' voices

**Museums and collective memory in Orwell's novel**

In this age of hyper-connected museums and fast, digital *Newspeak*, we must react against the disappearance of museums and the future of communication, as foreseen by Orwell by the year 2050. We are now in 2018, and 70 years have passed since *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was written, in which he described a society dominated by three fundamental ideas: *war is peace – freedom is slavery – ignorance is strength.*

Big Brother controls every form of information, whether it is past, present or future: *Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past … We, the Party, control all records, and we control all memories. Then we control the past*. Museums have disappeared; the only survivors are occasional temporary exhibitions that are instant propaganda vehicles for military victories, real or invented. The protagonist, Winston, seems to be the only one who is aware of what is happening and desperately tries to save memories, his own and those of society, to counteract the hatred, in order to feel part of a human community. He comes across an antique shop where he believes he can find residual resources, archaeological fragments, surviving witnesses of a past that can only be real thanks to their existence. Thinking that he is safe from Big Brother's cameras, he deludes himself that he can find memories and testimonies and that he will be able to love. However, that unbeknownst museum turns out to be a trap designed to capture the last irreducible heretics, who still think they can save the past and humanity.

The Party prevents all contact with people from other nations, the citizen *is forbidden the knowledge of foreign languages. If he were allowed contact with foreigners, he would discover that they are creatures similar to himself and that most of what he has been told about them is lies*.

According to the novel, by the year 2050, a single, simplified artificial language will have been perfected: ***Newspeak***. Synonyms, antonyms and adjectives will thus be eliminated, together with all words that might be used to express doubt or emotion; subordinate clauses and indirect modes of speech disappear; it becomes impossible to express in the conditional tense; all terms referring to feelings, states of mind and personal opinions disappear.

*The purpose of Newspeak not only was to provide a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits proper to the devotees of Ingsoc but also to make all other modes of thought impossible. It was intended that when Newspeak had been adopted once and for all and Oldspeak forgotten, a heretical thought — that is, a thought diverging from the principles of Ingsoc — should be literally unthinkable, at least so far as thought is dependent on words*.

Words would only serve to supply information, communicate technical details and unquestionable orders, removing all possibility of reflection, imagination and thought. *When Oldspeak had been once and for all superseded, the last link with the past would have been severed.*

Even when under torture, Winston still tries to oppose the cancellation of the past by recounting the material evidence: *But the rocks are full of the bones of extinct animals – mammoths and mastodons and enormous reptiles which lived here long before man was ever heard of*. But the response is unequivocal: *Have you ever seen those bones, Winston? Of course not. Nineteenth-century biologists invented them.* The past does not exist, archaeological findings do not exist, museums do not exist; **only that which Big Brother says is real exists**. *There will be no emotions except fear, rage, triumph, and self-abasement… There will be no art, no literature, no science. … There will be no distinction between beauty and ugliness. There will be no curiosity*.

**Museums: strongholds of *Oldspeak***

The purpose of museums, on the contrary, is to cultivate curiosity and to preserve our memory of the past and the present. They allow us to enjoy the beauty and the good which humankind is capable of; they let us tell stories that keep us united with our traditions, that make us aware of our identity. They are able to communicate the best of human creativity, to reflect, to imagine the best possible future, to create forms of dialogue between diverse cultures, to invent alternative solutions, to suggest our infinitesimal and grandiose natures. Only in museums, only inside them, can a visitor come face to face with an ancient artefact or a work of art, appreciate its size and colour, its surface, its smell, the way it catches the light. It would be nice if this could happen in a sort of technological blackout, without mobile phones or other devices, using only one's own senses.

Museum communication calls for an *Oldspeak* with plenty of adjectives; descriptive and evocative, it needs a variety of carefully selected words that are appropriate for each particular object on display, for each visiting group (or even better, for every individual user). There exist innumerable and useful digital tools to accompany a visit – tools that provide augmented and virtual reality, but there is not yet a "Chatbot" able to respond to individual curiosity, to the great variety of possible visitors; there is no app or game or recorded voice able to compete with the communicative possibilities offered by human mediation. Digital communication is undoubtedly rapid and democratic, it reaches the remotest corners of the world and is accessible wherever there is a suitable energy source, a device and wi-fi coverage. The achievements already accomplished through the Web and those possible and imaginable in the future represent a revolution – that has changed the world, and that will rapidly change it again. Communication has become ever quicker and more essential, but, at the same time, too often rather sterile and pre-packaged, uncomfortably close to Orwell's *Newspeak*. Clearly, museums cannot do without digital connections and contents: to make themselves known, to supply more detail, to dialogue with the present and the future. "Digital" language works fine in the virtual world and can provide an infinity of links. In the real, concrete, material world of the museum, though, we need to suspend virtual reality at the entrance and let it return at the exit; we need to have direct relations with objects, to maintain visual and emotional contact with them, we need to empathise with them. In front of works of art, ancient artefacts, scientific and contemporary objects, memorials, we need *Oldspeak*, made up of gestures, facial expressions, tones of voice, replete with words that are ancient, foreign and local, subtleties, intellectual categories and vulgarities, so we can express ideas that are abstract, original, creative and sometimes even heretical. We need human, interactive, multisensory, immersive mediation: the ability to choose the right level of discourse, appropriate to each different and individual human being who comes to the museum.

This mediation must, of course, be professional and well-informed, and available in different forms and at different levels, with the possible participation of teachers and teaching assistants, researchers and attendants, artists and conservators, tourist and museum guides, poets and musicians. All the professionals who transmit the cultural, social and aesthetic values of an exhibit must interact with it physically and will never be entirely "neutral" since each one will have had different experiences and will know, recognise, like and be stimulated by different things. The involvement of the various professions related to the transmission of meaning to the final user, both in real and virtual contexts, should be an irremovable priority of every project. For any permanent or temporary display, the constant presence of flesh-and-blood cultural mediators should never be considered as an extra, an occasional or a merely possible element.

Costs such as insurance, graphics, lighting and video systems should be planned for, and adequate financial compensation provided, equivalent to that of other professionals involved. During what might be the only occasion in the lives of visitors to have direct physical contact with a work of art or archaeological find, human mediation will be more effective, evocative and exciting than any response obtained on a digital screen. Seeing as necessary the constant presence of professional mediators is also a concrete response to the crisis of cultural and humanistic professions and it restores the modalities, rhythms and courtesies of human relations. The recovery of ancient and non-verbal languages and the choice of slower, more diversified and engaging narrative paths surely contributes to reinforcing the mediators' and visitors' sense of belonging, to tranquillising cultural comparisons, and to making us feel less alone and less scared by things we know little about.

These ideas are certainly not new: in Milan, the place this author knows best, museum keepers are increasingly better qualified, they are selected archaeologists and art historians who end up playing the part of the guardians of the museums' artistic and cultural messages. Some examples are the Prada Foundation, the Bicocca Hangar, the Boschi di Stefano House Museum and the Francesco Messina Study Museum (where sometimes the "attendants" are the artists themselves).

**Listen to the Others' voices at Angera, on Lake Maggiore**

The Angera Civic Archaeology Museum occupies only 150 m$^2$, but it has ambitions: from its home on splendid Lake Maggiore, it dreams of saving *Oldspeak.* And by that, we mean speaking about human history and beauty by the employment of all the descriptive, emotive and evocative riches of the human beings' tongues and languages, and drawing on the experiences enshrined in the ancient languages that were spoken in the territory of Lombardy. The cultural landscape around Angera has seen the passage of different peoples, and we want to throw light on the fact that men, women and children were able to communicate, at times by overcoming great linguistic and cultural barriers, making use of images and the universal non-verbal languages, gestures, glances and sounds that make up much of human communication. This aim has given rise to a project entitled *The Others' voices. Foreign languages, words, alphabets in ancient Lombardy.*[1] Since the time of the Tower of Babel, speaking in different languages has undoubtedly been an obstacle to the encounters between different peoples.

Nevertheless, archaeological findings exhibited at the museums of Lombardy demonstrate that the ancients much communicated among themselves; although they spoke different languages, the peoples who came to these lands exchanged products, ideas and discoveries, and encounters between different cultural knowledge and traditions greatly favoured local development. Even the area of Lombardy, apparently distant from the crowded Mediterranean seaways, was anything but isolated in antiquity. Technological developments and improved navigational abilities drove men of every origin to travel, migrate and find work in places far from where they were born. These people brought with them foreign words, which then became part of the common language. We have therefore prepared for our public an investigation into the languages spoken in ancient times in our territory, followed by a series of lectures and guided thematic tours. The project started with a description of the communication through images exemplified by rock engravings,[2] continuing with the first alphabet of the Celts, who used Greek phonetic signs, mediated by the Etruscans with whom they had

[1] This research project was designed by the author together with the Angera Council, in collaboration with the Archaeology, Fine Art and Landscape Superintendency of the provinces of Como, Lecco, Monza and Brianza, Pavia, Sondrio and Varese, and the Società Cooperativa Archeologica, with funding from the Lombardy Regional Authority. A special thanks to all those who contributed to the debate, namely: Ottavio Bifulco, Patrizia Cattaneo, Barbara Carneglia, Chiara Fabi, Maria Fratelli, Carlo Liborio, Annamaria Ravagnan and Gabriella Tassinari.

[2] Maria Giuseppina Ruggiero, Museo Nazionale della Preistoria della Valle Camonica at the museum event *Comunicare per immagini. La narrazione delle incisioni rupestri in Valcamonica* (March 2018)

trading contacts.[3] We looked in detail into the presence of Celtic and Mediterranean names in Roman period inscriptions in the area[4] and noted the significant examples of Greek-speaking people of Eastern origin present from the 4th to 6th centuries AD.[5] Inscriptions also demonstrated the arrival of Germanic peoples from central Europe.[6] Finally, revision of the iconographic messages encoded in heraldic coats-of-arms revealed to us that an image generally considered to derive from religious hatred represents peace and hope instead. A case in point is the emblem of the Visconti, Dukes of Milan, whose coat of arms by no means portrays a dragon devouring a Saracen in memory of the Crusades, but is rather a symbol of peace and resurrection – a blue sea monster that spits out a boy refers to the biblical story of Jonah who was swallowed by a whale.[7]

Further new words arrived under the Spanish, French and Austrian rule; today our language continues to evolve. In addition, the Angeran variant of Lombardy's tongue itself has an ancient history. Every week at the Civic Library, a group of pensioners meets local young people: the former speak in dialect, while the latter learn, record and transcribe digitally the virtual vocabulary of Angeran dialect.

The Archaeology Museum is home to the MABA, a display designed for children; we have also created an itinerary for school groups and families entitled *ALFA, BETA, PUNTO, GESTO. Alfabeti antichi, pallini a rilievo e mani parlanti* ("Alpha, beta, point, sign: ancient alphabets, raised dots and talking hands"). We have organised meetings and teaching workshops focused on all possible forms of communication, ancient and modern, using letters, images and gestures, which also present the types of language that have been created for deaf and blind people. After engraving messages onto plaster that imitates rock engravings, participants were taught ancient alphabets and invented new ones to recount mythological tales. During the week of ICOM Day we put on a basic course in body language and sign language, and then experimented with Braille writing and making tactile relief drawings. Lastly, we used maps, road plans, signs and seafaring languages to imagine journeys near and far, and whales, unicorns and rampant lions to build personal heraldic shields.[8] *The line that unites moments creates time; that which joins together objects creates stories that are recounted in museums.*[9] That line is traced by the concrete experience of objects on display and by the use of a slow, empathic, diversified and evocative language: in this way in 2050 museums will still be strongholds of ***Oldspeak***.

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Cristina Miedico has a research degree in classical archaeology. She is a conservator of Angera's Civic Archaeology Museum and Open-Air Museum, and an ambassador of GARIWO. In recent years she has worked on the archaeology of migration, artworks as expressions of memory, and developed the three-year project The Museum and the "Others", which considers "foreign" cultures in the museum's hinterland by means of an original approach to the objects on display.

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[3] Filippo Maria Gambari, Museo delle Civiltà, Rome, at the museum event *Un alfabeto antico per lingue 'nuove'. Le prime attestazioni delle lingue celtiche nelle epigrafi preromane della Lombardia occidentale* (April2018)

[4] Serena Zoia, Milan University, at the museum event *Tra Celti, Greci e proconsoli di terre lontane. Nomi e ruoli 'stranieri' nelle epigrafi romane del territorio* (May 2018).

[5] Massimiliano David, *Alma Mater Studiorum*, Bologna, at the museum event *Maraotes e gli altri. Parlare greco a Nord del Po tra IV e V secolo* (October 2018).

[6] Shared by Marco Sannazaro, Sacro Cuore Catholic University, Milan, at the museum event *Nuovi arrivi, nuovi suoni. Accenti barbarici nelle testimonianze epigrafiche lombarde.* (November 2018).

[7] Francesca Vaglienti, Milan University, at the museum event *Latet anguis in herba. La biscia viscontea e le trasformazioni di una balena in serpe e di uno stemma in brand di successo* (December 2018).

[8] The teaching workshops were designed by the writer and conducted by the archaeologist Melissa Proserpio, the Piano Terra Association, LIS interpreter Desiree Donderi, and Aurelio Sartorio, artist and typhologist of the Milan Institute for the Blind.

[9] Orhan Pamuk in a video made for the exhibition *Love, Museums and Inspiration. Orhan Pamuk's Museum of Innocence in Milan*. The Bagatti Valsecchi Museum, Milan, 19 January – 24 June 2018 (curated by Lucia Pini and Laura Lombardi).

SIBYLLE DIENESCH

GrazMuseum, Austria

# ORGANISATION FOLLOWS CONTENT

## ABSTRACT

Technological innovation is influencing our lives and future perspectives, be it in the way we communicate, socially interact, share, participate or how we perceive things. For museums of cities, one way of handling the new situation (according to Pier Luigi Sacco) is for them to become a participative platform.

This does and will have consequences in the museums' missions, their content, their interconnectedness and interdependence with ever more diverse local communities and on the values they produce for society. However, this transformation seems to have little focus regarding the museum's organisational set-up. If we rephrase the famous "form follows function" to "organisation follows content", then the questions are what kind of organisation and processes do museums need to have in order to meet these future challenges and how to implement them.

Agile management is one answer to these new challenges. It is a system offering a tool-box of instruments which can be very well adapted to different domains and their specific needs. This paper will give a short introduction to agile frameworks and explore different methods. It will show how they can be used to transform teamwork and leadership, goal-setting and planning processes for a museum that can more quickly adapt to changes in the city, its stakeholders and in society in general.

**Key words:** Agile management, organisational structure, participative platform, systems thinking

**Introduction**

Digitisation is influencing our lives and future perspectives, be it in the way we communicate, socially interact, share, participate or how we perceive things. However, the pace of change is hard to keep up with for many of us. Museums of cities have a great potential for attracting people and being a resource for those coping with contemporary challenges: they provide knowledge for understanding complex societal issues, they offer a meeting place and a forum for a differentiated public discourse in a diversified civil society and support the making of local identities.

However, this potential can only be fully tapped when museums of cities engage with residents and communities and gain their commitment, which, in our experience, is not a straightforward task – even when specific communities can be identified and approached.

In 2016, the GrazMuseum developed an exhibition on the everyday lives of people with intellectual disabilities (*Mittendrin – In the middle*). The curating team worked in close contact with different caregiving institutions in the field. People with intellectual disabilities were involved in the creation of part of the exhibition's content. Furthermore, special educational programmes for people with intellectual disabilities were developed.

A lively interaction and relationship started. Even though the project was successful in terms of co-creation, collaboration and engagement, we did not manage to maintain the relationship with this community. When reflecting upon it, among other factors, we realised that the GrazMuseum does not have an organisational structure and processes which support sustainable engagement with communities and residents.

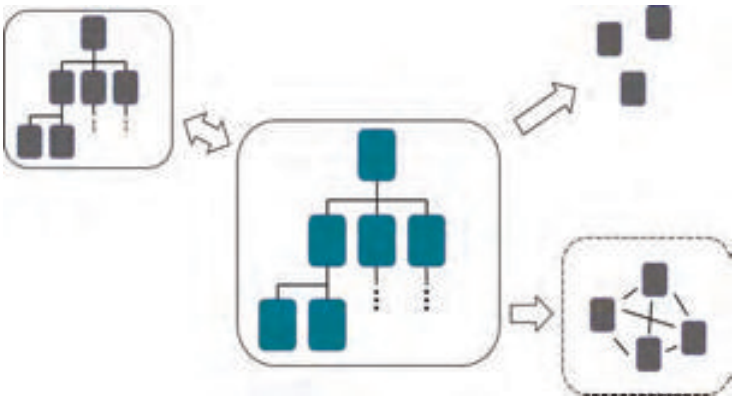
**The future museum of the city as a participative platform**

Technological and social transformation, as we all well know, has always been happening and has had its impact on the museum's activities, on its outcomes and on the values which are generated by museums. In this respect Pier Luigi Sacco describes three types of regimes:
**Museums 1.0:** they serve as temples of knowledge which focus mainly on the conservation, development and presentation of collections;
**Museums 2.0:** they function as entertainment machines which promote the entertainment aspect of the museum;
**Museums 3.0:** they are participative platforms "where the idea of a passive audience is being substituted by a spectrum of forms of direct engagement" of local communities (Sacco, 2016: 12). Museums can take advantage of the fact that today people are socialised in cultural participation by digital content production which leads to forms of active and passive participation.

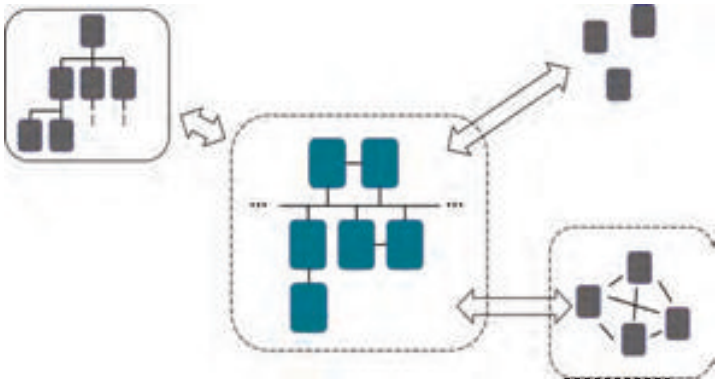
Temples of knowledge produce educational value; the outcome of entertainment machines is economic value, efficiency and a contribution to the event and tourist industry. Museums as participative platforms, however, contribute to all forms of civic functioning like social cohesion, welfare, lifelong learning, and local identity – to name a few.

It is important to understand that all three regimes may coexist and that the combination differs, depending on each museum's specific context and mission.

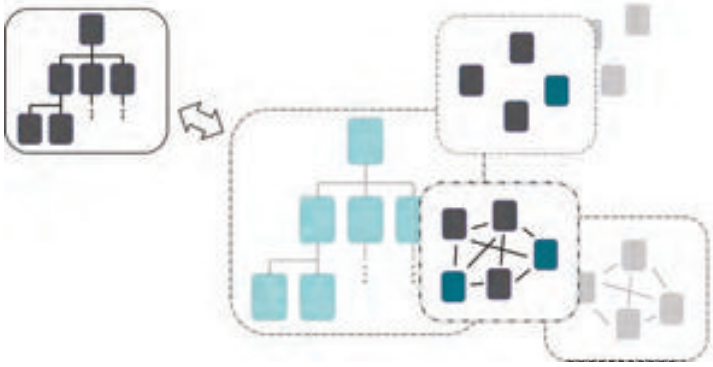
When museums aim to function/serve as a participative platform, this will have consequences on the museums' contents, on their interconnectedness and interdependence with the diverse local communities and on the values they



*Traditional organisational model.*
*© S. Dienesch*



*Flat hierarchies. © S. Dienesch*



*Participative platforms.*
*© S. Dienesch*

produce for society. Moreover, it will have consequences on the organisational structure and the internal processes.

**Organisational set-up**

If we rephrase the famous "form follows function" to "organisation follows content", then the questions are what kind of organisation museums need to have in order to meet these future challenges and how to implement it.

The museum as a temple of knowledge and also the museum as an entertainment machine are museums functioning within traditional hierarchical structures. The organisational model has a top-down communication and decision-making setup. This organisational model is compartmentalised, it leads to little or no collaboration and is rather bureaucratic and slow. It is reliable at maintaining the status-quo and effective when tasks and objectives, such as conservation, development and presentation of objects, are stable.

Organisational structures become flatter with a more dynamic environment, more collaboration in content creation and therefore higher complexity. Flat organisations promote communication and collaboration. They can create additional temporary structures such as project teams which can be added when needed.

Museums which work as participative platforms need to operate as open, dynamic and learning systems. Therefore, the flat organisation model needs to be expanded. Based on systems thinking, we consider the museum "a networked entity within a larger societal system" (Greene, Bowers and Fox, 2017: 61). Relevant communities and stakeholders are regarded as part of the system.

In the diagram represented in *Image 3*, we see the underlying original organisational structure of a museum. In addition, it is through this model that most cross-functional project teams are built, (which can also involve community participants for a certain period) and are dissolved when their task is fulfilled. They act autonomously with clear goals.

In this structure, community management would be decentralised and involves a wide range of staff as it is also suggested by Nina Simon (2010). Communities are hereby engaged through personal entry points. Thus, relationships among staff members, community participants and stakeholders become more fluid, equitable and sustainable given that they are maintained on an ongoing basis.

**A brief introduction to agile management**

One way of implementing such an organisational structure and the corresponding processes is by applying the principles and methods of agile management. Agile management can be described as a philosophy or mind-set which recognises change as a permanent condition.

It applies different instruments in order to enable both individuals and teams to adapt and act in a timely fashion in a changing and dynamic environment.

The various methods have some common elements:

- Flat hierarchies with cross-functional teams and a networking structure;
- Autonomy for self-organised and empowered teams;
- Working iteratively in small, quick steps;
- Instant feedback and learning;
- Transparency of outcomes, structures and processes;
- Putting the customer/visitor at the centre of decisions.

Let us delve into some of the above-mentioned elements:
In **self-organised and empowered teams,** there are no hierarchies but defined roles with clear responsibilities. The underlying idea is "the concept of sapient authority – the authority that an individual possesses is based on his/her knowledge and wisdom, not upon their position in a hierarchy" (Greene, Bowers and Fox, 2017: 61).

The basis for collaboration is a shared vision and a clear purpose of the organisation: members need to know why we – as a museum – exist and what value we create for society. In addition, shared values such as trust, courage, transparency and responsibility are considered in every activity, underlying the clear goals, timelines and processes. Team members have the freedom to be creative within the defined boundaries (*ibid*: 62).

Leadership in this respect means "to enable, empower and guide one's staff, based on a foundation Iof trust and confidence" (*ibid*: 61). Managers are responsible for governance, strategy and facilitation.

The Museums Victoria organisation is an interesting example of networked museums which apply agile principles, such as the culture of shared values, delegated authority and empowered teams. Self-organised teams and people work independently to achieve shared goals and a shared outcome, e.g. when they developed their children's gallery in close collaboration with internal and external experts.

In order to achieve their goals, it is essential for self-organised teams to communicate regularly. These meetings need to be very efficient; therefore, they have a clear structure. The Kanban method consists of holding daily "stand-up meetings" which only last 15 minutes at the most, and are supported by simple visualisation methods such as Kanban boards. Every team member briefly tells what he/she has done; what he/she plans and what he/she needs from the others. Weekly meetings last 60 minutes at the most. In monthly governance meetings, there is a reflection on roles and rules. Thus the team can adapt quickly to new situations and is involved in a continuous learning process (Grieshuber and Schwarenthorer, 2018: 6).

**Transparency and learning** are central to the agile organisation. Transparency relates as much to the openness on all information available, to the level of goal achievement by individuals, teams and the overall institution as to feedback. Competency and the will to give and receive feedback are essential in this respect.

Since museums have applied a visitor-centred approach, visitor feedback has been evaluated and taken into account. Agile methods take it a bit further: they do more than "walk in the customer's shoes", by using methods like creating personas. They are **putting visitors at the centre of decisions** by involving them in the process, from understanding the problem to testing the outcomes. To give an example: Andy Warhol Museum had blind visitors involved when they were developing their inclusive audio guide by resorting to the agile method of design thinking.

**Practical implications**

One of the reasons why agile methods have become so popular during the past years is the tool-box of different instruments they provide, from which one can choose what suits their organisation best. Some of the instruments are also attractive due to their effectiveness and implementation at low cost. Whatever the instruments chosen, there are some principles which one should bear in mind when starting to apply agile management:

**Start implementation in small steps**: e.g. use design thinking in project teams working on an exhibition or new educational formats. No statically planned change process for the entire museum is needed. An overall change is rooted in the behavioural change of individual team members as ongoing learning is an integrative part of most agile methods;
**Fail fast**: integrated planning and execution makes failure transparent at a very early stage and opens up for adaptations;
**Be transparent**: transparency in communication and thus transparency on outcomes allow for a broader understanding by all the museum staff, not just by those involved in a project.

**Conclusion**

The GrazMuseum had already implemented some of these ideas and attitudes when it addressed the aforementioned exhibition project in 2016. Since then, concepts and procedures have become much more thought through, meaningful and powerful. The author strongly believes that this is more far-reaching than planning a single exhibition or only projects.

On the way to becoming participative environments which actively engage communities and handles the outcomes of the societal change in local lives, museums need a clear understanding of their role in and their value for society. Based on their purpose, the museum needs to develop relevant content by integrating engaging practices into organisational structures and processes. Shared learning and development within museums of the cities are a fundamental basis for their future relevance in society.

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## BIOGRAPHY

Sibylle Dienesch is the deputy director of the GrazMuseum. She has directed all aspects of the museum's operations since 2006 and of the city archive's operations since the two institutions were merged in 2014. While she was responsible for the strategic development of the GrazMuseum, she has initiated and been leading an ongoing organisational change process towards an inclusive organisation and an intercultural learning environment/space. In terms of content, her focus is on urbanistic and socio-cultural issues. She was the co-curator of exhibitions and co-editor of publications dealing with the public space and with the life of people with intellectual disability.


FRANKFURT. © J. SAVIC, 2018

# *PART 2: IN THE MAKING*

VALERIA PICA

ICOM Italy

# A FUTURE MUSEUM FOR A DISAPPEARED CITY? PAST AND PRESENT IN DAMAGED HISTORICAL CENTRES: IDENTITY AND ETHICAL ISSUES

## ABSTRACT

A natural disaster can modify the shape of a city and, consequently, how it is perceived and felt by the community. In 2009, a massive earthquake almost destroyed the city of L'Aquila, in central Italy, but, ever since, restoration works have been conducted to rebuild the city centre. Nine years later, a new city is blossoming, with an eighteenth-century architecture that looks more beautiful than ever.

This paper aims to highlight this specific case, referring to how it is possible for a city museum to represent a space of collective memory and identity. Actually, L'Aquila never had a city museum; this event brought to light the need to talk about its past and present identities. It is a subject closely tied to ethical issues, given the many complex narratives on how to debate and adequately convey it as a historical document – stories of a community that lost its core centre and the urgent necessity to reconstruct the community within the city. A project for a city museum is currently ongoing in order to design a space where the community can find and rediscover the city, by retracing the historical events that shaped L'Aquila to what it is today. To think of a new museum of the city is a challenge both from ethical and identity points of view, regarding cultural and economic values – is it necessary to open a new museum? How to deal with the collective memory? How to reconstruct the local community alongside the destroyed architecture? Identity-related issues affect museums as forums of discussions and places to improve socialisation and urban living.

**Key words:** Collective memory, cultural identity, local community, social inclusion, revitalisation

## Introduction

On 6 April 2009, the city of L'Aquila experienced one of the most severe earthquakes in Italy. L'Aquila lies at the centre of Italy, along the Apennines and by the Gran Sasso mountain, the highest peak in this area with almost 3000 meters of altitude. Like many mountainous areas, the city is not easily accessible and services are not always available. Winters can be very cold and snowy. This information is necessary to understand the context where the disaster occurred. Many tremors affected the area for many months, but nobody expected an earthquake rating 6.2 on the moment magnitude scale that caused over three hundred victims. The Clock Tower in L'Aquila is still crystallised at 03h32 a.m., the moment of the strongest, most destructive tremor that claimed the first victims. Furthermore, most of the population moved out of the city and, probably, will never return. Their homes are still not habitable nor are their jobs available; their families and their children started a new life elsewhere.

The consequences of such an event in a historical centre with medieval and mainly eighteenth-century buildings were massive. The city hall, a few churches representing the centre and the historical identity of the city were destroyed. To talk about churches is tantamount to talk about the historical centre for the peculiar foundation system of the city. L'Aquila was designed according to a specific order and criterion in the thirteenth century, when every village of the area came together to build a fortified city. So, according to tradition, ninety-nine villages were involved to build ninety-nine squares, ninety-nine churches, and ninety-nine fountains to become the fulcrum of the new communities installed in them. It means that losing a church brought the loss of part of the local community identity.

In the aftermath of the earthquake, the national museum housed in a sixteenth-century castle was closed due to structural damages, and the collections were moved to a safe place located in the opposite side of the city. That also meant a radical change in the cultural axis because the area was far from the centre, not easily accessible, but it was the best possible choice to reopen the museum and give the community its cultural hub back.

The "new" museum was opened to the public in December 2015, and it was housed in the former slaughterhouse of L'Aquila, built between 1881 and 1883 and closed in 1990. In the new temporary location, after the restoration and repairs carried out between 2010 and 2015, a selection of archaeological findings and paintings, sculptures and jewellery from the Middle Ages to the Modern Age, made safe by advanced anti-seismic protection measures, has been exposed. These masterpieces testify the history and the vitality of this region and its culture; some of them were found under the ruins left by the earthquake and brought back to new life thanks to complex restoration works. It is actually said the museums lived twice, because of an impressive work of inventory, restoration and redisplay of the collection. The artworks themselves do not talk about the earthquake, but the display, the new location, the protections tell a different story that is hard to conceal.

Recently, the Basilica of Collemaggio, the most iconic building in town (opened alongside other buildings, squares, streets) is enjoying a second life. Or, more accurately, a third life: in 1703, another earthquake had destroyed L'Aquila, and the medieval town was hidden behind a façade from the 1700s. The modern restorations are bringing to light the medieval decors, portals, architecture that for three centuries has been forgotten. As a matter of fact, the 2009 earthquake made the city rediscover its past and induced it to rewrite history thanks to all the hidden artefacts.

## Do we need a new museum of the city?

The National Museum of L'Aquila, as mentioned before, houses the historical collection that used to be displayed at the Castle until 2009. In the new location, the display is not presenting the events that have occurred in the city and its

territory for the past ten years. Likewise, it has to be said that L'Aquila did not have a city museum telling the story of its foundation, the changes and its recent history. The idea to set up a new museum could also be justified by the need to explain and put together numerous new information that is coming to light thanks to the ongoing restorations. Palaces and walls are revealing an incredible story full of original historical and decorative elements able to redesign and write the narrative of the city. A place devoted to research, exchange, study, education and knowledge should be conceived in order to gather all this information and start a further phase of thinking up the city and its future.

Do we need a museum of the city to do that? Probably not, because a museum is seen as a place where memory is crystallised, and it is not perceived as a place of research and scientific speculation. So, a centre for the promotion and research of cultural heritage, rather than a museum, would be more adequate in this specific situation.

The goal of such an institution is to contribute to redefine the collective identity of the local community through awareness-raising actions, in which the participation and the memory of all are at the centre of the reconstruction of the social and cultural fabric. In short, it aims to create a heritage community, as stated by the Faro Convention and identified as a "group of people who attribute value to specific aspects of the cultural heritage they wish to support and transmit to future generations, in the framework of a public action".[1] In this sense, the right to cultural heritage that every citizen can and must exercise manifests itself in participating and assuming personal and collective responsibility even by reviving the memories or reconstructing together the sense of belonging to such a delicate and dense place of meaning.

Thus, the research and recovery of collective memory aims to redefine and to reconcile with the territory in a broader perspective of sharing and cooperation to start activities that are respectful of places and "enrich the processes of economic, political, social and cultural development".[2] All this is part of a series of actions aimed at achieving a common goal for those who live and visit small villages, *i.e.* to improve the quality of life and strengthen social cohesion in order to look at cultural heritage as a precious source for cultural and collective memory. A methodology proposed by the Faro Convention was that of patrimonial walks, representing one of the examples of collaboration with community and memory enhancement. Here, the layer of macro-history that has crossed the walls and streets, the narrative of the people who offer glimpses of lived life and moments of micro-history are capable of making the places more "real" and closer to the listener's approach to a country full of meaning. This methodology contains the deepest meaning of centre dedicated to the recovery of cultural and collective memory, which conveys the places, stories and people that represent the essence of cultural heritage.

**Cultural memory and identity: two faces of the same coin**

Museums can be seen as living structures that grow together with their community. Their living structure is made up of two main elements that hold the idea of museum in itself: memory and identity. Memory is embodied by the collection, the artefacts or objects (regardless of their nature: archaeology, art, science, ethnography, or other tangible and intangible human creation) recounting stories of the past, the ways of living, the tastes, the interests, and the development of Humanity in all possible fields of interest. Likewise, identity is embodied both by the display and the interpretation of these same objects. The museum display is a way to select, give relevance and propose a possible interpretation. This interpretation is the result of modern theoretical frameworks that follow a specific path capable of analysing and summarising an enormous amount of information. What interpretation sometimes conceals is the partiality of its message. Every

[1] Faro Convention, Article 2.
[2] Faro Convention, Article 8.

interpretation is the sum of different theories that inevitably exclude others to give evidence and sustain their outcomes. What is increasingly necessary for museum interpretation and mediation is the declaration that every single explanation is but one of the many possible aspects composing the identity of a specific object in modern society.

As a result, if memory looks backwards, and identity, building brick after brick, looks forwards, the museum can be seen just as the statue of the Roman god Janus, a double-faced creature with its two faces melded together and the eyes directed in opposite directions. Even if the gazes are directed elsewhere, the head is a single one, a unique and uniform structure. In these terms, the museum would be able to preserve and display its past, providing different forms of mediation, while it also builds tools to face the future. Somehow, memory is the only weapon against disaffection and oblivion, and the museum can achieve a strategic function in modern societies, offering a sufficiently broad knowledge that enhances and develops a stronger identity.

**A possible theory on museum identity**

If, from a sociological perspective, memory and identity are so closely tied, then a theory that can link these two elements to a museum needs to combine two opposite and complementary forces. Moreover, the museum identity theory is made up by many other different elements that enrich its composition. Here, the relevant aspects to be considered are of historical, cultural, ethnographic, anthropological, urban, social, and environmental nature, very much like the tiles of a complex mosaic. To render this theory graphically, the most suitable image is that of a DNA strand, which offers many points for reflection and analysis. The conformation of the strand allows to better identify the characteristics of the museum identity, and to combine them in a specific and unique way each time. Indeed, the idea that memory and identity run in two parallel albeit opposite directions perfectly reflects the description of the DNA strand, which is tied together with complementary strands that make every single being unique. The museum identity theory is based on the assumption that each and every museum is a nonpareil structure where its constituting elements have contributed to shaping it throughout the centuries. Likewise, they also contribute today to its uniqueness and its constant transformation.

Museums can be conceived as living structures where dependent and independent variables shape their identity. Primarily, if one considers the internationally accepted definition by ICOM, one can find the dependent variables: the openness to the public, the permanent collection, the research, preservation, purchase, the exhibition of tangible and intangible heritage, the purposes of education, study and enjoyment. All these elements comprise the dependent variables that have to be present for an institution to be socially and culturally recognised as a museum. If one of these variables is missing, the definition as a museum can fail and the idea itself changes in favour of a different kind of institution, for instance, a centre for the arts or a cultural centre. That is to say that a museum has to respond to specific criteria to be identified as such. On the other hand, the independent variables, instead, denote the museum's specificity and uniqueness. These kinds of variables provide identity elements capable of characterising a museum and giving it a special *allure*. The independent variables change according to the social system, the cultural milieu, the geographical location, and also to historical events that mark a place in a lasting and deep way. These elements are constantly developing and offer the opportunity to investigate and rethink the concept of a museum over and over again. Current events necessarily affect a museum's agenda if the museum declares itself to be a place of dialogue and discussion. For instance, many museums are devoting themselves to debates about refugees or climate change, because these are today's most sensitive topics involving every culture in the world. They are part of the contemporaneity debate. Likewise, museums also perform a social role. In a recent conference dedicated to difficult stories told at the museum (ICOM Nord, 2017), many speakers argued about the different

perception of history and social problems one has. Karen Logan, a project curator at the National Museums of Northern Ireland, best summed up the spirit and the feeling that most curators and museum experts experience: "We share the same history, but we don't share the same memory". Again, personal experiences based on the independent variables can mark one's perception of past events, affecting not only identity but also memory.

**Museum DNA: the complex process of museum making**

As previously stated, memory and identity are closely tied together in a mutual exchange of information and influence. They represent the two main elements of the museum structure, which are in constant evolution and change; they are its vital poles. While memory looks backwards, to the past, collecting all necessary information to constitute the historical base of the museum, identity is looking forwards, enriching itself with brand-new elements. The other components, typifying molecules that are interconnected between identity and memory, can be traced in the common elements. The description Watson gave of the single phases of the discovery can add another interesting element to the identification of the other independent variables:

> "A further complication arose from the fact that four types of nucleotides were found in DNA. In this sense, DNA was not a regular molecule but a highly irregular one. The four nucleotides were not, however, completely different, as each contained the same sugar and phosphate components. Their uniqueness lies in their nitrogenous bases, whether it was either purine (adenine and guanine) or pyrimidine (cytosine and thymine). However, since the linkages between the nucleotides involved only the phosphate and sugar groups, our assumption that the same type of chemical bond linked all the nucleotides together was not affected. So, in building models, we would postulate that the sugar phosphate backbone was very regular, and the order of bases of necessity very irregular".
> (Watson, 1968)

Paraphrasing this description, one can say that all the components have a common base, but some of them are regular and, conversely, some are irregular. The backbone is the use of cultural history as "an example of a cultural tradition in perpetual transformation, constantly adapted to new circumstances" (Burke, 2008). Cultural history is the palimpsest where the "irregular", or constantly changing elements move and shape the modern identity of a museum. The specific elements, like the proteins of human DNA, can be identified in history, ethnography, anthropology, tradition, urbanism, geography, symbolism and politics.

The peculiarity of museum DNA lies, both internally and externally, in the combined presence of the elements that shape it. The first four elements – history, ethnography, anthropology and tradition – are internal factors, while urbanism, geography, symbolism and politics are external ones. An internal factor is affecting the DNA in a deeper way and is part of its core structure. History, for instance, is the basis upon which one builds all possible narratives in a museum, and it provides information enabling the advancement of knowledge and critical thinking. Ethnography describes the roots of a community and the meaning of its belonging to a certain place and a certain culture. It helps with forming a profound connection with traditions that are the intangible laws whereby a community recognises itself and establishes a relationship of brotherhood. Anthropology gives an overall perspective of past and present societies, focusing on some specific aspects such as norms, values and language. These elements compose the inner structure that, in a certain sense, is inherited, and, even if in constant change and evolution, assumes the traits of the most significant characteristic of a museum, its collection.

The external elements contribute to the shaping of the museum identity from a different perspective. Even though they cannot be directly tied to the collection, they have a deep influence on it. So, urbanism is an important element for understanding the social and political forces that, throughout the centuries, have influenced the status a museum acquires within a city. This has been made clear in the case of the grand museums that have regenerated industrial or unpopular districts, namely the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Guggenheim in Bilbao, the MAXXI in Rome, among others. Urbanism arises with a two-way dialogue influencing the city during its evolution or becoming the cornerstone of a new urban layout. In either case, it does not affect the collection directly, but rather the perception that travellers or visitors have had of looking at the museum from the outside. In these terms, geography also plays a pivotal role in the perception of a museum, depending on the surroundings and the morphology of the place. Geography also affects one's special perception within a given space; it connects the physical and cultural worlds, and one's attitude to visiting new places and new countries can change one's perspective when experiencing a museum and making comparisons between what is already known and what is going to be experienced. Again, it is related to audience perception rather than to the collection itself. Symbolism can help to represent ideas and qualities, by creating a set or a system of symbols capable of articulating emotions and states of mind. It provides an interpretational key to enter new cultures and new experiences at the museum, so symbolism can be the way to explain something that is distant both historically and geographically. Talking about ancient mythology and the meanings of the symbols linked to a god is also a way to discuss some traditions still present in modern society. An example is the caduceus, the herald's wand with two serpents twined around it, carried by Hermes, the messenger of the gods. This symbol is often confused with the single serpent rod of Asclepius, a deity associated with healing and medicine, which has led to the use of the caduceus as the symbol of the modern healthcare organisation. Therefore, symbolism from the past can relate to modern times, once more, in the perspective of a better understanding of the public. Finally, politics and the relationship between art and politics are useful to illuminate the reasoning and presence of a certain collection in a certain museum, always in the direction of a clear and useful message for audiences. Most museums are the result of "displacement", where the collection was not intended as part of their decoration. Even in the case of house museums, some of the furniture might not be original but comes from other sites. All museums are the result of a complex, difficult and sometimes controversial process, leading to the making of a collection that cannot have any direct connection with the city and its community. If one considers the grand museums, from the Louvre to the British Museum, from the Vatican to the Prado, they mainly house collections originating in other countries and other cultures. They are collectors of non-indigenous cultures, but, nevertheless, they offer a way to experience how colonial politics and nineteenth-century regulations (namely the closure of monastic orders due to Napoleonic directives) have shaped their perception and have had a deep impact on their interpretation.

**Conclusion**

In the early 1970s, Duncan F. Cameron, director of the Brooklyn Museum, stated that museums were living an identity crisis and probably needed psychotherapy to find themselves again. Museums were oriented towards two main directions: their prestigious and consolidated history, on the one hand, and the need for renovation, redefinition and museum space opening, on the other hand; both were posing the issue of the museum's survival (Zuliani, 2009). The idea of a temple or a forum seemed to signal the end of the museum as a symbol of a noble past that was slowly dying. In this circumstance, a balance and a new cultural *koine* between *forum* and *temple* were found in the making of the Centre Pompidou, a centre for contemporary arts conceived in the aftermath of the 1968-inspired movements and completed in 1977 by Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers (Zuliani, 2009). So, the decade from 1968 to 1977 also signalled a turning point in the conception and perception of museums thanks to the opening of centres for the arts all around Europe and the United States. For instance, the Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea

Luigi Pecci opened in Prato in 1988 with the purpose of presenting, collecting, documenting and promoting the most advanced artistic research; or the Centre for Contemporary Arts in Glasgow was officially established in 1992, however, it already had a long tradition in the Third Eye Centre founded in 1974 by Tom McGrath. More recently, the CKI (Centre for Art and Interculture) in Copenhagen, established in 2008 after a long process, represents excellence in promoting accessibility to the art scene and supports audience engagement initiatives.

It is interesting to notice how institutions dedicated to contemporaneity are usually defined as centres and not museums, as if the latter were linked to an old-fashioned idea of audience engagement. In any case, museums are made of objects, stories and people, and this idea perfectly responds to the principles of the Faro Convention that focus on the importance and responsibility of the community with regard to the knowledge and protection of cultural heritage. These aspects are also crucial elements of the museum identity experience, where artworks and people (both the audience and professionals who work there) represent the *quid* that makes the difference and give a profound sense to the experience.

In this framework, all museums should be or become forums where one can talk about contemporary issues according to a heritage modality. They should also be places where heritage can foster the discussion of contemporary world issues in an honest process of mutual understanding, in which the codes and concepts of the museum identity experience enable visitors to develop a broader knowledge of society. This process should follow a solid knowledge of the museum identity, meant as a precursor of experience where the collection is the starting point to discuss any aspect of the past and present world. As a result, memory is the outcome of a personal and a collective experience that keeps at its origin the idea of the museum, but transforming it into a comprehensive experience. Also, from the idea of identity to that of experience, and eventually to the making of memory, the museum identity experience is a tool where evidence-based information referring to items is harmoniously combined with interactive activities engaging the audience, an emphatic approach leading to a mutual exchange of knowledge and a participatory process for cultural and social inclusion.

The challenge in the near future is not only the restoration and reconstruction of the architecture and urban fabric but also the restoration of the community and its social fabric that can recompose the idea of heritage made of places, stories and people, bringing in the perspective of an inclusive revitalisation.

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## BIOGRAPHY

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# DEVELOPMENT TOWNS – FROM POVERTY TO PROGRESS, FROM DEPRIVATION TO CULTIVATION: ESTABLISHING NEW CITY MUSEUMS IN ISRAEL

## ABSTRACT

Following the establishment of the State of Israel, in 1948, the Arab-Israeli War broke out, the Israeli forces conquered vast areas, and many Palestinians left the country. The Jewish population was scattered across Israel to such extent that the young country experienced difficulties in sustaining itself and developing properly. Most of the population was concentrated in the large coastal cities or in central Israel, and very few citizens occupied the peripheral countryside.

Shortly thereafter, Israel welcomed a great number of immigrants – Jewish Holocaust survivors from Europe's displaced persons camps, as well as Jewish refugees who fled from persecution in Arab states. About thirty new towns were swiftly founded, most of them far removed from the centre. The immigrants' arrival suited the State's leaders and architects as it answered the need to disperse the population, and immigrants were routed toward desolate towns, sometimes under pretences.

Additionally, the government used an official "melting pot" policy which aimed to assimilate all immigrants, from dozens of different places, into one new culture – secular Israeli. These processes have completely transformed the Israeli state, both geographically and culturally. Development towns became one of the country's most significant urban phenomena, but they have yet to find their rightful place within the national narrative or to own their historical museums. Over the past few years, Israel has undergone a "cultural revolution", which involves plans towards the establishment of development towns museums.

Historical museums deal with many issues of narrative, representation and collective memory. As part of these museums' planning process, we have faced dilemmas such as: how to combine Israel's national narrative with the microhistory and personal stories of development town residents? How can we deal with topics which, to this day, are still considered painful and controversial? What values should these museums highlight?

This article illustrates the development of such narrative and the selection process of the content to be displayed in development towns museums and their guiding concept, as they must not only retell the past but also, and especially, raise questions and invite their public to answer them, both from within and without the museum.

**Key words:** Development towns, heritage sites, historical museums, Israeli urbanism, Israeli culture

**Local museums in Israel – a turning point**

Museums that recount local histories face many questions of narrative, representation and collective memory. Which citizens' stories should be told? How should they be presented? What is the museum's target public? What will visitors experience? What sensations, emotions and values will this experience awaken? When it comes to city museums, these are not questions of a philosophical or theoretical nature, but rather acutely pragmatic dilemmas. And their answers may change over time.

Over the past few years, Israel has witnessed a true cultural revolution that led not only to far-reaching changes in the narratives presented thus far in local museums but also to the opening and planning of new museums in cities which, to that moment, had none, namely, in *development towns*. These comprise about thirty small towns quickly founded to accommodate the massive wave of immigration that arrived in Israel upon its establishment, and which have spent decades on the margins of the hegemonic Israeli-Zionist ethos.

Dozens of museums and local heritage sites dedicated to settlements and issues that preceded the state's foundation are scattered throughout Israel. Many are located in the agricultural settlements, colonies and *kibbutzim* (collective communities) founded in the late 19th and the first third of the 20th century. On the one hand, these sites usually tell stories of European immigrant pioneers and, for the most part, represent Zionist-Socialist perceptions and define Zionist pioneering accordingly. Some scholars believe that these sites acted as "secular pilgrimage" hubs, for certain sectors of Israeli society (Ashkenazi, Jews of European descent), who sought out cultural roots and a sense of belonging in the belief that their identities were connected to the stories of these first pioneers. On the other hand, until the 2000s, no museum had been founded in development towns.

**"We hereby declare" – historical background to the establishment of the State of Israel**

The State of Israel was founded in May 1948, after the British Mandate in the area came to an end. About six months prior, the General Assembly of the United Nations decided to divide the Land of Israel between the Jews and Arabs who inhabited it. The war that broke out immediately thereafter was named the "Israeli War of Independence" by the Jewish population, or the *Nakba* by the Palestinian population, meaning "disaster" or "blow". During the war, the Jews conquered extensive lands, and about 70,000 Arabs moved either to the surrounding Arab states or to the Gaza Strip. Did they flee? Leave willingly? Were they banished? That all depends on whom you ask, it is all a matter of narrative, of course.

The young State of Israel ended up with plenty of uninhabited areas and, not long after, a vast number of new immigrants – Jews from displaced persons camps in post-WWII Europe, and Jewish refugees who fled Arab states as the latter began persecuting their Jewish citizens following the foundation of the Jewish State.

This stream of refugees led to a massive rise in the population: the Jewish population doubled within a mere three and a half years, from 650,000 to 1,300,000. Meaning that it welcomed about 700,000 immigrants. After a decade, that number reached one million.

For an immigration country, this growth rate was unprecedented, especially considering that Israel had been newly founded and some of its infrastructure and state establishments were still in their infancy.

Although most immigrants were refugees, Zionist terminology dubbed them *Olim* (from the verb "to rise", "to ascend"), a word that has a far more positive connotation than mere "immigrants" who fled one place or another. The term implies an ideological or religious choice to immigrate to the State of Israel based

on nationalistic reasons. Another aspect of this ideological perception, which mphasizes the desire to create a "New Jew" who returns to his biblical fatherland after two thousand years of exile: the Israeli government introduced an official "melting pot" policy, also nicknamed *Kibbutz Galuyot* (ingathering of exiles / the return of Jews to Israel). Their aim was to assimilate all immigrants – who came from dozens of different places – into one new culture: Israeli-secular. The means to achieve that goal were diverse, for instance, the encouragement – and sometimes coercion – of immigrants to replace their names with Hebrew ones. In the early days of the state, and even before, Zionism aspired to achieve the ideal image of the "New Jew": a strong independent pioneer who either worked the land or defended it, and aided in settling the country, thus devoting their mind and body to the task. In reality, the immigrants were often old or religious or arrived with their families. In short, quite different from this "desirable image".

**Shaping the map of Israel: historical background to the foundation of development towns**

Upon its foundation, Israel's population was scattered in a way that threatened the young state's ability to sustain itself and develop properly. Most of the population was concentrated in the large coastal cities, or in central Israel, while very few people occupied the peripheral countryside, areas that maintained their economic connection via land transport.
Two thirds of the state's water sources were located in the north.
Two thirds of the population inhabited its central third.
Two thirds of the lands were located its southern third, in the desert.

Therefore, the country's leaders concluded that the population ought to be dispersed for political, financial and security reasons. Policy-makers attributed a great deal of importance to their plan to scatter the population around the country, especially to inhabiting the frontier zones along the borders. Between 1948 and 1963, about thirty towns were quickly established in an attempt to assimilate a "hierarchal" planning model between the preexisting rural settlements in Israel and the small to medium city centres of the three biggest cities – Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa. Development towns were meant to complete the missing links in the former settlement layout.

In reality, Development Towns, and especially those founded in remote desert areas (like the Negev), became the most impoverished zones among the Jewish population in just a few years, comprising about 18% of the population. They could not constitute a link between the smaller rural settlements and the big cities, nor could they provide the agricultural settlements with high-end services. The tension and alienation that brewed between Development Town residents and some of the surrounding settlements (the cooperative and communal settlements – *kibbutzim* and *moshavim*, respectively – founded before the establishment of Israel) remained part of Israeli society for many years. Over time, more waves of immigration were directed to Development Towns. For example, Ethiopian Jews who made the *Aliyah* during the 1980s and 90s, as well as the tens of thousands of immigrants who arrived in Israel during the 1990s in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The arrival of these new immigrants suited state leaders and architects, as it answered the need that arose with its establishment: to disperse the population. The foundation and population of dozens of new settlements was stipulated upon the willingness of many residents to move into these new areas. However, without the financial appeal that would draw in wealthy investors, entrepreneurs and the professionals required to develop these new settlements, most veteran citizens refused to move to locations whose future remained unclear. The pioneering settlement movements, which toiled on settling the frontier in the years that preceded the state, and viewed settlement and pioneering as a fundamental value, could not rise to the occasion, as they had no member reserves that could populate the large number of settlements planned. Moreover, such values were often foreign

to the people who arrived in the great immigration waves of the 1950s and 1960s, who sometimes even lacked sufficient knowledge and orientation concerning their settlement options, and were thus routed to those new towns, sometimes under pretences, in order to successfully bring them to those desolate areas of the periphery.

**Will the sins of the fathers be visited upon the sons?**
**The ramifications of Israeli society's formative years in the 21st century**

These processes of "population dispersal" and *Kibbutz Galuyot* have completely transformed the State of Israel, both geographically and culturally. Before the "Mass Migration", most of the Jewish population in Israel was of European origin, while most of the immigrants who arrived in this massive wave of immigration came from Muslim countries. Nevertheless, for decades, hegemonic culture in Israel remained Western-secular.

Moreover, despite businesses and industries there being eligible for favourable tax treatment and other subsidies, most of the towns (particularly those in the south) have fared poorly in the economic sense, they have suffered from unemployment problems and often feature amongst the poorest Jewish areas in Israel. Furthermore, despite a rise in diploma-eligibility percentages and university graduates, they remain below the national average in the field of education.

Nowadays, some "Mass Migration" descendants, who originated in Islamic countries and whose parents were sent to settle development towns, believe their cultural identity has been marginalised, that they have been placed on an educational and professional manual labour track, and even been excluded from the state's cultural, communication and economic institutions. Many of the challenges and struggles the Israeli society has faced to this day are the results of the events and processes that took place during the first decade after the State's inception. The government's hopes to turn Israel into a "melting pot" have only been marginally successful, at the cost of a polarised society with a frail common ground, comprised of groups who do not always communicate with one another.

Over the past few years, Israel, like other places, has undergone a cultural transformation: from "melting pot" to "multiculturalism" and, sometimes, even to "culture war" – identity politics. The Jews who came to Israel from Muslim countries would also like to be considered among the pioneers that built the country and to be awarded the social prestige thus far almost solely reserved for Jews of European origin – as the latter comprised most of the immigrants who arrived before the State was established and preceded them in the construction of its settlements and institutional infrastructures. Development towns' residents want to redefine themselves and shake off the way they have been perceived. After having been sidelined, they now wish to take their place at centre stage.

This identity-ethnic awakening has been taking place in Israel across various cultural fields, as well as in the world of museums. A substantial number of museums in Israel, much like their worldwide counterparts, are no longer perceived as national "temples", but rather as spaces which express the viewpoints of smaller communities, such as ethnic minorities, immigrants and other underprivileged social groups. For the past years, it seems that each self-respecting ethnic group has either opened or plans to open a museum dedicated to its heritage. Some examples of this are The Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center, the Nahon Museum of Italian Jewish Art, The Universal Karaite Judaism Center, The Museum of Yemenite Jewish Heritage, The World Heritage Center of North African Jews in Jerusalem, among others.

**What's next? Settlement museums in Israel – looking to the future**

The government and especially Miri Regev, the Minister of Culture, have adopted the new narrative and initiated a large-scale project which entails the construction of a network of city museums – "founders' houses in development towns". This

initiative puts wind in the sails of pre-existing local initiatives: about seven smaller heritage sites have already been founded by development town "enthusiasts", which enables building museums in additional towns.

The Council for Conservation of Heritage Sites in Israel, chosen as the project's executive body, has been dealing with the aforementioned questions of representation. Since its inception, the Council, which aims to promote the preservation of historical buildings and sites in Israel, has worked towards promoting heritage, alongside the act of preservation. In the past decade, the Council has exponentially broadened its activity in the heritage field, and, in addition, has acted as an "umbrella organisation", which provides professional guidance to dozens of heritage sites and historical museums in Israel, in areas related to their daily operation. For example, with manager training, guide training and the construction of new exhibitions.

For anyone who plans historical exhibitions, matters of memory and forgetfulness are not merely theoretical but very practical, and must be closely examined in order to make executive decisions from a place of utmost awareness and sensitivity. Such conflicts are tightly linked to our perception of the vision and goals of a museum: is it meant to preserve a materialistic culture and document nothing but history? Does it aim to present a historical narrative – and if so, which? – or must it also deal with the future and educate – and if so, what values should it teach? Is it meant to entertain, or to provide an experience-based leisurely outing? Or should it arouse a discussion and raise painful questions, or maybe encourage dialogue and make peace between the different sectors of a torn society? Is it supposed to make one feel nostalgic? Should it be an agent of change?

As a first step toward answering these questions, the Council for Conservation of Heritage Sites in Israel has founded steering committees. Both local committees, in every settlement where a museum is to be built, as well as a national steering committee, which comprises resident representatives and academic scholars – historians and sociologists, who specialise in development towns.

The aims that were drafted are as follows:

- Overall goal: presenting the pioneering contribution of development towns to the development of the State of Israel;
- Presenting the towns' heritage from their inception to the present: the challenges and difficulties they have faced and their achievements;
- Improving the residents' sense of belonging to their town and creating local camaraderie and identification.

The established leading principles are:

1. The inclusion of the community in the museum creation process: the use of materials that come from the townspeople themselves, as much as possible, in order to tell the story from the residents' point of view, with an emphasis on those personal stories which fit the illustration;
2. Pioneering: the reference point is that, although the town's first inhabitants did not choose to live there and were often brought there unwillingly and through governmental manipulation, in practice, they were still "pioneers" – by virtue of staying and developing the town despite the difficulties;
3. Presenting the story and its complexities: the exhibition will present to visitors the hardship the town had to endure (for example, relationships with neighbouring settlements, ethnic tensions in town, unemployment issues), and, of course, its achievements (their developed culture, outstanding education, the melding of different cultures and a communal atmosphere, urban development, among others), and the nationally significant personages who were raised or worked there;
4. Access and accessibility: museums will be welcoming and will be accessible to a myriad of target publics. The exhibition will be accessible – structure

and content-wise – to population groups with various disabilities. In addition, texts in museums will be written in three languages: Hebrew, English and an additional language of the site's choosing;
5. Historically significant structure: the museum will preferably be built in a place which holds historical importance to the town;
6. Dialogue with the audience: organised groups who visit the museums will receive guided tours in order to enable a discussion on sensitive topics, and encourage debate on controversial issues.

The main topics the museums will deal with are:
1. Regional and periodical orientation: the town's geographic location, the background that led to the foundation of development towns and its timeline;
2. Employment;
3. Education;
4. Culture;
5. Communal and day-to-day life;
6. Important individuals in the fields of leadership, culture, politics, sports, etc.;
7. Population diversity (from around the world) in the cultural stories of the origin countries.

**Our remaining conflicts**

How do we combine Israel's national narrative with its "micro-history"/ personal stories? What values should museums stress? How do we produce a "network of founders' houses in development towns" on the one hand, while creating a separation based on each town's local distinction, on the other?
Even today, in the age of digital mass media, when we sometimes think museums are outmoded institutions that seek out new ways to justify their existence and draw in visitors, they can still have a significant educational influence. Therefore, the process of selecting what content to display in the museum, which sometimes conceals more than it reveals, should be done judiciously and with an understanding of the great responsibility that we shoulder. Dilemmas are in abundance, and stories innumerable, but the physical space and the visitor's time both dictate moderation and require utmost precision and strenuous thought. We believe that a museum must do more than present a picture, object, or story; it must also constitute a starting point for a process that would continue beyond its walls. We believe museums must not merely recount the past but also, and especially, raise questions and invite the audience to take part in designing the answers, both within and without.

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Orit Engelberg-Baram is an independent curator who works with many museums and heritage sites on subjects related to the history of the Land of Israel and the Jewish people. Among the exhibitions she has curated are: Light and Shadows: The Story of Iran and the Jews and Threads of Silk – The Story of Bukharan Jewry at Beit Hatfutsot, and Reap in Joy – The Harvest Festivals in the Kibbutz at Beit Avi Chai. Lately, she has been the chief curator of the "Network of Founders' Houses in Development Towns" – an initiative by the Ministry of Culture and Sport, executed by the Council for Conservation of Heritage Sites in Israel. In addition, Engelberg-Baram specialises in pedagogy and education in museums, and trains museum facilitators. Engelberg-Baram is a doctoral candidate at The Department of Israel Studies at the University of Haifa. Her doctoral thesis deals with the environmental history of the Dead Sea. For her MA dissertation, she compared exhibitions at Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Center with those at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Elad Betzaleli is the head of the Development and Education Department at the Council for Conservation of Heritage Sites in Israel. Under his guidance, the Council has become an "umbrella organisation" for 180 heritage sites and provides them with professional guidance towards the daily operation of museums and heritage sites. For example: facilitator course, manager training, and the development of educational content. In addition, the Council placed him in charge of exhibition planning and new museums, and presently he heads a national project that aims to establish the "Network of Founders' Houses in Development Towns". In the past, he was a member of the Dror Movement, where he managed projects in the field of informal education in the Jewish and Arab sectors and coordinated a teacher-training program. Betzaleli holds a Master's degree in Israel Studies.

# QUANTIFYING HOW MUSEUMS IMPROVE WELL-BEING: A VISION FOR A FUTURE CITY MUSEUM

TONER STEVENSON AND PAUL BARTON

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## ABSTRACT

Museums and heritage sites not only can enrich the mind but also the body, and this attribute has the potential to influence how stakeholders value a cultural heritage site and what we, as museum professionals, should consider when planning future city museums.

Sydney Living Museums, as a key stakeholder in the rapidly changing Greater Sydney, has developed a new vision for its heritage house museum and farm at Rouse Hill. This heritage site, Aboriginal cultural centre and museum, will, in the foreseeable future, be part of a city. In developing the vision, we have pursued the idea of a museum becoming fundamental to the people who live in the surrounding areas, not only for culture but also for their health and well-being. This was one of four primary findings of extensive stakeholder research which determined the project's ambitions. Improving population health and fitness is also a government priority.

This paper discusses recent research into the health benefits of city museums and green space. It reveals that a robust methodology to quantify how museums can deliver wellness is possible, and that multi-disciplinary evaluation of wellness programmes can quantify and provide a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of programmes in improving the health and well-being of museum visitors.

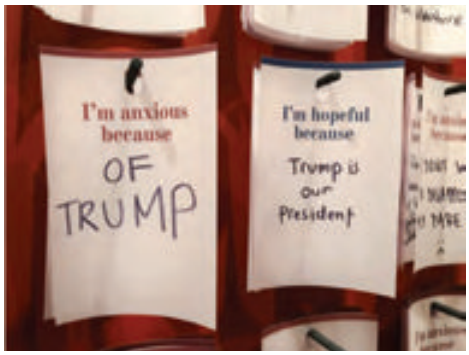
**Key words:** Museums, heritage, cities, health, wellness

## Introduction

Wellness is a hot topic as museums and galleries around the world seek to find ways of increasing and measuring their social impact. This is not a new concept, but it has re-emerged as a new trend as museums embrace health benefits within their vision.

Sydney Living Museums is a key stakeholder in the rapidly changing Greater Sydney, and as such has developed a new vision for Rouse Hill House and Farm, located in an area of population growth and housing development. One rationale for this vision appraises how, with an increase in public amenity, the heritage site and museum will provide a social benefit. The method of analysis of this benefit in fiscal terms will be discussed.

The terms "wellness" and "social benefit" defined for the purposes of this paper encompass psychological, social and physical well-being.




*"A Monument for the anxious and hopeful", detail. Rubin Museum, New York. Source: http://rubinmuseum.org/events/exhibitions/a-monument-for-the-anxious-and-hopeful (Retrieved May 2018). ©Rubin Museum*

## Yoga, mindfulness and gym classes

At the turn of the millennium, Richard Sandell, Leicester University Museum Studies academic, identified that museums had to go through fundamental changes in their policies and practices to be agents of social inclusion in the UK and that the organisations that funded museums demanded this paradigm shift (Dodd and Sandell, 2001). This required valuing society as much as collections and interpretation. In 2012, Sandell co-authored a book titled *Museums, Equality and Social Justice*, in which he highlighted numerous examples of museums which had brought social justice and inclusion from the margins to the core of their programming and exhibition development considerations (Sandell, 2012). While the commitment to the social benefits of museums has waxed and waned, it now appears that a number of Museums are re-aligning their strategies to be proactive in physical as well as social wellness opportunities. Disappointingly, in some cases, this has been a gimmick to attract momentary new audiences, as I will now outline.

Over the past year, some museums, including the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the Brooklyn Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art and Museums Victoria in Melbourne have opened their doors to yoga, ballet and other forms of physical exercise classes. These classes proved to be popular, and in every case, they attracted the attention of the media.

The Metropolitan Museum's aim to bring in new audiences, but not the method which involved holding exercise classes in the galleries, was appreciated by the New York-based author, art critic, academic and fitness advocate, Daniel Kunitz (Kunitz, 2017). Even though Kunitz was highly critical of the way the exercise classes were positioned within the galleries, he conceded that exercise could improve concentration and focus. He strongly advocated that the artworks and displays should be more than a backdrop for the main objective, which was the exercise class. This connectivity between the physical and the mindful is exactly what made the approach taken by a another museum successful.

However, there are examples where museums have incorporated wellness and health events and activities as a method of contemplating, or engaging with the content in a deeper or more diverse way. For example, the Rubin Museum in New York City has an innovative exhibition and a public programme which is carefully aligned with its Asian collection and addresses mental health and mindfulness. A current exhibition, titled *A Monument for the Anxious and Hopeful*, inspired by Tibetan prayer flags, is designed to make visitors contemplate their own lives and share their experiences in a therapeutic and positive manner (*Image, left*). Regular "Art and Yoga" retreats and "Mindfulness meditation class" programmes feature in the integrated approach that the Rubin Museum has developed to raise awareness

of the cultural meaning of the collection and enable the personal and emotional engagement of the whole self.[1]

The Memphis Brooks Museum (*Image, right*) holds regular yoga and wellness events in the galleries.

These are described as designed to:

> "…facilitate profound experiences with objects in our permanent collection, deepen community relationships and help build on our century of commitment to public service … we strive to make a significant contribution to the wellness of our community."[2]

*A Health and Wellness yoga and mindfulness event held in a gallery. Source: www.brooksmuseum.org (retrieved June 2018). © Memphis Brooks Museum of Art*

There are parks in our cities which have been fulfilling these needs for decades, and it is to their experience in measuring their effectiveness in delivering wellness benefits that I now turn.

A study of the health values of cultural, natural and parkland spaces prepared for Parks Victoria in Australia by Deakin University is of particular relevance for city museums as it demonstrated that green space and connectivity with nature provide a number of health benefits to people living and working in densely populated city environments (Townsend, Henderson-Wilson *et al.*, 2015). The interaction with nature was carefully considered in the master planning of the Natural History Museum's Darwin Centre, located in central London, which incorporated the existing wildlife garden into the architectural plan.[3] In 2015, the Natural History Museum redesigned the wildlife garden, and the level of public outcry indicated the significance of this access to nature with 40,000 signatures on a petition to ensure the garden was retained. The Museum's intention was always to improve, not remove, the garden and its interpretation.

In 2015, a new group was established in the UK called the National Alliance for Museums, Health and Wellbeing. Its mission was to support research and to highlight and improve the existing practice through a multi-disciplinary approach, involving museum and health professionals (Lackoy, Patsou *et al.*, 2016). Its members produced a review of what museums were doing to improve wellbeing, inclusivity of general fitness, mental health and people dealing with cancer and the impact of strokes. One of the initiatives to evaluate the effectiveness of museums in improving people's health and wellbeing was a research programme titled "Museums on Prescription", undertaken by Thomson, Lockyer, Camic & Chatterjee. During a 10-week period, 116 adults over the age of 65 were *prescribed* to attend museums in central London every week. The methodology was to test changes in their general well-being before and after the museum visits. The participants were found to have fewer falls and increased morale. Their research report provided proof of the effectiveness of museum visits in improving health, and concluded that "Museums can be instrumental in offering… programmes for older adults to improve psychological well-being over time" (Thomson, Lockyer *et al.*, 2018).


*"Museums on Prescription" research project graphic. Source: https://www.lifestudy.ac.uk/museums/research/museumsonprescription © UCL*

Concurrently, in North America, there has been an awakening of the responsibility of museums to be agents of social wellness. In 2013, the American Alliance of Museums commissioned a report which comprehensively included every state and investigated the efforts museums were taking to address ten health-related areas, including health literacy, childhood obesity, Alzheimer's, diabetes and nutrition (American Alliance of Museums, 2013). This report cited 142 museums which offered relevant programs and facilities, but it did not address how to quantify the health benefits.

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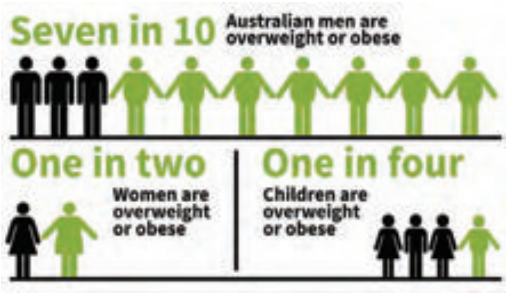
[1] See: the event on Mindfulness mediation by Kate Johnson (Rubin Museum, *http://rubinmuseum.org/events/event/kate-johnson-05-30-2018*), and also: Strauss, 2017.

[2] See: Memphis Brooks Museum website, *http://www.brooksmuseum.org/*.

[3] Source: Darwin Centre Phase II Landscape design.




*ABS data. © The Root Cause*

The work undertaken in the UK and North America is significant, and these and other examples can be accessed on the National Alliance for Museums, Health and Wellbeing website (Evans, Johnson, Krucoff, 2016), but there is still a lack of methodology for evaluating the impact of these programmes which can be more broadly applied in other countries, such as Australia.

**Wellness in museums in Australia**

Alarming statistics about the trends in population health have made clear that the athletic, bronzed Aussie is long-past mythology. In his 2017 Gandhi Oration, social scientist Hugh Mackay lamented the state of Australian society and that although we have every reason to be a healthy, robust society, we are: "…in the grip of epidemics of anxiety, obesity and depression – 20% of Australians experience some form of mental illness" (Mackay, 2017). According to Mackay, common mental health and social problems stem from the rise of the "me" culture, a "sense of self-absorption" equating to anxiety, loss of community and its ramifications impact all ages and socio-economic groups. Mackay's message is not new, he has published in this field before (Mackay, 2014), but more recently (Mackay, 2019), this author called for us to not put faith in our government leaders, but to engage in community life and take the initiative to change whatever we can. Mackay's words should resonate as we plan our cities for the future, inclusive of an articulated and substantiated role for museums to play in the cultural life and social wellness.

Words about social benefit are becoming prevalent in many recent Australian museum vision statements and strategic plans. For example, the Australian Centre for Moving Image's vision is "…to empower our community…"; the Museum of Western Australia's "…philosophy is People First…" and at the Australian Museum a priority initiative is to "develop a performance measurement framework for the analysis of social and economic impact". These aspirational goals of social benefit must be measurable to be meaningful. I will now explain how Sydney Living Museums quantified "social wellness" and defined this as a significant outcome of a museum development plan.

**A case study of social wellness defined as a benefit**

Sydney Living Museums (SLM) has developed a comprehensive vision for the future of Rouse Hill House and Farm located in Greater Sydney (Capital Insight, 2015). This museum is currently a significant colonial house within a 16-hectare estate including an Aboriginal cultural education centre, a farm and an education centre. The surrounding area is being transformed from a semi-rural into a medium-density urban area. Multi-storey housing and office developments, a light rail transport system, schools, hospitals and health care centres are being built. The population is increasing significantly, and, in the foreseeable future, this museum will be within a city.

The project to create a future-looking vision and supporting business case was instigated by the Executive Director, Mark Goggin, in 2015, and involved museum professionals, archaeologists, Aboriginal People, landscape designers, national parks and wildlife experts and architects. Capital Insight, a strategic planning and project management consultancy with a specialisation in social infrastructure projects, facilitated the engagement. This unorthodox alignment of cross-disciplinary experience on a museum project was an insightful choice. We began our planning by extensive stakeholder engagement, which revealed that there was a measurable need for open space and that no such space had yet been allocated in other plans for the area.

The stakeholder-identified benefits of open space were analysed by Capital Insight as:

- Economic – tourism and recreation expenditure creates employment, enhancing property values and providing free space for the community;
- Social – connecting and building strong communities enhances livability

in urban environments, improves low socio-economic issues, reduces crime;
- Health – improves physical and mental health, well-being, child development;
- Environmental – protects areas of conservation and cultural heritage value.

These were incorporated in the proposal to expand the area from 16 to 232 hectares to cater for the forecast population growth in the area. This scale meant enough space for a rich cultural and environmental landscape inclusive of bicycle paths, Aboriginal cultural hubs, native bushland, relaxation and contemplation spaces, education, aged care and other health facilities (*Image, right*).

*A future vision for a "Central Park" of the north-west at Rouse Hill Estate. © JMD Design for Sydney Living Museums, 2015*

The ultimate aim of the project emerged to "leverage the heritage and cultural significance of the site – together with its open space elements – to connect and enrich the community". This was in synergy with some government strategies, including combatting childhood obesity (NSW Government, 2017), and the Greater Sydney Commission's strategic priorities designed to create three liveable, healthy cities (Commission for Greater Sydney, 2018). The population surrounding Rouse Hill is predicted to be one of the fastest growing areas of Sydney due to immigration, relocation of employment and completion of infrastructures such as transport, shops, schools and hospitals.[4]

Capital Insight produced the economic and financial appraisal and calculated the "wellness" value of the plan based on recent research, by using quantifiable statistics to determine the wellness benefits of the new scheme. Several sources were used to quantify health and social benefits because of the lack of a singular robust methodology able to survive intense scrutiny. Visitor participation was based on approximately 30% of the population residing within a 10 km radius visiting the estate, discounted by 75% to account for alternative parklands in the area, which equated to 8% of the population. This equated to 27,550 unique local

*Table 1. Calculation of health benefits, Rouse Hill Estate, using a model developed by Capital Insight.*

| What was measured | Metric used | Source of data |
|---|---|---|
| Physical exercise value | $1660 | (Medicare Private) |
| 15:3 Estimated # Visitors year 1 | 27,550 | ~8% people in 10km radius |
| 59% people visit for fitness | 17,907 | Office Heath & Economics UK 2014 |
| These people get 8% of fitness at Rouse Hill estate | 17,907 *0.08 *$1660 | Multiply above |
| Avoided physical health care | $2,378,049 | Estimated savings per annum |
| Sub-TOTAL | $2,708,649 | Per annum |
| 5 YEARS ON ... Same metrics | | Population doubles |
| Estimated # Visitors per annum in year 5 | 55,100 | ~8% people in 10km radius |
| Avoided health care costs | $4,756,098 | Estimated savings per annum |

[4] The increased health value calculations referred to a body of work funded by health insurers and the US Forest Services (2009), Deakin University (2010) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011-12). Calculations based on research indicating that 52% of the population in Australia do less exercise than the recommended minimum and the health cost per person for that inactivity is $1,660 per person. Significant open space within a local area can contribute 15% of recommended physical activity.

visitors in the first year. According to Medibank Private, one of Australia's largest health insurance providers, the health cost of physical inactivity is $1,660 per person per annum. Capital Insight referred to other research which showed visits to parks and other open spaces equated to 15% of an average Australian's physical exercise.

To be conservative, we used 8% to represent the percentage of park-type exercise in an Australian's routine. Of people who visit open spaces for leisure, 59% are doing this for exercise. Considering these metrics, Rouse Hill Estate would contribute $2,378,049 in health savings per year once the project was delivered, and this would double within the first five years (*Table 1*).[5]

The value of the community engagement through volunteering was conservatively assessed at 1% of visitors, each providing 30 hours of volunteering valued at $30 per hour, resulting in $132,000 per annum in the first year. Furthermore, adding in other factors such as an estimated $12 per willing person of the population to contribute to heritage parks as calculated by Parks Victoria, the value was increased to an estimated $5.4 million per annum of savings on health care costs.

The proposal was well received, and there is renewed interest in the plan by key government stakeholders, most particularly due to its positive health and social wellness characteristics. This is in synergy with the heightened community concerns about liveable cities.

This process highlighted to me that space for activity, exercise, contemplation and relaxation is rarely included in city museum development. Western Sydney has a unique opportunity to plan and build an equivalent to New York's Central Park right now, and that opportunity has a time limit.

**Conclusion**

Museums can deliver both health and cultural benefits to society by offering a compassionate frame of reference as well as opportunities for non-sedentary interaction. Opportunities to engage with nature are rarely included in museum planning, but the evidence is overwhelming that this can make a significant difference to the health and well-being of people of all ages and diverse backgrounds. Sydney Living Museum's Rouse Hill Estate is a rare opportunity to set aside a museum and heritage estate before the city develops around it. Sydney Living Museums, through the engagement of Capital Insight, has quantified to a certain extent the value of wellness in the preliminary business case. By doing so, we have discovered that providing health benefits is supported by stakeholders who expect measurable outcomes. For further investigation, more multi-disciplinary research to determine quantifiable methods for assessing the value of the "wellness" benefits provided by museums is a priority.

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# FROM INTERACTIVES TO HOSTING: PARTICIPATION IN THE BERLIN EXHIBITION AT THE HUMBOLDT FORUM

## ABSTRACT

City (history) museums have a special character and play a special role. They are, more likely than any other kind of museum, community museums. More and more, they try to open themselves to the current discussions in society. A visit to a city museum is, in other words, not only intended to entertain audience but also to engage it in a confrontation with contemporary issues from a historical perspective: history is used here as a mirror for the present and as a means of discussing the future. The encouragement of the audience interaction and participation has become a major part of exhibitions in city history museums. Citizens are empowered to express their ideas, opinions and to add their personal histories to the bigger picture being presented by the museum staff – thus creating a participative museum.

**Key words:** Participation, visitor empowerment, interactive participation

## The Berlin Exhibition in the Humboldt Forum

In the centre of Berlin, on Museum Island, a former baroque palace is being brought back to life. The reconstruction of the exterior walls of the palace (severely damaged in the Second World War and demolished by the German Democratic Republic), and the installation of the Humboldt Forum in its modern museum interior, is the German Federal Republic's largest cultural project ever, with estimated costs of 650 million euros up to the opening of the museum, and another 60 million of annual maintenance costs. The project is mainly financed by the Federal Republic, with some additional support from private funders. The city of Berlin has been granted the use of 4,500 square metres on the first floor, originally planned to house (parts of) the city library.

*The aspect Entertainment in the Berlin Exhibition on the 1st floor in the Humboldt Forum.*
*© Kulturprojekte Berlin, design: krafthaus Das Atelier von facts and fiction*

When Paul Spies was appointed to lead the Stiftung Stadtmuseum and to be the Chief Curator of the Berlin exhibition at the Humboldt Forum in 2016, the exact scope of the exhibition was still to be defined. One thing was clear: the city government did not want to make other branches of the city museum redundant; therefore, this new venue must provide additional value and not act as a rival to the existing group of city history museums.

### Developing the concept

A new team of curators was constituted for the Berlin exhibition; only two members came from the Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin, the remaining ones were selected from universities or among freelance professionals. An important factor in the selection of these curators was not only their knowledge of Berlin (in relation to world history) but also the state-of-the-art knowledge of museology, given that storytelling, interaction and, above all, participation were to be major elements of the exhibition concept. For the exhibition *Berlin and the World* (at the moment still a working title), the Museum wanted to create a surprising and entertaining storyline. It was therefore decided not to opt for a traditional chronological storyline but instead to choose a thematic concept. As there are eight large rooms at one's disposal, the Museum selected eight central themes of Berlin history that have a strong international resonance. Each room was to be "a world in itself", with a spectacularly designed experience centred around one specific, internationally famous aspect of Berlin history. After much consideration and discussion, the themes chosen were the following: science, revolution, free spaces, borders, entertainment, war, fashion and transnationality. In all these fields, one could say that Berlin is – or at least was – one of the capital cities of the subject in question: the capital of revolution, the capital of free space, the capital of war, etc. Taken individually, these eight aspects may not be exclusive to Berlin, but the combination of them has very much marked the international history of Berlin, especially from about 1800 onwards, when the Von Humboldt brothers started to study and publish on global issues.

In order to develop a truly monumental and participative exhibition, the curatorial team should first limit itself to its basic conceptual idea, so that the exhibition choreographers and designers, as well as content partners, like specialists and other participants, can still have a major influence on the final outcome. For this purpose, the conceptualisation of the exhibition was in fact restarted, but now in cooperation with such aforementioned contributors and many more experts. Alongside the exhibition and multimedia designers from Krafthaus/Facts and Fiction (in itself already a group of at least ten intensely involved professionals), an important role was played by committees drawing on a large pool of "critical friends" who were involved in the detailed development of each sub-aspect: a group of specialists, including both scholars and field experts.

Since the space available consists of a fixed circuit running along an inner courtyard, renewing the opening exhibition would have meant closing down the whole exhibition for months. However, the Museum developed a range of flexible exhibition formats, in order for content to be refreshed in a modular manner.


*The aspect Thinking the World in the Berlin Exhibition on the 1st floor in the Humboldt Forum. © Kulturprojekte Berlin, design: krafthaus Das Atelier von facts and fiction*

*The aspect Interconnection in the Berlin Exhibition on the 1st floor in the Humboldt Forum. © Kulturprojekte Berlin, design: krafthaus Das Atelier von facts and fiction*

Therefore, several central flexible elements in the form of "hosting areas", called *Freiraeume* (free spaces) were created; places that were not designed by the curatorial team, but by communities and individuals that are experts in their specific fields. The Museum plans to refresh these hosting areas every six months, so that many different voices and opinions can be expressed and heard from the first few years of the exhibition.

Other areas have a rather collaborative approach: based on a concept developed by the curators, participants create the content which is being displayed in the room, as is the case with "transnationality", where the biographical stories of individual people define the scenography for the whole room. Moreover, we also cooperate with different people as co-curators – they curate certain parts of the exhibition, for example in the field of urban art.

**Interactive audience participation**

The central message of the exhibition is: communities in metropolises like Berlin, as well as visitors to the city, can take responsibility for issues that affect the world as a whole. The impressive example of an early form of world citizenship is given by the Von Humboldt brothers, based in Berlin but in constant contact with people from all over the world. This example can be used as a great inspiration under the motto: "Don't wait for the politicians to take action, but start connecting yourself!"

Thanks to developments like the Internet we are now able to connect much more easily than in the days of the "all-knowing" Von Humboldt brothers, in the first half of the nineteenth century. But since then, the amount of knowledge accumulated by the humankind has massively increased, so that "knowing all" is an impossible task for any single individual today. As individuals, we are all more or less experts in whatever field we are active in, but we have to leave the rest to the other experts. However, if we combine these different expertises, we can probably do more than if we act alone. We also need many opinions and voices to understand all kinds of global matters, since the days in which the western world completely dominated global developments are over. We thus need to learn to listen to each other, and to act together as equals. In order to achieve this, we have to team up with people from all over the world. The exhibition, which the Museum expects to attract people from all over the globe, will try to bring visitors together in teams around issues they have shown a shared interest in during their visit to the (Berlin exhibition in the) Humboldt Forum.

For this "teaming up" of visitors, the Museum will create visitor profiles with the help of interactive events during the visit. In the first room, *Weltdenken* ("Thinking the World"), visitors will receive a wristband with an integrated token/chip, which will enable them to become part of the exhibition. During their visit, they will be asked to rule on some of the big dilemmas of today that are related to our historical themes: Are you more local or global? Do we need another revolution? Are we at war or not?, etc. A set of questions that are most likely impossible to be answered with a "yes" or "no" will have to be resolved by the visitors; their answer is given by walking into the next room by choosing one of two available doors. Visitors will be interactively asked a few more questions throughout the exhibition. This will generate a personal profile, which each visitor will receive at the end of the visit. Following the exhibition, visitors will enter a lounge where they will be offered a team of other visitors from all over the world, with different backgrounds and expertise, that appear to have a common interest in global issues, so that they can get together and work on a specific project. Meeting up at the end of the visit will be completely voluntary, and the Museum does not expect many visitors to accept the invitation, but even if just a few of our many visitors decide to meet, it will have been successful. And our message will have been made clear to everybody: it is not that difficult to bring people together to discuss world issues and to consider taking action!

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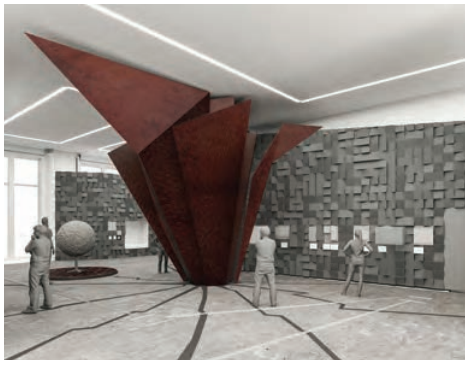
(Walter) Paul Spies was born in Amsterdam, Netherlands, in 1960. After completing his studies in art history and ancient archaeology, he and two colleagues founded the art historical *Büro d'arts*. He worked in this capacity for the next 21 years, before being asked to head the Amsterdam Museum in 2009. In February 2016, he became director of the Stadtmuseum Berlin and chief curator for the state of Berlin in the Humboldt Forum.

Brinda Sommer studied literature and communication with a focus on museum research and the communication of knowledge. She has worked extensively on topics related to remembrance culture and the new role of museums in society. She has been working at the Stadtmuseum Berlin since 2008 and has been team leader of the curatorial team of the Berlin Exhibition in the Humboldt Forum since 2016



*The aspect War in the Berlin Exhibition on the 1st floor in the Humboldt Forum.*
*© Kulturprojekte Berlin, design: krafthaus Das Atelier von facts and fiction*

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# THE SKY IS THE LIMIT. THE *SKYLINE* EXHIBITION

## ABSTRACT

City (history) museums have a special character and play a special role. They are, The city museums of Rotterdam (NL) and Ghent (BE) are working together for the upcoming *Skyline* exhibition. People construct an image of a city when referring to it, and this is partly determined by its silhouette, which is formed by the city's skyline. This basic idea is the starting point for our museums when it comes to researching various aspects of the urban skyline. Key elements of our approach are the history of high-rise buildings, the power skyscrapers emanate, recurring urban development failures and the inspiration that artists, science-fiction movies and gamers draw from skylines. The cooperation between the two museums will result in a temporary exhibition in the two cities. The event in Ghent and Rotterdam not only will offer a historical reflection on the diversity of skylines in the past and their geographical spread but also hopes to encourage visitors to become engaged in contemporary global debates on the impact of high-rise buildings on urban life, and how they determine the future of urban developments and urbanity. We hope other city museums (not just in Europe) will be inspired and that our exhibition will become a travelling display to reach the widest possible audience.

**Key words:** Skyline, urban history, co-production, Museum Rotterdam, STAM – Ghent City Museum

## Introduction

This article about the skyline has three sections. First, we explore the terminology and associations a skyline evokes, and we briefly discuss some relevant historical developments and geographical differences. Then, we further examine two aspects that often recur: the power that a skyline emanates and a skyline's capacity to stir the imagination of a wide range of artists and novelists – how these images reflect upon the symbolic meaning of architecture and our understanding of the modern city. The final section considers the skyline from the point of view of the two city museums in Ghent and Rotterdam, and we also discuss the ultimate purpose of this research: creating an exhibition about skylines.

*Diagram of the Principal High Buildings of the Old World, 1884. George F. Cram © Wikicommons*

## The meaning of skyline

Skylines are mostly associated with 20th-century urbanism. However, in its original early 19th-century sense, the term was used as a synonym for the horizon or outline of the background of the sky (Maslovskaya and Ignatov, 2018). The meeting of sky and land has always been an essential aspect of how citizens, visitors and tourists interact with urban space (Madsen and Plunz, 2001). We identify cities because of their skyline. Indeed, from ancient to modern history and all over the world, the mind of the city is intermittently linked to urban heights and panoramas generating urban sensorial experiences (Leslie, 2018). The medieval city used its church towers to highlight metaphysical spiritual aspirations. Panoramic drawings and engravings, which were often commissioned, started to circulate at the end of the Middle Ages and demonstrated the prominence of these towers, often in exaggerated sizes to highlight the magnificence of the urban landscape and dignified skyline (Pounds, 2005). Apart from their religious aspect, medieval churches and cathedrals also express the (economic and financial) power of clerical institutions. Along with a town's belfry and the tower houses owned by patrician families, these skylines reflect who had power and privilege during that period. The iconicity of these medieval buildings is still clear, however, it is no longer based on their appeal as places of worship, but as sightseeing attractions for tourists. The old heritage icons have new competitors that changed the urban landscape at the turn of the 20th century. However, we have to recognise that, from an architectural historical perspective, the affiliation between late medieval gothic architecture and modern skyscrapers is not coincidental. Indeed, it is not only due to the decoration of a building but also because this is a kind of architecture that mediates between the new and the older familiar forms, which has made the acceptance of skyscrapers much easier at a time of rapid urban transformation (Murphy and Reilly, 2017). Skyscrapers were not, however, immediately accepted and organisations like the City Beautiful Movement were against such structures that would impede natural light from reaching large city areas, such as parks (Wigoder, 2002). Their arguments are concerned with a "matter of scale" and have to be considered in relation to the nearby urban context. The term "high-rise" is, therefore, always related to the immediate area surrounding it. It is the difference in height compared to the average building in a city that defines a structure as a skyscraper, and this varies from place to place. A skyscraper in a mainstream city, for example, would be regarded as an ordinary building in the Loop of Chicago or in the centre of Manhattan (Allain, 2004).

The modern city is less spiritual in a religious sense but no less orthodox in symbolising modernity as a narrative of a capitalist ideology of corporate verticalism and "Randian libertarianism", which is the ultimate form of *laissez-faire* capitalism (Kaika, 2010; Leslie, 2018). The new skyline turned into a metonym, summing up everything that embodies the new era; it celebrates progress. The skyline is seen as an urban manifestation of organising the concentration of masses, with modern construction materials, like the steel frames delivered by the steel barons, as well as the new achievements of modern scientific management. It represents the new vertical city of people, entertainment, communication and business. The modern New York skyline brought beauty and "business" together as manifestations of a new world order dominated by money and power (Madsen and Plunz, 2001: 28).


*The differences in skylines are representative of a shift in power. This poster, an unselected design for the world exhibition held in Ghent in 1913, gives the belfry a prominent place, but, in the background, smoking chimneys of the textile factories are also visible. Artist Léon Spilliaert has already indicated here that new players are appearing on the horizon between the historical buildings. © STAM Ghent*

But what is fundamental in explaining the skyscraper cycle? Is it the market or do egos matter as well? After World War I, the cost of building skyscrapers fell, and innovations in concrete and steel construction as well as new techniques for the use of glass and constructing elevators meant that it was possible to build higher. This made the construction of taller building more interesting because of the builders' egos rather than because these buildings would maximise profits. Figures like Frank Pulitzer and Frank Woolworth had a personal desire to dominate New York's skyline. However, in general, personal characteristics and psychological factors are less relevant for explaining the building of skyscrapers than market conditions and the expectation of economic growth (Barr *et. al*, 2015, Allain, 2004).

Modern skylines today sometimes reflect the goals of policy makers and urban planners who want to climb the height hierarchy. Ego matters here. The notion of progress that was so dominant at the start of the skyscraper boom in the early 20th century has been revived. A new optimism has replaced an older pessimism, even in western European cities where high-rise buildings had a negative image and aroused a lot of opposition, particularly in historical cities, where the general opinion claimed that modern high-rise buildings would "desecrate" the historic skyline. Churches and belfries were manifestations of collective public interest and not of individualism or corporate interest. Most scholars on skylines agree that the negative skyline image started to change in the 1990s, due to a counter-movement that began to celebrate the positive image of skyscrapers. They were seen as part of a new urban vision that can be associated with post-modern trends and the changing role of cities in creating a new economy. The triumph of the city became part of a new urban marketing strategy that resembles the euphoric skyline and high-rise building before World War II when New York was prominent.

The skyscraper mania of today focuses on the Asian metropoles and the major urban centres in the Middle East, where the new skyline not only has become part of a cinematic urban vision but also celebrates national identities and pride. Dubai has more than 300 tower buildings exceeding 150 m, and is home to Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building at 828 m; Shanghai, meanwhile, has the highest high-rise building density in the world. The new super-talls have become part of a new Asian and Middle Eastern mediatised narrative of the world. Economic rationality cannot explain this boom, but public relations and political circumstances do. New powers need skyscrapers and "symbolic heights" to demonstrate their technical capabilities and global marketing value. Sophia Al-Maria calls them "Gulf Futurism", reflecting upon the hyper-verticalism that is an expression of hyper-elitism and hyper-consumption in an urban space created for symbolic meanings and consumer experiences (Graham, 2016). Such structures and heights are also essential for creating globality through entrepreneurialism by building hyper-talls (Acuto, 2010).

In the wake of the growing attention of architects and urban planners, scholars from other disciplines have shown interest in skyscraper research. In particular, critical urban scholars have defied the triumph of the skyline and the political and social conflicts associated with it, as well as the economic dynamics behind it, and how iconic architecture and the urge for skyscrapers are signifiers of political, social and cultural power (Kaika, 2010, 2011).

The historiography on skylines shows us: 1) that they may be looked upon as symbolic representations which help to understand the historical changes of cities in periods of boom, as well as in times of turbulence sparked by globalisation and economic distress; and 2) how new urban forms are signifiers of new radical imaginaries of modern cities (Grubbauer, 2014). Why did the skyline become popular in the past? What were its functions? How was it represented and what is its meaning today?

Skylines and skyscrapers are fascinating topics for urban historians and city museums, since they generate a public discourse that triggers our urban sensibility

and imagination of a city's past, present and future (Leslie, 2018). In particular, our interests focus on the differences between earlier forms of the skyline and modern and post-modern representations. Scholars like Maria Kaika raised the question of whether today's skyscrapers carry the same meaning as their predecessors (Kaika, 2011). In her view, the Egyptian pyramids, the Greek Parthenon, medieval cathedrals and even the Empire State Building represent an architecture of timeless, indestructible, unique objects. These buildings became embedded in a public environment, and their architecture and design played a role in an urban narrative for creating a better city. They became icons because of their public functions, which were performed, staged and ritualised. However, the high-rise mania of today fits into a different paradigm. The new post-modern skylines are of a different nature, produced like commercial products with a short life expectancy, as "serial objects" that are marketed as unique icons. Their iconicity is not made by the public, but by sophisticated marketing campaigns directed by star architects and their corporate commissioners (Kaika, 2010, 2011). The stories that skylines tell us from a historical perspective are not only a combination of architectural, technological and urban history but also of urban sociology, philosophy and politics. In short, their complexities, multifaceted aspects and forms of representation tell us how the city is conceived, perceived and lived (Koch and Latham, 2014).

**Skylines and power**

A recurring pattern is noticeable in the history of city skylines. Having power – or rather money – results in the building of a tower or skyscraper to flaunt that power and wealth, with different clients having different emphases.
Examples of this expression of power can be found in Italy in buildings that are more than 900 years old. In Bologna, the competition between two patrician families is still visible in its present skyline. Gherardo Asinelli started building a tower in 1109. However, when that of the Garisenda family proved to be higher, Asinelli turned his structure into a 97 m "skyscraper". The story goes that the Garisenda family was less prosperous and could not outclass the Asinellis for the second time, and so their tower stayed at 42 m. An even better example is the town of San Gimignano, with numerous towers representing the power of (and competition between) several noble clans dating back to the 12th century (Kauffmann, 1985). Similar examples can be found elsewhere in Europe, e.g., *der Goldene Turm* in Regensburg.

Several cities in Belgium and northern France feature a rather specific type of tower among the churches and cathedrals: the belfry. These belfries represented urban autonomy and guarded the freedoms granted by rulers. The belfry of Ghent, for example, was completed in 1380 and was a symbol of municipal power and privilege. The charters setting out the city's rights were preserved in chests kept in the tower, which was used as an observation post, with the bells ringing out to indicate the start and end of the working day, to warn of danger and to announce celebrations (Kauffmann, 1985; Boone, Deneckere *et al*., 2010). Fifty-six belfries in Belgium and France have been recognised as UNESCO World Heritage Sites since 2005.

There are, of course, other examples to be found over the centuries but, in this article, we now skip to the 19th century, and to North America. A changing economy required an architectural response, which was the office tower. The services sector grew in the mid-19th century, increasingly concentrating administration, stock markets, banks, insurance companies etc. in cities where high-rise buildings offered ever-increasing office space. The demand for office space in the United States increased tenfold from 1870 to 1920, especially in New York and Chicago (Allain, 2004). As a result, the country took the lead in the field of high-rise buildings in the 19th and the first decades of the 20th century.

When the Empire State Building was almost complete in New York, Europe was still debating over such skyscrapers, for example at the *Congrès international*

*d'architecture moderne* (CIAM) conferences. CIAM was an international discussion platform for (modernist) architects and had a considerable influence on urban planning and the architectural debate. The first conference was held in Switzerland in 1928, while the third, organised in Brussels in 1930, was dedicated to high-rise buildings. The tower was presented as a symbol of modernity and the solution to the housing problem. It offered, as it still does, the possibility of accommodating a large number of residential units over a limited surface area. This ideology evolved into the definition of the "functional city", offering maximum comfort on a minimum surface area. At the CIAM congress in Athens (1933), this led to the *Charter of Athens*, in which a city was to be divided into zones for housing, work, traffic, culture and recreation (Kauffmann, 1985; Van Bever, 2013). Living would occur in tall residential towers, and the design of the *Ville Radieuse* (1935) by Le Corbusier – one of the protagonists of those CIAM meetings – is an elaboration of that idea.

The high-rise housing model in Europe is particularly used in social housing. It is often chosen to achieve a high housing density in a project. Sometimes, these social housing towers are part of a large-scale urban development scheme, which takes into account the incoming sunlight, public facilities and (car-free) green spaces. However, more often than not, pragmatism prevails and residential towers become banal (De Meulder, 2006). Troubled residential areas in suburbs appeared all over post-war Europe, often as a result of modernist, social democratic planning and the mass production of cheap, efficient high-rise buildings for people to live in. Many such examples can be found both in the West (e.g. Sheffield, Ghent, Bijlmermeer in Amsterdam, and Scampia in Naples) and in the former Eastern Bloc countries (e.g. Krakow, Kiev). They have contributed greatly to the negative perception of high-rise buildings. In addition to the gloomy architecture and sometimes poor locations, cheap finishing and, in some cases, even poor building quality have also contributed to this viewpoint. Several of these high-rise projects are downright urban development failures and, in more than one place, they are currently being demolished to make way for new, more qualitative architecture.

The "higher-ranking apartment building" appeared in the same period. These are residential towers that focus on the (higher) middle class and offer an urban alternative to the classic family home (De Meulder, 2006). This is a model that is still doing well to this day and is certainly in demand on the luxury market. Recent examples of luxury residential towers can often be found on the riverside areas of many cities. *De Rotterdam*, for example, which is a design by Rem Koolhaas and has – for some years now – been an eye-catcher on the Maas in Rotterdam, not only comprises a hotel and offices but also holds 240 apartments that are among the most expensive and the most sought-after real estate in the city. Owning the penthouse of a skyscraper is a status symbol, as the tower commands respect (Kauffmann, 1985), which brings us to the aspect of power.

Skyscrapers emanate power and authority. Anyone who can afford a spacious apartment on the top floor of a residential tower can use it to demonstrate his or her financial supremacy. The pinnacle of these features is owning a complete skyscraper and naming it after oneself, of which the Rockefeller Center and the Trump Tower are well-known examples. Banks, insurance groups and leading companies are also on the map with a skyscraper bearing their names, such as the Commerzbank Tower in Frankfurt or the HSBC Tower in London. Yet high-rise buildings can also showcase the power and authority of systems. The residential towers that were built in the former Eastern Bloc are an example of this, or, more recently, the new presidential residence in La Paz, Bolivia (Collyns, 2018). These cannot be attributed to any person or company, but they are just as much an expression of power and ego, in this case of the central government. The symbolic power of the 21st-century skyline should be looked upon from a globalised network perspective. Its power structure is not primarily focused on the citizens, who actually live in the city, but it is an effective instrument for gaining a position as a global city. This is particularly the case in Asia and the Middle East (Acuto, 2010).

**Urban dreamscapes**

The skyline is more than a view; it is an ongoing, inexhaustible inspiration for artists, science-fiction movies and gamers. The earliest futurist interpretations of the world order developed in ancient texts lean toward science fiction. This started with the theological imagination, as represented by Babel in Genesis: "Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven". Ever since the earliest interpretations of Babel, there has been a consensus on the fact that building towers is part of a city's dream of immortality. "Immortality and monumentality are interwoven in our skylines" (Graham, 2015). The earliest cities of our civilisations are rooted in ancient texts and myths that are part of our urban historiography and perceptions of the city. New York, London and all major cities, which became icons of new globalised power and market conditions, were represented in novels and popular culture as the modern Babylon. Images are closely associated with the concept of the city, as expressed in literature, paintings, photography and all kinds of modern art, but also popular cultural representations, such as the collage by the Dutch-German artist Paul Citroen, who contributed with *Metropolis* (1923) to the Dadaist movement. Classic novels include the dystopian science-fiction work *When the sleeper awakes* (1899) by H. G. Wells, who sketched the consequences of the vertical city, and *Manhattan Transfer* (1925) by John Dos Passos, who criticises the city that lost its significance as a democratic space, as the street is no longer a place for social and cultural interaction. His novel highlighted the differences with the 19th-century city of the *flâneur*, which could not co-exist with the modern vertical metropolis (McKee, 2018).

*Dress with Rabbit's Head. Marga Weimans. Collection Wonderland, 2009. From her studio in Rotterdam, Weimans has a view of a typical Dutch gallery flat, which contrasts heavily with the world of fashion. People living here can only dream of a glamorous world. The everyday ugliness and the story of Alice in Wonderland are the central themes of this collection. This outfit expresses silhouettes and represents the harsh urban reality of Rotterdam South.*
*© Collection Museum Rotterdam*

In his review article, Thomas Leslie refers to Hugh Ferriss's *Metropolis of Tomorrow* (1929) as a combination of "prophecy and dream" (Leslie, 2018: 4). Ferriss's pictorial representations of his utopian metropolis were partly based on the studies by the American architect Harvey Wiley Corbet, one of the greatest advocates of skyscrapers. Ferriss's renderings are visible in the Chinese translation of Le Corbusier's *City of Tomorrow* (Mingri zhi Chengshi, 1936), however, they are adapted to a new narrative on the future of China's modern urbanism (Chu, 2018). Ferriss's impressions helped to create a vision of the utopian city, which was further stimulated by the development of aerial technologies (Morshed, 2015). The short documentary film *Manhatta* (*sic*) (1921) by Charles Sheeler and Paul Strand documents the rise of Manhattan and is, in its rudimentary form, an early example of a new sub-genre that used new media to create a cinematic landscape featuring the dynamics of the verticality of skyscrapers, bringing motion and emotion to a city's abstract spaces (Kinik, 2008). In a way, New York's images and their filmic representations paved the way for European cinema, which featured the anxieties and social distress of the inter-war period and the future evolution of Europe into a dystopian order for which New York, with its different urban configurations, offered an example. Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927) has become the most influential science fiction film of all time. Lang became influenced by the modern skyline of New York, like many artists with a European background who crossed the Atlantic. Lang projected the spatial features of New York and its vertical reordering of social space on Germany's disruptive, tense Weimar era and cultural criticism influenced by scepticism concerning the Machine City. There is the cinematic space with a glittering skyline of an enormous city of the future, with elevated roads and railway bridges. Yet apart from references to the future, the film has all kinds of iconic representations that link it to Medieval and Renaissance art history. Apart from Pieter Bruegel the Elder's *Tower of Babel* (1563), there is an art-historical reference to Hieronymus Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*, the playground for the happy few on the summits of the towers. Far below the garden is a subterranean world where the workers lived (Graham, 2016; Müller, 2015). Another example is the fictional futurism of Batman's Gotham, first published in the 1940s, which became the icon of a "vile city" featured by its skyscrapers, serious crime, corruption and poignant inequality. These social contradictions and class distinctions of the vertical city are also highlighted in J.G. Ballard's dystopian novel *High-Rise* (1975), adapted by Ben Wheatley to a film of the same name in 2015. The novel was published in an era when high-rise living in the UK was looked


*Modern Chicago was the key example for the new city that Rotterdam wanted to become, as the front cover of the Rotterdam illustrated magazine, Groot Rotterdam ("Big Rotterdam"), shows in 1929.*
*© Collections Municipal Archives Rotterdam*

upon as a vertical catastrophe. The exaggerated vertical scale in these science-fiction pictures is widely used in post-modern adaptations, but the post-modern cyberpunk does not use the clean images of modernist dystopias. Instead, their urban futurism is sketched as "gritty and half-decayed places, ridden by extreme time-space compression, population explosions, environmental exhaustion and terrifying advances in technology" (Graham, 2016: 394). *Blade Runner* (1982) is the most influential example. Science fiction cityscapes have a great influence on urban culture (art, film, novels, etc), but also on architecture. The renowned architect Richard Rogers confessed that he runs *Blade Runner* once a week for his staff. The influence of this film is most visible in the Gulf region and China, with their city skylines mimicking the verticalised scenes of urban science fiction. Dubai created a *Star Trek* skyline, which was the most suitable place to record the movie, as the producers did not need to model a future city; it was already there (Graham, 2016).

Civic imagination is thus a fundamental part of our urban consciousness. The industrial city was looked upon as a degenerated city, the "abyss of human species", as Rousseau called it. The skyscraper offered a new narrative of the city, turning the "slim-dwelling narrative" into a spiritual rebirth (Gleeson, 2012; Leslie, 2018). Yet the optimism of the new capitalists and the architects commissioned by them triggered, at the same time, a dystopianism imagined in the multifaceted expression of artists that influenced modern urban critics. The vertical city, stimulated by the new waves of global capitalism, has reproduced older discussions on the city as a place of urban communities. The vertical city divides social classes and stimulates a segregated city, in particular when its buildings concentrate people who do not intend to settle there, but only to use the urban space as a temporary residence, a stop-over in their global journey (Graham and Hewitt, 2013).

**An exposition in Ghent and Rotterdam**

The American model is frequently discussed in research under the term "skyline", and foremost, the iconic example of New York. We cannot ignore this, but it will not be our starting point. Our idea is to create a core exhibition in which we present the universal element of the urban skyline – with aspects such as the aforementioned power and dreamscapes. In addition to that "core layer", the Museum Rotterdam and STAM will place their own emphasis on specific aspects that are relevant to their own cities and their European context. In this way, the local city is the lead into a broader look at the subject and the exploration of similarities and differences worldwide.

At first sight, Belgian Ghent and Dutch Rotterdam are very different European cities. Nevertheless, looking at their separate skyline histories makes them interesting places to start our phantasmagorical tour, which encouraged us to think about an exhibition. Ghent had its belfry constructed in 1380. Although the tower's superstructure has undergone numerous changes over the centuries (Heirman, 2003), the belfry was for a long time the tallest building in the city – until 2012, when the KBC Arteveldetoren (118 m) was completed. Various urban projects are currently ongoing in the city, such as the conversion of the old harbour docks into a new town district, or the major redevelopment of the railway station area. These include options for high-rise buildings (on a Ghent scale). Rotterdam had its first "skyscraper" in 1898 – the White House – which is 44 m in height and was, at that time, marketed as the highest private building on the European continent, a form of American mimicry, highlighting the ambitions of the Port of Rotterdam. In Rotterdam marketing terms, the White House has become an iconic building, fitting into an urban narrative of Rotterdam's claim to modernity. Prior to World War II, the American skyline became an important mediator between European and American modernism. This is reflected, for instance, in Rotterdam's pre-war ambitions and optimism towards a new future represented by modernist architecture (Van de Laar, 2013).

Rotterdam built a new modernist city after World War II and embraced an idea of modernism and modern architecture that is strongly associated with the skyscraper mania of past decades. Rotterdam had not, however, planned to become a high-rise city after the fatal destruction of its inner city in May 1940.

Instead, it wanted to be social-democrat modernist, and economic considerations – there was enough space – meant that there was no urgency to create high-rise buildings. The skyline turn started to occur in the 1980s, as Rotterdam, like so many port cities, rediscovered its inner city. As a result, in its new urban vision, high-rise architecture became part of an iconic rebranding (Kaika, 2010, 2011).

The Museum Rotterdam and STAM Ghent have been working together for several years. Now, the two have joined forces to prepare this exhibition, which will be on display in Rotterdam in 2020 and Ghent in 2021. The skyline exhibition will be designed as a travelling event. It is initially to be presented in Rotterdam and Ghent, but the Museum Rotterdam and STAM are certainly open to having the exhibition travel farther after that, including to other city museums.

The Museum Rotterdam and STAM are only at the start of the skyline project, but, based on initial research and surveys, we can already assume that skylines are a universal, urban phenomenon. The history of high-rise buildings in cities and their various aspects is very interesting, leading to further investigations and the possible creation of new exhibitions. As city museums, the aim is to contribute to the debate on the future of cities. An expo about skylines would be an excellent forum for further discussions about high-rise buildings and the urban skyline in Rotterdam and Ghent, as well as in other cities worldwide.

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2017 PRE-OPENING. © STEFANIE KOESLING

# *PART 3: STATE-OF-THE-ART CITY MUSEUMS AND THEIR PRACTICES*

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# HOW TO BECOME A RELEVANT PLACE IN THE CITY? THE NEW HISTORICAL MUSEUM FRANKFURT

## ABSTRACT

The Historical Museum Frankfurt (HMF) had the chance to completely renew itself from 2008 to 2017. The historical part of its buildings, the Saalhof, was thoroughly refurbished between 2008 and 2012. It is an ensemble of five historical buildings erected over an 800-year-period from the 12th to the 19th century, making it one of the city's oldest historical monuments. The Saalhof itself is situated on the Römerberg, the heart of the Old Town of Frankfurt am Main. A major new building, added between the years 2011 and 2017, allowed the HMF to be remodelled as a modern city museum for Frankfurt. The new HMF was conceived as a participatory museum: here, visitors become users who are invited to play an active role in the work of the museum. This fits in well with its new mission, which is to be an inclusive museum for people of all backgrounds and abilities. The museum wants its exhibits and events to appeal to all visitors and to engage all senses. The HMF wants to be a key point of reference for the city and about the city, a place where Frankfurt and its concerns are discussed, where an array of topics from the past, present and future is presented, and where the many different perspectives and standpoints of Frankfurt's residents are rendered visible.

**Key words:** City museum, participation, inclusion, diversity

## Introduction

The Historical Museum Frankfurt (HMF) is situated in the Römerberg district, the heart of the Old Town of Frankfurt am Main. It is housed in the Saalhof, an ensemble of five historical buildings built over an 800-year-period from the 12th to the 19th century, making it one of the city's oldest historical monuments. A major new building, added between the years 2011 and 2017, allowed the HMF to be remodelled as a modern city museum for the city of Frankfurt. The new HMF was conceived as a participatory museum: here, visitors become users who are invited to play an active role in the work of the museum. This fits in well with our mission, which is to be an inclusive museum for people of all backgrounds and abilities. We want our exhibits and events to appeal to all visitors and to engage all senses. We also want the HMF to be a key point of reference for and about the city, that is to say, a place where Frankfurt and its concerns are discussed, where an array of topics from the past, present and future is presented, and where the many different perspectives and standpoints of Frankfurt's residents are rendered visible.[1]

*Exhibition Opening, 2017.*
*© HMF*

## From a museum of history to a city museum for the 21st century

Between 2007 and 2017, the HMF underwent a radical process of remodelling. The first step was the technical and architectural renovation of the historical buildings, which was done by the Diezinger Architekten office from Eichstätt and completed in 2012. The construction of the new building, designed by the winners of the 2007/2008 competition, the LRO Architekten office from Stuttgart, began in 2011 and it was finished in 2017. The full-scale renovation of the old Saalhof seemed an excellent opportunity for the HMF to rethink its entire concept. For this, the team sought the advice of Steiner Sarnen from Switzerland, and, with his support, developed a new master plan. One of the key premises of the 2009 master plan was that "a museum in the 21st century, especially a city museum of the 21st century, can become a laboratory and a forum for a new civic society".[2] This assertion grew out of the realisation that museums, like most cultural institutions, are insufficiently prepared for the challenges posed by both present and future. The accelerated pace of change, resulting from globalisation, digitisation, mobility and migration is impacting all major cities, and Frankfurt is no exception. Not only does it have a relatively high rate of turnover within its resident population (between 10 and 15 per cent per annum) but over 50 per cent of its inhabitants have an immigrant background as well. At the same time, Frankfurt is continental Europe's financial centre and, as a leading data hub, a capital of digitisation.

So, the first question the museum team had to ask itself back in 2009 was: what must a museum accomplish in order to remain relevant in a city like Frankfurt? And how can it attract not only the dwindling numbers of middle-class "culture vultures" but all sections from civil society, as well as guests from elsewhere? To answer these questions, we first formulated two basic assumptions:

(1) The only theme that can provide social cohesion in a population as culturally diverse as Frankfurt's is the city itself. After all, the one thing that all Frankfurt's residents have in common is the city they inhabit. No other factor – be it cultural heritage, nationality, language, or religion – is shared by the majority of the population.

(2) Thanks to the digital revolution, knowledge in the 21st century is no longer exclusively generated by academically accredited institutions or individuals, such as museums and their curators. These days, anyone can generate and publish what they know simply by posting it online. Inevitably, this is having an impact on established institutions like museums.

[1] Based on: Gerchow, 2017.
[2] Published in: Gerchow, CURA 2009, 9. See also Gerchow, 2013 (the paper given at the CAMOC conference in Vancouver, in 2012).

*Exhibition Opening, 2017.*
*© HMF*

The mission of the new HMF was then developed from two basic considerations: first, the old museum of history with its focus on the history of Frankfurt, second, the surrounding region that was to be reinvented as a modern municipal museum. Moreover, the themes addressed there should no longer be confined to the past but should include present-day concerns as well as the city's prospects. The museum's claim – based on its academic and custodial credentials – to exclusive "sovereignty" over the city's cultural heritage was to be dropped in favour of a concept that made the museum and its resources open to all comers. These visitors would henceforth be treated as users who would feel respected and taken seriously by the museum. This policy of inclusiveness was to be supported by the installation of new interfaces: users were to be given opportunities for participation of varying intensity and quality. The inspiration for this came from the New Museology approach that has become the standard practice in English-speaking countries, where concepts such as "open museum", "outreach", "participation" and "co-creation" have become firmly established.[3] The new HMF, in other words, was to become a place where a highly diverse resident population, alongside with large numbers of outside visitors, is able to engage with the city's past, present, and future. Instead of a museum *about* the city, it was to become a museum *for* the city and *with* the city.

***Typical Frankfurt!***

Visitors from Frankfurt and elsewhere are now drawn to the museum by a most unusual attraction, clearly visible from the square: *Typical Frankfurt!,* which takes the form of a gigantic snow globe, whose eight artistically made models of the city are an instant eye-catcher. Here, even visitors with very little time to spare or with limited German or English can obtain a pithy, thought-provoking insight into Frankfurt's "DNA".

At the centre of the new museum square, aligned with the museum entrance, stands a brass periscope. It directs the attention to the underground level: the connecting level between the museum entrance and the exhibition gallery beneath the museum square. Not only can museum visitors be seen strolling here but also a city model can be seen beneath an oversized snow globe, and after a few moments, a new city model is presented on a round disc, raised by an orange-coloured industrial robot.

The Snow Globe is the introduction to the topic of the museum, namely, the city of Frankfurt am Main. Although the eight models under the glass globe greatly differ regarding design, all of them depict this city. They provide an unusual introduction to a museum visit both for international tourists and "experts on Frankfurt" from the region. Frankfurt is a city with very pronounced characteristics. Hardly any other city in Germany is so strongly associated with clichés as Frankfurt am Main. That goes for self-images and public images alike. Its strongest image today is doubtless that of the banking city; the locals themselves speak of "Mainhattan" – a popular image with an ironic if not megalomaniac undertone – whereas the term "Bankfurt" tends to have negative connotations. As far back as 500 years ago, Martin Luther referred to Frankfurt as "the Empire's gold and silver hole". In other words, this cliché goes back a very long way. These are precisely the stereotypes that the Snow Globe addresses: something like the city's "DNA", in other words, distinct traits that have long shaped Frankfurt and are still dominant or readily visible today. From 2013 onwards, the eight selected clichés were discussed with guest experts and museum visitors in a series of "Snow Globe Talks".

The models were made by international contemporary artists like Tracey Snelling, Edwin Zwackman and Rob Voerman, specialised in this genre; they explore modelling as a medium of urban visions, often inspired via photography or film. For them, modelling becomes an instrument of urban artistic research. Each model of the Snow Globe shows an individual selection of contemporary and

[3] Simon, 2010.

historical local architecture coloured by the artist's own interpretation of a cliché. Like dioramas – another classic museum medium – they contain small scenes featuring events from the city's past and present. Observers approach these models in the same way as numerous visitors to the city do: they look down onto the microcosm that is Frankfurt as if from a plane, and they can delve into the details of its architecture and history.[4]

**A laboratory for the city**

The laboratory *Frankfurt Now!* is the most important format through which the museum intends to accomplish its mission of becoming an open and relevant cultural institution for all. The lab was launched as an experiment in 2010, and, after the main building was torn down in 2011, it was forced to go "on tour": first to an empty office space (*Ostend-Ostanfang*, 2011), then to an abandoned shop (*Gallus – A Quarter and a Whole*, 2015), next to a clubhouse on the outskirts of town (*G-Town: Living Room Ginnheim*, 2013), followed by the city's oldest outdoor swimming pool (*My Stadionbad*, 2012), and finally to the Wallanlagen (*Park in Progress*, 2014). The year 2015 saw the addition of a new project, a *Summer Tour*, which in its first year took the lab through all the forty-two city districts. In 2016, it took the form of a voyage of discovery through Frankfurt, accompanied by various artists. Thanks to these touring workshops, exhibitions, and expeditions, we got to meet countless residents, commuters and guests, who were able to inject their voices and their views of Frankfurt into the new museum. So it was with this experience already under its belt that the lab, at last, moved into the new museum on the Römerberg in 2017. Moreover, its "snapshot" findings were collected and are now available to users as part of the new permanent exhibition *Frankfurt Now!*[5]

*The Library of the Old* fits in well with this new approach. Since the artist Sigrid Sigurdsson launched this participatory art and memory project in the year 2000, the museum has recruited and supported more and more authors, so that a total of 130 contributions have been collected to date or are still being processed. Here, too, the subject is the individual's view of the city, along with personal memories and mementoes of Frankfurt supplied by members of society. As *Library of the Generations*, it now forms one of the two mainstays of *Frankfurt Now!*,[6] alongside with the large model of Frankfurt made by the artist Herman Helle from Rotterdam. This highly unusual model, which grew out of the subjective descriptions of Frankfurt collected during the *Summer Tour* of 2015, is a constant inspiration to engage with the texts, podcasts, films and photos submitted by the city's residents and users, and one seeks to continue collecting more of these valuable documents.

*The Snow Globe, one of the main attractions of the museum.*
*© HMF*

Between these two poles, the city lab exhibitions are presented and the results of the *Summer Tours* are shared with all museum visitors and users. The new Digital City Lab supplies the necessary internet interface. Here, anyone interested can publish material about the city on a special digital map. In addition, four interactive media stations allow this material to be called up and enlarged upon inside the museum.[7]

**Permanent exhibitions**

The history of the city naturally still has a key role to play in the museum. After all, even today there are still plenty of city museums where the history of their city, alongside a room for temporary exhibitions, is all they have to offer. Such museums basically have just one large exhibition that is on show all the time. The current thinking among museologists, however, is that it is precisely these permanent exhibitions, especially in museums of history that have become a problem. Because after opening to great fanfare, such museums soon see visitor numbers tailing off and, although schools and tourists continue to visit them, their regional target audience does not. So, how can we succeed in turning permanent

[4] Gerchow and Kossmann (Eds.), 2017.
[5] Vand den Borg, Gemeinhardt and Gerchow, 2016, and Gerchow and Cillesen (Eds), 2017, 93-108.
[6] Gerchow and Janelli (Eds.), 2017.
[7] Gerchow and Cillesen (Eds), 2017, 93-108.

exhibitions on the history of our city into something of enduring interest? The exhibition *Frankfurt Once?* certainly takes pride of place when measured in terms of square metres alone, but it is now only one of six semi-permanent exhibitions: (1) *Frankfurt Now!*, (2) *Snow Globe/Typical Frankfurt!*, (3) *Frankfurt Collectors and Donors* (4) *The Staufer Age* and *The Staufer Harbour* and (5) the *Main Panorama* in the Toll Tower. Moreover, the very notion of permanence has been redefined so that many exhibition elements can be replaced, updated, or exchanged with others.

*The model of Frankfurt am Main.*
*© HMF*

**A history of the city in five chapters**

Even as the title *Frankfurt Once?* alone tells us, this section was conceived as a counterfoil to the second-largest section *Frankfurt Now!* Thus, the *Once?* is housed in the new exhibition building, immediately below the *Now!*. The question and exclamation marks turn the expected ratio of certainty to uncertainty on its head: the question mark appended to history that is supposedly a closed chapter (*Once?*) identifies it as anything but, whereas the present, which normally would not count as a museum piece at all, asserts itself with a mark of surprise (*Now!*). So, the history of the city raises questions, while contemporary Frankfurt has taken its place by its side within the new museum. The story told in *Frankfurt Once?* frequently looks ahead to the exhibition of present-day Frankfurt and ends where *Frankfurt Now!* begins.

The crucial decision not to tell the story of Frankfurt chronologically, as a journey through the ages, was made back in 2009. Although this is the ordering system most commonly adopted by museums like ours, we felt it would make too much of the content seem predictable. Thus we would be risking a loss of suspense, excitement and surprise. The nearly 2,000 $m^2$ of exhibition space allotted to *Frankfurt Once?* were therefore subdivided into five chapters or galleries, each of which covering a different theme: the first of these, *Townscapes*, presents various views of and on Frankfurt. The gallery, *100xFrankfurt*, offers an alternative approach to Frankfurt's past, specifically 100 intriguing, noteworthy objects lined up in a thousand-year timeline.[8] The gallery called *Citizen's Town* is the first in a suite of three galleries devoted to three key aspects of Frankfurt's long history, which, taken together, make our history unique, since apart from a brief episode during the Napoleonic period, shortly after 1800, Frankfurt has always been a city governed by and for its citizens. The fourth gallery, called *Money Town*, homes in on Frankfurt's role as a commercial and financial centre, which began with the launch of its autumn fair in the 13th century. The fifth and last gallery, *Global City*, looks at Frankfurt's role as the city that for centuries played the role of Germany's unofficial capital. It was here where German kings and emperors were elected and later crowned (*cf. Emperor Makers*); it was here, for fifty years in the early 19th century, that the government of the German Confederation sat in session; just as it was here, for that very reason, that Germany's first democratic National Assembly was convened in 1848–49 (*cf. Representatives of the People*).

The grouping of the exhibits in order to form impressive object collages promises to turn the visit to the museum into an aesthetic experience that visitors will hopefully wish to repeat. The object installations of *100xFrankfurt*, the portrait wall of *Frankfurt Faces*, and the flags in the *Bourgeois City* provide excellent opportunities for this, as do the "coin empire" in *Money Town* and the *Schöner Globe* in *Global City*. Fortunately, the HMF is in possession of exceptionally rich collections that make such variations possible.[9]

While this concentration on just a few key themes makes for much-focused content, it inevitably means paying rather less attention to other topics of interest. To remedy this, we created several theme trails through the whole museum, so migration, the history of women, art and design, and others like them across all

[8] Gerchow and Gorgus (Eds), 2017.
[9] Gerchow and Cillesen (Eds), 2017, 59-92.

sections. Moreover, when compared to earlier permanent collections, we now have a much larger selection of interactive objects and exhibits as well as "learn more" levels to encourage repeated visits. In addition to the extensive use of digital display media, there is also a family trail designed especially for younger visitors and the adults accompanying them, as well as special study rooms on every floor, with further reading and additional materials for groups and school classes.

**Exhibitions in the Saalhof**

The museum's historical premises also have an important role to play in the new concept, for this is where the special themes that set the HMF apart from the city's many theme museums are housed. Among them is the exhibition on Frankfurt collectors and donors that occupies nearly 1,000 m² of the Burnitzbau and Stauferbau. Spread over four floors, this show unfurls a panorama of Frankfurt's great collectors, from those of the early 17th century such as Johann Martin Waldschmidt (1650–1706), the first librarian of the municipal library, and Johann Wilhelm Dilich (1600–1657), a builder of fortifications, to Wilhelm Kratz (d. 1945), the collector of Frankfurt faience, and the remains of the private museum that the Jewish banker Julius Heyman (1863–1925) installed at his home on Palmstraße. Visitors here are cast in the role of "educated travellers" who are welcomed as guests into the collectors' "private homes". There they learn all about the history of Frankfurt from twelve unusual, often very personal perspectives.[10]

The basement of the 12th/13th-century Stauferbau houses a small exhibition (200m²) on Frankfurt during the Staufer Age. After all, as the seat of the kings and emperors, this very building was at the heart of the city in those days. It thus played an important role in establishing Frankfurt as the city where German kings were elected from 1152 onwards. The exhibition of architectural remains is flanked by spolia and other archaeological finds from the Staufer period as well as a model of Frankfurt as it looked like at that time. In 2017, this section was enlarged to include the spectacular finding of the Staufer Harbour. This quay dating from ca. 1200 was built as part of the royal palace, but it was filled in once more, just 150 or so years later, which explains how it survived the intervening 700 years so well. It was uncovered by chance only during the excavation work for the new building in 2012.[11]

The Rententurm (toll tower) opened to the public for the first time in its 600-year-long history only in 2012. Visitors to this building can now climb its 15th-century spiral staircase, stopping on each floor to view the series of exhibits explaining the building's various functions. The pace here is set by the tower's 19th-century clock, whose movement is both visible and clearly audible. The Main Panorama, which confers the name to this section of the museum, can be admired in the second floor of the tower.[12]

**An inclusive museum**

When developing all these concepts, we attached special importance to making both our buildings and content as inclusive and barrier-free as possible. This ambition not only informed the measures taken for visitors with disabilities (such as the guidance system for the blind and easy-to-understand audio guides) but also enshrined in our mission right from the start.[13]

When developing the new exhibitions, our most important partners were Ursula Gillmann and Matthias Schnegg from Basel for those in the historic buildings and the show *Frankfurt Once?* in the new exhibition building, and Herman Kossmann (Kossmann.deJong) from Amsterdam, who developed the experimental formats *Frankfurt Now!* and *Typical Frankfurt!* (the Snow Globe).

[10] *Frankfurter Sammler und Stifter*, 2012.
[11] Gerchow and Cillesen, 2017, 117-120.
[12] *Ibid.*, 121-126.
[13] Vand den Borg, Gemeinhardt and Gerchow, 2016, and Gerchow and Cillesen, 2017, 17-20.

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# CONSTELLATION OF THE CITY LEADING TO HISTORICAL PROMENADE – SUSTAINABLE FUTURE OF THE SEOUL MUSEUM OF HISTORY

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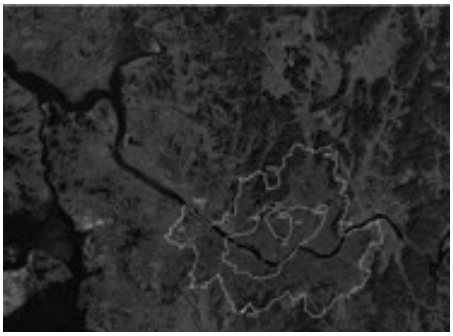
## ABSTRACT

Seoul is a beautiful city that, for over 2,000 years of history, has become inseparable from its topography. The power of its terrain and the many layers of history are the most important assets of Seoul. The Seoul Museum of History, established in 2002, consists of a main museum and nine branch museums. The main building coexists with the historical site of the Gyeonghuigung Palace built in the Joseon Dynasty, and each branch museum collects and exhibits its special history based on a particular place, time and memory. While the Cheonggyecheon Museum focuses on the urban stream and the ordinary daily life, the Seoul City Wall Museum exhibits mountain sceneries and the city wall; on another perspective, the Gongpyeong Historic Site Museum preserves the historical urban fabric. In a different approach, the Baek Inje House Museum depicts the city's cultural landscape and Hanok in modern times. Finally, the Seoul Urban Life Museum, to be opened in 2019, will cover the citizens' everyday life in the 20th century. Each museum, located in a different part of the city, has a different urban context and presents a different historical layer as well as different types of objects and formats of representations. The Seoul Museum of History, like the stars of the city, leads to the historical promenade from the main museum to the branch museums, and the citizens feel empathy and the shared urban memory. The city constellation will be completed by linking old objects and knowledge, based on the place and time of Seoul, thus creating a sustainable future for the Seoul Museum of History.

**Key words:** Seoul, Seoul Museum of History, city history museum, sustainable museum, historical promenade

*The Great Map of the Capital. © Seoul Museum of History*



*Top – The Old Map of Hanyang (19th century) in an aerial photograph of Seoul. Bottom: Hanyangdoseong, the city wall of Hanseong in 1394 (the capital of Joseon Dynasty) / Boundary of Gyeongseong in 1936 (Japanese colonial period) / Boundary of Seoul since 1963 (Republic of Korea). © Seoul Museum of History*

**Morphology and identity of Seoul**

The name Seoul means *capital city*. However, depending on the period, it was also known as Hanseong, Namkyeong, Hanyang, Suseon or Gyeongseong. Seoul has maintained its geographic presence and status at the centre of the Korean Peninsula through its 2,000 years of national history. As Seoul is located at an intersection between mountains and waterways, the city's morphology, that is, its urban structure and landscape, was planned based on its topography. Seoul is a beautiful city that became inseparable from its topography.

The map of old Seoul, the Great Map of the Capital (**都城大地圖,** 1753-1764), depicts the harmony established between the mountains and the city. It is a comprehensive record of geography and humanities. This type of depiction is illustrative of the traditional landscape painting technique of East Asia. The four mountains are unfolded and the boundary of the city is represented by its eight gates and the city wall built along the ridge. Within, palaces, governance buildings, streets, waterways and markets are exquisitely drawn. The map is a complete representation form showing Hanyang as one body with the terrain, and how the urban form and the surrounding natural environment are closely related.

Seoul is an ancient city, where the arrangement of its layers, stacked one upon the other as time went by, is a witness of its history. When one looks at the history and expansion of Seoul, it is possible to outline three rings that have defined its growth. The innermost ring is the boundary of Hanyang, in 1394, during the Joseon Dynasty, which is limited to the four inner mountains. The second growth ring is the boundary of Gyeongseong, the capital during the Japanese colonial period, which includes the industrial districts in the south-western part of the Hangang River. The outer growth ring, the current boundary of Seoul, the capital of the Republic of Korea, is defined along the ridge of the outer mountains. Each city-growth ring is physically based on the mountains and the water system, and it reinforces the nature of the boundary formed by urban artefacts or by the green belt.

Seoul is a city with a thick layer of history accumulated over 2,000 years. In the last 500 years, in particular, Seoul has maintained its paramount position and status after it became the capital at the end of the 14th century. Throughout the 20th century it has experienced more turbulent periods than any other city in the world: it went through the periods of colonialism, the Korean War and the Cold War, industrialisation and democratisation.

Seoul is now a metropolis whose scale and status have sprawled. The history of the last 500 years and the centennial fluctuations are engraved on the body of the city in a thick and layered manner. The Seoul Museum of History is based on the understanding of Seoul's land and time, as well as the lives and memories of those who lived there.

**Naming the Seoul Museum of History a city museum**

The Seoul Museum of History is a huge warehouse that stores places, times and the memories of Seoul. It collects, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the things that bear witness to the history of Seoul and its knowledge.
In the square of the Seoul Museum of History there are three kinds of huge relics corresponding to each period of Seoul. The first is a foundation stone of what remains of the bell tower that had been built in the centre of Hanyang. Hanyang is a city planned over a wide basin and in consideration of its relation with surrounding mountains. The palace was arranged according to the terrain and

*Right: Panoramic View of Seoul (1929). © Seoul Museum of History*

*Left: Panoramic View of Seoul (2016). Middle: Foundation Stones of Bell Tower / Tram 381 (1930) / Building components of Gwanghwamun (1968). © Seoul Museum of History*

scenery, being the shape of the road decided afterwards. The bell tower used to lie at the centre of the T-shaped road connecting the main gate of the city to the palace. The bell tower not only was the physical centre of the city but the bell also stroke the times in the city. Although the bell tower was destroyed, now we can relate and reminisce about the bell tower of Hanyang through its cornerstone in front of the museum.

The second, Tram 381, is the last tram that ran in Seoul. The tram, part of the important transportation network of Gyeongseong, it began operating in 1899 in front of the Seoul Museum of History and it ran until 1968. It is an artefact that used to witness everyday life and the urban infrastructure of the modern Seoul.

The third relic are the Gwanghwamun's building components that were part of a concrete monument, completed in 1968 but demolished in 2006 in order to restore the original gate at the same place. It should be added that the Gwanghwamun is the front gate of the Gyeongbokgung Palace, the most iconic palace in the capital, Hanyang. The Gwanghwamun building, which was built in reinforced concrete in

a traditional style, represents the age of development. Gwanghwamun's building components became valuable artefacts of the museum and they not only represent the place but a whole era of industrialisation and dictatorship.

These three artefacts are the museum objects that reflect the place, the age and the memory of Seoul, together with the maps, paintings, artefacts and archives. Given that we are a city history museum, targeting cities and people, the types and categories of the collection are various and layered from a range of small artefacts

*Royal banquet to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Gojong's accession (1902). © Seoul Museum of History*

to historical architecture, from everyday props to monumental documents, and from old city ruins to modern visual materials, among others.

An "exhibition to put the city in the museum building" is physically impossible. Therefore, the exhibition is formed by stories of the city and the people through the evidence on the place, time and memory. The Museum truly communicates with the visitors when it makes an exhibition based on the authenticity of things and knowledge, and creates a link between the context of the place, its time and its memory.

**Organisation of the Seoul Museum of History**

The Seoul Museum of History consists of the main museum and nine branch museums. Each branch museum of the Seoul Museum of History represents different aspects of the places, times and memories of Seoul.

The main museum coexists with the historical site of the Gyeonghuigung Palace, one of the remaining palaces from the Joseon Dynasty. *Seogueoldo*, the painting of the western palace, is a beautiful painting that realistically illustrates the architecture of the royal palace in its original setting. The king's rock and the zelkova tree in the painting still remain as evidence of its 400-year history.

The types and contents of the nine branch museums are specialised and dedicated to a specific topic. Each museum, located in a different part of the city, holds a different urban context and historical layer, as well as different types of objects and formats of representations.

The Cheonggyecheon Museum focuses on the urban stream and the ordinary daily life. On the other hand, the Seoul City Wall Museum exhibits the mountain scenery and city wall. The Gongpyeong Historical Site Museum preserves the historical urban fabric, while the Baek Inje House Museum depicts the cultural landscape and *Hanok* in modern times. The Gyeongyojang House Museum and the Donuimun Museum house modern architecture and records. The Seoul Urban Life Museum stores and exhibits special places, times and memories such as the urban residential areas that were incorporated during the 20$^{th}$ century and their daily life.

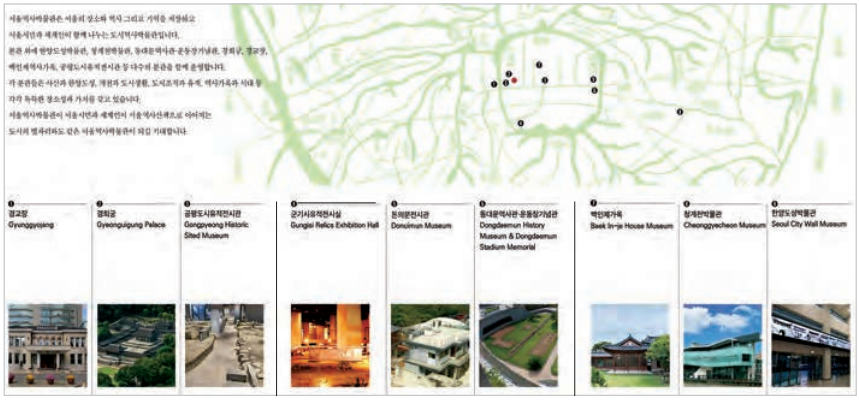
**Historical promenade – like a constellation of the city**

The Seoul Museum of History sets five strategic goals as a city history museum: strengthening the credibility, establishing the conservation philosophy, enhancing capacity building, communicating with the city and, finally, basing itself on civil society. The two latter focus particularly on the status and the way of being of the city history museum, while the three former are focused on the fundamental mission of city history museums based on a collection of relics, historical architecture and urban relics.

The future of the city history museum should be based on the premise of its communication with the city, both physically and contextually. The location of the museum is the basic condition of the city museum and the building itself is the evidence of the urban history, allowing for the cityscape seen through the windows to be a component of the exhibition. Furthermore, a city history museum based on civil society should be a museum that makes the citizens' learning and impressions evolve. In particular, it is necessary to plan elaborate exhibitions to share the memories and records of things, to learn the vision and gain knowledge of urban history and to have identity as citizen.

The starlight we see from Earth is a long-awaited light from outer space. It is like an old relic. We draw stars from the universe according to their location and time. We also name and devise the constellation according to our knowledge and beliefs. The Seoul Museum of History, like the stars of the city, leads to the historical

promenade from the main museum to the branch museums, and the citizens feel empathy and share this urban memory. The city constellation will be completed by linking old objects and knowledge, based on the place and time of Seoul, and thus creating a sustainable future for the Seoul Museum of History.




*The main museum and the nine branch museums of the Seoul Museum of History (2018).*
*© Seoul Museum of History*

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Dr. Song is the director of the Seoul Museum of History, aiming to share 600 years history of the capital city and its urban memories with its citizens and the world at large. As a specialist in historical urban architecture, *Hanok* (Korean traditional house), and cultural heritages in Seoul, he also serves as vice-president of ICOMOS Korea and professor at the Department of Architecture, University of Seoul.

JOANA SOUSA MONTEIRO

Museum of Lisbon, Portugal

# BECOMING A CITY MUSEUM. NEW APPROACHES ON TIME, PEOPLE AND URBAN HERITAGE AT THE MUSEUM OF LISBON

## ABSTRACT

This paper aims to show the foremost challenges the Museum of Lisbon has been facing on its way to becoming a better city museum. It has been about evolving from a research and exhibition programme centred on the city's past and the display of items of fine arts, archaeological artefacts and documents towards the design of research, exhibition and learning projects that invite multidisciplinary approaches and different time perspectives.

Like in so many other museums, the goals stated by the Museum of Lisbon before 2014 were aligned with the traditional scope of a history museum: to acquire, research, document and display objects related to the history of the city of Lisbon, namely documents, decorative arts and archaeology. The permanent exhibition stood intact since 1979, with hardly any major changes.

Since 2015, following the modifications of the mission, the name and the structure of the Museum, a regular programme of temporary exhibitions was set up, in which the recent past and the intersection of arts, science, anthropology and urbanism have been present, along with a focus in a broader engagement. The permanent exhibition is being totally remodelled, in parallel with the building works of the Museum's main site.

This text will focus on four key issues that sustain the different strategy in exhibitions and public programmes:

- **Time:** not only embracing the historical past but also the recent past and the present, and even future prospects, however, not necessarily in chronological views;
- **People:** engaging systematically with groups of city inhabitants, both people born in the city and any type of migrants, coming from other parts of Portugal or from abroad. Increasing diversity awareness;
- **Disciplines and themes:** broader, multidisciplinary approaches to both collecting and exhibiting. The traditional exhibition frame within the fields of decorative arts, documents and archaeology is complemented with contemporary art, science artefacts, industrial heritage, and intangible heritage, including documentation of oral history;
- **Debates:** being available as a cultural space to experiment and discuss identity issues, urban cultural problems and cultural diversity, and thus promoting regular debates and talks.

**Key words:** Mission, evolution, transformation, multidisciplinary approach

**Introductory notes**

One of the most thrilling features of city museums is the possibility of being significant agents of people-centred and place-based approaches. What is special, if not unique in city museums is the focus on the relation between people living in cities throughout history, and the evolution of their urban territory.

Unlike the first generation of museums, which typically addressed the city history, often history as a whole, or were decorative arts museums, the second generation of city museums that has been growing for the past 15 to 20 years adds a modern perspective to the traditional model: that of not only being about the city but also for the city (Lanz, 2013).

Old museums about the city history have been transformed with updated and more engaging long-term exhibitions, featuring different narratives related to their communities, new temporary exhibitions' themes and activities, both at the museum and spread out across the city, tackling contemporary, relevant issues like migrations, political activism, social urban rights and sustainability.

The city museums of Berlin, London, Paris, Lisbon, Barcelona, Seoul, Amsterdam, Gent, Rotterdam, New York, Moscow, Vancouver, just to name a few, are among the museums that were recently remodelled or that are now in the process of changing.

New city museums have also been popping up in Europe, Asia and America, as dynamic institutions by nature, promoting local identity values in relation with a globalised world (as in the case of the museums of Antwerp, Shanghai, Bologna, among others).

City museums have and will continue having, in the near future, increasing relevance and responsibility in the world, as they follow the development of the urban world phenomenon itself.

The United Nations estimates that by the year 2050, two-thirds of the world population will be urban, which turns cities into major hubs for global challenges and opportunities. The New Urban Agenda, adopted at the Habitat III conference in 2016, refers that the soft power of culture, education, science and social integration is essential for cities to be inclusive. It is recognised that culture and heritage are key resources for regenerating and humanising cities, in which city museums may have an important role in the long run.

**The case of the Museum of Lisbon**

The Museum of Lisbon is a typical case of a city museum evolving from the first generation of historical museums about the city, presenting itself as a history museum and a decorative arts museum in a historical building, to the second generation of museums that goes beyond that framework, fitting in a new conceptual outline of city museums' definition.

Despite being formally created in 1908, the Museum only began hosting regular exhibitions in the 1940s, in different premises, and finally opened in 1979 at the Pimenta Palace, an eighteenth-century estate, comprised of a building and gardens located in the northern part of Lisbon. Over the years, a first version of the Saint Anthony Museum and the Roman Theatre Museum joined the main municipal museum of Lisbon, which was called "Museum of the City".
Like in so many other museums, the goals set by the Museum of Lisbon before 2014 followed the traditional scope of a history museum: to acquire, research, document and display objects related to the history of the city of Lisbon, namely documents, items from decorative arts and archaeological artefacts. The permanent exhibition remained with hardly any significant changes since 1979 until now.


*The Lisbon that Could Have Been (2016). © Museum of Lisbon*

The process of transformation started four years ago, with the changing of the mission, the name, the multi-branched structure, the exhibitions and learning programmes. The permanent exhibition is being totally remodelled, in parallel with the construction works at the Museum's main site.

The Museum of Lisbon is composed of five sites: the main one at the Pimenta Palace, for the long-term exhibition hall and a temporary exhibition pavilion; the Roman Theater museum site, including the former theatre ruins; the site dedicated to the life of Saint Anthony and to the religious and pagan festivities; the West Tower site at the main city square for temporary exhibitions and events and the "Casa dos Bicos" archaeological site.

From an overall perspective, the Museum's changing movement has been about departing from a research and exhibition programme centred on the city's past and the display of items of decorative arts, archaeological artefacts and documents, towards the planning of research, exhibition and learning projects. Thus, the museum invites multidisciplinary approaches, including contemporary arts, ethnography and science, community engagement and wider perspectives on a timescale.

Keeping in mind the international context and the specific experiences of the past three years of work in the Museum of Lisbon, this paper focuses on the three axes that we find to be structural in the making off of more meaningful city museums. Those are: multidisciplinary and unique approaches to research projects and exhibitions, community engagement related to city spaces and broader timeline perspectives.

**Multidisciplinary approaches to research and exhibition projects**

The partial moving off from a decorative arts perspective has been opening doors to thinking and acting in broader ways to embrace issues important to the city identity, to the past and present culture and to re-interpret the history. A regular programme of temporary exhibitions has been set up, counting on the intersection of arts, sciences, anthropology and urbanism.

As the different projects for the intervention in the museum's buildings began to take shape, the first research and temporary exhibition under this new scope was disclosed, along with the presentation of the new name and the new museum model. It was the *Lisbon's Fishermen Wives – Memories of the City* (2015), an exhibition that explored the unique and iconic figures of hard-working women from northern Portugal, who inspired artists and musicians alike, while at the same time addressing the working conditions in the 20th century. The research project was built grassroots from a perspective grounded in anthropology and visual arts, involving the four last living fishermen wives of the city.

Another exhibition focused on the foremost intangible value of Lisbon: its natural light. *The Light of Lisbon* (2015-16) analysed the theme from a dual angle, in a cross-disciplinary approach: physics and meteorology paired with modern and contemporary photography, film, visual arts and poetry.

The history of Lisbon as seen from the floor level was the idea for *Under our Feet – Historical Pavements of Lisbon* (2017), from prehistory throughout the Roman period until recent times. This project also gathered multiple perspectives from sciences and arts, geography, physics, archaeology and industrial history.

The thinking about the city became a theme, too. How has the city been planned and imagined? What has become of those ideas and dreams, when comparing planning to reality? *The Lisbon that Could Have Been* (2016) was the first exhibition and catalogue on that theme, also aiming at promoting urban literacy, *i.e.*, a better knowledge of the city structure, organisation and evolution.

*Testimonies of Slavery* (2017) was an overall Council of Lisbon project, involving not only municipal but also national museums and other institutions, featuring exhibitions, talks and publications. The post-colonial and slavery themes are new to the Museum and will be tackled regularly as a long-term approach.

Another cross-disciplinary project is the long-term one about Lisbon's present urban gardens, which encompasses the approach to a more sustainable city, by exploring the theme of food supremacy, organic and permaculture techniques as well as communitarian urban gardens and migrant practices.

**Community engagement related to city spaces**

In the process of adding social value to the Museum, the "learning museum" concept approach is being followed, with the purpose of both strengthening the audiences' participation, including traditional "non-visitors" from different backgrounds, and reaching out to migrant communities that contribute to the variety ways of living the city.

The *Thrones of Saint Anthony,* informal shrines related to the city June festivities, may be a good example to this account. The practice of building personalised shrines was fading out among the traditional communities. Three years ago, the Museum started to distribute shrines made of cardboard structures to local communities of the oldest parts of the city, to promote the creation of the *Thrones of Saint Anthony.* Now, the practice has been renovated and spread out into larger parts of the city, including shrines made by non-Catholic Lisboans and foreigners, for personal enjoyment and for marketing reasons by shop owners.

*A typical Throne of Saint Anthony. © Museum of Lisbon*

Besides enhancing family programmes and outdoor tours in the city, the Museum has been structuring bottom-up experiences of field-work to get to know migrant communities relevant for today's city identity, by working in partnership with NGOs and neighbourhood associations. Such communities are composed of people from Cape Vert and other former Portuguese colonies as well as other countries without any historical relation with Portugal – of people coming from Bangladesh, Nepal, Ukraine and Romania.

**Broader timeline perspectives**

Apart from contemporary art museums, museums are mostly seen as supposed to deal with the past. Tackling recent past and present issues is a new challenge for many of us. Nevertheless, one of the most exciting goals of the second generation of city museum is, precisely, to embrace the present times of city life. Maybe the city museum can be the right place to put together forms of the past, the present and reflections of the future, as long as the focus remains in the city identity and its way of life.

History will remain a pillar of museums in general, and city museums in particular. Clearly, the research about the cities' past and the revision of past times' narratives will keep on being utterly important to creating knowledge and awareness of the city values and fundamental to the building of intelligent perspectives on the city of the present.

Dealing with time in a wider way will not – we believe – transform city museums into plain urban centres. Embracing the present times does not imply erasing history or the disregard for any kind of heritage. On the contrary, tackling present issues of the city identity and way of life can make the history research projects even more valuable to the public eyes.
Actually, reinterpreting ancient history may not be enough. There seems to be an increasing need for getting a better understanding of the contemporary city, in its relation to history, and a wish for bird-eye views on relevant topics to the city identity and values. Otherwise, we can easily lose track of the city dynamics and its cultural diversity, which may be considered as some of the most relevant issues for the city inhabitants, who are our main public target.

As previously referred, the Museum of Lisbon has been developing research projects related to the present times, which will result in exhibitions, publications, artistic events and learning activities.

In 2018, however, the Museum opened a temporary exhibition about future perspectives on the city: *Futures of Lisbon*, curated by a geographer, an architect and an environment philosopher, featuring photography, documentary, 3D images, scientific objects, and technology and ecology-related objects. The making of the exhibition and the book *Futures of Lisbon* has shown us that exhibiting the past, the present and the reflections on the future of the life in the city can be stimulating and thought-provoking, both to the curators and to the public.

With the increasing globalisation effects and the urban migration movements, cities like Lisbon are being confronted with a growing diversity, with direct consequences to the communities' configuration and in the identities related to the city authenticity and uniqueness, which calls for better and more active city museums.

Multidisciplinary themes, place-based community engagement and wider timelines, from the far past until the future, can be some of the most important features of the second generation of city museums, in Lisbon and around the world.

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Joana Sousa Monteiro is the director of the Museum of Lisbon, since 2015. She was a museum and heritage adviser to the Lisbon Councillor for Culture (2010-2014). She was Assistant Coordinator of the Portuguese Museums Network at the National Institute of Museums (2000-2010). Previously, she worked at the Institute of Contemporary Art and at the National Museum of Contemporary Art.

She holds a degree in Art History (Universidade Nova, 1993), an MA in Museology (Universidade Lusófona, 2000), and an MA in Arts Management (ISCTE, 2010).

She was a member of the Portuguese National Committee of ICOM (until 2016) and is the Chair of ICOM – CAMOC, the International Committee for the Collections and Activities of the Museums of Cities (since 2016).

ELENA PÉREZ RUBIALES AND THE MUHBA TEAM

Barcelona History Museum (MUHBA), Spain

# AT HOME. WORKER HOUSING AS A PARTICIPATIVE NEW BRANCH OF BARCELONA CITY MUSEUM

## ABSTRACT

Within a museum's narrative, worker housing is one of the best means of talking about migration, city settlement, integration into urban life and social cohesiveness. It is also a way of breaking down barriers between the centre and the peripheries, giving a glance at the city from outside to inside.

It is in this context that the Barcelona History Museum (MUHBA) has opened a new branch with the conversion to a museum of four of the so-called "Cheap Houses" in the Bon Pastor neighbourhood. Bon Pastor was one of the first public housing estates built in Barcelona to rehouse shanty town dwellers displaced by the International Exhibition of 1929. Obtaining a house meant going from an "informal city" to a "regulated city".

Rather than taking an approach based on an ethnography of the ways of popular life, the museological project for this new MUHBA branch aims at offering a historical narrative capable of explaining the evolution of social conditions among the working classes over the course of more than a century, from extremely harsh conditions to the fight for social improvements. This is how the Museum places houses and heritage within the urban history of the city.

The initiative for the new site arose from MUHBA's collaboration with several entities, such as the Bon Pastor Residents' Association and the University of Barcelona, to create a space for history and memory in the homes that people left behind when they moved to the new social housing. Thanks to this collaboration, the Museum's team, led by Carmen Cazalla,* has collected more than three hundred items of furniture and personal effects to illustrate historical living conditions in the suburbs of Barcelona, focusing particularly on the Bon Pastor neighbourhood in 1930, 1955, 1980 and 2015.

The site, created according to strict historiographical and museological criteria, is set to become an extraordinary heritage ensemble of general interest, as it helps build Europe's contemporary identity. A place for Barcelonians and foreign visitors alike.

**Key words:** Worker housing, participation, collecting, citizenship, Bon Pastor, Barcelona

* In June 2018, the team was managed by Joan Roca and Carmen Cazalla and also formed by Anna Butí, Marta Delclòs, Natàlia Hervás, Aina Mercader, Sònia Pons and Paula Ustarroz.

**Industrial urbanisation, a shared identity**

The mark left by the industrial age in European countries speaks to us of a shared experience, a common identity forged in parallel with social processes. The great economic and social transformations caused by all this changed European society and, in consequence, cities and their citizens, generating similar results throughout the continent.

We speak of the European experience of urbanisation with the explicit intention of emphasising the term "urbanisation", one that goes beyond the word "heritage", to refer to urban complexity from the standpoint of the dynamic process of growth and urban development itself. Within this concept of urbanisation, we will highlight the categories of work and housing as well as factories and housing, two concepts that fluctuate in urban life.

The interest in the material evidence of industrialisation began to grow during the last quarter of the twentieth century when museums began to open in Europe that were specifically devoted to the forms and evolution of work and workers' living conditions. Thanks to the recovery of industrial heritage, these museums were installed in old abandoned factories, thereby emphasising the historical status of work. However, such centres failed to focus on the work-city binomial, the relationship between the two concepts, in short, the way that different types of work have helped model the city.

As a consequence, a wide diversity of examples of the conservation of this industrial heritage, preserved for its historical value, is found all over Europe. However, the conversion of industrial sites into museums tends to place history within heritage, in the factory itself, furnishing it with historical content that justifies its choice as heritage worthy of conservation. However, should city museums not reverse this operation and place the heritage within the history of the city? Such would require us to study and understand the phenomenon of work as a historical category and to place its trajectory within the general history of the city, interpreting industrial work and the great transformations it has generated, its relations with and within the urban social order.

The other concept that we link to work within this so-called industrial urbanisation is the housing issue. Regarding the present subject, as it will follow, we focus on worker housing. However, we should not forget that we can also talk about the houses of the wealthier classes, attaching the same level of importance to them, given that they, too, form part of the same historical narrative of the city. Indeed, if we look at how much worker housing has been preserved as heritage around Europe, we will readily note that the housing of the better-off classes has received considerably less attention.

From a global perspective, without entering into geographic or chronological differentiation, late-nineteenth-century Europe is characterised by a migrant population. The large industrialised cities faced the challenge of absorbing a growing population that was leaving rural areas to seek new employment opportunities in the urban environment. However, this population growth could not be accommodated by the real physical capacity of the city, which did not expand in the same proportion, thereby generating a climate of building speculation and new models of slum housing. One of the consequences was the growth of the informal city, shanty towns,[1] a phenomenon that was not limited to Europe but spread around the world.

The move towards the construction of housing in working-class neighbourhoods signified not only a step towards the regulated, official, formal city but also a move

[1] On the phenomenon of shanty towns and their integration as heritage sites in the Barcelona History Museum with the museum conversion of Turó de la Rovira, see the article by Roca i Albert, J. (2017). The informal city in the city museum. *Museums of Cities and Contested Urban Histories*. ICOM / CAMOC. 26-37, based on the communication presented in Mexico at the CAMOC Annual Conference in 2017.

*Aerial view of the Bon Pastor neighbourhood (Arxiu Fotogràfic de Barcelona). © MUHBA*

towards a city that consolidated areas of vulnerability which went beyond visible spaces of exclusion to establish processes of domination in working-class neighbourhoods with low construction quality and insalubrious areas lacking in services.

These characteristics make working-class neighbourhoods the domain of the disinherited, where, besides the physical distance, which creates poverty in the most positivist sense of the term, a symbolic distance prevails: a world of little miseries, as Bourdieu would say.[2] Everyday miseries that led those who lived there to a feeling of disenchantment, finding themselves locked into a system of domination that deprived them of all possibility for active participation in the public space. In other words, they were denied the right to the city.[3]

This situation has sparked a lively, ongoing theoretical debate all around Europe about the forms of working-class housing. Although the housing models adopted vary according to context and feature adaptions of the original idea, if we take a highly synthetic approach we can reduce them to two categories. Firstly, models generated by a more reformist vision that focus particularly on questions of hygiene. These take the form of small, one-family houses with a garden, located in low-density areas with a prevalence of green spaces and an adequate system of communication with the city centre. This is a model somewhat reminiscent of the English garden city and was also widely adopted in the Nordic countries. Secondly, models that embody a more rationalist approach to urban planning, typical of Central European countries, in which the city is conceived in a more "concentrated", compact way, with apartment blocks in large collective buildings and community services. These large residential blocks were aimed at improving the workers' quality of life in an affordable manner. In Vienna, the Karl-Marx-Hof, a great municipal tenement complex with 1,300 apartments with entrance through a large gardened courtyard, is an outstanding example of this second model.

Just as we have spoken of heritage conversion of factories, nowadays we can also visit worker housing transformed into museums, although, in this case, fewer examples exist. In Tampere (Finland), for instance, we can find a museum organised around a block of houses in the working-class district of Amuri, where 29 such blocks were built. These one-storey houses, with shared services between them, were rehabilitated in the 1970s, when they were replaced by apartments. In this case, the decision was made to save one block of houses in order to conserve the memory of the district. Each of the five houses preserved illustrates a different historical period and is accordingly furnished.

Another example is the Työvaenasuntomeo, a worker housing museum that forms part of the City of Helsinki Museum and comprises nine houses decorated in the style of different periods. Finally, the Arbejdermuseet, in Copenhagen, features reconstructions of two apartments that belonged to working-class families in the early twentieth century. In all cases, an ethnographic model is adopted in order to give visitors a glimpse of everyday life among working-class families from different periods of the twentieth century. In short, these are exhibitions devoted to lifestyles in which ordinary, everyday objects take a central place in the discourse.

**Growth in the periphery: Barcelona and the Bon Pastor neighbourhood**

In the first third of the twentieth century, industrialisation also generated an extraordinary population growth in Barcelona, due to the influx of immigrants, whether internal migrants attracted by the need for labour or foreigners fleeing from the Great War. This sharp, rapid demographic increase, which saw the city's population double to one million inhabitants, was accompanied by a housing deficit, which led to a proliferation of poorly-built housing, slums or shanty towns.

[2] Bourdieu, P. (1993). *La misère du monde*. Paris: Seuil.

[3] For more in-depth consideration of this subject, see: Lefebvre, H. (1968). *Le droit à la ville*. Paris: Éditions Anthropos.

In response to this situation, characterised by an accelerated, disorderly urban growth with countless deficits, the first measures in housing policy ever to be taken in the city were enacted. In 1911, the first Cheap Housing Bill was passed. A second bill entered the statute books in 1921. In 1927, the Barcelona Housing Board was established and charged with the mission of promoting, on a state-wide basis, social, rented and officially protected housing for the more disadvantaged classes. However, these measures had little effect and did not resolve new needs for housing in the city. The turning point came with the Universal Exposition, which the Catalan capital would host in 1929, when the Housing Board decided to promote a very first type of protected housing, known as *Cases Barates* ("Cheap Houses"). This measure obeyed, above all, a drive towards improved hygiene in the city, as the authorities sought to rehouse the inhabitants of the shanty towns on the sides of Mount Montjuïc, the Expo venue.

Accordingly, parallel to the construction of the Eixample district, where the new bourgeois classes took up residence, growth also took place in the periphery of Barcelona, where the working classes would be housed.[4] The Housing Board built four groups of homes in the outskirts of the city (Eduard Aunós, Can Peguera, originally known as Ramon Albó, Baró de Viver and Bon Pastor, originally known as Milans del Bosch), in some cases, even outside municipal limits. Of these, we shall focus our attention on the Bon Pastor estate, the largest of the four developments, located in the municipality of Santa Coloma de Gramenet (absorbed into Barcelona in 1945) to the east of the city, on the banks of the River Besòs.

**From cheap houses...**

The project for the Bon Pastor estate, with characteristics very similar to those of the other three, entailed the construction of 784 houses grouped into modules, each with two rows that were repeated over the entire site. This was a "mass produced" landscape occupied by small, one-storey houses, each with an area of between 38 and 54 $m^2$, and two or three small bedrooms where several families could live. The construction materials and finishings were of low quality. Due to this elementary construction system and its location near the river, the neighbourhood suffered severe flooding on several occasions. This is a neighbourhood built in a suburban area, unconnected to the city, with communication and transport difficulties and a complete lack of services. Thus, a neighbourhood created to be forgotten, but where, nevertheless, the residents would struggle ceaselessly to fight for better conditions. In fact, Bon Pastor is often referred to as one of the most revolutionary neighbourhoods of the city. Moreover, reinforcing this isolation even further was the repetitive, uniform urban structure, which defeats all attempts at individualisation, with little houses all painted white, arranged along streets without a name, differentiated only by the cold distinction of a number.

All this notwithstanding, and despite these precarious conditions, these were houses with electricity and running water, equipped with hygienic features such as a laundry-washing area and an individual toilet for each home. Although this toilet was just a hole in the ground, it was located in a separate room and connected to a central sewage system in each block.

The structure of the Bon Pastor estate helped it become a living community, where the relations between individuals wove a social system of its own. The model of rows of houses left, in its middle, a space where domestic life could be prolonged. The houses were small, opening directly into the street itself, and it was in the street that the residents conducted many everyday activities. The lack of space in the houses, where several families often lived together, made the occupation

[4] For a more in-depth study, see the following articles in *Vivienda obrera y colonias industriales en la península ibérica.* 2008. Proceedings of the Symposium (2002) and the Congress (2005) at the National Museum of Science and Technology of Catalonia:Tatjer, M. Los orígenes de la vivienda obrera en Barcelona (1753-1859), 43-53; López, P. La Primera Revolución Industrial y el nacimiento de la vivienda obrera en Barcelona, 54-63; Oyón, J.L. and Andrés, G. Las segundas periferias de Barcelona: vivienda y formas urbanas, 1917-1936. 115-120.

of the street as a prolongation of the home a necessity. It was common to see laundry hanging there, chairs at doorways where the residents would meet to chat and children playing outside together. In short, conditions served to strengthen community ties in a neighbourhood conceived as a "horizontal city",[5] where the inhabitants felt as part of a great family. We might well say, in this case, that the site encouraged a certain type of social relationships among the inhabitants of the Bon Pastor neighbourhood.

**... to blocks of flats**

In the third quarter of the twentieth century, Barcelona's periphery saw the appearance of new housing estates formed by blocks of flats, with a lack of investment that established considerable differences to other European countries, as this great urban expansion occurred in Spain during a period when there was no democracy. Once democracy was restored in 1979, with the first local elections, reforms began to be carried out in neighbourhoods, both in the heart of the city and in the periphery where the situation was most precarious. The first plans to build services and rehabilitate the "cheap houses" in Bon Pastor were unveiled in the 1980s.

However, despite the improvements, the neighbourhood and its houses continued in a precarious state and, in 2002, the amendment of the General Metropolitan Plan in the Bon Pastor area was approved, envisaging the renovation of the entire *Cases Barates* estate. The project entailed replacing the single-storey houses with blocks of flats built in the area in order to rehouse the residents, who were offered grants to help buy them. The citizen debate between the alternative of rehabilitating the houses and the local authority's proposal to build new homes was intense and left an enduring mark, with the majority supporting the second option. The construction of the new buildings, planned over several phases, began in 2004.


*Heritage sites of the Barcelona History Museum in the city.*
*© MUHBA*

**Placing worker housing in the urban history of the city**

Around 2010, with the process of replacing people's houses well under way, the idea began to form among residents and various local government representatives of maintaining the external appearance of one of the blocks in order to house neighbourhood services and to serve as a heritage site that would provide a succinct illustration of local history. From this initial idea, a proposal began to take shape between 2016 and 2017, through lively conversations between the Residents' Association, the Barcelona History Museum and the Sant Andreu District Authority. The initiative also aroused interest of the Municipal Housing Board (now known as Barcelona Municipal Institute of Housing and Rehabilitation) and support from the Neighbourhood Plan, once it was launched.

The conversion of a group of "cheap houses" into a museum offered the possibility of presenting worker housing in Barcelona and interpreting Barcelona from the perspective of Bon Pastor in what was both a city-wide and a neighbourhood project.

With the opening of MUHBA Bon Pastor, the Museum continues to advance along its strategic line of action, placing heritage – in this case, worker housing – in the history of the city, and recognising the active role that this type of housing played in the construction of Barcelona. As a heritage site, Bon Pastor is not just another point on the Museum's map, and be as it may, the Museum does not merely aim to establish as many points as possible. Quite the opposite: its aim is to link up those sites that are strategically necessary in order to suggest a coherent narrative of the

[5] A term that Stephano Portelli uses in the title of his work (2005): *La ciutat horitzontal: urbanisme i resistència en un barri de cases barates de Barcelona*. Barcelona: Temes d'Etnologia de Catalunya; 26.

city's history. Accordingly, Bon Pastor enables us to complete the discourse on housing and worker housing in Barcelona, and to describe its development in the urban context in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In this conceptual

aspect, Bon Pastor is closely linked to several other Museum sites, including two in particular: Turó de la Rovira and Park Güell. Turó de la Rovira was the site of an anti-aircraft defence facility used during the Spanish Civil War and occupied by shanty dwellers after the war. Consequently, Turó de la Rovira represents informal housing in the city as a phenomenon inextricably linked to the conceptualisation of worker housing. Whereas Park Güell, apart from many other qualities as a great universal work, functions as the representation of a type of housing designed by the elite classes in the early twentieth century. One of the tasks that city museums should perform is that of suggesting a plural discourse, embracing both majorities and minorities, as it regards the trajectory, in this case, of the contemporary city.

**Bon Pastor in the Besòs museum axis**

The Bon Pastor also takes on special significance due to its geographic location near the river Besòs, in the city's eastern periphery, where little attention has generally been paid to cultural and museum aspects. The MUHBA has made great efforts in this area of the city for the last decade, integrating its historical discourse into that of the city in the most global sense. Through appropriate heritage sites, bringing together narrative, objects and urban resources, we can suggest a more integrated view of the city's history. To structure the Museum is to structure its different rooms and heritage spaces, according to an urban discourse that considers all possible interrelations in order to present multiple narratives that form the multi-faceted mirror that is the city.

It is through this plurality of relations that the MUHBA seeks to articulate the Besòs museum axis, whose creation as a museum axis in the east of the city the Museum recently proposed to the Barcelona City Council, to which it belongs, and to other institutions.[6] Within the physical demarcation represented by the banks of the river Besòs, the Museum's heritage sites speak of the contemporary growth of the city. Such sites comprise the *Casa de l'Aigua*, a pumping station where the Museum explains the importance of water supply to the urban and historical development of the city; *Fabra i Coats*, a factory that focuses on the world of work, fostering technical and social knowledge of its functions and development; the *Oliva Artés* industrial unit, devoted to various subjects related to the formation and trajectory of the contemporary city (and where a specific exhibition on housing in Barcelona is currently in preparation); and the *Bon Pastor*, where the "cheap houses" illustrate the development of worker housing in the city. In short, sites that speak, respectively, of *providing, working, urbanising* and *inhabiting* the city, concepts embodied in the metropolitan evolutionary process.

To speak of the Besòs museum axis, as proposed in recent, yet unpublished MUHBA working documents, is to suggest an alternative application of the concept of the museum island (like the *Museumsinsel* in Berlin)[7] or the museum embankment (such as the *Museumsufer* in Frankfurt). While, in those cities, the idea is to create a central cultural acropolis, the Besòs axis is located in the periphery, naturally enough, along the river, which was once a border, and is now destined to become articulation.

Visiting the different spaces entails travelling around the city, interpreting it, understanding it, learning it. Here, the Archaeological Promenade at the Berlin museum island is embodied by the urban fabric itself, which we trace as we discover or rediscover the city by taking a route that is flexible but palpable and is both local and universal. It is the art of following urban walks.

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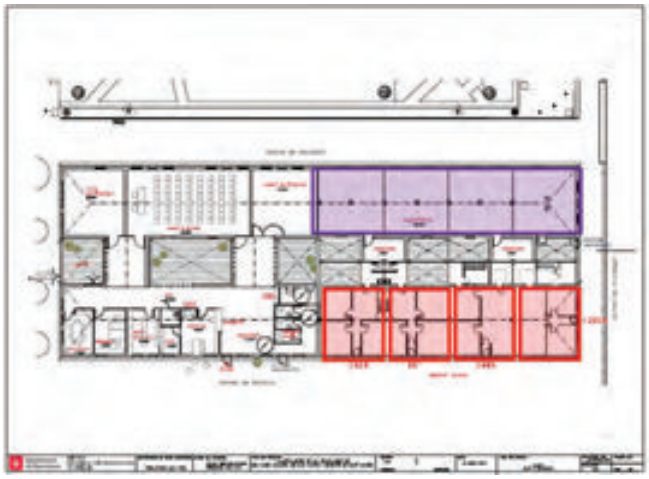
[6] See the article by Joan Roca i Albert mentioned earlier.

[7] In 1999, UNESCO catalogued the island museum of Berlin, formed by five major museums (PergamonMuseum, Bode-Museum, Altes Museum, NeuesMuseum and AlteNationalgalerie), as World Heritage. At present, work is underway at the site to implement a project aimed at shaping a more integrated ensemble by connecting all the museums underground via the Archaeological Promenade, and with a single entrance, the James-Simon-Galerie.



*Plan of the MUHBA Bon Pastor project. © MUHBA*

Each of the museum sites, like necessary links in this interwoven narrative, embodies a project that operates on two scales: at the community level; and at the level of the urban history of the city as a whole. Through all this, we can interpret the city by breaking down the borders between centre and periphery.

**Converting worker housing into heritage**

The project of preserving a block of "cheap houses" at the Bon Pastor estate was undertaken in cooperation with other organisations that shared the aim of conserving the historical memory of the neighbourhood. Here, as mentioned, the cooperation of the Bon Pastor Residents' Association, the Barcelona Municipal Institute of Housing and Rehabilitation, the Sant Andreu District Authority, the Bon Pastor Neighbourhood Plan and the University of Barcelona and the production of BIMSA were key. More specifically, MUHBA seeks to explain worker housing in Barcelona, while taking account of both the neighbourhood and the city as a whole.

MUHBA will establish its museum project in half of the sixteen houses that form the preserved block. On one side, four houses will be restored to represent their appearance at different times (1930, 1960, 1980 and 2015), following a historical rather than a synchronous discourse. On the other side of the block, the Museum will convert further four houses into exhibition spaces devoted to the history of housing in Barcelona. The remaining eight residences will house local services, with spaces for the partner organisations and other shared facilities, such as a multi-purpose room, meeting room and hall, classroom, workspaces, archives and storage rooms.

The MUHBA Bon Pastor is currently immersed in the process of creation, focusing on the conversion of the four houses into museum spaces. In the short term, it is planned to present an "open for works" event to show the backstage activity behind the process and to present the project to the neighbourhood and the city as a whole.

**Participation as a way of breaking down barriers**

The MUHBA Bon Pastor project is far more than the materialisation, in the most visible sense of the term, of the conversion of houses in the neighbourhood into a museum; the Bon Pastor will also enable us to speak of migration, integration into urban life and social cohesion. It is necessary to describe the development of social conditions among the working class that, in extremely precarious conditions, constantly fought for social improvements. We need to recognise the key role played by the working class (as well as the bourgeoisie) in the city's development, its place in the city as an active, transforming agent. Our responsibility as a city museum is to identify the voice of social diversity, that is, to recount the history of the city through the diversity of its frameworks of reference because there is not one single account; instead, multiple narratives coexist. We must, therefore, aim to show and describe this social construction of the city, making all voices heard and placing them within the urban history, rendering them visible and, thereby, participants in this history.

This inclusion is, from the Museum's standpoint, a way of extending citizen participation. Recognising diversity and disseminating its interpretation requires work in different formats to cater to the multiple sensibilities that exist. That is why we create explanatory frameworks based on urban materiality, our heritage, and present its discourse through various formats, such as exhibitions, seminars, publications, routes, concerts, among others. The Bon Pastor project embraces

all these formats and is already beginning to shape them into different activities that will form part of the future programme. This is how the Museum builds citizenship, constructs knowledge, breaks down the barriers between research and dissemination to generate a more inclusive and, in short, participatory social context. The right to form part of the city rejects segregation in order to embrace inclusion and, in this sense, enables a non-managed, two-way movement between the centre and the periphery.

**Participating, collaborating, contributing**

*Fieldwork at Bon Pastor.*
*© MUHBA*

In a more active, systematic fashion, given the flexible nature of the term, participation also takes different forms in the MUHBA Bon Pastor project.[8] Firstly, participation as a collaborative model. In this case, the project became feasible thanks to the collaboration of different organisations in the neighbourhood, as referred to earlier. The links that the Museum established with these bodies have intensified in recent months.

We should particularly highlight the key role that the Residents' Association played at the fieldwork stage. The Association made it easier to introduce the MUHBA team into the neighbourhood. We should keep in mind that the social structure of the Bon Pastor neighbourhood is particular, and one needs to generate local codes that require understanding in order to interact successfully there. The Association's presence and experience enabled us to integrate into the local environment quickly and easily. Partner social agents worked to persuade the residents to become involved in the project, enabling the initiative to develop satisfactorily. When the Museum first arrived in the neighbourhood, it was clearly considered an external agent, invading the people's everyday environment. Indeed, the residents looked at the Museum with certain misgivings and distrust, and these were barriers that could have greatly limited the results of the project. However, thanks to the collaboration and dedication of the various social institutions, the Museum was able to become integrated to such an extent as to change the preconceived image that the local community had formed. The residents not only accepted the presence of the Museum but came to appreciate the work it does in the neighbourhood and to understand the relevance of the project.

Secondly, there is participation as a contributory model. The residents of Bon Pastor have contributed directly to the project, bringing vital material to the Museum. Having conserved material evidence, they enabled objects to be recovered that will assist the museum conversion of the houses. For instance, they have contributed with many personal effects (furniture, everyday objects, decorative items, photographs, among others) while also sharing their personal experiences. The residents have been generous by sharing their life stories, and this testimony has been key to recover the oral memory of Bon Pastor. Accordingly, objects and accounts help reconstruct the history of families on the Bon Pastor estate, the neighbourhood as a whole and, ultimately, the entire city. "Small" histories form part of the "great" history, multiplying the value and substance of both.

The residents of the block of houses where the Museum is working have now moved into new apartments provided by the Housing Board. We should remember that the process of remodelling the neighbourhood has taken place in stages over the last decade, and is now in its final point. Over the last few months, the residents have moved out, and this has, without doubt, affected the rhythm of work at the Museum. Adaptation to individual and social processes was essential in order to interfere in the dynamics of the phenomenon as little as possible and to approach it in the most natural way possible. In order to form a reliable register, all the fieldwork was recorded on photographs and video, and a logbook was kept on every work session to describe in detail the progress made. All this material will also be used to produce a "making-of" to recount the process, showing all the preliminary activity required to create a museum space.

[8] A more in-depth study of the diversity of participatory models applied to museums is found in Simon, N. (2010). *The Participatory Museum*. Santa Cruz, California: MUSEUM 2.0.

Before leaving their homes, many residents opened their doors and allowed the Museum to visit their houses and record the spaces. Moreover, in several cases, we were able to record interviews with the residents, who also gave us access to their photography collections. The residents' involvement enabled us to recover personal memories of great value to the Museum. We might as well say that the documentation at this stage of the project formed a living, participatory record.

This moment, with the Museum staff inside the houses with the residents, was particularly important, as it signalled the beginning of negotiations with them aimed at obtaining objects and furniture that, although the occupants did not now want, could be of interest to the Museum. Accordingly, establishing a good relationship of trust and understanding was vital for the benefit of both parties.

On the day the residents finally left their homes to live in their new apartments, they gave their keys to the Institute, and the Museum team collected the furnishings agreed by both sides, taking them to the storage space near the block itself. The moment of moving and the resulting recovery of objects was the turning point. It was when the Museum stepped away from theory to confront reality and to evaluate the material results of these relationships. Then, suddenly, the system of codes that we felt we had addressed sprang up once more, and we realised that the complexity of the neighbourhood required time. What is agreed may or may not be honoured, depending on the circumstances. A particular bed, which would perfectly illustrate a bedroom in the 1980s, now belongs to a resident in greater need than the one moving out. The bonds between people in the neighbourhood are strong, the relationships intense, and it is necessary to understand that, often, the residents' priorities are not the same as the Museum's.

For this reason, the task of awareness-raising was added to the work of acclimatisation and negotiation conducted by the Museum staff. Constant awareness-raising was required among the residents about the importance of the project, to reinforce their involvement. Awareness, then, of the importance of preserving the historical memory should also be a new role and responsibility for all city museums.

Once all the objects were taken into storage, they were inventoried, catalogued, described and identified. The work of systemising information carried out by the Museum curators followed the same protocol as it would be applied at any other archaeological site. Quickly, on the same day of the relocation to the new apartments, the houses had to be bricked up and "vandalised" to ensure that they could not be occupied by intruders. Finally, the process continued by following the residents to their new apartments. This ended the fieldwork stage, which was followed by a new stage, that of designing the museum project itself. The site is expected to open next year, but in the short term, the Museum plans to present the project with an "open for works" event to show the work achieved to date.

**Conclusion**

The presence of MUHBA at Bon Pastor represents another step forward in reconstructing the historical trajectory of urban housing in contemporary Barcelona. In this way, the Museum generates a historical narrative of the city, built up through the relations between its different heritage sites. At Bon Pastor, the Museum continues to work at two levels, that of the neighbourhood and that of the city as a whole, to present a narrative that is rooted in the territory and interacts with a network. As a result, the project has benefitted both the network of associations in the neighbourhood and its more intraurban links.

The work of converting a block of houses in Bon Pastor into a museum revealed the city as a place of conflict, but also of negotiation and shared memory. History is an inclusive phenomenon, and the Museum needs to be able to suggest an account built up by all, for all, a plural, transversal narrative generated by the different

voices that shape urban reality. By breaking down the barriers between the centre and the periphery, between research and dissemination, we articulate a model of a museum that is cohesive and inclusive; in other words, participatory, where everyone takes part in the city. It is this act of overcoming limitations, which on its turn enables the Museum to cover the different interpretational codes of citizens to achieve an inclusion that is viable without being condescending. The use of different formats in the exhibition of knowledge is key to achieving this. These may well be among the roles and responsibilities of future city museums, a subject that CAMOC has encouraged us to think about at this conference.

## BIOGRAPHY

Elena Pérez Rubiales is a member of the MUHBA team and head of Museum and Citizenship. She holds a PhD in Production and Consumption of Culture from the Autonomous University of Barcelona, where she has taught in the Humanities degree course. She bases her scientific research on participation and the relationship between the museum and its users.

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# ACTIVE COLLECTING AND THE FUTURE OF CITY MUSEUMS

## ABSTRACT

Across the world, city museums are facing a series of complex challenges. They are often working with reduced resources, constrained by their buildings, as well as by competition for the attention of their communities and visitors. It is the author's belief that much of this revolves around how one's work becomes relevant and encourages active participation from communities. By doing this, it is also possible to transform the approach to conservation and collection management. Likewise, it creates an opportunity to explore and capture the increasingly powerful role technology plays in everyday life. The future of city museums lies in redefining their role in the dialogue of the city, not only by bringing to the fore their collections and collective knowledge but also by actively stimulating the ecosystem of their cities and communities, every day, and in a variety of ways.

In this paper, the author will explore the current thinking and findings of a long-term project that she has been developing at Museum Rotterdam, called Authentic Rotterdam Heritage. The initiative was created in 2016 and has been built upon a series of community projects, as a method to collect and acknowledge the contemporary life of the city. Its main aim is to consider the importance of retaining collections in contexts, relating to the meanings they have and what they represent to their communities. Through these expanded narratives, this "active collection" has become a radical step towards smart collecting and intelligent collection management. Though objects are classified and accessed, they remain alive and active in their community contexts.

The day-to-day connection to the museum itself is then transformed from a traditional management and conservation model into expanded knowledge and understanding of the objects' place in the wider society.

A recent natural extension of this approach is the active management of the project and collection strategy, which is now being shared between museum staff and a board of community members. Through this, the museum is extending, empowering and recognising the importance of the "living" resource of the city. Through all of these initiatives and mechanisms, the important role museums play in the life of their cities is being explored.

**Key words:** Active collection, Authentic Rotterdam Heritage, inclusive heritage, contemporary collecting, empowerment, smart collecting, experiment

**The Active Collection of Rotterdam**
***Authentic Rotterdam Heritage***

The Museum Rotterdam manages the City of Rotterdam's collection of historical objects. They are kept in a depot, and they help tell the city's stories in exhibitions. The Museum has been doing this for more than a century; however, the city is changing.

New Rotterdammers do not always recognise themselves in the Museum's historical collection. For this reason, the Museum has been moving into the city since 2000 to gather and present modern Rotterdam with Rotterdammers. It works on projects together with the *Vrouwen van de Velden* in the Rotterdam Zuid district of the city, a group of Bulgarian labour migrants and providers of informal care. In order to give this new approach an integrated place within the museum, it began looking for a structural method.

*The Authentic Rotterdam Heritage Council.*
*© Museum Rotterdam*

A multi-year project with Bulgarian labour migrants in Rotterdam put the Museum on the path of a workable approach. The Bulgarian community maintains a strong relationship with its home country. Between 2010 and 2014, a group of Bulgarians regularly travelled between Rotterdam and Bulgaria in a Volkswagen bus. Their tourist visa allows them to stay in the Netherlands for only three consecutive months. Used this way, the bus, otherwise an anonymous mass product, embodies a changing Europe and Rotterdam.

Since the bus still plays an important role for the owners, the Museum did not want to place it as an object in the depot. It chose to "adopt" the object, label it as part of the collection and continue to write down and follow the stories of the community that uses the bus. The bus became the first item in our *active* collection of the city, *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage* – a new way for the museum to collect and connect.

This new way of collecting connects the museum and communities in a sustainable and vital manner. There were more additions to the collection after the bus. Initially, they were pragmatic: new parts mainly came from a project in Rotterdam West that the Museum was working on at that time. Over time, it has further developed the concept and strategy. An important new instrument is the *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage* Council.

**The *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage* Council**

How does one expand the *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage* collection? Rotterdammers know who and what is important in their surroundings. Therefore, the first pieces from the collection were chosen together with residents. They are part of the network that the museum has built up in the city in recent years. The Museum also asked the visitors of its collections or events: "What might *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage* be missing?"

The result was a long list of candidates. Rotterdam is full of extraordinary people and initiatives. However, the Museum cannot possibly record everything as *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage*. Once again, it called upon Rotterdammers to join the Museum in a council to think about the choices for the active collection.

On Tuesday, 14 October 2017, the *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage* Council was formed. During the first council meeting, the following requirements for *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage* were agreed upon:

- It must be from Rotterdam or in Rotterdam;
- It must be topical;
- It must be actively working for others and/or the city;
- It must be open to connection;
- It must add something to the city;
- It must be related to historical development or to an object.

*Story café in the Museum Rotterdam. © Museum Rotterdam*

This method is under development and will conform to the life and needs of the city. How the council works, the way in which special projects happen, and the manner of presentation can also be adapted.

***Authentic Rotterdam Heritage*, and then?**

If the Council agrees on a new *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage* item, then it will be officially added to the collection. An interview, photos, videos and background information are recorded in a database. The new participant is added to the overview of *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage* both online and in the museum. The relevant community receives a certificate with the *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage* stamp and the number in the collection. Furthermore, the museum links a historical predecessor to the new heritage

For many initiatives and communities, this form of recognition is important; it strengthens them in their activities.

However, this is just the beginning. The resulting platform not only offers many opportunities for the participants of the collection but also for others. Through *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage*, people and communities that distinctively engage with their surroundings are brought together. This creates new projects with even more impetus for the city. Through presentations and lectures, the Museum Rotterdam regularly draws attention to this collection, thus leading to further growth and development of *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage.*

The project has four phases:

1. Practical search for opportunities to permanently connect communities to the museum and the collection;
2. Further development of the concept leads to a structured citywide approach to this collection;
3. Decision-making becomes participatory through the establishment of the *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage* Council with representatives from various Rotterdam communities;
4. The collection will be a fertile breeding ground for new projects, knowledge exchanges, and collaborations. With the *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage*, we build an active collection that supports the city.

**The impact of *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage*, 2016 – 2018**

The *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage* collection currently has 55 participants. The project now represents about 700 Rotterdammers who are involved in our city in a special way. In turn, they involve at least 2,000 Rotterdammers in the collection.

***Authentic Rotterdam Heritage* works**

Its activities ensure jobs at various levels:

**Project Team**
A team of six people works on the *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage*. Within the project, a set of inspiring activities was established with various partners. These activities also provide work:

- **Social work I**: The Museum believes in meaningful work in a pleasant environment. Several volunteers are going to work for us. Some to improve their Dutch, others to reflect on their future after an illness or job loss. In recent years, 12 volunteers have found a place in the Museum.
- **Social work II**: Various social enterprises in Rotterdam provide food and drinks for meetings, gatherings and activities relating to the *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage*. Through this catering service, companies enlarge their network. Moreover, they find recognition and inspiration in the *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage* stories.

***Authentic Rotterdam Heritage* connects** – the Museum draws attention to the *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage*, by bringing the groups and activities behind this

contemporary heritage in contact with each other. This creates new collaborations and possibilities, such as:

- ***Boskalis* and *Jeugdveld* playground club.** The Museum has brought managers of the dredging company into contact with the playground's volunteers. The meeting immediately provided a financial injection of €320 into the club. This can be used to play bingo for a while. *Boskalis* will also structurally support the playground with materials and construction.
- **TOS and London.** TOS and the street game *kerb ball* are in the *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage* collection. The Museum's team put the organisers of the Merge Festival in London in contact with this typically Dutch game. They have invited *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage* to play kerb ball with young people and residents in London. In June 2018, ten Rotterdam youngsters had their first trip abroad to play kerb ball with hundreds of Londoners.
- ***Krachtvrouwen* and group dynamics**. The *Krachtvrouwen* (Power Women) group holds weekly meetings. The interns from the Social Work programme have become involved and help where they can in the empowerment of women. Meetings with 40 women were held, and 4 women were brought in contact with other relevant participants of the *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage*.
- **Water in the rural neighbourhood.** The Museum has gathered diverse participants from the *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage* in the rural district for a unique collaborative project in order to make the neighbourhood greener. Here, a smart rain barrel was made, and 10 kilos of mint are grown.
- **Mothers & Daughters.** The *Krachtvrouwen* is a reminder of the importance of the relationship between mothers and daughters. The Museum has conducted interviews, made photo portraits and a film with 40 mothers and daughters to bring attention to different forms of education, emancipation and empowerment.
- **Loving Day.** Several students from the Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences recounted the different origins of their parents and how they deal with their mixed identity. The Museum Rotterdam has picked up this subject by looking for more Rotterdammers with a double background. Why do they live in Rotterdam, who do they deal with, and how do they see the future?
- **Story Workshop**
  During the story cafés, the Museum has noticed that many Rotterdammers also want to share their own stories, especially Rotterdammers who struggle with their health, finances and social environment. Newcomers and people looking for a new experience benefit from telling their life stories. This is how the *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage* Story Workshop took form. After workshops by Stitching Format and visits to the Authentic Rotterdam Heritage, there is the story café in which participants can tell stories about themselves and the collection.
  The Museum wants the strength and resilience of Rotterdammers to be visible. With the *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage* quality mark, it emphasises the vital role played by the 55 entries of his collection in our city. The recognition and subsequent support are much appreciated.
  We think stories are important – they inspire and connect. It has now organised 5 story cafés, where 35 stories about Authentic Rotterdam Heritage were shared with 350 participants. They, in turn, tell the stories again in future events.ey, in turn, tell the stories again in future events.
- **Trainees** – the Museum underlines the importance of education for the development of young people. By involving students in special initiatives in Rotterdam, they broaden their view of the city and are consequently inspired. In the past two years, 14 students attending the Social Work course at Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences have been working full-time on our project. In addition, 3 students from heritage training did internships with the project team.

*Handing out certificates to participants in Authentic Rotterdam Heritage during a Story café on location.*
*© Museum Rotterdam*

*Dinner participants, Water Sensitive Rotterdam (#0033) in the Museum Rotterdam.*
*© Water Sensitive Rotterdam*

On 28 September 2018, the Museum presented the book *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage, Part 1: 55 Go-Getters, Doers and Connectors,* with the first 55 participants of the *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage* collection. The book is titled *Part 1* because the Museum shall continue to research with Rotterdammers for new instalments.

## BIOGRAPHY

Nicole van Dijk is a curator and leads the research and development programmes of the Museum Rotterdam. She is responsible for participatory research and community projects. These include *City as Muse*, a longitudinal participatory project with Rotterdammers in creative dialogue with the museum. Such has resulted in more in-depth projects focused on citizens and communities including *Surviving Carnisse*, *True Rotterdammer I* and *II*, *Connection by Heritage* and the *Authentic Rotterdam Heritage*, a new way of collecting for museums. At the Active Collection Centre, she is building an active collection which consists of objects, people and communities in the city, who play a connecting role in the contemporary city – the heritage of the future which has more social power to connect communities and start social empowerment.

Nicole's practice is driven by using the museum's experience and collections, and combining it with the contemporary experience of people living in the city. This creates a fusion of collections and participatory approaches to programmes and governance to shape the role of the 21st-century museum.

Nicole studied at Art School and holds a Master's degree in Cultural Anthropology.

2017 PRE-OPENING. © STEFANIE KOESLING

# *PART 4: OTHER CASE STUDIES*

# BRANDING OF THE CITY AND MUSEUMIFICATION OF URBAN SPACE: THE EXPERIENCE OF RUSSIAN MUSEUMS

IVAN GRINKO

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## ABSTRACT

The topic of branding of territories is a topic of enduring relevance; for instance, the case of Bilbao and the influence of the museum on the formation of the city image is regularly recalled in articles and discussions. However, the time when an original museum building could, by itself, become a brand of the city has already passed. It does not mean that the museum has exhausted its significance as one of the main tools of "soft power". On the contrary, its importance for the branding of territories keeps increasing. As modern practice shows, museums can form not only national but also urban identities, with equal success and thus become a framework for a complex system of local images and narratives. The brand as an identity today is formed not only at the level of public statements, made by administration representatives, alongside with the use of the official identity (logo, colours), but also in everyday space, which implies the need for the museum to enter the city space and for its museumification.

In this article, the author would like to highlight, once more, the role of the museum in the formation of a sustainable brand of the territory, to show examples from Eastern Europe and, finally, to analyse the experience of museums working alongside the urban space to produce and maintain a certain brand.

In addition to the analysis of direct tools, the author seeks to highlight a series of problematic issues that arise from working with the formation of a brand in Russian cities. In the article, the author addresses the often ignored basic principles and strategies for the integration of museums into the urban space.

**Key words:** Museum, territory branding, museumification, intangible heritage, Russian Federation, cultural practices

*The past is not necessary in order to live in it,*
*the past is a well, from which we draw*
*water to act in the present.*

D. Berger, *The Art of Seeing*

**Introduction**

*At the Arseniev Museum (Vladivostok). © Ivan Grinko*

The topic of the branding of territories is still up to date, and the influence of the museum in the formation of the image of the city, such as in the case of Bilbao, is regularly recalled in articles and discussions. However, the time when an original museum building could, by itself, become a brand of the city has already passed. Even though the idea of the museum as a non-standard dominant architectural landmark, symbolising and promoting the city, has not been entirely exhausted (a vivid example is the building of the Museum of Wine in Bordeaux), it raises quite legitimate skepticism and doubts in terms of efficiency, because "for every Guggenheim museum there are dozens of costly failed projects"(Glaeser, 2012: 110).

At the same time, this does not mean that the museum has exhausted its significance as one of the main tools of "soft power" in the city. On the contrary, its value for the branding of territories keeps increasing (Lord and Blankenberg, 2015: 272). The last decade has become increasingly popular with the concept of brand of the territory as a competitive identity (Deffner and Metaxas, 2005; Anholt, 2007: 149; Vizgalov, 2011: 160). Once, the presence of museums designated one of the key elements for building imaginary communities (Anderson, 2006). As modern practice shows, museums can become a framework for a complex system of local visual images and narratives, by forming not only national but also equally successful urban identities. Moreover, the heritage, or rather, its interpretation, is in itself a form of identity (Smith, 2006: 368).

Whatever the new conceptual approaches to a brand may be, the main trends in the leisure economy point out to the need to involve the historical and cultural heritage in the branding of territories. The demand for cultural tourism continues to grow, competition in the tourism market is increasing, and tourists' requests for authenticity and diversity are also increasing (Deepak, 2010: 225). At the same time, nobody has negated the role of the museum as an effective valorisation tool (Kopytoff, 2006), which is applicable to the city.

The museum plays a unique role not only by trying to collect the image of the city but also by creating authenticity. In an ideal model, a contemporary museum should work immediately in three dimensions: 1) to preserve the historical and cultural heritage, mythology and images of the territory (past); 2) to form a local community at its base (present); 3) to create a brand of the city, that is, a vector of development (future).

In fact, most Russian museums are, at best, limited to the first dimension, but this does not negate the obvious idea: *Museums are a unique resource for a better understanding of this city. In addition, they can become a platform for planning the urban future* (Jones, 2008: 10). There are changes in the understanding of the role of the museum for branding the territory: from the static visual dominant (landmark) to the active subject of the city formation (place-maker; Lord and Blankenberg, 2015).

In addition to the formation of urban identity, the museumification of the urban space is always associated with another extremely important factor – the quality of the urban environment. Empowering space with symbolic value always carries a positive effect on the attitude towards that space among its consumers.

The participation of museums in this process is conditioned not only by the benevolence of experts but also by their direct interest – for them, it is an obvious

opportunity to show their contribution to the economic development of the territory and the improvement of the quality of life, as explicitly stated in the latest international framework documents (Council of Europe, 2005; UNESCO, 2016). In this article, the author would like to analyse the experience of museums working alongside the urban space to produce and maintain the brand of the territory. This article is primarily based on materials from Russian museums.

Before addressing the instrumental issues, it is important to highlight the problematic series that emerges from working with branding in Russian cities. In addition to the obvious problems with the formal technical elements described earlier (Bandarin and Van Oers, 2012: 225), we note fundamental problems at different levels that hamper the process of territorial branding through the use of local heritage:

- a lack of city museums, that is to say, museums that work directly with urban heritage and are centres of urban memory. Often enough, city museums are absent even from large cities (Rostov-on-Don, Kazan, Voronezh, Chelyabinsk, etc.). Their role in large cities is often carried out by regional museums. Here we find an obvious contradiction: it is unclear what the museum brand refers to – the region or the city? At the same time, it should be noted that, today, all the museums will be included in the work on the museumification of the city, regardless of their profile.
- they are not based on the tradition and local historical narrative. Often, museums relay an all-Russian / Soviet narrative, using local collections, and do not try to create the history of their own city.
- the denial of a difficult dilemma, that is, they must choose whether to support or to refute the stereotypes about the city. Unfortunately, this problem stems from the unwillingness of domestic museums to work with "difficult heritage" or negative images, which entails a certain technological backwardness: the inability to beat difficult moments in an analytical or even humorous way (Grinko, 2017).

*From the Boris Yeltsin Museum.*
*© Ivan Grinko*

**Tools. The city represented in the museum exhibition**

Naturally, the inclusion of the museum in the museumification of the urban space begins with the museum itself. Therefore, first and foremost, we will consider the options for reflecting the images of the city in the exhibition.

The image of the city in the form of a traditional layout is still relevant (for example, the layout of Krakow in the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, the POLIN, or the layout of the city in the Amsterdam Canal Museum), but it can receive a new reading, for example, through colour illumination. A successful combination of the layout with digital technologies can be found in the Museum of Athens: the spotlighting of buildings on the city layout is accompanied by photos and video content projected next to it on a wall. These are all basic ways for the city's fractalisation and its multidimensional perception (Nikolaeva, 2014: 219).

The principles for selecting critical elements of the urban space have been formulated long ago, and there have been no fundamental changes in this case. We are only able to repeat that they are:
- *paths*: the main streets, railways, etc.;
- *areas*: pronounced neighbourhoods, communities, etc., which have a special character;
- *nodes*: strategic meeting points – squares, intersections, stations, etc.;
- *edges*: clear transitional zones or linear boundaries, for example, shorelines and green zones;
- *landmarks*: material objects serving as reference points, signs, high buildings, buildings of unusual architecture, etc. (Lynch, 1960).

An interesting effect is provided by a combination of different approaches. The Ivanovo Regional Art Museum used photographs of Constructivist buildings –

one of the main images of the city – to decorate the exhibition space, in which both authentic photographs from the mid-twentieth century and paintings with the same architectural dominants were presented. This example proves the fact that museums of any profile should participate in the formation of the city brand, and not only by regarding local lore.

It is also important to note that the images of the city in a museum space should not be reduced solely to overviews or mock-ups. It is necessary to use more actively the traditional elements of regional identity. Thus, the Museum of the History of Catalonia, at the exhibition dedicated to the 300th anniversary of the loss of independence of the region, designed the walls in the orange-red colours of the Catalan flag. In the Museum of the City of Warsaw, a whole section of the exhibition is assigned to various objects bearing the official symbol of the city, as depicted on its coat of arms – a mermaid.

*At the Landscape Museum (Ples).*
*© Ivan Grinko*

Such images do not have to be official. In fact, at the Arseniev Museum (Vladivostok), the exhibition begins with an installation of items symbolically associated with the sea: a helm, a sea bell, an anchor – showing the inseparable connection between the city, the fleet and the sea. The Museum of Izhevsk managed to combine two city images into one art object: the visitors are greeted by Alena Sobinoy's huge fresco *Earth – Izhevsk*, depicting the city at the beginning of the last century, and it is made of Izhevsk mud – an unofficial and ironic symbol of the city.

Sometimes, the details come to the fore, and they are no less important in forming a complete impression. For example, the Lights of Moscow Museum exhibits the history of the development of street lanterns. In the Moscow Avant-garde Museum (the Shabolovka Gallery), the wall of one of the halls is dotted with material evidence of communal life – from hangers and kitchen shelves to ventilation grilles.

Naturally, a special and very important role in the formation of the image of the city and, accordingly, urban identity is played by maps. The author has already turned to the topic of using maps in the museum space (Grinko and Shevtsova, 2015), but, now, focuses on cases related specifically to the urban space.

Maps not only can be independent exhibits (see the symbolic map in the Helsinki Museum) but they also serve as a spectacular design solution for the exhibition space (Torun Museum of History, Bremen Museum). In addition, their application to the floor of the exhibition halls allows the visitor and the exhibits to be placed in the symbolic space of the city. In the Museum of the City of Zagreb, the map of the historical centre of the city on the floor is combined with mock-ups of historical buildings, placed taking into account the real topography.

In the Museum of Moscow, on a large map of the post-Soviet space, visitors were asked, with the help of small stickers, to indicate where their parents were born. Such a simple practice showed well the system of forming the population of Moscow in the twentieth century, in part reducing the *migrantophobia* characteristic of Moscow of the 2000s.

In addition to reflecting the image of the city, maps could be used to solve applied exhibition tasks. In 2017, the Perm Art Gallery made a new label format for the exhibition *Permian Gods*. On the labels was a mini-map of the Perm region, where the point of discovery of the object was indicated. In addition to the fact that this move greatly simplified the visitor's perception of the material, it also helped to form a clear vision of the territory.

**Museum and its surrounding area**

The next stage of the work with the urban space is the cultural development of the adjacent territories.

In the Ivan the Great Belltower Museum (2008), the entrance to the observation deck and the view over Moscow became, in fact, the logical part of the exhibition, and this trend is now intensifying. A very interesting case with similar polysemantic assimilation of species can be found at the Museum of the first Russian President Boris Yeltsin (Yekaterinburg). In the hall of the museum, which tells about freedom of conscience, a pair of binoculars is located near the panoramic window overlooking the city, through which one can view the Temple on the Blood, one of the main temples of the city. However, there is another subtext here: the temple is located at the site of Ipatiev House, demolished exactly when Boris Nikolayevich [Yeltsin] was the mayor.

*A view towards Gdansk from the Solidarnosc Museum.*
*© Ivan Grinko*

Turning now to the direct development of the surrounding space by the museum, it is necessary to mention the project of the Anna Akhmatova Museum in the Fountain House in Saint Petersburg. The museum placed a mural with a portrait of the poet near the arch leading to the museum from Liteiny Prospekt. Not only did the museum designate its territory but it also included one of the most famous persons of St. Petersburg's culture in the city space. However, at the same time, it partially solved the problem associated with the conditional "invisibility" of the building's wings, making itself noticed on the transport and tourist highway.
A similar move was made by the GULAG Museum in Moscow, placing a huge graffiti with a portrait of Varlam Shalamov near the turn to the Museum from Samotechnaya Street.

The presence of the function is very important when working alongside the urban space. As practice shows, very often abstract ritualised places of memory fall out of the mental topography, even if they enter the daily route (Konradova and Rileva, 2006).

**Museumification of the city space**

The next step is the museumification of the entire urban space. The most popular option at the moment is the usual conservation of heritage objects. It was recently decided that the remains of the Chudov Monastery in the Kremlin would be "museumed". In general, this is an extremely common approach, especially in cities that have a large number of ancient or medieval archaeological monuments of stone architecture.

A popular move today for museumification is framing the space – the installation of visual viewports with explanations. A striking example is a similar work in the small Russian town of Ples, where the legacy of the famous painter Isaak Levitan is actively promoted. Thus, the city itself becomes one big changing landscape.
Given the rapid development of virtual and augmented reality technologies, this will be one of the most popular approaches in the near future.

The project *Portals of History* (Saratov) is also saturated by the historical meanings of everyday urban space. The aim of the project was to improve the space of the city embankment and the gateways of the houses overlooking it. At the same time, for the translation of the historical context, fairly simple art objects were used here, for example, fifty bells were placed in one of the arches, which remind us of the Holy Cross Nunnery, once located at this site. It is interesting to note that the choice was based on the house arches – traditional transition spaces, portals to a new dimension, very important for the understanding of the urban space (Dukel'skij, 2010).

At the same time, such formats turned out to be quite effective to work with the "difficult heritage". A striking example is the Russian version of the project *The Stumbling Block – The Last Address*. The project is designed to perpetuate the memory of victims of political repressions in the Soviet period. On the houses, the last known place whence people departed, tablets are placed: "Each of the memorial signs, no larger than the palm of one hand, mounting up to thousands of "last addresses" of our deceased compatriots, is dedicated only to one person."

The project of the Aviation Museum (Perm) is interesting from the point of view of the semantification of the everyday space. The *Studio Old Future* exhibition used concrete fences of the Perm Engine Factory to create a series of murals dedicated to the history of Permian engines and their role in the history of domestic aviation. Fences depict eighteen aircraft and five full-size helicopters, and the "museum" itself, with a length of almost one kilometre, became the largest street art object in Perm. It is important to realise that this initiative is a logical continuation of the street art festival *Long History of Perm*, that is, it preserves the continuity of local traditions and events. Furthermore, along the walls of the plant are tram routes, and thus the "museum" is integrated with the transport system, as mentioned.

**Museum and city transport systems**

These variants deal with special projects like *Bus 33* – an anti-excursion from the Museum of the History of Yekaterinburg, or the *Museum Tram* between Hakodate and Vladivostok "created" by the Arseniev Museum (Vladivostok), although they certainly have a positive impact on the perception of urban space, not only by working with monuments but also filling everyday space with everyday meanings. Much more important is the museumification of standard routes, as it was done in the project *Suprematist Tram* (2004). In this case, not only it was a homage to the historical fact – the avant-garde design of the Vitebsk trams of the 1920s, created by N. Kogan and A. Tsetlin – but also a unique representation of the museum's funds – sketches of works by Suprematists which are kept in the State Tretyakov Gallery (Griber, 2017).

The State Tretyakov Gallery maintained its work in this line. Its project *Intensiv XX* not only included a thematic train dedicated to the history of Russian art of the twentieth century but also comprised the installation of information boards over the escalators of the Park Kultury station. It should be noted that the project was aimed at solving one of the specific strategic goals of the State Tretyakov Gallery – attracting visitors to the museum building on the Crimean shaft. In addition to the special design of the train and stands, other tools were used: banners in the metro lobby, stickers in the inter-arching spaces, floor and door stickers, a place for selfies, street installations at the exit of the metro and even a limited series of tickets.

**Conclusions**

It should be emphasised that these methods of work can and should be used in any possible combination, and the strategy of their use depends on the mass of variables (museum profile, its location, the architecture of the museum building, climatic conditions, specificity of the urban landscape, etc).
However, the basic principles of the museumification of the urban space for the purpose of branding the territory should be respected:

- Museumification of urban space begins with the museum itself;
- It should be conducted systematically on the main thematic lines associated with the brand;
- Museumification of the city should not become an advertisement for the museum: it should be as unobtrusive as possible;
- the functionality of the elements (marking the route to the museum, creating comfortable spaces for rest, etc) should not be forgotten;
- Involvement and consideration of the opinion of local communities is required;
- Complementarity and interpenetration of local images and brands is needed;
- A combination of historical heritage and art objects is desirable;
- Transmedia: combining, in the same thematic area, different types of content and its presentation in various formats.

Despite criticism (Kratke, 2011: 259), the involvement of culture and heritage in the revitalisation of urban spaces and the promotion of the city will evolve, and

museums need to be included in this process to become once again an institution of influence.

Urban space should become a single narrative, united by nodal points and common themes to form an attractive and sustainable brand of territory today. This narrative should be transmediate and broadcast for different audiences in many ways. Realisation of this without the use of historical and cultural heritage as well as the participation of museums is not yet real.

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# JURMALA CITY MUSEUM
# CURRENT ISSUES AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

**INGA SARMA**

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## ABSTRACT

The Jurmala City Museum was established in 1962 during the Soviet era. Jurmala is one of the oldest seaside resorts in northern Europe. For the time Latvia was incorporated in the USSR, it was one of the most beloved Soviet resorts which hosted annually about 3 million guests – more than the whole population of Latvia. The aim of the museum in Soviet times was to portray the development of the city in the light of socialism, showing all the previous history as a negative example. It must be noted that, during the 1960–1980 period, all Soviet city museums were very similar – their exhibitions began with a stone axe and ended with another congressional decision of the Communist Party. Museums, like any other such institution, were subjected to censorship and were held under strict control by the government.

Today, the Jurmala City Museum sees research and reflection on the history of the resort as its main objective as stated by its mission. The museum is divided into two branches – an ethnographical open-air museum dedicated to fishery (before becoming a resort, in the beginning, Jurmala consisted of fishermen's villages) and a memorial museum of the poet Aspazija. The primary target audience consists of the visitors to the city.

This article briefly reviews the Jurmala City Museum's current challenges and future purposes, the search for new methods and opportunities for creating social ties, for reflecting upon collective identities and society consolidation.

**Key words:** Cooperation, joint exhibitions, networking, entertainment, social ties

*Exhibition The Magic Mirror, Sala Community, 2018. © Jurmala City Museum*

**Current challenges**

One of the biggest challenges is how to address the split between "Temple of Muses" and entertainment centre. We are living in an age overwhelmed by information, high technology and "fear of text". Any museum worker who creates exhibitions will have faced the problem of making texts shorter – ever shorter texts are required because visitors do not want to read a lot. Therefore, we are currently looking for new methods to present information – video filming, animation and audio recordings.

It is understandable that a museum does not have to be a place with a reserved academic atmosphere. However, there is a thin line between an institution of entertaining education and entertainment for entertainment's sake under which the theme of a glorious museum is used.

Any activity of the museum, whether it is an exhibition, educational programme or publication, must be based on the results of the research. At the moment, it is very difficult to convince the leadership of Jurmala, which provides our financial support, that funds for research are of foremost importance. Conversely, much greater approval is received by projects which attract many people, which are entertaining and have great publicity.

An important issue is the implementation of a generational change in the museum staff – most of the employees are over 50 years old, and the work at the museum is not very appealing to young people, mainly because of the low wages. Due to the small number of posts for staff, it is difficult to pass on professional knowledge and skills – this is the reason for endless discussions with the city's management in an effort to increase the number of posts.

**Future objectives**

A museum is an opportunity to tell many stories – not only about those who are famous and important but also about those who have never been listened to or who have never been heard.

The mission for the future is to talk about ordinary people and minorities – those who are not known like celebrities.

To reflect on how events are connected and on their historical context, as well as to show different experiences and approaches, cooperation and the exchange of ideas between museums, both regional and international, will be very important.

We have started working in this field, and we have created a network of cooperation between the resort city museums of the Baltic. We have worked together for three years on the project *Northern Stars of the Seaside. Cultural Heritage of the Baltic Resorts*.[1] The project participants included the Jurmala City Museum (Latvia), Parnu City Museum (Estonia), Sopot City Museum (Poland), Birstonas Museum (Lithuania), Hanko Museum (Finland) and Komarovo from St.Petersburg Resort district (Russia).

In the course of the project, we created exhibitions together, held a conference and issued a conference journal as well as several video materials. These activities involved not only museum workers but also architects, artists, librarians and teachers. The project was implemented thanks to the financial support of the Nordic-Baltic Mobility Programme "Culture".

The cooperation between museums is essential for the exchange of ideas, good examples of what works and the development of new methods – in this case,

[1] *https://www.norden.lv/jaunumi/04.08.2015.ziemelu-zvaigznes-juras-krasta/*

we created the *The Story of a Place* and *Life Story*, 15-20 minute long digital presentations, which were made by combining video, documents, photos, animations, as well as drama elements.[2] The purpose of these presentations was to reflect the specific story of a particular place (a building, a square, a street) and a person's life story in each of the participating cities. We demonstrated how many historical events could occur in a small city and the extent to which many different historical events affect people's lives. This was especially significant in the context of 2018, as for almost all the project countries (except Russia) this year marks the 100th anniversary of their establishment as independent states (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland and Finland gained their independence after the First World War). Teaching methods were developed for presentations, for use in school education, and they are also shown to audiences of different ages at museum events. As a result, we promoted the awareness of historical events in our closest neighbouring countries.

Another example of successful cooperation is the joint exhibition *Fashion in the Resort* by the Jurmala and Pärnu museums.[3] We created the exhibition from the collections of both museums and private ones, too. Consequently, not only had we created a major cultural event, attracting many visitors, but we also gained new facts about the theme of the exhibition, as well as a new idea in an artistic solution to the exhibition.

In an effort to overcome the locality of the museum, we also cooperate with the neighbouring communities. There is a rural area next to Jurmala, the Salas parish, where a museum was opened in September 2017. We cooperated with our colleagues in creating it – both offering advice and practical help, as well as sharing materials from the collection of the Jurmala Museum. The principal reason is the fact that the history of the Salas parish is very closely connected with Jurmala's: in the past, farms flourished thanks to the development of the resort in Jurmala, as farmers were able to supply their products to the Jurmala market. In the Salas parish, an innovative exhibition was created through this collaboration: *The Magic Mirror* – where, using modern technologies, an antique mirror "tells" tales about life and people in this area. When creating the exhibition, we involved residents, by having them share their life stories, provide photographs and documentary material.[4]

Getting people involved in the preservation of the cultural and historical heritage is a very important task for the future. We have had success in getting people to know their cultural heritage – the youth has participated in the historical costume theatre and the adults share their life stories.

However, we have much to do until we get people to be active in the city life and the decision-making process.

By working together, we came to the obvious conclusion that the city museum is not just about the story of a city alone. These are also stories about the wide variety of links that connect us to the rest of the world. Socio-political, economic and ecological events and problems are so encompassing and deep that the museum can no longer serve just as a narrator. The museum should become an instigator of ideas, a place to share experiences and create new ones.

At the end of the 1980s, which is known as the "time of the *perestroika*" in former Soviet spaces, the Jurmala City Museum became the centre for movements of civil disobedience – the NGO Environmental Protection Club and the Jurmala Coordination Center for the Popular Front of Latvia found their home in the museum premises. During this time, the museum was in the building of the Lutheran Church of Dubulti. This place held great symbolic significance – it was

*Jurmala City Museum in Dubulti Lutheran Church in the mid-1960s.*
*© Jurmala City Museum*

[2] *https://www.facebook.com/northernstarsoftheseaside/*
[3] *http://culture.ee/event/summer-exhibition-resort-fashion/*
[4] *https://www.facebook.com/Babitesnovads/posts/1462542033849724*

taken from the church in the 1960s, and later became a keeper of the collective social memory of the city's inhabitants.

Since 1998, the museum is in a different and more suitable building, which has been rebuilt to the needs of the museum and has modern equipment, though for many locals of Jurmala it remains a place that once was a laundromat. We must still work very hard in order for people to accept this place as a place where they can gather, exchange views and learn many new things. In this aspect, we also have had success – every Friday, people gather in the museum to sing. It is not a choir participating in concerts, but people who sing for their own pleasure. On Mondays, museum rooms are used by yoga enthusiasts, and, once a week, there's a group for people who want to learn drawing under the guidance of a professional artist. All lessons, except the yoga classes, are free. Although these activities are not museum-like, their participants also see exhibitions, learn about the latest activities in the museum and, most importantly, inhabit the museum's premises and recognise it as their space, to which they belong to and where they feel well.

*Exhibition Child in the Resort. Jurmala City Museum. 2016. © Jurmala City Museum*

*Exhibition History of the Resort. Jurmala City Museum. 2008. © Jurmala City Museum*

Unfortunately, at this time in Jurmala, as in the rest of Latvia, society is divided into two communities: Latvian and Russian. They are not hostile towards each other, but there are also not many factors that unite them. Even in present times, a large part of the Russian community does not know the Latvian language, which is the official national language. Each party lives within its information space. The most pressing issue in Latvia today is how to look for contact points in order to bring these two factions of society closer together and to be united.[5] In preparation for the exhibition dedicated to Latvia's 100th anniversary of independence, the museum invited residents of the city to share stories and relics which testify to Latvia's path to independence. Unfortunately, no one representing the Russian minority came forward. There are many objective and subjective reasons for this, but the main issue that is highlighted in this regard is that Russians do not perceive events related to Latvia's independence as their own history. This clearly shows us the possibilities and tasks of the museum in this field. We should strive to involve this part of society by showing its inclusion in the state of Latvia and its history. Furthermore, the migrants of the middle of the 20th century, as well as their descendants, are part of the policy of *sovietisation* and part of Latvia's shared history.

We hope that the cooperation network of several museums and the experience exchange can help us in finding solutions to many of these problems. However, we understand that the main solutions need to be sought after by ourselves – by improving our skills, continuing our endeavours and trying to persuade the city leadership to understand our needs and efforts.

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[5] According to: *Integration policy in Latvia*. Department of Humanities and Social Sciences of the Latvian Academy of Sciences, Expert Advice conclusion, retrieved from: *ljza.lv/.../Konsilija_sledziens_integracija_gala_variants_30.05.2016.doc*

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## BIOGRAPHY

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# CREATING CULTURAL HERITAGE IN CITY MUSEUMS: A CASE STUDY FROM TAIWAN

## ABSTRACT

There is a wealth of literature and research works pointing out the trend to revise the historical narratives of cities, an issue that represents an important challenge for city museums. It has been increasingly acknowledged that, when constructing narratives within the context of a city museum, the viewpoints of academic experts, local memories and life experiences need to be represented. It is thus vital that city museums build dialogues to fully represent their subjects, which can be done by maintaining awareness of the rapidity of social change and by implementing a flexible design to adapt to this variety as well. It is also important to consider whose memory and life experience ought to be represented by a museum as "cultural heritage" of the city. How should we collect individual memories and, simultaneously, develop the narrative history of the city?

There are more than four hundred museums in Taiwan. Since 2002, there has been a nationwide movement to establish museums in conjunction with the preservation and use of cultural heritage to promote community development. Today, a large proportion of new museums in Taiwan have their origins in this sort of movement. In recent years, Taiwanese people have become more concerned with protection of cultural heritage and cultural resources relevant to their city's history, a concern which has grown in tandem with wider issues surrounding cultural identity. There is a tendency to pay close attention to an individual's history and culture. At the same time, city museums have started to transform and reflect the way people think about their history, culture and life experience.

The Daxi Wood Art Ecomuseum in Taoyuan City, Taiwan, is an effective case study regarding the observation of a historical background leading to the establishment of a city museum. This article will examine the role of this museum and its significance in preserving and using cultural heritage within the framework of a community-based city museum.

**Key words:** Cultural heritage, city museum, memory, representation

## Introduction

Whose memory and life experience should be represented by a city museum? When establishing a city museum's historical narrative, should we prioritise academic research or people's memories and their life experiences? Reexamining historical narratives has become an important issue for city museums. How should they collect individual memories and develop a narrative history? How can different agendas of remembering and forgetting coexist in a city museum? City museums need to be flexible by design – to build dialogue and negotiation into their systems in order to become institutions capable of reflecting the rapid societal change.

A growing wealth of literature and research work points to the trend of reevaluating the historical narratives of cities, and this issue represents an important challenge for city museums. It has been increasingly acknowledged that, when constructing narratives within the context of a city museum, the viewpoints of academic experts, local memories and life experiences need to be represented. It is thus vital that city museums build dialogues to fully represent their subjects, something that can be done by maintaining an awareness of the rapidity of social change and by implementing a flexible design to adapt to this multiplicity as well. Notwithstanding, it is important to consider whose memory and life experience ought to be represented by the museum and therefore distinguished as "cultural heritage" of the city. How should we, simultaneously, collect individual memories and develop the narrative history of the city?

Yoshida (2011) points out that the preservation and use of cultural heritage by museums is not simply the actions taken in preserving old things in their original state, but rather examining the fact that, by addressing and presenting the concept of "cultural heritage" through museums, new values, interpretations and representations may occur. Museums come with varied functions and meanings, replete with the community's own histories and their museum missions. As they are seen from different points of view, museums mean different things to different people. In this research, the author would like to explore how a city museum can preserve and use the cultural heritage of its community, and how cultural heritage may be tied to the community through a city museum. Furthermore, the author seeks to examine the role of the city museum in the community and consider the significance of preserving and using cultural heritage within this community framework.

The Taiwanese situation parallels an international trend, and the broader environment surrounding museums has undergone a major change in many countries all over the world. In recent years, the tendency to explore the ways in which museums may be defined and how they function in Taiwanese society has been on the rise, and trends in museums, cultural heritage and community development in Taiwan ought to be examined accordingly. In 1908, when the country was under their rule, the Japanese government established the very first museum in Taiwan; this marked the beginning of cultural policy and museum history in Taiwan.

After a century of museum development in Taiwan, we now find a diverse museum landscape to be explored. Notably, since 2002, the movement to establish museums is spreading nationwide, in conjunction with the movement to preserve and use cultural heritage to promote community development. According to the latest cultural statistics, issued by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of China (Taiwan), in 2015, there are 476 museums in Taiwan.[1] Most of the museums in Taiwan have their origins in this movement.[2]

[1] Cultural Statistics issued by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of China (Taiwan). Retrieved from: *http://stat.moc.gov.tw/HS_UserItemResultView.aspx?id=6* (December 2017).

[2] Wang (2015). General survey on museums in Taiwan. Unpublished document; the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of China (Taiwan).

There are more than four hundred museums in Taiwan. Since 2002, there has been a nationwide movement to establish museums in conjunction with the preservation and use of cultural heritage to promote community development. Today, as previously stated, a large proportion of the new museums in Taiwan have their origin in this movement. In recent years, Taiwanese people have become more concerned with the protection of cultural heritage and cultural resources relevant to their city's history, a concern which has grown in tandem with wider issues surrounding cultural identity. There is a desire to pay close attention to an individual's history and culture. At the same time, city museums have started to transform and reflect the way people think about their history, culture and life experience. Taiwan has become increasingly concerned with the protection of cultural heritage and resources relating to the history of its cities, and is leading the way on the subject of cultural identity. There is a tendency to pay close attention to the history and culture of the "self". By prioritising this issue, city museums have started to transform and reflect the way people think about cities, identifying and investigating the diversity of histories and cultures they hold, rather than relying on standard interpretations and values.

The Daxi Wood Art Ecomuseum (Daxi W.E. Museum)[3] is a place that tackles these issues head-on; its permanent exhibition, in the native history hall, is a particularly helpful case study in assessing the ways in which these changes might be manifested in real life situations. The museum is located in Taoyuan City, the fifth-largest city in Taiwan. The city is home to many industrial clusters and tech company headquarters, and, as a result, many immigrant workers live here.[4] The location is also well-known given the Taipei Taoyuan International Airport, which serves the capital, Taipei, and the rest of northern Taiwan.

Daxi is a district in eastern Taoyuan City, an important canal city in Northern Taiwan, which developed largely due to its role as a transport hub for commercial activities. It came to prominence during the Qing Dynasty because of its diverse historical features, such as the local wood-product based industry, street houses and ancient historical buildings – it is full of tangible and intangible assets.

**Historical background to the establishment of the museum in Daxi**

The first idea to establish a museum in Daxi was developed by the Council for Cultural Affairs of Taiwan ( C.C.A)[5], which planned to establish a museum in the city that focused on a famous industry or a cultural theme.[6] The theme for Daxi was wooden furniture, as this is an industry with over a century of history in the region. In the 1990s, as a part of the cultural policy "Community Infrastructure Establishment",[7] Daxi was the focus of several different national governmental departments wanting to develop this place as a cultural asset for tourism – including the C.C.A, the Department of Commerce and the MOEA.[8] At the same time, the local government's commitment to invest in culture kept present. In 2008, the preservation and revitalisation plan for the Daxi Old Street put forward the idea of setting up the "Street Life Museum".[9]

In the 2000s, the Taoyuan City Department of Cultural Affairs proposed a cultural governance policy for the renovation, identification and registration of "story houses". These were deemed to be spaces with historical and cultural significance

[3] The museum is named Daxi W.E. Museum. The term 'W.E' has the dual interpretation of both the *we* of *together*, but also 'wood art'.

[4] According to Taoyuan City Government, the population is 2 184 655. It is ethnically diverse and consists of: 900,000 Hoklo, 798,300 Hakka, 66,000 Indigenous people, 130,000 New Immigrants. Source: *http://www.tycg.gov.tw/cab/home.jsp?id=175&parentpath=0,24* (Retrieved: December 2017).

[5] In Chinese: **文化建設委員會**. Source: The Ministry of Culture's predecessor, the Council for Cultural Affairs, *http://english.moc.gov.tw/article/index.php?sn=4183* (Retrieved December 2017).

[6] The movement to develop the museum can be traced back to 1994. Daxi has rich cultural resources with regard to community building, handicrafts, festival culture, monuments, and historic buildings.

[7] In Chinese: **社區總體營造**.

[8] In Chinese: **經濟部商業司**. Source: *http://gcis.nat.gov.tw/mainNew/English/index.jsp* (Retrieved December 2017).

[9] In Chinese: **老街生活博物館**.

*Left: Map of the Daxi Wood Art Ecomuseum. © Daxi Wood Art Ecomuseum*

throughout the city's 13 districts. Among them, Daxi has the richest cultural resources with regard to community building, handicrafts, festival culture, monuments and historical buildings. The Department of Cultural Affairs began to establish a museum in 2012, and attempted to use this museum as a platform for cultural governance to bring together Daxi's residents, events, objects and spaces. The Taoyuan Municipal Daxi Wood Art Ecomuseum, which opened in 2015, is Taoyuan's first municipal museum and the first in Taiwan to be named an "ecomuseum". Taoyuan City's Department of Cultural Affairs, applying its long-term experience in community building, engaged Daxi residents in a discussion of the "ecomuseum" concept. The establishment of the museum was developed over three years, as cooperation unfolded between the public sector, private organisations and community groups.

**City museum, regional museum or ecomuseum?**

In 2015, Taoyuan City's Department of Cultural Affairs used its long-term experience in community development to engage Daxi residents in a discussion on the museum concept of the *ecomuseum:*[10] a living organism that was to develop in parallel with local residents.

The idea was taken up, and, in addition to hundreds of active volunteers, all Daxi residents are considered to be museum curators; the entire Daxi is deemed to make up the ecomuseum.

The four missions of the museum were developed by the people from Daxi: *to advocate a lifestyle linked to woodwork; to preserve the culture of everyday people; to celebrate the value of craftsmanship;* and *to stimulate local revival.*

Why take an ecomuseum as a case study when considering the role of city museums? The Daxi museum is a museum acutely focused on city identity and largely based on local participation, which aims to enhance the welfare and development of local communities. Given that this is a city museum, communities use the ecomuseum concept but run it in their own way. The establishment of the museum unfolded over three years, and cooperation developed between the public sector, private organisations and community groups. As the first municipal museum in Taoyuan City, there is a question as to whether the museum should be classed as a "city museum". Conversely, in deference to the ecomuseum concept, which encompasses the entire Daxi region, would it be more apt to class it as

[10] The idea of ecomuseum (ecomusée) originated in France, the concept being developed by Georges Henri Rivière and Hugues de Varine in 1971. It is defined as a museum focused on the identity of a place, largely based on local participation and aiming to enhance the welfare and development of local communities (Hudson, 1992). In the 1990s, ecomuseum was introduced to Taiwan as a part of the cultural policy "Community Infrastructure Establishment" led by the Council for Cultural Affairs of Taiwan (C.C.A), which has lasted for more than 20 years. In recent years, the concept of ecomuseum has been widely rooted in the local communities. Ecomuseums are more properly defined by what they do rather than by what they are (Chang, 2004).

*The green post in the Museum.*
*Photo by the author*

"regional museum" or an "ecomuseum"? The future development of the museum will be closely related to new directions and new challenges for many museums that represent cities.

In the case of Daxi, an ecomuseum can be viewed as a way to develop a city museum within a community. Ideally, an ecomuseum gathers together the strengths of the people and community and is focused on local material culture and knowledge, all of which expresses the idea that residents are in charge of the museum. There have been challenges to the ongoing management and maintenance of the museum's buildings with respect to expenditures, decision-making processes and several bottlenecks that have been encountered during the development of both case studies.

The name "Daxi W.E. Museum" communicates the museum's intentions in a multiplicity of ways as "W.E." has the dual interpretation of both "we" and "wood art".[11] Instead of establishing a new museum building to serve as a "city museum", the choice was made to make good use of Daxi's old buildings instead. Those buildings are to be repaired with the intention that they perform multiple functions to best display Daxi's special historical figures and stories. This shows the extent of human life represented in the museum and how successful the collaboration between the museum curators and the locals with real stories to tell has become.

In total, the museum will revitalise and reuse twenty-three historical buildings in Daxi in order to display the city's special historical figures and stories. The programme of repairs is due to finish in 2019, with seven buildings already restored and in use. The hope is that the museum will help to preserve and use cultural heritage to promote community development, in addition to bringing cultural and economic growth in to the area.

The main project, ongoing since the museum was established, is called *Living Museum* and it takes place alongside the revitalisation and reuse of the historical buildings. The project aims to support community and gather community support, letting the residents craft their own stories, so that the treasures of Daxi are shared.

**Ways in which the city museum represents / creates the cultural heritage of the community: The permanent exhibition**

Housed in the museum's Native History Hall, the permanent exhibition is an important example of how a city museum can both represent and create the cultural heritage of its community. It occupies a row of four terraced timber dormitory houses, which were built around 1937, during the Japanese colonial period. It was established through joint research projects with the local residents and curators. The exhibition is divided into seven parts: *Geographic Environment and Resources, Daxi People Then and Now, Foster a Cultural Town, Outdoor Space, Inheritance and Innovation of Wood Art Industry, Stories Told by Daxi People, Power in Unity* and *Cooperative Spirit in Daxi*. They shed light on the cultural identity of Daxi, by selecting narrow historical narratives on different themes – to achieve a goal of "Daxi People telling Daxi stories".

The exhibition opens with a space called *Geographic Environment and Resources* that introduces the city and its surrounding area, largely through old maps and photos – and a popular animation. Here, visitors learn that the name Daxi originated from the Da-Han River.

This is followed by the largest part of the exhibition, *Daxi People Then and Now,* that covers local beliefs and customs, the city's history and development, as well as industrial, commercial and residential architecture. It delves into interesting local biographies, including a historical merchant and a singer born in Daxi, famous throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

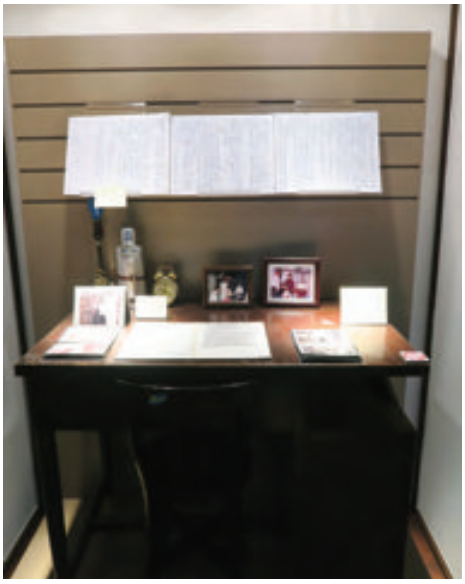
[11] *http://wem.tycg.gov.tw/home.jsp?id=135&parentpath=0,82* (accessed December 2017).

Visitors are reminded that this once was a domestic space by the sight of a distinctive hand-painted green post. After all, as this is a row of four wooden houses, four families used to live here. The green paint was applied by a former occupant and remains here alongside the desk, photos, a diary and other household items, in observance of the time when this space was a home. With their inclusion, the exhibition endeavours to address the issue that "when exhibiting one part of history, one deletes another point of view". There is a strong intention in Daxi to disturb the past as little as possible, that the creation of a new present should not come at the cost of eliminating the past. The focus is always placed firmly on the lives of the people of the Daxi and on preserving and using historical buildings. This line of thought also appears when restoring historical buildings and landscapes.

The next part of the exhibition, *Foster a Cultural Town*, introduces the unfolding of Daxi history throughout the 20th century – with a particular focus on how culture was established by the local people. Visitors go through an outdoor space before entering the following exhibition area, there is a panel that explains how they are visiting not only an exhibition but also a former home.

*Wood Art Industries* is the title of another important section of the exhibition, as they are an essential part of Daxi's cultural identity. Here, a lifestyle tied to wood crafts is introduced in a video about Daxi's skilled craftsmen. *Power in Unity* is the part of the exhibition that informs visitors of the developments in Daxi's community over the last thirty years. It introduces the role of the museum in the city and its significance in preserving and using cultural heritage within the framework of a community-based city museum. It prioritises local people seeing their own stories being shown – linking "cultural heritage" in the city with the local community, and it has created a local oral history database. It is a dynamic exhibit that will change and develop as the oral history database is updated. Towards the end of the exhibition, visitors can read a letter from the museum that explains how the century-old city history of Daxi exhibited in the Native History Hall was the result of a collaboration process between the curators and the people of Daxi. The timber crafts exhibited on the shelf are works especially commissioned from a local craftsman to be a symbol of the spirit of cooperation that thrives in Daxi.

The permanent exhibition in Daxi clearly demonstrates strong outcomes in terms of exhibition content, museum management, community input and feedback, as well as education and research. The museum and its curators are taking efforts not only to manage the site they inhabit but also to truly reflect the intentions of local residents – working together to create sustainable, symbiotic systems.



*Top: Former residents' belongings. Bottom: The oral history display of Daxi Wood Art Ecomuseum. Photos by the author*

**Creating cultural heritage: "Us" in city museums**

When creating "cultural heritage" and considering the revitalisation of an area, we have often focused on finding "new value" in some sort of cultural heritage, such as the discovery of historical buildings and objects. However, in this case, the Daxi Museum focuses on the value of collecting personal memories – interpreting the life experience of local people to be represented as the "cultural heritage" of the area. Thus, it can be said that not only have they established a sense of cultural heritage *with* the local residents but also that the local residents *are* the ongoing cultural heritage of the museum. From the onset, the local community always expressed a desire to find a "feeling of *us* expressed in the museum" and to realise it at this level, it was, and still is, necessary to build a dialogue. Nevertheless, to bring it to this point, it was imperative to create exhibits through collaborative research and interviews with local residents. The bank of local knowledge created by this project has become part of the local cultural heritage.

The research is ongoing, and the author would like to share the current issues and challenges that emerged at this stage. From the Daxi case study, we have a view into the role of the museum in the city and its significance in preserving and using cultural heritage within the framework of a community-based city museum. This article takes Daxi Wood Art Ecomuseum in Taoyuan City as a way to explore

how city museums work with local residents to create exhibits that reflect people's lives in the city, namely, their actions, intentions and emotional responses, aiming to shed light on museum – community relations in the city, and to explore opportunities to invite people into the museum interpretive processes. The case of Daxi highlights the importance of a city museum's will to face its communities, learn what they need, listen to what they say, to communicate and engage the communities in exhibition and museum activities.

However, staying relevant and prioritising equality for all might be a challenge for Daxi. The Daxi museum has started to transform and reflect the way people think about their history, culture and life experience. But sometimes strong representation of certain branches of the community may result in others being overlooked. How can the museum create and maintain a positive relationship with communities, stay relevant and prioritise equality? As the idea was taken up, and in addition to hundreds of volunteers, all Daxi residents are considered to be museum curators, and the entire Daxi is deemed to make up the ecomuseum. As the museum actively participates with some local residents, there is a possibility that some other locals will be overlooked. Taoyuan City's population is ethnically diverse, and includes indigenous people, immigrants and foreign workers. All of these are members of the community, and many are local to Daxi. How to include indigenous people and the new immigrants into the narrative of Daxi's museums is an issue that is largely yet to be addressed. How can a museum be open to all, connect with diverse people with various values and be a platform where all cultural heritage can be expressed?

Ultimately, all city museums need to continue building dialogues in order to fully represent their subject; they need to stay nimble in order to be capable of rapid change and be flexible by design as society progresses. From the exhibition, it is possible to see how feedback from the community who created, contributed and lived these stories supports this conclusion: by working together in this context, the sense of "us" that is so often missing in city museums was successfully transported from outside the museum walls where it risked being lost forever, to safety and celebration within. Real people got to share stories that otherwise might have been lost and records were made and kept for future generations.

**Acknowledgements**
The author would like to thank colleagues and community from Daxi W.E. Museum, especially the curators Hsin-Lin Wen, I-Ching Lin, Tao-Hsin Liu, for their invaluable help in developing the study.

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# LISBON – THE ROLE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

## ABSTRACT

This article aims to explore the use of Global Education on cultural heritage for the creation of sustainable communities in the city of Lisbon. From the Global Education experiences conducted in the PhD programmes in Museology at the Universidade Lusófona and the Afro-Digital Museum – Estação Portugal, we propose plural views on the multicultural city. We identify diverse cultural heritage elements and their different forms of community organisation. From the reification of the senses on heritage, we propose that, in the context of the doctoral programme, the students become involved and analyse the patrimonial processes that arise from the participation of the communities. We seek to reflect how Global Education can be a tool for organising actions that contribute to the creation of sustainable communities.

The understanding of the changing nature of community relations in their context, whether through their history or the continuous recomposition of the social formation through economic, social and environmental life, is an important tool to increase the quality of life in those communities. Citizens who can reflect more deeply on the transformations of their values and ways of thinking can respond more effectively to the ongoing changes in their communities, to be more resilient to events and to develop communication processes that increase social inclusion.

In the course of this project, for the last three years, in different points of the cosmopolitan city, we have verified the emergence of alternative uses of the heritage that have stemmed from traditional museological structures. In this article, we present three cases of Global Education: The work of Universidade Lusófona, in Bairro da Mouraria, the case of the Moinho da Juventude in Cova da Moura and the case of patrimonial intervention in the city's eastern neighbourhoods, subjected to a relevant urban pressure for transformation. Then, we seek to answer questions about how the community of heritage professionals can be mobilised to promote a deeper change in the knowledge on the ownership of heritage by communities, and what tools they have available to increase participation in their sustainable development and their resilience.

**Key words:** Cultural diversity, sustainable communities, educational heritage

**The creative power of city museums**

How can the creative power of museology contribute to social innovation in our cities and establish sustainable communities? How are new urban heritage processes being reconfigured to change the traditional view of museums? To answer these questions, we will analyse some cases that are happening in the city of Lisbon, and we will try to reflect on how heritage processes came to the centre of public policies for sustainable urban communities. Through that, we will work out the role of cultural policies for the diversity in the cities.

Establishing the role of city museums in contemporary cities is an appealing challenge for new museology, at a time when the concept of museums is being discussed. As the Argentine architect George Enrique Hardoy, who in 1972 participated in the Round Table of Santiago de Chile on the relevance of museums in contemporary society, argues on the role of city museums: *despite the intense urban development in the second half of the twentieth century, we are anchored to the traditional vision of what a museological process is, and what is the role of the buildings called "Museum"*.[1]

*The network map of cultural facilities in Lisbon. © CML*

Is this statement true today? City museums are still aseptic, quiet worlds that tell a unique story about the territory, without tensions and conflicts; such approach ignores a good part of the demographic flows of the present. Are they also nostalgic representations of a mythical past, with a reductive one-dimensional vision of reality? Questions of housing, transportation, work, environmental pollution, the scarcity of green spaces, food sovereignty and urban security should thus be asked. Where are these problems enunciated? Can we use them to mediate an educational relationship with their public? City museums are an interesting reflection on what museums are and what reality shows. What kind of narrative is written? The narrative of poets, historians, ancestors, founding heroes, architects and technocrats?

In 2015, the UNESCO Recommendation on Museums and their Social Role clarified some issues, including the need for museums to work with and for their communities through participatory processes. For those who stand in the field of social museology, it is necessary to develop a decolonised museology in the city. A museology that gives voice to muted communities, from migrants, Afro-descendants, women, indigenous peoples and subordinate minorities, to gipsies and other groups that have been silenced by the city museums.

By looking at the cultural map of Lisbon, namely, at the spatial distribution of its cultural facilities, we verify that they are concentrated mainly in the historical centre. We here consider cultural facilities in their various forms: museums, archives, libraries, cultural centres, art galleries, theatres and concert buildings. The distribution of cultural facilities results from a vision of the public institutions over society and the way in which it works.

Although the Museum of Lisbon has, in recent years, substantially improved its link to the community and its urban dynamics, the fact remains that museums today are facilities absent from the populated neighbourhoods of the city. Rarely does the urban requalification of the neighbourhoods include the development of cultural dynamics, except for some work in terms of libraries. From this point of view, the activity of public libraries has accompanied the development of the city in a more assertive way than the heritage processes. Can patrimonial education and the processes of citizenship promotion continue to be absent from the urban communities of Lisbon?

[1] Source: *http://www.ibermuseus.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/copy_of_declaracao-da-mesa-redonda-de-santiago-do-chile-1972.pdf*

*Research work in the city with the museology summer course of Academia Reinwart of Amsterdam, Lisbon 2018. © Pedro Pereira Leite*

**The experience of the museology laboratory in the urban space in Mouraria**

The situation of the museums of Lisbon and their cultural policy has been too dependent on urban planning criteria, where different facility networks are created regarding demographic dynamics and territorial management choices. Given that museum facilities do not obey the logic of technocratic quantification, their creation is too dependent of the symbolic functions and the legitimation by hegemonic powers, as the current controversy about the creation of a museum of the discoveries in Lisbon has demonstrated.

However, if we change the way we look at the city from the cultural politics perspective to one of diversity, the cultural life in cities will be mapped with alternative criteria. These criteria go through the mapping of hot spots, the points where there cultural life is present, and will take advantage of these spaces and communities to develop processes of affirmation of social memories and the creation of social innovation. Cultural policies for diversity are designed from the interests of citizens; they are developed for citizens and with the participation of citizens.

This project is anchored in the relationship with the living forces of the city. It has been developed by Universidade Lusófona, at the postgraduate course in advanced training in museology, as an action research programme based on an area in transition: the neighbourhood (*bairro*) of Mouraria in Lisbon. This work has been developed in partnership with the Museu AfroDigital Portugal and, since 2018, it includes the activities of the UNESCO Chair in Education, Citizenship and Cultural Diversity.

Mouraria is a central district of Lisbon, which for several years, in the twentieth century, had been a degraded urban area and housed a disadvantaged population. It is an area of cultural diversity. For the last twelve years, the municipal administration has been promoting several urban redevelopment operations there. Nowadays, the combination of the requalification operations with the intense tourist dynamics in the city is producing intense dynamics of social transformation.

Nevertheless, as mentioned above, these operations did not create new cultural facilities. Despite this, some activities on the social memory of the neighbourhood became visible through new exhibition processes in the urban space carried out by a few freelance initiatives. Due to the strong dynamics of transformation of this space, and the absence of a systematic patrimonial education work in this area, the understanding of the extent of change in this neighbourhood is complex and contradictory, with strong signs of loss of collective memories and overlapping of new identities and new inhabitants.

The work that has been developed by the students of museology of Universidade Lusófona explores the methodology of "poetics of space". This is a methodological process for the creation of a heritage action developed at Universidade Lusófona. By mapping the space and the living time of this territory and its communities, it aims to observe how it is inhabited and perceived in different forms and experiences of identity. It is intended that participants in the training activity confront their memories with the memories of others in context.

The purpose of this "encounter" is to raise questions. The enquiries constitute, in this process, the raw material for the creation of museological processes of communication and extraversion. It is sought that the processes are based on a practice of dialogue with the communities, creating connections and building bridges to understand differences. Every phase of the process is approached from the perspective of heritage education and discussed in a participatory way between students and local associations. In the end, an exercise is carried out to return the results to the communities through an exhibition in the "bairro".

**Other experiences in the city**

Notwithstanding this experience, which we have conducted for the last three years, we have also analysed other processes that are happening in the city, which allow the creation of narratives about the memory and heritage of the city, which do not take the traditional form of "museum-building". These are: the Laredo Cultural Mediation Association, Moinho da Juventude – Cultural Association, the Urban Art Gallery – Loures and the Circle of Seeds – Lisbon. We must say that the concept of the city here is used in a broader form, not confined to municipal territories.

*Working in a local association on the theme of oral heritage. Anagrama StudioLab, 2018. © Pedro Pereira Leite*

**The Laredo Cultural Mediation Association**

This is a cultural association created by Miguel Horta, that has been promoting literacy in different environments, whether they may be associations, or prisons, libraries or museums. Its particularity lies in developing activities with communities with special educational needs and in environmental subjects, mainly the sea. It reflects the author/actor approach to his activities: "I always liked to intervene in urban textures, working with people through challenges that brought them together, thinking, changing and acting. Art and Poetry achieve all this by promoting full citizenship in cities. When artistic education is taken to the streets, its effects are very rewarding. I like to be given challenges that involve people, the stories of their lives and the place they live in." Miguel Horta has become a reference figure in meetings about oral or traditional tales.

The art of story-telling is not meant to numb children. In this approach, the university serves primarily to educate adults. Every tale has a particular structure. It has an introduction where it presents a conflict and has a denouement. It is necessary for the narrator to know what the story is, why and how is it told (narrated). The story, when written, is independent of the narrator, but it is the narrator who has to seek the transcendence of the story through his narration.

The act of surrendering to the story, surrendering to the narration, is not only the application of a technique (and here the technique of representation is helpful) but also the awareness of what is sought to be conveyed in the story. The narrator needs to know why he chooses this story, or why the story followed *this* narrative form through *this* narrator. It is a living process, which manifests itself in a certain way through a narrator. Likewise, the narrator is not just an innocent transmission agent. He is an agent, or dynamic actor, involved in the process, who adds a personal experience, dialogues with the structure of the story and works an emotional dimension of memory.

**Moinho da Juventude – Cultural Association**

This a cultural association located in Amadora, a peripheral city of Lisbon, and it has been operating for more than 30 years; it dedicates its mission to reading and education in the community with the support of community work. Its work began with Eduardo Pontes and his neighbours, all of them residents in the area and concerned with the social situation of the neighbourhood. Eduardo Pontes, a former political prisoner during the fascist dictatorship in Portugal, had had an experience of anti-colonial struggle. After the liberation, he created a community intervention project in the neighbourhood of Cova da Moura, aimed at community education. He created a library and developed various literacy activities. The "Moinho da Juventude" (Youth Windmill) has become a solid community intervention project, seeking to work with the collective memory of the residents in order to improve the integration of the neighbourhood in the city. Given the tense dialogue with hegemonic ideas about the city, the project has known several difficulties, particularly due to the conflicting difficulties of recognising the potentialities and specificities of the neighbourhood. The project developed has

been dealing with the memory of the neighbourhood in different dimensions, and it now seeks to value the community by introducing the patrimonial dimension.

*Performative practice laboratory in the community. Library of Marvila, May 2018.*
*© Pedro Pereira Leite*

***Quinta do Mocho,* Loures**
Loures is another peripheral city of Lisbon. However, the neighbourhood had its origin, in the late 1960s, not here but in an estate called Quinta do Mocho, in Sacavém, Lisbon. It began as an urban development plan of economic costs. After April 1974, following the Democratic Revolution in Portugal and the emergence of the Right to Housing, the urban development plan, still under construction, was occupied by African communities arriving in Lisbon. The Quinta and its unfinished houses created an area of a great insalubrity and its population, marginal in society, was harassed by the locals.

At the end of the 1990s, the urban regeneration programme for the eastern part of Lisbon and the infrastructure programmes associated with the 1998 Universal Exhibition forced the relocation of the neighbourhood to its current location in the municipality of Loures, through the construction of a new housing project. However, the neighbourhood retained its original name.

The services of the municipality accompanied the rehousing of the community, and a cultural centre was built, where social assistance functions were installed in addition to the already existing cultural functions. In 2013, a programme of intervention and requalification of the public space was created, designed to narrow the distance between the local authority and the residents. Several community assemblies were held at the time, and the idea of telling the story of the Quinta do Mocho emerged: the history of the neighbourhood through painting and the opening of the neighbourhood to the surrounding community. However, the name continued to stigmatise its inhabitants of the neighbourhood. The "Neighbourhood and the World" programme, supported by voluntary work of the residents, has been developing various activities in the neighbourhood and it has expanded to other areas of Loures, where the Loures Public Art Festival is being promoted. Nowadays, every year, the festival allows the continuity of the community's interaction with the city, transforming the urban art gallery into a space of interaction.

The Urban Art Gallery of Quinta do Mocho is invigorated by the Municipality of Loures through the invitation of urban artists, who work voluntarily. Furthermore, the CML [Loures City Council] provides the materials and supports their stay. Until 2017, 342 works were painted on the façades of buildings and in public places throughout the municipality.

**The Circle of Seeds Network**
Finally, this is a project developed by Frederica Teixeira and Pepa Bernardes since October 2012, following an international Vandana Shiva's appeal for seed liberation. Following suit, the authors organised a Seminar Workshop, but they concluded that this action was not enough and they decided to continue creating an activity project by developing seed collection workshops.

A Circle of Seeds is a meeting of a group of friends, where each one subscribes to multiply and store seeds of one or more cultures. Each element chooses a crop, then sows, cares, harvests, cleans, dries and stores the seeds. In the meetings, everyone shares their seeds and the information they have about the plants they have chosen.

The network aims to create seed circles throughout the country, rediscovering, collecting and sharing ancient and traditional varieties of the natural heritage – the seeds. At the same time, they carry out actions to raise awareness and share knowledge about seeds and food sovereignty. Within this network, all seeds are shared, and no seed can be sold; no genetically modified seeds are allowed.

At least one person is needed to start a circle; we suggest no more than twelve people in order to maintain focus, support and commitment. Participants in each circle should know how to harvest, clean and store their seeds. Traditional and rustic seeds should be given priority, but, if one wishes, one can sign up for non-traditional cultures in their area (e.g. stevia).

The meetings are moments of sharing, energised by each circle. They can be meetings accompanied by visits, help, sharing of seeds, sharing of knowledge, celebration, seed collection, among others. Each circle should create its seed bank, in order to create a local seed bank. The local bank aims to maintain the largest possible seed diversity in a decentralised and on-site way, to be a resource for sharing among circles, and to help start new circles.

**Conclusion**

Now, we would like to systematise the main ideas that we have been demonstrating. We start from the central idea that there are new heritage processes in our cities, which challenge city museums to incorporate cultural policies for citizenship and cultural diversity. Contrary to traditional centralised public planning processes, inherited from the UNESCO policies of the 1960s, we defend the externalisation services that the liberal logic and social gentrification have imposed on cultural facilities at the end of the millennium. We also argue that public powers of culture must be more attentive to urban social dynamics and use that community dynamics to make inclusive policies for cultural diversity.

Parallel to the processes for creating networks of multifunctional cultural equipment, it is necessary to develop public policies for citizenship and cultural diversity based on social movements and local associations. In our argument, we defend that the patrimonial processes constitute places of practice of citizenship and cultural diversity, contributing to sustainable communities.

In the various processes observed, we verified that the ongoing transformations and innovations are reflected on the patrimonial work in transitional urban spaces. Today, it is necessary to observe patrimonial processes through other lenses and other instruments in order to identify these places of power.

The work that we have been doing since 2017, which included identification and analysis of the cultural values of the communities, and proposal of their incorporation in the processes of valorisation of the cultural heritage, reinforces the search for an understanding of the role of communities in the transformative dynamics of society. Such aims to favour expressions of cultural diversity as a process of sharing practices on different types of heritage as well as a form of freedom and construction of cognitive justice.

We believe that the field of social museology in Portugal should prepare to become involved and support groups and communities that seek to affirm their memories, anchored in the development of heritage education.

These instruments should be based on: elaboration of shared heritage charters, public awareness actions, mobilisation of resources for heritage intervention, development of training in oral history methodology, creation of digital archives, use of digital media and development of heritage applications, development of methodologies for working with groups, procedures for involving local communities and working with schools to promote social museology workshops.

Finally, in this line of work, it becomes necessary to document the history and heritage of the community through use of image and sound techniques as well as development of participatory exhibitions, which allows the application of participative methodologies, empowerment of communities and participation of

memory networks that broaden the reach of actions and promote participatory communication among members of various networks.

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