

# CAMOC MUSEUMS OF CITIES REVIEW

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## Changing Cities, Changing Museums

**CAMOC ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2023**  
**MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

## Citizen-centred Museum Practices

A CULTURAL RE-AWAKENING IN THE CITY THAT NEVER SLEEPS • STRETCHING THE BOUNDARIES OF ITS CITIZEN MUSEUM MODEL: MEM • SINGAPORE AND ITS CITY MUSEUMS





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CHANGING CITIES, CHANGING MUSEUMS



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Harvey Wang, Subway Entrance (1992). Gift of Harvey Wang, 2019.11.21.

# From the Chair

Dear colleagues and friends,

“New York opens itself up to those willing to explore it,” writes Jamaica-born Garnette Cadogan, our CAMOC 2023 Conference keynote speaker, in an essay in *Nonstop Metropolis: A New York City Atlas*, compiled by Rebecca Solnit and Joshua Jelly-Shapiro. Cadogan was editor-at-large of this sprawling collection of fascinating maps on everything from the city’s Spanish language radio stations to its water and power systems stretching upstate. His contribution is about walking 24 hours in the city, putting a foot down in every borough and exploring immigrant enclaves from Little Italy in the Bronx to Puerto Rican Loisaida in Manhattan to Caribbean Crown Heights in Brooklyn. From Filipino and Chinese communities in Jackson Heights in Queens to a Sri Lankan restaurant in Staten Island. “Many immigrants ... lay claim to the city by grasping it underfoot,” he writes. “I walk to connect with the city, but also to connect with other immigrants who pursue home – step by step, encounter by encounter, ambition by ambition – the way I do.”

Cadogan’s urban trek reveals ongoing transformations and cultural infusions in a wildly diverse city. On a visit to Singapore in May, I was not able to count anywhere close to as many steps as he made around New York. But darting down shop house sidewalks in Little India and Kampong Glam, and even around the glossy malls and manicured parks of City Centre, it was apparent how new arrivals from Kerala, Myanmar, Indonesia, and other places are continuing to transform the city. I was tremendously lucky to be in Asia as part of our CAMOC City Museums Global Mapping Workshop in Taipei. In Taiwan, we walked more and encountered other changes: in the Wanhua District, where we learned about the experiences of people experiencing homelessness in the city, and in Daxi, where weekender visitors thronged a heritage street.



© Yvonne A. Mazurek

Of course, immigration is just one of many factors bringing change to cities globally. There are also changing climates, changing ways of working, changing vulnerabilities – to pandemic, to conflict, to economic inflation, to housing shortages. How are city museums responding to these kinds of changes? That was one of the questions CAMOC’s City Museums Global Mapping Project has sought to answer. At our Taipei workshop, Dr Francesca Lanz talked about some of the “radical transformations” in some European city museums, especially since the turn of the millennium. Museums have sought to become more open, transparent, accessible, inclusive. That has also meant being responsive to contemporary issues and civic identities. Yet survey responses showed a wide variety of responses in how museums prioritize contemporary topics.

As we gather in New York, we have a fantastic opportunity to discuss and debate different kinds of transformations, from the radical to the subtle, and also to explore, step by step, how we can encounter and engage with change in our own cities. I hope to see you there!

*Glenn Perkins*  
CAMOC Chair

# Notes from the Editors

In this issue we are glad to bring to you articles about museums in NYC: the Museum of the City of New York, this museum's education strategies and the Tenement Museum. New York is a multicultural and multifaceted city that inspired many authors and filmmakers around the world. Presenting the history of such a city is not easy and that's why we have as our central piece the Museum of the City of New York that is also hosting our annual Conference "Changing cities, changing Museums".

Overall, this edition is dedicated to different ways that museums are putting people and communities at the centre of their collections and exhibitions. Montreal's newest museum (in Québec, Canada) recounts the memories of its inhabitants and how integrating these memories into the city's narratives are crucial to better creating inclusive narratives that speak directly to visitors. Museums have a duty of memory regarding the city and its inhabitants.

We use the term duty of memory here since city museums not only witness the lives of inhabitants born and raised in its environment but also migrants who chose to live in another country for economic reasons, but also those of refugees from war contexts and political exiles. Hence the city museum becomes a place that collects and saves testimonies, which are sometimes painful and difficult, with the intent to prevent such events from reoccurring. Therefore, we evoke the importance of putting the memories of migrants, refugees and exiles in the city museum as a *devoir de mémoire*. The question of what is intentionally forgotten when creating cultural heritage is central when thinking of difficult histories such as migration history. It is also a question of studying the paths of different actors who then contributed to making (re)appear these forgotten or future objects: forgetting lies between the destruction and the safeguarding of cultural heritage.

It highlights a process of "heritagization" which is the result of tensions linked sometimes to conflicts and political decisions, sometimes to urban changes, even to the evolution of taste. If research on cultural heritage has been almost exclusively devoted to memory and its different figures, a regular activity of writing and research has nevertheless always been interested in the forms of



Yvonne and Andrea

forgetting and neglect: these days are the opportunity to highlight it. That's why the roundtable is dedicated to migration and housing where museums like Ellis Island and the Tenement Museum will be presenting how to create a narrative on the different communities that make up the patchwork of NYC culture.

This issue also brings news from MUHBA hosted the EMYA awards that brought many European museums together to Barcelona to celebrate news approaches and processes of curating. In addition, Barcelona's citizen museum organized another edition of the CITYHIST conference at which the book *European City Museums* was released. We also look at CAMOC's activities in Asia, reporting on the milestone workshop that took place in Taipei with the first findings from our ongoing Global Mapping Project. We conclude our Reviews with a committee visit to committee visit to Singapore.

Our focus in this issue is to bring articles about museums that put people at the heart of their practice showing the importance of social museology in a polarized world. Even if museums are not able to effectively change the socio-economic context of our contemporary societies, they have the power to create dialogue and safe spaces for individuals to build a sense of community and to change their cities in ways that suit all citizens.

We affirm that people are the heart of museums and its practices. With the new ICOM museum definition, we saw that museums are moved by the changes of society and the communities that they represent. We would like to thank our Editorial board and we are looking forward to receiving your contributions to the Review.

Andréa Delaplace and Yvonne A. Mazurek  
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# A Letter to Fellow CAMOC Members

CHET ORLOFF\*



Fig. 1. Chet Orloff.

Dear Fellow CAMOC Members:

As CAMOC members, we are part of an organization whose mission is to serve city museums and, by extension, the cities they serve. We also serve the visitors to our cities, who take home the ideas and information our museums provide to them.

We should be proud that CAMOC serves museums and their cities worldwide.

CAMOC has a vital mission, especially in an era of constantly increasing urbanization, suburbanization, and exurbanization. As someone who has worked in museums for 50 years and has taught urban studies and has been a CAMOC member almost since its founding, I want to share with you some questions I have about our work.

\* Chet Orloff, former Peace Corps volunteer, Director of the Oregon History Museum & Library, Professor of history and urban and museum studies at Portland State University and the University of Oregon, and ongoing CAMOC since 2006.

In recent conversations with CAMOC's originator, Ian Jones of London, I asked him what his thoughts were about city museums. *"In London, what debate there is about the city is liable to take place in the London newspapers or online, not in our city museum. That's no reflection on the Museum of London; it simply cannot compete with newspapers, or the education and entertainment functions of the big museums. I find that most city museums concentrate on city history, as if the*

*present and future of the city are too difficult to deal with. Obviously, there are city museums which take a different approach, but they are more likely called "urban centers" and are not necessarily regarded as city 'museums'."*

Like Ian Jones and the rest of us, I look forward to hearing how city museums are not only joining the debate but leading it within their own cities. As Ian says, it is a debate about the present and future of cities, not just the past. I look forward to reading about the debate in the *CAMOC Review*. When it comes to cities, the potential topics are endless, and most are global. And whatever they are, the topics can be of interest to almost every city museum.

Here are some questions and topics that I hope we will raise and discuss, many of which are *already* on our members' own program lists and calendars. I look forward to our collective answers and to many more questions that should be asked, in upcoming meetings and conferences.

***What might city museums of the future look like?  
What might these museums be? What might they do?***

## CAMOC MEMBERS

***Has design taken a back seat to necessity?***

***How has your city dealt with changes in the economy over the years? (For example, right now cities worldwide are dealing with changes in work regimes and where people do their work.)***

***Who have been your city's biggest "developers" since its founding? Alternatively, who have been your city's greatest "developers" since its founding? (A difference between "biggest" and "greatest" might be that the "biggest" is in it primarily for the money while the "greatest" might be in it for reasons such as design, legacy, and human welfare.)***

***How has your city dealt with transportation and transit since the early 1900s?***

***How inclusive is your city? What parts are doing better than others?***

***How is your city dealing with the houseless? With immigrants? With the young? With other groups?***

***Does your city look like a "15-minute city"? In other words, is your city one with neighborhood services and amenities within 15 minutes of walking or cycling for residents and workers?***

***How "green" is your city?***

***What steps is your city taking to address climate change?***

***How innovative has your city been?***

***What defines your city? (Distinguishing qualities and characteristics)***

***Who plans and has planned your city?***

***How is your city financed? Who pays taxes? How is money spent by the government? How generous are the citizens of your city?***

***Where has the population of your city come from (recently, 100 years ago, 200 years ago...)?***

***What other ways is your city working, educating, policing, funding, and in other ways keeping your city healthy, wealthy, and wise?***

***How is what your city is doing today applicable to other cities?***



Fig. 2. Chet Orloff.

***How is your museum working with other city museums to share ideas that can be applied in your own city and in other cities worldwide?***

Yes, these are the kinds of questions that city planners and government agencies should ask of their citizens every day. How can city museums ask and help answer them, too?

As Ian Jones says, we must debate such questions. Many of our fellow museums have already done incredible work in dealing with issues like immigration and settlement, history, trade, transportation, and other topics. Some have begun debates and programs on planning and infrastructure. As an increasing number of fellow CAMOC members have said, we must become part of the debate over what our cities are doing and where they are going. Such is the job of the next generation of city museums.



Fig. 3. Green cities. © Michael Gaida / Pixabay



# MCNY at 100

LILLY TUTTLE\*



Fig. 1. Entrance to the exhibition *This is New York: 100 years of the City in Art and Pop Culture*. © Brad Farwell

In 1923, the Museum of the City of New York was founded “to do all things necessary, fit, or suitable to create a love for and interest in all things pertaining to the city of New York.” While institutions like the Musée Carnavalet in Paris provided a model for a museum dedicated to documenting a single city, MCNY (as it has come to be known) was one of the first city museums founded in the United States. Inherent in the city museum concept is the ambitious notion that a single institution can capture the layered history, endless physical transformation, and complex diversity of a modern metropolis. For 100 years MCNY has wrestled with this challenge by developing a vast collection, telling stories about the city, and educating visitors of all ages about this singular place.

To mark its centennial year, in 2023 the Museum of the City of New York has organized two key exhibitions to celebrate this milestone. In May, we opened *This Is New York: 100 Years of the City in Art and Pop Culture*—a multi-gallery exhibition that explores the wide range of ways that New York City has inspired storytelling across a variety of media. In framing that exhibition in its earliest stages—as

New York, and the entire world, was in the crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic—the curatorial team, of which I am a member, decided to avoid centering our centennial programming on our own institutional history (fig. 1). As it is the longstanding goal of MCNY to expand and diversify our audiences, we felt that placing a spotlight on ourselves would speak to our existing fanbase but would not help advance that wider goal. We decided instead to consider the very *idea* of New York; how it has been interpreted and served as an inspiration for generations of visual artists, songwriters, filmmakers, fashion designers, authors, comic book illustrators—to name just a few.

*This Is New York* highlights the fact that the 1920s was the moment that modern culture—cinema, radio, and mass media in general—came to life. Taking over the entire 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Museum, *This Is New York* is organized around the spaces that have inspired art about the city: the streets and subways in “Tempo of the City,” spaces of gathering and spectacle in “Destination: NYC,” and finally a smaller gallery on the challenges and opportunities of living in New York, entitled “At Home in New York.” The exhibition also features a gallery dedicated to depictions of New York on film; “You Are Here” is an immersive experience that combines thousands of film clips into a dazzling

\* Lilly Tuttle, Curator. Museum of the City of New York.



Fig. 2. A view of the exhibition *This is New York: 100 Years of the City in Art and Pop Culture*. © Brad Farwell

juxtaposition across 16 screens. In presenting the exhibition to the press and the public, we have made the case that our ongoing exhibition *New York at Its Core*—which traces the history of our city from 1609–2020 tells our visitors “what happened in New York?”— while *This Is New York* gets at something more abstract, more visceral: “what does New York mean?” “what is the *idea* of this city?” and “how has it appeared across cultural forms through this extraordinary century from the 1920s to the 2020s” (fig. 2)?

Despite our institutional reticence to focus primarily on our own story, while planning our anniversary celebrations we began to consider ways to weave our own story, and in particular a reflection on our collection, into our programming. The result of that conversation was the exhibition *People, Place, and Influence: The Collection at 100*, a project that uses selections from the Museum’s rich and varied collection to inform our visitors about our founding and our mission, to highlight the unique challenge of capturing a city as diverse, dynamic, and ever-changing as New York through a single institution and collection, and to invite conversation about how we shape the collection for the next 100 years.

### The Story of MCNY

In 1923, New York was a city in flux. As the 19<sup>th</sup> century city of mansions and row houses gave way to the 20<sup>th</sup> century city of apartments and skyscrapers, a massive demographic shift was in full swing after decades of record immigration. The initial motivation for a new

museum dedicated to the story of New York came from a disgruntled patron of the New-York Historical Society, who called for a new institution “filled with treasures from old New York.” By 1923, Henry Collins Brown, an author and antiquarian who had been agitating for a museum dedicated to New York City for years, had founded the Museum of the City of New York. Brown served as the Museum’s first director until 1926 when he was ousted by board members. Hardinge Scholle, a midwestern museum professional, took over and led the Museum as it moved into its first home in 1927 at the newly restored Gracie Mansion (fig. 3), which sits along the East River and is today the official residence of New York City mayors.

The mansion, which dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, quickly proved to be unfit as a place to display historical artifacts and in 1928 architect Joseph Freedlander won a competition to design a new home for the Museum on City land on upper Fifth Avenue. At the cornerstone-laying ceremony on April 30, 1929—the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of George Washington’s inauguration in Lower Manhattan—New York Governor Al Smith praised the new museum for its dedication to provide “a visual conception of progress,” which was particularly salient in the burgeoning era of mass media and rapid economic and physical change. To that end, the foundational collection gift to the Museum came from a Bronx real estate mogul named J. Clarence Davies who had collected thousands of images of New York to promote enthusiasm for the city and, by association, for his business. Later, under the leadership of the influential



Fig. 3. *Byron Company, Gracie Mansion, Interior, Showing 'Old New York Costumes' (1927). Gift of Percy Byron 93.1.3.567.*

photography curator Grace Mayer, the Museum would become one of the leading repositories of images of New York and its people. Other early curators, who reflected a new professionalization and female leadership of the curatorial profession, V. Isabelle Miller and May Davenport Seymour developed the costume, decorative arts, and theater collections.

The 1930s and 40's were an era of significant collecting as the Museum took in major acquisitions, including a dressing room and bedroom from John D. Rockefeller's home as his house was demolished to make way for Rockefeller Center, as well as several manuscripts by Eugene O'Neill, which were donated by his wife, Carlotta Monterey. Today MCNY holds an estimated 750,000 items, including hundreds of thousands of images of the city in prints, photographs, drawings, and paintings, along with vast holdings of clothing, furniture, toys, documents, and a trove of materials related to the history of theater in New York.

### The MCNY Collection at 100

As we approached a project to present our collection in the context of our centennial, we strove to embed the shape and highlights of

collections in the context of the city museum's mission and focus, relating the things that make MCNY distinctive and setting it apart from art museums and historical societies. True to the founding mission of MCNY as a city museum, the collection represents an ongoing effort to capture the diverse, cacophonous, and perpetually transforming nature of New York. While many of the materials were donated, the collection also reflects the interests and priorities of the numerous curators who have shaped it over the past 100 years.

On a practical level, MCNY's founding coincided with a moment of urban transformation. As Fifth Avenue mansions gave way to apartment buildings, the Museum provided a storehouse for the possessions of New York's downsizing elites. This physical transformation arrived on the heels of an era of unprecedented immigration, which motivated the museum's early curators to use these material goods to educate the city's newcomers with a patriotic story about New York's place in American history. Museum practices have evolved in the past 100 years and today this expansive collection, like the city itself, is still a work in progress, and the effort to capture a city like New York through objects and images is a nearly impossible task. In presenting the exhibition, we have been candid with our audience about the collection's gaps and shortcomings, and the ways in which we are still striving to capture the full diversity of the city. To that end, we are developing interactive moments in the gallery for our visitors to weigh in on what interests them and how they would like us to shift our collection. While we cannot make



Fig. 4. *Samuel H. Gottscho, The Home of the Late John D. Rockefeller, No. 4 West 54th Street, Bedroom (1937). The Gottscho-Schleisner Collection 94.53.16.*

## MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

assurances about new acquisitions, we want to inform our visitors about the process of collecting and to hear a bit about the places, stories, and aspects of our existing collection that excite and inspire them. We expect that this conversation will take place digitally in the gallery with videos and surveys, as well as on social media.

Likewise, we have explained that any attempt to display the collection can only hint at its contents. Yet with a focus on the themes of the city's *people, place, and influence*, the exhibition introduces the framework for the entire collection through the topics that inspired the collection's curators a century ago and that still drive us today.

### Place

At its core, the MCNY collection was intended as a 'visual biography' of New York, a record of the physical city made through paintings, photographs, drawings, maps, and objects. The founders of MCNY were motivated in part by the loss of older buildings and spurred on by what scholars have called an 'indoor preservation' movement, an attempt to preserve physical remnants of the past in educational spaces. At the same time, the new city that was erupting in the interwar years, marked by subways, skyscrapers, and new forms of housing, captivated the



Fig. 5. Bernice Abbott, *Court of the First Model Tenements in New York City* (1936). Museum Purchase with funds from the Mrs. Elon Hooker Acquisition Fund, 40.140.48.

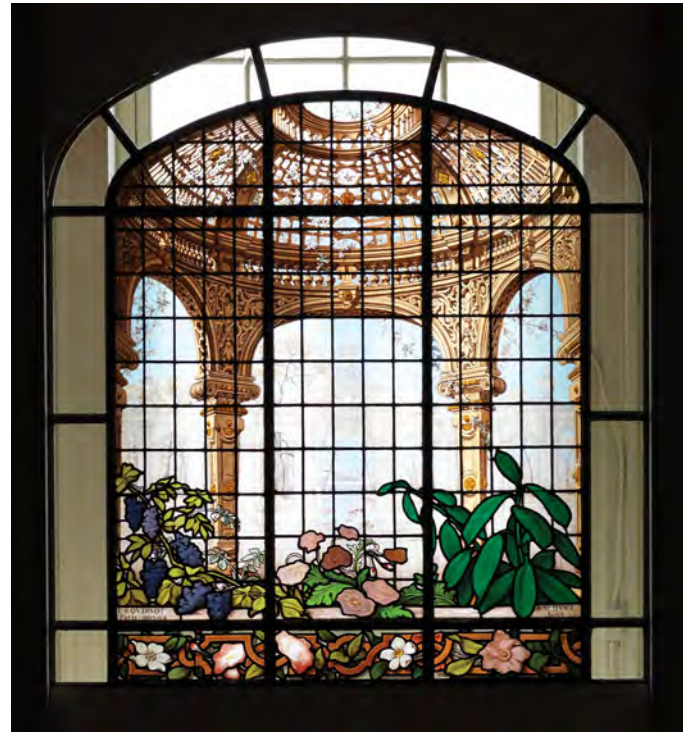


Fig. 6. Eugène Oudinot, *Conservatory Window* (1883–1884). Anonymous Gift, 53.1.29.

early curators, who also aspired to document the rapid progress of the modern city. These stories are told not just in the hundreds of thousands of images of the city in MCNY's collection, but in maps, planning documents, architectural models, and physical elements salvaged from buildings and structures long gone. In the exhibition the section on 'Place' is broken out into two subsections: 'Building Up' and 'Tearing Down.'

### Building Up / Tearing Down

Although the modern historic preservation movement in New York City is often tied to the protests responding to the loss of Pennsylvania Station in 1963, pressure to save older buildings had emerged in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By the 1920s, when the Museum was founded, some civic leaders and social elites mourned that 'old New York' was slipping away. By collecting and displaying physical artifacts and a vast catalog of images, the Museum contributed to this movement for preservation in the 1920s, and tapped into a hunger for the past, championing visual narratives of New York's founding and its ascent as a capital of commerce and culture.

In 1937, MCNY exhibited Berenice Abbott's series *Changing New York*, a landmark project funded by the Federal Art Project that documented the rapidly transforming city. The Museum holds the 695 negatives Abbott created for the project as well as multiple versions of the 307 photographs printed by Abbott herself (fig. 5).

This is one of five stained glass windows designed by architect Richard Morris Hunt. Among his many credits in New York, Hunt designed the façade and great hall of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the pedestal for the Statue of Liberty. Hunt designed these windows for the home of financier Henry G. Marquand on East 68<sup>th</sup> Street. The mansion stood from 1884 to 1913 and, like many of its time, was torn down and replaced by an apartment building (which was then named The Marquand) (fig. 6).

At the same time that the loss of historic mansions and other buildings motivated the growth of the Museum's collection in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Museum's first leaders also celebrated the city's ongoing development, and the collection documents the continual reinvention and modernization of the city's landscape that is a fundamental feature of this densely packed metropolis, through objects as diverse as construction tools, architects' models, and dramatic portraits of a city of the rise.



Fig. 8. Jacob A. Riis, *Indians (Iroquois) at 511 Broome Street* (c. 1890, printed later). Gift of Roger William Riis 90.13.4.288.

### People: Power Brokers / Everyday Heroes

Building a collection about a city is a project to document the people who live there, and the MCNY collection is a

rich archive of both the ordinary and extraordinary New Yorkers who have shaped our city. In its earliest decades, the MCNY collection focused on the rarefied world of New York's elite, and the Museum has long collected around the city's power brokers, celebrities, and even some of its more notorious politicians.

Yet in keeping with the expectation of a city museum as a full record of the city itself, the Museum's collecting practice—much like its exhibitions—has also long reflected a more democratic vision of New York. Objects made, used, and cherished by ordinary New Yorkers have been part of the collecting strategy since the Museum's founding, but a push to reflect the city's true diversity began in earnest in the last third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



Fig. 7. Lewis Wickes Hine, *Empire State Building Construction* (1930). Permanent Loan to MCNY.

Skyscrapers, and their construction, were a continual source of fascination for photographers in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Lewis Hine, himself an activist and advocate for labor issues, created some of the most renowned and familiar images of the Empire State Building's rapid ascent and the workers constructing the iconic tower (fig. 7).

The earliest MCNY curators established a goal of bringing history to the present day and representing 'the various nationalities' that comprise our vast metropolis. Early additions to the collection holdings like the photography of Jacob Riis and Alexander Alland, who documented the intimate worlds of a variety of communities, led this effort. Subsequent collecting has focused on objects that



Fig. 9. Laurence Kaminski, Demonstration Keg (1893). Gift of Mrs. Peter Kaminski, 75.45.1A-B.

highlight the dress, play, and artisanry of everyday New Yorkers.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Jacob Riis was a pioneer in pairing journalism with photography to expose—and sometimes sensationalize—living conditions in New York’s poorest neighborhoods. His collection of photography was largely forgotten after his death, until his negatives were discovered by photographer Alexander Alland and donated to the Museum of the City of New York, which held the first exhibition on his reform work in 1947. The women in this image were residents of the New York Indian Colony, a community around Broome Street where about 100 Indigenous people lived and worked as models, performers, and craftspeople (fig. 8).

Polish immigrant Laurence Kaminski spent three years creating this keg to demonstrate his skill as a cooper, or barrel maker. Kaminski, who emigrated from Poland to Greenpoint, Brooklyn in 1873 offered \$1,000 to anyone who could duplicate his handiwork. According to his daughter-in-law, who donated the keg to the Museum, he had no takers on his challenge (fig. 9).

**Influence**

Embedded in the mission of MCNY is the notion that New York is one of the most influential cities in the world. As a creative hub for fashion, theater, and art—and a center for media and marketing—New York has been the birthplace and showcase for both visual and material culture that has reached a global audience.

While the original MCNY founders intended the Museum to serve as a kind of attic by collecting and preserving material goods that were family heirlooms, providing a link to the history and ascendance of some of New York’s most prominent families, and to a way of life that was fading in

the 1920s. Yet the Museum’s collection has also preserved the output of the city itself, capturing the spectacle and the ingenuity of New Yorkers, whose ability both to produce and display has sustained the city through its most challenging moments.

*Produced by NY*

The collection grew at a rapid pace in the 25 years following the opening of the Museum’s Fifth Avenue building. One of the major collecting areas that shaped this growth was material that was not simply owned by New Yorkers but made by and in New York, prompting the acquisition of everything from clothing to cartoons, chandeliers to teddy bears, with a particular emphasis on theater as an encapsulation of the singular energy and creativity in this city.



American-born couturier Main Rousseau Bocher established his label Mainbocher in Paris in 1929 but relocated his business to 57<sup>th</sup> Street at the onset of World War II. In a diverse career that spanned decades, Mainbocher designed uniforms for women in the US Navy, and theatrical costumes, including this look for the character of Maria in act one of *The Sound of Music*. MCNY holds a vast collection of Mainbocher looks, dating from his time in Paris in the 1930s up until the closure of his New York salon in 1971 (fig. 10).

Fig. 10. Mainbocher, Day dress worn by Mary Martin as Maria Rainer in *The Sound of Music* (1959). Gift of Mary Martin, 68.128.34A-E.

*Personal Style*

The earliest leaders of the Museum viewed ‘costume’—clothing and accessories—as an integral means of presenting the story of the city and its people, and some of the city’s most influential style icons have wardrobe pieces in the Museum’s collection. Showcasing the work of blue-chip designers such as Dior, Givenchy, and Balenciaga, the wardrobes of figures such as Diana Vreeland, Leena Horn, Gloria Swanson, Marlene Dietrich, and Sarah Jessica Parker—to name just a few—are held in the Museum’s costume collection.



Fig. 11. Halston, Evening ensemble worn by Lauren Bacall (c. 1975). Gift of Lauren Bacall, 85.78.4A-D.



Fig. 12. Jamel Shabazz, Untitled (Man in yellow hat and jacket) (1981). © Jamel Shabazz

### Interiors

In its early years, the Museum was at the vanguard of utilizing professionally curated decorative arts and costume collections to delve into the historic past. In organizing these rooms of material goods, the MCNY curators of the 1930s envisioned spaces that would build a narrative of progress through the juxtaposition of a

cross-section of personal artifacts almost like a stage set for a historical pageant.

The MCNY ‘period alcoves,’ which were on view until the modernization of the building in 2012, were a part of the initial vision of the founders, who acquired a trove of gowns, tea sets, tables, mirrors, and chandeliers from notable New Yorkers who no longer had space for such opulent goods. The alcoves were eclectic in their curation; some were rooms pulled in entirety from stately homes of families like Pierrepont and Whitney, to valorize New York’s historic past. Others were more of a pastiche, referencing time periods and styles of décor to relate a sense of progress and stylistic development in the city. For the exhibition, we created a space that was a gesture to the alcoves; an arrangement of collection highlights in a playful, anachronistic juxtaposition inspired by the rooms that once sat recreated in the same gallery.

### Conclusion

Reflecting on the 1920s context in which MCNY was founded, the changes afoot in the city were a cause for alarm for some but also marked an opportunity to collect material and educate New Yorkers about the city’s past. An elite and patriotic narrative ran through these early works and the museum’s first curators captured little of the cultural innovation—including the Harlem Renaissance—happening in their midst.

Today, through a range of programming and an ongoing collecting effort, MCNY strives to stay attuned to the unceasing dynamism in our midst. As our city rises to meet the challenges, newcomers, creative communities, and physical transformations that continually reshape this city, so continues the work of the museum dedicated to capturing that impact.

Fig. 13. Wurts Brothers, Period alcove, 1950–1965. Wurts Bros. Collection. Gift of Richard Wurts, X2010.7.1.16168.



# A Cultural Re-awakening in the City that Never Sleeps

## The Museum of the City of New York Emerges Stronger and More Inclusive Post-Pandemic

JAMES C. HORTON\*

New York City, often referred to as the city that never sleeps, is renowned for its vibrant cultural landscape. At the heart of this cultural re-awakening stands the Museum of the City of New York (MCNY), a historic institution founded in 1923. Over the years, the museum has evolved, facing challenges and seizing opportunities to redefine its purpose and engage with the community. Let's explore the museum's transformative journey during the pandemic, highlighting its commitment to activism, inclusivity, community engagement, and youth empowerment.

In March 2020, the world was shaken by the COVID-19 pandemic and civil uprisings, bringing cultural institutions, including the MCNY, to a standstill. Forced to close its doors, the museum's team embarked on an innovative approach to stay connected with the community.

The Museum was already known for its revolutionary work around documenting activism in NYC through its permanent *Activist New York Exhibition* which speaks to the city's history of activism and the people who have propelled social change from the 1600s to today. However on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 They launched an exhibition called *New York Responds: The First Six Months*. The show took an in depth look at the still-unfolding events of 2020 through the eyes of over 100 New Yorkers. The crowd-sourced exhibition presented objects, photographs, videos, and other artworks that documented and interpreted the COVID 19 pandemic, the racial justice uprisings, and the responses of New Yorkers as they fought to cope, survive, and forge a better future. A jury of a dozen New Yorkers representing many walks of life helped to make the selection from among tens of thousands of submissions received from individual artists and from partner institutions. On July 23, the Museum unveiled the first phase of this exhibition, an outdoor installation

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Fig. 1. REACH Class of 2022. © MCNY





featuring 14 images that had been submitted as part of our ongoing collecting efforts. Together, these powerful artifacts and artworks speak to the dramatic effects of these unprecedented months on the city, its residents, and the dynamics of urban life itself.

Moreover, the MCNY took the opportunity to delve into its Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) work, which started in the spring of 2018. The IDEA Committee was charged with devising an institutional action plan based not only in its audience-driven mission, but in its committed values regarding inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility (IDEA). With a focused approach on addressing systemic inequity and enhancing accountability, the museum developed a comprehensive IDEA Action Plan. By cultivating an inclusive workforce, diversifying the board of trustees, and integrating IDEA into everyday operations, the MCNY aimed to become a more representative and accessible institution and by embracing inclusivity, diversity, and accessibility, the museum redefined its role as a cultural institution and became a catalyst for positive change. The three point *IDEA Action Plan* consist of the three most pertinent points of intersectionality at the MCNY:

### People

- 1) Cultivating inclusive and equitably diverse workforce at all levels of Museum staffing
  - a. Recruitment and Hiring
  - b. Onboarding and Education
  - c. Retention, Promotion, Succession
- 2) Cultivate an Inclusive and Diverse Board of Trustees
  - a. Create Board-focused IDEA-related education opportunities
  - b. Include diverse voices on the Nominating Committee in order to meet Board goals as detailed in the adopted Strategic Plan (*medium term goal*).
- 3) Integration of all IDEA Plan and Processes into Everyday Operations of the Museum.
  - a. Address current Museum policy and procedures in conjunction with established workplace IDEA values, with specific attention to safe and responsible channels for claim (*short term goal*).
  - b. Refine statement of organizational values and norms, as part of updating the Employee Handbook (*short-term goal*).
  - c. Refine statement of organizational values and norms, as part of updating the Employee Handbook (*short-term goal*).
  - d. Coordinate tracking of IDEA Plan of Action progress (*short term goal*).

### Places

- 1) Improve access to all content (digital and on-site) and public spaces and the workplace.

- a. Take advantage of resources and programs in the city, centralize information, and offer training opportunities on improving access (*short-term goal*).
  - b. Expand use of audio tours in multiple languages, large print text guides, and partner with organizations that program exhibition spaces for diverse, intergenerational audiences of all ages and abilities (*long term goal*).
  - c. Explore funding options to support improved tools to increase accessibility and resources to support these efforts (*long-term goal*).
- 2) Cultivate Diverse Audience Onsite, Remotely, and Digitally
    - a. Expand outreach plan for Marketing & Communications department (*short-term goal*).
    - b. Continue to dedicate resources for partnerships and diversity-focused marketing consultants (*medium term goal*).
    - c. Explore opportunities for pop-up installations across five boroughs (*long term goal*).

### Programs

- 1) Diversity and Inclusion in Content and Collection
  - a. Identify subject matters that speak to New York's diversity (*short-term goal*)
  - b. Explore new and expand upon existing avenues for engaging with communities through committees, advisors, outreach, affinity groups, etc. (*medium term goal*).
  - c. Investigate possibilities for being more nimble when collecting around contemporary issues with time sensitive parameters (*medium term goal*).
  - d. Build career pathways through paid internships, partnerships, and academic credit opportunities to prepare young learners for museum professions (*long term goal*).

In the face of crises such as pandemics and social unrest, communities often turn to cultural institutions for solace, inspiration, and a sense of connection. The Museum of the City of New York served as a prime example of how cultural engagement can contribute to community resilience and well-being.

Recognizing the importance of youth development and community engagement, the MCNY created a new executive leadership position in 2021, the Vice President of Education & Engagement. This executive leadership role oversaw the museum's Schwarz Education Center and Public Programs. The objective was to hire someone who



Fig. 2. REACH Girls. © Barnabas Crosby



Fig. 4. REACH Girls 2. © Barnabas Crosby



Fig. 3. REACH Photography. © Barnabas Crosby

could merge youth development, community engagement, artistic practice, and pedagogy, while also shaping the museum's social impact narrative. With this appointment, a new strand of programming called Community Based Initiatives (CBI) was introduced. The inaugural CBI program, known as the *Research, Education, Arts, Community and History (REACH)* initiative, launched in the summer of 2022 (fig. 1).

It provided New York City youth with opportunities to explore various art forms, including visual arts, performing arts, and media arts, during a six-week paid internship. Participants created work inspired by the museum's exhibitions, fostering storytelling, creativity, and reflection. The program aimed to empower the future generation of New Yorkers to contribute positively to their communities and shape the future of the city. The REACH program has

continued to evolve and offered a Photography course for teens which ran during the spring of 2023. The young people in the program came from all five Burroughs, truly representing the diverse fabric of what makes New York, New York (figs. 2-4).

The MCNY's redefined engagement through experiential education and the Public Programs department faced the challenge of re-engaging the community after the pandemic hiatus. Realizing the need to move beyond traditional lecture-based series, the team developed a series called *Cocktails & Culture*. These monthly events, held during extended museum hours, offered a unique experience for visitors to enjoy live performances, DJs, food, and specialty cocktails (fig. 5).. The aim was to create a welcoming space that celebrated the resilience, creative brilliance, and diversity of New York City.

Building on this success, the Public Programs team expanded its offerings to include *Soul of the City: Live @ MCNY*, a series of intimate musical performances by a range of New York City artists. These live acoustic sets not only entertained the audience but also provided insights into the personal stories behind the music.

While public programs redefined who they were in terms how they engaged and changed their relationship to the community, getting museum patrons to stay longer and shift the public's relationship to the museum. Our traditional education programs, The Schwarz Center evolved in a different way by increasing access to their

programs through and expansive online virtual offering both synchronous and asynchronous and the shift allowed schools and students to "Zoom into the Museum". In these online and virtual offerings, the education staff was able to serve a broader intersection of students and tailor the experience to the teachers needs actually creating more of a bespoke offering meeting students where they were. The education was also able to offer virtual citywide offerings for free especially during holidays and heritage months like Women's History Month, Black History Month, and Pride Month which celebrates LGBTQ+ Culture. The key to any successful education program and serving students is to be able to be agile and responsive to student needs. The Schwarz Center can attribute its success to that and one other thing which is being able to create authentic connections to the students that they serve. Creating authentic connections with student populations means being able to not only teach the history of New York City but to also connecting the history to what's happening in city now and making sure that the history lives.

The Museum of the City of New York exemplifies the transformative power of cultural institutions in re-awakening a city. Through the challenges posed by the pandemic and civil unrest, the museum embraced innovation and inclusivity. By engaging with the community, empowering the future generation, and redefining traditional programs, the MCNY has revitalized its purpose as a cultural hub. As New York City moves forward, the museum stands as a beacon of hope, celebrating the past, present, and future of the city that never sleeps.



Fig. 5. Community Celebration. © Flip Wolak

# The Tenement Museum in New York: a museum dedicated to the memory of a neighbourhood and its inhabitants

ANDRÉA DELAPLACE\*



Fig. 1. View of the Tenement Museum, 2014. © Andréa Delaplace

The Lower East Side Tenement Museum (Fig. 1), located at 97 (recently renovated) and 103 Orchard Street in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, New York, opened in 1992. The five-story brick building, where the museum is

located, housed approximately 7,000 people from over 20 countries between 1863 and 1935. The building was built by the Prussian immigrant Lukas Glockner in 1863 and has been modified several times to comply with the city's various housing laws.

When first built, it contained 22 apartments and a living room in the basement. Over time, four basement apartments and two basements were converted into a commercial space, leaving 16 apartments in the building. Modifications over the years include the installation of interior plumbing (cold running water, two toilets per floor), an air shaft and gas supply followed by electricity. In 1935, rather than continuing to modify the building, the owner evacuated the residents, blocked the upper windows thus closing the upper floors and leaving only the first floors and the basement available to the residents. No other changes were made until the museum moved into the building in 1988. As such, the building constitutes a sort of time capsule, a palimpsest of the various stages of occupation of the place. It reflects 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century living conditions and changing notions of what constitutes acceptable housing.<sup>1</sup>

The museum was created by two historians and social activists Ruth Abram<sup>2</sup> and Anita Jacobson who had the idea of creating a place of memory (*lieu de mémoire*) dedicated to the history of immigration in the

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<sup>1</sup> The issue of social housing is strongly highlighted by the Tenement Museum, which also wants to be a centre of activism for (public) housing in the United States. See the museum's website: <https://www.tenement.org/about-us/> (accessed October 08, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> Ruth Abram is also the founder of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience and that speaks to her social justice perspective. That's why the Tenement museum always had a strong activist position for social inclusion and equity, especially when talking about housing and migrants.

district. In fact, they almost gave up on their idea because they couldn't easily find a building that could accommodate their project.

The Tenement Museum was officially founded in 1988 but it did not open its doors until 1992 when the first visits took place and gave access to the first restored apartment: "the 1878 home of the German-Jewish Gumpertz family".<sup>3</sup> The first step was to open a total of six apartments to the public. The museum presents to the visitors a reconstruction of what would have been the refurbishing of the apartments at the time of the occupation of the different families presented during the guided tours.

Visitors see the museum with a guide who tells them the history of the place and accompanies them along a fixed route. When buying tickets, visitors choose one of many routes organised around the stories of immigrants of different origins. As a whole, the museum promotes a multicultural perspective<sup>4</sup> highlighting the cultural diversity of American society and history.

### 1.1 The Lower East Side neighbourhood

In the case of the Tenement Museum (Fig. 2), it is also important to understand the importance of the neighbourhood that surrounds it in creating a narrative about the history of immigration in New York. It is above all a museum that is well anchored in the city and in the neighbourhood where it is located. Thus, it is from the personal stories and trajectories of former inhabitants of the buildings that house the museum that the visitor discovers stories of immigrants from different origins and periods in time.

The Lower East Side is a neighbourhood located in southeast Manhattan in New York City, with its hub traditionally being located between Bowery and East River, and Canal Street and Houston Street and eventually stretched up to 14th Street bordering on Second Avenue. Traditionally an immigrant and working-class neighbourhood, it began to be transformed by a rapid movement of gentrification from the mid-2000s,

<sup>3</sup> This guided tour is still part of the options offered by the museum. Indeed, each course presents a different "ethnic" group of immigrants who have lived in these tenement buildings in New York.

<sup>4</sup> The concept of multiculturalism is quite complex and we will not go into an in-depth discussion in this article. However, we would like to give a brief definition. The term multicultural expresses a de facto situation, the reality of a society made up of several cultural groups whose cohesion is maintained in accordance with a certain number of values and norms. People working in the museum field in North America tend not to use the word 'multicultural' anymore. They now talk about cultural diversity/culturally diverse people. Multiculturalism has a 1970s feeling about it, trying to suggest that everyone got along, whereas cultural diversity is more accurate. That's why we are using both terms here.



Fig. 2. Entrance to the museum, 2014. © Andréa Delaplace

prompting The National Trust for Historic Preservation to place the neighbourhood on a list of places most in danger of disappearing in the United States.

The district is known for its cultural diversity and the strong immigrant population that has historically occupied this district. The bulk of immigrants who came to New York in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries settled on the Lower East Side. By the 1840s, large numbers of German immigrants were settling in the area, and much of it was called Little Germany or Kleindeutschland. Groups of Irish and Italian immigrants, Jews from Eastern Europe, as well as Greeks, Hungarians, Poles, Romanians, Russians, Slovaks and Ukrainians, settled in relatively homogeneous enclaves in this part of the city. In 1920, the Jewish Quarter was one of the largest of these ethnic groups, with 400,000 people, with several businesses on Orchard and Grand Streets, and many Yiddish theatres.

Living conditions in these buildings were less than ideal, although some improvements came from a change in zoning laws that required 'new law' buildings to be constructed with air shafts between them so that fresh air and light could reach the apartments. Yet reform movements, like the one that began with Jacob A. Riis' book *How the Other Half Lives*<sup>5</sup> continued to attempt to alleviate housing and sanitation issues in the

<sup>5</sup> *How the Other Half Lives* is a pioneering work of photojournalism by Jacob Riis, documenting the subhuman living conditions in the slums of New York in the 1880s. It served as the basis for future muckraking journalism by exposing the slums to the upper and middle class of New York. The book quickly became a landmark in the annals of social reform. Riis documented the filth, disease, exploitation and overcrowding that characterised the experience of over a million immigrants. He helped push tenement reform to the forefront of New York's political agenda and prompted then-Police Commissioner Theodore Roosevelt to shut down "poor houses" as a result. Roosevelt later called Riis "New York's most useful citizen." Riis' work also inspired Jack London to write a similar article about London's East End, titled *People of the Abyss*.

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neighbourhood through new buildings constructed with settlements, such as Henry Street Settlement and other welfare agencies. New York City thus developed its first public housing project: the First Houses dating to 1935-36 (an early project that would influence other similar projects throughout the country).

Another reason the tenants were evicted in the 1930s is that the City introduced a new bylaw that buildings over three or four stories had to have elevators and they could not afford to put them in during the Depression, so only the lower floors continued to be occupied. This change in building codes explains why the building was left relatively unaltered, making it unique.

### 1.2. Discover the life of different immigrant communities

The central questions posed by historians working at the museum are: How did people live their lives? How were the intimate spaces shared by immigrants laid out?

The Tenement Museum is a history museum that pursues ongoing research into the history of the neighbourhood and the inhabitants of the tenements, allowing the museum to continue its development. By looking at different personal stories chosen by the researchers with a more critical analysis, we can perceive lasting legacies of racism. The way in which different groups of immigrants have been pitted against each other as forced into different treatment and social rules according to race: European immigrants, for example, are treated very differently from African-Americans (see the example of the Moores mentioned above).

The main objective of this institution is to offer visitors the opportunity to discover the life of the different immigrant communities who lived in the Tenement buildings of New York's Lower East Side district. Each guided tour offers the opportunity to discover a family, and in particular a community of immigrants (Italians, Irish, Germans, etc.). Visitors choose a theme that interests them and participate in a pertinent, guided tour.<sup>6</sup> Specialised guides use stories to lead visitors through the spaces. Overall, the museum has historically engaged in a dialectic with its public, immersing visitors in the architecture and its development to convey various periods of social history. Hence, the guide's role is to stimulate discussion among tour participants. This approach is very different from typical museum tours where the guide has all the expertise and the visitors simply

<sup>6</sup> During my visit to the Tenement Museum, I had the opportunity to take all three guided tours that were offered that day. I was the only one to repeat visits and the guides were surprised to see me again each time (most visitors do only one visit). The price being quite high, the vast majority of visitors will not go on all the visits offered by the museum, except for researchers or people passionate about the subject.

listen. The mediation created at the Tenement Museum brings a real depth to the discussions and becomes the centre of the museographic narrative itself.

In essence, each visit presents a part of the building where the visitor finds him- or herself in the old building of such or such family. You could say that the museum presents Period Rooms focusing on the personal history of families with an immigrant background. Although, for many visitors, the discussions and information brought during the guided tour become more memorable than the rooms themselves. That's why the museum is only visited via guided tours capable of unveiling the former residents' personal stories and wider sociological and historical contexts. This approach recalls what Jean Davallon implicates a museological perspective which he calls an "exhibition-show":

On the one hand, we have, for example, the reconstructions of ecosystems in which visitors can circulate and which are heirs to both dioramas, period rooms and parks (bioparks such as the Biodôme de Montréal). On the other hand, it is the exhibition-shows that govern the movement of the visitor through strong scenographies (spatial or theatrical staging); or who take care of the visitor by means of an audio-guiding system such as the diffusion of texts by infrared.<sup>7</sup>

The Tenement Museum therefore presents rather this approach of exhibition-show where the visitor is invited to 'revisit' the different periods of the history of immigration as well as to discover how the immigrants of different ethnic origins settled in the neighbourhood. By inviting the visitor to discover their homes and personal journeys in an immersive setting, the museum's designers have highlighted both the importance of individual memories and that of the objects bearing witness to these stories.

To a certain extent, the Tenement Museum presents an exhibition that could be complementary to that presented at Ellis Island (the migrant experience<sup>8</sup> presented through

<sup>7</sup> Jean Davallon, "Le musée est-il vraiment un média ?". *Publics et Musées*, n°2. Regards sur l'évolution des musées (sous la direction de Jean Davallon), 1992, pp. 99-123.

<sup>8</sup> This expression that we use here was put forward during the analysis of exhibitions centred on routes that invite the visitor to follow in the footsteps of migrants (developed during my doctoral research). The idea behind this expression is that migration museums invite the visitor to follow in the footsteps of migrants who have gone through the various administrative and health sorting processes to finally gain access to the new host country. This approach thus invites the visitor to put themselves in the place of the migrant and therefore to reflect on the difficulties encountered by them during the different stages of their journey.

the visit of the audio guide). If Ellis Island<sup>9</sup> talks about the arrival of migrants facing official controls and sorting before entering the new host society, the Tenement Museum talks about the life stories of these migrants once settled in the United-States. The narrative choice highlights the oral histories which are at the heart of the museum's participatory strategies.<sup>10</sup>

As one of the museum's Instagram posts of March 2018 (Fig. 3) says: "You have settled all your affairs, packed only your most necessary and precious possessions, said heartfelt and sombre goodbyes to people and a life you may never see again. Embark on an epic physical and emotional journey to America. Check all that off the list – a new life awaits! But now what?? That's exactly what the Tenement Museum is asking for - come hear the stories, triumphs and challenges of people who shaped what it means to be an American."<sup>11</sup>

However, it must be pointed out that most of the accounts until the acquisition of the new buildings were devoted mainly to European immigrant communities. The opening of the new building with more ethnically diverse accounts of immigration could begin highlighting the life paths of immigrants from other countries of the American continent (and in particular from Latin America) but also those of African-Americans. These curatorial decisions created a broader perspective on immigration to New York and, more broadly speaking, to the United States.<sup>12</sup> The exhibit titled *Under One Roof*, on display since December 2017, is located at 103 Orchard Street, above the Visitor Center. It explores the lives of three immigrant families: one that fled the Holocaust, another from Puerto Rico and one from China. Continuous, new research opened the way for greater ethnic diversity to be displayed among the tenement inhabitants, thus including new groups in the immigrant narratives offered to the public.

<sup>9</sup> In the next CAMOC Review we are going to have an article dedicated to the ongoing creation of the new long term exhibition at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum.

<sup>10</sup> The Tenement Museum is developing an ongoing project to collect oral history from neighbourhood residents. The working basis for the production of new visits and exhibitions proposed by the museum is therefore the individual and collective memories of immigrants, thus creating a participatory process since without the contribution of testimonies and personal journeys researchers would not have as much material to create the various museographic and narrative itineraries.

<sup>11</sup> Tenement Museum Instagram advertisement campaign, post posted 03/22/2018. <https://www.instagram.com/thetenementmuseum/?hl=fr> and [https://www.instagram.com/p/Bgn4aN0g33p/?hl=fr&taken-by=tenementmuseum\\_shop](https://www.instagram.com/p/Bgn4aN0g33p/?hl=fr&taken-by=tenementmuseum_shop)

<sup>12</sup> We allow ourselves here to highlight immigration in New York and its history as a good sample representing the types of immigrant communities found in the country. Even if, certainly, each region of the United States offers different demographics representing the ethnic groups of origin of immigrants, New York remains a large urban and economic centre which therefore attracts many immigrants, thus making it possible to have a fairly relevant sample of American multiculturalism.

Recently, it was movements like Black Lives Matter<sup>13</sup> that contributed most significantly to creating visibility around systemic racism in many institutional structures making space for the paths and stories of African Americans to be (re)told within the national historical narrative. After the 2020's protests, that echoed all around the world, were claiming for the retelling of national histories with a decolonized perspective and, for example, not including slavery traders or colonial officers as national heroes into museum's historical narratives as public monuments, the museum field became even more aware of the importance of changing perspectives and giving space for voices previously under-represented in the national narratives.<sup>14</sup>

In the spring of 2021, the Tenement Museum added "Reclaiming Black Spaces" to its list of available walking tours and virtual activities<sup>15</sup>, inviting visitors to reflect on the lived experiences of Black communities in the Lower East Side. This was inspired by a find in the museum's collection regarding two men named Joseph Moore. These men were both residents of New York, were around the same age, and had the same occupation. Their biggest difference was that one was a white Irishman and lived in the museum's location at 97 Orchard Street, and the other was a black man who lived in a nearby building. The museum recreated the kitchen of Joseph Moore the Irishman and opened the apartment recreating the home of Joseph Moore and his family in 2022. This will be the museum's first permanent apartment exhibit depicting the lives of black inhabitants of the Tenements.

The museum also offers tours about Irish migrants showing how the divide between Protestants and Catholics was as strong as division along racial lines and how the Irish<sup>16</sup> were systematically marginalised. In fact, many of the now considered early migrant groups, such as Irish, Italian,

<sup>13</sup> Black Lives Matter is a political movement born in 2013 in the United States within the African-American community, which militates against systemic racism against black people. Its members are mobilising against fatal attacks on black people by white police officers. They mainly denounce racial profiling, police violence as well as racial inequality in the criminal justice system of the United States. The various spring/summer 2020 events have propelled the movement internationally and the discussion on the importance of fighting systemic racism in several countries around the world.

<sup>14</sup> Neil MacGregor *À monde nouveau, nouveaux musées*. Les musées, les monuments et la communauté réinventée, collection Chaire du Louvre, coédition musée du Louvre éditions / Hazan, 2021, 272 p.

<sup>15</sup> During the pandemic the museum developed their virtual presence and created projects where personal memories are shared during the presentation of an object related to these memories. The *Your story, our history* project is a tool that allows educators to invest with students (schools and colleges) to ask them to share 'migration stories' from their own family or school background. Students who agree to participate in the project must present an object related to their personal or family memories of immigration and from it tell their experience.

<sup>16</sup> Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

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German and Jewish immigrants<sup>17</sup> were racialised and later went through a “whitening process” when being integrated into American society. So having the memories of an Irish man alongside those of a Black<sup>18</sup> man is a poignant comparison that helps reveal different processes of racialisation and systemic racism in the United-States.

As a result, the new building acquired by the Tenement Museum has therefore enabled the museum to tell stories of families of diverse origins (Puerto Rican, Chinese, etc.) and thus broaden the scope of museum discourse. These initiatives bring the Tenement Museum’s contents to a wider audience and create growth opportunities for an institution dedicated to showcasing the history of migration in New York’s Lower East Side as well as many other equally important ancillary themes like public

housing<sup>19</sup>, issues of race, gender and social justice<sup>20</sup> in the United States. While this museum focuses on a neighbourhood, it must be said that it is in no way parochial as it amplifies these issues, bringing them to a national and international level.

Museums have a “duty of memory” (*devoir de mémoire*)<sup>21</sup> regarding cities and their inhabitants. We use this term that is related to the ethical responsibility of heritage sites as city museums not only collect the

<sup>17</sup> Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998.

<sup>18</sup> Barbara J. Field, *Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America*. *New Left Review*, 1990, 181: 95–118.

<sup>19</sup> Cette thématique est importante dans le contexte américain, principalement dans de grandes villes comme New-York et Chicago, par exemple. Dans cette dernière, un musée consacré entièrement à l’histoire du Public housing dans le pays. Le *National Public Housing Museum* a été créé en 2022. Pour plus d’informations, veuillez consulter le site web du musée: <https://www.nphm.org/>

<sup>20</sup> En juin 2020, le Tenement Museum a publié une déclaration dans laquelle nous nous engageons, ainsi que notre institution, à lutter contre le racisme. Afin d’être transparents dans nos efforts, nous nous sommes engagés à informer le public avec un rapport d’étape continu. Pour plus d’informations veuillez consulter le site web du musée: <https://www.tenement.org/about-us/commitment-to-anti-racism/>

<sup>21</sup> Tina Magazzini and Stefano Piemontese (eds.) (2019). *Constructing Roma migrants : European narratives and local governance*, Cham : Springer International Publishing, IMISCOE.



Fig. 3. Instagram Post by Tenement Museum, March 2018.



oral history (and material culture) of inhabitants born and raised in its environment but also migrants who chose to live in another city or country for economic reasons, as well as refugees from war contexts and political exiles that become part of the city's history as they settle in their new home. Hence the museum becomes an institution that collects and saves

testimonies—without sidelining painful and difficult stories—with the intent to prevent such events from reoccurring. The Tenement Museum's approach to migration and housing history remains unique as its multivocal narratives effectively include the memories of diverse migrant groups, refugees and exiles in the history of the City of New York.



Fig. 4. View from one of the guided tours at the Tenement Museum. © Tenement Museum



Fig.5. View from one of the guided tours in one of the apartments. © Tenement Museum



Fig. 6. View from one of the guided tours at the entrance hall of 97 Orchard Street. © Tenement Museum

## CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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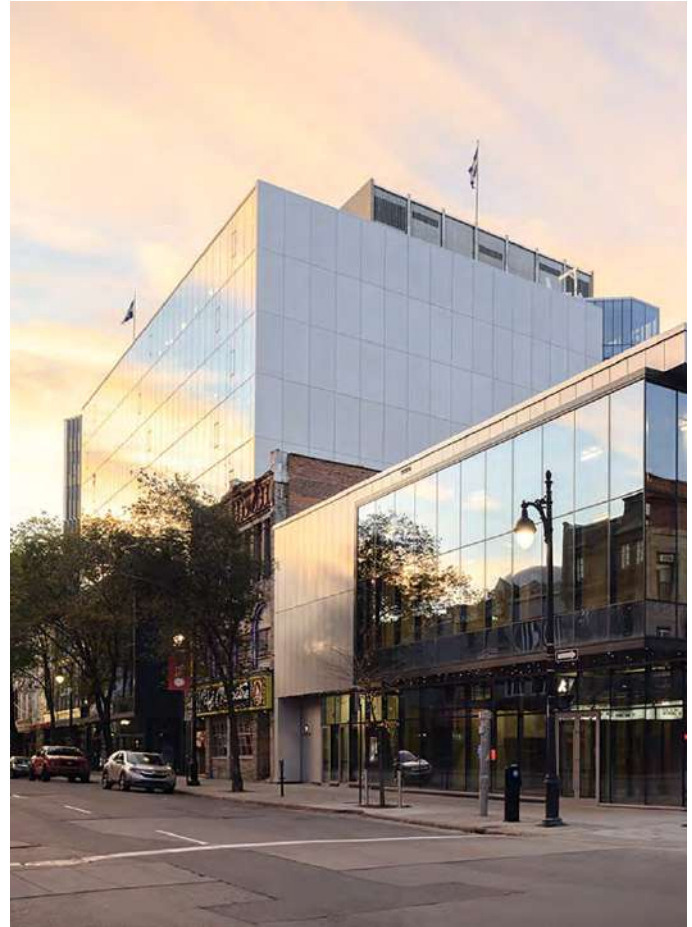
The texts should be concise (up to 1000-1500 words), having not only informative but also an analytical component, and be accompanied with complementing images or other visual materials of your choice. For technical reasons, horizontal layout is preferred for images.

For text proposals and submission, for questions or clarifications you might need, please write to the co-editors at:

[camoc.review@gmail.com](mailto:camoc.review@gmail.com)

# Stretching the Boundaries of Its Citizen Museum Model: MEM

WRITTEN BY JOHANE BERGERON / TRANSLATED BY YVONNE A. MAZUREK\*



Figs. 1a.-b. MEM's or the Centre des mémoires montréalaises' new building with the logo featured on its façade. © Ophélie Raffin (left) and © Sokhan Sim (right)

Created by the City of Montreal in 1983, the *Centre d'histoire de Montréal* (CHM) began its transformation from a municipal institution dedicated to local history into a new museum and civic space in 2018, changing its name to MEM - *Centre des mémoires montréalaises* (<https://memmtl.ca/>). By collecting and disseminating personal accounts, MEM is a pioneer in the production and promotion of oral history linked to Montrealers' memories. Its activities intend to stretch the boundaries of conventional models of collecting memory. By promoting citizens' voices, MEM affirms its intent to be a museum designed for, by and with

citizens. It wants to give pride of place to the people who shape the city's "montréalité", as well as to the collections it safeguards. Its narrative and relational perspectives have broadened to align with the new institutional mandate of co-creation and shared authority. The following article records a conversation between Annabelle Laliberté, MEM Division Manager, and the museologist Johane Bergeron.<sup>1</sup>

## JB: Can you give us a brief history of MEM from the founding of CHM to its current metamorphosis?

AL: The city of Montreal set up a number of cultural infrastructures contemporaneously: the network of *maisons de la culture* and the *Centre d'histoire de Montréal*

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<sup>1</sup> The following conversation originally took place on 4 May 2023.

## MONTREAL'S CITIZEN MUSEUM

which quickly made a name for itself as an interpretation centre telling Montreal's stories and showcasing its history. In the 2000s, the institution made a major shift focusing on people, citizens and Montrealers, and placing greater interest in communities and newcomers. Inspired by the Museum of the Person in Brazil<sup>2</sup>, this approach allowed others to inform the content of their memories, opening doors for the existing team to think about different ways of doing museology. We began to collect memories in exhibitions such as *Quartiers Disparus*, *Scandale* and *Expo 67*<sup>3</sup>. In so doing, memory earned a place in our databases, leading us to adopt new methods for collecting oral history. This different approach to talking about the city was so successful that the municipal administration recognized the opportunity to distinguish CHM from other history museums in Montreal and to expand it<sup>4</sup>. In 2016, the City of Montreal became the tenant of the first floor of

<sup>2</sup> *Le parcours du Musée de la Personne au Brésil: une collection de récits de vie 1*. Rosali Henriques. *Musées. Enjeux et défis du patrimoine immatériel*. Intangible Heritage and Museums: Issues and Challenge. VOL. 29, 2010, pp.80-95. Consulté le 22 mai 2023, [https://www.academia.edu/41009287/Le\\_parours\\_du\\_Mus%C3%A9\\_de\\_la\\_Personne\\_au\\_Br%C3%A9sil\\_une\\_collection\\_de\\_r%C3%A9cits\\_de\\_vie\\_1](https://www.academia.edu/41009287/Le_parours_du_Mus%C3%A9_de_la_Personne_au_Br%C3%A9sil_une_collection_de_r%C3%A9cits_de_vie_1)

<sup>3</sup> For more information, turn to: <https://ville.montreal.qc.ca/memoiresdesmontrealais/dans-les-coulisses-de-quartiers-disparus>; <https://ville.montreal.qc.ca/memoiresdesmontrealais/dans-les-coulisses-de-lexposition-scandale>; <https://ville.montreal.qc.ca/memoiresdesmontrealais/memoires-dexpo-67>

<sup>4</sup> For more information, visit: <https://museeshistoiremontreal.ca/les-musees/>

the new Angus Société de développement building, where CHM continues its transformation into a new kind of museum<sup>5</sup> (figs. 1a-b). In other words, it's a museum where citizen collaboration is 100% part of the design; we share a holistic vision that always takes into account shared authority and co-creation. Diverse voices, sometimes with opposing or parallel points of view, all find space in exhibitions, programming and communications. In short, these dynamics influences all areas at MEM and their development.

### **JB: With this new impetus, what remains of CHM's DNA as a citizens' museum?**

AL: The team sought to preserve CHM's DNA. In fact, MEM's DNA comes from the same root, but expands it exponentially. We elaborated the centre's identity together with Boîte Rouge Vif<sup>6</sup>, which has expertise in community museology, oral practice and transmission, especially with Aboriginal communities. We took time to go into detail about everything that sets us apart and everything that we find important; we realised that we've been working together for a long time and that this is the kind of work

<sup>5</sup> The lease was signed in 2016. At the end of 2018, the *MEM - Centre des mémoires montréalaises*, announced its new name and in 2019 set up its offices.

<sup>6</sup> For more information, visit: <https://www.laboiterougevif.com/>



*Figs. 2a-c. A view of the entire constellation entitled "The constellations of the hippocampus" (2023) by Raphaëlle De Groot with details.*  
© The artist

we want to continue. Our conversations resulted in a guide to best practices and helped define co-creation, as well as different forms and levels of citizen collaboration: processes for which everyone will be held accountable. I believe it comes down to shared authority. The phrase that best sums it up is the one that is used in all our communication: “You are the memory of Montreal, let’s talk about ‘you’ together”.

**JB: What is MEM’s governance structure and, since you have no board of directors, who determines the governance practices?**

AL: MEM is a municipal museum that reports to the *Service de la culture*, and more specifically to the *Direction du développement culturel*. The institution is a municipal cultural facility that is entirely dedicated to the public.

Our ‘big bosses’ are the municipal councillors. They approved our mission, vision, values and broad guidelines. Our dream, once the museum opens, is to go a step further and set up a governance committee made up of citizens. This council could act like a board of directors to continue the work we’ve begun. Together we could reflect on next steps, while posing challenges, making recommendations and fomenting our evolution.

**JB: How did MEM go about rethinking its mission and its citizen-centred cultural projects?**

AL: Our mission was developed during the strategic planning process which was carried out by a team for over 18 months. This process gave rise to a five-year plan that guides our operations while appealing to our scale of values.

**JB: To achieve its new mission, MEM intends to give pride of place to the voices of citizens, both past and present. It aims to reveal “montréalité” and the wealth of facets that constitute Montreal. What then is “montréalité”?**

AL: To answer the question of “montréalité” and how to represent it, we set up committees made up of citizens who love the city. There were about sixty people involved, including academics, resources drawn from diversity, aboriginal groups, accessibility organisations and people from other city departments. We wanted them to point out directions we might want to take and to avoid. When all is said and done, it’s all about working with Montrealers of all backgrounds, letting them have their say and guiding us on how to tell the story of Montreal. It’s about being as inclusive as possible.



Fig. 3. MEM’s recording studio: an exception among other Quebecois and Canadian museums. © Sokhan Sim

**JB: In fact, the City of Montreal has a “Solidarity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan 2021-2025” to make the city more inclusive<sup>7</sup> and to put human beings at the heart of its actions. The term ‘inclusive’ also appears in your new mission statement<sup>8</sup>. As a city museum, to what extent are you obliged to adhere to the municipal vision? Does it allow you to respect your own mission in your programming activities?**

AL: Nothing is imposed on us. The general vision of the city of Montreal is inherent to our DNA. We’ve been operating within this paradigm for 20 years. On the other hand, culture has yet to assume its rightful place in the city and for the administration; it is an underestimated vector. There are a few cities that value heritage, but there are few North American examples to date. It’s a Western epiphenomenon.

**JB: How do you address issues of social justice and specific ways of dealing with inequality? How does MEM put inclusivity into practice?**

AL: We’ve made a promise to address difficult issues for citizens and society, such as homelessness or housing, from a 360-degree angle. One of the best examples of this is the cultural mediation work that artist Raphaëlle De Groot has done with audiences who never come to the museum. For a year and a half, she went out to meet them to create a dialogue and to get them to talk about the city. She used significant objects that she had collected and then integrated into a collective work of art that tells the story of Montreal like a polaroid. The piece is titled *The constellations of the hippocampus*<sup>9</sup> (figs. 2a-c).

**JB: While it was founded as an interpretation centre without a collecting mandate, the institution has evolved into a museum about society. Today, MEM has major 20th and 21st century collections that embrace memory and oral history or mentefacts<sup>10</sup>. What**

<sup>7</sup> To know more about the city of Montreal’s action plan, visit : <https://montreal.ca/articles/plan-solidarite-equite-et-inclusion-pour-ne-laisser-personne-derriere-20662>

<sup>8</sup> “To promote the diversity of Montreal’s identities and histories through authentic and inclusive human experiences, where citizens tell their stories and meet each other.” For the MEM’s full mission, visit its website: <https://memmtl.ca/apropos>

<sup>9</sup> For more information on the artist’s approach, go to: <https://www.constellations-hippocampe.net/>

<sup>10</sup> The mentefact is understood as the trace of an event, a performance or an interview that took place but is no longer there. The mentefact is therefore a witness to what happened, a re-creation of the event without being the event itself, a “substitute”, as Jadé puts it. It requires a material support (magnetic tape, CD, DVD, etc.) to ensure its preservation and, above all, its dissemination. Without a suitable medium, the mentefact cannot be represented in all its complexity, hence the undeniable contribution of technical and technological progress. Blanchet-Robitaille, Ariane (2012). “Le mentefact au musée: la mémoire mise en scène”. *Muséologies*, 6(1), 55-75. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1011532ar>

**spawned this transformation and how can you stretch the boundaries of your collecting model?**

AL: We have objects that represent everyday life and popular culture in Montreal. Our oral collection came about when we decided to record memories to create exhibitions and document them. The current challenge is to implement optimal strategies for collection management and to integrate it into our activities.

MEM has given itself a structure that didn’t exist five years ago. We now have a dedicated collections curator and a cataloguer to put the system in place. The museum has grown from a permanent team of 5-18 people. We now tend to make acquisitions by having donors tell the story of the object in our studio. Once their story has been recorded, they realise that they have shared a part of their lives by talking about a piece of their cutlery, for example, in a different way than if they had just given it away. This object is more robustly documented. This is what sets us apart in the way we collect, and what creates a different and meaningful relationship between the city and the museum. We’re going to review our collecting policy once the museum is open and see what’s missing from our collections. We may be too heteronormative and risk missing parts of history. We’re going to carry out this analysis through a collaborative process. We plan to watch what’s happening elsewhere while forming a committee of old and new donors who can look at how they want the museum to talk about their collection and highlight it.

**JB: MEM plans to expand its narrative and relational perspectives through citizen participation. How do you envisage meeting this challenge? What are the operational criteria that will make this vision work in a museum context? How do you maintain a balance between the roles of museologists and citizens?**

AL: We have had a variety of experiences so far. The level of collaboration developed by Boîte Rouge Vif varies according to the group, the theme, and people’s level of commitment. Some projects allow for more collaboration and others less. At this stage, we’re trying to maintain a balance between museologists and the general public by using different strategies. When developing a new project, we keep given criteria in mind. On the one hand, we know our mission, vision and values, and we know where we want to go. On the other, we listen to the ideas that are suggested to us and take them into consideration. We are there as a guide or to ensure that the basic standards in museology retain MEM’s personality. With each project, we ask ourselves how far we can go with the public. We also ask ourselves another

question: has MEM lost its soul? Sometimes people are only consulted, other groups are more involved and present from beginning to end or somewhere in between. MEM professionals need to constantly assess the nature of projects. It is the role of my curatorial colleague, Catherine Charlebois, in particular, to guide the groups. Each process unfolds organically.

**JB: So each project has an exploratory part?**

AL: It's like stepping into a void every time, and it constantly challenges us. Yes, you have to be prepared to dive in and make mistakes. Frankly, the team makes this trial-and-error possible, as does the administration. We're lucky to be able to experiment, but you have to give yourself the time and the budget to do it.

**JB: Can you tell me a little about the recording studio you set up in the museum offices?**

AL: It was a *sine qua non* for us to have a recording studio in order to have more autonomy and to produce our own materials. This was missing when we were at CHM because we always had to go off-site to do the editing. We now have top-quality equipment that will enable us to improve our collections, but above all we'll be able to react to a topical issue on the spot. We can quickly change information in the permanent exhibition or take advantage of someone's visit by spontaneously inviting them into the studio to talk about their experience. This space allows us to edit and broadcast material almost immediately (fig. 3).

**JB: Since the 1990s, museums have been trying to include diverse messages and audiences. They are also making an effort to diversify their teams. The hope is to mirror the diversity that exists outside museums' walls. How does this diversity manifest itself within MEM? How have you defined your audiences and how do you intend to cultivate active citizenship?**

AL: The issue of diversity poses a number of multifaceted challenges and open questions. The first step we have taken is to ensure the team's own diversity. We are working with the city's human resources department to experiment new strategies. We are making a significant effort to hire people from diverse backgrounds to occupy permanent and part-time positions. As far as visitors are concerned, we hope to attract a variety of people through greater representativeness in our communication and programming. We also count on engaging citizen committees. With their input, we hope to develop exhibitions and activities that appeal to all age groups. In fact, we have chosen not to be a family museum, but a museum aimed that caters to visitors

age 12 and over... even age 90 or beyond. We also chose not to target tourists directly since tourists will come if Montrealers come.

We're in the process of defining how we can be even more welcoming. We have a lot of work to do to develop MEM, to become better known, and, above all, to welcome groups who don't think they belong here or have a role to play in a museum. We are especially eager to work with aboriginal communities who live in the area. By including people of all walks of life, our museum can help empower people to recognize their capacity to become agents of social change.

**JB: How does MEM make use of digital and interactive tools? Can you elaborate on these topics especially in light of their roles in outreach and accessibility?**

AL: In short, MEM has assumed the position that we are a people-centred museum. Digital technology is unavoidable, that's for sure, but we still have a lot of thinking to do. It will undoubtedly take shape as we move forward, but we're not there yet: we can't do everything at once. We have various platforms and we're reviewing our website. We developed online educational activities during the pandemic, but as soon as they were finished, we went straight back into the classroom. We've also just won an award from the Canadian Museums Association (CMA) for our "*Montréal en cinq sens (Montréal in Five Senses)*" project<sup>11</sup>. The idea was to reach out to community organisations that were less likely to visit a museum like senior citizens' centres or groups devoted to the seeing-impaired. If I had money to invest, I'd prioritise projects that allow us to do this type of outreach. Our most important digital showcase is the "*Mémoires des montréalais*" ("Montrealers' memories") website<sup>12</sup>. It offers an extraordinary encyclopaedia dedicated to Montreal with articles available in Chinese, English, Arabic, Portuguese, and Spanish. These have been translated and subtitled, but we would like to make this platform accessible in other languages and better known. We are also exploring ways to showcase our collection and tinkering with digital tools that help people access MEM from a variety of perspectives.

**JB: MEM will open its doors in the heart of the Quartier des spectacles for the Rentrée culturelle montréalaise in September 2023. It will be inaugurated under the auspices of the Mayor of Montreal Valérie Plante with four exhibitions and related cultural and educational programming.**

<sup>11</sup> For more information, go to: <https://memmtl.ca/en/programming/montreal-in-5-senses>

<sup>12</sup> Pour visiter le site Web, allez à: <https://ville.montreal.qc.ca/memoiresdesmontrealais/>

# Barcelona History Museum Hosts Prestigious EMYA 2023 Awards

DANIEL ALCUBIERRE, AINA MERCADER, ELENA PÉREZ RUBIALES\*

From May 3 to 6, Barcelona was transformed for a few days into the European capital of museums. The Barcelona History Museum (MUHBA) hosted and, together with European Museum Forum (EMF), organised the EMYA2023 (European Museum of the Year Awards - Annual Conference and Awards Ceremony), the longest running and prestigious museum award in Europe. In Barcelona, the EMYA celebration was integrated as part of the programme for MUHBA's 80th anniversary, marking the institution's reinvention as a *citizens museum*.

The EMF is a non-for-profit charity working under the auspices of the Council of Europe. Since its foundation in 1977, it has organised the annual EMYA with the aim of supporting, encouraging, awarding and showcasing excellence and innovation in the museum field. Every year, the EMF promotes aspects and dimensions of the values and best practices within the sector through six different prizes.

\* Daniel Alcubierre, Aina Mercader, Elena Pérez Rubiales, Members of the MUHBA team.

The two main awards, the EMYA and the Council of Europe Museum Prize, have been continuously conferred since the organisation was founded

## A programme for democracy

Under the motto *Democracy and democratisation. Urgent challenges today*, EMYA 2023 gathered, during the three-day event in Barcelona, more than 250 members of the European museum community including partners and former candidates, alongside current ones: 33 nominees from 19 countries<sup>1</sup>. The heritage site of the MUHBA Palau Major was the main venue for the Conference, placing the concepts and contradictions of democracy and democratisation as its core themes. All the candidates took the floor in the majestic Saló del Tinell, in a hybrid but mostly in-person format, presenting their museums during thematic sessions<sup>2</sup>. They also shared the experiences of

<sup>1</sup> The candidates brochure is available at the following link: <https://emya2023.europeanforum.museum/> and the presentation videos of each candidate here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fq8SE5tqfw&list=PLYoXMVAC5xPLQEhvJ9G12vs7nS-ZOWWAo>

<sup>2</sup> All sessions of the conference were recorded and will be available soon at the MUHBA YouTube channel: [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLc\\_HTVN7--40tTyBtuYZNcZNDvghcM9A8](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLc_HTVN7--40tTyBtuYZNcZNDvghcM9A8)



Fig. 1. The conference of the EMYA 2023 at the Barcelona History Museum. © David del Val, MUHBA



creating a whole new museum or completely reinterpreting, reinventing and renewing an existing one. Among various themes, the sessions addressed the role of science museums in scientific knowledge, the action of museums in criticising dominant narratives, the synergies between cultural heritage and artistic practice, the innovation in the construction of narratives or the links between museums and their audiences. Some of the interventions focused on current topics really related to the programme of the CAMOC conference in New York this autumn, with topics such as decolonization, participatory collecting, uses of history or changing communities.

City museums had a prominent session at the conference. Under the title *Community engagement through city museums*, it was emphasised that city museums are core cultural and participatory institutions for local communities, having a unique position to create a sense of belonging and pride in cultural identity. Three candidates, City Museum of Rijeka (Croatia), Olympic Museum of Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Graz Museum Schlossberg (Austria), discussed the following questions based on their own experiences and projects: How can museums empower residents? How to embrace groups that are excluded from a museum's cultural programming due to their education or due to mental or physical disabilities? How do newcomers like refugees, immigrants or expatriates become vital local community members?

This extensive programme was rounded out with three inspiring keynotes by Josep Ramoneda, philosopher and writer, "Museums in the construction of a democratic Europe", by Elvira Dyangani Ose, director of MACBA (Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona), "The possible museum", and by Nanette Snoep, winner of the 2022 Kenneth Hudson Award and director of the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum in Cologne (Germany), "Staying with the trouble". All of them focused on the idea of how museums can become spaces that build a more democratic Europe, spaces that are participatory and rooted in their context, that are relevant to their communities, and that promote inclusiveness and social justice.

The EMYA 2023 Annual Conference offered rich and varied content with keynote addresses, nominees' presentations around thematic panels, roundtables, workshops organised by former award winners, and a vast programme of tours, a format in which the host museum has a large experience. There were different pre-conference guided tours around the city curated by MUHBA showing that

urban trekkings and itineraries are a useful tool for reading the city thus contributing to more inclusive knowledge. During the days of the conference, the MUHBA, which defines itself as a polycentric network museum with a total of 55 rooms distributed throughout the city, also organised visits to other spaces near the venue, offering a brief glimpse of the city's history to those attending. The last day of the meeting was no less attractive and attendees could choose from a number of tours covering a larger area, even outside of Barcelona: a visit to Mount Montserrat, where culture, nature and spirituality merge; MUHBA Bon Pastor, Barcelona's new branch dedicated to housing, living in and inhabiting the contemporary city; or the visit to the Museum of Footwear and Industry (Inca, Mallorca), winner of the Silletto Prize for Community Participation and Engagement 2022, who sponsored and organised the tour.

The evening social gatherings around the city were especially noteworthy with music and performances linked to the cultural and historical heritage of Barcelona proposed by the host, and the involvement, for example, of different institutions like Barcelona's CosmoCaixa Science Museum (Kenneth Hudson Prize 2021 and EMYA 2006), which sponsored and organised an evening reception in its museum. In the context of this complete programme, EMYA2023 offered a perfect occasion for exchange, discussion, analysis and networking. It was a time and place for reflection and self-reflection for the museum sector and its international professionals.

### **6 winners and 6 special commendations**

For over forty years, the European Museum Forum has awarded around 400 museums from 36 countries. Each year some 45 museums from all member countries of the Council of Europe apply, with winners from every type of museum, scale, discipline and location. The EMYA gathering has thus become a complete panoply of innovative museums in the sector.

The awards ceremony was held on the evening of May 6 at the Gothic Contracting Hall of La Llotja de Mar, near the main venue. The gala, which brought together more than 300 personalities from the international museum and cultural sector (with the presence of politicians, sponsors, representatives of the Council of Europe, among other personalities), was broadcast in streaming<sup>3</sup> for all over the world and was covered by the main media.

<sup>3</sup> The EMYA2023 Awards Ceremony is available at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdyQSRpSgDE>

## EMYA 2023 AWARDS

After having evaluated the projects of the 33 candidate museums, the EMYA 2023 jury announced the winners of each award<sup>4</sup>:

- The European Museum of the Year Award – EMYA

In each edition, the EMYA goes to a museum which contributes to the understanding of the world as well as to the development of new paradigms and professional standards in museums. On this occasion, the prize went to the **L’Etno, Valencian Museum of Ethnology (València, Spain)**. According to the judges: “the museum values open and inclusive dialogue and strives to provide universal access for visitors. Through the sharing and discussion of hidden histories, the museum seeks to honour the right of local communities to understand their past and acknowledge their painful experiences”.

- The Council of Europe Museum Prize

The Prize aims to highlight Europe’s diverse cultural heritage and the interplay between local and European identities. Selected by the Culture Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 5 December 2022 and awarded at a special ceremony that took place on 25 April 2023 in Strasbourg’s Palais de L’Europe, the prize was given to the **Workers Museum, Copenhagen** (Denmark), “an institution and a museum which combines the history of its symbolic building and the history of the Danish Labour movement with present-day concerns about how workers’ culture could be more relevant to society”.

- The Kenneth Hudson Award for Institutional Courage and Professional Integrity

This award is given by the EMF board to celebrate courageous, at times controversial, museum practices that challenge and expand common perceptions of the role and responsibilities of museums in society. The winner was the **23,5 Hrant Dink Site of Memory** (Istanbul, Turkey) because it “communicates that human rights are indivisible and universal. It sheds light on the past while also acting for the future, fostering empathy and mutual understanding, and contributing to social transformation and democratization”.

- The Portimão Museum Prize for Welcoming, Inclusion and Belonging

This prize celebrates a friendly atmosphere of inclusion, where all elements of the museum, its physical environment, its human qualities, its displays and public

programmes, contribute to making everyone feel they are valued and respected and belong to the museum. The **Chillida Leku** (Basque Country, Spain) was the winner of this edition and was recognised as “an art museum with an active social agenda”.

- The Silletto Prize for Community Participation and Engagement

Celebrating a deep, continuous and empowering involvement between a museum and its stakeholders, the Silletto Prize was given to the **Otar Lordkipanidze Vani Archaeological Museum of Georgian National Museum** (Tbilisi, Georgia) because “offers a range of community programs that prioritise the involvement of younger audiences and disadvantaged groups and encourages visitors to connect with the city’s rich cultural heritage”.

- The Meyvaert Museum Prize for Environmental Sustainability

An award committed to a museum reflecting and addressing issues of sustainability and environmental health in its collecting, documentation, displays and public programming. The Meyvaert Prize went to the **Swiss Museum of Agriculture** (Burgrain, Switzerland), “a central regional hub, a museum that connects local producers, agricultural workers, and companies to create meaningful links that allow citizens to comprehend the complexities of food production and the key players involved”.

In addition to these 6 awards, the jury gave 6 special commendations to museums “that have developed a new and innovative approach in specific aspects of their public service and from which other European museums can learn”. The winners, among which it is worth mentioning that of a city museum, the one in Graz, were: Thackray Museum of Medicine (United Kingdom), Ilia Chavchavadze Literary Memorial Museum (Georgia), Graz Museum Schlossberg (Austria), FeliXart Museum (Belgium), Abbey Church of Payerne (Switzerland) and Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen (Netherlands).

After the successful EMYA 2023 in Barcelona, the Museu de Portimão (Portugal) takes over from MUHBA for the next edition to be held in 2024. The dates of the EMYA 2024 Annual Conference and Awards Ceremony will be announced by EMF later this year.

<sup>4</sup> See the winners brochure here: <https://emya2023winners.europeanforum.museum/>



Fig. 2. One of the moments of the social programme of the EMYA2023, at the MUHBA Oliva Artés. © David del Val, MUHBA



Fig. 3. L'Etno, Valencian Museum of Ethnology won the European Museum of the Year Award 2023. © David del Val, MUHBA

# European City Museums

ELENA PÉREZ RUBIALES\*



Fig. 1. Front cover of the book European City Museums

At the end of April this year, the book *European City Museums* was presented, a collaborative work of around fifteen authors, museum and urban history professionals, which offers an overview of city museums in Europe, focusing on their trajectories and current transformations, while stopping at relevant issues of current museological debate for city museums (fig. 1).

Published by the Barcelona History Museum (MUHBA) and edited by Tim Marshall and Joan Roca, the book is the result of the meetings of the City History Museums and Research Network (CITYHIST), an informal but stable network of some twenty European city museums, universities and research centers of urban history created

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in 2010 by MUHBA, where it meets every year and a half or so, and the Museum of Amsterdam as the secretariat. After a break imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, CITYHIST met again at the end of 2022 to recover this space for debate and transfer of ideas and practices around urban history and heritage, as well as the management of city museums and the institutional and social place that cities currently occupy (figs. 2 and 3).

*European City Museums* is a meeting point, it does not try to offer univocal explanations but rather to induce reflection and establish common bridges that help to continue advancing in the knowledge of city museums, their dynamics, and challenges, in order to build a theoretical and practical framework that helps to position city museums as key institutions for the knowledge of cities and the integration of their citizens.

The book is divided into three distinct parts. The first one has a more general perspective of analysis of the history of city museums in Europe, from its emergence basically from city history museums, their development since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the rise of new experiences in the last two or three decades to the most recent transformations of many museums. These chapters reveal common patterns of change and the contexts that have favored this emergence of new city museums, ending with a reflection on the role of museums in the future of cities, exploring the connecting role of urban planning.

The second part presents six specific cases of city museums that have been profoundly transformed in recent years: Barcelona, Berlin, Copenhagen, Frankfurt, Lisbon, and London. These heterogeneous cases also address a wide variety of topics stemming from the specific experience of each Museum: public space and its relationship with the territory, the representation of the city in museums and how they are integrated into the city, renovation projects in central spaces, in the historic centers of the city, as well as the creation of spaces in other parts of cities like their peripheries, the renewal of permanent exhibitions or the formulation of new narratives. This thematic disparity highlights the great dynamism of city museums.

The last part of the book is divided into thematic chapters, issues that have been shaping the main discussions of the Network's meetings: the importance of research, heritage, the contemporary collection, the diversity of formats such



*Figs. 2 and 3. Snapshots from the urban trekking of the Besòs Heritage and Museum Trail at the last meeting of the CITYHIST, November 2022. © Daniel Alcubierre, MUHBA*

as digital ones or urban itineraries, the participation, and the construction of narratives. This last theme is treated from two different geographical perspectives; one focused on the United Kingdom context and the other with a look at Eastern Europe, namely Poland, examining how narratives can build a discourse on the identities of urban societies, reinterpreting problematic and painful episodes of their cities' past.

Whether we with city networks like CAMOC does, or on a smaller scale like CITYHIST, when city museums work together with research groups our museums grow stronger and become hubs of knowledge and shared thinking: these

collaborations promote innovative reformulation. Even when debates are reiterative and topics arise repeatedly, being able to meet and discuss these ideas over the years, with accumulated knowledge, helps to stop for a moment the hectic pace of our daily lives to reflect and listen to others' experiences.

Books like this one—the fruit of networked interaction—are an example of how city museums, institutions rooted in the territory, can play an important role in the daily functioning of cities, in their futures, and how a network of cities can be a good structure for promoting dialogue and democracy in a socially turbulent time.

# Highlights of Taipei's Workshop

ANDRÉA DELAPLACE\*



Fig. 1. View of Taipei. © Andréa Delaplace

Last April 2023, CAMOC organised a workshop in Partnership with the National Taipei University of Education (NTUE and CAM) dedicated to the findings of our ongoing survey about city museums as part of the Global Mapping Project (Fig. 1).

\* Andréa Delaplace, anthropologist and art historian (PhD at Université Paris Panthéon-Sorbonne) and CAMOC member since 2017. She is now part of the new CAMOC Board and co-editor of the *CAMOC Review* with Yvonne A. Mazurek.

The presentation of the survey analysis progress by Shih-yu, taiwanese specialist at NTUE in charge of the analysis of data from the survey, was crucial to understand the subjects that are at the heart of city museums today: sustainability, gender, decolonization, equity, and multicultural perspectives to better portray the different aspects of a city's history and challenges today.

The history of a city is far more than its architectural or urbanistic traits: the social and economic aspects are



Fig. 2. View of the Tea Museum. © Andr ea Delaplace

essential to better understand and face the challenges of our contemporary societies today.

The keynote from Francesca Lanz about the history of city museums and their relevance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century was also important as it gave us an overview of the long history of city museums in Europe (where we actually find most of the city museums today). This model of history museum took other forms around the world and today, we find such a rich variety of museums dedicated to the city (from art museums to ecomus es that tell the history of a city). But the central question remains: can we have a single definition to what makes an institution a city museum?

The variety of museums present in the Asia and South Pacific region emerged clearly during the panel session by Margaret Anderson (Australia), Winston Lam (Singapore), and Chicako Suzuki (Japan) who analysed their respective museum and heritage landscape through the perspectives of social inclusion, gender equality and multicultural narratives.



Fig. 3. View of one of the houses of Daxi Museum. © Andr ea Delaplace



Fig. 4. Taoyuan City Daxi Wood Art Ecomuseum. © Outlookxp / commons.wikimedia.org



Fig. 5. Wooden Education Handcraft Course. The Wooden Museum regularly offers woodwork hand-made courses every month, Combining with Daxi carpenters to develop hand-made courses suitable for novices and parents and children to experience together, Focusing on the production of hand tools, it promotes the public to get close to Daxi wood art culture. © Taoyuan City Daxi Wood Art Ecomuseum



The excursions to the Tea Museum (Fig. 2), the Wanhua district at the city centre of Taipei and Daxi Museum (Fig. 3, 4, 5 and 6) were incredible and extremely rich, helping participants understand some of the different aspects of Taiwan's museum landscape.

This workshop brought this special project to life with lively participation from university students and professors, museum professionals and representatives as well as researchers from such different provenances (both on-site and online): Asia (Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore), Australia, Europe, North and South America. We took a beautiful group photo (Fig. 7) at NTUE to mark the success of this workshop.

After three years of hard work, the Global Mapping Project is getting to a close and of creating the first official survey dedicated to city museums in the ICOM community. There will be an official website and publication reporting on this project. More on that in our next CAMOC Review.



Fig. 6. Two puppets at Daxi Museum. They represent an important part of Taiwanese cultural landscape. © Andréa Delaplace



Fig.7. Group photo at National Taipei University of Education. © NTUE

# Singapore and Its City Museums

GLENN PERKINS\*



Fig. 1. Tradition and modernity meet in Kampong Glam. © Glenn Perkins

After the City Museums Global Mapping workshop in Taipei, I was eager to explore another example of what city museums can look like in the Asia Pacific region. Luckily, former CAMOC board member Jenny Chiu, I-Ching Lin from Taoyuan City Daxi Wood Art Ecomuseum, and I were able to travel from Taipei and visit several sites in the city/nation of Singapore to see several approaches firsthand.

We met with staff of the three Heritage Institutions of the Singapore National Heritage Board. Winston Lim of the Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall was our fantastic tour guide overall. He and his team took us through the Hall, built as a villa in 1901. A temporary exhibition on Mutual Aid Societies drew connections between urban Chinese communities in Singapore and San Francisco. At the Indian Heritage Centre, curator Liviniyah P and manager Bhavani Dass offered an amazing look at a wide range of communities from the subcontinent. A massive tableau

commissioned for the exhibition “Once Upon a Time in Little India” stretched a long wall of one of the galleries, depicting generations who have helped shape and reshape the culture of the city.

The Malay Heritage Centre, managed by Asmah Alias, was closed for renovations, but curator Zinn Nasir and National Heritage Institutes director Cheryl Koh led us on a tour of the colorful Kampong Glam neighborhood (fig. 1). While the property is undergoing repairs and updates, the Centre sustains its work through tours and through street displays co-curated with heritage businesses. We visited a perfume shop, drinks stand, and batik store, just to name a few.

NHB staff also arranged visits to the recently reopened Peranakan

Museum, which explores the cultures of different Straits mixed-ancestry communities, and the Singapore Children’s Museum, which connects the youngest visitors to city history from shipping docks to shop houses. We also had a chance to tour the NHB’s Heritage Conservation Centre with Darren Wong. This massive storage and treatment space centralizes much of the collections management work for the museums across the city-state.

Finally, Deputy Director Colin Lauw led us on a tour of the Singapore City Gallery (fig. 2). Operated by the Urban Redevelopment Authority rather than the NHB, the gallery highlights and interprets housing, neighborhoods, transport, land use, water, energy, etc. A mix of interactives and architectural collections show how city systems work and citizens’ roles in shaping civic life.

What unites Singaporeans? Many would say food. And our crew dutifully explored much of the amazing, multicultural cuisine that characterizes the city - from kaya toast and Hainanese *kopi* (coffee) to *laksa* curry noodle

\* Glenn Perkins, Curator of Community History at Greensboro History Museum (NC, USA) and current CAMOC Chair.



Fig. 2. Colin Lauw at the Singapore City Gallery. © Winston Lim

soup. UNESCO inscribed Singapore hawker culture—defined as “community dining and culinary practices in a multicultural urban context”—on its Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2020. The inscription commends the nomination for highlighting a culture “that is thriving in a highly urbanized and culturally diverse environment.” And in the sprawling hawker centres, you sense a shared

urban experience that is powered by diverse traditions and culinary invention.

Three and a half days was not nearly enough to experience Singapore fully, but the hospitality of our NHB hosts and a fascinating range of museum approaches revealed different aspects of a multifaceted city.

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Wall of Honour at Ellis Island and Manhattan seen from Ellis Island. © Andréa Delaplace (2014). Wall of Honor | Statue of Liberty & Ellis Island

# Announcements



## PROGRAMME

### Changing Cities, Changing Museums

## CAMOC ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2023

### MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Cities are famously generators and reflectors of social, economic, and political change, and never more so than in our own times. Population changes, global and regional migrations, racial and social justice uprisings, wars and human rights crises, economic globalization, the pressures of real estate development, gentrification, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the climate crisis are just some of the forces that are causing cities to reckon with their futures, their identities, and what they represent.

As interpreters of history, city museums have always had the responsibility to contend with change, but existential shifts affecting cities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century present new levels of challenge. Simultaneously, new imperatives in museology and conversations around social justice are challenging city museums to examine their own practices around DEAI (diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility) and their relationship to their communities. ▶

MONDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2023	
9:00 AM-12:30 PM	Guided excursions
12:30-6:00 PM	Explore New York!
6:00-8:00 PM	Opening reception at Museum of the City of New York
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2023	
8:30-9:00 AM	Coffee and registration
9:00-10:45 AM	OPENING SESSION
Welcoming remarks	
Keynote address	
Garnette Cadogan – Essayist, Lecturer in Urbanism at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Editor-at-Large of <i>Nonstop Metropolis: A New York Atlas</i>	
10:45-11:15 AM	BREAK
11:15-12:30 PM	GENERAL SESSION
MCNY at 100: Programming our centennial year Museum of the City of New York curators and advisory committee members	
12:30-1:30 PM	Lunch
1:30-3:30 PM	CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS
<b>Audience-focused decision making: Changing frameworks for museum practice</b> Rachel Seidman & Asantewa Boakyewa, Smithsonian's Anacostia Community Museum, Washington, DC, USA Daniel Hammer & Heather Green, The Historic New Orleans Collection; David W. Robinson-Morris, REImagination; and Brent R. Fortenberry, Louisiana State University, USA	
<b>Can anywhere be a site of conscience?</b> Linda Norris, International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, New York, NY, USA	
<b>Collecting the city through co-creation</b> Margriet Schavemaker & Gonca Yalciner, Amsterdam Museum, Netherlands	
<b>In search of collective memory</b> Eugénie Forno, Casablanca Collective Museum, Morocco	
3:30-4:00 PM	BREAK
4:00-5:30 PM	CONCURRENT PANEL SESSIONS
<b>Renewing museums</b>  <i>Memory of Montrealers: Designing a new, inclusive institution with community at its heart</i> Catherine Charlebois, MEM-Centre des mémoires montréalaises, Montréal, Canada  <i>Geyer House: The opening of a new house museum in Brazil</i> Maurício Vicente Ferreira Júnior, Museu Imperial, Petrópolis, Brazil  <i>Breaking the unbreakable: What are we afraid of</i> Sanda Kočevar, Karlovac City Museums, Croatia  <i>The challenge of change: The renewal of Tower of David Jerusalem Museum</i> Eilat Lieber, Tower of David Jerusalem Museum, Israel	

## Thought, process and shifting concepts

*Beyond regionalism: A conceptual framework for examining the national and global dimensions of city museums*  
Mohamed W. Fareed, University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates/Egypt

*Changing the city museum: About process and method*  
Joan Roca i Albert & Elena Pérez Rubiales, MUHBA - The History Museum of Barcelona, Spain

*When can (and can't) a national museum think like a city museum?*  
Benjamin Filene, Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Washington, DC, USA

*Curatorial strategies and practices: Institutional articulation and decolonial processes on the road to the 450th anniversary of the City of Córdoba*  
Patricia Elsa Brignole, Museum of the City of Córdoba, Argentina

## Negotiating publics in diverse spaces

*Reconciliation and healing through the Nunavut Inuit Heritage Centre*  
Catherine Cole, Inuit Heritage Trust, Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada

*The layered museum: The National Anthropology Museum in Angola*  
Suzana Sousa, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa

*History in its place: Community, collections and public space in a city museum*  
Luiz Henrique Assis Garcia, Federal University of Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, Brazil

*When research and public opinion clash: Were first settlers of Espoo Black?*  
Tomi Heikkilä & Johanna Vähäpesola, KAMU Espoo City Museum, Finland



Fig. 1. UNFRAMED Exhibition, JR. © Ellis Island - CAMOCnews 2016 #2

## WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2023

8:30-9:00 AM

Coffee and registration

9:00-10:30 AM

CAMOC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

*Introductory remarks: Museums, islands of truth on the ocean of uncertainty and anxiousness*

Michał Niezabitowski, CAMOC Board, Kraków, Poland

*Committee activities and budget*

Glenn Perkins, CAMOC Chair, Greensboro, NC, USA

Johanna Vähäpesola, CAMOC Secretary, Espoo, Finland

Sawako Inaniwa, CAMOC Treasurer, Tokyo, Japan

*City Museums Global Mapping project*

Shih-yu Chen, National Taiwan University of Education, Taipei

*CAMOC Conference 2024*

Annemarie de Wildt, CAMOC Vice Chair, Amsterdam, Netherlands

*Concluding remarks: City museums in Africa and the future*

Christian Nana Tchussieu, CAMOC Board, Yaoundé, Cameroun

10:30-11:00 AM

BREAK

11:00 AM-12:30 PM

CONCURRENT PANEL SESSIONS

### Environmental transformations in changing cities

*Transformations – tales of trash – activism and ethical responsibility at Roskilde Museum*

Dorthe Godsk Larsen, Roskilde Museum/ROMU, Denmark

*It socks: What does a single sock add up to in the big carbon footprint?*

Mette Stauersbøl Mogensen, Museum Odense, Møntergården, Denmark

*Cohousing and urban agriculture: The challenges regarding feeding and housing in an historical and contemporary context*

Christine De Weerd, STAM Ghent City Museum, Belgium

*The role of museums in sustainable cities: Mars & Cairo educational exhibition*

Fatma Mostafa, Children Center for Civilization and Creativity, Cairo, Egypt

### Co-curation and communities in urban spaces

*It turned out differently: Learning to be more flexible in community engagement projects*

Joana Sousa Monteiro & Sofia Bicho, Museum of Lisbon, Portugal

*A hitchhiker's guide to reaching out*

Femke Hajjtema, Museum Gouda, Netherlands

*Says who?: Sharing space for city-making*

Gijs Schunselaar, Museum Van Loon, Amsterdam, Netherlands

*Co-location, co-curation and co-operation: A case study of Singapore's Kreta Ayer Heritage Gallery*

Alvin Tan, National Heritage Board, Singapore

### Communities, memories and heritage in changing museum practice

*Future of the Nairobi Railway Museum: Education and decolonization in the digital age*

Flora Nguye Mutere, Technical University of Kenya, Nairobi, Kenya

*Change forced by war: Ramifications and roles of city museums*

Saeed Hussein Shukri, Saryan Museum, Hargeisa, Somaliland

*Migration heritage, contemporary art and city archives: Representations, memories and identities*

Andréa Delaplace, Université Paris Panthéon-Sorbonne (HICSA), France

*Creating heritage towards a socially just city*

Nicole van Dijk, Stichting Wijkcollectie (District Heritage Foundation), Rotterdam, Netherlands



12:30-2:00 PM	Lunch
1:00-2:00 PM	Gallery of ideas – Food for thought
<p><i>Rome's evolving identities: Blurring lines at the Casalino and Testaccio open-air museums</i> Yvonne A. Mazurek, Non-Catholic Cemetery for Foreigners in Rome, Italy</p> <p><i>The innovation of the Museum Public Cultural Service: The example of Datong Museum</i> Jia Xia, Datong Museum, Shanxi, China</p> <p><i>Open the museum, open the city: Rethinking and reconnecting the urban spaces of Daxi</i> Hsin-lin Wen, Daxi Wood Art Ecomuseum, Taoyuan, Taiwan</p> <p><i>Museums and Yangzhou rural revitalization</i> Xingli Wang, Yangzhou Museum, Jiangsu, China</p> <p><i>The power of the curator PUBLIC!: Driving a paradigm shift towards a more community-led programme at the Lëtzebuerg City Museum</i> Anne Hoffmann &amp; Kyra Thielen, Les 2 Musées de la Ville de Luxembourg / Lëtzebuerg City Museum, Luxembourg</p> <p><i>The changing face of Tokyo: From Edo to today and into the future</i> Kimura Sagiri, Tokyo Metropolitan Edo-Tokyo Museum, Japan</p> <p><i>From one person's story to the city history</i> Nini Sanadiradze, Tbilisi Museum Union, Georgia</p> <p><i>Something new, something borrowed: Planning a new museum</i> Joanna Kurth &amp; Anniina Lehtokari, Turku City Museums, Finland</p> <p><i>Democracy, museums, libraries and changing spaces of neutrality</i> Carol Ghiorso Hart, Greensboro History Museum, NC, USA</p>	
2:00-3:30 PM	AFTERNOON ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS
<p><b>Migration and social housing: Creating participatory projects with communities</b></p> <p><i>Moderator: Andréa Delaplace, Université Paris Panthéon-Sorbonne (HICSA), France</i></p> <p>Lisa Lee, Public Housing Museum, Chicago, IL, USA</p> <p>Annie Polland, Lower East Side Tenement Museum, New York, NY, USA</p> <p>Diana Pardue, Ellis Island Museum, New York, NY, USA,</p> <p>Linda Norris, International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, New York, NY, USA</p> <p>Elena Pérez Rubiales, MUHBA – The History Museum of Barcelona, Spain</p> <p><b>Museum transformations: Collectivity, creativity, engagement and democracy</b></p> <p><i>Moderator: Michael Knoll, HistoryMiami Museum, FL, USA</i></p> <p>Kristi Paatsi, Kalamaja Community Museum / Tallinn City Museum, Estonia</p> <p>Rachel Roy, Museum of Anthropology (MOA), University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada</p> <p>Luis Manjarrés, Museo de Bogotá, Colombia</p> <p>Sibylle Dienesch, Graz City Museum, Austria</p>	
3:00-4:00 PM	Gallery of ideas – Food for thought
See above	

3:30-4:00 PM	Break
4:00-5:30 PM	<b>CLOSING GENERAL SESSION</b>

**Changing intersections**

*Representing intersectional communities: How to increase gender, ethnic and social class diversity in city museums?*  
Elif Çiğdem Artan, Independent Scholar, Turkey

*Curating new narratives: Challenges and lessons learned*  
Monxo López, Museum of the City of New York, USA  
Imara Limon, Amsterdam Museum, Netherlands

*Reshaping the museum object: Re-interpreting our collections*  
Foteini Aravani, Museum of London, UK

*Intersections between private lives, public housing and national narratives: Community museums in Hong Kong and Singapore*  
Ian YH Tan, University of Hong Kong, China

**Final program subject to change**

## SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

**Melanie Adams**, PhD, Smithsonian Anacostia Museum, Washington DC

**Annemarie de Wildt**, CAMOC Vice Chair, Amsterdam Museum

**Andréa Delaplace**, PhD, CAMOC Board, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

**Sarah Henry**, PhD, CAMOC Vice Chair, Museum of the City of New York

**Flora Mutere Okuku**, Technical University of Kenya, Nairobi

**Elena Pérez Rubiales**, PhD, CAMOC Board, MUHBA, Barcelona

**Glenn Perkins**, CAMOC Chair, Greensboro (NC) History Museum

**Lilly Tuttle**, PhD, Museum of the City of New York

**Johanna Vähäpesola**, CAMOC Secretary, KAMU Espoo City Museum



Photos: Daniel X. O'Neil, Tanakawho, Ian Creighton, Mike Clarke

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## Migration and social housing in Museums: creating participatory projects with communities.

Finding a place to live has been a constant challenge for most people in big cities around the world. Now that housing is once again back at the forefront of most cities' political agenda, it is more important than ever to take a longer-term historical overview in city museums. Exhibitions can survey actions undertaken by government institutions to face housing crises as they can give a voice to community leaders and housing activists. Museums can create a better understanding of a city's urbanistic web and highlight the importance of housing in terms of belonging and identity making.

These are the reasons why most museums that talk about housing also talk about other themes connected to issues around belonging such as migration, as new migrants look for housing as a way of establishing themselves in their new city and new homes. Their struggle to find appropriate housing involves adapting to a new reality. In the roundtable discussion at MCNY, we will examine how museum professionals are creating exhibitions dedicated to the thematics of housing and migration (18 October 2023). Equity in terms of living conditions is essential to understand the challenges of cities today where inflation and economic fluctuations make it almost impossible for younger generations to acquire houses or find proper accommodations. In a city like New York, whose identity is strongly marked by the different migrant groups that arrived through the gates of Ellis Island and settled in the tenements, housing is a central part of its history and we are happy to be bringing this theme to the 2023 annual CAMOC conference. The next issue of the CAMOC Review will deepen aspects of this very conversation. *(Andréa Delaplace)*



Wall of Honour at Ellis Island. © Andréa Delaplace (2014). Wall of Honor | Statue of Liberty & Ellis Island





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