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# “PLACING” EUROPE IN THE MUSEUM

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*People(s), places, identities*

edited by  
Christopher Whitehead,  
Rhiannon Mason, Susannah Eckersley,  
Katherine Lloyd





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Susannah Eckersley and Katherine Lloyd

**MELA BOOKS 08 – RF01 MUSEUMS & IDENTITY IN HISTORY AND CONTEMPORANEITY**

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# Introduction





## Introduction

The imperatives surrounding the museum representation of place have shifted from the late eighteenth century to today. This is in part because the political significance of place itself has changed and continues to change at all scales, from local, civic, regional to national and supranational. At the same time, recognition of changes in population flows, migration patterns and demographic movement now underscore both cultural and political practice, be it in the accommodation of “diversity” in cultural and social policy, scholarly explorations of hybridity or in state immigration controls. These issues, taken historically, have particular significance for contemporary understandings of the role of place in individual, collective and state notions of society in the EU, in member states and in other European countries. How do European museums present societies as bound to, or enabled by, place and places? Or as having roots in places and/or taking routes from, to and through places? What cartographical groupings, borders, knowledges (e.g. archaeological, ethnographic etc.) and traversals order and organise populations into societies in the museum? What is the metaphorical “place” of place in European museums now, what does this say about identities?

To invert these questions, we might ask what happens or what can happen, when the “peoples” and “places” implicated in, and at least to some extent constructed in, museum representation shift, change, multiply, fragment and/or move? What happens when the museum desire for fixity is disrupted by new sensibilities towards population flows, multiple heritages and the shifting territories of geopolitical places? Should museums’ representational practices change? If so how? What are the new dimensions of identity construction and production in museums whose physical place is fixed, but whose audiences, with their changing heritages and cultures, are not? Last but not least, what are the implications of such questions and issues for practice (curatorial, political, architectural etc.) and for visitors and visiting?

PREVIOUS PAGE —  
*Destination X, Museum  
of World Cultures,  
Gothenburg.*

This short volume comprises a number of situated reflections on these questions and themes and represents the proceedings of the international conference “*Placing Europe in the Museum: people(s), places, identities*,” held at Newcastle University in September 2012. This was the first in a series of events intended to complement and inform research within the MeLa consortium (<http://www.mela-project.eu/>). The papers published here represent a range of perspectives, practices and places.

Extending and enriching Habermasian ideas of the communicative action in the public sphere, Luczewski and Maslanka contrast sites of memory (such as museums and heritage sites) in Germany and Poland. The authors attend to the complexities of representing national identity positions and alterity while remembering difficult histories pertaining to the effects and experiences of Nazism and Communism. Luczewski and Maslanka’s paper is in dialogue with Cadot’s essay on the place of museums within the grand narration of the history of the European Union, and in particular the disruptive significance of Central and Eastern European countries as “ghosts” within the narrative of freedom and progress. Meanwhile, Adina Huma’s exploration of an Eastern European state currently outwith the European Union—Moldova—illustrates the complex role of museums in positioning borders and recasting the geographical spaces for nationing and nationalism.

Tietmeyer gives a curator’s account of the tensions which arise when seeking to represent European culture through stories of cultural encounter, which force questions around the maintenance of entrenched identities and the assimilation of others. In a related account of similar tensions Ülker explores the play of tolerance and intolerance in political discourse and museum representations of immigrant communities in Germany, such as the Turkish guestworker labour force and their descendants. The paper draws on and contributes to a significant debate on notions of tolerance led by scholars like Wendy Brown and Slavoj Žižek, and problematises tolerance as an ideal and as a practise which perpetuates power relationships between the majority community and its others.

Little reflects here on the development of a new permanent gallery—*The Making of Modern Tyneside*—at Newcastle upon Tyne’s Discovery Museum, situated in the North East of England. Tyneside is a place with a significant population of migrants and descendants of migrants, but this is not well known or represented. Moreover, according to one survey negative feelings towards Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups are reportedly higher than in the UK. The authors explore some of the challenges they face in representing Tyneside as a place made of migration and in engaging with and giving voice to migrant communities.

Lanz explores the potential of city museums to refigure people’s relations with place, informing a kind of citizenship involving a collective and individual being of, belonging to and experiencing, the city. How can city museums “make sense” of the city and, as Massey (1991, 28) would put it, the ‘social relations they tie together’ in order to enable such a way of being, especially now when we see rapid and potentially disorientating

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changes in demographics and in the urban fabric? The author explores the architecture, displays and representations of some recent Italian museums which exemplify in different ways the social agency of the city museum as a discrete form.

Moore takes museum architecture and design as her principal focus, looking at design responses to the move away from materialities of single places (e.g. countries) and towards narratives of human mobility, travel and contact in museum representation of cultural histories. The author explores case studies in South Africa, Spain and the UK illustrating the ways in which political contexts, interdisciplinary collaborations between project design team members and the conceptual and physical organisation of museum exhibition spaces and content contribute to the representation of intercultural connections, exploration, migration and colonisation.

Kmec offers a review of a number of bodies of identity theory and an account of a qualitative research project into identity in Luxembourg which are mobilised in relation to her own curatorship. The 2012 exhibition *iLux—Identities in Luxembourg*, at Musée 3 Echelen encouraged visitors to reflect on the social constitution of identity in Luxembourg through interactive exhibits and co-ordinates such as languages, gender, the body, national and spatial identities and socio-cultural milieus. The account of the exhibition and its reception reveal the appetite for, and potentials of, interactive reflection on identity in museum contexts and an appeal to the importance of the situated nature of identity.

We take from these papers a number of interrogative trajectories to inform our future research. What are the relationship between Europe and its constituent places and the different forms and discourses of identity that they enable and disable? (And here we must always attend to the unstable difference and differencing between Europe and "EU".) In political discourse and in the museum, what places, peoples, cultures and identities do not figure prominently or are perhaps "othered", and why? What tensions exist between ideas and experiences of solidarity, shared history, intolerance, difference, belonging and not-belonging, "integration" and exclusion? How, finally, can (and should) museums respond to and act on such tensions in order to ameliorate situated social divisions? In future publications we will explore these concerns within the context of our ongoing research.



**“Placing” Europe  
in the Museum:  
people(s), places,  
identities**



# Museums as Validity Claims

## Trans-national Memory and the European Public Sphere

→ MICHAŁ LUCZEWSKI, TOMASZ MAŚLANKA

In this paper, we want to suggest a theoretical extension (Snow, Morrill, Anderson 2003) of Habermas's theory of communicative action to memory studies as a way of reinvigorating and mainstreaming this non-paradigmatic, trans-disciplinary and centre-less field (Olick and Robbins 1998).

Even though Habermas is an active participant, if not indeed an instigator, of most important historical debates in Germany and by extension in Europe (Habermas 1989a, 1989b, Maier 1988), his theory has not been applied consistently to the memory studies so far. Confining his analysis of memory to polemical interventions (e.g. Habermas 1989a, 1989b, 2001, 2009) rather than developing self-contained and fully-fledged theoretical contributions, Habermas has not exhausted the full potential of his own perspective. One underlying reason for this neglect might be the fact that from the very beginning he has remained sceptical to memory, tradition, myth and culture in general as founding elements of modern nations. For instance, inaugurating Historikerstreit, he argued that those German historians who lamented the loss of history (*Verlust der Geschichte*) were in fact trying to instil national, if not nationalistic, myths. It seemed that he associated memories with conventional forms of national identity, which should be subjected to public rational debate and in consequence replaced with post-conventional identity, based on "constitutional patriotism" giving justice to rational, universalistic principles of morality and democracy (Habermas 1989a; Maier 1988, 58-60, 161). For this reason, in his theory "the public contestation of the past" takes precedence over memories themselves, "renegotiation in an open public sphere"—over a "particular view of the past." True, "bloodless" constitutional patriotism needs "motivational power", which is to be found not in politics but in memories. But traditions are always double-edged and ambivalent and we have to be critical in choosing them, making sure that central among them will always be the memory of the Holocaust (Mueller 2006, 286-7).

Despite (or because of) his civic and political engagement, it is truly striking that Habermas left memory out of his theoretical focus. This becomes even more evident, given that the theory of communicative action has been employed in a very wide range of areas: Beside critical theory, philosophy, sociology and law, it was applied to theology, gender studies, management, aesthetics, pedagogy, bioethics or health studies (Johnson 2004; Douglas 2004; Ginev 2003; Hudson 2004; Scambler 2001; Sitton 2003; Spracklen 2009; Fleming 1997; Junker-Kenny 2011).

#### → THEORETICAL PRELIMINARIES

In what follows on the example of sites of memory (further: SOMs), i.e. museums and monuments in Poland and Germany<sup>1</sup>, we seek to show the fruitfulness of Habermas’s theory in its two fundamental aspects: descriptive as well as normative. Both aspects are constitutive of Habermasian notion of the “public sphere”, which—as Andreas Koller rightly argues (2010, 263)—falls into a neutral notion of the **minimal public sphere** as “the physical and virtual sphere and institutional setting of communication open to strangers” (a descriptive notion)<sup>2</sup>, on the one hand, and of the **communicative public sphere** as process of rational communication (an ideal-type notion)<sup>3</sup>, on the other. The former is a necessary condition of emergence of the latter, as the capacity of rational communication will not be realised, unless there is a free space between the state and the private.

The minimal public sphere is constituted by media as well as face-to-face encounters and organised gatherings (Gerhards and Neidhardt 1991). In this perspective, SOMs are hybrid institutional settings, which appear to be both media as well as places of face-to-face encounters/gatherings (Young 2008; Erll 2008; Zierold 2008; Garde-Hansen 2011). In this sense, SOMs are constitutive of what could be termed the **minimal mnemonic public sphere**.

More importantly, SOMs construct and articulate their own images of the past and seek to pass them on to diverse audiences (see also Den Boer 2008; Le Rider 2008; Winter 2008). Extending Habermas’s analysis beyond language and discourse, we can consider SOMs—just as other non-discursive phenomena, such as works of art (see Maślanka 2011, 92)—as formulating and negotiating in acts of communication of three types of validity claims<sup>4</sup>, i.e.:

1 We describe the objects of our study as sites of memory as specific, material locations, staging the past in a concrete geographical space, in contradistinction to “realms of memory”, as defined by Pierre Nora (1989; see also François and Schulze 2002, Hahn and Traba 2011, see Kończal 2009).

2 Reflecting on his analysis of Öffentlichkeit, Habermas reformulated his early definition in the following way: “The public sphere consists of an intermediary structure between the political system, on the one hand, and the private sectors of the lifeworld and functional systems, on the other hand.” (Habermas 1996, 373).

3 For empirical sciences, the notion of “unlimited capacity for reasoned public choice serves as a methodological fiction” (Koller 2010, 265).

4 There is no need to go into all intricacies of Habermas’s theory. It should suffice to observe that validity claims, as the German philosopher believes, originate from the very nature of human communication—or even of the human language—based on the search



- (a) claims to normative rightness (reference to social norms): images of the past, as constructed by SOMs, are meant to observe normative rules operative in a given society.
- (b) claims to propositional truth (reference to external world): images of the past constructed by SOMs, being neither fiction nor some arbitrary construct, claim to be grounded in factual reality.
- (c) claims to authenticity or sincerity (reference to human subjectivity): images of the past rather than being instrumentalised should reflect true convictions of the founders of SOMs.

These claims may be conflicting. For instance, there is an undeniable tension between claims to propositional truth and sincerity. The tension may be conceptualised through such distinction as: (a) history (as constructed by science) versus memory (as constructed by a community), (b) heritage (as encompassing all past events and phenomena) versus tradition (as those past events and phenomena which were constructed as important for a community; (e.g. Szacki 2011); (c) "functional memory" (Funktionsgedächtnis) versus "storage memory" (Speichergedächtnis) (Assmann 1999). While the former refers to a group and is typically selective, normative and oriented towards the future, the latter is a meta-memory, a memory of other memories, represented by historical sciences. Functional memory is intentionally constructed by representatives of a group and establishes group-identity, the storage memory constructs no identity, as it includes many, often contradictory images of the past, i.e. variants of functional memory. Of course, by no means should we consider those distinctions to be dichotomies. History draws on memory, while memory draws on history (see Hutton 1993, Szacka 2006). The same goes for heritage and tradition (Szacki 2011). Functional memory in turn cannot do without storage memory, and storage memory—without a functional one (Assmann 1999).

Habermas's approach may complement the analysis of the tension between the claims to truth and claims to sincerity with a third element: claim to rightness. In his view, the only justifiable rational normative stance in modernity—after the fall of the sacrum—is the inclusion of the Other (Habermas 2002, 100-150). Mature morality of the modern world relies on the ability to recognise, listen and accept perspectives other than our own. However, this cannot be achieved on the basis of our perceptions of the Other, but only in communication with the Other (Maślanka 2011, 148-153). Looking at memory studies,

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for consensus among its users. Considering participation in communication, in our use of language we seek to understand one another. On the other hand, communication serves as the test of rationality of claims. It is only through communication, through public debate, critical reflection and discussion, that we articulate reasons in support of our claims, while confronted with reasons of other subjects we verify, modify or falsify our claims. What it means is that rational claims require communication free of distortions. This implies that communication must not be instrumentalised. It should not serve any purpose other than describing what is, expressing internal states and strengthen valid social norms. Only then can it support the emerging trust. If we approach it in our strategies as serving our own, particular goals, the trust erodes (Maślanka 2011, 95-104).

Habermas’s idea anticipated the concept of “dialogic remembering” coined by Aleida Assmann:

Dialogic memory is still more of a project than a reality and is best exemplified by its absence...As a rule, national memories are not dialogic but monologic. They are constructed in such a way that they are identity-enhancing and self-celebrating; their main function is generally to enhance and celebrate a positive collective self-image. National memories are self-serving and therein closely aligned to national myths, which Peter Sloterdijk has appropriately termed modes of self-hypnosis (2010, 19, 17).

When it comes to “the public use of history”, if the claim to rightness clashes with other claims, Habermas seems to give precedence to the former over the latter two. If the claims collide, honesty and truthfulness should yield to rightness (see Habermas 1989a). In this perspective we can look at the *Historikerstreit*, where Habermas underlined the uniqueness of the Holocaust and the uniqueness of the German guilt both against those who wished to “historicise” the Holocaust (nominally heeding the claims to truth), as well as against those who wished to let Germans identify with their own nation and in so doing express their “conventional identity” (and thus realising their claim to sincerity; Habermas 1989a). According to Habermas, allowing either of these tendencies would lead to dilution of German guilt and consequently to a “moral catastrophe”. The claim to rightness should, then, apply “the filter of universal values” (Habermas 1989a) both to the German identity (“After Auschwitz we can only derive national awareness from the better parts of our history, accepted not blindly but critically”), and public scientific debates (Habermas 1989a, 1989b, 1993).

It should be underscored that it is not so much the conclusions we reach as the procedures of argumentation that render communication with its validity claims rational. In Habermas’s view, there are no transcendental or metaphysical ideas of rightness, truth and sincerity, as they are constantly socially negotiated and re-negotiated. If in the course of undistorted public debate, in which all participants are equal, their claims prove to be right, true and sincere, a **communicative mnemonic public sphere** develops. It should be thus considered to be a constant process rather than a stable structure. On the one hand, it remains prone to atrophy, if rational communication falls prey to politics, market (when power and profit, and not reaching rational consensus, become goals of communication) or ideology (when participants of the communication refuse to accept the perspective of the Other) (Habermas 2002, 475-586). On the other hand, however, once conditions of rational debate are met, the dynamics of understanding exceeds local differences leading through national to European and universal level.

In accordance with our theoretical preliminaries, we will (a) analyse the development of **minimal mnemonic public spheres** with regard to SOMs in Germany and Poland as well as (b) address the question whether SOMs foster **communicative mnemonic public spheres**.

Finally, we will describe the **dynamics** of communicative mnemonic public sphere, i.e. (c) its internationalisation, Europeanisation and universalisation, on the one hand, and (d) its colonisation under pressure of claims of other social systems, on the other. Admittedly, all these questions are of crucial importance in contemporary memory studies (see Buchinger, Gantet and Vogel 2009; Leggewie 2011; Levy and Sznajder 2001, 2002; Müller 2007; Sznajder 2008; Wessler 2008) and yet they were not tackled from a Habermasian point of view.

Our analysis is based on the example of twenty SOMs in Poland and Germany, which were described in a recent study (Łuczewski, Wiedmann 2011). Though the sample cannot be viewed as representative, it seems that to date it is still the most extensive one<sup>5</sup>. In a series of case studies, the authors included the most important memory projects constructed or reconstructed after 1989 in both countries as well as local sites, not directly linked with the state politics of remembrance. All in all, despite the fact that on this ground we cannot formulate authoritative conclusions and generalisations, we still may entertain strong hypotheses. More importantly, we can test Habermas's approach in a new area and show that it can bring about important theoretical insights. In this, we are going in the footsteps of Michael Burawoy (2003) and George & Bennett (2005) who argue that reflexive case studies offer powerful tools for theory development.

#### → MINIMAL MNEMONIC PUBLIC SPHERES

In the period after World War II in Poland and East Germany the state made the development of the public sphere impossible, and the spontaneous bottom-up construction of SOMs met serious political obstacles. Instead, it was the state with its repressive top-down politics of remembrance which tried to colonise the public and even the private sphere. For example, two of the most important projects of commemorating the past in our sample, Auschwitz (1945) and Buchenwald (1958), but also Sachsenhausen (1961) or Treblinka (1964) served not so much articulation and negotiation of public memory, as the imposition of one official version of history, which could be neither challenged nor rationally justified. Those SOMs upheld an anti-fascist, statist agenda.

At the same time, in democratic West Germany it seems that the development of a minimal mnemonic public sphere faced also some resistance. Many contemporary commentators point to the initial erosion

5 The State Museum at Auschwitz-Birkenau, the Buchenwald Place of Memory, The Kreuzberg District Museum (Berlin), The Karta Centre (Warsaw), the *Runde Ecke* Museum (Leipzig), the Stasi Museum (Berlin), Villa ten Hompel (Münster), the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (Berlin), the Ghetto Heroes Square (Kraków), the Jewish Heritage Trail (Białystok), the Warsaw Rising Museum, the Centre for Thought of John Paul II (Warsaw), the *Zug der Erinnerung*, the European Solidarity Centre (Gdańsk), the Kaufering concentration camp (Landsberg), the Museum of Communism (Warszawa), the Polish History Museum (Warsaw), the Munich Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism, the Visible Sign (Berlin), the Białoleka Lapidarium (Warsaw). All claims regarding the SOMs that we formulate here are based on the analyses of these authors.

of the mnemonic public sphere, as the past was repressed rather than staged. As a consequence, the memory of World War II was initially “communicatively silenced” (Assmann 2006).

Development of SOMs gained momentum after the collapse of Communism and reunification of Germany (e.g. Villa ten Hompel, Stasi Museum, Runde Ecke). Arguably, it climaxed with the construction of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe as well as the Topography of Terror. This process seems far from complete, as the already constructed SOMs are reconstructed (Landsberg), while new ones are in progress (Visible Sign, Documentation Center). A similar development of minimal mnemonic public sphere—with an approximate fifteen-year shift compared to Germany—can now be observed in Poland. Although 1989 triggered a wave of commemoration projects (the KARTA Centre), the majority were only started in the early twenty-first century, the most prominent being the Warsaw Rising Museum (2004). It should be noted that a number of significant projects are either under construction (European Solidarity Centre, The Museum of the History of Polish Jews), only about to begin (Polish History Museum) or still at the planning stage (Museum of Communism). It seems thus that the German mnemonic public sphere is more developed than Polish one.

Mnemonic public spheres are constructed and expanded not only due to diffusion of SOMs as media of memory, but also to ever-changing repertoire of SOMs. Both Polish and German SOMs employ more and more innovative forms to engage the public and move beyond the confines of buildings and squares. A good example of this process is Zug der Erinnerung, the Memory Train, which is a mobile form of commemoration, moving the public sphere beyond traditional places and reaching out for streets and railroad tracks. It is no wonder, then, that the same repertoire was used by the Polish European Centre for Solidarity in the European Train.

Without doubt, in the construction of mnemonic public spheres today SOMs gain special significance. This is also related to more general trend, as in Europe we are experiencing a process of fading communicative memory in relation to World War II, which still remains a critical event to all European societies. This is particularly true for Poland (Kwiatkowski, Nijakowski, Szacka 2010) and Germany (Rüsen 2001). Drawing on Jan Assmann’s theoretical distinctions, we could argue that (private) communicative memory is being replaced by a (public) cultural memory (Assmann 2009, 83-86). Communicative memory, in order to survive, materialises itself and becomes spatial in the form of institutionalised sites of memory (Nora 1989). Accordingly, researchers shift their focus from witnesses of the war to SOMs. In the course of diffusion and development of SOMs minimal mnemonic public spheres emerge. The question is whether this infrastructure results in development of communicative mnemonic public spheres.

## → CLAIMS TO RIGHTNESS

In the course of the *Historikerstreit* Habermas (1989a, 1989b) demanded that a modern democratic culture of remembrance should not only take into account the perspective of victims, but it also should take their side, imagining the past from their point of view. It seems that by now both Polish and German cultures of remembrance meet this expectation. In line with Habermas's claims—with one possible exception of the Visible Sign or some earlier SOMs devoted to the expelled in East Germany—SOMs in both countries do not assume the perspective of the expelled Germans, the "desperate civilians", and certainly not the perspective of the "brave soldiers" of Wehrmacht.

Put simply, the respective goals of SOMs in both countries may be formulated as never again for Germany and, by analogy, *always again* for Poland.

For most of Polish SOMs the aim is to return the past to the society and to underline the role played by Poles in the history of Europe and the world in the struggle for freedom (Polish History Museum), in the period of enslavement of the continent by the national socialism (Auschwitz-Birkenau), in the fall of Communism (Museum of Communism, European Solidarity Centre, the KARTA Centre), and even further—on the religious and eschatological plane (Polish History Museum, John Paul II Centre). In Poland the most common element used in opposition to the own group is Nazism (Auschwitz, Ghetto Heroes Square, Jewish Heritage Trail), Communism (European Solidarity Centre, Communism Museum), or both Nazism and Communism (John Paul II Centre, Polish History Museum, the KARTA Centre, Warsaw Uprising Museum). In consequence, both totalitarianisms are equalised.

In Germany the main pattern is *never again*. Initially, it was employed in relation to the Nazi crimes only (Documentation Center, Buchenwald, Zug der Erinnerung, the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, European Holocaust Monument); although after the fall of Communism it was also related to the Communist crimes (Runde Ecke, the Stasi Museum) and the twentieth century expulsions (Visible Sign). This negative slogan is then complemented with positive ones: defence of human rights and development of democratic values. Simultaneous presentation of Nazism and Communism, together with a clear indication of the perpetrators shows the ability of the German state to confront the ignoble past and accept the responsibility while at the same time clearly distancing itself from them and taking the side of the victims.

Although formally the goals in the two countries are different, in fact they complement each other. In each case the essence is the opposition against totalitarianism. Each time the victims are commemorated against the perpetrators. In this sense the goals are in accordance with the communicative mnemonic public sphere, as imagined by Habermas.

Now, let us look at a less abstract level, where we can examine the problem of inclusion of the Other in greater detail.

Polish sites of memory usually depict Poles as active subjects. It appears that the commemoration of other groups meets certain resistance. The more controversial sites in our sample include the Ghetto Heroes Monument in Kraków and a lapidarium in a small protestant cemetery in Białołęka (Warsaw). In the former case the resistance from the residents and the local authorities was driven by the perspective of lost employment and turning the area into another monument of martyrdom; in the latter—by the association made between the Protestants living in Białołęka and the Nazis as well as by the fear of slower development in the area.

The German SOMs, on the other hand, usually depict Jews (as passive, innocent victims) and Germans (as active perpetrators). There are controversies related to the depiction of Germans in different roles. The Visible Sign, which commemorates the expelled Germans, may serve as a case in point. Controversy also accompanies the commemoration of the Jews (Documentation Centre, the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe). However, in contrast to the Kraków Ghetto Monument, the question was not whether to commemorate, but how.

On these grounds, we could venture a hypothesis that the German culture of remembrance would be more open to the perspective of the Other than the Polish one. However, we have to introduce three important provisions.

Firstly, we are focusing on the assumption of the Jewish perspective. But commemorating the Jews means two different things for two different nations: Germans, recognising their role as perpetrators, commemorate their victims, Poles, victims of the Nazi policy, commemorate other victims. Should perpetrators resist the idea of commemorating victims, they would risk accusations of anti-Semitism. It is easier for Poles, who were also victims, to distance themselves from this type of accusations.

Secondly, it should be noted that the Jewish Heritage Trail, dedicated to the many centuries of Jewish presence in Poland, met with very positive reactions. This suggests that the tendency to include the Jewish perspective is also gaining momentum in Poland. Two further notable examples of this process are the Polish History Museum and Museum of the History of Polish Jews, currently under construction.

Thirdly, if we focus on the inclusion of perspectives other than Jewish, the German culture of memory seems less open than the Polish. An especially telling example for Poland is the case of the lapidarium in Białołęka. Controversies around the project echo the ones related to the Visible Sign: the commemorated group is German. The main difference is that in the first case the members of the nation recognising themselves as perpetrators are commemorated by the descendants of their victims, while in the second—by the descendants of the perpetrators. On the Polish side this would then be a radical opening to the perspective of the Other. What is more, one may get the impression that in Poland accepting the perspective of the Germans is expressed in their absence. In Poland the Germans, and—more broadly—out-groups, antagonistic

to Polish identity, are usually depicted in an abstract, non-specific manner. This is partly related to the Europeanisation and universalisation of memory (see below): since one of the aims of Polish SOMs is to relate Polish experience to the experience of out-groups, they play down potential conflicts between them. The process is visible in the example of the Centre for Thought of John Paul II, where the out-group is described in terms of a "civilisation of death" without any indication of who that might be. The practice is employed towards Germans by the Warsaw Rising Museum, which focuses on presenting the martyrdom of Poles, without directly presenting the perpetrators.

In Germany, on the other hand, groups are usually presented more specifically. Instead of general categories (Nazis, Communists), we see specific faces. What is more, what is documented is not only the operation of secret services (Runde Ecke, Stasi Museum), but also of department officers, whose guilt was theoretically lesser (Villa ten Hompel). The difference between German and Polish cases may be attributed to the fact that Germans may well present themselves as perpetrators, while Poles, in an attempt to account for sensitivity of Germans, may be reluctant to present the Germans in the same way. Therefore, they prefer the language of allusions and understatements. Furthermore, the German culture of memory seems closed to the Polish perspective. Among the collected German MMPs there is none intended as commemoration of the Poles. This may be understood either through negative context for this sort of initiatives, or through lack of such initiatives. It is impossible for us to resolve the question, since we do not know what institutions were not created. We may only raise a hypothesis that in the German culture of memory the victims are the Jews, followed by the Roma or the homosexuals, while other groups, such as Poles, Belarusians or Ukrainians, are not included.

Finally, let us concentrate for a moment on the assuming of the perspective of the Other who is not a member of another nation. Do Poles and Germans recognise the perspectives of all groups? Do they commemorate all of their own victims? Looking at the question of commemoration of Communism we notice some interesting differences. The perspective of the victims of Communism is only accepted on the territory of the former East Germany (East Berlin, Leipzig, Buchenwald). Among the German SOMs in our sample, except for Buchenwald, there are no places narrating both the crimes of Nazism and Communism. We might add also Bautzen. This also suggests a serious regional division in the culture of memory within Germany. It is even possible to speak of "two memories"—the dominant memory of Nazism, based on the assumption of its uniqueness, and the east-German memory of Communism. While in East Germany the commemoration of Communism commenced immediately after the fall of the Wall (Runde Ecke, the Stasi Museum, Buchenwald), in Poland the memory of Communism has yet to see an institutionalised form. In this sense, German SOMs seem to construct a more righteous public sphere on a domestic plane than Polish ones.



## → CLAIMS TO TRUTH AND SINCERITY

In both cultures of remembrance, there is a growing tendency in SOMs to prove that images of the past are real and in doing so to provide them with a scientific sanction. The most effective way to achieve this is to seek the support of historical sciences. This is best exemplified in the practice of establishing places of memory together with research institutes. It can be observed in the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum, the Centre for Thought of John Paul II, Buchenwald, Runde Ecke, the KARTA Centre, Visible Sign, Warsaw Rising Museum, the Jewish Heritage Trail, Landsberg, Polish History Museum, the European Solidarity Centre, and the Documentation Centre in Munich. These efforts show how both cultures of memory strive to realise claims to propositional truth. In this sense, culture of memory in both countries becomes more and more rationalised.

The question of claims to sincerity is more complex. Due to the Second World War, in Germany the democratic state could not construct SOMs that would reflect conventional German identity. That identity experienced severe crisis on three dimensions of the life-world: (a) cultural reproduction, (b) social integration, and (c) socialisation (Habermas 2002, 246–253). In Germany the continuity of cultural reproduction was interrupted. The knowledge of earlier generations could no longer be trusted. This led to the loss of sense and orientation in the world (see Habermas 2002, 248). Social integration was disrupted—the German society was not prepared for the defeat and for confrontation with the evil it caused. This resulted in eroding group identity, anomie and social conflicts (see Habermas 2002, 249). Finally, the experience of Nazism questioned the effects of socialisation. Mass murder put into question responsibility or even sanity of individual Germans. This brought about alienation and conflicts between individual and group identities (see Habermas 2002, 249, 251). As Habermas put it:

Our own life is linked to the life context in which Auschwitz was possible not by contingent circumstances but intrinsically. Our form of life is connected with that of our parents and grandparents through a web of familial, local, political, and intellectual traditions that is difficult to disentangle—that is, through a historical milieu that made us what and who we are today. None of us can escape this milieu, because our identities, both as individuals and as Germans, are indissolubly interwoven with it. (Habermas, 1989, 233)

In order to overcome this identity-crisis, it was necessary to develop identification with victims. In this context, we can point to three strategies: (a) identification with the opposition against the Nazis (Villa ten Hompel) and against Communism (Runde Ecke, the Stasi Museum); (b) identification with the expelled Germans (the Visible Sign); (c) identification with an out-group: the Jews (Holocaust Memorial). However, the efforts of reconstructing the life-world could not bring about complete success and one can claim that modern, German culture of remembrance encounters some challenges to claims to sincerity.

First, there are still problems related to socialisation and lack of harmony



between society and individual biographies. Undeniably there exists a clear lack of symmetry between the personal strategies of dismissing guilt, and the responsibility for the Holocaust recognised on the national level (Assmann 2006). Young generations do not identify with the Nazis, they do however identify with their grandparents, who—as they wish to believe—were not the Nazis (Welzer, Moller, Tschuggnall 2005). In this sense, the German culture of remembrance can be accused of being merely an official construct without bearing on society.

Second, it is often claimed that identification with victims is not enough to build social solidarity and cultural continuity. Moreover, blaming Germans and taking the side of the murdered and persecuted distances ourselves from perpetrators. Ernst Nolte (1989) directly questioned the German claim to sincerity:

The talk about the guilt of the German all too blithely overlooks the similarity to the talk about the guilt of the Jews, which was a main argument of the National Socialists. All accusations of guilt that come from Germans are dishonest since the accusers fail to include themselves or the group they represent and in essence simply desire to administer the coup de grace to their old enemies.

It seems thus that a sincere form of commemoration would be commemoration of the German victims. This is the function performed by commemorating victims of the Nazism and Communism as well as German expellees (the Visible Sign). However, the latter strategy is still problematic, as it is difficult to reconcile remembrance of German victims with remembrance of the Jewish ones. What is more, the claim to sincerity at the Visible Sign seems to enter into conflict with the claims of validity and truth. This conflict of claims leads to major controversy and a chain of transformations in the form the expelled Germans are to be commemorated.

In Poland, in turn, the war, followed by Communism, did not interrupt continuity—as claimed by Ryszard Legutko (2008)—but strengthened and amplified the model of a Catholic-Pole (Łuczewski 2008, 2012). Unlike the German culture of remembrance, the Polish culture of remembrance does not have problems commemorating victims from the in-group. In this sense, claims to sincerity should be easily met. Yet, there is still tendency that goes against this pattern, as it is argued that Polish SOMs could not meet claims to sincerity as long as they do not face the fact that Poles took part in the persecution of Jews and Germans.

#### → EUROPEANISATION AND UNIVERSALISATION

Since Europe becomes a significant element of the construction of SOMs, both countries show a trend towards the Europeanisation of memory. Both in Poland and Germany some institutions aim to describe the presented groups in a European context. The most striking examples are—in Poland—the European Solidarity Center (the European

dimension in the very name), the Museum of Communism (showing Polish Communism in its European context, while stressing the key role played by Poles in its downfall), the Polish History Museum and the Warsaw Rising Museum (depicting Poles as a major European nation struggling for freedom). In Germany this process is evident in the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (already visible in the names), the Zug der Erinnerung (connecting Polish and German cities) and the Visible Sign (showing the expulsions against a broader, European background). One fundamental difference between the countries is the fact that in Poland the Europeanisation of memory has not been achieved yet, as the appropriate institutions are only now being established, while in Germany it has been systematically implemented.

Both cultures of memory weigh heavily towards a universalised identity. The process is perhaps the most clearly visible in the Auschwitz museum, which has become the symbol of evil in the twentieth century, or even broader—of evil as such (Alexander 2003, 27-84). Each nationality has a pavilion devoted to its own martyrdom. The universal character of the museum is also visible in the association by other places of memory in Germany – it was no accident that the Zug der Erinnerung finished its course there. The universalisation strategy is also employed by the Warsaw Rising Museum, showing the struggle of Poles against two totalitarisms. It will also be utilised by the Visible Sign, depicting the twentieth century as the “century of expulsions”, as it already is in Bauhaus Europa in Aachen.

#### → COLONISATION

The argument up to this point suggests that the processes of universalisation and Europeanisation of memory continue, and that Poland and Germany establish a communicative mnemonic public sphere. The cultures of both countries are open to other perspectives and seek to fulfil the claims to sincerity and truth. However, Habermas’s approach drives our attention also to countertrends, pointing to potential threats to the public sphere on the part of the state and the market.

The processes of commercialisation and reduction of memory to a product are certainly taking place, although the analysed cases do not support very far reaching hypotheses. It is not easy to distinguish the instrumental motives of erecting SOMs from non-instrumental. It is, however, interesting to point out that one of the motives leading to the construction of the Ghetto Heroes Square was to establish the position of Podgórze district as another part of the city attractive to tourists and drawing on the success of a more popular Kazimierz district. Similar tourism motifs were present in the establishment of the Jewish Heritage Trail in Białystok. Admittedly, this type of argumentation was never brought up openly for any of the German projects, but it may be regarded as a factor. The effort to fulfil the claim of propositional truth leads towards another process, which may alienate memory in the public space. SOMs tend

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to be influenced more by experts and academics, which may lead to the colonisation of communal memory by expert and scientific discourse. History, instead of shaping and being shaped by the public sphere, may be left to the historians. The threat is perhaps not very serious, as even in the cases where the head of a SOMs is a historian, as is the case e.g. for the Second World War museum, the SOM does not become a research institute.

Considering the fact, that the state is far more potent in the process of establishing places of memory than the market or the experts, it seems that political bias is a far more serious threat than commercialisation. We should not, however, assume in advance that any intervention of the state will necessarily disintegrate the public sphere. The Kreuzberg museum, established by the district authorities, aims to involve the residents in the operation of the museum—thus establishing it as public space. A similar approach is assumed by the Warsaw Rising Museum, established by the late Lech Kaczyński during his term as the President of Warsaw. Based on our analysis we may raise a hypothesis, that political risk does exist, taking a direct form in Poland and indirect in Germany. Why? Generally speaking, the culture of memory in Germany leads to the development of politics of history, while in Poland the politics of history lead to the development of the culture of memory.

A characteristic example for the Polish culture of memory is the fact that the John Paul II Centre was initiated and established not by civic organisations but by the authorities—in this case the City. The example is all the more striking, since after the death of John Paul II (2005) Poland has observed a surge in social mobilisation to unprecedented levels, comparable perhaps to the times of the first Solidarity (*Solidarność* 1980–1981). The experience of the passing away of the Pope would unite the youth so much, that many talked about a JP2 generation. However, the general mobilisation of the youth did not materialise into the establishment of associations, which could influence the shape of the culture of memory. The task was taken up by the city council of Warsaw. The resulting situation was a paradox: the JP2 generation did not build any institutions commemorating the heritage of the Pope; on the contrary, it is the institution commemorating his heritage that aims to uphold or shape that generation.

The establishment of a place of memory typical for Germany would originate from a bottom-up initiative. Even the largest projects, such as the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, started out as small, civic associations. What complicates the image is the fact, that the German authorities are not restricted to passive execution of the will of such associations. This is clearly visible on the example of the Centre Against the Expulsions, a project that changed its shape significantly once government funding was involved. What is more, the management of its implementation (*Visible Sign*) was entrusted not with the initiators, but a federal foundation “Plight, Expulsion, Reconciliation”. A similar process took place in the case of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe.

Considering the significant power of the German state, accusations have been made of failure to include the citizens, while historical commemoration associations are facing a perspective of their projects being taken over. For this reason the Stasi Museum in Berlin, founded by the ASTAK association, despite pressure and incentives from the government refused cooperation with the Federal Officer for Stasi Documentation (BStU), which in a longer perspective could lead to the establishment of the Education and Documentation Centre. German projects which originate as bottom-up may very well turn out to be top-down.

In consequence, in both cases, state intervention may lead not to the development, but to atrophy of the public space. The Polish government may thus employ the sacrifice of the Polish people during the Second World War to build its stance on the European level, and the German government may make the same use from the fact that they have come to terms with their past and, contrary to some neighbouring nations, have accepted the perspective of the victims.

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## Europe's History Museums: Houses of Doom?

### Central Europa museums and the vanishing dream of a unified European memory

→ CHRISTINE CADOT

Until very recently, the debates on the memory of Europe had been shaped by Western European nation-states. At the time of the 2004 Enlargement, the institutional discourses of the EU Parliament or the Commission hardly contained any reference to historical events related to Central or Eastern European nation-states that could also embrace the idea of a shared European memory.

Intellectuals, academics and politicians have been urged to question Europe's grand narrative: the references to the history of a communist resistance that liberated the Western part of Europe have not been experienced in the same way by nation-states that joined the EU more recently (Snyder 2003). The popular notion of the "Return to Europe" of former Central and Eastern-European countries also crafted the idea that museums and commemorations should stay tied to a unified history of freedom and progress in Europe, which began after World War II. Are Poland's, Hungary's or Bulgaria's fights for freedom after 1989 the ghost parts of this grand narrative? What can Central European museums teach us about this teleological grand narrative?

These consistently vivid debates lead us to discuss the traditional function of history museums when addressing supra-national collective history in places other than Western Europe. Are museums always the places of tradition? If museums are, as wrote Foucault, "heterotopias that are proper to western culture of the nineteenth century" (Foucault 1967, 1986, 27), then are these non-Western museums places that were reinvented when they faced the Western historiographical paradigm on Europe? Is the accumulation of time, artefacts and relics still the rule?

## → THE RHETORIC OF THE “RETURN TO EUROPE”

The rhetoric of the “Return to Europe” of Central and Eastern European countries, formerly under Soviet domination, was extensively used in the nineties by political and intellectual elites. To some extent, it brought an expected counterpart to the popular vision of a homogeneous “Eastern Block” which was supposed to share common historical roots because of the communist domination. Once freed from communism, this block should have no other choice but to return to its former and “natural” state. Most of the political, economic and intellectual discourses on the “return to Europe” have been framed as pro vs. against EU integration, which has led to the formation of a black-and-white picture of the relationship with the Russian neighbour.

When referring to the “return to Europe”, very few voices make a distinction between Eastern and Central “Europeanness”, as Milan Kundera did in a famous article published in 1984 in the *New York Review of Books*. Of course, the historical background of the time was also to question whether communism should be seen as the fulfillment or the negation of Russian history. All the same, the article brought to light another paradigm:

“Geographic Europe” (extending from the Atlantic to the Ural Mountains) was always divided into two halves which evolved separately: one tied to ancient Rome and the Catholic Church, the other anchored in Byzantium and the Orthodox Church. After 1945, the border between the two Europes shifted several hundred kilometers to the West, and several nations that had always considered themselves to be Western woke up to discover that they were now in the East.

As a result, three fundamental situations developed in Europe after the war: that of Western Europe, that of Eastern Europe, and, most complicated, that of the part of Europe situated geographically in the center—culturally in the West and politically in the East. (...)

That said, we can no longer consider what took place in Prague or Warsaw in its essence as a drama of Eastern Europe, of the Soviet bloc, of communism; it is a drama of the West—a West that, kidnapped, displaced, and brain-washed, nevertheless insists on defending its identity. (Kundera 1984, 34–38)

By the time of the accession of ten new member-states in 2004, eight of them being former “Soviet satellite states”, the European Parliament became a forum in defence of their “Europeanness”—for example this was the case for Poland or Hungary (Killingsworth, Klatt and Auer 2010).

One of the best known promoters of the “return to Europe” was (and still is) Tadeusz Mazowiecki, former Prime minister of Poland (1989–1990) and one of the intellectuals initially linked to the Solidarnosc party. As the historic first non-communist Prime Minister in Eastern and Central Europe since the late 1940s, Mazowiecki has also been constructed (and constructs himself) as the very promoter of the accession

of Poland to Europe, coining the “thick line” formula<sup>1</sup>. On the one hand, this has often been criticised as a way to silence the crimes of the communist regime and, therefore, as showing no clear discontinuity with it. On the other hand, he also has been accused of silencing the history of the communist occupation in Poland as not being part of the National and European heritage.

The Visegrad group, now called ‘V4’<sup>2</sup>, also adopted this formula: it was regarded as fulfilling the need to find a common European memory that would benefit Central Europa, separate from any sentimental “Slavic soul” that would make it return to a Russian alternative centre. At the time of its accession to the EU in 2004, Hungarian literature stressed the end of the mythology of the “Ferry country”. Hungary has been portrayed for decades as floating back and forth between the shores of Eastern and Western cultures. Its accession represented it finally coming back to port. As for Poland, the accession to the EU has been the occasion to reactivate the old mythology that the country was the gatekeeper of Christianity and Western Europe, against Eastern pagans and barbarians (Killingworth, Klatt and Auer 2010).

#### → A DEBATED TIME ZERO

For some voices, such as Polish MPs, the “time zero” that EU founding members have chosen as the official beginning of the European construction does not fit well with those new member states. A conflicting debate related to an invisible disappearance, that Kundera did see coming twenty years before.

the countries in Central Europe feel that the change in their destiny that occurred after 1945 is not merely a political catastrophe: it is also an attack on their civilization. The deep meaning of their resistance is the struggle to preserve their identity—or, to put it another way, to preserve their Westernness. (Kundera 1984, 35)

While these countries have vanished from the Western map, the EU founding members created an official historiography that signified 1945 as a unique historical *tabula rasa* in which the EU collective identity had to be rooted. The debates surrounding the choice of the 8th May as *Europe’s Day* have hardly been related to Central and Eastern Europe’s historical experiences, but rather to the idea that Western Europe should not be divided between former WWII winners and losers. More recently, the Nobel Peace Prize attributed to the EU was an occasion to reaffirm the central role of the Founding Fathers. The *Nobel lecture* given by Herman Van Rompuy (*From War to Peace. A European Tale*) and José Manuel Barroso did not forget to celebrate the work of Monnet, Churchill, or

1 “We split away the history of our recent past with a broad line. We will answer only for what we have done to help extract Poland from her current predicament, from now on” (Mazowiecki 1989).

2 Originally named the “Visegrad Triangle”, the group is now composed of Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia since 1993.

IMG. 01 — *Stalin's Boots*, Memento Park, 2011.

Adenauer and to define a continuum of “‘advancement’ for over six decades” already visible in the announcement of the prize.

As first sight, some Hungarian public places could be seen as meeting the criteria of a 1945 *tabula rasa*, since they physically erased the relics of the Soviet occupation. It took two years and vivid debates, from 1989 to 1991, to decide whether Budapest’s statues paying tribute to Soviet heroes or founding fathers of the Marxist ideology should be sold to tourists or simply melted, transformed or destroyed. They were finally moved and grouped in a working-class neighbourhood, in the peripheral part of Buda, where visitors can see them today. The aptly-named *Memento Park* has to be seen on a cold winter day—it looks even better in the fog. It takes visitors almost one hour to get there from the centre of Budapest. As such, the adopted project was to preserve these statues from destruction—even if relegated in a remote area—but also to expose their fakeness, as close up it is possible to see that some were made of painted foam rather than of bronze. They were therefore pursuing a double objective:

- *Erasing/burying the artefacts of the Soviet occupation from the central public spaces of Budapest*, so they could also erase it from the official narratives of the Magyar nation and “wrap” part of the nation’s history. The official name of the park, *Szoborpark*, namely *Statues’ park*, has soon been popularised as *Szobortemető* (Statues’ cemetery) by Budapest citizens, even if its scenography evolved after 2005 . This removal of the statues from central public spaces and historiography can be compared to its Estonian variation, when the monument and the remains of a dozen unknown soldiers killed by the Nazis were removed from the daily vision of the inhabitants in the centre of Tallinn, in April 2007, and relocated to the periphery of the capital. At the time of my visit to the Memento Park, a statue of Lenin, wrapped in a protective plastic film, welcomed rare visitors just after the entrance to the memorial. Curiously enough, a label was added on top of the wrapping material, describing the content of the hidden statue, and even adding a photograph of the statue in its original condition. If not easily accessible, the cemetery was obviously not trying to make these artefacts disappeared.
- *But preserving in erasing*, i.e. also meeting some of the practices presented in Central and Eastern Europa as a distinctive sign of the Western civilisation that pre-WWII Hungary was familiar with. The aim is to preserve a patrimonial continuity with (and of) the past and not to let informal groups coming from new social movements “blaspheme” and “vandalise” these testimonies of the past. The *Monument to the Soviet Army*, painted overnight in Sofia in 2011, is a good example of how anonymous artists have been targeted as vandals because they turned each bronze soldier of the monument into colourful American cartoons characters. As such, this patrimonialisation of the past is seen as a way to return to common values that could be shared with Western Europa, which associates the conservation of past objects d’art and relics as a sign of prosperity and democratic practices.





As such, the preservation and continuity of the *objet d’art* is presented as a way to counter-balance political discontinuities of democratic western societies (Losozcny 2011, 93, 95). Here too, we could find apparently a good illustration of this so-called “return to Europe”.

In fact, it is not “by luck” so to speak that Hungary chose to improve its statues cemetery in 2004 and that Estonia chose to relocate its monuments and remains in 2007. They were not late in commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the end of WWII with the other Western European countries. Hungary was actually returning to celebrating the 1956 uprising, while Estonia was (and still is) fighting for years to put an end to the relics that were the symbols of the country’s occupancy, rather than an act of liberation. Both removals represented the complicated, worsening relationship between Russia and its former satellites, and subsequently between Russia and the EU itself, culminating in riots and economic sanctions.

Nevertheless, it would be too simple to follow Kundera’s idea of Hungary being liberated from its Soviet past and therefore recovering its “Westernness”. The vivid debates that emerged at the time of the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of WWII showed that Hungary was not returning to its Western harbour to adopt its timeline. In fact, older Hungarians, and Czechs as well, refuse the idea that they are linked to the first part of the 20th century history (Wahnich 2008, 51), as in all other countries which experienced Nazism, either to an individual or to a collective level. The House of Terror museum in Budapest is a good example of how the Hungarian government has been dealing with its pre-WWII past, silencing the rise of the Hungarian Nazi Arrow Cross in the thirties. Only two of the forty rooms in the museum present an explanation of the birth of the movement (albeit rather superficial), while visitors are told the fable of a dismembered Hungary whose history sounds distant and in no way relates to present or future times.

#### → LIVING WITH THE EUROPEAN NOISE OF THE PAST

It would be wrong to consider that only Central European countries face historiographical debates today, in relation to the celebration of a common European memory. It is still a long road for some European countries to come to terms with the representations of Western Europe as a victim of Hitler’s regime, putting the responsibility of WWII solely on German state. Modern day France is still sometimes portrayed as fully embracing resistance, such as two of its European Founding Fathers (namely Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman). Marcel Ophüls’s documentary *Le Chagrin et la Pitié* (1969) has been banned from French TV channels and movie theatres until the beginning of the 1980s and there are still today some voices to discuss whether the *Rafle du Vel D’hiv*’ in Paris should be blamed only on the French collaborating state or on the collective responsibility of the whole nation<sup>3</sup>. Only hagiographical information will

3 For recent debates on the *Rafle du Vel d’Hiv*, see Henri Guaino’s answer to François Hollande’s declaration reaffirming the responsibility of the French State in arresting

be displayed in Robert Schuman's House near Metz, or Jean Monnet's House near Houjarray. In both scenarios, the history of the EU began here and has to be continued, helped by the political testimonies of the two Founding Fathers (Jean Monnet memoirs or Robert Schuman's book, *For Europe*, opportunely displayed at the end of the visit). The visitor will not find any references here to the political debates that inspired the Founding Fathers—in particular those related to the idea of a rather weak European parliament—which also inspired the practices of the Vichy Regime (Cohen 2012).

Western European countries certainly have no lessons to give to Central and Eastern European countries. They developed a model of commemoration of European history mainly oriented on Holocaust commemoration, which does not work well in an enlarged Europe. In fact, the European past is often cast away through the notion of "Europe, year zero", a tale permitting no further questioning of its common historiographical practices. We can mention here two examples of this Western framing of history:

- The timeline displayed at the Exhibition on the 60th Anniversary of the Schuman declaration (Quai d'Orsay, Paris, 8th-9th May 2010) titled its brochure *Europe, where everything began. From Robert Schuman to our times. 60 years of concrete realisations*. This exhibition, organised by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, had a strong interest in defending the role of one of its own civil servants, placing him, as the classical historiography of the European integration usually does, as an undisputed Founding Father. Several other French figures illustrated the timeline, carefully selected for their capacity to highlight the positive role of the French State in the building of the EU, ending by Nicolas Sarkozy's face, whose size has been adjusted to compete with Schuman's figure.



IMG. 02 — Multimedia timeline, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2010.

- The Musée de l'Europe in Brussels in its temporary exhibition *It's Our History, 2007-2008*, whose scenography adopted the term for the name of one of its rooms ("1945: Europe, Year 0"). We are here at the very heart of the debate and tension between the heavy tendency of museographers to favour a linear history that avoids ruptures,

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thousands of Jewish children and families in Paris. Former advisor of the former French President Nicolas Sarkozy, Henri Guaino declared that "France was not located in Vichy. France was in London from the 18th of June" [the "De Gaulle Appeal" broadcasted on the radio in 1940 to the French resistance movement]. [François Hollande] did not speak in the name of the France I love" (Citron 2004).

discontinuities and heterogeneity and a museum which could be an open space of representation, also perceived, according to Habermas (1989), as a place where voices can confront, communicate, and debate.

From the end of the nineteenth century until the end of the 1970s, the narrative structure suggested by museographers was essentially a teleological vision that did not leave place for the uncontrolled wandering of the visitor, even in art museums. This controlled progression towards the resolution of the enigma, what Tony Bennett calls the backtelling, is supposed to show the linearity of historical experience and progress [of the European integration]. (Cadot 2010, 131).

The change of the European political landscape in the wake of 1989-1991 deeply affects post-communist countries and forces them to redefine their collective memory along with their inclusion in the EU, which, in turn, reconstructs their national consciousness. Not to forget the heavy tendency to create a regional central collective identity separated from their German/Russian influences. History Museums and memorials should address this conflicting issue when they try to overcome the traditional way of displaying EU histories, by allowing unheard or new emerging voices to express themselves (Zhurzhenko 2009). In this matter, there should be no historiographical legitimation on a “first come, first served” basis when displaying foundational narratives.

At the same time, European historiographies, along with national ones, should take into consideration that framing the past is not only a matter of reconciliation with the crimes of Nazism or Stalinism but rather a way to learn that Europe—and not only nations—has to live with *the noise of the past* and that, “in a sense, nothing can reconcile you with them” (Confino and Fritzsche 2002). The central question is not “What museums can do to create a common European memory” but rather “What a common European memory would be useful to.” It could appear that more important issues could be lost on our way. How could we measure the efficiency of such a constructed shared memory in terms of solidarity? How could we isolate it from other externalities? The pitfall would be to consider that a common shared collective memory would create more solidarity between EU member states, contrary to the view held by Onken (2007, 29). The current economic crisis that shapes everyday references to the EU proves that even historically-constructed Western founders of the EU (such as the “Franco-German couple”, always portrayed as the core engine of most of EU realisations, or the Franco-British couple) are in no way disconnected from their national political agendas.

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## Contested borders

### Representing boundaries within Moldovan museums

→ ROXANA ADINA HUMA

Whilst there is ample writing on nationalism in Moldova, there is very little written on the way in which museums represent the Moldovan nation. The only writing that touches on this topic, Cash (2008, 77-8) studies, very briefly, the way in which the state is not reinforced, but actually undermined through museum representations. Yet, whilst her argument is centred largely on the way in which the state is either missing or presented as a destructive force, this paper will go into more depth in analysing the way in which the borders of the Moldovan nation and other communities to which it belongs are represented and whether these overlap with the reality of the Moldovan state. Moreover, through this approach focused mainly on national identity and borders, I will also be highlighting the way in which not only museums, but more importantly, in which national discourses use museums as a medium for expression to undermine the state's borders, thus serving as counter-discourses to the official Moldovan state representation of its spatiality.

The first part of the analysis will briefly look at the ways in which the two main national identity discourses in Moldova treat the problem of national borders, in order to contextualise the discourses present within museums. Most authors accept the fact that the Moldovan debate on national identity is divided in-between two sides (Romanianism and Moldovanism), other representations being firstly unsuccessful within Moldovan society and also understudied (e.g. King, 2000; Zgureanu-Guragata, 2008). Moreover, it is widely acknowledged that cultural elites, such as museum curators, are staunch supporters of Romanianism (e.g. King, 2000; Cash, 2007) and it would be relevant to see whether this discourse is truly hegemonic within museum representations in this approach. In this context, the first section will argue that firstly the two main discourses of national identity in Moldova both dissolve the state's border with Romania across the Prut; its findings will also be used, wherever possible, to frame the

analysis conducted on museums within the logics of these two national identity discourses.

The main part of this paper will look at the way in which the borders of the nation and other spaces are represented in museums. Museums represent part of the ideological apparatus of the state, essential in producing and reproducing the nation (e.g. Bennett, 1995). They serve in refreshing and strengthening visitors' collective memory and thus, identities (Nora, 1996), whilst also presenting the Moldovan nation to foreign guests. The museums I will be focusing on are the three national museums in Chişinău, the History and Archaeology Museum (HAM), the Ethnography and Natural History Museum (ENHM) and the Military History Museum. From this data I will firstly conclude that through an adaptation of the Romanianist discourse, the borders between the Romanian communities abroad and Romania are strengthened, one of them being that on the Prut river erased by the two main national identity discourses discussed. This will be achieved by analysing the reasons why a series of regions and communities, the Budjak, Bukovina, Northern Maramures and the South of the Danube, are presented as similar to the Republic of Moldova but dissimilar to Romania. Furthermore, the last section of this chapter will look at the various ways through which Moldova is integrated within different spaces of similarity, thus presenting it as either a part of the soviet, the Eastern space or of a European or global world.

#### → THE ROMANIANIST AND MOLDOVANIST DISCOURSES

There are two main discourses of Moldovan nationalism, the Romanianist, arguing for the Romanian character of the people of Moldova, and the Moldovanist one, stressing the difference between the people of Moldova, as Moldovans, and those of Romania. The Romanianist narrative of Moldovan national identity argues that the people of Moldova are essentially Romanian and whilst it has a clear way of representing equivalence, through the similitudes in language and history there is a certain degree of vagueness regarding the Romanian/Moldovan's Other. Usually, this Other is the Slav, an idea supported through the importance played by the focus on Romanian language and Latin script (as opposed to Cyrillic) throughout the 1980s and the liberation movement (Dyer, 2002; Deletant, 1996; King, 1996, 1999). Yet the delimitation in-between the Romanian and the Slav is not on a clear, tangible border, as the one border shared with the Ukraine, Moldova's only Slavic neighbour, is never mentioned within Romanianist discourse, nor is any other form of physical border ever mentioned. The “Slav” takes two forms in the Romanianist discourse, firstly the Russo-phone minority populations in Moldova and secondly, the historical Russian other. The minorities are composed of Russians, Ukrainians, Gagauz, Bulgarians, etc. and consist of approximately 30% of the population (National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, 2004); but whilst less than a third (9.39%) of them are Russian, the use of the term “Russo-phone minorities” in itself outlines their main characteristic and highlights the opposition to

the Romanian speaking majority in Moldova. Nevertheless, except for the Gagauz and Bulgarians, who are concentrated in their own autonomous regions of Gagauz Yeri and Taraclia, all the other minorities are well dispersed throughout the country, except for a greater concentration in Transnistria<sup>1</sup>; for this reason the border on the Dniester river is one to keep an eye out for in museum representations. Nevertheless, when discussing the inclusion/exclusion of Transnistria it is important that especially on a political level, the integrity of the Moldovan state has become a hegemonic discourse since the end of the war across the Dniester in 1992; consequently, whilst there are a few hints at it, no parliamentary political party will ever support Transnistrian independence. This is one clear example of the way in which studying museums offers more depth to the analysis of national identity discourses, firstly because it is not entrapped by various hegemonic discourses operating at the political and societal level and secondly, because museums usually use far more subtle ways in their discourse than outright support for a cause. The second "Other" for the Romanianist discourse is the historical Russian Other, be it Tsarist or Soviet Russia and, essentially, the alternative narrative regarding the character of the Moldovan nation, as an extension of the Russian Other, though the link created within discourse in between this view on nationalism and its creator, the historical "Russian" (for a historical analysis of Moldovanism see King, 2000). But yet again, today Russia does not share a border with Moldova, the only tangible Russian presence (besides for the Russo-phone minorities) are the Russian troops stationed in Transnistria.

These two forms of Othering fail to create a tangible border to delineate Moldova from its Others; they are either within the national borders, as a sort of a fifth column, or historical Others. Hence, an approach based strictly on Barth's (1969) view of borders and difference at its basis does not allow us to place the Moldova geographically, within certain limits. Hence, inspired by Conversi's (1995, 81) conceptualisation of the ethnic borders as deeply related to ethnic content, the analysis will focus more on the way in which this is used to argue that different people, places, objects are the same. Nationalism is based on creating similarity within the nation and difference with the outside and the paper will focus on the former of these two processes. Hence, not on the way in which borders are created, but on the way in which certain borders are dissolved through the representation of sameness.

The Romanianist discourse holds that the Moldovan people are essentially Romanian and speak Romanian, thus making the border on the Prut river in-between Moldova and Romania, obsolete; in some radical versions even promoting the reunification of Moldovan with Romania (e.g. PNL). At the opposite end of the spectrum, the Moldovanist discourse of national identity supports the idea that the people of Moldova are different from the Romanians. This discourse has as its precursor the Soviet (de)nationalising project (van Meurs, 1998; King, 2001; Schrad,

1 I choose to use the Romanian/Moldovan name for the region throughout this paper.

2004) and is based on the idea that Moldovans speak the Moldovan language (different from Romanian) and have had a separate historical development. There are a fair few variants of this discourse, some remarkably primordialist and others arguing for a civic citizenship which also includes all the national minorities, which seems to clash with the ethnic focus on language. Stemming from this latter view, the Russian minority in Transnistria is seen as an integral part of the nation (unlike the vagueness encountered in the Romanianist discourse), thus placing the border East from the Dniester river. But more importantly, at first sight one would think that the main border of the discourse is that on the Prut, in between Romania and the Republic of Moldova. In reality, Moldovanists draw legitimacy for their project from the existence of the Medieval Moldovan Principality and have repeatedly argued for the creation of the Greater Moldova, incorporating both the Republic of Moldova and the Romanian region of Moldova. Concluding, the (same) border on the Prut River is erased through the representation of the Moldovan nation through the Moldovanist discourse. One such claim has been raised when the Romanian Social Democratic Party opened a branch in Chisinau, to which the Communists' Party in Moldova responded with a threat to open their own branches in the Romanian region of Moldova (Unimedia, 2012).

Thus, both discourses of national identity in Moldova dissolve the border on the Prut in their spatialisation of the nation. Furthermore, whilst the Romanianist discourse is vague regarding the Eastern borders of the nation, the Moldovanist one clearly sets the border at the Eastern margins of Transnistria.

Stemming from this approach on identity as creating differences and similarities, the analysis focuses on the way in which Moldovan borders are represented within museums. One important element in this analysis has been the focus on common spaces and in this endeavour I have been working on the idea that, just like a Venn diagram, the grouping of a series of objects (within a cabinet or in describing a certain event/characteristic/age) creates a sense of unity among them, in presenting either small variations or different facets of the same thing (example, a bird from here, a fox from there, but all representing one ecosystem). Through this approach, one can easily draw a map of the origins of objects and then create a space of similitude incorporating all of them, like a Venn diagram. Moreover, whilst acknowledging the importance of national identities in this discussion, I will not be limiting the analysis to these, as creating similarity within the group and contrasting this with the outside is not singular to this type of identity (Jenkins, 2004), I also look towards other types of “civilizational” or geographic spaces. Lastly, given the nature of museum objects and the fact that their sources are usually just a village or a community somewhere it will also be useful to see the deeper meaning attached to these places (for example capitals/centres used to symbolise an entire region) and also to triangulate the findings with discourses present in the public sphere. Lastly, my focus is to see the space as it is created in the mind of the visitor (and hence, through the

tags that relate to places), thus not limiting itself to how it existed in the mind of the researcher collecting the objects or their intentions. From this point of view, this analysis will not focus on the stories behind certain objects and the trajectories they have taken throughout their existence, but only on the perspective the visitor has, that given by the tags attached to each object.

#### → MUSEUM REPRESENTATIONS

The first point to be made across the museums is that while the majority of objects come from the space between the Prut and Dniester, both the Ethnographic part of the ENHM and the archaeological finds in the HAM feature many objects from modern day Transnistria (e.g. from Camenca). Moreover, the sense of the unity in-between the space west of the Dniester and Transnistria is further strengthened through the use of a series of uniformly “block” coloured maps when portraying the territory of Moldova during the ice age, the only markers on them being the three main cities of Moldova: Chisinau, Balti and Tiraspol. On the other hand, the most obvious way to portray the division of the country is through a simple geographical map containing only rivers, as the Dniester, together with the Prut, represents one of the biggest rivers in Moldova, thus constructing a map with the territory of Moldova divided into two. Nevertheless the dividing effect is lost in a more complex map, as is the case with one of the few non-block colour maps in the ENHM, an ample map of rivers, forests and different types of environment that through its complexity diminishes the dividing effect of the Dniester. This can be seen as both a representation of the Moldovanist discourse and proof that the idea of national sovereignty within the current borders has become hegemonic, even at museum level.

The first region represented within the maps of Moldova is that of the Budjak or the three counties south, between the Republic of Moldova and the Black Sea. Whilst the few objects from the region merely hint at similarity with some communities within the region, the whole region appears in the museum on one of the Ice Age maps of Moldova, as an extra part attached, representing these three counties. Historically, this territory between the Prut and the Dniester has been part of the Principality of Moldova being separated from it for only two decades, from 1856 to 1878, when they were reunited to the Principality of Moldova and, from 1859–62 to the newly formed Romania. But more importantly, this representation helps reconstruct the historical region of Bessarabia, though there are almost no mentions of this name in the museums. Bessarabia is the name given by the Russians to the territory they occupied between 1812 and 1918 (Birladeanu, 2008; Cusco, 2008; Enciu, 2012), which besides the Budjak and the modern day Republic of Moldova also encompasses a small slip of land to the North, the Hotin citadel<sup>2</sup>, and is represented in

2 To prove its relevance, the region was a Turkish raia up until 1812, although it had no borders with the Ottoman Empire.

one of the very few maps found in the HAM. Hence, through the use of this “toponym” the space of Moldova is further enlarged within the space of the Moldovan Principality, but more importantly in that of the territories previously (and currently) occupied by foreign powers. Moreover, all throughout the museums I found mentions of the Pruto-Dniestean space (“*spatiul Pruto-Nistean*”) i.e. the territory of Bessarabia, as representing the Moldovan space, which in the strictest sense also excludes Transnistria. Hence, the addition of the Budjak together with the use of the Pruto-Dniestean toponim have showed us the way in which through museums the Moldovan national experience is not limited by the borders of the Republic of Moldova, but expands into those of the tsarist guberniya of Bessarabia. But before delving into explanations, the next paragraphs will look at another representation of similitude that with Bukovina, achieved through the presence of a few objects, especially a collection of painted eggs from Cernauti.

Cernauti is the main city in northern Bukovina, now in the Ukraine, a region still comprising of an important Romanian minority (Census, 2001) and can be seen as a capital, centre and hence symbol for the whole region (Interview with the author, July 2012). Hence this narrative would suggest that both Northern Bukovina<sup>3</sup> and Bessarabia are part of the same ethnographic or even cultural space and share its characteristics; moreover, there are some historical similarities that might help us shed light on this association. The first is the fact that both were part of the Medieval Principality of Moldova, as the Moldovanist discourse argues, whilst the second is the fact that both share a similar structure for their modern history; more specifically, both have been under foreign occupation during the nineteenth century, reunited with Romania after the decision of a popular assembly in 1918 and then have been occupied by the Soviet Union from 1940 onwards (Hitchins, 1996). This last event marks the beginning of Soviet rule in these lands, while also representing one of the main steps to the dissolution of Greater Romania, thus highlighting that the similarity between these regions goes beyond the Romanianist argument of the existence of Romanian communities. Every commemoration of the events of the 28th June 1940 will see the “kidnapping” of both regions together, always as “Bessarabia and Bukovina”, whilst also being presented together whenever discussing soviet deportations from the two regions (e.g. a party communique PADM, 2012). History is very important to the way nationalism is constructed and, more specifically, the idea that the history of a nation will define its future (Anderson, 1983; Özkirimli, 2000) explains the way in which, based on this historical experience, the two regions are seen as having similar historical aspirations. This idea was sparked whilst doing my research on the way in which the 27th March is commemorated in Moldova. On this date, in

3 Southern Bukovina is today within the borders of Romania, but given its relative assimilation within the Romanian thinking there it has loosely ceased to be called that, the name of Bukovina usually being employed only for the “foreign” region; hence, all references to Bukovina (be it Northern or not) in this section of the paper and in the sources it refers to Northern Bukovina.



1918, the Moldovan assembly (*Sfatul Tarii*) decided to unite the country with Romania, thus creating (together with the other regions who chose this course of action: Transylvania, Banat and, more importantly, Bukovina) what for the next two decades will be Greater Romania. Moreover, in recent years, on this date, pro-Romanianists in Moldova have organised demonstrations promoting reunification, under banners like "*Basarabia e Romania*" (Bessarabia is Romania!) (Realitatea, 2012; Actiunea 2012, 2012). A participant to this demonstration in 2012 writes on his blog regarding the preparations done for the day: "I'm thinking: I'll put on my t-shirt from Cernauti, because the Bukovinean spirit too must take part in this march" (BloGalbur, 2012).

Among the photos there is also one of the participant, wearing a simple black t-shirt with a traditional pattern in front, as a clear illustration of how it is exactly these elements of traditional wear that connect the two "nations" and how this traditional pattern represents the "spirit" of Bukovina. But more importantly for this study is the purpose of this commemoration, unification, and the way in which it is expanded to encompass both Bessarabia and Bukovina.<sup>4</sup> Hence, it can be argued that the two regions, through their common experience, can be represented not only as having shared this traumatic experience but also the will to achieve its "reversal", reunification. This also illustrates the way in which the museums exhibits can easily be interpreted in the most radical of Romanianist manners, i.e. promoting the dissolution of Moldovan stality together with the re-creation of Greater Romania. But, more importantly, this comparison sheds light over the ways in which foreign occupation and the short experience as part of the Romanian state can create a common sense of both victimhood and belonging, in illustrating how similarity can go beyond the existence of Romanian communities in these territories.

Concluding, two Romanian populated regions in the Ukraine have been represented as similar, as belonging to a common historical, cultural or ethnographic space with current day Moldova. Their common element is the memory of their modern historical experience and, linked to it, national aspirations. Yet, the analysis must also take into consideration the Moldovanist explanation for this similitude which is based on the common historical experience of belonging to the medieval Moldovan principality, but not Russian occupation in the nineteenth century, as Bukovina was under Austrian and Austro-Hungarian rule (Hitchins, 1996). Lastly, in interviews with curators from the National ENHM (July 2012), the main argument for the commonality of these regions was the fact that communities interacted and that culture rarely remains within state borders; the first point is extremely useful, as it outlines the irrelevance of the

4 Moreover, this is by no means an exception to the nationalist discourse, because if we were to move the centre of analysis to Romania, we discover that the association between Bessarabia and Bukovina is quite common. One such example is the multitude of Romanian organisations that lump the two together, e.g. the Bessarabian and Bukovinian Students' Organisations or the Pro-Bessarabia and Bukovina. Moreover, given the possibilities these open for us, it would be interesting to carry out further research to see the ways in which Romanians construct the similarities in between the two in interviews with members of these organisations.

state borders in their approach to the museum exhibit, whilst the second can be treated with suspicion, taking into consideration both the different historical experiences and distance between certain places, especially the absence of objects from Romanian Moldova, which is considerably closer to both regions. Lastly, this idea of geographic closeness will be challenged in the next two sections, which will help refine the argument further by analysing a series of objects from the Subcarpathians together with an event at the ENHM.

Our second set of “foreign” objects in the Ethnography and Natural History are from the Subcarpathians, the Ukrainian region Zakarpattia Oblast<sup>5</sup>. Both arguments developed so far might explain the presence of such an object in the Moldovan Ethnographic collection. To reiterate, the first is the presence here of a small percentage of Romanian language speakers (State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, 2001), whilst the second is centred on the Moldovanist historical discourse. This region comprises Northern Maramures, as the region of Maramures in its entirety is seen as a Romanian historical region geographically north of Transylvania, its southern half being in Romania in the present day. But more importantly, focusing on the thesis regarding the principality of Moldova, we discover that the narrative of the Moldovan history claims that the country was founded by two princes from Maramures who crossed the Carpathians. Yet rarely in current day discourses is Maramures mentioned as a place of origin and a link between the two regions is almost never seen<sup>6</sup>. Thus, the lack of any such clear connection in current day debates does problematise this idea and hence, the first of the theses, that arguing that the commonality between elements is based on historical memory of being a part of the Principality of Moldova, fails to cover this example.

To draw a parallel in discussing the second thesis, another symbolic construction of borders is achieved, this time through a conference and exhibit organised at the ENHM together with the *Fratii Golescu* Institute, regarding the Romanian communities in Bulgaria held on the 6th May 2012, whilst also choosing to see museums as more than just exhibits, but also as cultural centres. Through this the common cultural space of Moldova is expanded to include the Romanian communities all across the South of the Danube. Mihai Ursu, the director of the ENHM, in a discussion dated 6th May 2012, argues that that “to be Moldovan is equivalent with being Romanian (...) same language, same culture, same spirituality” and through this the Moldovans are the same as the Romanians South of the Danube. This is a clear example of the Romanianist discourse, which confirms the fact that museums can be seen as a site of

5 Geographically, the Subcarpathians are a range of hills bordering the Carpathian Mountains all across Slovakia, the Ukraine and Romania, yet the name is rarely used to define more than a geological structure (ethnographic notes). The only place where it is used strictly to define a geographical region is in the Romanian translation of the name of this region; NB The word by word translation from Ukrainian means “over the Carpathians” or more simply “Transcarpathia”.

6 The only mention appearing in my interviews with a series of Romanianist organisation, was in a discussion with members of the New Right in July 2012, organisation well known for its focus and interest on history.

production and reproduction of Romanianism<sup>7</sup>. The main focus of the presentation on the case study population in Bulgaria was on the way in which communities there managed to keep the Romanian language and traditions alive, focusing both on their self-identification as Romanian speaking in a survey, but also in the way in which tradition is reproduced in festivals. But more importantly, the researchers there chose to discuss not the Romanian population, but the Romano-phones, thus tackling the issue of state policies which divide Romano-phones into Romanians and Vlachs (or Moldovans in Moldova) and also stressing the importance these have for the experience for the groups they are studying. A parallel was drawn with the Transcarpatian case, where Jurnal TV, an important media outlet in Moldova, made a range of case studies highlighting the challenges in keeping the Romanian language alive there (e.g. Jurnal TV, 2012a, 2012b). Yet, neither this region, nor Northern Maramures have been part of Greater Romania and hence cannot claim to be part of the historical experiences belonging to these regions, thus highlighting how similarity is not strictly linked with historical experience but more with the experience of "occupation" (or foreign rule). Moreover, through the simple fact that these narratives focused mainly on these elements which would never be studied when it comes to Romanian communities within Romania, they create a sense of distinction from these, whilst also highlighting a feeling of victimisation against foreign state policies and pride in keeping Romanian traditions against these odds. A specific exhibit in the ENHM illustrates exactly this by focusing on the troubles of the Romanian language under Tsarist and the Soviet occupation. Moreover, this sentiment has been illustrated in an interview with museum researchers and curators when arguing that in Moldova people thought differently of national values, that they were more patriotic and more nationalistic, ideas confirmed also within a conversation with members of a nationalist non-parliamentary party (Interviews with the author, June-July 2012). This narrative of "survival" as a minority or against foreign rule is common not only to the Bessarabian and Bukovinian cases through their common commemorations of Soviet occupation, but also in the representation of other Romanian speaking communities around Romania, or as is the case here South of the Danube and in Northern Maramures.

Moreover, this image is further strengthened through the very few references, objects or even maps representing the Principality of Moldova or, more importantly, the Romanian region of Moldova. This is one of the elements that challenges the view that museums would represent a purely Romanianist discourse, as it fails to stress the main tenet of this view, i.e. the fact that the Moldovans are the same as Romanians. This is not to say that there are no references to Romania within the museums, but they are usually presented as "foreign", largely through the lack of objects from the inter-war period, when Moldova was a part of Romania. One such

7 It would be unwise to jump to the conclusion that museums are solely a place reproducing this type of discourse, as it is the same ENHM that in an exhibit on Moldovan history awards the same importance to the Dacians and the Sarmatians within Moldovan early history, a characteristic of Moldovanist discourses (Solonari, 2007).

example is a set of objects acclaiming cultural life at the beginning of the twentieth century in Chisinau, an important part of it being a series of photos of actors from Iasi (Romanian Moldova) who were visiting as the simple idea of “visiting” creates a certain degree of foreignness, of “not from here” and it certainly does not create equivalence. Hence, museums contain a representation of unity of the Romanian populated regions outside Romania together with a separation from Romania, through the commonality of their experience as minority groups there, including the Moldovan experience. Hence, borders-wise there is a construction of a Romanian community, yet with one border exactly on the Romanian state limits, part of which is the border on the Prut between Romania and the Republic of Moldova, a border which was erased through the Moldovanist and Romanianist discourses. In this way, the Romanianist discourse, in its focus on minority Romanian-speaking communities actually strengthens the borders of Romania.

Moreover there are some other references to Romania, but they rarely appear just by themselves. Instead they appear together with objects from Moldova, highlighting the similarity between the two spaces, whilst also stressing difference with others. One such example is the presence in the HAM of liturgical writings from the seventeenth and eighteenth century from Iasi (the capital of the Romanian region of Moldova), but also from Bucharest, which would support the argument of a common Romanian space, should they not be also mixed with a wide (and balanced size-wise) range of books from St Petersburg and Kiev. Yet, this section is also characterised by very few Moldovan objects within the exhibit, most likely due to the focus on printing, e.g. the fact that this is usually done within the greater cities, and thus focusing not on what was printed in Moldova, but on what circulated there and, thus, the closest cultural centres. This creates an image of Moldova within the cultural space and influences of both Romania and Russian writings or, even, since there is no representation of the differences between these two spaces, in a general (Eastern) European cultural and monastic space. Moreover, the qualifier of Eastern draws from firstly the inclusion of Russia and secondly through the very object of studying, i.e. orthodox liturgical books, orthodoxy being one of the main elements on which Europe defined its East (see Neumann, 1999).

A similar thing happens when presenting the ecosystem of Moldova in the ENHM. Here, there are objects from all around the world, Romania included, without any place of origin dominating (besides the majority from Moldova) which would highlight more the placing of Moldova within a world perspective; in the same way, its geological development is always presented as part of the global events, next to a world map. Arguably this approach is the same as that taken in Moldovan history books, that of an “integrated” history, or more specifically a focus on world history with small sections about Moldova through the ages; the main purpose of this approach was to work as a compromise at a time of conflict in between different groups arguing for the study of either Romanian or strictly Moldova history (Musteata, 2008). Yet, through this approach

of including Moldova within the development of world geography and history, there is a general erasure of borders, irrespective of whether they are Moldova's or any other countries' around the world. Furthermore, in the current history section of the HAM there is a collection of religious objects aimed at presenting religious diversity of the current day Republic of Moldova, within the context of religious freedom after the fall of the communist regime. Objects in this exhibition are truly from all across the world, from France objects belonging to the Catholic faith; from Russia objects relating to Orthodoxy and Islam and Judaism from Middle East. Essentially, through them, Moldova is portrayed as a mix of all these influences, whilst at the same time belonging and being similar to this global space. Moreover, this construction goes against all types of national discourses which see orthodoxy as the main religion of the people of Moldova and, even, the unifying factor according to the programme of parties like the PPCD (PPCD, 1999).

These are just two ways through which Moldova is incorporated into different spaces thus highlighting the way in which unity is created beyond that of the nation, into a form of universal space, through which the borders of Moldova are entirely erased. But moreover, there is a more important space in which Moldova is placed—that of the former Soviet Union. Unlike some of the other spaces we have discussed, the whole natural history section in the ENHM is dominated (well above the 60% mark) by objects from all around what is now the CIS space, more specifically Siberia, the Urals, the Ukraine, etc. This representation fits perfectly into the current political and foreign policy debate which tends to display a form of civilizational divide between East and West similar in many ways to Huntington's "clash of civilisations" (1993), in this case relocating Moldova to the Eastern space. But more importantly, besides the attempts to integrate Moldova within a global space, there are very few counter-discourses representing the Western space. These counter-discourses usually come in subtler ways, for example one of the curators at the ENHM argued that their choice to present Dragos, the Moldovan founder, in a painting in the historical section of the museum was in order to show that Moldova too had an origin in a hunting myth, just like all other European nations (Interview with the author, July 2012). Hence, this construction utilises a Moldovan symbol in order to present the European character and thus to place Moldova within an European space, but most others will appear in arguments regarding the European-ness of Moldova, be it through culture, European values, democracy or just plain "common sense" in the responses not only of individuals, but also representatives of the press, NGOs and official political parties, as a series of my interviews have illustrated in April and June-July 2012.

#### → CONCLUSIONS

This analysis has highlighted the multiple ways in which borders, national or not, are created within the three Moldovan museums studied. Firstly the paper illustrated how the two main national discourses in Moldova,

although opposing in views, are not very border-centric, but that in their constructions they both erase the same border in representing similarity between the people East and West of the Prut River, as either Romanian or Moldovan. Hence, these discourses within themselves are examples of the way in which the official borders of Moldova are challenged.

Both the History and Archaeology and the Ethnography and Natural History Museums, in various ways, support the unity of the Moldovan space, including Transnistria, thus reproducing what is either a hegemonic discourse of Moldovan independence and integrity or, a lot less likely given the Romanianist implications of the other findings, a Moldovanist discourse. But more importantly, the analysis of museum representations has shown that the inclusion of a series of historical regions like the Budjak and Bukovina can be understood through a common historical experience of having belonged to Greater Romania (1918-1940) and having been occupied by foreign powers. Moreover, when adding another two cases represented as similar to Moldova, that of Northern Maramures and the Romanian speaking communities South of the Danube, similarity is not achieved through their historical experience, but through the experience of being occupied, of being a minority and of living in a state that is essentially not Romanian. This is accomplished through a series of methods, from the way in which research on these regions is focused on this element specifically, to the common commemorations of occupation and personal views on the degree of patriotism. Hence, through an adaptation of the Romanianist discourse the exact opposite of the border erasure noted in the first section happens, in actually strengthening the borders of Romania in general and that on the Prut in particular. Nevertheless, museums offer us only a limited perspective on this, even when supplemented with analysis of events and discussions with researchers and curators. Further research would be needed on the way in which this difference is perceived, especially at grass roots, as it illustrates an interesting case of the way in which the Other is represented within the same nation.

Lastly, Moldova is integrated within different geographic or even civilizational spaces, either (Eastern) European, global or, more poignant, Soviet, thus illustrating how museum exhibitions can play into geopolitical discourses, constructing the East and West or just presenting Moldova as similar and a part of the global space. Yet, whilst most of these discourses are extremely vague in constructing borders, the so-called Soviet one has a particular characteristic in the way in which by incorporating Moldova in a post-Soviet and Slavic world, it highlights its border with Latin Romania, the same border erased in the two main national discourses and strengthened through museum representations of the Romanian diaspora. Lastly, though not one of its main purposes, this paper has also shown that there is a clear inclination within museum representations, and implicitly, in the minds of museum researchers and curators in Moldova, towards the Romanianist discourse.



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## The Challenge of “Displaying Europe”

### Experiences of the Museum Europäischer Kulturen—Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

→ ELISABETH TIETMEYER

#### → CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MUSEUM

The Museum of European Cultures is one of fifteen National Museums in Berlin which belong to the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz (Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation). Yet, amongst these the Museum is the only institution that dedicated itself to lifeworlds in Europe. With around 280,000 objects, it houses one of the largest collections of everyday culture and popular art in Europe, especially in Germany, spanning the period from the eighteenth century to the present day. Thus, it specialises in questions concerning quotidian and social aspects of European cultural and contemporary history. In its basic philosophy the Museum is focused on cultural similarities and differences in Europe, on the one hand by explaining the intermingling of cultural patterns, and on the other by discussing group identities, as well as by tracing the history of European cultural phenomena. The theoretical basis for this approach is the scientific differentiation of the term “culture”. This is not the definition generally accepted in Europe of culture as art, music and literature. It refers more to cultural expressions, such as cultural domains, symbolic culture, subculture, ethnic culture, regional culture, national culture, and supra-national culture. And culture is not a static entity; it is seen as a process, it has a dynamic character. Our approach further refers to contacts between cultures and contacts between social strata within Europe. Moreover, relations between Europeans and non-Europeans and the latter’s interpretation of European cultural phenomena are also issues for discussion. The name of our museum obviously implies a conscious decision against using the German term “European Culture” in the singular, because from a European vantage point this escapes definition, as does the term “German culture” (Karasek and Tietmeyer 1999).

The Museum of European Cultures was founded in 1999 as the result of

the merging of the former Museum für Deutsche Volkskunde (henceforth: Museum of German Folklore) with the European collections of the Museum für Völkerkunde (henceforth: Ethnological Museum), located in Dahlem in southwestern Berlin. It first occupied a space vacated after the former permanent exhibition of the Museum of German Folklore was dismantled. Because of organisational reasons, the National Museums in Berlin was forced in 2005 to move its exhibitions to the then vacant historical halls of the neighbouring museums’ site called Museen Dahlem (henceforth: Dahlem Museums), where the Ethnological Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst (Museum of Asian Art) are located. The Museum of European Cultures was reopened there last year after a two-year period of renovation.

#### → THE HISTORY OF BERLIN’S EUROPEAN ETHNOGRAPHIC COLLECTIONS

The ethnographic collections—European and non-European—originated in the Königlich Preußische Kunstammer (Royal Prussian Art Cabinet), which presented all its collections on the Museumsinsel (Museum’s Island) in the centre of Berlin since 1830. The Ethnological Museum, founded as an autonomous museum in 1873, gained its own building in 1886. It was dedicated to collecting and exhibiting artefacts of “native peoples” thought to be without history. Thus, the culture of the nations of Western and Central Europe with their extensive written history was not regarded as a subject for ethnological investigation. Nevertheless the Ethnological Museum did own European ethnographic objects, although these were acquired haphazardly. And all of them were presented in a showcase labelled “Europe”, which was located between the ethnographic and prehistoric exhibits in the Neues Museum (New Museum) at Museum Island, which opened in 1856.

After the Ethnological Museum moved into its own new building in 1886, where for lack of space no German or European objects were exhibited, the anthropologist and politician Rudolf Virchow founded the Museum für deutsche Volkstrachten und Erzeugnisse des Hausgewerbes (Museum of German Traditional Costumes and Domestic Products) on a private basis in 1889. It was awarded the status of autonomy as the “Museum of German Folklore” in 1934 by the then National Museums in Berlin. It exhibited objects used by the lower and middle classes of the different German and German-speaking regions. Comparable objects from European countries bordering Germany were also on display. Those European objects—still part of the Ethnological Museum—were considered of little interest until in 1934—parallel to the establishment of the Museum of German Folklore—an independent Eurasian Department was set up in the Ethnological Museum. The result of this was that the Museum of German Folklore was forced to hand over its European, non-German objects to the new department and vice versa. This was of course done against the background of the National Socialist ideology at that time (Steimann 1964; Westphal-Hellbusch 1973).

The partition of Germany after the Second World War left some of the

National Museums divided between East and West Berlin. The Museum of German Folklore suffered this fate, too. In East Berlin the Museum revised its national way of looking at culture and again became involved in comparative European studies. Its namesake in West Berlin began organising joint exhibitions and conventions with the Ethnological Museum's Eurasian Department, which was renamed the "European Section" and reorganised in 1950. This cooperation reached its peak during the 1980s (Nixdorff and Müller 1983). But in the permanent exhibition the Museum of German Folklore still showed aspects of life among Germany's middle and lower classes mainly in the nineteenth century in an abstract and structured way.

Towards the end of the 1980s, the National Museums in West Berlin came up with the idea of "Europeanising" the Museum of German Folklore by merging it with the European Department of the Ethnological Museum. As Europe became more united, it was no longer appropriate to have two institutions, one with a nearly exclusive German ethnographic collection and another with an analogous collection from the rest of Europe located in a museum, which exclusively concentrated on non-European cultures. Above all, the European Department had never been on permanent display. After the reunification of the two German states, which was followed by the reunification of the National Museums in 1992, this idea of Europeanising was revived. Thus, a plan to establish a museum of ethnology dedicated to European cultures with a focus on German cultures was implemented.

In the beginning, the curators argued about an appropriate profile and subject matter. This was strongly influenced by teaching and research programmes of German universities, which had always strictly distinguished between "Völkerkunde" (ethnology / anthropology / study of peoples), on the one hand, and "Volkskunde" (German folklore / folk life, study of the people), on the other, each field governed by a century-old academic tradition. Nonetheless, a slow change was taking place in the two disciplines: in order to expand their scientific scope, both had turned increasingly towards studying European cultures. This led to a convergence of the scientific approaches, and the foundation of the Museum of European Cultures was a reflection of this development. It finally opened thirteen years ago with a pilot exhibition called "Fascination Picture: Cultural Contacts in Europe", which was on display for six years. The exhibition was based on the concept that the cultures of Europe did not develop independently of one another, and this was exemplified by different kinds of pictures and images (Karasek et al. 1999). In the forthcoming years we organised several special exhibitions—often bilaterally—with accompanying publications and above all many special events and event series like the annual European Cultural Days.

#### → STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE NEW PERMANENT EXHIBITION

In the course of renovation of the historical building itself, starting in 2009 the staff of the Museum of European Cultures in Dahlem took the opportunity to reflect upon the former exhibition approach and decided to implement a permanent exhibition space, covering 700 square metres.

The development and realisation of a new concept posed a challenge, as the older presentations of solely object groups like textiles, ceramics, household utensils or the lifeworld of ethnic and national groups in Germany or Europe seemed outdated.

Curators, architects and designers were confronted with several demands and conditions: First, our task was to present a cross-section of the varied museum collections documenting everyday life. Second, as the general theme should refer to actual discussions about society, the curators had to think systematically about collecting present-day objects. Third, the curators felt obliged to also fulfil visitors' wishes. Fourth, the concept had to be adapted to the difficult spatial situation of the historical building. Fifth, there was the challenge to raise Europe as an issue without defining in a few sentences what Europe is and where it ends. Sixth, a complex theme which reflected the profile of our museum—like cultural contacts and cultural locations or identities in Europe had to be communicated in a simple and clearly structured way.

Thus, it was not easy to develop the relevant themes, to select objects from cultural history and the present, to write the corresponding texts, to organise visual media illustrating exemplarily spheres of action which interlink the inhabitants of Europe, but also distinguish them from one another.

The exhibition is made up of thirteen thematic modules, separated respectively in content and design terms by a group of display cases. Hence, the “showcase landscape” themselves resemble “islands” and present objects, texts and media about a specific topic. For this reason we call them “themed islands”. The objects are not presented as if they were on a stage where they might become lost to sight. Quite the opposite: they are in the centre of the exhibition, contextualised by written texts and media.

This exhibition presents forms and consequences of cultural contacts in a comparative manner. Ethnographic objects and testimonies of cultural history from Europe, and also occasionally other continents, are introduced as physical evidence for the topics “Encounters”, “Borders” and “Religiosity” in three rooms (Tietmeyer 2012).

The exhibition reveals that Europe, despite the diversity of its cultures and their “manifestations”, is vested with a cultural concord that distinguishes it from other continents, but also from individual national perspectives. Hence, the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset was already able to comment in 1929:

If we were to imagine that we should merely live with what we are as ‘nationals’, and if we would, for example, try to deprive the average German [for example] of all the customs, thoughts and feelings he or she has adopted from other countries of the continent, we would be shocked by how impossible such an existence already is, four-fifths of our inner wealth are the common property of Europe. (Ortega y Gasset [2002] 1931).

And we maintain that this is most of all attributable to the mobile behaviour of people in and to Europe. On the one hand, it brought about culture

encounters and commonalities, which have led to cultural changes and the development of hybrid global cultures or communities, and still does. On the other, it continually gives rise to questions regarding the identity of individuals and groups within Europe, who attempt to counter fears of loss and uncertainty, or to express their ties to their homeland, sometimes with their wish for segregation. The consequence of these apparently contradictory tendencies is the cultural diversity within the unity of Europe.

#### → ROOM 1: ENCOUNTERS

The topics of Trade, Travel, early Media and Migration in the first room of the exhibition serve to present the effects and consequences of culture contacts within and with Europe. This room is dominated by an original gondola from Venice, eleven metres long. The boat acts as the exhibition's "guiding object": all of the topics presented here are directly or indirectly related to this famous European city. By virtue of its historic economic and political importance, the city of Venice has influenced the fate of Europe for over centuries' time, and even today it is still much sought after by travellers, tourists and people looking for work (Scheppe 2009).

Therefore, the first "themed island" in this room introduces the effects of European trade relations. This is exemplified by objects made of silk and glass beads from various European regions. Trade in these goods was closely linked to Venice as of the twelfth century, before the sixteenth century and onwards when knowledge about their production, the establishment of factories and the distribution of the products spread to further regions and towns and effectuated the development of wide-ranging trading networks.

The second thematic island is dedicated to the outcomes of cultural contact by way of Travel. While travel had remained the reserve of the privileged classes in Europe until the eighteenth century, the urge to explore familiar and foreign worlds subsequently was characterised by the journeys of scholars, artists and scientists. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards travel became increasingly popular and financially affordable. The towns, islands and regions of Italy have meanwhile remained popular travel destinations in Europe to this day.

The third themed island uses two examples to explain how indirect cultural contacts are abetted by early Media, which spread information and intercede between people. One of the earliest media is the picture, able to mirror contemporary events and experiences. After printing methods were improved by movable type around 1440 and after the invention of lithography at the end of the nineteenth century, pictures enjoyed increasing mobility and, thanks to their wide distribution, popularity. Most of all since the age of industrialisation, world events and specifics reached people at home by way of pictures in a multitude of shapes and forms, whether as illustrated theatre performances, as pieces of furniture, or as decorations.

The fourth thematic island is devoted to the topic of Migration, which has characterised humankind from the beginning of time as the classical form of culture contact, just as the European region has been defined by



**IMG. 01** — View of the exhibition “Cultural Contacts – Living in Europe” with Sicilian Cart, © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum Europäischer Kulturen / Ute Franz-Scarciglia.

migratory movements for more than 3,000 years. This included small-scale population shifts from or to regions or places as much as the larger emigration or immigration movements, which have particularly shaped Europe in its present form since the nineteenth century (Schlögel 2006). Their effects and outcomes are much too varied to even start to list them all, much less exhibit them. But they are recognisable most clearly and sustainably in culinary and epicurean culture. Migrants and (of course) trade brought dishes, beverages and stimulants to Europe centuries ago that were still deemed exotic at the time. Today they are part of everyday culture or have become globalised.

#### → ROOM 2: BORDERS

When people from different cultural backgrounds meet, at least one of them has crossed geographical borders in the course of leaving his or her place of origin. This process is not always without conflict and often has negative consequences, particularly for the immigrant. How Europeans “localise” their culture, that is, how they are able to identify with a territory or place, is shown in the second exhibition room with further themed islands.

Local, Regional, National and Supranational Sitings of Culture are introduced with various exemplary objects from European lifeworlds. Many people identify their culture with a location or region that they call their home. When they share this feeling with other people—often conveyed by a common language—they form a group, which differs from other groups or sets itself apart. Such demarcations, however, are not rigid, but permeable. They do not prevent people from coming into contact, who





will instead be more likely to influence one another—thus a separation of the local from the regional or the regional from the national is impossible. In this sense geographical borders are ambivalent: “[They] have ambiguous features: they divide and unite, bind the interior and link it with the exterior, are barriers and junctions, walls and doors, organs of defence and of attack” (Strassoldo 1989: 393).

Many people in Europe, nonetheless, challenge what they deem to be increasing “Europeanisation” and “Globalisation”. As a response, this can entail a return to “one’s own” culture, mediating a feeling of familiarity. It is not unusual for these uncertainties or insecurities to be politically exploited by suggesting that a space is congruent with a “homogenous culture”. But this falls short of the reality—where cultures can overlap, straddle spaces or be of a translocal nature (Bhabha 1994). Cultural attributes that are typical for a locale, region or nation nevertheless exist.

How varied and yet similar the Local Sitings of culture can be and have been in Europe is shown in the fifth thematic island of the exhibition. The objects drawn from the domains of clothing, clubs and societies, customs or marketing represent localities in Europe or are regarded as typical for specific locations. They are an expression of the self-esteem felt by the people and their identification with a place, and its typical culture—tangible and intangible—is always integrated in the respective cultural region. For example, an eighteenth or nineteenth century regional rural costume or custom with masks might also include variations that were typical for a locale and, hence, made their respective origin discernible.

Against this background, the sixth themed island highlights Regional Sit-

IMG. 02 — View of the exhibition “Cultural Contacts – Living in Europe”, © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum Europäischer Kulturen / Ute Franz-Scarciglia.

IMG. 03 — “European Costumes” in the exhibition “Cultural Contacts – Living in Europe”, © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum Europäischer Kulturen / Ute Franz-Scarciglia.

ings of culture with the help of masks and traditional costumes, amongst other items. The costumes were reinvented in the nineteenth century in response to urbanisation, and regarded as typical for a cultural landscape, or also an ethnic group. This can still apply today, or applies once again, to some extent. As the places people call their home increasingly disappear, their residents endeavour to preserve or establish their regional, ethnic or local identity. In order to visibly demonstrate their sense of a common bond, groups of the most varied kind may take to “uniforming”. By way of an excursion, the seventh thematic island shows selected photographs taken by a German artist named Sabine von Bassewitz, who has documented how groups present themselves in Germany. These also include societies for traditional costumes, which can be found in many European regions and locations, along with local historical associations and dance and music groups. They dedicate themselves to the preservation of their cultural heritage, and also to living it. The rediscovery of rural life has been growing for some time now (at least in Germany), occasionally attended by transfiguration or new invention. This can take on folkloristic and local features, when elements of a culture that are no longer known exactly are supposedly reconstructed and taken for real, and when the emotional attachment to one’s own culture gets out of hand.

That regional cultures have always carried national connotations has not changed until this day. But as opposed to regional culture, National Sitings hardly find any expression in the material culture of everyday life. They surface foremost on a symbolic, musical, textual and pictorial level. The eighth themed island treats this by looking at so-called ‘national personifications’ and presenting visual portrayals of national stereotypes (Konrad 2006). Populist politicians use stereotypes to ostracise alleged opponents in their own country or to cast slurs on other countries, as has become clearly evident in the dictatorships and wars within Europe. However, the most positive identification with a nation today, and more than ever before, occurs in sports, in particular the globally inclusive Olympic Games. Such competitions, their athletes and fans use symbols of the respective national colours or other colour combinations, such as in football, as a mark of national representation and that of their followers.

If national cultures find hardly any reflection in quotidian things, the same surely also applies exponentially for a supranational—European—culture. An art installation made of recycled material by a Berlin fashion designer named Stephan Hann is shown in the ninth thematic island to scrutinise a Supranational Siting of culture. The founders of and persons responsible for the European Economic Union, today’s European Union, may have created a complex system of symbols, but there is hardly any shared “visible” culture in everyday life in Europe, discounting pan-European music and sport events, or culture initiatives such as the “European Capital of Culture”. For many Europeans, Europe as a political and cultural construct is much too abstract to wishing to identify with it. It only takes on a more concrete shape for them from a geographical or cultural distance, or when they feel “beset” by immigrants from a Eurocentric perspective, and “isolate” themselves from other continents and their populations.



## → ROOM 3: RELIGIOSITY

Nonetheless, there is indeed an awareness of a shared European history, shaped by small- and large-scale trade relations that go back for centuries’ time, by wars, by mutual and opposed policies. Yet, what has lastingly shaped life in Europe most of all since the Middle Ages has been the Christian religion with its connections to Judaism and Islam. That is the subject of the third exhibition room, which explores how religions and traditions structure people’s lives. Against this background the tenth themed island looks into various expressions of Piety in everyday life. These are boundless in their variety and number, as well as their geographical distribution within and outside Europe. Religions are trans-local with regionally or locally typical manifestations and independent traditions, which is best illustrated by customs that mark the course of the year, including the celebration of Christmas with Nativity Scenes. The eleventh themed island illustrates these doings using examples from Africa, Latin America and Europe. Outstanding and unique amongst them are the “nativity or Christmas mountains” to be found in German Saxony, Czech Bohemia and the Austrian Tyrol in the nineteenth century. A mechanical Christmas Mountain from the German Erzgebirge (Ore Mountains), twelve metres long, can be seen in the twelfth and thirteenth themed island as an example. It is typical for this region and simultaneously an outcome of cultural syncretism with the combination of Catholic traditions from Bohemia with Protestant traditions from Saxony, whilst integrating the lifeworld of mining communities in the Erzgebirge (Ore Mountains) in Saxony.

Hence, this Christmas Mountain at the end of the exhibition echoes the gondola at its beginning by signifying the numerous links between people in Europe, which distinguish this continent from others.

## → THE MUSEUM AS A FORUM FOR CULTURAL CONTACTS

The task areas of any museum dealing with past and present day-to-day culture are manifold. By preserving the cultural heritage of a location, a region or a country—depending on its orientation—it can help people find their identity, and contribute to their self-affirmation. This heritage can be multifaceted indeed and spring from various cultural roots, because cultures are never static or homogenous. Museums not only preserve cultural heritage, but also provide a platform for examining current socio-political issues, for encountering other cultures, and for enabling the audience’s participation in museum work, following the meaning of the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums where it is written amongst other rules: “Museums work in close collaboration with the communities from which their collections originate as well as those they serve.”

Indeed, some topics displayed in the exhibition, like cultural contacts via migration or local and regional sitings of culture in Europe are the result of projects, in which the protagonists have been involved or of direct co-operation with the protagonists (Kistemeyer and Tietmeyer 2010).



Apart from that we underscore the transnational European orientation of the main exhibition by continuing our event series: "European Cultural Days", a series of events that introduces a city, a region, a country or a people in Europe introduced within the framework of a specific theme. The Cultural Days last up to four weeks and comprise a small exhibition as well as a supporting programme of lectures, discussions, films, music, regional dishes, or arts and crafts offered for sale. So far we have organised the "Sami Cultural Days", the "Polish", "Venetian", "Tatar", "Estonian", "Romanian", "Sardinian", and "Apulian Cultural Days". In 2013 we are planning the "Slovakian Cultural Days". They are usually organised in cooperation with the respective European cultural institutes, embassies, migrant associations or communities in Berlin, and are often combined with our partner museums in the corresponding European city, region or country. Naturally all cooperation partners are very committed in organising the presentation of "their" culture (or parts of it) for "themselves" and for other people visiting the Museum (Tietmeyer 2006).

This participative approach helps to consolidate the Museum of European Cultures as an intercultural meeting place on the basis of a permanent exhibition with cultural contacts as its main theme.

#### → REACTIONS TO THE MAIN EXHIBITION

In view of the financial and political crisis of Europe, we think that we opened this exhibition at a very appropriate time, although this particular date was not intentional: the reopening had been postponed several times. The reaction of the media made us aware of the opening's timeliness—for the response was overwhelming. We did not expect such a positive echo, as we thought that the topic of "Europe" is too abstract. There was, of course, some criticism, for example, regarding the alleged lack of historical depth or the small size of the exhibition. Yet, altogether the reports were very positive. Until now most of the visitors have been satisfied, especially when they were offered a guided tour. Some of the critical comments written in our guest book stated that they missed the presentation of German cultural history, such as that presented by our predecessor, the Museum of German Folklore, in the 1970s. It is true, though, that this museum never had nor never met the claim to show the entire cultural history of Germany. In any case, we also tried to fulfil the wishes of visitors—many of them were asking for example to see textiles again or exhibitions with nativity scenes (even such objects are in the permanent exhibition, too) as long as they fit the general theme of the exhibition.

The reaction of professionals, here meaning teachers and students of disciplines like anthropology, ethnography and museums studies, has been positive, since our thematic approach concerning "mobilities and identities" is part of current scientific discourse in Germany. Above all, there is general agreement with our consistent practice of collecting present-day objects and showing them in nearly every themed island of the exhibition. This also gives the impression that the exhibition is not

“old-fashioned” and is concerned with the everyday life of the visitors. And this is one of our most ambitious aims: to pick up on and proceed from wherever the visitors stand—that is to say, to address the visitors first with aspects that are familiar to them, enabling them to learn more about their cultural and historical background.

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## “Today as yesterday, endlessly rocking, ever bringing the same human pas- sions, the same joys and sorrow”

### Displaying “others” in Berlin

#### → BARIŞ ÜLKER

I hope you will come to value life in our open-minded community and to reinforce further development of our relaxed and tolerant way of living together.

(Günter Piening, Senate Commissioner for Integration and Migration, Bundesministerium des Innern, *Willkommen in Deutschland*)

News headlines, weekly weather forecasts and advertisements of movies, festivals and local businesses are usually displayed on the monitors mounted in the Berlin subway cars. When the video system is broken, screens are either totally black or are frozen with a message that is set up to indicate the error. One of these contemporary messages cycles between three pictures. First, a motto covers the whole screen in different fonts going in all directions. Then, the motto is replaced by two others, which also have different fonts going in all directions. Lastly, the three mottos appear in the same picture, all in the same font, and do not move: *Gegen Rassismus, Gegen Xenophobie, Gegen Intoleranz* (*Against Racism, Against Xenophobia, Against Intolerance*).

This campaign runs under the supervision of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) that was established by the Council of Europe. A long but useful self-description summarises its goals and methods:

It is an independent human rights monitoring body specialised in questions relating to racism and intolerance. It is composed of independent and

impartial members, who are appointed on the basis of their moral authority and recognised expertise in dealing with racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance (...). The work is taking place in 5 year cycles, covering 9/10 countries per year (...). The reports of the first round were completed at the end of 1998, those of the second round at the end of 2002, and those of the third round at the end of the year 2007. Work on the fourth round reports started in January 2008. The working methods for the preparation of the reports involve documentary analyses, a contact visit in the country concerned, and then a confidential dialogue with the national authorities. *ECRI's reports are not the result of inquiries or testimonial evidences.* They are analyses based on a great deal of information gathered from a wide variety of sources (...). Documentary studies are based on an important number of national and international written sources. The in situ visit allows for meeting directly the concerned circles (governmental and non-governmental) with a view to gathering detailed information. The process of confidential dialogue with the national authorities allows the latter to provide, if they consider it necessary, comments on the draft report, with a view to correcting any possible factual errors, which the report might contain. At the end of the dialogue, the national authorities may request, if they so wish, that their viewpoints be appended to the final report of ECRI. (ECRI Secretariat 2009, 5) [emphasis added]

This self-description seems to contradict itself in the statement: *ECRI's reports are not the result of inquiries or testimonial evidences.* By implying that these findings cannot be proved because they were not seen, experienced or examined, ECRI tries to get rid of a “responsibility” that can be put on the state authority in Germany.

Despite these reservations, one can acknowledge looking at small flat screens that state authority in Berlin is working *Against Racism, Against Xenophobia, Against Intolerance*. The target groups are the Jewish community, Muslims, the Turkish community, the Black community, the Roma/Sinti community, migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees and other beneficiaries of international protection (Ibid., 31-44). Working *Against Racism, Against Xenophobia, Against Intolerance* is one of the “responsibilities” of state authority because of the legally binding force of basic rights. This is clearly defined in the Basic Law of Germany, which has been adopted by “the German people in the exercise of their constituent power under the Conscious of their responsibility before God and man, inspired by the determination to promote world peace as an equal partner in a united Europe” (Deutscher Bundestag 2010, 11):

Article 1

[Human dignity—Human rights—Legally binding force of basic rights]

(1) Human dignity shall be inviolable. To respect and protect it shall be the duty of all state authority. (Ibid., 13)

In Berlin, various methods have been implemented to develop a setting that is *Against Racism, Against Xenophobia, Against Intolerance*. One of these methods is to intensify the initiatives that can prove the existence

and power of values opposing racism, xenophobia and "intolerance", i.e. existence and power of "tolerance" in the fight against "intolerance". This method has been promoted through different measures including projects, campaigns, seminars and exhibitions. In this article, I bring in snapshots from three exhibitions in Berlin to re-think the categories of "others", particularly "immigrant" from Turkey. Each snapshot is also related to the framework, in which mobilisation of "tolerance" takes place.

→ ZUWANDERUNGSLAND DEUTSCHLAND: MIGRATIONEN 1500-2005

In 1977, the SPD-FDP coalition government formed a joint federal-*Länder* commission and declared the famous phrase: *Deutschland ist kein Einwanderungsland* [Germany is not a country of immigration] (Renner 1987). This was a reaction to the family reunifications, particularly the "immigrants" from Turkey, after the decision of *Ausländerstopp*<sup>1</sup> in 1973. Coming into office in October 1982, the Kohl administration confirmed the phrase by forming a second federal-*Länder* commission in 1983. Both of these governments did not foresee the possibility of creating an exhibition (in 2005) with the claim, i.e. *Zuwanderungsland Deutschland* [migration country Germany]. The reunified capital hosted this temporary exhibition in the powerful space of the German Historical Museum (Deutsches Historisches Museum, DHM).

Space is not an ontologically given entity; on the contrary, as James Clifford argues in reference to Michel de Certeau, "it is discursively mapped and corporeally practiced" (1997, 54). DHM has never been an exception of this formulation throughout its history. The presences and absences of the German monarchy, the Weimar Republic, the National Socialist dictatorship, the so-called Cold War division (capitalist West versus socialist East), and finally, the reunified Federal Republic all mark its topography. Its historical text has been written, erased and rewritten by these ruptures and continuities and at the same time has been practiced by its visitors. However, it is crucial to emphasise that DHM, the largest arsenal in Brandenburg-Prussia, was able to display this exhibition through a certain state of mind.

The exhibition is organised in relation to another exhibition, *Hugenotten* (Migration of French Protestants 1572), which is presented at the same time in DHM. The space that is given to these two exhibitions is the same size.

Within this limited space, the exhibition does not mean to challenge the political rationalities that contribute largely to the imagination of a particular population as one of the most prominent groups of "other" in the post-war Germany. Rather, it is set up in reference to the flows of people since 1500. In this sense, it is divided into eight historical periods (DHM 2005); Early Modern Period (1500-1800); German Confederation (1815-1870); German Empire (1871-1918); First World War

1 The order banning all recruitment of foreign workers from non-EEC countries.

(1914–1918) and Weimar Republic (1918–1933); Nazi Germany and Second World War (1933–1945); German Democratic Republic; Federal Republic of Germany and Germany since 1990.

The common element of these periods is the historical fact of “migration” in the territories of Germany. Each period is designed to reflect on different groups. By pursuing this goal, the exhibition does not challenge the political rationality of the famous phrase, i.e. *Deutschland ist kein Einwanderungsland*. Rather, it intends to interpret the category of “immigration” within the context of “migration”. This re-formulation (*Zuwanderungsland Deutschland*) de-politicises the connotations of “Gastarbeiter” [guest workers], especially the “immigrants” from Turkey. Additionally, difference ways of dealing with “Gastarbeiter” in the later stages of their residence are not even touched upon in the texts of exhibition.

Therefore, the exhibition minimises the political context of a famous phrase through the distribution of space, i.e. the dominance of all other periods over the section of the exhibition on “Gastarbeiter”. This spatial tool not only extracts the meaning of a continuous state policy, but also uses it in a linear historical understanding to emphasise the “diversity” of “(im)migrant” groups. This de-politicised narration fetishises the “multi-cultural” connections, which are assumed to be the result of a “tolerant” history since 1500. Germany, within this historical perspective, becomes the land of “(im)migrant” groups. Yet, what remains unquestioned is the power relations that become apparent at the historical ruptures. Let me reveal the importance of historical ruptures with a brief example.

“Immigrants” from Turkey designated Berlin’s urban fabric by cross-cutting three crucial symbolic periods: first: from the construction of the Berlin Wall (August 1961) to the ban on recruiting foreign labor (November 1973), second: from this ban in 1973 to the fall of the Berlin Wall (November 1989), and third: the post-Wall period.

In the first period, West Berlin was an “island of freedom” surrounded by the GDR and so-called socialist threat. Lacking its status as the capital of Germany, West Berlin was benefiting from the subsidies in order to improve its destroyed economic and infrastructure systems. “Immigrants” from Turkey were indeed considered as the most remarkable *Gastarbeiter* group, whose presence was a *state of exception* (Agamben 1998, 15–29). In the second period, they were becoming a permanent part of West Berlin. Their former image, as the symbol for minimising social and political costs and maximising economic profits, turned into a social question and risk that needed to be dealt with. At the end of this period, Berlin was profoundly discussing their “integration” and also experiencing the emergence of their entrepreneurship. In the last period, “immigrants” from Turkey continue to be considered as a part of the social problem. However, transformations deriving from German reunification and restructuring have paved the way for the development of their new image. As reunified Berlin started to reconstruct her spatiality, “immigrants” from Turkey contributed to this transformation through “ethnic entrepreneurship”, i.e. as a “tolerated” enterprising “other”. From a methodological

point of view, where one questions the conditions of possibility, "ethnic entrepreneurship" in Berlin has emerged as a product of "German economic system" through the "crises of Fordism" and the social market economy understanding of Ordo-liberals.

→ FREMDE? BILDER VON DEN "ANDEREN" IN DEUTSCHLAND UND FRANKREICH SEIT 1871

Four years after the exhibition of *Zuwanderungsland Deutschland: Migrationen 1500-2005*, DHM hosts another exhibition with a similar topic—for the second time in its history. This time Germany is compared to France in terms of the images of 'others' since 1871 (DHM 2009). The goal of this comparison is to confront the imagination of ethnically homogenous nation-states. Hence, Germany and France, as "historical rivals" in the order of European nation-states, set up the most suitable framework to question the national borders and sovereignties in the process of globalisation and European integration.

The exhibition is divided into historical periods. In the first floor, Germany is presented through the periods of 1871-1914, 1914-1918, 1918-1933, and 1933-1945, while France is staged through the periods of 1871-1914, 1914-1918, 1918-1940, and 1940-1945. A similar historical arrangement follows in the second floor: 1945-1970, 1970-1989 and 1989-2009 for Germany and 1945-1970, 1970-1983 and 1983-2009 for France.

The "others" of these two nation-states are introduced to the visitors within a continuous dialogue. For example, the images of "Gastarbeiter" in Germany (1945-1970) are given in relation to the images of "The Algerian War" in France (1945-1970). Also, there are common reference points for both countries, e.g. the images of "The Islam" and "Antisemitism".

Although the exhibition seems to analyse the relations between the state and its "others" through this comparative perspective, it ends up re-producing the linear historical understanding, for instance, by criticising the absence of an "integration policy" in the case of "Gastarbeit". To put it differently, the category of "integration", which signifies the technologies of power (Foucault 1988, 18), is indisputable.

This way of thinking in the exhibition makes one wonder: What could have happened if Germany had developed an "integration policy"? At this juncture, even though his comments in *Lettre Internationale*, a German quarterly, were not prepared in advance to shed light on this question, Thilo Sarrazin's reflections illuminate the limits of an "integration policy": How far can an "integration policy" be "successful"?

Having a doctorate in economics and being a member of the SPD, Thilo Sarrazin worked in high-ranking positions in the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Federal Ministry of Finance, TLG Treuhandliegenschaftsgesellschaft mbH (a large scale privatisation and real estate agency) and Deutsche Bahn AG (German Railways), until he became the Finance Senator to the Senate of Berlin (2002-2009). He was working as a member of the executive board of the German Federal Bank (Deutsche Bundesbank) before his resignation in September 2010.

In his famous interview, Sarrazin explains the developments in Berlin since 1989 and indicates its promising potential. In relation to the latter, he introduces the idea of “integration”. “Integration”, underlines Sarrazin, is a service for those who can “integrate” themselves and those who do not “integrate” themselves are not acceptable (2009, 197-9). According to him, “Turks” and “Arabs”, unlike other groups (e.g. “East Europeans”, “Ukrainians”, “White Russians”, “Polish”, “Russians”, “East Asians”, “Chinese”, “Indians”, “Vietnamese”), are not willing to “integrate”. This unwillingness to “integrate” might be exemplified with their personalities, mentalities and situations such as lacking a proficient level of German, having low graduation rates, raising young girls to wear headscarves, maintaining the aggressive and atavistic mentality of the Turkish state, having a higher birth rate that outpaces that of “Germans” and aims to take over Germany, and leaving behind twenty tons of mutton leftovers in the Turkish grill festival that had to be removed by the city’s cleaning teams.

In other words, particular “immigrant” groups (“Turks” and “Arabs”) do not carry out their obligations for “integration”. The extreme cost of this “irresponsibility cannot be tolerated”, as Germany has to cope with other challenges in the next decades. As Sarrazin formulates it, “anyone, who can do and aims to do something with us is welcome, but the rest should go somewhere else” (Ibid., 201).

Thus, even if Germany had developed its integration policy concerning the Gastarbeiter, this could have been only “successful” in relation to the willingness of immigrants’ to “integrate” themselves. The “host”, by acquiring the pre-given authority for that particular place (here Berlin and Germany as a whole) “tolerates” only the existence of certain types of “guests”. And, those that are “welcome” need the continuous approval of their “host”. In order to reflect on a complementary category of the “other”, let me now shift to the last exhibition.

#### → INTOLERANCE

In his exhibition, *Intolerance*, Willem de Rooij brought together a group of seventeenth century Dutch bird-paintings by Melchior D’Hondecoeter (1636-1695) and eighteenth and nineteenth century feathered objects from Hawai’i. Two items seemed to be predominant for de Rooij’s *Intolerance*: a feathered head representing the war god Kuka’ilimoku and a painting entitled *Pelican and Other Waterfowl in a Park* by Melchior D’Hondecoeter.

The installation describes the prevailing financial and territorial power structures in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this sense, the *Pelican and Other Waterfowl in a Park* and its related objects are selected to depict the complex colonial relations of the seventeenth century.

The Dutch painter Melchior D’Hondecoeter exclusively painted images of birds. These ‘group portraits’ were praised for their realism and were popular among commercial and political elite of that time. These paintings served as status symbols, and at the same time depicted them: Exotic birds, which

had been imported on Dutch merchant ships from newly discovered territories in Asia, Africa and South America. Melchior D'Hondecoeter's birds come together in dynamic compositions, often shown in conflict or under threat by one another. They seem to display human character traits, suggesting commentary on Dutch society of the 17th century; a society rapidly gaining socio-demographic and economical complexity through its colonial ambitions in an increasingly global market. (SMB 2010, 2)

In a complimentary manner, the war god Kuka'ilimoku and its related feathered objects are brought together to underline the domain of power, status, beauty and death during the colonial expansions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries:

In pre-Christian Hawai'i (the period before James Cook's trip to the islands in 1779) the god of war was named Kuka'ilimoku. Three-dimensional representations of his head were carried along during processions, as were helmets, capes and cloaks. All of these objects are covered with feathers, which decorated and protected chiefs and religious leaders. The base of the heads and helmets is a basket-like structure covered with a net material, which holds thousands of red and yellow feathers. Hundreds of 'iwi birds had to be captured, killed and plucked for every object. The fear-provoking facial features of the feathered god are produced by seashells, dogs' teeth and human hair. Feathers were believed to establish contact with gods and deceased ancestors. The significance of these feathered heads, helmets, capes and cloaks was to convey individual strength and to fight off external dangers.

Construction of these complex sculptures and garments involved various specialised skills, enabling entire villages to collaborate in proto-industrial production processes. Only 19 feathered heads remain known today, most of which were brought to Europe following James Cook's final voyage through the Pacific. Approximately 80 helmets and 180 cloaks or capes are now in collections in Europe and abroad. While Cook mainly aimed to collect materials for scientific research, he also brought back trophies and souvenirs with him to cover the costs of his travels. By their dislocation from the Pacific to the western world the function and meaning of these objects changed dramatically—ritual objects, which had to do with war, status and hierarchy, became renderings of the exotic. (Ibid., 3)

To be more specific, the exhibition title is an allusion to film history, which de Rooij is very familiar with: David Wark Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916) (Kittelman 2010, 11 and Rebentisch 2010, 38). *Intolerance* was the defensive answer of Griffith to the widespread controversy for his racist masterpiece *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), which promoted the white supremacy, slavery and knights of the Ku Klux Klan as heroes restoring the rightful order (relying on Thomas Dixon's 1905 novel *The Clansman*) (Stokes 2007). Apart from its relation to *The Birth of a Nation*, Griffith's *Intolerance* was largely influenced by the Italian silent movie *Cabiria* (1914). Written by Gabriele d'Annunzio (1863-1938), one of the most important political figures for the Italian Fascist movement and Benito Mussolini, *Cabiria* tells the conflict between Rome and Carthage



through the eyes of a young Sicilian slave, who was rescued from being sacrificed to the cruel god Moloch by a Roman Patrician traveller and his slave Maciste (Ledeen 2009 and Ricci 2008).

Under the influence of *Cabiria* and the criticism emerging from *The Birth of a Nation*, Griffith took a smaller feature film on the struggle between capital and labour (*The Mother and The Law*) and the theme of social injustice and merged them with three new stories. He moralises topics like religious hatred, hypocrisy, discrimination and persecution with a technique that cross-cuts back and forth among four stories—Modern (early twentieth century, California), Judaeon (last days of Christ’s life), French (AD 1572, Paris) and Babylonian (539 BC). These four stories are linked to each other with a symbolic device. Actress Lilian Gish, as Eternal Motherhood, rocks a large wooden cradle covered with roses and she is accompanied by the title of Walt Whitman’s poem in the *Leaves of Grass*, “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking” (2008). Such an image tries to emphasise the cycle of death and life with the title card “Today as yesterday, endlessly rocking, ever bringing the same human passions, the same joys and sorrow.”

These stories, which seem in the beginning to run gradually away from each other, start to run nearer and faster together as they develop. And then, they mingle in one mighty ethic code: good versus evil and the eventual victory of love over hate (Jacobs 1975, 326).

It is at this particular spot that de Rooij’s *Intolerance* is related to Griffith’s *Intolerance*. First, de Rooij makes an effort to link the group of bird-paintings and feathered objects by using montage as a technical device: no information signs and plaques, half darkened exhibition space, white temporary division walls and reference to a film. Second, cross-cutting paintings and feathered objects are connected to each other with “intolerance” (similar to Griffith’s moral reading of history) and they narrate violence and exploitation, snatching and robbery, and a relation built upon not understanding each other through de-contextualisation and exoticism (Völckers 2010, 5). That is why one has to fight against “intolerance”. De Rooij’s narration on the development of “tolerance” in Dutch society, especially in relation to its “immigrant” groups, at a period of colonisation conveys a similar message to the twenty-first century Berlin: “be tolerant”.

#### → CONCLUDING REMARKS

In her critical book *Regulating Aversion, Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire*, Wendy Brown questions the liberal notion of “tolerance” on different levels: “tolerance as a discourse of de-politicisation”, “tolerance as a discourse of power”, “tolerance as supplement”, “tolerance as governmentality”, “tolerance as museum object”, “subjects of tolerance”, and “tolerance as/in civilisational discourse”. Brown writes:

The very invocation of tolerance in each domain indicates that something contaminating or dangerous is at hand, or something foreign is at issue, and



the limits of tolerance are determined by how much of this toxicity can be accommodated without destroying the object, value, claim, or body. Tolerance appears, then, as a mode of incorporating and regulating the presence of the threatening Other within. In this regard, tolerance occupies the position of Derridean supplement; that which conceptually undermines the binary of identity/difference or inside/outside yet is crucial to the conceit of the integrity, autarky, self-sufficiency, and continuity of the dominant term.

If tolerance poses as a middle road between rejection on the one side and assimilation on the other, this road, as already suggested, is paved by necessity rather than virtue; tolerance, as Nietzsche would say, becomes a virtue only retroactively and retrospectively. As a practice concerned with managing a dangerous, foreign, toxic, or threatening difference from an entity that also demands to be incorporated, tolerance may be understood as a unique way of sustaining the threatened entity. (2006, 27)

Even though Brown reflects on the Western liberal democracies through a detailed analysis of the term, broadly speaking, she engages in representing the “culturalisation of politics”, which has a depoliticising effect. That is to say, under the context of liberal governance, “difference” is pushed to the private sphere through the mobilisation of ‘tolerance’ discourse. At this point, “difference” has become essentialised as identity and public politics as a domain of debate and compromise have rejected this essentialised portion. In her own formulation, the “culturalisation of politics”:

reduces non-liberal political life (including radical identity claims within liberal regimes) to something called culture at the same time that it divests liberal democratic institutions of any association with culture. Within this logic, tolerance is invoked as a liberal democratic principle but for what is named the cultural domain, a domain that comprises all essentialised identities, from sexuality to ethnicity, that produce the problem of difference within contemporary liberalism. Thus, tolerance is invoked as a tool for managing what are construed as (non-liberal because “different” and non-political because “essential”) culturalised identity claims or identity clashes. As such, tolerance reiterates the depoliticisation of those claims and clashes, at the same time depicting itself as a norm-free tool of liberal governance, a mere means for securing freedom of conscience or (perhaps more apt today) freedom of identity. (Ibid., 24-5)

One of the interesting examples that Brown uses to problematise this acultural nature of liberalism is the Siman Wiesenthal Centre, the Los Angeles Museum of Tolerance. The Museum of Tolerance (MOT), as Brown displays, does not only devote itself to remembering the Holocaust and fighting against anti-Semitism, but also to becoming the active defender of Israel and more recently the supporter of the US’s invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan against terrorism as an agent of democracy in the Middle East (Ibid., 107-48). By studying the MOT, she asks, among other questions: “How are Palestinians made to appear as enemies of tolerance while Jews are only ever victims of intolerance?... And how are

Jews figured as sages of tolerance, teachers of tolerance, and paragons of tolerance?” These questions make Brown’s example interesting in terms of its possible relations to Willem de Rooij’s *Intolerance* and in terms of the objective of this article in highlighting the relations of power between the state and its “others”. At this point, however, it is also important to follow the critique of Slavoj Žižek.

In rethinking the relations of “tolerance”, Žižek acknowledges Brown’s point of view that reflects on “the very procedure by means of which liberal multiculturalist discourse presents itself as universal, neutral with regard to all particular roots” and “how our freedom of choice often functions as a mere formal gesture of consenting to one’s oppression and exploitation” (2008, 667). Yet Brown’s “rejection of liberalism’s claim of *kulturlos* universality” (Ibid., 672) is not enough and it is at this point, in which Brown (2006, 24) pushes for “the recognition of liberalism as cultural”, that Žižek builds up his critique.

It is suspicious how obsessively, almost desperately, she tries to characterise liberal multiculturalist tolerance as essentialist, as relying on an essentialist notion that our socio-symbolic identity is determined by our stable natural-cultural essence. But, whatever one can accuse liberal multiculturalism of, one should at least admit that it is profoundly anti-essentialist. It is its barbarian other that is perceived as essentialist and thereby false, like fundamentalism, which naturalises or essentialises historically conditioned contingent traits. One can thus claim that Brown remains within the horizon of tolerant liberalism, raising it to a self-reflexive level; what she wants is a liberalism (multiculturalism) that would expose to critique also its own norms and procedures, becoming aware of its own intolerant eurocentric bias. (2008, 666)

He then clarifies this point by reflecting on capitalism:

More generally, an individual capitalist thinks he is active for his own profit, ignoring how he is serving the expanded reproduction of universal capital. It is not only that every universality is haunted by a particular content that taints it; it is that every particular position is haunted by its implicit universality, which undermines it. Capitalism is not just universal in-itself, it is universal for-itself, as the tremendous actual corrosive power that undermines all particular lifeworlds, cultures, traditions, cutting across them, catching them in its vortex. It is meaningless to ask the question, Is this universality true or a mask of particular interests? This universality is directly actual as universality, as a negative force mediating and destroying all particular content (...) the universality of capitalism resides in the fact that capitalism is not a name for a civilisation, for a specific cultural-symbolic world, but the name for a truly neutral economic-symbolic machine which operates with Asian values as well as with others, so that Europe’s world-wide triumph is its defeat, self-obliteration. The critics of “Eurocentrism” who endeavour to unearth the secret European bias of capitalism fall short here: the problem with capitalism is not its secret Eurocentric bias, but the fact that it *really is universal*, a neutral matrix of social relations. (Ibid., 672-3) [Emphasis in the original]

And if one applies this dialogue between Brown and Žižek to present-day Berlin, one can understand the continuation from "intolerance" to "tolerance": Today as yesterday, "tolerance" emerges as the *repetition* of "intolerance" with *difference* (Deleuze, 1994) and brings in the same power relations between the state and its "others".

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## My Tyneside

### Stories of Belonging: developing a new permanent migration gallery at Discovery Museum in Newcastle upon Tyne

→ KYLEA LITTLE

Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (TWAM) is a federation of twelve venues in Tyne and Wear. Discovery Museum is part of the federation and is based in the heart of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. It attracts over 400,000 visitors a year. Its collections and galleries cover life in Newcastle and Tyneside, from the area's renowned maritime history and world-changing science and technology right through to fashion through the eras and military history. The museum is bursting with interactive displays, which makes it the perfect place to learn and have fun. Families and school groups are a key component of Discovery's audience. TWAM's mission is: "To help people determine their place in the World and define their identities, so enhancing their self-respect and their respect for others."

Iain Watson, TWAM's director has written that:

A key element of our community engagement work is a belief that museums and archives can reflect the identity of communities—whether geographically defined, or defined by shared beliefs, cultures, interests or experience: this reinforces the sense in which the ideas of individualism can be augmented and supplemented by the sense of 'belonging' to a community or group.

Identity is constructed in many different ways. It may be constructed on civic or ethnic lines. It may be viewed from the perspective of the individual or community or from the perspective of the state or institution. As a regional museum service TWAM tends to explore how identity is constructed at individual, community or regional level.

We believe that it is important that we accept the vision of identity as a dynamic construct—too often, museums are constrained by the requirement to promote an historic or outmoded account of identity (whether at a regional or national level), whereas the true challenge is to reflect, develop and define the changing collective identities of our diverse and dynamic communities, to make museums relevant to now and to the future. (Watson 2012)

In summer 2013 Discovery Museum will open a new permanent gallery currently entitled “The Making of Modern Tyneside”. This gallery will deconstruct and reframe the identity of Tyneside and encourage visitors to appreciate how much the area’s identity has been influenced by migrants.

Inspiration for this new gallery originated from a number of factors. Hazel Edwards, Deputy Manager for Discovery Museum 2009/2010, managed a significant consultation process with 530 people in conjunction with Durham University into the future vision for Discovery Museum. The resulting report was entitled: “In order that we can all touch our past: Participatory Re-visioning of Discovery Museum” (Pain and Matthijsse 2010). Perhaps the most significant feedback in the report came from people who had most recently arrived in the region. Participants said that they felt distant from regional identity due to their exclusion from museum displays and that Discovery should do more to reflect the different histories and experiences of the region that follow from these minority communities. Significantly, very few participants felt Discovery Museum was of no interest at all to them, though they did have suggestions for content that would be more appealing.

In 2011 Watson and another member of the senior management team visited the European Museum of the Year of 2007, the German Emigration Centre in Bremerhaven. Impressed by interpretive technique, that combined storytelling with theatrical sets to create a highly emotive experience, they were inspired to create a similarly modern and dramatic offer at Discovery Museum.

The history curators, charged with proposing a concept for this new gallery, drew from experience of two highly successful temporary projects; “Destination Tyne & Wear” and “What’s Your Story? Discovering family history in Tyne & Wear”, that explored migration and family history respectively. Visitors to the ‘Destination Tyne & Wear’ exhibition commented:

[It makes you think] (...) that it is hard for people to leave their home and come to a new country to work.

I didn’t realise there was so much migration and so much ethnic minority. It made me consider whether I could migrate.

Migrants bring real richness and diversity to the area. They make a real contribution in the jobs they undertake and what that adds economically to the region. (Cultural Partnerships Limited 2009)

“What’s Your Story?” drew on the extensive archival collection housed within Discovery Museum and capitalised on the popularity of the approach of TV programmes such as the BBC’s “Who Do You Think You Are?” to shed new light on collections and local history.

The concept put forward by the curatorial team was to use the crucial period from 1840 to 1920 as a springboard to examine the role of migration in Tyneside in the past and today.

Tyneside’s pivotal role in Britain’s rapid industrial growth of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is well documented. What is less well

known is that by 1911 one third of the population were migrants or children of migrants, particularly from Ireland and Scotland. It has been written that "The North East was a boom area, a British counterpart to the California of the Gold Rush" (Renton 27, 2007). Historian David Byrne has suggested that without the influx of labour the 'North East could not have found the workers needed to achieve its greatness' (ibid. 2007).

But the story does not end there; in the decade leading up to 2001 the North East, relative to other areas in the UK, has seen the second biggest rate of change in migration—41% more people who were born abroad have made the region their home (IPPR 2005). The gallery will also include the stories of these more recent migrants.

The "welcoming" nature of the North East both in the past and today is something that has generated much debate amongst historians and a subject that will be explored in the gallery. Writing in 1917, J. P. O'Connor the Irish Home Rule MP praised the welcome that nineteenth century Newcastle gave to Irish migrants: "Of the many asylums to which the Irish fled after the great exodus of the forties, there was none in which, owing to many circumstances, they were able ultimately to find more favourable circumstances than Tyneside" (Renton 4, 2007). In the preface to *Colour Blind? Race and Migration in North East England Since 1945*, Renton has stated that in 'particularly in the 1950s and early 1960s, an argument was put that the North East found itself free from the racial conflict that was endemic elsewhere' (Renton 2007).

#### → THE MAKING OF MODERN TYNESIDE

The gallery will primarily take a first person approach to the interpretation. This technique will engender an immediate and emotional connection to the stories being told. Using personal stories is a popular approach within migration museums (Baur 2005).

Preliminary research into real life people has revealed some poignant stories that could feature in the gallery such as the story of Lena and Lewis Vineberg. Born in the 1850s in Russia they fled the country in the 1870s. In the 1881 census they are found living on Russell Terrace in Newcastle. Lewis is recorded as a slipper maker and they have two small children. The family continued to grow. One of their sons, David, signed up to the Royal Air Corps in 1911. David married Annie Lukes and was a tailor in Newcastle. David chose to change his name to the more English sounding 'Vyner', and the deed of name change document is in the Archives collection, while his tailor's scissors are in the museum collection.

Depicting migration as a process rather than event is an approach that the Lower East Side Tenement Museum chose to take by following families over a number of years (Baur 2005). We plan to use the same technique with the historic stories. And as with the German Emigration Centre we hope to explore the hopes and fears of migrants before they set off on their journeys (Beyer 2005) and to place them in historical context (Pes 2007).

As well as the memories of individuals the project will draw on a range of material including extensive archival records, official documents and personal papers plus a wealth of objects from TWAM’s nationally important maritime, science and industry, archives and art collections. Social history and costume and textile collections will also bring to life the stories of the many people who have made Tyneside their home.

This innovative new space will enable visitors to shape their own exhibition experience. They will explore multiple narratives before making personal connections to objects and archives, prior to entering the final space dedicated to encouraging participation and contribution. This participation space will be equipped with computer terminals to encourage people to research their own family history or to upload their stories of home and identity. Managers at Discovery Museum are interested in facilitating the shift from browser to searcher and potentially even to researcher for visitors. This space will be a test bed for that model.

Barbara Roche, chair of the Migration Museum Project and former UK Minister for Immigration, has commented that “Emigration and immigration are bound up with what it means to be British” (IPPR 2009,2). She cites the work of Robert Winder, who argues in his book *Bloody Foreigners* that “we are all immigrants: it simply depends how far back you go.” Roche suggests that: “If we could understand, accept and celebrate that, we would have a stronger society and a brighter future” (IPPR 2009, 2).

The UNESCO-IOM Migration Museums Initiative final report identified three core objectives of migration museums; to acknowledge the role of migrants to their ‘host’ communities, to include and integrate migrant communities into a national identity and to build awareness on why people migrate to increase empathy (IOM 2006).

By including this part of our history within Discovery Museum we hope to send out a strong signal about what we value as a region; to foster a sense of belonging and, by presenting an historical perspective on migration, to promote tolerance.

The development of the new gallery is managed using TWAM’s project management framework with extensive support from external partners in both developing content and rationalising the interpretative technique.

In terms of developing the content the curatorial team is working in close collaboration with the history department at Northumbria University to develop the storyboards for the historical characters. This partnership is proving mutually beneficial as curators benefit from the research skills of the professors while the University meets targets set by the Impact agenda, which requires that they make their research more accessible. Other academics that have specialist interests in one or more of the communities that will be represented in the gallery are also keen to share their findings.

A crucial part of the project is to engage migrants and children of migrants in telling their stories. Outreach with key communities such as the Chinese, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities is due to



begin in September, 2012. The team are also keen to work with the descendants of the historical migrants, where possible, in order to chart the rapid change in identity and belonging across the generations.

Brainstorming sessions run by staff from International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies at Newcastle University have focussed on exploring the interpretive styles of other migration galleries and museums from around the world. These sessions proved invaluable to the project team as they provided the opportunity to consider all possible approaches.

The project team have also sought out advice from the Community Cohesion team at Newcastle City Council in terms of managing the process of developing the gallery. Mark Ellis, Communities Advisor, commented that<sup>1</sup>:

The gallery has the potential to contribute to promoting greater community cohesion and diffusing tensions by:

- Educating about migrant and newer communities, who they are, why they came to Newcastle etc.
- Introducing attendees to more personal stories about individual migrants, which are often stories of overcoming great challenges and hardships, thus differentiating them as individuals and reducing perceptions of migrant groups as a single mass of "others"
- Encouraging attendees to consider the underlying similarities of experience, ambition, hopes and fears, etc. that cross all communities rather than focusing only on what makes "others" different—e.g. the need for safety, secure homes, job prospects, future for our children, etc.—and the role these things play in encouraging (or forcing) some people to seek sanctuary or a better life elsewhere
- Through all of the above, encouraging a process of empathy and 'perspective taking', where a group that may previously have been viewed with fear, distrust and lack of understanding becomes more individualised, their motives and needs more accepted, their commonalities more openly recognised and their differences more accepted.

There are some significant challenges involved in creating the gallery. How do you challenge perceived notions of a well-established history in an area that is largely presented as homogenous and where negative views of migration are often expressed?

Renton (2007) has pointed out that since 1945 the North East has been spoken about falsely by press and politicians as if the population of the past were static and unchanging. Green and Pollard have argued that:

it is this demographic dynamic—of high levels of migration followed by reduced mobility, as occupational continuity over several generations encouraged a certain social and geographical inertia that created the regional identities of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (...) It is no coincidence

1 Private communication 5th June 2012.

that at the end of the twentieth century, when the North East was widely identified as having the strongest regional identity in England—and thus the target for a referendum—it also enjoyed the lowest levels nationally of geographical mobility out of the region. (2007, 215)

How can we disrupt this notion of stability in a constructive way that enables people to see that “identity is always in the process of formation, it is forever unachieved” (Masey 1995, 186).

The *Profiles of Prejudice* report (MORI 2001) concluded that 25% of those questioned from the North East expressed negative feelings towards BME people (compared with 13% in London, 18% England). Do these negative feelings necessitate a different approach to interpretation than in countries such as America where migrants are seen as industrious and entrepreneurial rather than disenfranchised victims (Baur 2005)?

Representing the complexity of migration history on Tyneside, while ensuring the content remains accessible, is another challenge. While it is true to say that Tyneside experienced two periods of significant migration it also had the smallest immigrant population of any region in the 1961 census with only 1% of new commonwealth migrants choosing to settle here due to economic conditions (Renton 68, 2007). In the 1950s the population of the region fell by 70,000 (Renton 2007). Even with the post 1997 increase in immigration figures (the North East experienced the second fastest rate of change) the numbers of migrants were still comparatively small (IPPR 2005).

Will visitors to the gallery make connections between the experiences of migrants of the past and today? Today migration is often measured in kilometres. Will the shorter distances travelled in the past mean that those stories are dismissed as incomparable? We hope that by that by measuring travel in hours rather than kilometres new perspectives will be revealed. “The duration of the journey was much larger in earlier periods. People walked or sailed for weeks in the nineteenth century to get from origin to destination” (Schrover 2004).

The aim of juxtaposing the stories of past and present migrants is not only to allow for comparisons but also to demonstrate that migration is not a new phenomenon. Robert Winder aimed to show that we owe much more to immigrants than we think and by understanding the benefits our “national pride can feel less clenched, less besieged” (*The Guardian* 23rd July, 2004).

How can you prevent individual stories as being seen as representing whole communities? With a commitment to using individual stories there is a danger that those stories are taken as representative of whole communities. Experiences varied between ethnicities and nationalities, class had an impact and even within Tyneside it is hard to compare the experience of different locations; South Shields to Boldon to the city centre itself. How can we strike a balance between individual testimony and the contextualised representation of migration?

The development of the gallery will inevitably give rise to further challenges in relation to telling the story of migration on Tyneside. In many respects opening the gallery will mark the beginning of an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the public's understanding of migration and the chance to reflect on the museum's role in shaping or reflecting that understanding.

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## “Placing” the City within its Museum

The relationship between heritage, people, and territory in the Italian tradition of civic museums

→ FRANCESCA LANZ

Places, especially the ones that early nurtured us, are deeply impressed upon us. When we lose those spaces, we lose an essential part of our self and our stories.

(Archibald 2004, 1)

→ A MUSEUM ABOUT AND IN THE CITY

Growing attention is being focused on city museums. This is attested both by the fact that they have been the subject of discussion from the nineties onwards, as well as by the significant economic investments recently made on them across Europe. Such interest is not only social, theoretical or speculative, but, as David Flaming pointed out, it is also a response to new cumulative demands, which are “part ideological, part economic, driven by perceived social and educational needs, and by cultural competitiveness between cities, looking to diversify their post-industrial role towards European tourist currencies” (1996, 132). It can also be related with the re-emergence of local and regional identities in a context of political re-definition and, at the same time, it can be related to the current fast and deep changes that many European cities are facing. It is widely recognised that the on-going political, economic, and cultural process of the creation of the European Union and the new opportunities offered by globalisation are transcending the political-economic sphere, to the extent that they influence almost every aspect of human activities and life. Extensive research studies, as well as statistical surveys, have already pointed out how cities are deeply affected by such changes, both from a social standpoint and from a physical and architectonic point of view (Sassen 1991; Martinotti 1993; Sassen 1994; Amendola 1997; Rykwert 2000; UN|DESA 2012). In spite of the fact that places were expected to lose importance in

the global network society, and several authors foretold the very end of the city, discourses on places and their role in shaping identity are currently increasing and developing, while cities seem to be experiencing a “rebirth”, and are repositioning themselves in the political arena. Being the destination of material and immaterial fluxes of objects, individuals, information, and business, today many “European capitals”—which can be national capitals, historical centres, as well as new cultural, political or economic key points—are experiencing a renewed cultural and economic impetus that is characterising their development, offering important opportunities, but also furthering significant changes.

City museums, as institutions historically in charge of representing the city, recording its transformations and conserving its memory and history, are reacting to this context. In the last ten years, several new or renewed city museums around Europe have been opened, and many others are dealing with physical and conceptual renovations and cultural relocation processes. Thus the role, structures, and purposes of the city museum are being thoroughly reconsidered. City museums are nowadays reconsidering their approaches, widening their activities, reorganising their collections, rethinking their narrative and communication strategies, and redesigning their exhibitions, looking for new ways to implement and fulfil their mission—often revised—promoting the idea that their role should go beyond the mere collection and display of the city history, towards a more active involvement in society and in the current urban issues (Jones, MacDonad, and McIntyre 2008; Kistemaker 2006; UNESCO 2006; UNESCO 1995; Jhonson 1993).

As many authors have already pointed out, it is very difficult to provide a unique definition of a “city museum” (Postula 2012). Indeed, it is usually identified with historical museums, but today this is often not the case for many new and renewed city museums, which deal more and more with the city’s present and future. Actually, a city museum is neither defined by the type of objects it conserves, which can be very heterogeneous, nor by the ownership of its collections or by its funding sources, which can be national, municipal as well as private. Several effective definitions have been given (e.g. Bertuglia and Montaldo 2003; Galla 1995); however, for the purpose of this paper, the most telling definition of a city museum is probably the one given by Steven Thielemans in 2000, and quoted by Renée Kistemaker in her introduction to the fourth symposium on city museum in 2005: “a city museum is a museum about and in the city. It is connected with both the strategy of the city and with its citizens” (Kistemaker 2006, 5).

The birth of city museums in Europe can be traced back to the second half of the nineteenth century, when the biggest cities—which were involved in the urban, economic and social transformations of the time—tried to preserve documents, stories, and memories from the past; they were usually hosted in ancient and representative buildings of the city, they were conceived as repositories of civic treasures and places where the city history should be conserved, and their collections were meant to represent the city, tell its story and celebrate its glorious past. The

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relationship between the city museum and the city itself is the basis of the birth of the city museum and today it still lies at the very core of its *raison d'être*. This relationship is, however, being brought into question by the current city's changes, the on-going transformation that city museums are going through, and the resulting shift of their focus from urban history to social history and the contemporary city.

In a context where people, objects, knowledge and information move at increasingly high rates, cities—which have never been still—are today a fulcrum of a material and immaterial accelerated mobility, and are thus experiencing ever-faster changes: the on-going phenomena of mobility and migrations are reconstituting cultural diversity inside European cities and reconfiguring their identity, which is strictly related with the identities of a variety of subjects that live in the city, with their intellectual and cultural differences. At the same time, the current city's development results in quick urban changes, the dismantlement of large industrial areas, the construction of new areas and the social and physical transformation of many neighbourhoods. Thus, the city that the museum should represent is no more monolithic and unitary, but is full of contradictions, erratic, and its form and structure transform quickly. Furthermore, since city museums today do not only focus on the city's past and history anymore, but also, and sometimes primarily, on its present and future, the relationship between the city and the museum is no longer mediated by history, but is now direct: the city is at the same time the cultural and physical context of the museum, it is the subject of the actual museum but it also lives just outside the museum's own walls. Consequently, we should ask ourselves, which links, synergies, cross-references and mutual enrichments can be established? What should and could a visit to the museum add to the city's experience?

The relationship between the city and the museum needs to be rethought and redefined and new models and strategies have to be developed by city museums, to become more relevant for the city and its citizens, and eventually contribute to the city's social, political and economic development. Several outreach projects recently carried out by many city museums around Europe can be understood in this sense, as actions aimed at reconnecting people, places, and the museum within the city and in relation with city's history, present and future. New mobile technologies, ICT, educational programmes, and participative strategies are undoubtedly effective tools; temporary exhibitions dealing with specific contemporary city issues or difficult topics, and which may also be developed according to new curatorial practices aimed at involving urban communities, can produce important results, as well as the museum planning. My assumption is that some historical models of European local museums, on the ground of their long, inherent and original relationship with the local communities and places and their longstanding work in local identity building, could be implemented with remarkable aftermaths. Among these, there are some of the Italian museographical models for civic and city museums, which can offer interesting solutions, in particular with respect to the possibility to create a more articulated relationship between the museum and the city, in, within and beyond the museum itself.

## → THE ITALIAN CIVIC MUSEUM: A MUSEUM OF, ABOUT AND WITHIN PLACES

Civic museums today are very complex, fragmented and multifarious institutions, which are locally characterised and site specific. From a juridical point of view, Italian museums can be divided into state, civic, ecclesiastic, and private museums, according to the ownership of their collections and regardless of their topic, mission, and responsibility of their management. Civic museums, thus, are not necessarily minor local museums, and many major cities host civic museums which have a national relevance. The number of civic museums in Italy is very high. The data available is not updated or definite; however, to gain insight into the state of the art, it has been estimated that in Italy there are more than 4000 museums, 13% of which belong to the State, about 40% are civic, and about 1242 are ecclesiastic (Dell’Orso 2009; TCI 2009). Italian civic museums are also very heterogeneous. They are often multi-typological, since they may be picture galleries, archaeological museums, archives, or historical museums at the same time, and usually they are strictly connected with other local institutions, such as libraries or schools. Thanks to its peculiar structure, social and historical development, the Italian civic museum, as Andrea Emiliani pointed out, may be analysed as a document of the process of elaboration and transformation of the very concept of identity of a local community.

In the nineteenth century, several city museums arose in Italy; however, their development was slightly different than in other European countries, due to the particular Italian cultural and socio-political context of the time. In Italy city museums developed as part of the “civic museums” network; however a “civic museum” is not always necessarily a “city museum”, since its collections can have different origins, and thus it may not necessarily be strictly related with the city’s history and identity. Italian civic museums came into being in the eighteenth century and mainly spread in the nineteenth century, around the decades of the Unification of Italy: in this period, cities created these museums to strengthen the link with their local traditions and proudly affirm their specific identities, which were going to be absorbed into the new nation-state. It is widely recognised that the ratification of the laws that cancelled many religious orders, and the consequent devolution of their goods to the state and the municipalities, marked a very significant moment in the history of Italian civic museums. In particular, the laws enacted by the new kingdom of Italy in 1866 and 1867, granted a relevant number of paintings, sculptures, books, and other artistic and historical objects to civic and provincial museums and libraries. These laws caused one of the largest dispersions of Italian heritage, which was de-contextualised, sold—mainly outside the country—or ruined. On the other hand, they undoubtedly favoured the establishment of a peculiar bond between the local museums, which received part of these goods, and the surrounding cities and regions, where the heritage originated from. This worthwhile relationship made it possible to preserve and pass on a cultural heritage otherwise doomed to get lost, and marked the evolution of civic museums as institutions deeply rooted in the territory and implicated in local identity work. This particu-



lar relationship with the territory, the local history, the places' identities and the communities' memories, has been one of their main characteristics up to the present times (Emiliani 1985; Whitehead 1997; Di Valerio 1999; Visser Travaglini 2008; Dell'Orso 2009). In the years following the Italian Unification up to the Second World War, their collections were enriched by donations from private collectors and by several archaeological findings, provided both by the many major public works of the time, and by the specific surveys of those years. At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, after a period of uncertainties and delays, the legal order in the field of cultural heritage and cultural policies definitively opted for a centralised system and this trend became even more marked during the Fascist period (Emiliani 1973; Jalla 2000). The ownership and the management of the museums' collections were kept divided; the museums were entrusted with a basically preservative role; they were meant as "stores" of cultural objects underplaying their role and the relationship with the people or the places they should refer to.

After the Second World War, most Italian civic museums that had been bombed out underwent a renewal and became the object of new attention. Many museums were restored by some of the major Italian architects of the time, such as BBPR, Ingazio Gardella, Carlo Scarpa and Franco Albini, in collaboration with enlightened directors, such as Caterina Mercenaro, Vittorio Viale and Licisco Magagnato. Their projects are still today masterpieces of Italian architecture, which marked the heyday of Italian museology and museography, and defined a new approach to the museum design (Polano 1998; Huber 1997). Most of these projects were targeted at restoring historical buildings so as to turn them into museums, looking for "equilibrium between monumental buildings and new functions, between historical collections and new publics" (Huber 1997, 9). All of them were characterised by a very peculiar approach to the restoration of the ancient buildings hosting the museums and the relationship between the exhibition system, the collection and the building itself: the project was meant as "interpretation" of both the art works and the historical spaces hosting the collections, which became themselves part of the collection. The visit to the museums was meant as an *itinerary*, a physical, intellectual and emotive voyage, designed in order to allow the visitors to personally read, interpret and fix the collection in their memory, and where all the elements of the project, the exhibition design, the collection and the building, with their own identity but acting as whole, participate in generating a "visual emotion".

In the same period, a process aimed at guaranteeing autonomy to civic museums, in order to allow them to autonomously develop cultural projects and services, started to take over, fostering new scenarios in the evolution of the very concept of civic museums. A new idea of civic museum started to emerge, according to which it should be a cultural institution whose responsibilities go beyond the conservation and passing on of local memories; several authors and museums' directors saw the civic museum (and, in particular, the city museum) as a socio-political subject which acts in concert with local administration in planning,

managing, and taking care of the development of the territory. Thanks to their widespread distribution on the territory, and their historical link with places and people’s identities and traditions, civic museums are seen as new powerful starting points for a new museum conception.

One of the most powerful theories was developed by Andrea Emiliani and Fredi Drugman. Their idea of “*Museo Diffuso*” is today still characterising many debates in the field of museum policies and strategies (Emiliani 1974a; 1974b; 1985; Drugman 1982; 2010). The *museo diffuso*, a term that is actually impossible to translate in English, is a kind of museum that aggregates different places and complementary functions. It is a system of cultural places that does not only include other museums, local cultural services and centres (such as libraries, schools, universities), but also archaeological and historical sites, witnesses of local material culture and industrial remains—which are considered the roots of this culture—and any kind of local cultural resource relevant for the cultural life and identity of the territory. This museum is not constrained by a geographical definition. It has a physical site, but, as a matter of fact, it is a “network-museum”, rather than a museums’ network: it reaches out beyond its own walls, involving and interacting with the whole territory and cultural institutions it refers to, broadening its cultural horizons and its collection by including people and places, local, historical, and material cultural, tangible and intangible heritages. It is a “civic project”, a museum with a social utility and cultural and political dimension whose aims are to: recreate a link between the museum’s collections and the contexts they originate from; rekindle memories of places and traditions by enhancing the rich cultural heritage of the territory it refers to; act both as a place of identity making and as a modern “access portal” to the territory, making the most of local resources, also in a touristic and promotional point of view, in a fruitful collaboration between public and private institutions. These were all very innovative and high-potential ideas but they mostly remained theoretical speculations for a long time, as the juridical process aimed at providing local museums the needed autonomy was never finalised.

#### → CONTEMPORARY ITALIAN CITY MUSEUMS: PEOPLE, PLACES, IDENTITIES

Recent years have seen the opening of new city museums, which somehow try to embody the theories and ideas so far elaborated within the Italian museographic and museologic tradition. Such museums develop a new city museum model type between tradition and innovation, between the Italian and historical model and new emerging needs. Two of them are presented below as examples able to trigger some more general reflections on the role of museography in the creation of a relationship between the museum and its context, aimed at conserving, collecting, restoring and somehow enlarging places’ and people’s identity.

The Santa Giulia museum, in the city of Brescia, is the result of a process which has lasted over thirty years and is still in progress (Stradiotti, Castagnara Codeluppi, and Mastropietro 2005; Tortelli and Frassoni



IMG. 01 — Aerial view of the complex of the Santa Giulia museum. © Archivio fotografico Civici musei d'Arte e Storia di Brescia.

2009; Lo Tennero 2008). The museum is hosted in an ancient monastery lying on some remains of the Roman period, built in 753 AD and expanded throughout the centuries, up to the sixteenth century. After the time of the Napoleonic laws, which established that ecclesiastical goods had to be devolved to the State, the monastery was used as barracks, an army storage, a jail, a hospital, and, eventually, it was turned into the city's Museum of Natural Science. Consequently, the building itself is layered; it is a kind of historical palimpsest of the city history. In the sixties, some public works and related archaeological surveys in the area brought to light important archaeological remains. This was the beginning of the project for the city museum. Several successful excavations were organised, and the municipality came to the decision to make a museum of the whole area and entrusted Andrea Emiliani with the task of designing it. The plan for the museum was published in 1978: in this document Emiliani identified the creation of a city museum as the only and most effective tool to enhance this area, its treasures and historical meanings. Following his previous research activities and theories, he envisioned a museum aimed at recreating a link among the city, its history, places, and communities.

The realisation of the museum continued over the eighties and the nineties, and it involved the organisation of conferences, seminars, excavations, historical and archaeological research. In 1998 the first sections of the museum were inaugurated, and two main exhibitions were organised:





one on the history of the monastery, which included the visit of several rooms of the building that had been carefully restored, and the other one devoted to the history of the city, from prehistory to the eighteenth century. Between 2003 and 2004, an improvement project was carried out which included spaces for services, temporary exhibitions, conferences, and other events; on that occasion the museum enriched its roman section by opening a new area, which is the result of an exemplar work of restoration and musealisation of a Roman domus located on the grounds of the museum.

According to the so called "*progetto brixia*", the museum should spread in the city, involving other areas of the city centre and historical remains. The museographical project of the museum plays an important role, combining objects, museum spaces and city places in an organic way, enhancing and respecting them, though creating a single stirring itinerary, making the visit a real "emotional experience", in Albini's words. The project is by Giovanni Tortelli and Roberto Frassoni, who were appointed for the design of the exhibition inside the monastery, and then for the project of the new extension of the museum, which included the *domus* pavilion and the musealisation of the gardens (Horti). The structure of the pavilion for the *domus* was designed without intermediate pillars, in order to allow a whole perception of the original ancient domestic spaces; the display of the ancient floors and walls decorations in situ has the same objective. Moreover, the project of the pavilion is conceived as a serial structure, envisioning a possible extension of the museum to include new archaeological findings. The materials used (a local stone, traditionally used in the buildings of the city, and iron, which recalls the industrial tradition of the city), and the architectonic composition of the museum (with careful attention paid to the relationship between the interior and the exterior) clearly distinguish themselves from the remains, while, at the same time, are able to establish an architectonic relationship with the context and the city.

Another Italian city museum was inaugurated in 2012, namely, the Museum of the History of Bologna. It is actually a private museum, and the last step of a project started in 2003, called *Genus Bononiae*, which is run and managed by the Bank Foundation CARISBO. On the one hand, *Genus Bononiae* is based on the exploitation of the already working system of civic and cultural institutions of the city; on the other, it directly involves eight historical buildings, which have all their own historical and artistic value and which have been renovated and rehabilitated for public use and host a cultural centre. As described in the project's mission statement, "to better describe and understand the genus and stock of the Bolognese people from yesterday and today, *Genus Bononiae: Museums in the City* follows a path through the city and narrates its history, life, arts and dreams; it uses the streets of Bologna as corridors and the buildings and churches as rooms, blending into the existing institutional structure, and ensuring a full link with other museums, art galleries, as well as the other cultural, economic and social initiatives which animate the local community."

IMG. 02 — View of the monastery and the Domus Pavilion from the Horti. © Archivio fotografico Civici musei d'Arte e Storia di Brescia.

IMG. 03 — View of the interior of the Domus Pavilion, design by Giovanni Tortelli and Roberto Frassoni, 2003-2004. A system of gangways allows the view of the archeological findings; some of the original ceiling mosaics have been restored and displayed on site; a wide windows opens the gaze to the outside space of the Horti, a philological reconstruction of the ancient gardens and part of the open air museum's spaces. © Archivio fotografico Civici musei d'Arte e Storia di Brescia.

IMG. 04 — Map of the Genus Bononiae network. Courtesy of Genus Bononiae, Musei nella Città.



IMG. 05 — Palazzo Pepoli, Museo della Storia di Bologna, Section “Forma Urbis”. The rooms display a reconstruction of a portion of Bologna’s porch that characterize the city’s center, including old city shop signboards and part an original ancient Roman street. Backlit panels display the urban historical development of the city and its morphology. Photo by Paolo Righi, Courtesy of Genus Bononiae, Musei nella Città.

IMG. 06 — Palazzo Pepoli, Museo della Storia di Bologna, Section “Il Sacro e il Profano”. The exhibition apparatus fits in the existing spaces, detached from the walls and composed of self-bearing elements which include all the necessary technical facilities, including the electrical and lighting systems; they are stand-alone elements, custom designed for the museum by Mario Bellini and freely placed in the space according to a different geometrical and spatial grid from that of the building. The exhibition elements are based on different variations of the initial concept of a three-dimensional cage made up of a squared white glazed steel frame hosting the collection’s objects and the related information panels (designed by Italo Lupi using texts, drawings, images and other graphic communication tools). Photo by Francesco Radino, courtesy of Genus Bononiae, Musei nella Città.

*Palazzo Pepoli*, the Museum of the History of the city, is the core of this project and it is conceived as the starting point for this cultural and artistic itinerary within the historical centre of the city. The medieval palace has been restored and turned into the city museum. The exhibition was designed and set up by architect Mario Bellini, the graphic design was by architect Italo Lupi, while the scientific project was entrusted to Massimo Negri. In 2003, Mario Bellini won the competition to realise the museum: his project aims at preserving and enhancing the ancient building; the rooms have not been modified, the decoration apparatus has been restored and is part of the exhibition itself, and the exhibition design fits in the existing spaces, respecting and differentiating itself from the historical context. The exhibition structures, in fact, are self-bearing elements which include all the necessary technical facilities, conceived as standalone elements, detached from the building walls, and freely disposed in the space, thus creating a sort of “room inside the room”.

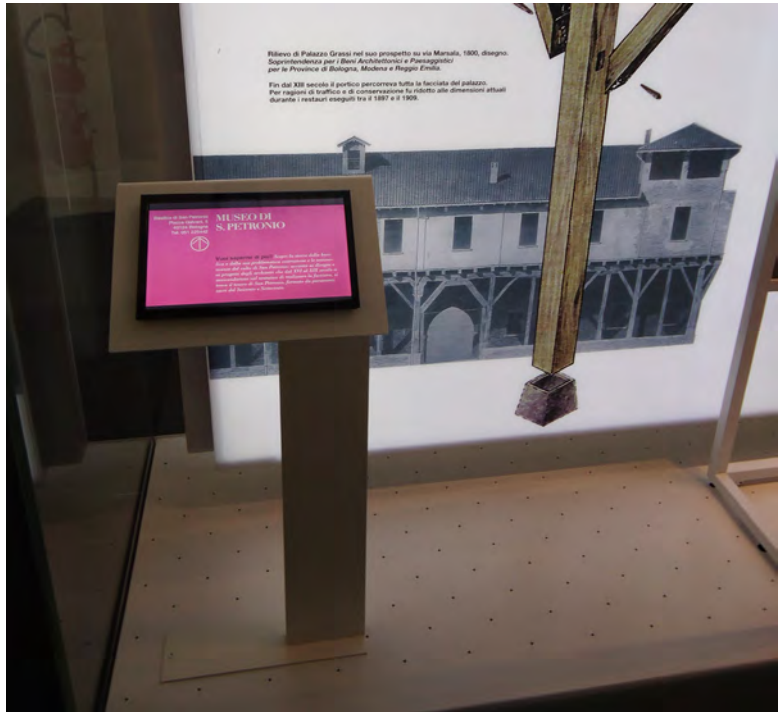
The museum tells the story of the development of the city and its culture, from the Etruscans to the present day. It is organised chronologically, through key episodes, symbolic figures, and anecdotes. The narration is interrupted by some cross-cutting themes devoted to represent a particular feature of the city in a diachronic way. The contents are presented through a combination of objects, images and multimedia elements. Actually, the museum collection only includes objects which the Bank Foundation already owned, and therefore it is not particularly







IMG. 07 — Palazzo Pepoli, Museo della Storia di Bologna, Baloons and Video Points. Photo by Massimo Negri, courtesy of Genus Bononiae, Musei nella Città.



large. Consequently, the curator made the choice to set up what he defines a "narrative museum", focused on the story telling, rather than being collection oriented. Thus, the exhibition display and the graphic design play a fundamental communication role, filling the information gaps and contributing to building and conveying the messages. The museum uses different exhibition tools drawn on from theatrical languages and scenography to create metaphorical and allusive immersive spaces, and the exhibition design visualises and implements concepts and messages. At the same time, the museum's collection is virtually enlarged by including also the palace hosting the museum, the buildings of the *Genus Bononiae* network, and the city as a whole with its cultural resources and physical places. Particular attention has been paid to graphic communication, in order to create a link with the city, with widespread references to city places through the use of contemporary and historical cartographies, maps, and photographs. Moreover, cultural links with the city are established in various ways: through cross-references at the "video points" presenting the civic museums that are connected to a given theme; through "balloons", which highlight some temporary events that are relevant to the topics of the museum; through educational activities, which are carried out in cooperation with the other city museums; through loans of works and finds; and through scientific cooperation with the other museums and cultural entities of the city.

Despite their differences, both these projects aim to foster awareness of identity in the city's inhabitants, a sense of belonging to their city and territory, and the rediscovery of the city centre as a place of encounter and historical memory, contributing, at the same time, to the cultural, touristic and economic development of the city. They propose a musographical model able to knit together the museum, its collection and the whole city, bringing the museum beyond its own walls and the city inside them. They are, in fact, historical museums and represent the development of the *forma urbis* (the city shape). However, they are first and foremost the core of a wider widespread museum system, which includes preserves and enhances the objects of the collection, archaeological and historical areas, including the buildings of the museum, the whole urban territory and its cultural resources. The city is consequently enriched by new values and open to multiple meanings arising from the people's personal experience.

#### → CONCLUSIVE OBSERVATIONS

In the last ten years a growing number of city museums have been inaugurated all over Europe: new museums have been opened, and a considerable number of them have undergone thorough processes of renovation, in relation to the on-going social, political and economic changes occurring at European level and affecting many European cities. This situation marks an important turning point in the development of city museums: their mission and *raison d'être* is questioned and reconsidered; several new roles are envisioned for them, starting with their historical role and moving beyond it. Among their new tasks, on the one hand they

are conceived as “urban marketing tools” for city promotion, acting as a portal for city communication, often tourist oriented and occasionally implemented also in relation with city branding and local polices (Monlieu 2012; Tisdale 2012). On the other hand, they are required to play a social role, being more involved in urban and social issues, addressing difficult topics, and contributing to foster the dialogue between the different ethnic, religious, social, and generational groups of the city (Flaming 1996; Lohman 2006; Kistemaker 2006).

The on-going transformations that many cities are facing undoubtedly offer important development opportunities. However, these same dynamics also seem to scatter local communities, blur local identities, create and multiply the “invisible boundaries” dividing our cities (UN-HABITAT 2008), while the global economy is making cities’ architecture progressively less various and more homogeneous, affecting the citizens’ sense of belonging and the overall urban quality of life. With no reference points, Rykwert states quoting Kevin Lynch, “a citizen cannot ‘read’, let alone ‘understand’ his home”, since they make the place legible, and “not only offer security but also heighten the potential depth and intensity of human experience” (2000, 133). Moreover, many authors assert that the current changes occurring in cities, which are faster than ever before, are also inducing the rise of a sense of disorientation and, consequently, a feeling of insecurity, alienation and homologation (Boeri 2012). At the same time, as Doreen Massey acknowledged, “if it is now recognised that people have multiple identities, then the same point can be made in relation to places” which can be conceptualised “in terms of the social relations which they tie together”, as “processes” themselves (1991, 28). Hence, while fast and important changes are challenging the identity of cities and making it difficult to create and nourish the relationship between the city and its inhabitants, places can be an important resource. Indeed, places can represent a starting point to build a new common ground, and city museums, in the light of their recent developments and their origins as agents deeply rooted in the city, can act as a nexus and as identity building agents, by restoring a sense of place. Mason, Whitehead and Graham have already highlighted the role of places and places’ representation in museums in shaping people’s personal identity and providing a setting for collective memory (2012).

City places are the very roots of a city museum, and might become a powerful starting point for the museum itself to help people rediscover them, the history of those who lived and live them, the events which took and take place there, and the memories embedded in every place of the city. This means giving a sense to places, in order to better understand them, and thus better live them, and also deciding whether to preserve or change them, showing respect to history, which is not mere subordination, but an awareness that is the precondition for conscious choices on the future of the city. The museum’s activities and policies, as well as its architecture, exhibition design and communication tools, can contribute to furthering the rediscovery of the city and its places, and to fostering the raise of a sense of belonging in the city’s inhabitants. It

can contribute to the development of the city from many points of view, and, at the same time, it poses the basis for the promotion of an idea of "citizenship" that is not based on political, ethnic or birth origin, but on urban connoisseurship and on a sense of belonging to the city and its communities. Several models and strategies can be explored and developed in this sense; the Italian model is one of them, a large-scale effort museographical project that discloses the crucial importance of the connections existing between the museum's design and the museum's contents and its capability to enhance city places and establish relationships that go beyond prefixed scopes.

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# Tales of Migration and Mobility

## Storytelling through design

→ MICHELLE MOORE

This paper examines three museums whose missions are to represent stories generated by European migration and mobility<sup>1</sup>. The discussion centres on strategies employed by museum and exhibition designers towards communicating these stories more widely and deeply. This study aims to show design responses to a significant shift in the museum's focus in recent decades from the material to relating stories. It is argued that objects have taken on a diminished role and furthermore that collecting and displaying objects should only be a vehicle for expressing ideas and relating stories and not an end in itself (Roberts 1997). Similarly, earlier ideas notions of place, once firmly grounded in physical locations<sup>2</sup>, now turn to *narratives surrounding places* revealing stories of mobile populations moving between places.

Following a brief summary of communication and design issues, this analysis is structured to:

- firstly, examine each of the three museums' *mission* or vision;
- secondly, explore the embodiment of this mission in the *spatial strategy* employed; and
- lastly, reveal inclusive design principles underlying the elaboration of *content* within the resulting spaces.

1 The case studies pertain to a current research project which concerns itself with the embodiment of the museum's communicative agenda in the design of museums and exhibitions. Pilot museum visits and interviews have been undertaken for two of the museums and in depth on-site research is due to be conducted at all three in the near future. Therefore, this paper will serve as an introductory analysis.

2 For example, as represented by in-situ eco-museums first developed in the early seventies (Davis 2005).

Under the above headings a synthetic analysis highlights the interrelated efforts of three key contributors<sup>3</sup>:

- the museum organisation
- the architectural design(er)<sup>4</sup>
- the exhibition design(er)<sup>5</sup>

The case studies presented here are:

- **Navigation Pavilion** Seville, Spain (completed 2012)  
This museum highlights Seville’s history as a major port of departure and return during the “discovery” of the Americas and reveals hidden stories of individuals of various social classes who stepped aboard. To create a museum and permanent exhibition, the project recycled the building and concept of the existing Navigation Pavilion constructed for the 1992 Seville Universal Exhibition themed “The Age of Discovery”.
- **Red Location Museum** New Brighton, South Africa (completed 2006)  
This museum confronts the larger national consequences of European colonisation from the heart of a black township remembered as a centre of early resistance and anti-apartheid activism. Essential to the winning concept of the architectural design competition were the use of vernacular forms and materials to counter forces affecting race and spatial movement<sup>6</sup> and the curatorial management of conflicting and shifting narratives in post-apartheid South Africa.
- **Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology** Oxford, England (completed 2009)  
The new permanent exhibition theme “Crossing Cultures, Crossing Time” at Oxford’s transformed Ashmolean Museum shows how our modern societies stem from past civilisations developed not in isolation but as part of an interrelated world culture resulting from mobile populations. Conservation demands stipulating that the new

3 It is useful to mention at the outset that the fourth implied subject of this study, the public, has not been surveyed. Therefore, reviewed are design strategies aimed to engage the public. Not assessed is the degree to which outcomes were successful (or not) from the perspective of the “visitor” (those who did come to the museum) or the “audience” (all those people who might come to the museum) (definitions according to: Hooper-Greenhill 1995, 2).

4 Interviews conducted as part of this research in several countries suggest the way designers label themselves can sometimes be misleading. Therefore, “(er)” appears following “designer”, i.e. “design(er)”, where reminder is needed that a designer’s title does not always correspond neatly with the design they actually do.

5 See above footnote.

6 Forced removals to the black township of New Brighton date back to 1903 (Red Location Museum 2006). A series of legal Acts in South Africa through the latter half of the twentieth century formalised policies of segregation by racially classifying the population, designating areas for each racial group, establishing black homelands to which people with no explicit purpose of being near the city were required to move and requiring ‘black’ and ‘coloured’ citizens to carry passbooks stating where the holder was allowed to be and at what times. The deep spatial implications of the Acts remain visible in post-apartheid South Africa. For a detailed discussion refer: (Findley 2005, 131-2)

museum extension not be visible from the street (Linn 2010) effectively channelled design focus into realising an interiorised visitor experience behind the aloof "Temple Museum" façade<sup>7</sup>.

#### → DESIGNING THE COMMUNICATIVE MUSEUM

Aside from their migration and mobility narratives, another characteristic shared by these three museums is evidence of creative design approaches aimed at communicating more widely and deeply with the public. Today this communicative capacity is seen as crucial to maintaining the museum's relevance for contemporary society on which its social and economic survival hinges (Hooper-Greenhill 1995, 2). It is even said that "the museum's message justifies the existence of museums" (Maroivic 1995, 36).

By "communicate more widely" I refer to current debate which returns inexorably to the question central to issues raised in the sixties—"Who is the museum for?" (Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA) 2011) The need to broaden museums' audiences is generally accepted by both those who theorise about museums and those who run them, the latter driven to this conclusion in-part by economic necessity as government support wanes. Historically this demand has two political faces—one which asserts that museum's improving influence ought to reach all sections of society and another which sees access to the museum as a cultural right to which all citizens have claim (Bennett 1995, 7-8). Today the latter view, the democratic right of access, is more widely accepted than the former which extends the question of "Who?" to ask "What is the museum for?" Contemporary theories emphasising the museum's obligation to harness its cultural authority and public funding towards transforming society are more likely to elicit challenges (Sandell 2002, 3).

By "communicate more deeply" I refer to changing attitudes towards communication. In the past objects were presented so that the invisible messages embodied in visible objects were readable only by those who possessed "double levelled vision", i.e. knowledge of socially coded ways of seeing *through* objects to their meanings (Bennett 1995, 35). Later, focus shifted from a preoccupation with messages transmitted by museums to ways of ensuring intended messages were absorbed by visitors (Maroivic 1995, 30-33). Recent efforts focus on minimising the museum's authoritative voice (Besley 2012) and engaging visitors in deeper two-way communication (Hooper-Greenhill 1995). Thus, theoretically the public has been promoted to participant in discourse rather than mere passive consumer.

7 The Ashmolean Museum's façade is the nineteenth century Neo-Classical building designed by English architect Charles Robert Cockerell. Its classical entrance portico is a typical feature of the 'Temple Museum'- a past museum model which reflected a nineteenth century idea of the museum as temple to art and civilising values. Monumental in style the 'Temple Museum' used architecture to convey its authority and elevate to sacred status the knowledge contained within it. In effect the aloof and authoritative attitude this design trend conveyed was counterproductive to changed museum regulations and visiting hours which aimed to provide access to a wider public.

## → THE CONTRIBUTION OF DESIGN

What is the contribution of *design* to wider and deeper communication? The word “design” is generic in the sense that it can be used as a noun, an adjective or a verb referring to a wide range of processes and products. In the museum “design” could apply to marketing material, activities programmes, exhibitions or any aspect of the built environment. In this paper, the focus is narrowed to exhibition communication strategies, extending to architectural design. To clarify the latter, rather than add to already healthy media debate on the cultural tourism value of iconic “wow-factor” museum architecture (for example Kelso 2000) this paper instead evaluates architecture as the exhibition’s silent partner contextualising communication strategies. Therefore, the building shell is only referred to where it relates directly to the main discussion threads of mission, spatial strategy or content.

By examining these two design fields—exhibition and architecture—the paper aims to identify contemporary design responses to two long standing demands generated by the museum’s democratisation: parity of representation for all groups and cultures and equal rights of access for all (Bennett 1995, 9).

## → MUSEUM MISSION

What is the relationship between the museum organisation’s mission and design?

The museum organisation, in defining its mission, setting agendas for thought<sup>8</sup> and determining how to go about realising them, is well positioned in its role as client to exert influence on the creative processes of designers it chooses to engage. Its guiding mission statement and the dilemmas it aims to confront ideally form part of the pre-design brief. However, there is also evidence to suggest that designers in turn exert influence on the museum organisation’s vision and the stories it chooses to relate.

*Bridge to America - Navigation Pavilion, Seville*

The Navigation Pavilion’s mission statement highlights Seville’s historical identity as: “capital of the world in the process of discovering America and the first circumnavigation” (Navigation Pavilion 2012) and envisages a cultural bridge: “to make a cultural bridge between Europe and America, recovering on its journey through the Atlantic navigation the voices of men and women who, over the centuries, have crossed the ocean in one direction or another”(Navigation Pavilion 2012).

The Andalusian Government approached exhibition designers General Production and Design (GPD) to develop a museum theme for reopening the Navigation Pavilion of the 1992 Seville Universal Exhibition.

8 Research has shown audiences actively deconstruct museum messages signifying museums cannot tell people what to think but can only set agendas for thought (Hooper-Greenhill 1995, 7).

Lacking a museum collection, apart from a set of scale models of ships gathering dust in the basement, GPD turned to the heritage listed pavilion for inspiration. The original architect<sup>9</sup> had designed a building to respond to the Expo motto “The Age of Discoveries” and the pavilion theme of “Navigation” through:

- Careful siting emphasising the building’s relationship with the Guadalquivir River (Biollain Tienda 2008)
- Building materials and forms which metaphorically evoked shipping port imagery—docks, hangers and lighthouses (Biollain Tienda 2008).

Inheriting a building with an in-built navigation concept GPD developed an intellectual narrative around Seville’s place identity as a major imperial port during the “discovery” and colonisation of the Americas (Simo Rodriguez and Lazaro de la Escosura 2009).

However, they avoided the trap of creating a museum of past glories. Instead, to develop the permanent exhibition concept, the team investigated previously untold personal stories of those who stepped on board the ships—revealing the hopes and desires which motivated their search for new horizons and their experiences of life at sea. Represented are individuals belonging to the poorer classes, women and orphaned children alongside wealthy high ranking men. This approach exemplifies wider progress over recent decades in tracing hidden and repressed pasts in struggles for multi-layered identity (Huysen 1995, 22) beyond the wealthy and influential whose well conserved objects tend to dominate museum collections.

Intriguingly GPD’s director denied any “politically correct” agenda behind the decision to represent a diverse social demographic insisting that to focus solely on the achievements of the great and the wealthy would be “boring for people”<sup>10</sup>. The clue to motivation may lie in his expressed concerns regarding the closure of many Spanish museums attributable to government austerity budgets, an oversupply of museums and stiff competition for paying visitor attendance<sup>11</sup>. Therefore, the use of diverse social representation in the bid for wider appeal was driven as much by pressing economic sustainability issues as any altruistic social agenda.

While Seville is the springing point for the cultural bridge towards America, the Navigation Pavilion does not confront experiences and views *from* America. To study challenges those colonised by Europeans face, the next example departs from Europe.

#### *Memorialising Apartheid – Red Location Museum, New Brighton*

The Red Location Museum’s vision statement begins: “Red Location Museum of Struggle will focus on the memorialisation and depiction

9 Guillermo Vázquez Consuegra was the original architect for the Navigation Pavilion.

10 Based on an interview held by the author with Boris Micka, Director of exhibition design firm General Production and Design (GPD), in Seville, Spain, on 9 December, 2011.

11 See above footnote.

of the apartheid narrative. It will portray the horrors of Institutionalised Racism and the heroic struggles of the Anti-Apartheid movement aimed at liberating the oppressed people” (Red Location Museum 2006). Initially proposed as a site for memorialisation by the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality in 1995 (the year after the end of Apartheid), the architectural design competition called for contestants “to reflect on the history of the community and promote culture, education and the arts” (Smith 2006, 10).

A striking feature of Noero Wolff Architects’ winning scheme is the integrated spatial and curatorial strategy of twelve walk-in containers inside the main building structure. Called “memory boxes”, they are conceived and named after the large trunks itinerant black workers carried from place to place containing their personal possessions and mementos from home (Findley 2005, 146). The underlying philosophy was to avoid collapsing history into a single narrative and provide instead exhibition spaces for many voices to be heard (Smith 2006, 10). In the minds of the architects it was important to avert any intention on the part of the client for the museum to become about the victory of victim over victimiser, thus shifting the target of racism from black to white, however understandable the desire might be. Joe Noero pointed out that large permanent gestures of victory leave no room for society to move on and can nurture bitterness (Findley 2005, 142-4). By choosing Noero Wolff Architects’ concept which hinged on multiple semi-permanent exhibitions the client committed to a vision which did not memorialise a frozen moment in time—the end of Apartheid in 1994—but acknowledged The Struggle of dismantling and coping with centuries of race-conscious policies is still underway in South Africa.

*Crossing Cultures Crossing Time – Ashmolean Museum, Oxford*

The Ashmolean explains its vision for transformation as follows: “*Crossing Cultures Crossing Time*: The approach is based on the idea that civilisations that have shaped our modern societies developed as part of an interrelated world culture, rather than in isolation” (University of Oxford—Ashmolean Museum 2011).

Exhibition designers Metaphor give full credit to the Ashmolean’s director Christopher Brown for this vision, though the influence of funding authorities is acknowledged (Greenberg 2010). The University of Oxford’s initial funding application for refurbishing the building and permanent exhibition conceived a conventional curatorial approach. The vast art and archaeological collection was to be organised according to traditional evolutionary principles of place and period in a floor by floor display. The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sent it back with the instruction more work was needed (Hobhouse 2009, 14). It was clear significant funds would only be forthcoming if the project addressed the HLF’s remit which embraces greater access and inclusion, including those from low-income groups and black, Asian and minority ethnic audiences (Heritage Lottery Fund 2012).

The second funding application proposed the new story “Crossing

Cultures, Crossing Time". The concept de-compartmentalised existing collection areas through a series of interconnected narratives highlighting historical cross-cultural travel and trade links. Once approved this concept shaped the brief for both the exhibition and architectural design and required the Ashmolean to make fundamental changes to its practices entailing horizontal interdisciplinary collaboration between departments (Glanville 2009, 36).

The case studies show how various team members contributed to pluralistic agendas by tempering the notion of a single coherent story with the possibility of multi-layered narratives embracing diversity. Their representative approaches together exemplify a theoretical framework posing three levels of the museum's social contribution, i.e. by confronting the issues of individuals, communities or societies (Sandell 2002, 4). The Navigation Pavilion fragmented its narrative into individuals' stories selected from a broad socio-economic spectrum; the Red Location represented the conflicting and shifting perspectives of communities in the on-going national post-Apartheid struggle; and the Ashmolean permeated its time honoured collection borders to emphasise "interconnectedness" over "otherness" between cultures of the world.

#### → SPATIAL STRATEGY

From the common problems associated with displaying multiple narratives three distinct solutions to spatial organisation emerged. Each museum illustrates a different strategy to "organised walking", a key characteristic of the museum experience (Bennett 1995, 6) which distinguishes it from other cultural mass media such as literary text, cinema, or television documentaries.

##### *Linear sequence - Navigation Pavilion, Seville*

The intended route at the Navigation Pavilion determined by exhibition designers GPD is essentially linear, effectively eliminating way-finding problems as visitors proceed from one narrative to the next. The pavilion's original architect Guillermo Vázquez Consuegra was recalled to reposition the entry and elevator to ensure the visitor's arrival point matched the exhibition designer's visitor flow diagram. The journey commences on a single "snaking path" where the museum visitor becomes "voyager" on board a ship carving through waves of light on a fibre-optic sea beneath ever changing cinematic skies. Punctuating the traveller's path at intervals, each personal story is revealed through a series of self-contained multi-sensory experiences. As this simulated journey concludes, other areas, each with their own distinct narratives, must be passed through as part of the sequence before exiting.

##### *Random choice - Red Location Museum, New Brighton*

In contrast to the above, Noero Wolff Architects' concept for the Red Location dictates that the visitor is free to wander randomly and choose which memory boxes to enter—a strategy which pointedly grants visitors freedom of spatial movement, a right previously denied to whole



**IMG. 01** — *Navigation Pavilion, Seville, Spain* - Inspired by the pavilion's hull-like interior, exhibition designers created a theatrical Atlantic “journey” where visitor becomes “voyager” on a “sea” of light. Real voyagers’ tales are told through immersive experiences revealed in linear sequence. Architect: Guillermo Vazquez Consuegra; Exhibition designer: General Production and Design (GPD). Photo by Niccolò Guasti.



**IMG. 02** — *Red Location Museum, New Brighton, South Africa* - Twelve walk-in “memory boxes” house distinct semi-permanent exhibitions, a curatorial strategy which pointedly grants freedom of spatial movement and acknowledges that stories in post-apartheid South Africa are conflicting and shifting. Architect: Jo Noero. Photo by Dave Southwood.

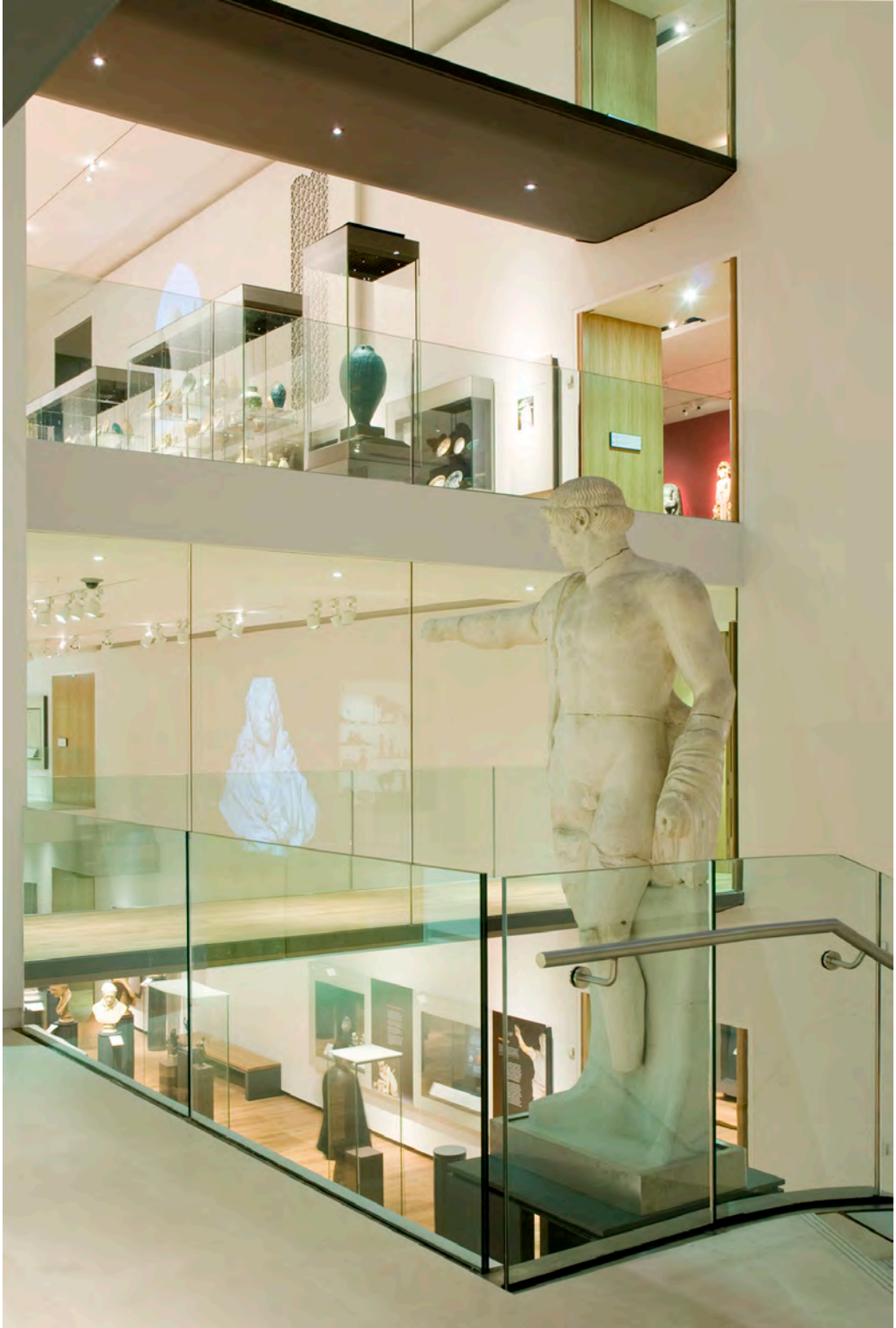
population groups during apartheid (Findley 2005, 146). However, no clue is given on the boxes’ exterior walls as to their content and narrative which is only revealed upon entry (Slessor 2006, 42)—a lack of transparency which aims to create a “space of disquiet” recalling the simultaneous and contradictory senses of normalcy and dread of the apartheid world (Noero 1999, cited in Findley 2005, 147).

#### *Bridging space - Ashmolean Museum, Oxford*

Bridging space, culture and time is central to the transformed Ashmolean’s visitor flow strategy conceived by Rick Mather Architects and fine-tuned by exhibition designers Metaphor (all of whom are trained architects). Intellectual bridges suggested by the display strategy “Crossing Cultures, Crossing Time” are reinforced by physical movement via footbridges and cascading stairs interconnecting one and two story exhibition spaces around a six-story atrium. Changing panoptic views into several galleries and easy movement between different exhibition areas afforded by this complex sectional diagram are designed to facilitate “reading” of multiple interlacing messages. Effectively, objects belonging to different cultures and time “talk to each other across a space” (Greenberg 2010). By orienting the visitor, encouraging exploration of a multitude of story paths and offering chances to escape areas if bored, the circulation strategy aims to combat museum fatigue (Greenberg 2010), a hidden psychological barrier for many non-returning visitors. Furthermore, the lively sounds of footsteps and voices transmitted through the atrium helps dispel the feeling of hushed austerity typical of museums of the past (Linn 2010).

The above examples illustrate different approaches by designers (architects and/or exhibition designers) to developing spatial strategies for contextualising exhibitions which aim to communicate multiple narratives, which in turn enable the museums to meet their pluralistic agendas. Viewed from the broader conceptual standpoint of the democratic museum, designers can be seen as contributing to parity of representation.







## → INCLUSIVE CONTENT

In the discussion which follows the focus shifts from representation to access—to identify Inclusive Design<sup>12</sup> strategies in the development of museum content and stories. As museums have kept pace with other public buildings in providing access for people with physical and sensory disabilities this paper looks beyond these pragmatic planning issues to identifying ways designers attempt to remove less obvious barriers inhibiting communication with significant audience sectors.

As a starting point each designer had very different material content to work with. Apart from obvious differences in quantities of available objects, the social values<sup>13</sup> attached to objects were clearly distinct for each case, ranging from “fakes” to the commonplace to a prestigious centuries old collection of authentic masterpieces and artefacts. In two of the cases intangible written or oral stories were the most valuable content available.

*Intellectual Ergonomics - Navigation Pavilion, Seville*

Lacking a collection of objects at the outset, apart from the set of model ships, the Navigation Pavilion’s success was highly dependent on exhibition designer GPD’s skills not only to communicate content but to create it from scratch. Voyagers’ stories recovered through pre-design investigation of archival records (letters and other documents) became the most valuable “content” designers had to work with. In interpreting the stories and recreating the journeys GPD exercised several design strategies they call “Intellectual Ergonomics” where the aim is to eliminate any conflicts or tensions which may hamper people’s visit. Three key principles underpinning the theory are “HARMONY, VERACITY & ERGONOMY”(Micka 2010) and they can be observed in action in the Navigation Pavilion’s permanent exhibition.

*Harmony*

“Harmony between the building and exhibition” (Micka 2010) was initiated when the museum’s Navigation theme was decided. This relationship was further elaborated in the exhibition design which capitalised on the potential atmospheric qualities of the building’s cavernous semi-dark interior by conjuring up theatrical effects using large format multi-media techniques. The integral relationship between building and exhibition becomes most apparent in the exhibition’s concluding narratives where the focus shifts from people’s stories to the place where the stories originated. Views of the city and river exploited by the original architectural design are interpreted from the main exhibition space and a “lighthouse” lookout tower anchored in the river. In contrast to preceding personal stories told through simulation techniques, here the real city is “displayed” as an authentic collection of objects.

IMG. 03 — Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, UK - The new permanent exhibition “Crossing Cultures, Crossing Time” offers visitors a choice of many “journeys around the world” where objects effectively “talk to each other across a space” emphasising the interrelatedness of world cultures. Architect: Rick Mather Architects; Exhibition designer: Metaphor. Photo by Rick Mather Architects.

12 “Inclusive Design” is understood as “an evolving and complex concept, whose definition can be extended to address not only age, gender and disability, but also race, income, education, culture, etc.” (Centre for Education in the Built Environment (CEBE) 2002).

13 Susan Pearce’s framework—“Social plot of the creation of value”—illustrates how social conventions lead to the classification of objects in the museum according to the following value scales:

*authentic* ↔ *non-authentic/spurious*; *artefact* ↔ *masterpiece* (Pearce 1995, 19-20).

“Harmony of scale” can be observed in reproductions of two and three dimensional images and objects which demonstrate “the ideal scale is the natural scale of things” (Micka 2010). For designers skilled at reading visual material and models at different scales this rule serves as a reminder that for the untrained eye such translations are difficult if not impossible.

“Harmony of message” is particularly relevant for interactive exhibits which can result in frustration for the less tech-savvy. Designers aimed to eliminate this obstacle by establishing a communication pattern for each area. The approach anticipated that, once learned, visitors need make only minor adjustments in order to engage with individual exhibits.

#### *Veracity*

For “veracity of scientific information” the design team turned to Seville’s General Archive of the Indies<sup>14</sup> with historian Pablo Emilio Perez-Mallaina of the University of Seville acting as scientific advisor. To lend authenticity or “veracity of feeling” (Micka 2010) to exhibits which largely depend on simulation, finely crafted timber and steel finishes are used throughout. Taking their cue from the building’s ship-like materials and construction details they ensure consistency in all the visitor sees, hears and touches.

#### *Ergonometry*

“The study of the design and arrangement of equipment so that people will interact with it in a healthy, comfortable and efficient manner” (Micka 2010). This last principle builds on well-established universal design guidelines and is particularly important in the design of elements for hands-on interactive play.

#### *Community collaboration - Red Location Museum, New Brighton*

The curatorial strategy envisaged for the Red Location Museum by Nero Wolff Architects is that each memory box “tells its own story in its own language” (Findley 2005). Oral history, rather than objects, is the most valuable underlying content of the “memory boxes” and community collaboration is the key inclusive strategy employed in relating stories. Similarly, community employment was a crucial condition of the building construction contract, one objective being to instil a sense of community ownership (Findley 2005). This principle of participation appears on-going in viewing exhibitions as a means of actively and formally recording and memorialising events previously only remembered through oral history (Slessor 2006, 40)—a reflection of imbalanced archival representation practices under former racial power relations (Smith 2006, 5). It exemplifies a wider shift “from an emphasis on access to an emphasis on what is now called co-creation or co-curation” where the museum “actively partners with its community” (Besley 2012, 1).

Many objects displayed mirror the architect’s “poetic use of the cheap, the commonplace and the disregarded” (Slessor 2006). The deliberate selection of modest materials within the context of the building’s monumental

<sup>14</sup> General Archive of the Indies is Spain’s repository for all documents relating to the history of the Spanish Empire. The building and its contents were registered in 1987 by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.

scale gives importance to the ordinary: concrete blocks, corrugated iron and cement sheeting—materials in the past scrounged and valued to patch up the rusted red shack housing from which the Red Location area gets its name (Findley 2005, 136, 142). Likewise, vernacular forms borrowed from industrial buildings salute the role Trade Unions played in the anti-apartheid movement (Noero 1999, cited in Findley 2005, 141-2). In validating the commonplace, buildings and objects work to combat intimidation felt by black citizens towards institutional facilities long after laws excluding their entry lifted (Findley 2005, 141).

Finally, it is the semi-permanent quality of the museum's exhibitions which, by facilitating changing stories and shifting views, extends the question of "Who?" to "What is the museum for?" The Red Location Museum unashamedly sees wider access as part of a greater goal of social transformation, this being, in its own words: "the empowerment, education and redress of the local community" (Red Location Museum 2006).

*Encounters with objects - Ashmolean Museum, Oxford*

In contrast to previous examples, at the Ashmolean exhibition designers Metaphor were privileged to work with a prestigious art and archaeological collection dating back centuries. Inclusive design principles therefore centre on transformation of an older framework which sees museums as places for encounters with authentic masterpieces and artefacts (Pearce 1995)—one advantage the museum's spatial experience can offer over and above other storytelling media not contained in spaces.

When designing an exhibition Metaphor employ three techniques: firstly developing "the story", secondly imagining "the building is 100 years old and it is a found space", and thirdly scripting "a theatrical experience where the visitor is an actor (...) going on a journey" (Greenberg 2010). At the Ashmolean visitors are given a choice of routes for round-the-world-journeys (Greenberg 2010) where they encounter special "connector pieces" highlighting cross-cultural influences which occurred through centuries of trade and travel.

The design principles underlying these techniques appear to correspond with two established ways of thinking about museum objects encountered during the visitor's journey:

- Recognising and communicating polysemia, or the plurality of meanings, contained in objects and collections (Hooper-Greenhill 1995, 9).
- The auratic power of authentic material objects (Huysen 1995, 33): perceived as "inspirational, magical and emotional power" as conditioned by a multitude of ways to encounter it, "some more dramatic, atmospheric and theatrical" (Greenberg 2010).

Therefore, the key to inclusive communication here lies in revealing "the polysemia" of an object through "a multitude of ways to encounter it" in scripting multi-layered journeys to appeal to different audience sectors.

In aiming for wider and deeper communication three different leanings may be detected in exhibition designers' expressed desires to know the

public. While designers for the Ashmolean wanted to know more about different audience sectors (who might come)<sup>15</sup>, the principles of Intellectual Ergonomics employed at the Navigation Pavilion appear to have been developed through an interest in “what works” for visitors (who did come)<sup>16</sup>. Of the three case studies, the Red Location is the most likely to have moved past exhibitions as one-way mass media towards design processes engaging the community in two-way communication—as emitter, not only absorber, of messages.

#### → CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the three examples make a case for suggesting that pluralist museum agendas, collaborative processes and the designer’s imagination were all factors behind enriching the quality of realised designs.

From their markedly different contexts, each of these three museums relates stories of European migration and mobility, recreating journeys or telling of their consequences. In doing so, all have chosen narratives representative of diverse populations (socio-economically, racially or culturally diverse). They illustrate a filtering down into practice of museum theories which emphasise democratic representation as “negotiated heterogeneity” not “fictional homogeneity” (Huysen 1995).

In the processes of setting agendas for communication and realising them through design, the various key players discussed have each been shown to play a significant part. However, the analysis illustrates that roles are not always predictable. The contributions towards mission, spatial strategy and content did not entirely come from museum organisations, architects and exhibition designers respectively as might have been expected. Neither did designers’ contributions to wider “representation” and “access” neatly correspond to “exhibition design” and “architecture” respectively. Instead, the success of the three examples came about through the involvement of all participants in processes across several areas—they were not the result of conventional briefing patterns and sequential processes where one team hands the project over to the next. With respect to regard given to museum audiences, as partners in communication processes, concerns ranged from evaluating visitors’ reactions to surveying potential audiences to collaborative partnerships.

The realised designs demonstrate a broad range of responses aimed at wider and deeper communication with the public. This could be attributed to the very different contexts and exhibition content which were the starting points for the three projects<sup>17</sup>. However, the range and richness of responses could also be indicative of challenges designers face in general when working to evolving inclusive agendas. There are no formulas and solutions can only be implemented one project at a time, each demanding

15 Based on an interview held by the author with Stephen Greenberg, Director of exhibition design firm Metaphor, in London, UK, on 19 October, 2011.

16 Based on an interview held by the author with Boris Micka, Director of exhibition design firm General Production and Design (GPD), in Seville, Spain, on 9 December, 2011.

17 Additionally, varying budgetary and regulatory constraints are important factors not discussed in this paper.



a unique response without the benefit of drawing on accepted cultures of precedent (Findley 2005, 38). This highlights how the imaginative capacities of designers are being reinvigorated by the social challenges that museums are confronting in addition to opportunities presented by the project's particular history, context, content and the people involved.

Outcomes have significance for designers, museums and the public. They may highlight exhibition and architectural design as effective mediums for engaging a wider public which in turn may contribute to the museum's social and economic viability. However, if designers do succeed in assisting museums in getting closer to their social goals, then it is the public for whom outcomes may ultimately be most significant.

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## Targeting the “I” in “Identity”

### A Paradigmatic Shift in Curating?

→ SONJA KMEC

“Identity” is an empty catch word; or rather it means many different things to different people. Two recent readers (Wetherell and Talpade Mohanty 2010; Elliott 2011) have tried to shed some light on the field of identity studies, which is—even in the scientific domain—a rather hotly debated territory. Therefore, this paper will first sketch the theoretical foundations, the empirical study “Doing identity in Luxembourg” (IPSE 2011) and the exhibition “iLux. Identities in Luxembourg”, which has opened in July, draw upon. The second part will then look at the exhibition itself and show how the visitors were brought to self-reflect or self-confront, while examining how this may related to the development of interactive Web applications and the context of what Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck have termed “reflexive modernity” (Giddens 1991; Beck, Giddens and Lash 1994).

Whether this can be likened to a “shift of paradigm” is an open question, which I hope the conference participants may help to clarify. At any rate, it does not mean that involving the visitors and pushing them to self-reflect is exceedingly new and innovative. This has clearly been part of museum policies for years if not decades. The question is whether it has become increasingly predominant, pushing other agendas, such as the traditional one of education of a visitor/citizen and the late twentieth century one of entertainment of the visitor/consumer (Beier-de Haan 2006), into the background.

→ DISENTANGLING “IDENTITY”

Let us first try to disentangle the Gordian knot that is “identity”. Rogers Brubaker (2001), who refuses to use the word “identity”, distinguishes instead between three different phenomena:

- **Identification** of certain categories of people; a categorisation thus, by actors or discourses.
- **Self-identification** (cognitive self-representation) said to be relational and changeable over time.
- **Groupness** (Max Weber’s “Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl”) derives from alleged shared category and connectedness.

Martina Avanza and Gilles Laferté (2005) propose a slightly different distinction between three different processes:

- **Identification** or passive external labelling, e.g. by the State.
- **Social image** or discursive production of meaning, e.g. historical, geographical, artistic or literary representations of sameness and difference.
- **Group belonging** or active individual self-identification, according to socialisation and individual choices.

Avanza and Laferté draw on a distinction C.F. Graumann already made in 1983 which is very prominent in German speaking discussions, thanks to the intercession of cultural geographer Peter Weichhart (1990):

- **Being identified:** people are being associated with certain groups (men/women, northerners/southerners) and given certain character traits; projection, stigmatisation.
- **Identification of** physically existing objects or spatial structures by an individual, who associates them with certain characteristics and incorporates them in his/her subjective consciousness.
- **Identification with:** self-identification with an object or a certain place. This is often called spatial identity.

By comparing these typologies, one can rearrange them to form only two very different notions of “identity”: identification *by* and identification *with*, a distinction made by Avanza and Laferté (2005) as well as Graumann (1983) and Weichhart (1990) (See IMG. 01). On the one hand, the labelling of people and the cataloguing of objects may both be considered to be “identification by”, since Brubaker makes no difference between who or what is being discursively produced. On the other hand, Brubaker’s second and third type of identity may be gathered under the keyword “belonging” or appropriation of those images.

This opposition between “attributions” and “appropriations” is of course only analytical, what is interesting is what is happening when they collide. The distinction that is operated here does not take into account individual and collective identification. The collective, be it nation, gender or ethnicity, is here conceived of as an “imagined community” (Anderson 1983), that cannot act but through the individual actors that it is made up of.

<b>Brubaker 2001</b>	<b>Avanza and Laferté 2005</b>	<b>Graumann 1983; Weichhart 1990</b>	
<b>1) Identification</b> by actors or discourses.	<b>1) Identification</b> or practice of labelling <b>2) Social image</b> or discursive production of meaning	<b>1) Being identified</b> <b>2) Identification of</b>	<b>Identification by (ATTRIBUTIONS)</b>
<b>2) Self-identification</b> (cognitive self-representation) <b>3) Groupness</b>	<b>3) Group belonging</b> or active individual self-identification	<b>3) Identification with</b>	<b>Identification with (APPROPRIATIONS)</b>

IMG. 01 — Typologies of identity.

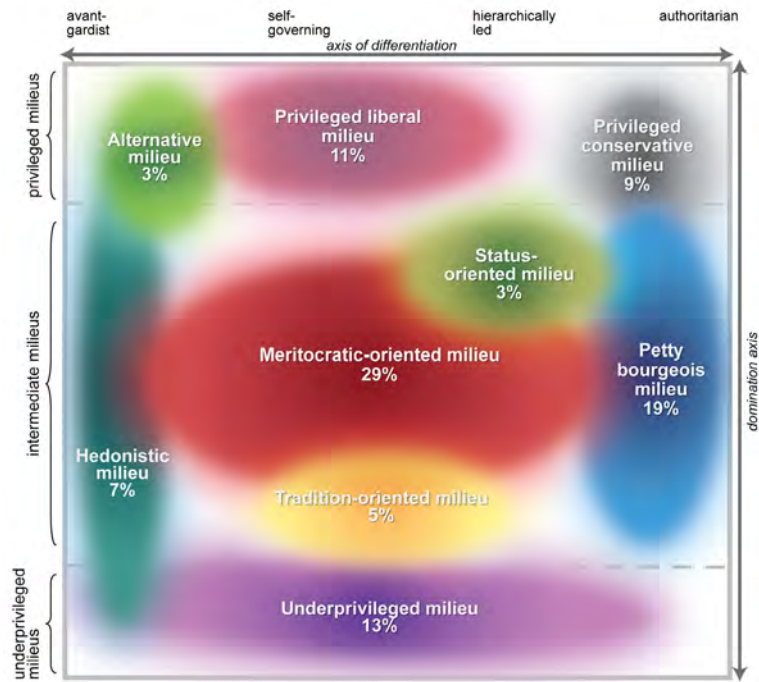
→ DOING IDENTITY IN LUXEMBOURG

This was the basis of an empirical study, which I participated in—together with around twenty colleagues—at the University of Luxembourg from 2007 to 2010, entitled “Identités socio-culturelles et politiques identitaires au Luxembourg”. A social survey was combined with qualitative interviews and media analysis, covering linguistic practices in Luxembourg; spatial identifications; symbolic representations and every-day practices regarding food and labour. The results were discussed with relation to socio-cultural milieus (Vester et al. 2001), which the survey had allowed to define [see IMG. 02].

The influence is clearly Pierre Bourdieu’s model of social space, which adds to the vertical distinctions of economic capital, a horizontal differentiation of inequalities and lifestyles, which he explored in his 1979 study “La distinction: Critique sociale du jugement”. Bourdieu postulated a systematic connection between class affiliation and “habitus” or patterns of thinking, assessing and acting. The general homogenization of living conditions linked to democratisation and globalisation does not prevent, indeed probably encourages, individuals to stage or project their own social images in terms of food, interior design, cars, but also political opinions and cultural practices (IPSE 2011, 46-48). The resulting model remains exactly that: a model. No interviewed person can be place in one or another “milieu”, but a statistical analysis has revealed certain patterns of behaviour, opinions and consumption that differ significantly enough from each other to form separate milieus.

Empirical data such as these have found their way into the exhibition. Before I expound on its scenography, let me take one step back and look at the theoretical framework, which is highly influenced by post-structuralism (Han 2011). The linguists in our project liked to remind us that post-structuralism was not “invented” by Jacques Derrida, but can be traced back to Ferdinand de Saussure, whose lectures on linguistics

IMG. 02 — Socio-cultural milieus in Luxembourg. Design by Marie-Line Glaesener (IPSE 2011, 53).



had been published posthumously in 1916 by his students. Saussure famously made the distinction between signifier and signified, stating that their relation was not *natural*, but constituted and maintained *socially*. Famous structuralist ethnographer Claude Lévi-Strauss applied Saussure’s semiology to study collective phenomena, such as myths. He detected underlying structures, which he described as ahistorical and universal. In 1966 Derrida (published in 1978) attacked Lévi-Strauss, by reinforcing Saussure’s claim that the sign (that is, the relation between signifier and signified) was arbitrary. But Derrida went much further: the arbitrariness or—as he called it—“free-play” of the system meant that any communication is built on sand. Derrida not only argued against his own structuralist colleagues, but assaulted the “philosophy of presence” or realism which he considered a metaphysical remnant of Platonism. In a similar vein to Derrida, although in a whole different context, the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan opposed the idea of the Platonic psyche or soul and Descartes “*cogito ergo sum*.” In his essay on the “mirror stage” (presented in 1949, published in 1966) he argues that a person’s identity is never unitary and total, but fragmented. When a child recognises itself for the first time in a mirror, it is *mis*recognition, built only on an image, an ideal “I”, “armour” of an alienating identity. Lacan argues for the social nature of the formation of the ego, whose centre remains void.

While Lacan was hugely popular (and contested) as France’s answer to Freud, Derrida is sometimes lumped with Michel Foucault and Gilles

Deleuze to form the so-called "French Theory" (Cusset 2003), ignored "at home", yet celebrated by Anglo-American social scientists since the 1970s. While it seems deliberately ironic to give them a national quality label, their influence on emerging fields of study, such as queer theory or postcolonial studies is as undeniable as is their "return"—in part via the German back door—to the French academic setting. At the University of Luxembourg, they are shunned by the Philosophy department, but embraced by theorists in Literary Studies, Gender Studies, Cultural Geographers and more and more by people like me, who perch between disciplines.

While the project often witnessed discussions between defenders of Pierre Bourdieu versus adherents of Judith Butler's theories (habitus vs. performativity—a discussion that probably remained unresolved), another strand of poststructuralism was less dwelled upon, but may explain the theoretical background of the exhibition that derived from the project.

#### → REFLEXIVITY

According to the main proponents of this social theory, "identity, who we are and who we think ourselves to be, is not innate, but is something that is constructed as part of a dialogue with ourselves, others, and social institutions and structures" (Chaffee 2011, 100). For George Herbert Mead (1863-1931), a pioneer of social psychology, there may be an "I" that is impervious to social relations, one that has desires and impulses that are not socialised, but the relationship of that "I" entertains with the socialised "me" is reflexive. The ability of individuals to distinguish between these aspects leads to self-awareness (Mead 1962).

This reflexivity is radicalised by Anthony Giddens, who does not simply see self-reflection as playing a part in the construction of social identity, but as being crucial. The self is all but a constant renegotiation, everyday staging of "this is who I am." The instability and uncategorisability of identity, he argues, generate anxieties and thus a quest for "ontological security". In a contemporary "runaway world", Giddens (1991) observes, old communal ties have disintegrated and self-awareness (or reflexivity) has dramatically increased. This process, which he calls "detraditionalisation" or "disembedding", can lead to anxieties, but it also gives people a greater choice over what kind of self they want to be and in what kind of relationships they want to be. The development of web technologies and practices has certainly proven his point. Though, to what extent individuals are free to (re)cast themselves and to what extent they are bound by economic necessity as well as social and cultural norms is still a matter of huge debate. Ulrich Beck, who has further developed the concept of reflexive modernity, argues that the old categories such as nation-state, family and class have become "zombie categories" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2001). They are still around, but have lost the definition they once had. He is more pessimistic about human agency, being limited by corporate capitalism, the job market etc.



But reflexivism has been criticised for not taking into account that individuals are not able to access their own feelings and information reliably. Individuals are not always empowered to take control over self-identity. There are other constraints that remain, constraints that are embodied and experienced.

This criticism is taken furthest by self-styled post-positivist realists such as Linda Alcoff and Satya Mohanty. In her book *Visible Identities* Alcoff (2006) argues that it is important to maintain the notion of group identities, such as “women” or “Latinos”, not simply because it allows political action in their name, but because the attributions are so strong that they colour individuals’ experience of who they are. Drawing on Mohanty, Alcoff does not say that experience is unmediated, but that there is a reality that is felt by the individuals, be it rape, sexual harassment, sexual dissatisfaction, illegal abortions etc. Experiences are not overlaid by discourses; they are not open to all meanings: “we might dramatically re-signify the word ‘black’, ‘bitch’ or ‘queer’; we cannot dramatically re-signify death, torture or rape. We need an account of identity that will retain this material consciousness of the limits of human embodied experience” (2010, 160).

However, I do not think that the realists succeed in totally dismantling the structuralist or reflexive arguments. Even death, torture or rape are constantly re-signified. We only have to think about the fact that rape within marriage was until recently perfectly legal or that the definition of where an interrogation ends and torture begins is highly contested. This is not to deny bodily experiences, but as soon as we refer to an individual’s experience, that is, as soon as we put it in words, communication sets in and we are back in the realm of language.

#### → ILUX—IDENTITIES IN LUXEMBOURG

The exhibition is the first temporary exhibition in a new museum, Musée 3 Eechelen, situated in an old fort, just next to a museum of contemporary art (Mudam), in a modern district of Luxembourg City that also hosts the European institutions and some of the largest banks. On the periphery of the city, the old fort was originally planned to be incorporated into the contemporary art museum by its architect, I.M. Pei. However, a petition launched by the so-called “Friends of the History of the Fortress” forced the political decision makers to back off and to create two distinct museums: one for contemporary art (labelled “Musée d’art moderne” as to not shock the taxpayers too much) and one to deal with the country’s “history and identity”. This was in 1993. Thirteen years later the museum for contemporary art finally opened (in 2006), while the other museum only opened in the summer of 2012. The delays may be linked to the difficulties of putting “identity” on display.

The first plan was to install a very successful exhibition staged in 1989 (150 Joer Onofhängegkeet—150 years of independence), or a renewed version thereof. As the curators (Gilbert Trausch & Co.) declined the offer, a group of historians at the newly founded University of Luxembourg

were contacted. I have been involved in the project ever since, for a period of almost ten years. At first, we were invited to adapt our work on the "lieux de mémoire" (that is the political usage of historical events, figures and symbols in the national building process) for the museum. This clashed however with the view of the then director of the Service des Sites et Monuments nationaux, whose view of "identity" was somewhat more organic. After his retirement, the new team decided that the question of identity had to be linked to the site itself—the remains of the fortress—and to the military history of the country. This appealed also to the University team, who started to examine what the historical fortress might have meant to the soldiers, inhabitants and visitors, as well as its symbolic reputation after the dismantlement in 1867. This project was well underway, when it was interrupted due to budgetary difficulties. In 2010 a new start was made. It was decided to place the museum under the responsibility of the National Museum of History and Art and to split again the issues of the fortress and identities. The latter was to be treated by temporary exhibitions and the cooperation with the University of Luxembourg was formalised. A new research project was to be adapted to the museum, entitled "IDENT. Socio-cultural identities and identity politics in Luxembourg". The project was based on the premise that identity was not something given or innate, but produced by everyday actions and interrelations, influenced by norms and social inequalities, yet taking into account individuals' agency. This approach is reflected by the publication entitled *Doing Identity in Luxembourg. Subjective Appropriations, Institutional Attributions, Socio-Cultural Milieus* (IPSE 2011). It could thus only be translated into a museum context by taking into account visitors' agency and appropriations, in a setting that would allow them to communicate with the exhibits and with each other. The designers, "Krafthaus das atelier von facts + fiction" from Cologne, suggested demystifying the awe a museum inspires by radically changing the setting. The exhibition space was designed as a private home, each topic dealt with in a different room:

- national identity (national stereotypes, the redefinition of monarchy as national symbol) in the living room
- spatial identity (perceived, conceived and lived space) in the hallway
- languages (multilingual practices; evolution of political correctness) in the kitchen
- gender (changing social and biological gender definitions) the bedroom
- body (beauty standards, age, health) in the bathroom
- values (morals, religious standards, pedagogics) in the nursery
- socio-cultural milieus in the garage

How effectively this setting works became clear when I tried to give guided tours. It is virtually impossible to give guided tours of the exhibition, as visitors are immediately distracted and engage with various items, start to talk among each other and stroll around, as if they were visiting



their new neighbour's home: curious, cautious at first, then increasingly animated. They do not necessarily like what they see, but they cannot help but respond. The sofa in the living room invites visitors to sit down and listen to a radio, which can be tuned to the right headset, to listen to patriotic anthems, or to the left headset, to hear protest songs about Luxembourg. At the opening I saw strangers sitting down and explaining the device to each other, then talking about the music and what it said about Luxembourg. In the kitchen, visitors were asked how many languages they had spoken that day. They were asked to place a plate on a number: one, two, three or more. On a Saturday most people will answer two or three. On a Sunday, however, the pile of plates at number one was considerably higher, presumably as people did not go to work or went shopping, but spent time with people from a more homogeneous linguistic group (family or friends). In the bathroom, visitors were asked to write down the things they liked best and they liked least about their own body, while the central object of that room was a (used) wedding dress, with an explanation about *bridorexia* and how women shape their body to fit into certain cloths or how certain cloths, such as corsets or shoes, deform bodies. This sparked quite a few discussions among visitors, especially teenage girls.

These observations are of course only cursory; my colleague Céline Schall is doing an evaluation of the visitors' reactions to the exhibition. What I am wondering is whether visitors will also engage with aspects that are less concerned with their own world, but seek to raise their awareness for the process of "othering". Each and every room has an element of "alterity" that contrasts with "identity". For instance, in the living room (nation), there is a black carpet, half drawn back, with some information about those who do not belong to the nation: the refugees placed in a detention centre, about to be expelled. In the bedroom (*gender*), intersexuality is discussed, or rather the fact that in Western Europe babies whose biological sex is not clear, have to undergo a surgical operation to fit the male/female dichotomy etc.

To conclude, it appears that it not the "I" that is being targeted by the exhibition, but the socially reflexive "me" and its interactions with others. Rather than putting a "visitors' book" at the very end of the exhibition, there are several possibilities throughout to add comments, put up post-its, place one's vote or even displace things in order to leave a mark, express oneself and think for oneself. This is not something new, but it has been applied here maybe more systematically than elsewhere and it may be part of a much larger trend, linked to the increasing ascendancy of "reflexive modernity". The very muted reactions and even positive feedback in the country's largest—traditionally very conservative—newspaper (*Luxemburger Wort*) the exhibition "iLux" has received contrast with the huge public controversy that surrounded the 2001 exhibition "Luxembourg, les Luxembourgeois : consensus et passions bridées" (organised by the Musée d'histoire de la Ville de Luxembourg, in collaboration with the Casino Forum d'Art contemporain). At the centre of public fury was a pregnant statue named "Lady Rosa of Luxembourg", placed next to

IMG. 03 — *iLux*. Photo by Sven Becker.

the original statue ("Gëlle Fra—Monument national du souvenir") dedicated to the memory of war heroes, on a pedestal "insulting" the image of women and of Luxembourg with inscriptions such as "madonna, whore, kitsch, capitalism" (Majerus 2007). The very same statue, an art installation by Sanja Ivekovic, is now on show—together with documentation surrounding the past debates—at the Mudam, and is visible from the roof of the "iLux" exhibition: a shift of paradigm?

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# EUROPE

# MEETS THE WORLD

## AN EXHIBITION ABOUT EUROPE AND THE SURROUNDING WORLD THROUGH 2500 YEARS

The story is told in nine large rooms, each divided into two areas: Europe and the World. In each room, historic objects stand face to face and tell of conflicts and mutual influences through history.

Some selected exhibits are linked to a topical narrative. This is shown as a projection on the walls of the room when you activate it. You will also see QR-tags which will ask you questions via your smart phone.

The exhibition was produced through broad collaboration and includes exhibits from all the National Museum's many collections.

We hope you enjoy it!



Are the French arrogant? Should EU cooperation be based on a single religion? Is a home a basic human right? Use your smartphone to take part in our opinion poll on five fundamental questions. You can also borrow an iPod touch at the Information Desk. There is free WiFi at the museum, but to take part you need a QR-scanner installed on your smartphone. Download one free via App Store or Android Play. Scan the blue QR-codes and let us know what you think!

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### **Christopher Whitehead**

Christopher Whitehead is Professor of Museology and a member of the University's Cultural Affairs Steering Group and the Great North Museum's Board. His research activities focus on both historical and contemporary museology. He has published extensively in the field of art museum history, with particular emphases on architecture, display and knowledge construction. His second major strand of activity relates to education and interpretation practices in art museums and galleries, and includes considerable government-funded and policy-relevant research. In the context of musicological study he has strong interests in learning theory, social constructionism, theories of representation, cartography and disciplinarity. He is the author of the following books: *The Public Art Museum in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Ashgate 2005), *Museums and the Construction of Disciplines* (Bloomsbury/Duckworth Academic 2009) and *Interpreting Art in Museums and Galleries* (Routledge 2012).

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Susannah Eckersley is a Lecturer in Museum, Gallery, and Heritage Studies and Research Associate on the MeLA project. Susannah's PhD examined new museum building projects in the UK and Germany, focussing on the relationships between and influences of the key figures involved (museum directors, architects and local/regional government officials) against the context of the different historical developments of museums, cultural policy priorities and management styles in each country. Susannah's teaching combines these interests and her wider interest in issues of representing difficult histories (in particular in Germany). She is currently developing a new research project examining the representations of forced migration in museums, focussing in particular on the post World War II expulsions of Germans from east of the Oder-Neisse line (the post-war border between Germany and Poland).

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Bariş Ülker received his PhD from the Central European University, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology in July 2012. His dissertation examines the genealogy of "ethnic entrepreneurship" in Berlin. As a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the University of Vienna since September 2012, he compares the ways of re-imagining migrants through urban re-structuring in Berlin and Essen.

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## MeLa\* - European Museums in an age of migrations

### **Research Fields:**

#### **RF01: Museums & Identity in History and Contemporaneity**

examines the historical and contemporary relationships between museums, places and identities in Europe and the effects of migrations on museum practices.

#### **RF02: Cultural Memory, Migrating Modernity and Museum Practices**

transforms the question of memory into an unfolding cultural and historical problematic, in order to promote new critical and practical perspectives.

#### **RF03: Network of Museums, Libraries and Public Cultural Institutions**

investigates coordination strategies between museums, libraries and public cultural institutions in relation to European cultural and scientific heritage, migration and integration.

#### **RF04: Curatorial and Artistic Research**

explores the work of artists and curators on and with issues of migration, as well as the role of museums and galleries exhibiting this work and disseminating knowledge.

#### **RF05: Exhibition Design, Technology of Representation and Experimental Actions**

investigates and experiments innovative communication tools, ICT potentialities, user centred approaches, and the role of architecture and design for the contemporary museum.

#### **RF06: Envisioning 21st Century Museums**

fosters theoretical, methodological and operative contributions to the interpretation of diversities and commonalities within European cultural heritage, and proposes enhanced practices for the mission and design of museums in the contemporary multicultural society.

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## “PLACING” EUROPE IN THE MUSEUM

PEOPLE(S), PLACES, IDENTITIES

This book represents the proceedings of the international conference “Placing” Europe in the Museum: people(s), places, identities, held at Newcastle University in September 2012. This was the first in a series of events intended to complement and inform research within the context of the EC-funded project *MeLa-European Museums in an Age of Migrations*. The papers relate to Research Field 1 of the MeLa project. This Research Field focuses on Museums and Identity in History and today, and will develop policy-relevant arguments concerning the cultural significance of place within museum representations for questions of contemporary European identities and notions of citizenship.

*With contributions by: Christopher Whitehead, Rhiannon Mason, Susannah Eckersley, Katherine Lloyd, Tomasz Maślanka, Michał Łuczewski, Christine Cadot, Roxana Adina Huma, Elisabeth Tietmeyer, Barış Ülker, Kylea Little, Francesca Lanz, Michelle Moore, Sonja Kmec.*

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ICCHS, Newcastle University.

**COVER IMAGE** — The National Museum of Denmark. Photo by Christopher Whitehead, 2012.

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MeLa-European Museums in an age of migrations



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