



ICCFM

**EMPOWERING
THE VISITOR: PROCESS,
PROGRESS, PROTEST**

**RESPONSABILISER
LE VISITEUR : PROCESSUS,
PROGRÈS, CONTESTATION**

**EMPODERAR
AL VISITANTE: PROCESO,
PROGRESO, PROTESTA**

Tunis
1-3 November 2012

ISS 41





ICOM International Committee for Museology
34th ICOFOM Annual Symposium
Comité international pour la muséologie de l'ICOM
34^{ème} Symposium annuel de l'ICOFOM
Comité internacional para la museología del ICOM
34^o Simposio anual del ICOFOM

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ICOFOM Study Series – ISS 41

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Cover by Hilarie Cutler, from the title page of *Natur und Materialien Kammern, Ost Indianische Send-Schreiben*, in the volumes *Museum Museorum*, by Michael Bernhard Valentini, Frankfurt am Mayn, 1714.

Imprimé à Tunis par ICOM Tunisie
et l'Institut National du Patrimoine

Avec le soutien de l'Agence de Mise en Valeur
du Patrimoine et de Promotion Culturelle



© International Committee for Museology of the International Council of Museums
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Comité international pour la muséologie du Conseil International des Musées (ICOM/UNESCO)

Comité internacional para la museología del Consejo Internacional de Museos
(ICOM/UNESCO)

1, rue Miollis, 75015 Paris, France

October 2012

ISBN 978-92-9012-406-1 (print version)

ISBN 978-92-9012-405-4 (on CD Rom)

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In memoriam Marc Maure 1946 - 2012

Le décès de Marc Maure est une perte cruelle pour l'ICOFOM, dont il était un membre important. Né en France, où il fit ses études, il suivit, en 1971, les cours de muséologie de Georges Henri Rivière, alors qu'il étudiait l'histoire de l'art et l'archéologie à la Sorbonne, et préparait son doctorat. À la suite de son mariage avec Mette Myhre, il s'est installé en Norvège où il a poursuivi sa carrière dans l'action culturelle et le développement des musées. La photo ci-dessus fut prise au cours d'une sortie dans la campagne norvégienne. Il laisse derrière lui sa femme, Mette, et son fils, Vincent.

Il voua sa carrière au développement de la muséologie et fut un membre actif du Bureau d'ICOFOM, avec des articles publiés dans les ISS ainsi que dans des journaux muséologiques. Ses intérêts se portaient sur les musées d'histoire locale, les écomusées et la nouvelle muséologie. À ce titre, à partir de 1983, il participa à la création du MINOM (Mouvement international pour la nouvelle muséologie) et à ses premières années d'activité. Il fit aussi partie du comité de rédaction de la revue Nordisk Museologi, créée en 1993 par son ami, le regretté John Aage Gjestrum, avec Per-Uno Ågren pour la Suède et Ole Strandgaard pour le Danemark.

Marc fut membre de l'ICOM pendant des décennies : président du comité national norvégien, il a fortement contribué à l'organisation et au succès de la Conférence Générale de l'ICOM à Stavanger, en Norvège, en 1995.

Son travail était le fruit de ses convictions personnelles : il était actif dans la création des musées participatifs, et dans la défense des droits l'homme – par exemple en Russie où il fut chaleureusement accueilli. Sa dernière réalisation fut une exposition sur les Goulags de l'Union Soviétique qu'il a conçue, réalisée et publiée en 2009-2011 pendant sa longue lutte contre son cancer du pancréas. Il nous manquera toujours.

In memoriam Marc Maure 1946 – 2012

We are sorry to report the loss of Marc Maure, an important member of ICOFOM. Born and educated in France, he studied museology with Georges Henri Rivière in 1971 while finishing his PhD in history of art at the Sorbonne. Moving to Norway following his marriage to Mette Myhre, he continued his career in cultural action and museum development. The picture above was taken during an outing in the Norwegian countryside. He is survived by his wife Mette and his son Vincent.

His career was devoted to furthering museology and he was an active ICOFOM supporter, as member of the Board and contributor of articles published in ISS and in museology journals. He was best known for his work with ecomuseums and local history museums. Starting in 1983, he took part in founding MINOM (the International movement for new museology) and its first years of activity. He was also member of the editorial board of Nordisk Museologi, founded in 1993 by his friend the late John Aage Gjestrum, with Per-Uno Ågren representing Sweden and Ole Strandgaard representing Denmark.

Marc was a longtime member of ICOM: Chairman of the Norwegian National Committee for ICOM, he was instrumental in the organization and success of the General Conference of ICOM in Stavanger, Norway, in 1995.

His work was driven by personal convictions: he was active in creating participatory museums, and in furthering human rights – an example was in Russia where he was often a welcome visitor. His last project was on Soviet Gulags, an exhibition which he designed, launched and published in 2009-2011 during his long fight with pancreatic cancer. We will always miss him.

In memoriam Marc Maure 1946 – 2012

El deceso de Marc Maure, miembro importante del ICOFOM, es una pérdida cruel para sus colegas. Nació en Francia donde completó sus estudios, en 1971 siguió el curso de Museología de Georges Riviere, mientras estudiaba historia del arte y arqueología en la Sorbona y preparaba su doctorado. Después de su casamiento con Mette Myhre, se mudó a Noruega donde llevó a cabo una intensa actividad en el desarrollo de los museos y en la acción cultural. La foto que va mas abajo fue tomada en el transcurso de una salida a la campaña noruega. Lo sobreviven su esposa Mette y su hijo Vincent.

Dedicó su carrera al desarrollo de la museología, miembro activo del Comité Directivo del ICOFOM, publicó numerosos artículos tanto en los ISS, como en revistas especializadas. Puso un interés especial en los museos que rescatan la historia local, los Ecomuseos y la Nueva Museología. Esa opción se puso de manifiesto a partir de 1983 cuando participa en la creación y primeros años de actividad del MINOM (Movimiento Internacional por la Nueva Museología). En esa misma línea de acción fue miembro del Comité Editorial de la Revista Nordisk Museologi, creada por su amigo, el lamentado John Aage Gjestrum, con Per-Uno Ågren por Suecia y Ole Strandgaard por Dinamarca.

Por mucho tiempo miembro del ICOM, Marc fue presidente del Comité Nacional noruego, y su participación fue decisiva en la organización y éxito de la Conferencia General del ICOM en Stavanger, Noruega en 1995.

Su trabajo fue el fruto de sus convicciones personales, y por eso fue activo en la creación de museos participativos y en la defensa de los derechos humanos, podemos dar como ejemplo su labor en Rusia donde fue calurosamente recibido. Su último proyecto fue una exposición sobre los Gulags de la Unión Soviética que concibió, realizó y publicó en el período que fue del 2009 al 2011, mientras enfrentaba con valentía su cáncer de páncreas. Lo extrañaremos por siempre.

AVANT-PROPOS

Doit-on considérer le sujet de réflexion proposé pour le n° 41 de ses ICOFOM Study Series, à l'occasion de notre symposium annuel, comme un dépassement du concept du musée que nous connaissons ou est-il un « retour aux sources » permettant de retrouver la problématique des origines ? Sans doute est-il loin de la problématique des cabinets de curiosités et des premiers musées, si l'on se souvient que ces derniers étaient simplement entr'ouverts à des intimes de son directeur ou sur une recommandation d'un de ses amis. Par contre, le premier signal de prise de pouvoir et de responsabilisation du peuple est bien celui qui a été donné en 1793, lorsqu'on a ouvert les portes du Palais du Louvre afin que le peuple s'éduque librement au contact des œuvres d'art, ou, en 1794, lorsqu'on décida d'installer des machines dans l'abbaye désaffectée de Saint-Martin-des-Champs afin que le meilleur des connaissances techniques soit transmis aux ouvriers de l'industrie naissante. Faire que ce qui était la propriété de quelques uns devint la propriété de tous – une propriété au moins morale, si elle n'était légale. Mais, pendant des décennies, qu'il fut d'origine archéologique, de fabrication préindustrielle ou œuvre d'art extraite de palais privés, l'évolution se fit au profit de l'objet et non pas de l'être humain, cette primauté pouvant même aboutir à la sacralisation de cet objet – au détriment de la connaissance de son contenu. Il a fallu attendre près de deux siècles pour que ce parti pris humaniste, non seulement fût confirmé mais commençât à être pris à la lettre.

C'est en effet autour de 1970 que nombre de musées, en Occident, ont tenté de dépasser ce matérialisme et de revenir à l'être humain. Ils le firent d'abord surtout autour de concepts identitaires, ce qui facilitait la connivence. Sont alors apparus les premiers *musées communautaires*, dans les pays à culture anglo-saxonne, et les *écomusées*, dans les pays à culture latine. Et non seulement ces musées d'un modèle particulier se sont mis à renforcer la réalité humaine comme objectif de la collecte et de l'exposition (c'était déjà l'objectif des musées d'anthropologie) mais, la population chez laquelle se trouvaient implantées ces nouvelles structures étant non seulement l'objet mais aussi l'acteur et le public, la question de l'*empowerment*, de la *responsabilisation* était pour eux résolue par définition. Si cette question se posait encore, ce ne pouvait donc être que pour les musées traditionnels.

Toute la difficulté pour ces musées (et pour ceux qui doivent en parler) est alors de changer complètement de registre, en transformant en un moyen ce qui était une réalité vivante, une pratique : le pouvoir de se muséifier soi-même et de gérer cette muséification par la collecte, la conservation, l'exposition, l'explication et la communication. Une condition première est de se souvenir que la responsabilisation par le public peut et devrait se manifester à toutes les étapes. Pour cela, il faut des financements qui ne se limitent pas à la mise en place d'un système, humain et technique, de surveillance, mais visent comme première étape à la création de tout un dispositif de formation par ateliers - où l'on explique, où l'on touche, où l'on manipule, où l'on démonte et l'on remonte, où l'on dessine, où l'on sculpte et où l'on peint, où l'on copie et recopie... des objets en tous genres de même nature que ceux, patrimoniaux, que l'on trouve exposés dans les galeries du musée. Pour atteindre cet objectif, interactif, il faut aussi de l'abnégation, car il n'est pas facile pour des responsables de s'avouer qu'ils vont se déposséder du pouvoir qu'ils ont sur les activités du musée. Dans le cas d'un musée communautaire ou d'un écomusée, cette étape peut être superflue puisque le public, baignant dans son patrimoine, a par définition toute

autorité sur lui. C'est par la suite que le conflit peut naître¹, dès lors qu'apparaît une concurrence entre les différents détenteurs de pouvoir – ou ceux qui prétendent à ce partage - : les administrateurs parce qu'ils sont les financeurs; les scientifiques, parce que ce sont eux qui gèrent la matière et sont responsables de son utilisation ; les usagers parce qu'ils sont la matière elle-même. Mais, en général, un consensus s'installe entre les trois parties, conduisant à un partage de responsabilités : afin de faciliter la compréhension du contenu du musée, les scientifiques se mettent au service du peuple, en même temps visiteurs.

Au regard du sujet proposé, ce numéro **41** aura été particulièrement significatif de la distorsion entre les initiatives les plus engagées dans l'action sociale et la routine de ceux qui, par manque de moyens, ou par manque de volonté politique de leurs autorités de tutelle, continuent à privilégier l'objet par rapport à l'être humain. C'est pourquoi la mise en avant de ce qui est une innovation d'application exceptionnelle a posé un immense problème à tous ceux qui en découvriraient jusqu'à l'existence et auxquels il aurait été bien difficile de donner des exemples réels dans leur propre pays. Les uns de traiter de la motivation des visiteurs, les autres de la manière de les attirer, d'autres de mesurer la fréquentation, et encore d'autres les influences de la numérisation et du devenir du cybermusée – tous sujets intéressants en soi, mais qui n'ont que peu de rapport avec la question posée. C'est ce décalage entre le sujet et les réponses, qui nous a conduit à retenir, beaucoup plus que de coutume, de nombreux textes qui auraient dû, d'emblée, être rejetés.

Cependant, une fois de plus, nous n'avons pas seulement rencontré un problème de culture, mais aussi un problème de langue. Toute publication internationale souffre d'être l'héritière de la Tour de Babel. Il en est de celles d'Icofom comme des autres, mais nous appartenons certainement à une catégorie extrême, ne choisissant pas nos contributeurs en fonction de la langue qu'ils peuvent écrire, mais les voyant venir vers nous, librement, du monde entier. Le résultat : l'ICOM a beau reconnaître officiellement trois langues, ceux qui, par naissance ou par éducation, parlent et écrivent couramment l'anglais, l'espagnol ou le français, sont loin d'être les plus nombreux parmi nos membres et, donc, nos auteurs. Il en résulte pour chacun de grosses difficultés pour être lu et compris par les autres ou pour lire et comprendre les autres. En cela, le système de Google n'a rien arrangé, qui laisse croire aux uns et aux autres que ce que l'on obtient avec son aide permettra d'être compris. Il peut aider à traduire éventuellement une expression de deux ou trois mots, mais s'agissant d'une phrase, il ne pourra entrer dans le génie de la langue et assembler des mots dont, le plus souvent, le sens n'existe que dans la polysémie. Que chacun imagine la torture des membres du comité de lecture lorsqu'il doit comprendre pour le juger et donner à lire à d'autres des textes en langage *volapuk*, transcrit en dialecte *charabia*. Il est aussi triste de ne pouvoir comprendre que de pouvoir être compris. Et triste aussi aux membres de ce comité de passer un temps énorme à essayer de faire en sorte que tous les textes soient à peu près compréhensibles. Mais y a-t-il une solution ?

André DESVALLÉES

Président du Comité d'Évaluation
Conservateur honoraire des Musées de France

¹ Très bien mis en lumière par Serge Chaumier : *Des musées en quête d'identité*, Paris L'Harmattan, 2003.

FOREWORD

Should we look at the theme of ICOFOM Study Series No. 41, published at the occasion of our annual symposium, as moving beyond our understanding of museums as we know them, or does it go “back to basics”, probing the issues that lie at the origin of museums? Undoubtedly the museum today is far from the curiosity cabinets and the first museums of old, if we remember that these were only opened to visitors known personally by the director, to being recommended by one of his friends. The first sign that people were gaining empowerment was when in 1793 the doors of the Palais du Louvre were opened so that people could become educated by contact with the works of art without restrictions, or in 1794, when it was first decided to set up machines in the abandoned Abbey of Saint Martin des Champs so that workers of the budding industries could improve their knowledge of technology. What was owned by a few was converted into something owed my all – at least moral ownership, even if it was not official. During decades, whether the objects were archaeological, pre-industrial products, or works art from private palaces, museum work always evolved in favor of the object itself, and not the human being. This primacy could even lead to making the object sacred – to the detriment of knowledge about its content. We had to wait almost two centuries for a humanist bias not only to be confirmed, but was also taken literally.

It was only around 1970 that a few museums in the West tried to reach beyond this materialistic approach and return to the human being. This first began when museums addressed the concept of identity, which made the process easier. The first *community museums* were founded in countries of Anglo-Saxon culture, and *ecomuseums* in countries of Latin culture. No only were these museums founded on a specific model, they tried to make the substance of human reality their criteria for collecting and display (already the aim of anthropological museums) but the populations of the territory where these new structures were established were not only their object, they were also the actors and the public. The issue of *empowerment* was already solved quite simply by defining the museum itself. Thus if the question of visitor empowerment is still asked, it can be only for traditional museums.

The difficulty for ecomuseums and community museums (and for those who must talk about them) is to turn ideas into reality, and make a structure for cultural action out of what was real life, and to establish a practice that is, the power to musealize itself and to manage this musealization: to collect, to preserve, to display, to communicate and to be explain. A first condition to see that empowerment by the public can and should be recognized at every stage of development. For this, finances are needed that are not just limited to putting in place a system of guardianship, both human and technical, but also to set up training through workshops – where people can explain, where they can touch or manipulate, where they can take apart and put together again, draw our sculpt or paint, where they can copy and copy again... all sorts of objects of every type, just like those objects of cultural heritage which are found on display in major museums and galleries.

To reach this first interactive stage, abnegation is needed too because it is not easy for people in charge to accept that they will lose their power over the museum. In the case of a community museum or an ecomuseum this stage can appear superfluous because the public is immersed in its heritage and has authority over it. Conflicts can arise after this stage when there is competition among different holders of power – or among those who pretend they are sharing it¹: administrators because they manage the

¹ Serge Chaumier made an excellent analysis of this conflict in: *Des musées en quête d'identité*, Paris L'Harmattan, 2003.

money; scientists because they manage the material and are responsible for its use; the users because they are the population at the origin of the museum and they are the material itself. In general there is a consensus between the three parts, leading to sharing responsibility: scientists are at the service of the population who are also the visitors, to make the content understood.

Considering the subject of this symposium, ISS 41 will be particularly significant for revealing the gap between the initiatives that are most committed to social action, and those which – for lack of resources or for lack of political will on the part of the governing authorities, continue to favor the same routine and objects over human beings: this is why placing in the forefront an innovative approach that is an exception was a very big challenge for those who were just discovering its existence and for whom it would be extremely difficult to give examples from their own country. Some authors focused on the motivation of visitors, others on the way to attract them, others measured attendance, and others the influence of digitalization and the future of cyber museums – all interesting subjects in themselves, but with little relation to the question that has been asked. It was this gap between the subject and the replies which led us to retain, far more than we usually do, many texts which should have been immediately rejected as irrelevant to the topic.

However, once more, we not only have a problem of culture, but also of language. Every international publication suffers from inheriting the Tower of Babel. It is the same for ICOFOM as for the others, but we probably belong to an extreme category, not choosing our contributors according to the language in which they are able to write, but who come to us freely from all over the world. The result is that ICOM recognizes three official languages, and those who, by birth or by education, write and speak fluently English, Spanish or French are far from the majority of our members, and thus of our authors. The result is that for each person it is enormously difficult to be read and understood by others, or to read and understand the others. With that Google's automatic translation system has not been of any help, as it lets some people believe that it is going to help them be understood. Web translations can be of precious help for words and expressions of two or three words, but when a whole sentence is involved they cannot enter into the spirit of the language and put together words which only have meaning when used in combinations. We should each imagine the torture of the review committee when in order to judge the relevancy of a text and pass it on to others they must understand papers in *volapuk*, that have been transcribed into *charabia*. It is just as sad not to understand as it is not to be understood. It is also sad that the committee members must spend a huge amount of time to try to make the texts more or less understandable. But is there a solution?

André Desvallées

Chairman of the Editorial Committee

Honorary Curator General of the Museums of France

PREFACIO

¿Debemos considerar el tema de reflexión propuesto para el número 41 de ICOFOM Study Series, como un intento de ir más allá del concepto de museo tal como lo conocemos, o es una “vuelta a las bases” que permite repensar una problemática que está presente en el mismo origen de los museos? Sin duda está lejos de la problemática de los Gabinetes de Curiosidades y de los primeros museos, si damos por hecho que esos primeros intentos estaban sólo abiertos a los íntimos de su director o bajo recomendación para sus amigos. Por el contrario, el primer signo de que la gente estaba tomando poder fue en 1793 cuando se abrieron las puertas del Palacio del Louvre a fin de que la población se eduque en contacto con las obras de arte o en 1794 cuando se decidió por primera vez instalar máquinas en la desafectada abadía de Saint-Martin-des-Champs, para que los trabajadores de las nascentes industrias pudieran mejorar su conocimiento sobre tecnología. Lo que fue propiedad de unos pocos se convirtió en propiedad de muchos, una propiedad, si no legal, al menos moral. Durante décadas, así los objetos fueran arqueológicos, productos pre-industriales, u obras de arte de palacios privados, el trabajo en el museo siempre priorizaba el objeto en sí mismo y no al ser humano.

Más aún, esa primacía nos conducía a sacralizar el objeto, en detrimento del conocimiento de su contenido. Tuvimos que esperar más de dos siglos para que una inclinación humanista sea no sólo tenida en cuenta si no que comenzara a ser tomada al pie de la letra.

Es en efecto alrededor de 1970 cuando numerosos museos en Occidente, intentaron superar su materialismo y hacerse más humanos. Esto ocurre sobre todo cuando se reafirman conceptos identitarios, lo que facilita el proceso. Aparecen los primeros museos comunitarios en los países anglosajones, y los ecomuseos en los países de cultura latina. Y no es el caso solamente de un modelo particular de museo pensado para reforzar la realidad humana como objetivo de la colecta y de la exposición (que sería el objetivo de los museos de antropología) se aplica también a la población donde se insertan estas nuevas estructuras museales donde el público no es sólo objetivo si no más bien protagonista y en donde la cuestión del empoderamiento está resuelta por definición. Entonces, el interrogante sobre el empoderamiento de los visitantes se aplicaría sólo a los museos tradicionales.

La dificultad para esos museos (y para los que tenemos que hablar de ellos) es que deben cambiar completamente el registro, transformar en un medio lo que es una realidad viva, una práctica: poder musealizarse a sí mismos y gestionar esa musealización a fin de coleccionar, conservar, exponer, explicar y comunicar. Una condición principal es recordar que el empoderamiento del público debe poder manifestarse en todas las etapas. Para esto, el financiamiento debe ser usado no sólo para organizar sistemas de vigilancia, tanto humana como técnica, si no más bien aplicarse a todo un dispositivo de organización de talleres participativos - donde se explica, se toca, se manipula, se monta y se desmonta, se diseña, se esculpe, se pinta, donde se copia y se vuelven a copiar... objetos de todos los géneros, de la misma naturaleza de aquellos, patrimoniales, que encontramos expuestos en las salas de los museos. Para lograr este objetivo interactivo, hace falta también abnegación, porque no es fácil para los responsables despojarse del poder que tienen sobre las diferentes acciones de los museos. Para el caso de los museos comunitarios o ecomuseos esta etapa puede parecer superflua porque la población está imbuida de su patrimonio y por definición tiene autoridad sobre él. El conflicto puede nacer¹ cuando concurren diferentes detentores de poder – o aquellos que pretenden

¹ Muy bien explicado por Serge Chaumier: *Des musées en quête d'identité*, Paris L'Harmattan, 2003.

compartirlo: los administradores porque financian, los investigadores porque son los que manejan el asunto y son responsables de su utilización, los usuarios, porque ellos mismos constituyen el asunto. Aunque en general, se instala un consenso entre estas tres partes, lo que conduce a compartir responsabilidades: a fin de facilitar la comprensión de los contenidos del museo, los científicos se ponen al servicio de las gentes, que son al mismo tiempo visitantes.

Al considerar el tema de este simposio, ISS 41 será particularmente significativo para revelar la brecha entre las iniciativas más comprometidas con la acción social, y las rutinas de aquellos que, por falta de recursos o por falta de voluntad política de parte de las autoridades gubernamentales, continúan privilegiando los objetos sobre los seres humanos. Esto es porque poner en primer plano aquello que constituye una innovación de carácter excepcional, instala un inmenso problema para todos aquellos que han descubierto recientemente estos abordajes y también para aquellos a quienes les resulta muy difícil dar ejemplos reales en sus propios países. Así algunos autores se han enfocado en la motivación de los visitantes, otros en la forma de atraerlos, otros sobre los métodos para medir la frecuentación y aun otros la influencia de la digitalización en el desarrollo de los cibermuseos; todos análisis interesantes en sí mismos, pero que tienen poca relación con la cuestión propuesta. Este desfase entre el tema propuesto y los textos presentados, es lo que nos ha impulsado a aceptar, con más frecuencia que lo acostumbrado, textos que en otra oportunidad hubieran sido rechazados como irrelevantes al tópico.

Una vez más encontramos no solamente un problema de cultura, también uno de lengua. Toda publicación internacional sufre la herencia de la *Torre de Babel*. Esta situación se produce tanto en las publicaciones de ICOFOM, como en otras. Pero en nuestro caso esta situación se da con características especiales, porque nosotros no elegimos nuestros contribuyentes de acuerdo al idioma en que ellos pueden escribir, ellos hacen sus aportes libremente desde cualquier lugar del mundo. El resultado: como el ICOM reconoce tres idiomas oficiales, aquellos que, por nacimiento o educación, escriben y hablan fluentemente en inglés, francés o español son de lejos los más numerosos entre nuestro miembros, y por lo tanto de nuestros autores.

El resultado es que para cada persona es terriblemente difícil ser leído y comprendido por otros, o leer y entender a los otros. El sistema de traducción automático de Google no ha sido de ninguna ayuda, porque conduce a que algunos creen que van a ser mejor entendidos. Las traducciones en la web pueden ser una ayuda preciosa para palabras o frases cortas, pero cuando se trata de oraciones completas es casi imposible captar el espíritu de lo que quiere ser expresado, porque las palabras son polisémicas y sólo tienen sentido en su contexto. Cada uno puede imaginar la tortura del comité de revisión, que deben juzgar la relevancia y dar a leer a otros textos en *volapuk*, que han sido transcritos en *charabia*. Tan triste es no entender como no ser entendido. También es triste que los miembros del comité deban invertir una enorme cantidad de tiempo tratando de lograr que los textos sean más o menos comprensibles. Pero ¿Hay alguna solución?

André DESVALLÉES

Presidente del Comité de Evaluación
Conservador Honorario de Museos de Francia

Visitor empowerment

RATIONALE

Museums are increasingly recognizing that their visitors have needs and wants that are not always being fulfilled. Concomitantly visitors, and non-visitors, are becoming more vocal in expressing their hopes and desires for museums. The topic examines what visitors want and what museums are prepared to give. As well, the topic looks at how museums are fulfilling their visitors' requests and how visitors are pushing museums to respond to their concerns.

This theme can be considered from either the point of view of the visitor or the point of view of the museum. There are three subsections to this topic. The first, process, poses the questions what and how. For example the Louvre hired Daniel Jacobi to examine the signage and found that only French is used on the permanent collections in that august museum, while many visitors do not read or understand French. This topic could probe what led the Louvre to commission this study, the theory of visitor empowerment, and why museums are shifting their priorities and interests towards visitors.

The second part of this topic, process, seeks to study what museums have done to make museums more visitor-friendly. John Falk, in *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience*, gives some nice examples.

Finally some museums are resisting this shift towards visitor empowerment, seeing it as a loss of control, and some frustrated visitors are protesting museums' attitudes. Protest by either the visitor or the museum can have consequences. For example the 1988 Calgary protest of *The Spirit Sings* Glenbow exhibition has resulted in a major reconsideration of how Canadian museums treat First Nations' visitors and artefacts.

January 2012
Ann Davis, President of ICOFOM

Responsabiliser le visiteur

PRÉSENTATION DU SUJET

Les musées sont de plus en plus reconnaissants de ce que leurs visiteurs expriment des manques et des besoins auxquels il n'a pas toujours été répondu. En même temps, les visiteurs et les non-visiteurs tendent à exprimer davantage oralement les espoirs et les souhaits dans ce que le musée peut leur donner. Le sujet que nous proposons vise à étudier ce que les visiteurs veulent et ce que le musée est prêt à donner.

Le sujet regarde aussi comment le musée répond aux demandes des visiteurs et comment les visiteurs poussent les musées à répondre à leurs préoccupations. Ce sujet peut être abordé ou bien depuis le point de vue du visiteur, ou bien depuis celui du musée. Il peut se diviser en trois sous-sections. La première, le processus, pose les questions du quoi et du et du comment. Par exemple, Daniel Jacobi a été conduit à examiner la signalisation du Louvre et à constater que seul le français est utilisé pour les collections permanentes dans cet important musée, alors que de nombreux visiteurs ne lisent ou ne comprennent le français. Ce sujet pourrait approfondir ce qui amène le Louvre à commander une telle étude sur la théorie de la responsabilité du visiteur, et pourquoi les musées sont en train de déplacer leurs priorités et leurs intérêts vers les visiteurs.

La seconde partie de ce sujet, le processus, cherche à étudier ce que le musée a fait pour être rendu plus accueillant au visiteur. Dans *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience*, John Falk donne quelques bons exemples.

Finalement quelques musées résistent à ces changements visant à responsabiliser les visiteurs, voyant cela comme une perte de contrôle, et quelques visiteurs frustrés s'insurgent contre ces attitudes des musées. Selon que la contestation provienne du visiteur ou du musée peut avoir des conséquences. Par exemple, la contestation qui eut lieu à Calgary, en 1988, à propos de l'exposition *The Spirit Sings* au Glenbow Museum a entraîné une très grande révision de la manière dont les musées canadiens traitent les visiteurs des Premières Nations et les expôts.

Janvier 2012

Ann Davis, Présidente de l'ICOFOM

Empoderar al visitante

PRESENTACIÓN DEL TEMA

Los museos están reconociendo cada vez más que sus visitantes tienen necesidades y deseos que no siempre han sido respondidos. Al mismo tiempo los visitantes y no visitantes tienden a expresar oralmente sus esperanzas y deseos de lo que los museos pueden proporcionarles. El tema que proponemos discutir versa sobre lo que los visitantes desean y lo que los museos están preparados para ofrecer.

También contempla como los museos responden a las demandas de los visitantes y como los visitantes requieren de los museos que respondan a sus preocupaciones. Este tema puede ser abordado o bien desde el punto de vista del visitante, o bien desde el de los museos. El tema ha sido dividido en tres secciones. El primero, proceso, pone la cuestión en qué y cómo. Por ejemplo Daniel Jacobi fue contratado por el Louvre para examinar la señalización y constató que sólo el idioma francés es utilizado para las exposiciones permanentes en ese importante museo, aunque numerosos visitantes no leen o no comprenden francés. Este tópico puede profundizar lo que lleva al Louvre a comisionar ese estudio sobre la teoría del empoderamiento del visitante, y porqué los museos han desplazado su interés hacia los visitantes.

La segunda parte de este tema, proceso, busca estudiar qué es lo que los museos han hecho para ser más amigables. John Falk en *Identidad y la experiencia del visitante del museo*, nos propone interesantes ejemplos.

Finalmente algunos museos se resisten a esos cambios tendientes a empoderar al visitante, porque lo perciben como una pérdida de control y algunos visitantes, frustrados, reaccionan ante esas actitudes de los museos. Según la reacción provenga del visitante o del museo la situación tendrá diferentes consecuencias. Por ejemplo la protesta que tuvo lugar en Calgary en el museo Glenbow con motivo de la exposición *El espíritu canta* resultó en una reconsideración sobre la forma en que los museos canadienses tratan a los visitantes de las Primeras Naciones.

Enero 2012

Ann Davis, Presidente del ICOFOM

EMPOWERING THE VISITOR: PROCESS, PROGRESS, PROTEST

Chang Wan-Chen

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There exists a body of literature that discusses the symbolic and real characteristics of museums. Since the 1970s, the value attached to museums and the appearance of copious research on their visitors have shown that we now have different perceptions of and attitudes towards what is known as the “museum visitor”. Already museums and their visitors occupy different positions on the scale. Visitors, sitting at the opposite end from the museum, have begun to receive both an encouragement and an invitation to express their ideas and needs, and this defines our use of what we mean by the verb, “to empower.”

The term “empower” comes from the Latin verb ‘potere’ which means ‘to be able’. The prefix ‘em’ means ‘cause to be or provide with’. The Oxford English Dictionary defines to empower as to give someone the authority or power to do something. Some authors, however, do not approve of such a definition as bestowing power upon or making powerful, but believe that we must move away from correlations between empowerment and power *per se*. They consider that empowerment is not power itself, but a process by which the latter is only bestowed as an end or for a purpose. Others argue that power has the capacity not only to impose one’s will, but also to set the terms of agreement.

While “empower” is not easily defined, it has been used extensively in many different fields. The long-term link between this terminology and minority ethnic groups, education, social work and management studies has also influenced museums’ use of the concept of empowerment as referring to the connection between museums and society/communities or museum management. Although empowerment can be viewed as a continuum stretching from an individual to a collective empowerment (whether organizational or community based), we will address here the individual perspective, as our main interest lies in the relationship between the visitor and the museum.

Since the 1980s, several studies have used the term “empowered visitor” to describe those who are likely to take an active role in telling museums what they want and need. To understand the visitor’s thinking in this regard, existing research has pointed out the need for further development in order to understand both the visitors and the theories and techniques of collecting the relevant data. For the role of visitors to be a significant part of the museum world, professional museum personnel need to create situations in which visitors may express themselves in a way that reflect their own attitudes – a process far more structured than that of anecdote gathering.

If we perceive empowerment as the use of certain techniques to transform those without power into positions of equality with those already having power, we must also consider to what the word “power” refers in this context. We believe that the power of visitors lies not only in our making demands on them in relation to the aspect of the services that they provide, but also in the sensory experiences they enjoy when they visit museums and in the learning aspects of self-growth. Perhaps it is the latter that is most important. Empowerment, therefore, represents both a process and an outcome involving visitors’ ability to recognize their value and to meet self-determined goals by linking them with museum resources, helping them gain self-knowledge and

Wan-Chen Chang

Empowering the visitor: process, progress, protest

completing certain tasks. How should we define a positive visitor experience? How, moreover, can we recognize that visitors also have the power and the right to construct meaning and that they can explain the processes involved? Can we more clearly understand, respect, and respond to visitors' expectations of museums? These fundamental questions have not yet been satisfactorily answered and are worthy of our continued diligence. At the same time, we need to understand that the concept of power should not to be seen as a one-dimensional term; it is not our purpose to take power away from museums. Rather, the goal of empowering visitors is to develop visitors' own power while respecting museums for what they are.

RESPONSABILISER LE VISITEUR : PROCESSUS, PROGRÈS, CONTESTATION

Chang Wan-Chen

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Il existe un corps de littérature qui s'interroge sur le caractère symbolique ou réel des musées. Depuis les années 70, la valeur attachée aux musées et l'apparition de nombreuses recherches sur leurs visiteurs ont montré que nous percevons maintenant différemment celui qui est connu comme « visiteur de musée » et avons différentes attitudes à son égard. Les musées et leurs visiteurs occuperaient différentes positions sur le fléau d'une balance. Les visiteurs, qui seraient situés à l'extrémité opposée à celle du musée, ont commencé à être encouragés et invités à avancer pour exprimer leurs idées et leurs besoins, et cela définit l'usage que nous faisons du verbe « responsabiliser ».

En anglais, le terme « empower » vient du verbe latin « potere » qui signifie « pouvoir, être capable de ». Le préfixe « em » signifie « permettre de devenir » ou « fournir quelque chose ». Le dictionnaire anglais d'Oxford définit « to empower » comme accorder à quelqu'un l'autorisation ou le pouvoir de faire quelque chose. Certains auteurs, cependant, ne sont pas d'accord sur une telle définition d'attribuer le pouvoir à quelqu'un ou de le rendre puissant. Ils pensent que nous devons éviter des corrélations entre la responsabilisation et le pouvoir lui-même. Ils considèrent que la responsabilisation n'est pas le pouvoir lui-même, mais un processus au travers duquel ce dernier est accordé uniquement comme une finalité ou comme un objectif. Les autres induisent que le pouvoir a non seulement la capacité d'imposer la volonté de quelqu'un, mais également de fixer les modalités de l'accord. C'est ce qui explique que, en français, on traduit « empower » par « responsabiliser » plutôt que par « habiliter ».

Bien que le terme « responsabiliser » se définisse difficilement, il a été largement employé dans les différents domaines. Le lien durable entre ce terme et les groupes ethniques de minorités, l'éducation, le travail social et les études de gestion a également influencé l'application du concept de responsabilisation par le musée en tant que rapport entre les musées et la société/communauté ou la gestion du musée. Bien que la responsabilisation puisse être considérée comme un continuum qui s'étend de la responsabilité d'un individu à celle d'une collectivité (que cette dernière soit fondée sur une organisation ou sur une communauté), c'est sous l'angle individuel que nous devons aborder ici la question dans la mesure où notre intérêt principal réside dans la relation entre le visiteur et le musée.

Depuis les années 70, plusieurs études ont employé l'expression « visiteur responsable » ou « visiteur responsabilisé » pour qualifier ceux qui sont susceptibles de prendre un rôle actif en disant aux musées ce qu'ils veulent et ce dont ils ont besoin. Pour comprendre ce que le visiteur pense à cet égard, les recherches existantes ont souligné la nécessité de travailler plus en profondeur afin de comprendre aussi bien les visiteurs que les théories et les techniques de collecte de données pertinentes. Pour que le rôle des visiteurs soit une partie significative du monde des musées, les professionnels de musée doivent créer des situations dans lesquelles les visiteurs puissent s'exprimer eux-mêmes d'une manière qui reflète leur propre attitude – un processus beaucoup plus structuré que celui d'un rassemblement d'anecdotes.

Chang Wan-Chen

Responsabiliser le visiteur: processus, progrès, protestation

Si nous percevons la responsabilisation comme étant le fait d'utiliser certaines techniques pour mettre ceux qui n'ont pas de pouvoir en position d'égalité avec ceux qui en ont, nous devons également considérer à quoi dans ce contexte, se réfère le mot « pouvoir ». Nous croyons que le pouvoir des visiteurs ne réside pas seulement dans les revendications qui peuvent être faites auprès des services fournis par le musée, mais également dans l'appréciation des expériences sensorielles et dans l'apprentissage de l'auto-développement qu'ils font lorsqu'ils visitent les musées. C'est peut-être ce dernier point qui a le plus d'importance. L'acte de responsabiliser traduit donc à la fois un processus et un résultat impliquant l'aptitude des visiteurs à reconnaître leur valeur et à répondre aux objectifs qu'ils ont déterminés eux-mêmes en les rattachant aux ressources du musée, en les aidant à acquérir la connaissance de soi et à achever certaines tâches. Comment devrions-nous définir une expérience positive du visiteur ? Comment, d'ailleurs, pouvons-nous reconnaître que les visiteurs ont également le pouvoir et le droit de construire du sens et qu'ils peuvent expliquer les processus utilisés ? Pouvons-nous plus clairement comprendre et respecter les attentes des visiteurs de musées et leur répondre ? Il n'a pas encore été répondu d'une manière satisfaisante à ces questions fondamentales qui sont dignes de notre attention continue. En même temps, nous devons comprendre que le concept de pouvoir ne devrait pas être vu dans une seule direction, puisque notre propos n'est pas d'enlever le pouvoir au musée. Plutôt, l'objectif de responsabilisation des visiteurs vise à développer leur propre pouvoir tout en respectant les musées pour ce qu'ils sont.

EMPODERAR AL VISITANTE: PROCESO, PROGRESO, PROTESTA

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Existe un cuerpo de literatura que discute las características simbólicas y reales de los museos. Desde 1970 el valor atribuido a los museos y la aparición de numerosas investigaciones sobre sus visitantes, han demostrado que tenemos ahora diferentes percepciones y diferentes actitudes hacia lo que es conocido como “visitante” de museo. Los museos y sus visitantes ocupan diferentes posiciones en dicha escala. Los visitantes, puestos en el extremo opuesto del museo, han comenzado a recibir aliento (a ser alentados) y ser invitados a expresar sus ideas y necesidades y esto es lo que define lo que significamos cuando usamos el verbo empoderar.

El término “empoderar” viene del verbo latino ‘potere’ que significa ‘ser capaz de’. El prefijo ‘em’ significa ‘poder ser’ o ‘estar provisto de’. El diccionario inglés Oxford define empoderar como dar a alguien la autoridad o el poder de hacer algo. Algunos autores, sin embargo, no aprueban esa definición de conferir poder a alguien o de hacerlo posible, piensan que debemos apartarnos del correlato entre “empoderamiento” y poder “per se”. Consideran que el “empoderamiento” no es poder por sí mismo, sino un proceso por el cual este último es acordado únicamente con una finalidad o un objetivo (para un propósito). Otros arguyen que el poder tiene la capacidad no sólo de imponer nuestro deseo, si no también de fijar los términos del acuerdo.

Mientras el término “EMPODERAR” no se define fácilmente, ha sido usado extensivamente en muchos diferentes campos.

El vínculo a largo plazo entre esta terminología y grupos étnicos minoritarios, educación, trabajo social y artículos sobre gestión ha de la misma manera influenciado la aplicación del concepto empoderamiento al uso museal como referido a la conexión entre museos y sociedades/comunidades o gestión de museos. Además empoderamiento puede ser percibido como un *continuum* que se extiende de un empoderamiento individual a uno colectivo (basado en lo organizacional o en lo comunitario). Nosotros adherimos aquí a la perspectiva individual porque nuestro interés principal descansa en la relación entre el visitante y el museo.

Desde 1980 numerosos estudios han usado el término “visitantes empoderados” para describir aquellos que son susceptibles de tomar un rol activo al manifestar a los museos lo que desean o necesitan. Para entender el pensamiento del visitante a este respecto, las investigaciones existentes han subrayado la necesidad de desarrollar trabajos en profundidad para comprender tanto a los visitantes como las teorías y técnicas de colecta de datos relevantes y pertinentes. Porque el rol de los visitantes es una parte significativa del mundo de los museos, el personal profesional de los museos necesitan crear situaciones en la que los visitantes puedan expresarse de una manera tal que se reflejen sus propias actitudes en un proceso mucho más estructurado que aquel de recopilar anécdotas.

Si percibimos al empoderamiento como el uso de ciertas técnicas para poner a aquellos sin poder en posición de igualdad con aquellos que lo poseen, debemos también considerar a qué se refiere la palabra poder en ese contexto. Creemos que el poder de los visitantes descansa no sólo en las preguntas que les formulamos en relación a los aspectos de los servicios que les proveemos, sino también alas

Chang Wan-Chen

Empoderar al visitante: proceso, progreso, protesta

experiencias sensoriales que experimentan cuando visitan los museos y en los aspectos cognitivos de crecimiento personal y auto desarrollo. Siendo este último punto el que tiene mayor importancia. Empoderamiento entonces representa al mismo tiempo un proceso y un resultado que implica la actitud de los visitantes para reconocer valores y para satisfacer objetivos determinados por ellos mismos, ligándolos con los recursos del museo, ayudándoles a ganar conocimiento de sí mismos. Alcanzar ciertas metas. ¿Cómo deberíamos definir una experiencia positiva del visitante? ¿Cómo, más aún, podemos reconocer que los visitantes tienen el poder y el derecho de construir significados y que son capaces de explicar los procesos involucrados? ¿Podemos entender claramente, respetar y responder a las expectativas de los visitantes de los museos? Estas preguntas fundamentales no han sido satisfactoriamente respondidas y son merecedoras de nuestra continua atención. Al mismo tiempo necesitamos entender que el concepto de poder no debe ser entendido en términos unidireccionales; porque no es nuestro propósito quitar el poder de los museos. Por sobre todo, nuestro objetivo de empoderamiento de los visitantes tiende a desarrollar su propio poder en lo que respecta a los museos por lo que ellos son.

Chang Wan-Chen

Empoderar al visitante: proceso, progreso, protesta

ÉVOLUTION DES MUSÉES EN TUNISIE : QUELLE PLACE POUR LE VISITEUR ?

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Tunisie

RÉSUMÉ

Depuis la création des premiers musées en Tunisie, le paysage muséal a gagné en nombre et en variété. Ces dernières années les musées tunisiens ont connu des mutations importantes qui ont permis de remettre en question leurs muséographies et de placer le visiteur parmi leurs priorités. Le présent article retrace, dans sa première partie, l'évolution de l'institution muséale en Tunisie et revient sur les principaux tournants qu'elle a connus en matière de muséographie et de médiation. Une deuxième partie présente une réflexion sur le processus d'appropriation du musée par les visiteurs, locaux en particulier, en interrogeant leurs rapports à cette institution.

ABSTRACT

The evolution of museums in Tunisia: what place is there for the visitor?

Ever since the first museums were founded in Tunisia the museum landscape has grown both in number and in diversity. In the last few years Tunisian museums have undergone important transformations which allowed us to question our museum strategies and to put the visitor among our highest priorities. This paper recounts, in the first part, the evolution of the museum institution, and describes the turning points regarding museography and communication. A second part presents thoughts on how the visitor may seize the museum's heritage as his own, in particular the local public, by examining their relation with the institution.

RESUMEN

Evolución de los museos en Túnez: ¿qué lugar para el visitante?

Desde la creación de los primeros museos en Túnez, el paisaje museal ha crecido en número y en diversidad. En estos últimos años los museos tunecinos han experimentado mutaciones importantes que permiten poner en cuestión sus museografías, estrategias museales y el lugar que ocupan sus visitantes en la lista de sus prioridades. Este texto enuncia, en su primera parte, la evolución de la institución museal en Túnez y describe los principales hitos en materia de museografía y mediación. Una segunda parte presenta una reflexión sobre los procesos de apropiación del museo por sus visitantes, particularmente la población local, al interrogarse sobre sus relaciones con la institución.

* * *

Les musées en Tunisie : aperçu historique et principaux tournants

L'histoire muséale tunisienne a commencé au XIX^{ème} siècle avec l'apparition des premières collections privées d'antiquités, constituées par des collectionneurs

Soumaya Gharsallah-Hizem

Évolution des musée en Tunisie: quelle place pour le visiteur?

tunisiens et européens. Plusieurs de ces collections ont servi plus tard à alimenter les premiers musées du pays. Parmi les collectionneurs les plus éminents on cite l'abbé François Bourgade, aumônier de la Chapelle Saint Louis de Carthage. Il avait deux collections, une privée et une autre destinée au futur musée de Carthage¹. Le premier ministre et ministre des finances Mustapha Khaznadar fut, lui aussi, l'un des plus grands collectionneurs de son époque, notamment d'antiquités tunisiennes, une passion qu'il partagea avec son fils Mohamed. Après la chute du ministre Khaznadar, une grande partie de sa collection fut pillée et dispersée. Le réformateur Kheireddine Bacha, qui lui succéda en 1873, en récupéra une partie. Celui-ci fût lui-même un remarquable collectionneur d'antiquités ; il réunit des objets de tout le territoire dans le but d'en faire le premier musée national², mais son exil l'empêcha de concrétiser son projet.

Dés 1875, le musée de Carthage, anciennement appelé le musée « Lavigerie », exposa des objets provenant des fouilles archéologiques menés par les pères blancs. À l'époque les visiteurs avaient la possibilité d'acheter au musée des objets archéologiques. L'actuel musée national du Bardo, ouvert au public en 1888 sous le nom du musée Alaoui en hommage à la monarchie de la Régence, est considéré comme le premier musée institutionnel en Tunisie. Il a été créé par un décret Beylical datant du 7 novembre 1882 et paru dans le journal officiel. Dix ans plus tard, on ouvrit le musée municipal de Sousse. Dans la même région, fut créé le musée archéologique d'Enfidha en 1907 ; installé dans une église construite pour la communauté catholique de la ville, il présente une collection d'objets paléochrétiens. Les objets du musée participèrent donc à la médiatisation de la foi chrétienne. Dans la même année, fut ouvert le musée archéologique de Sfax, au rez-de-chaussée de l'hôtel de ville. Ce choix d'emplacement promut le musée au rang des institutions civiques. Outre les musées archéologiques, on trouve le musée océanographique de Salammbô créé en 1924 et qui dépendait du musée océanographique de Monaco. On a connu également le musée des 4 tirailleurs, aujourd'hui disparu, et qui fut installé dans une salle d'Honneur du Régiment dès 1887.

Après l'indépendance, en 1956, plusieurs petits musées, appelés souvent antiquariums, émergèrent sur les sites archéologiques : à Kerkouane, à Bulla Regia, à Dougga, pour ne citer que quelques exemples. Ces musées furent, pour la plupart, assimilables à des dépôts où l'exposition est réduite à son degré zéro³. À partir des années soixante, on assiste à la création des premiers musées ethnographiques en Tunisie. Dans un climat imprégné de changements sociopolitiques profonds, ces musées tentèrent d'affirmer l'identité nationale en mettant en valeur les arts et les traditions locaux. Le premier musée de cette catégorie, appelé Dar Jallouli, fut ouvert à Sfax en 1965, suivi du musée de Dar Ben Abdallah, créée dans la médina de Tunis en 1967. Installés dans d'anciennes demeures bourgeoises, ils utilisèrent des techniques de présentations empruntées à la muséographie analogique⁴ : dioramas, reconstitutions et intérieurs d'époque. Ils suivirent les exemples des musées classiques d'ethnographie régionale européens. Avec leurs mises en exposition tournées vers le public, ces musées représentent les premiers essais de médiatisation muséale en Tunisie. Ils ont de surcroît servi de modèle à de nombreux musées ethnographiques privés.

La création de musées s'intensifia entre les années 1980 et 1990, en particulier dans les zones côtières. Cette période coïncide en effet avec l'expansion du tourisme balnéaire en Tunisie, d'où la création d'un nombre important de musées sur le littoral. Ces musées sont le plus souvent considérés comme des équipements complémentaires aux hôtels et aux plages, destinés principalement à enrichir l'offre

¹ Bacha, 2005, 46

² Jaïdi, 2001, p. 94

³ Davallon, 1999

⁴ Monpetit, 1996

touristique et en second lieu l'offre culturelle. Cette préférence pour le littoral s'accroît au fil des années au point de provoquer un déséquilibre de répartition territoriale des musées. Certaines régions intérieures sont restées dépourvues d'établissements muséaux, malgré leurs forts potentiels patrimoniaux et culturels. C'est le cas des régions de Sidi Bouzid et de Béja. Dans d'autres régions intérieures, pourtant touristiques, comme Tozeur ou Tataouine, dans le Sud tunisien, ce sont les musées privés qui comblent le vide muséal créé par l'absence de musées publics. Signalons au passage que la majorité des musées privés, échappent à tout contrôle et manquent de rigueur scientifique. Cette situation est aggravée par l'absence de textes législatifs qui organisent l'institution muséale en Tunisie⁵.

Sur le plan institutionnel, les années 1990 ont été marquées par la création de l'Agence de mise en valeur du patrimoine et de promotion culturelle, en 1997. Cet événement montre l'importance accordée désormais à la valeur économique des musées et des sites et monuments historiques. Rattachée au Ministère de la culture, cette Agence à caractère commercial a pour mission de gérer le patrimoine archéologique et historique et de le mettre en valeur. Inspirée par le modèle français de la Réunion des musées nationaux, elle gère les revenus de tous les musées, les sites et les monuments historiques placés sous la tutelle du Ministère de la culture. Ces revenus proviennent principalement des billetteries et des boutiques. Toutefois, les musées, les sites et les monuments historiques sont restés scientifiquement et administrativement rattachés à l'Institut national du patrimoine, qui est une institution scientifique et technique, dépendante du Ministère de la culture. Cette situation, encore en vigueur, pose beaucoup de problèmes. En l'absence de toute autonomie, le fonctionnement des musées, en particulier les plus grands, est entravé par la lourdeur des procédures administratives.

C'est également dans les années 1990 que l'on commença à réfléchir sur la médiatisation des contenus des musées archéologiques, notamment avec la création du musée archéologique du site de Chimtou inauguré en 1997. Celui-ci constitue une expérience muséale exceptionnelle en matière de vulgarisation et de mise en exposition. Sa réalisation a fait l'objet d'une coopération tuniso-allemande. À la même époque fut rénové l'étage du musée de Carthage en proposant une présentation plus didactique. Ces initiatives de médiatisation s'apparentent aux mouvements de démocratisation culturelle, prônant pour l'accessibilité du musée à tous et à la contextualisation de l'objet. Les mutations qu'a connues le musée, notamment dans les pays occidentaux à partir des années quatre vingt, grâce à des mouvements comme la MNES (Muséologie nouvelle et expérimentation sociale) ou le MINOM (Mouvement international pour la muséologie) commencèrent, a priori, à trouver leur chemin en Tunisie.

Quelques années plus tard, en 2000, la salle de Mahdia au musée national du Bardo fut rénovée. Conçue avec le concours de la Direction des Musées de France, cette salle présenta des objets retrouvés dans l'épave d'un navire datant du I^{er} siècle avant J.C. Sa muséographie, démontée en 2009, marqua une nouvelle ère pour les musées tunisiens : pour la première fois, les objets archéologiques étaient exposés en essayant d'appliquer les normes de la conservation préventive⁶ et en usant d'une muséographie d'immersion⁷.

Les années 2000 ont été marquées par les projets de rénovation muséographique de plusieurs musées comme les musées archéologiques de Nabeul, d'Utique et d'El Jem. Le lancement du « Projet de Gestion et de Valorisation du Patrimoine Culturel », à la même époque, constitua un tournant dans l'histoire muséale tunisienne. Financé grâce à un prêt attribué par la banque mondiale, il permit de rénover le musée national du

⁵ Gharsallah-Hizem, 2012 (À Paraître)

⁶ Serafi, 2011, p.197

⁷ Belaeen, 2005

Bardo, le musée archéologique de Sousse et le musée du patrimoine traditionnel de Jerba. Il permet également de créer un centre d'interprétation pour la médina de Kairouan destiné à présenter ses principaux monuments historiques. L'objectif de ce projet est d'augmenter les capacités d'accueil de ces musées et de renforcer leurs potentiels économiques en rénovant les muséographies existantes et en ajoutant des espaces de service destinés à améliorer la qualité de l'accueil. Comme l'explique Denis Lesage, l'un des acteurs de ce projet « Ceci montre à l'évidence qu'au XXI^e siècle, le patrimoine est reconnu comme une composante du développement et que sa mise en valeur en dehors des objectifs culturels, vise des objectifs économiques, de création d'emplois et de revenus⁸. » Aujourd'hui, le musée est considéré comme une unité économique, voire une entreprise⁹, susceptible de contribuer, par le biais du tourisme, au développement économique de la région dans la quelle il se situe¹⁰, puisqu'il doit désormais générer des revenus. Même si les avis concernant ces projets sont mitigés, en particulier pour ce qui concerne la conservation et la médiatisation, les travaux ont permis tout de même d'introduire ces musées dans une nouvelle phase muséographique.

Actuellement, la Tunisie compte 38 musées publics gérés par le Ministère de la culture et 26 musées publics, gérés par d'autres ministères sans compter les projets en cours. On estime à 37 le nombre de musées privés. Cependant, il est difficile d'établir une typologie précise des musées tunisiens, étant donné qu'ils sont, pour la plupart, mixtes. Les musées placés sous la tutelle du Ministère de la culture sont majoritairement archéologiques : environ 55%. Les musées privés sont pour la plupart ethnographiques, environ 45% contre 36% pour les musées publics placés sous la tutelle du Ministère de la culture. Les musées dédiés aux arts islamiques constituent environ 15% des musées publics tunisiens. Et les musées d'histoire contemporaine sont d'environ 7%. Mais ce qui est frappant, quand on observe le paysage muséal tunisien c'est l'absence de musées dédiés aux arts plastiques.

Malgré la variété des musées en Tunisie, l'importance des collections qu'ils détiennent et les nombreux projets de rénovation et de réaménagement muséographique déjà réalisés et en cours, le constat est toujours le même : le musée tunisien reste peu tourné vers le public et la médiation y fait défaut.

La place du visiteur dans les musées tunisiens : processus d'appropriation

Les premiers musées tunisiens ont aujourd'hui plus d'un siècle d'existence. Ces établissements n'ont commencé que depuis peu à s'interroger sur les attentes et les exigences de leurs visiteurs. Plusieurs mesures prises en faveur de ces derniers illustrent cet intérêt, telle la gratuité attribuée aux tunisiens et aux étrangers résidents en Tunisie le premier dimanche de chaque mois et à plusieurs autres catégories de visiteurs tout le long de l'année. Parmi ces mesures on cite aussi la création par l'AMVPPC d'une base de données qui permet de traiter leurs réclamations. Les récentes formations en médiation culturelle attribuée aux nouvelles recrues du musée national du Bardo, montrent également une volonté de s'approcher du public. Cependant, le nombre de visiteurs des musées, des sites et des monuments historiques correspond à peine au tiers des touristes que reçoit la Tunisie. De plus, les fréquentations des Tunisiens sont faibles.

Malgré le faible pourcentage des visiteurs locaux, le musée a toujours suscité la curiosité des Tunisiens comme l'atteste le nom que donnait les tunisois au musée du Bardo au XIX-XX^{ème} siècle ; ils le surnommaient « Dar Laâjaieb » ou la maison des merveilles, ce qui exprime leur fascination et leur étonnement face à ce lieu. Une

⁸ Lesage, 2006, p. 88

⁹ Benhamou, 2003

¹⁰ Desvallees, Mairesse, 2011, p.31

appellation qui détient quelque chose des cabinets de curiosités occidentaux, ancêtres des musées. Aujourd'hui encore, les Tunisiens n'arrivent pas à s'appropriier le musée en tant qu'institution qui les concerne. Comme l'explique Francesca di Muchelli, dans les pays arabes, les musées sont une invention occidentale, ils « ont été créés par les Européens et pour les Européens pendant la période coloniale. De plus, les musées présentaient, et présentent encore en grande partie, le patrimoine local et le plus traditionnel (ethnographique) et le plus ancien (archéologique)¹¹. »

En effet, pour beaucoup de Tunisiens, les musées sont destinés avant tout aux touristes. Pourtant, ils présentent principalement le patrimoine local : il s'agit a priori de musées qui traitent du rapport à Soi. En réalité, les musées archéologiques présentant des collections appartenant à des civilisations qui ne sont pas arabo-islamiques sont perçus par les locaux comme des musées de l'Autre qui représentent des civilisations différentes, plus proches des civilisations occidentales. Cette distinction démontre, du moins pour une certaine génération, un clivage dans la perception du patrimoine local¹².

Même si les professionnels des musées s'accordent à dire que les Tunisiens ne sont pas des habitués de musées, l'expérience a montré qu'ils sont tout de même très sensibles à la création de musées dans leurs régions. Ainsi lors de la création des musées de Moknine (2006) et de Kesra (2009), les habitants se sont précipités pour faire don d'objets personnels à ces musées; il s'agit d'objets familiaux transmis de génération en génération. Ceci montre que le musée est perçu par la population locale comme un lieu de transmission de mémoire. En lui léguant des objets personnels, les donateurs transforment un patrimoine familial en un patrimoine collectif qu'ils acceptent de partager avec autrui. Ils font preuve d'une responsabilité patrimoniale et d'un devoir de mémoire et participent à la construction du rapport au passé, mais aussi au futur; cet acte s'inscrit dans un processus de patrimonialisation¹³.

Par ailleurs, les dernières expériences muséographiques menées dans les musées tunisiens montrent que la faible fréquentation des locaux est souvent liée au manque de communication et de médiation. L'exposition temporaire *Le jeune homme de Byrsa* en est un exemple. Organisée en 2010 au musée national de Carthage, elle a drainé un nombre inespéré de visiteurs, venus grâce à la campagne de communication menée autour du personnage de « Arish », présenté comme un ancêtre lointain. « Arish » est un jeune homme dont le squelette a été retrouvé sur la colline de Byrsa à Carthage et le corps a été reconstitué grâce à la technique de la dermoplastie. Les Tunisiens sont venus en masse pour voir à qui ressemblait cet ancêtre. Le discours publicitaire construit sur la relation entre le personnage de Arish, objet de l'exposition, et le visiteur interpelle ce dernier dans son identité et son rapport au passé. Une intelligente façon pour qu'il s'approprie l'exposition. Le succès de l'exposition se justifie également par son caractère émotif¹⁴ : la scénarisation du contenu, couplée à l'emploi d'une mise en exposition qui use de dispositifs de médiation sensoriels variés, peu commun dans une exposition archéologique en Tunisie, ne laissent pas le visiteur indifférent.

Outre les expositions temporaires qui permettent de faire revenir les visiteurs au musée, il existe d'autres moyens de fidélisation, aujourd'hui connus et reconnus par tous les professionnels de musées, tels que les ateliers d'animation. Actuellement, seul le musée national du Bardo dispose d'un service pédagogique, d'espaces et de médiateurs offrant aux visiteurs, en particulier les plus jeunes, des activités d'animation en rapport avec son contenu. Rappelons au passage que ce musée est le plus important établissement muséal en Tunisie, notamment eu égard à sa surface et à son

¹¹ Di Muchelli, 2008, p. 316

¹² Ben Younes, 2002, p. 19-20

¹³ Davallon, 2006, p. 119

¹⁴ Belcher, 1991

nombre de visiteurs (environ 550.000 visiteurs par an). Il se distingue par ses importantes collections archéologiques. Il a bénéficié récemment de travaux de réaménagement et d'extension, qui ont permis d'améliorer son exposition, de le doter d'un grand hall d'accueil et d'espaces divers, offrant plusieurs services aux visiteurs. Le projet de réaménagement et d'extension était l'occasion de former au musée une équipe de médiateurs, chargés du guidage, de la communication, des ateliers pédagogiques et de l'organisation d'évènements culturels. L'objectif de la création de ces services est bien entendu de rapprocher le visiteur du musée et de l'aider à s'en emparer.

Bien que le musée national du Bardo, comme beaucoup d'autres musées rénovés, soit mieux préparé à l'accueil des visiteurs, il demeure peu outillé pour définir leurs profils. En l'absence d'enquêtes officielles sur le(s) publics(s) et de services spécialisés, les musées ont du mal à répondre aux besoins et aux attentes des visiteurs. Ce problème empêche d'améliorer leur rentabilité. Sans connaître les profils des visiteurs, il serait difficile de communiquer avec eux et de les aider à s'emparer du musée. Pour que l'appropriation ait lieu, le visiteur a besoin de se sentir attendu, bien accueilli et d'être un acteur au musée. La mise en communication du musée est la condition sine qua non pour atteindre cet objectif. Lorsque l'appropriation n'a pas lieu, la responsabilisation du visiteur s'avère une opération difficile, car il s'agit d'une étape tardive dans le processus de rapprochement entre le musée et le visiteur. Il reste encore du chemin à parcourir avant de parvenir à responsabiliser les visiteurs des musées tunisiens.

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THE EVOLUTION OF MUSEUMS IN TUNISIA: WHAT PLACE IS THERE FOR THE VISITOR?

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ABSTRACT

The evolution of museums in Tunisia: what place is there for the visitor? Ever since the first museums were founded in Tunisia the museum landscape has grown both in number and in diversity. In the last few years Tunisian museums have undergone important transformations which allowed us to question our museum strategies and to put the visitor among our highest priorities. This paper recounts, in the first section, the evolution of the museum institution, and describes museographic and communication turning points. A second section presents thoughts on how the visitor, in particular the local public, may make the museum his own, by examining his relationship with the institution.

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Museums in Tunisia; history and principal events

The history of Tunisian museums started in the XIX century with the creation of the first private collections of antiquities, begun by Tunisian and European collectors. Later many of these collections formed the basis for the first museums in the country. Among the most eminent of collectors was the Abbot François Bourgade, the chaplain of the Cathedral of Saint-Louis of Carthage. He had two collections, one private and the other destined for the future museum of Carthage.¹ The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Mustapha Khaznadar was, himself also one of the greatest collectors of his time, focussing on Tunisian antiquities, a passion he shared with his son Mohamed. After the fall of Minister Khaznadar, a large part of his collection was looted and dispersed. The reformer Kheireddine Bacha, who succeeded Khaznadar in 1873, recouped part of the latter's collection. Bacha, himself a remarkable collector of antiquities, acquired objects for all parts of the county with the goal of creating the first national museum,² but his exile prevented him for realizing his project.

In 1975, the Carthage National Museum, erstwhile called the "Lavigerie" Museum, exhibited objects recovered from archaeological digs organized by the White Fathers. During this period, visitors could buy archaeological objects from the museum. The actual Bardo National Museum opened to the public in 1888 as the Alaoui Museum, in honour of the Regency monarchy, and it is recognized as the first public museum in Tunisia. It was created by Beylical decree, dated 7 November, 1882 and was noted in the official journal. Ten years later, the municipal museum of Sousse was opened. In the same region, the Enfidha Archaeological Museum was created in 1907. Housed in a church built for the Catholic community of the city, it had a collection of paleo-Christian objects. The objects then were part of dissemination of the Christian faith. In the same year, the Sfax Archaeological Museum was opened in the basement of the City Hall. This location boosted the institution to civic status. Beyond archaeological museums, we find the Oceanographic Museum of Salammbô created in 1924 which

¹ Bacha, 2005, p. 46.

² Jaïdi, 2001, p. 94.

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was an offshoot of the oceanographic museum of Monaco. There was also the Museum of the Four Tailors, since dismantled, which was situated in the Regimental Hall of Honour in 1887.

After independence, in 1956, a number of small museums, often called antiquariums, emerge from archaeological sites: in Kerkousane, Bulla Regia, Dougga to name only a few. For the most part these museums were centres where exhibitions were reduced to nothing.³ In the 1960s, the first ethnographic museums were built in Tunisia. In a culture rife with socio-political change, these museums attempted to affirm national identity by championing local arts and traditions. The first museum of this kind, Dar Jallouli, was opened in Sfax in 1965, followed by the Museum of Dar Ben Abdallah, located in the medina of Tunis in 1967. Mounted in old bourgeois houses, these museums used methods of presentation borrowed from analogic museography⁴ : dioramas, reconstructions and traditional interiors. They outlasted European examples of regional classical ethnography. With their display techniques directed toward the public, these museums represent the first Tunisian attempts at museal mediation. In addition they served as models for many private ethnographic museums.

The creation of museums intensified between 1980 and 1990, especially in costal areas. This period coincided with tourist expansion in Tunisia and the creation of a number of important museums on the sea side. These museums are often considered complementary to the hotels and beaches, destined principally to touristic enrichment and only secondarily cultural organizations. This emphasis on the sea shore became more prominent as the years went by to the point of provoking a geographic imbalance. Certain regions in the interior remained without museum establishments, despite their strong patrimonial and cultural potential. This is the case for the regions of Sidi Bouzid and Beja. In other interior areas, such as Tozeur or Tataouine in southern Tunisia, despite attracting tourists, it is private museums that fill the museum space created by the absence of public institutions. We note, in passing, that the majority of private museums lack all accountability and academic rigour. This situation is aggravated by the absence of any legislation that regulates museums in Tunisia.

At the institutional level the 1990s were marked by the creation of *l'Agence de mise en valeur du patrimoine et de promotion culturelle* [Agency for the enhancement of heritage and promotion of culture] in 1997. This passage showed the importance given hereafter to the economic value of museums and historic sites. Attached to the Ministry of Culture, this commercial agency has as its mission to develop the archaeological and historic heritage and to give it value. Inspired by the French model of the Réunion des musées nationaux [Union of National Museums]. This agency administers the revenues of all the museums, sites and historic monuments that have been placed under the care of the Ministry of Culture. Revenues come principally from admissions and the shops. At the same time, the administration and content control of the museums, sites and historic monuments has stayed with the l'Institut national du patrimoine, [The national institute for heritage] which is an administrative and research body, within the Ministry of Culture. This situation, still in place today, poses many problems. In the absence of full autonomy, museums, especially the biggest ones, are burdened with administrative procedures.⁵

In the 1990s, as well, thought was being given to the contents of archaeological museums, especially with the creation of the Archaeological Museum at Chemtou, opened in 1997. The result was an exceptional museal experience, emphasizing popularization and presentation. This was a joint Tunisian-German project. At the same time the Carthage National Museum was renovated and given a more didactic presentation. These mediative initiatives are part of the movement toward cultural democracy, extolling museum accessibility for all and contextualization of the object.

³ Davalon, 1999

⁴ Montpetit, 1996

⁵ Grarsallah-Hizem, 2012, at press

Especially in occidental countries starting in the 1980s, the mutations that the museum world experienced, due to movements such as MNES (Muséologie nouvelle et expérimentation social) or MINOM (Mouvement international pour la muséologie), started to have an effect in Tunisia.

A few years later, in 2000, the Mahdia gallery in the Bardo National Museum was renovated. Undertaken with the help of the Direction des Musées de France, this gallery showed objects found in the wreck of a ship dating from the first century before Jesus Christ. The museography shown here, dismantled in 2009, marked a new era for Tunisian museums: for the first time archaeological pieces were shown under preventative conservation conditions⁶ and using immersion museology.⁷

The years 2000 were marked by museum renovation projects in a number of institutions, such as the archaeological museums of Nabeul, Utique and El Jem. The beginning of the "Projet de Gestion et de Valorisation du Patrimoine Culturel" [*Project for Management and Enhancement of cultural heritage*] during this period, constituted a turn in the history of Tunisian museums. Financed through a loan from the World Bank, it permitted the renovation of the Bardo National Museum, the Sousse Archaeological Museum and the Jerba Museum of Traditional Culture. It also allowed the creation of an interpretative centre for the Kairouan medina which considered major historical monuments. The purpose of this project is to increase museum accessibility and to reinforce their economic potential by renovating existing galleries and adding service spaces to increase the quality of the visitor experience. As Denis Lesage, one of the creators of this project, explains "This demonstrates that in the 21st century heritage is recognized as one component of development and that its value goes beyond the specific cultural objects to embrace economic goals, employment and revenue."⁸ Today the museum is considered an economic unity, an enterprise⁹, able to contribute through tourism to the economic development of the region in which it is located¹⁰ because hereafter it must generate revenue. Even if advice on projects is modified, especially for conservation and display, the work introduced museums to a new phase of museography.

At the moment Tunisia has 38 museums managed by the Ministry of Culture and 26 public museums managed by other ministries, without counting current projects. We estimate that there are 37 private museums. However it is difficult to establish a clear idea of the types of museums because, for the most part, they are mixed. Most of the museums under the direction of the Ministry of Culture are archaeological: about 55%. Most of the private museums are ethnographic, about 45%, against 36% of the public museums in the Ministry of Culture. Museums dedicated to Islamic arts constitute about 15% of the public Tunisian museums. And museum of contemporary history make up about 7%. But what is noteworthy in looking at the range of Tunisian museums is the absence of arts institutions.

Despite the variety of museums in Tunisia, the importance of collections that they hold and the many projects of renovation and museological reorganization already completed and in progress, what it always the same is that Tunisian museums are not very engaged with visitors or with interpretation.

The role of the visitor in Tunisian museums: a process of appropriation

The first Tunisian museums have been in existence for more than a century. It is only recently that these establishments have started to ask themselves what the visitors

⁶ Serarfi, 2011, p. 197.

⁷ Belaeen, 2005

⁸ Lesage, 2006, p. 88.

⁹ Benhamou, 2003

¹⁰ Desvalées and Mairesse, 2011, p. 31.

want and need. There are some examples of this new interest, including free admission for Tunisians and foreigners on the first Sunday of each month and fee admission for a select category of visitors all year long. Another example is the creation by the *Agence de mise en valeur du patrimoine et de promotion culturelle* of a way of dealing with complaints. Equally new recruits to the Bardo Museum have more education in interpretation and are showing a willingness to engage with visitors. However only about one third of tourists who come to Tunisia visit museums, sites and historic monuments. And visits by Tunisian are infrequent.

Although locals are infrequent visitors, the museums has always peeked Tunisians' curiosity as can be seen the in name given by Tunisians to the Bardo Museum in the XIX and XX century: it was called "Dar Laâjaieb" or the house of marvels, which expresses their fascination and astonishment with this place. This appellation retains something of the occidental cabinets of curiosity, the ancestor of our museums. Today still Tunisians do not see museums as something that concerns them. As explained by Francesca di Muchelli, in Arab countries museums are a western invention. They "were created by the Europeans for Europeans in the colonial period. In addition, for the most part museums presented and present still the local heritage, the most traditional (ethnographic) and the oldest (archaeological)."¹¹

Indeed, many Tunisians consider museums to be for tourists. However they present primarily the local heritage: here we are talking about those museums which relate to one's own culture. Actually archaeological museums which show materiel that is not Arab-Islamic cultures are perceived as museums of the Other representing different civilizations, close to western civilizations. For a certain generation this distinction shows a cleavage in the perception of local heritage.¹²

Even if museum professionals agree that Tunisians do not favour museums, experience has shown that they are sill very aware of the creation of museums in their region. Thus with the building of the museums at Moknine (2006) and de Kesra (2009), local inhabitants hurried to donate personal objects to these museums: these were family objects passed down from generation to generation. This shows that the local population considers the museum as a place for guarding memories. By giving personal objects, the donors transformed the family history into a collective history that they agreed to share with others. It demonstrates not only a responsibility for heritage, a duty to memory, and a participation in the construction of the past, but also a recognition of the future. This act is part of the process of making heritage.¹³

On the other hand, these museological experiences in Tunisian museums demonstrate that poor local attendance is often linked to a n absence of communication and interpretation. The temporary exhibition, "Le jeune homme de Byrsa" is one example. Organized in 2010 by the Carthage National Museum, this exhibition attracted an inspired number of visitors, drawn in by a marketing campaign built around the person of "Arish", presented as a distant relative. "Arish" is a young man whose skeleton was found on the hill of Byrsa in Carthage and whose body was reconstructed thanks to dermoplastic technology.

Tunisians came in droves to see who he resembled. The publicity was constructed on the basis of the relationship of Arish, object of the exhibition, and the visitor, interpellating the visitor in his identity and his link with the past, an intelligent way to appropriate the exhibition. The success of the exhibition was justified by its emotive character¹⁴: the exhibition design, interspersed with varied arousing interpretive slides, an unusual system in an archaeological show in Tunisia, did not leave the visitor indifferent.

¹¹ Di Muchelli, 2008, p. 316.

¹² Ben Younes, 2002, pp. 19-20.

¹³ Davallon, 2006, p. 119.

¹⁴ Belcher, 1991

Apart from temporary exhibitions which encourage repeat visits to the museum, there are other means of instilling loyalty, known and recognized today by all museum professionals. One such is animation. Today only the Bardo National Museum has an educator, with spaces and interpretation offered to visitors, especially children. Let us remember that this museum is the most important one in Tunisia, in terms of its floor space and the number of visitors, (approximately 550,000 per year.) It boasts important archaeological collections. It has recently benefited from expansion and rearrangement that have permitted it to improve its exhibition, to devote a large hall to reception and assign other various spaces for visitor services. With the renovations and extension came a staffing change, a group of interpreters, charged with giving guided tours, providing communication, instructing workshops and organizing cultural events. The objective in creating these services of course is to better link the visitor to the museum and to help the visitor master the museum contents.

While the Bardo National Museum, along with other renovated museums, is better prepared to receive visitors, it does little good for the profile of Tunisian museums in general. Lacking official studies on the public and on specialized services, the museums have responded poorly to the needs and wishes of visitors. The problem prevents an easy fix. Without knowing the characteristics of visitors, it would be difficult to communicate with them and help them understand the museum. For appropriation to take place, the visitor needs to feel wanted, well received and be an actor in the museum. A museum communication plan is the foundation for attaining this objective. When appropriation does not occur, the empowerment of the visitor becomes a very difficult operation, because it involves a missing step in the process of linking the museum and the visitor. There is still a way to go before visitors to Tunisian museum are empowered.

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Papers – Contributions – Documentos

LA PRISE EN COMPTE DES PUBLICS DANS LES MUSÉES DES ANNÉES 1920 : UNE EXPÉRIENCE RUSSE INCONNUE

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RÉSUMÉ

L'article aborde des questions, liées à la prise en compte des publics dans les musées de l'URSS au milieu des années 1920. À partir d'une analyse de documents d'archives peu connus, y compris des procès-verbaux qu'on faisait aux séances de la Section muséale du Comité de sociologie de l'Institut national d'Histoire de l'art, on précise l'histoire de pareilles recherches au Musée national Russe, ainsi que l'attitude de la communauté professionnelle à l'égard de ces recherches et de leur rôle dans le développement de la muséologie nationale pendant les époques passées.

Mots-clés : musée, muséologie, publics des musées, sources d'archives, langage muséal, communication.

ABSTRACT

From the history of visitor studies in 1920s: a little-known Russian experience

The article examines questions connected with the studies of the museum audience in the USSR in the middle of 1920s. Based on little known archival materials, proceedings of the meetings of the Museum Section of the Sociological Committee of the State Institute of the History of Arts, the history of such investigations in the Russian State Museum, the attitude of the professional community towards them and their influence on the further development of Russian museology are defined.

Key words: museum, museology, museum audience, archival source, museum language, communication.

RESUMEN

Toma de conciencia sobre los públicos en los museos de los años '20: una experiencia rusa desconocida

El artículo aborda temas ligados a la toma de conciencia de los públicos en los museos de la URSS a mediados de los años '20. A partir de un análisis de documentos de archivos poco conocidos que incluyen procesos verbales que se realizaban en las sesiones del Comité de Sociología del Instituto Nacional de Historia del Arte, se detalla la historia de las investigaciones realizadas en el Museo Nacional de Rusia, así como la actitud de la comunidad profesional con respecto a dichas investigaciones y a su rol en el desarrollo de la museología nacional durante épocas pasadas.

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Palabras clave: museo, museología, públicos de museos, fuentes de archivos, lenguaje museal, comunicación

* * *

L'aide aux publics dans les musées doit être fondée sur la prise en compte de ces publics : si on ne connaît pas ce qu'ils sont, on ne peut pas les aider à s'approprier le milieu muséal. Cela est aussi vrai pour le milieu symbolique, que pour le milieu muséal intellectuel et l'espace réel du musée. La prise en compte des publics dans les musées est une des fonctions les plus importantes de l'activité de chaque musée. L'analyse de l'histoire des recherches sur ce thème a été faite dans la thèse de doctorat de Lynne Teather ; elle a rappelé qu'on a commencé à développer les « visitor studies » en Grand-Bretagne dès le milieu du XIX^{ème} siècle. Il y a peu de temps que Eilean Hooper-Greenhill a généralisé l'expérience accumulée et a présenté son essai sur les principaux courants existant dans ce domaine.

Néanmoins la plupart de ce genre de recherches concerne seulement l'expérience du monde occidental, surtout celle des pays anglo-saxons. On voit clairement qu'on a besoin d'élargir l'espace d'étude et de connaître l'expérience des autres territoires et traditions culturelles. L'exemple de la Russie, notamment, est significatif dans ce domaine. On l'exclut généralement des histoires universelles des musées. Le travail classique d'Alma Witlin est une des rares exceptions à cette règle. Dans la plupart de leurs travaux les auteurs se bornent à indiquer quel rôle ont les musées pour les besoins politiques ainsi que leurs fonctions idéologiques. On compare la Russie à d'autres pays totalitaires en Europe dans l'entre-deux-guerres mondiales (l'Allemagne et l'Italie). Aussi on accentue une spécificité des musées soviétiques : leur fonction instructive. Mais il faut tenir compte de ce que la période soviétique n'était pas homogène. On peut y distinguer différentes étapes. La suppression et l'unification totalitaire des années 1930 ont été précédées d'une période de recherches relativement libres et d'innovations révolutionnaires qui dura de 1917 jusqu'au milieu de la deuxième moitié des années 1920. À cette époque on suivait avec beaucoup d'attention les différentes directions de recherche, y compris celle des « visitor studies ». Les expérimentations allant dans cette direction ont été commencées en Russie au milieu des années 1920, mais ont été interrompues pour des causes politiques, et n'ont été reprises qu'après un long intervalle, pendant les années 1970. À l'époque actuelle ces recherches attirent l'intérêt de plusieurs praticiens et théoriciens du travail muséal.

Le recours à cette expérience peut être aussi utile au monde muséal de Russie, où se voit nettement la tendance à l'exclusion sociale et culturelle, contredisant les principes de la démocratie libérale et, en certains cas, les principaux droits de l'homme.

Les publics

On peut déjà remarquer dans la littérature scientifique des essais d'analyse des principaux moyens et procédés en vue d'étudier les visiteurs des musées afin d'analyser comment la sociologie muséale russe s'est formée¹. Par ailleurs les travaux de Larisa Rafiyénko et de Marina Youhnévitch, consacrés à l'histoire de l'étude des visiteurs de musées des années 1920-1930, présentent une image fragmentée des débats et des discussions sur ce thème, car ils utilisent seulement comme base les matériaux publiés². Les articles publiés dans les différents journaux du milieu des

¹ Marina Youhnévitch, « Je t'emmènerai au musée... ». Moscou, RIK, 2011, p. 53-69.

² Larisa Rafiyénko « Comment on étudiait des publics dans les musées des années 1920-1930 », in : *Les questions du travail de guide*. Moscow, 1973. P. 193-211 ; Marina Youhnévitch « Des publics dans les

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années 1920 au début des années 1930, c'est-à-dire à la période d'épanouissement des publications sur les études muséales en Russie, ont l'habitude de présenter seulement les points de vue définitifs de leurs auteurs. Ils ne permettent pas de suivre comment se formaient ces notions ni de connaître toute la variété des opinions.

Afin d'approfondir nos connaissances il est utile d'examiner les nouvelles sources d'archives, y compris celles qui conservent l'esprit des débats qui ont suivi sur les questions qui nous intéressent. Seules de telles sources rendent possible la précision de l'histoire intellectuelle qui va dans cette direction dans la vie culturelle du pays. On peut classer comme sources semblables les procès-verbaux des séances de la Section muséale du Comité de sociologie de l'Institut national d'Histoire de l'art, qui restaient jusqu'à l'époque actuelle en dehors des recherches scientifiques³.

L'Institut national d'histoire de l'art a été fondé à Saint-Pétersbourg en 1912 par le comte Valentin Zubov. En 1916 l'Institut a reçu le statut d'école supérieure et, dès 1925, il a reçu le nom d'Institut national d'histoire de l'art. La même année Fyodor Schmit, un éminent savant, théoricien et historien de l'art, est nommé son directeur.

L'Institut était composé de départements dont le travail devait être coordonné par le Comité d'étude sociologique de l'art, destiné à lier « le travail scientifique de tous les services de l'Institut dans le domaine de la sociologie de l'art⁴. » Plusieurs sections existaient auprès de ce comité : celle de la théorie universelle et de la méthodologie, de l'art d'« Octobre », de la pédagogie, de l'étude de l'art des paysans du Nord russe et la section muséale⁵. La section muséale avait été fondée à l'initiative d'Oscar Valdghuèr, important spécialiste de l'art de l'antiquité et, pendant plusieurs années, collaborateur de L'Hermitage ; à l'Institut, il dirigea le département des Beaux-arts⁶. Les membres de la section écoutaient les interventions sur les questions les plus actuelles du travail muséal et en discutaient lors des débats communs. Ils faisaient la bibliographie de la littérature étrangère et russe dans le domaine de la muséologie et de l'organisation de musées, préparaient des expositions ; ils ont préparé un recueil des articles ; pendant l'été ils dirigeaient les travaux pratiques sur la base des palais-musées autour de Léningrad [*Saint-Pétersbourg*] pour les étudiants de quelques établissements d'enseignement supérieur. Des centaines de personnes se rassemblaient aux séances de la Section qui étaient ouvertes au public⁷. Pendant les séances de la section on discutait sur les questions liées à l'avenir des musées d'histoire de la vie quotidienne, qui ont été organisés dans les anciens palais et hôtels privés de Leningrad et de ses alentours ; on débattait sur les expositions nouvelles qu'on organisait au Musée Russe et à L'Hermitage ; on discutait sur l'emploi des pièces d'archives pour les expositions, ainsi que sur l'expérience de la création de nouveaux musées en Europe, etc. L'une des questions discutées lors des séances fut celle de l'étude du visiteur de musée.

La perception des visiteurs

musées et leurs études », in : *Le musée d'art et le processus d'enseignement*. St.-Pétersbourg , Littérature spéciale, 1998. P. 77-95.

³ Vitaly Ananiev « La formation du Musée de Gatchina pendant les années 1920 », *Courrier d'un archiviste*, no 4, 2010, p. 176-177.

⁴ Les Archives du Musée de l'Hermitage (AMH). Fond 6. Inventaire 1. N° 219. Feuille 44; Xenia Kumpan « Pour l'histoire de l'apparition du Comité de la sociologie à l'Institut national d'Histoire de l'art (encore une fois à propos de Jirmounskiy et des formalistes) » in : *À la limite de deux époques : le Recueil en l'honneur du 60^{ème} anniversaire d'Alexandre Vasilyévitch Lavrov*. Moscou : NLO, 2009, p. 345-360.

⁵ Les Archives centrales nationales de la littérature et de l'art à Saint-Pétersbourg (ACNLA à SPb). Fond 82. Inventaire 3. N° 14. Feuille 110.

⁶ Les Archives du Musée de l'Hermitage (AMH). Fond 6. Inventaire 1. N° 219. Feuille 91, recto.

⁷ Les Archives centrales nationales de la littérature et de l'art à Saint-Pétersbourg (ACNLA à SPb). Fond 82. Inventaire 3. N° 21. Feuille 47 ; *ibid.* N° 27. Feuille 8.

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L'intervention sur le thème « Questions d'étude de la perception du visiteur de musée » fut présentée le 20 avril 1926. L'intervenante, Véra Bélyavskaya, collaboratrice du Musée Russe, a abordé le sujet en soulignant l'actualité de cette direction du travail des musées contemporains. La « réforme de la création des musées » faisant suite à la Révolution, elle accentuait l'importance de cette étude. Le nouveau système d'organisation « aspire à orienter l'exposition vers les masses ; à cette fin, il est nécessaire de connaître la perception des matériaux de musée par les masses de visiteurs ». On peut atteindre ce but seulement « par la prise en compte scientifique des publics dans le musée » ; par conséquent, il faut élaborer des méthodes conformes. Selon l'opinion de Véra Bélyavskaya, l'expérience accumulée pendant l'étude des publics de théâtre peut donner une aide solide à l'élaboration de ces méthodes. Concernant la choix de la partie concrète des publics, laquelle doit devenir l'objet principal de l'étude, l'auteur de l'exposé a souligné qu'il est important, en premier lieu, d'étudier « les besoins muséaux et la perception » des ouvriers, représentant « la masse prolétarienne, qui constitue le plus important visiteur, organisé pour les excursions au musée ». Mais il est nécessaire d'étudier aussi « les autres groupes de classes sociales », parce que seule l'analyse comparative peut présenter des données significatives. Le contenu de ce rapport avait pour but de caractériser les méthodes utilisées pour l'étude des visiteurs.

Méthodes d'analyse

Trois méthodes ont été formulées : 1) méthode d'observation directe, quand « l'observateur se tient debout à côté et prend note de la réaction du visiteur devant tel ou tel monument de l'art » ; 2) méthode d'enregistrement exact des réactions par l'intermédiaire de diagrammes et de chronomètre : « L'observateur suit l'excursion et enregistre combien de temps le groupe reste devant telle ou telle œuvre ; à quel degré l'attention diminue et combien de personnes s'éloignent lors de l'arrêt du groupe devant telle ou telle œuvre » ; 3) méthode d'enquête. Les questionnaires peuvent être brefs ou détaillés. On remplit les questionnaires brefs directement au musée, les questionnaires détaillés à la maison. Les premiers traduisent les impressions immédiates, les deuxièmes l'analyse des impressions. Afin d'obtenir une image authentique, il faut employer l'ensemble des trois méthodes et les employer en un plus grand nombre possible de visiteurs afin de calculer les données exactes⁸. En gros, on peut estimer sûrement que toutes ces méthodes étaient traditionnelles pour ceux des musées qui, depuis le milieu des années 1920, s'occupaient de l'étude des publics. On les employait avec succès à la Galerie Trétiakov, qui est devenue « l'initiateur de ces entreprises », et aussi au Musée historique [à Moscou], qui s'est allié à ces expériences. On peut supposer que la discussion du travail des collaborateurs du département pédagogique de la Galerie Trétiakov, qu'on suivait en différents lieux, y compris aux séances du Conseil scientifique du Musée Russe, a juste stimulé les recherches à Léninegrad. Il faut remarquer que le Musée Russe est devenu le deuxième musée du pays et qu'il s'est adressé à l'étude de ses publics trois ans plus tôt que le Musée Historique⁹.

L'intervention a éveillé de vifs débats, et c'était naturel. La « réforme de la création des musées », mentionnée par Véra Bélyavskaya au commencement de son intervention, touchait à tous les aspects de l'activité muséale, provoquait les discussions concernant la substance principale constituant le but essentiel du musée (l'objet du musée), et posait devant les musées des objectifs nouveaux ; par la suite,

⁸ Les Archives du Musée de l'Hermitage (AMH). Fond 6. Inventaire 1. N° 219. Feuille 122 recto - 123.

⁹ Larisa Rafiyenko « Comment on étudiait des publics dans les musées aux années 1920-1930-èmes, in : *Les questions du travail de guide*. » Moscou, 1973, p. 194.

cette réforme fut lourde de conséquences, surtout celle de la transformation du musée en un établissement social absolument nouveau¹⁰.

Un nouveau point de départ

Les débats autour de l'intervention de Véra Bélyavskaya ont éclairci non seulement la variété des opinions des spécialistes sur cette question, mais surtout l'attention éveillée des travailleurs de musées qui étaient à l'affût de la nouvelle direction donnée aux activités. La collaboratrice de l'Institut, M. Kroutikova, a émis des doutes sur le fait que l'« on puisse concevoir l'exposition du musée en tenant pour point de départ la catégorie des visiteurs. » Malgré toute l'importance de cette question, l'exposition « doit [quand même] avoir pour base le développement de telle ou telle pensée scientifique », quoique « bien sûr, elle [doive] être composée de manière à être la plus accessible à la perception d'un visiteur, même de niveau culturel assez moyen ». C'était un point de vue traditionnel pour la muséologie russe du commencement du XX^{ème} siècle, appliquant la primauté du concept scientifique à la création de l'exposition : « Le point de départ – la pensée scientifique, logique et claire, exprimée par les objets -, et non pas la perception du visiteur¹¹ ».

L'un des fondateurs des recherches sur les excursions, Boris Brullov, s'est solidarisé de cette opinion. Pendant le premier quart du XX^{ème} siècle il était l'un des principaux organisateurs des excursions à Saint-Petersbourg et l'auteur de plusieurs guides de la ville, le collaborateur de l'Institut des excursions et du Centre d'excursions auprès de la Base d'excursions, qui était la partie du Comité du gouvernement local dans le domaine de l'instruction politique¹². En soulignant l'importance incontestable de la question que l'on discutait, il a remarqué que « la perception du visiteur du musée est influencée par plusieurs circonstances accidentelles, et très peu par les faits habituels », et il faut les différencier. « Il est important d'enregistrer la prédominance des publics dans telle ou telle salle¹³ », mais cela peut être aussi un facteur accidentel. Le secrétaire de la Section, Pavel Schoults, collaborateur de L'Hermitage, exprimait le même point de vue ; il indiquait qu'il ne fallait pas « exagérer la signification des catégories des visiteurs pour l'exposition [...]. Il faut envisager les conclusions comme un matériel auxiliaire utile pour les travailleurs des musées et des excursions, mais il n'est pas admissible de donner comme base à l'exposition cette étude ». Il est important que ce travail accentue l'attention des collaborateurs des musées sur les visiteurs. « Il les aide à élaborer le langage souple (de l'exposition), qui doit s'adapter d'une manière adéquate à la conscience des masses ». Il est très difficile de surestimer la signification de cette dernière thèse¹⁴.

Le langage de l'objet

Il y a longtemps que les historiographes russes ont remarqué que les concepts de la spécificité du langage muséal se formèrent pendant les années 1930¹⁵. En même temps l'attention des chercheurs a été attirée vers les problèmes de la sémantique et de la syntaxe de ce langage. On aspirait à répondre aux questions : comment, à l'aide de ce langage, transmet-on telle ou telle idée ? de quels éléments ce langage est-il

¹⁰ Vitaly Ananiev, « Quelques projets de l'emploi d'une approche sociologique au travail muséal en Russie Soviétique des années 1920 », *Courrier de l'Université nationale humanitaire de la Russie*. 2011. Cahier 17. Série : *Culturologie, Critique de l'art, Muséologie*, p. 275-283.

¹¹ Les Archives du Musée de l'Hermitage (AMH). Fond 6. Inventaire 1. N° 219. Feuille 123.

¹² Vladimir Frolov, « La vie et l'activité de B.P.Brullov », in : *Antziférovskiyé tchténiya : les matériaux et les thèses de la conférence*. Léningrad : Fonds de la culture soviétique, 1989, p. 40-42.

¹³ Les Archives du Musée de l'Hermitage (AMH). Fond 6. Inventaire 1. N° 219. Feuille 123 recto.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Nikolai Nikishin, « Le langage muséal comme système universel pour modeler l'activité muséale », in : *Muséevédéniyé. Les problèmes de la communication culturelle dans l'activité muséale*. Moscou, 1989, p. 7-8.

composé ? Etc. Les questions pratiques de ce langage restaient au second plan, tandis que, dès les années 1960, ces questions venaient au premier plan dans la muséologie de pays étrangers.

Dans son célèbre article « A Viewpoint: The Museum as a Communications System and Implications for Museum Education » Duncan Cameron écrit que « la communication effective entre le créateur de l'exposition et le visiteur dépend comme toujours de la capacité de ce dernier à apprendre le langage "non verbal des objets authentiques"¹⁶. » Eilean Hooper-Greenhill accentuait dans ses travaux l'importance des « significations moyennes »¹⁷.

Nous voyons que les muséologues russes comprenaient déjà au milieu des années 1920 la nécessité d'élaborer un langage spécifique d'exposition, « s'imposant délicatement à la conscience des masses ». Même Véra Bélyavskaya, en résumant son intervention, a noté qu'il fallait développer les modalités de l'étude des publics dans le musée, juste « pour établir un langage commun du travailleur du musée et du visiteur par l'intermédiaire de l'exposition¹⁸ ». Cette tradition n'a pas été perdue aux époques suivantes. Les meilleurs représentants de la muséologie russe se souvenaient toujours de l'importance de ce « facteur anthropologique ». Un critique éminent de l'art, archéologue et historien de l'art byzantin, Leonid Matzoulévitch, en faisant le cours de la muséologie à la faculté d'histoire de l'Université de Léninegrad [le nom de Saint-Pétersbourg à cette époque], pendant la période la plus dure, de la fin des années 1940 au commencement des années 1950, apprenait à ses étudiants : « ... le travail pédagogique, le travail des cours, le travail du discours et de la démonstration, le travail du musée doivent obligatoirement contenir l'idée d'un homme. L'image de l'exposition, la planification architecturale, l'image de l'espace architectural comprennent aussi l'homme, un homme réel, l'étudiant, l'écolier etc. Le créateur de l'exposition doit le connaître et le prévoir¹⁹ ».

On voit nettement que ce principe reste l'un des plus importants pour le travail de chaque musée. Encore en 1987, à la conférence du Comité international de la muséologie auprès du Conseil international des musées on a marqué qu'il existe deux catégories principales des musées : ceux qui s'orientent vers les collections, et ceux qui s'orientent vers la communication. L'étude des publics dans les musées représente un objectif important pour toutes les deux catégories. En s'adressant à l'histoire de ce phénomène, nous pouvons préciser nos connaissances d'une des plus intéressantes périodes de la muséologie russe, ainsi qu'imaginer les voies de l'optimisation des pratiques convenables à l'activité des musées contemporains.

Un public privilégié ?

Nous sommes au regret de constater que, à l'Institut de la théorie des Beaux-arts, l'étude des publics des musées a été interrompue. La Section des musées a changé de nom et, sous le nom du Comité des musées, a cessé son activité à la fin des années 1920. On a noté dans le rapport du département des beaux-arts pour les années 1928-1929 que « ... le Comité des musées ne travaillait pas à cause de la réorganisation de l'Institut et du manque de travailleurs nécessaires »²⁰. En 1930 le

¹⁶ Duncan Cameron, « Viewpoint : The Museum as a Communications System and Implications for Museum Education », *Curator*, Vol.11, no 1, 1968, p. 36.

¹⁷ Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, « Learning in art museums: strategies of interpretation », in : E. Hooper-Greenhill (ed.), *The Educational Role of the Museum*. London : Routledge, 1999, p. 44-52.

¹⁸ Les Archives du Musée de l'Hermitage (AMH). Fond 6. Inventaire 1. N° 219. Feuille 123 recto.

¹⁹ Archives de l'Académie Nationale des Sciences, la succursale à Saint-Pétersbourg. Fond 991. Inventaire 1. N° 185. Feuille 87.

²⁰ Les Archives Centrales Nationales de littérature et de l'art à Saint-Pétersbourg (ACNLA à SPb). Fond 82. Inventaire 3. N° 39. Feuille 36.

directeur Fyodor Schmit²¹ a été obligé de quitter sa fonction ; on a changé la direction des recherches de l'Institut « pour le mettre dans la voie de marxisme ». Aux recherches suivies par le Département des Beaux-arts la création « de l'histoire de l'art soviétique » se trouvait déjà au premier plan. Néanmoins, en relation avec l'un des objectifs des recherches, on a formulé une question « ... concernant les demandes des masses pour l'organisation du travail au musée et pour l'exposition muséale, et comment ces demandes et questions se présentent aux musées²² ». D'ailleurs, ce thème (comme tous les aspects du travail de l'Institut) devenait « un raisonnement de classe ».

De toutes les catégories de publics on en a choisi une seule ; on inscrivait à l'ordre du jour « la prise en compte du visiteur-ouvrier et de son niveau artistique ». En outre, le travail devait avoir une envergure encore plus large qu'auparavant, en embrassant non seulement les musées, mais aussi toute la vie artistique. On supposait « révéler l'attitude de la classe ouvrière à l'égard des tendances actuelles ; étudier quel langage des formes plastiques est le plus proche et le plus compréhensible au visiteur ouvrier ; mettre en évidence la différenciation des classes de publics ouvriers ». Pour atteindre ce résultat, il était nécessaire de lier les recherches de l'Institut avec les travaux de l'Institut du Travail de l'éducation politique N.K.Kroupskaya, de l'Institut Pédagogique A. I. Guertzen, d'une section éducative du Musée Russe. L'étude des publics ouvriers devait se réaliser dans les expositions, dans les musées, au cours des excursions. On établissait les plans d'élaboration de la méthode qui contribuait à observer les réactions des publics (les formulaires d'enquêtes, les instructions méthodiques). Pour cela, on projetait des interventions consacrées à l'étude des publics de la Galerie Trétiakoff, par la méthode d'enquête, par la nomination à ce travail des consultants des musées et des guides. On envisageait créer un Bureau spécial de prise en compte des publics en y nommant des étudiants de l'école supérieure. Considérés comme base principale pour la réalisation des recherches, on concevait des expositions d'art qu'on réalisait aux Maisons de la Culture. Les résultats des recherches devaient être formulés en des articles portant sur deux thèmes principaux : le concept sociologique du visiteur contemporain et les goûts artistiques du visiteur-ouvrier. Parmi les personnes qui s'occupaient de ces projets il y avait les collaborateurs de l'Institut (par exemple, A. S. Goutschin, un jeune critique d'art et élève de Fyodor Schmit), ainsi que les travailleurs des musées, coopérant avec l'Institut (Pavel Schoultz, un archéologue et collaborateur de L'Hermitage). On voulait aussi employer les enquêtes à l'usage d'un autre thème : « que faut-il apprendre de l'art moderne européen au prolétariat, et pourquoi faut-il le faire²³ ? ».

Comme on peut juger d'après les sources d'archives, les recherches de solutions à ces problèmes ont été interrompues par les transformations de l'Institut et par le changement de son profil. En 1931 on a créé, à Léninegrad, un Département de l'Académie nationale de la Critique d'art, et les musées ont été exclus de ses plans. Il aurait fallu bien des décennies pour revenir à une prise en compte du public des musées, surtout une prise en compte qui pouvait mener à leur responsabilisation.

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*La prise en compte des publics dans les musées des années 1920:
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Note de la rédaction : La connaissance des travaux russes a été réalisée, en France, par deux textes importants écrits en Français, l'un de Schmit, l'autre d'Engran, qui sont répertoriés dans la littérature actuelle. D'autre part, un numéro d'*Histoire et Critique des arts* (1974) présente une introduction critique à ces textes, ainsi qu'à celui d'**Antal** sur l'Hermitage en 1925.

Text traduit par Mme Vera Bondarchuk, Saint-Petersbourg

EVALUACIÓN FRONTAL DE LOS PÚBLICOS PARA EL DESARROLLO DE CONTENIDOS DE REALIDAD AUMENTADA DENTRO DEL PROYECTO EUROPEO DE ARTSENSE

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RESUMEN

El paper presenta tres estudios empíricos que forman parte de la evaluación frontal de los contenidos utilizados en un dispositivo de realidad aumentada. El estudio se desarrolla en el Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas sobre una sala dedicada a una cocina del siglo XVIII. El estudio forma parte de las evaluaciones desarrolladas dentro del proyecto ARTSENSE (*Augmented Reality Supported Adaptive and Personalized Experience in a Museum Based On Processing Real-Time Sensor Events*), proyecto europeo financiado por el Séptimo Programa Marco de la Unión Europea.

El paper presenta tres estudios sobre un total de 285 visitantes. En el primer estudio, "*Previous Potential Knowledge Task*", se evaluaron sus expectativas e intereses, motivaciones, conocimientos previos y teorías alternativas. En la segunda tarea, "*Induced Potential Knowledge Task*", se desarrolló una visita guiada a la sala con un pre-test y un post-test para chequear la capacidad de aprendizaje de los visitantes. El tercer estudio, "*Suggested Potencial Knowledge Task*", se realizó sobre asistentes a un programa público en la sala objetivo del museo. En la segunda y tercera evaluaciones se utilizó una técnica más participativa en la que se interactuaba con los visitantes sobre los contenidos de la sala usando la metodología SIPP (Sistema Interactivo de Participación de Público).

ABSTRACT

Front evaluation of the public on the development of increased reality content based on the European project ARTSENSE

The paper presents three empirical studies that are part of the front evaluation of the content used in an augmented reality device. The study was developed at the National Museum of Decorative Arts on a gallery-room for a kitchen of the eighteenth century. The study is part of the assessments developed within the project ARTSENSE (*Augmented Reality Supported Adaptive and Personalized Experience in a Museum Based On Real-Time Processing Sensor Events*), a European project funded under the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Union.

The paper presents three studies. The total sample was 285 visitors. The first study was "Previous Potential Knowledge Task". We assessed their expectations and interests, motivations, prior knowledge and alternative theories. The second task was "Induced Potential Knowledge Task". We developed a guided tour of the room with a pre-test and a post-test in which they evaluated the same aspects, adding the test of the learning ability of visitors. The third study was "Suggested Potential Knowledge Task", attending a public program in the target room of the museum. We made the evaluation through a more participatory technique which interacted with visitors about the

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contents of the room. In the second and third studies we used the SIPP methodology (Interactive System Public Involvement) based on the use of clickers.

RÉSUMÉ

Évaluation frontale des publics pour le développement des contenus de réalité augmentée à partir du projet européen de ARTSENSE

L'article présente trois études empiriques qui font partie de l'évaluation préalable utilisée dans un dispositif de réalité augmentée. L'étude a été développée au Musée national des Arts Décoratifs sur une salle consacrée à la cuisine du XVIIIe siècle. Elle s'inscrit dans le cadre des évaluations développées dans le projet ARTSENSE (Augmented Reality Supported Adaptive and Personalized Experience in a Museum Based On Processing Real-Time Sensor Events), un projet européen financé au titre du septième programme-cadre de l'Union européenne.

Le document présente trois études sur un total de 285 visiteurs. Dans la première étude, "Étude de connaissance potentielle antérieure", nous avons évalué leurs attentes et leurs intérêts, leurs motivations, les connaissances antérieures et des théories alternatives. La deuxième étude, "Étude de connaissance potentielle induite", a donné lieu à une visite guidée de la salle avec un pré-test et un post-test pour vérifier la capacité d'apprentissage des visiteurs. La troisième étude, "Étude de connaissance potentielle suggérée", a été effectuée dans la salle cible du musée pour participer à un programme public. Dans l'évaluation des deuxième et troisième études, nous avons utilisé une technique participative d'interaction avec les visiteurs sur le contenu de la salle en utilisant la méthode SIPP (système interactif pour la participation du public).

* * *

1. Motivación.

Las expectativas, la agenda, la opinión, los afectos o la desafección, los conocimientos previos o las lagunas más insondables; los valores, la memoria, las mentalidades, nuestros modelos de mundo, son el bagaje que los humanos utilizamos para enfrentarnos a los nuevos mensajes. Lo que somos capaces de aprehender, aprender, comprender, recrear, disfrutar e identificarnos, depende de nuestra capacidad para actualizar en la exposición un complicado conjunto de representaciones internas disparadas en asociación con el contenido y la forma del mensaje expositivo percibido.

Desde hace relativamente poco, se viene tomando conciencia general de la importancia de los estudios de público y visitantes, y de la evaluación de exposiciones, sobre todo si lo comparamos con el peso y la importancia concedida a las colecciones por una parte, o incluso al peso otorgado a disciplinas que deberían ser auxiliares como la arquitectura o el diseño, que deberían estar siempre al servicio de la puesta en valor de las colecciones y al servicio de los visitantes.

Nuestra trayectoria en los estudios de público ha estado ligada en estos temas a la *Visitor Studies Association* (www.visitorstudies.org), primero relacionada a nuestro trabajo con el profesor Chan Screven en el International Laboratory for Visitor Studies en la Universidad de Wisconsin-Milwaukee, posteriormente, por nuestra colaboración con el profesor Ross Loomis en la Colorado State University y más recientemente, por nuestra colaboración con Zahava Doering en la Smithsonian Institution. De ellos y de otros colegas (como Conny Craft o Minda Borum) hemos aprendido teorías y

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metodologías, pero sobre todo actitudes y valores sobre los museos. Hemos aprendido a mirar las problemáticas del patrimonio desde el punto de vista del público, desde la perspectiva del ‘receptor’ del mensaje expositivo, desde nuestros ‘públicos potenciales’, desde el ‘participante’ en nuestras ofertas, desde el ‘cliente’ de nuestros servicios.

2. Introducción: El MNAD y la realidad Aumentada.

Es tremendamente importante conocer a los visitantes de un museo por múltiples razones, pero la razón principal es que sin ellos, los museos caerían en el vacío de la incompreensión. Más aún, si tenemos en cuenta que se vienen realizando estudios relevantes sobre la incorporación de las Nuevas Tecnologías de la Información (TICs) a los ámbitos de presentación del patrimonio y educativos, con resultados poco alentadores (por ejemplo, Asensio e Ibáñez, 2010) en referencia a la brecha tecnológica, la usabilidad y accesibilidad, los problemas de gestión, gasto y mantenimiento de estas tecnologías.

Teniendo en cuenta estas dos variables, por un lado la inserción de las TICs en los museos y por otro lado, el estudio de los visitantes, podemos introducir brevemente nuestro trabajo en la evaluación de una pieza del museo en el que se desarrolla el proceso para la elaboración de contenidos que se incluirán en un dispositivo de realidad aumentada. Esta investigación comienza a tener importancia cuando se estudia al usuario potencial de estos dispositivos en el contexto real de la pieza, que en este caso resulta ser una pieza única y envolvente, con el fin de comprender mejor cómo se desarrollan las necesidades del visitante en conexión con sus expectativas y conocimientos previos, sus ideas y emociones, para optimizar el uso de esta nueva tecnología y convertirla, en la medida de lo posible, en una herramienta adaptada a su usuario y que consiga proporcionarle una experiencia significativa de aprendizaje en su contexto informal y una vivencia sensitiva especial.

Por un lado, el Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas de Madrid (MNAD) es uno de los museos participantes en el proyecto ARTSENSE. Siendo la primera vez que el museo participa en un proyecto europeo, su contribución se centra en la aportación de un entorno real que permite la definición de contenidos sobre patrimonio, la reflexión desde los *end-users* (usuarios finales o destinatarios) y la aportación desde el punto de vista de los expertos en colecciones, en el desarrollo del prototipo, a más de un espacio de prueba del mismo con visitantes reales. En esta última línea, se ha contado con la ayuda de la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid para el desarrollo de la evaluación de la experiencia. El Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas (MNAD) celebra este año el centenario de su actividad (<http://mnartesdecorativas.mcu.es/>). Fundado en 1912 por decreto real con el nombre de Museo Nacional de Artes Industriales, sobre la base del Museo Industrial creado en la época de Amadeo I, en 1962, el edificio y sus colecciones fueron declarados monumento histórico artístico. La sede actual, en el palacete de la calle Montalbán, alberga la exposición de unos quince mil objetos, expuestos en sesenta salas, de un total de unos cuarenta mil objetos en almacén o depositados en otros museos. Aunque la mayor parte de las colecciones son españolas, hay un importante fondo de procedencia extranjera que trata de reflejar las relaciones artísticas y las importaciones de objetos cotidianos y de lujo a lo largo de los siglos. Las artes decorativas occidentales son las más abundantes e incluyen artes del fuego (cerámica, loza, porcelana y vidrio), mobiliario, textiles, alfombras, orfebrería, joyas, y metalistería, marfiles, cordobanes y guardamecíes, nacimientos, obras sobre papel y algo de pintura y escultura. Entre el arte oriental, es especialmente importante la colección procedente del Gabinete de Historia Natural del reinado de Carlos III.

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El MNAD es el único museo de la época que en su Reglamento, de 1913, recoge un Departamento de Pedagogía dirigido al aprendizaje de artesanos, fabricantes, artistas y conocedores de la artes industriales, siguiendo el espíritu de las escuelas de época sobre Artes y Oficios (Villalba, 1925). La tradición de educación y aprendizaje se ha retomado en estos años con el desarrollo de actividades infantiles, talleres para estudiantes y adultos y una relación estrecha con las escuelas de diseño. La difusión y la divulgación, junto con la investigación, han sido y siguen siendo las señas de identidad que acompañan a sus labores de conservación. Actualmente, la museografía de la 'recocina' valenciana es muy escasa, dispone de una iluminación mínima y de un panel, tamaño folio, donde se resume lo que hasta el año 2011 se conocía sobre dicho espacio (dentro del proyecto ARtSENSE, el otoño pasado se realizó una sesión científica cuyos trabajos se publicarán próximamente, y que ha aumentado considerablemente nuestra visión de dicho espacio). Normalmente, ante la falta de museografía e información de apoyo, la visita a la recocina se realiza de manera autodidacta. Ocasionalmente, la interpretación de esta pieza se apoya con guías voluntarios del MNAD. Entre los meses de noviembre y diciembre de 2011, se realizó un programa de 'pieza del mes' a cargo de Manuel Alonso Santos y se editó un folleto sobre dicho espacio.

Por otro lado, ARtSENSE (*Augmented Reality Supported Adaptive and Personalized Experience in a Museum Based On Processing Real-Time Sensor Events*) es un proyecto europeo financiado por el Séptimo Programa Marco de la Comisión Europea (<http://www.artsense.eu/>). El objetivo principal es elaborar un dispositivo de realidad aumentada (A2r), consistente en unas gafas que superponen información digital con la información real que recibe el usuario que visita la Cocina Valenciana del MNAD, en tiempo real. El dispositivo responde en base a los movimientos oculares y proyecta información visual en tres dimensiones sobre el objeto real, incluyendo efectos de audio, en función del interés del usuario, que se mide sobre la base de unas señales biométricas y el punto de fijación visual. Es innovadora y ambiciosa la pretensión de reducir la distancia que separa el espacio físico del visitante con el mundo digital que genera el propio dispositivo, acotando el espacio de incertidumbre que puede generar el mensaje expositivo, ayudando al visitante a elaborar de forma activa la información y haciéndole partícipe y agente de su propio conocimiento.

Parte del éxito en la eficacia de la implementación de las NTICs en museos y espacios de presentación del patrimonio, tiene su base en la elaboración de nuevos y buenos contenidos informativos y narrativos, así como programas y actividades que los sustenten, aplicables al dispositivo tecnológico. En ese punto se encuentra la clave de nuestro trabajo dentro de este proyecto.

3. Qué tiene de especial la Cocina Valenciana del MNAD.

El MNAD cuenta con un espacio muy singular, que desde el primer momento se pensó que era ideal para el desarrollo de la experiencia del proyecto europeo ARtSENSE. Se trata de una habitación alicatada hasta el techo con ladrillos de época, que constituye una de las manifestaciones más importantes del patrimonio decorativo de finales del siglo XVIII. Entre 1940 y 1942, el museo construyó una habitación *ex profeso*, para albergar esta colección que se conoce como "la cocina valenciana". En realidad, se trata de una 're-cocina' o un espacio de *office* cuya función no es la típica de una cocina de preparación de alimentos para la supervivencia, sino de un espacio de preparación de alimentos ya cocinados en otro lugar (con toda seguridad otra área de cocina de la casa), y en el que se terminaban de preparar y se disponían para el agasajo en una fiesta social. Por tanto se trata de un espacio de representación, propio de la parte pública o semi-pública de la casa, lo que justifica la riqueza de su decoración para la época. Esta re-cocina, procedente de Valencia, se erige como una

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única pieza en sí misma, de carácter muy envolvente, que aporta mucha información sobre la sociedad de finales del siglo XVIII, las costumbres de la época, la moda, la alimentación, la jerarquía social y demás detalles, de manera que se instaura como documento primario de múltiples lecturas.



**Panel Principal de la recocina Valenciana. MNAD.*

Los más de 1.500 azulejos que la componen, tienen representadas varias escenas, objetos y elementos decorativos a lo largo de toda su extensión. Estos espacios de recocinado son prototípicos de esta zona geográfica, y en ellos se representan algunas de las tradiciones más populares de la época en Valencia. En la recocina del MNAD se recoge, prácticamente como si se tratara de un documento primario debido a la gran cantidad de información que nos facilita, la práctica típica del refresco. El refresco consistía en una reunión, principalmente de mujeres de casa alta, en las que se servían alimentos muy variados: dulces, ácidos, fríos y calientes, con el chocolate como manjar principal. Para componer la escena principal se representa a los mayordomos, la señora de la casa con su mascota, criadas y cocineras, animales vivos y muertos, utensilios típicos (caracolas, enfriadores, anafres, anguileras) y alimentos típicos como helados, turrone, alfeñiques y horchata, por poner algunosejemplos. Para más información puede visitarse la página Web del museo, <http://mnartesdecorativas.mcu.es/>.

Existe constancia de restos similares en otras casas valencianas de la misma época, por ejemplo de la Casa Miquel en Benicarló, o restos de otros ejemplares recogidos en el Museo de Cerámica de Barcelona o en el Museo Nacional de la Cerámica de Valencia. La profusión de este tipo de manifestaciones, con algunos paralelos históricos en el resto de Europa, se concentra a finales del siglo XVIII y muestran un sistema de producción artesanal sobre una base 'proto-industrial'.

4. ¿Cómo se planificó la evaluación en general?

En este apartado se exponen la planificación y el sistema de evaluación llevados a cabo en el MNAD para testar los tipos de contenidos susceptibles de usarse en el prototipo de Realidad Aumentada del proyecto ARtSENSE. Tanto la UAM como el MNAD tienen el objetivo común de llegar a una experiencia significativa de aprendizaje

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de los visitantes del museo y, en este caso concreto, se desea que el efecto sea no sólo la capacidad de atracción que pudiera provocar la novedad del dispositivo, sino la creación de una experiencia tanto emocional como intelectual realmente significativa, mediante el uso de un diseño centrado en el visitante, pegando un salto cualitativo con respecto a la museografía tradicional que se venía usando en el MNAD.

La evaluación comenzó en septiembre del 2011, con el diseño de tres tareas secuenciales de carácter cualitativo con preguntas abiertas y categorías descriptivas flexibles, combinando la observación con un tipo especial de entrevista semi-estructurada con preguntas abiertas, preguntas de opción múltiple y la resolución de preguntas problema. Los métodos que se utilizaron suponen un rango variado de técnicas adaptadas a un contenido específico, un contexto concreto y el tipo de audiencia (Krueger, 1988, Frazer, y Lawley, 2000). Además, las tareas se llevaron a cabo en el “contexto real” de la recocina utilizando material gráfico. Para la evaluación de esta experiencia se diseñó un plan que abarca el diseño, la aplicación, el desarrollo y la puesta en funcionamiento finalmente (Asensio y Pol, 2005). Las etapas del proceso de investigación siguen el marco teórico propuesto por Screven, 1990; Loomis, 1987 y revisiones más recientes (por ejemplo Borun y Korn, 1999; Tomlinson & Roberts, 2006; o Klingler & Graft, 2012). Se optó por este tipo de evaluación porque permite comprobar la efectividad del diseño por etapas y el efecto del mensaje expositivo (Kelly, 2009). Según está planteada, la evaluación para los contenidos de la recocina valenciana se pensó como un proceso largo compuesto por varios pasos. El hecho de utilizar metodologías repetitivas en cada etapa nos permite corregir en cada una los errores que hayan podido irse encontrando en las anteriores.

Al principio se llevó a cabo una *front-end evaluation* que también recibe el nombre de evaluación previa o “frontal” (evaluación exploratoria). Se evaluaron principalmente, los intereses de los visitantes con respecto a la recocina valenciana y los conocimientos previos que se poseían al respecto, las *misconceptions* (ideas erróneas) y las teorías alternativas sobre los contenidos de la recocina valenciana (Dierking y Pollock, 1998; Hayward, J. y Loomis, 1993; Shettel, 1992) Esta parte de la evaluación permite identificar los objetivos del proyecto, aumentar la comprensión de los conocimientos del público potencial y sus intereses previos en relación a los conceptos, probar las teorías existentes sobre el comportamiento del visitante y su capacidad de aprendizaje, averiguar las necesidades del público y cómo podemos cubrirlas, recopilar información pertinente acerca del público visitante y las ideas que se han propuesto para guiar el proceso de toma de decisiones. Los métodos que se han utilizado habitualmente incluyen:

- cuestionarios adaptados a las características de la muestra
- entrevistas no estructuradas y semi-estructuradas
- conversaciones informales
- encuestas tanto presenciales como on-line
- talleres y actividades, entre otras los *focus group* (grupos de interés).
- estudios previos sobre investigaciones e informes de proyectos similares y la revisión bibliográfica.

La segunda fase, “formativa” (de monitorización) o *formative evaluation* tratamos de comprobar la viabilidad del programa en diferentes públicos, para evaluar y valorar la comprensión y la capacidad de aprendizaje de los distintos tipos de visitantes. Como es habitual, esta etapa se incluyó en la fase inicial del diseño para poner a prueba los distintos elementos de la exposición. Ya que tiene lugar en una etapa de desarrollo de la evaluación, nos permite incorporar los resultados obtenidos al producto final.

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(Griggs, 1981; Screven, 1988, 1990; Taylor, 1991). Sus objetivos son: evaluar la eficacia comunicativa del programa, mejorarlo hasta que sea lo más óptimo posible y obtener información sobre los procesos de aprendizaje y comunicación.

Los métodos que se suelen utilizar en esta etapa incluyen:

- la recogida de datos con muestras pequeñas
- entrevistas semi-estructuradas
- observaciones estructuradas o no y las actividades con grupos de interés.
- revisión bibliográfica, los informes de evaluación de trabajos anteriores
- información que puedan aportar consultores y compañeros.

En una tercera fase se desarrollarán las tareas para la evaluación de la eficiencia del sistema en diferentes audiencias, incluyendo la evaluación de la usabilidad y la viabilidad, el impacto del sistema, el aprendizaje, la mejora de la fidelidad y un análisis de costes-resultados. Esta fase de la evaluación recibe el nombre de “remedial” (correctiva) o *remedial evaluation* que sucede después de quedar abierta la exposición y sirve para ver lo que se ha hecho hasta ahora (Kelly, 2001). Normalmente esta parte se centra en los factores físicos y ambientales que interactúan con el mensaje expositivo: la disposición del espacio, las características físicas y arquitectónicas, la iluminación, la disposición de las cartelas informativas, la entrada y la salida y los factores psicológicos de los visitantes como el hacinamiento, la desorientación, el cansancio y la fatiga, el contexto social del museo, la sobrecarga informativa, la capacidad de aprendizaje, etcétera. Los objetivos de esta fase son principalmente comprobar el programa y su funcionamiento en un sentido práctico y mejorar la eficacia del programa con centro en el visitante.

- Los métodos utilizados en esta etapa incluyen:
- las observaciones
- la retroalimentación formal de los visitantes
- hojas de *feedback* en general y encuestas y entrevistas de carácter más estructurado.
- los comentarios sobre libros específicos y el *feedback* por parte del personal de planta del museo y el personal de recepción especialmente.

La fase de evaluación “sumativa” (síntesis acumulativa general) o *sumative evaluation*, utiliza varios métodos y se desarrolla al final de una exposición o un programa para comprobar si se ha conseguido transmitir con éxito el mensaje expositivo que se pretendía y si se ha producido o no el aprendizaje deseado en los visitantes. Además, se evalúa el grado de satisfacción de éstos con respecto al programa, así como el desarrollo y la eficacia de las estrategias de *marketing* del mismo (Beer, 1987; Chiozzi y Andreotii, 2001). Es decir, proporciona la información general sobre el programa de trabajo: cómo los visitantes lo usan, lo que han aprendido de él, la forma en la que se ha producido la interacción entre los visitantes y el programa, aportar informes sobre el plan para proyectos futuros, sugerencias para la investigación, identificación de los problemas de usabilidad, el interés y aprendizaje por parte de los visitantes, identificar estrategias exitosas, diseños e identificar la relación entre los costes del programa y los resultados obtenidos, a través de un análisis de costes-beneficios.

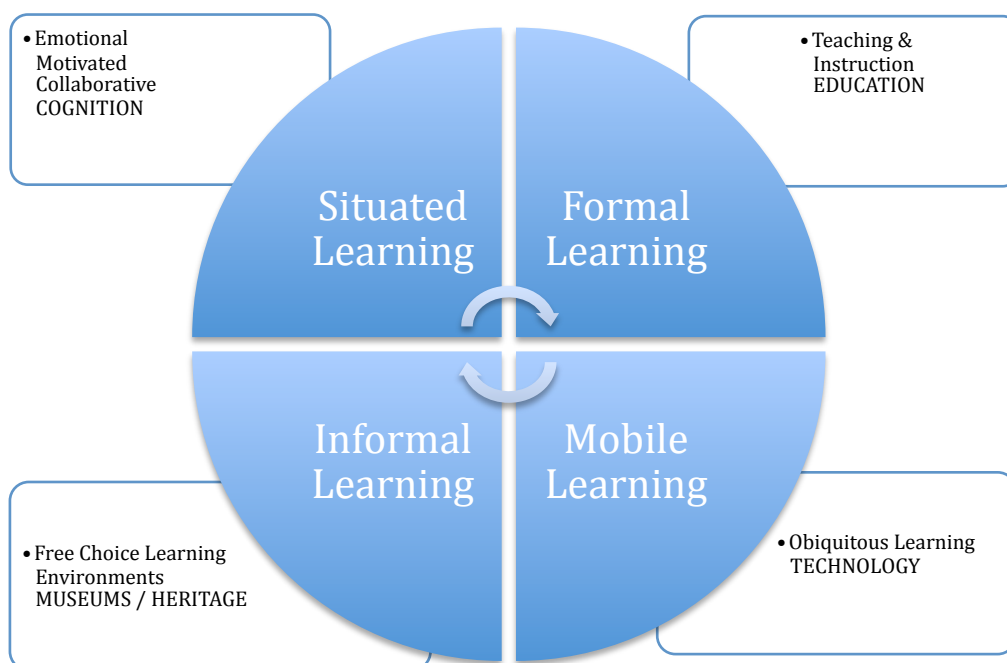
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Esta fase se desarrolla utilizando un cruce de los datos obtenidos a través de fuentes internas (por ejemplo, el equipo del proyecto) y fuentes externas (como los visitantes en general). Los métodos utilizados incluyen:

- las encuestas a gran escala y entrevistas en profundidad
- la observación estructurada
- evaluaciones formales con los visitantes o con grupos concretos
- la evaluación crítica
- revisiones críticas de los medios comunicativos del museo
- rastreo del número de visitantes
- comentarios sobre bibliografía concreta
- el análisis sobre el *feedback* del público (informes de ingresos en el museo y el análisis de sus estadísticas habituales)

Nuestra evaluación se basa en un marco teórico con cuatro bases fundamentales: la teoría psicológica del aprendizaje situado, como marco comprensivo y teoría de sujeto; el aprendizaje informal o de libre elección como sintaxis propia del aprendizaje en museos; la teoría de la instrucción como el referente educativo que no puede perderse; y la modulación sustancial que está aportando la tecnología, mediante el formato básico de '*mobile learning*' (aprendizaje móvil o ubicuo) dentro del aprendizaje ubicuo (nuestra intención en este punto es solo nombrar algunos de los marcos teóricos de referencia siendo conscientes de que la discusión de estos aspectos escapa totalmente a este artículo, una discusión en profundidad de dichos aspectos puede verse en Asensio y Pol, 2008; Caldera et al., 2010; Asensio, Asenjo & Rodríguez, 2011).



*Cuadro de perspectivas teóricas complementarias que afectan a la concepción de la teoría del visitante en los museos y exposiciones.

5. El Plan de Evaluación Frontal.

Se diseñó la *'Previous Potential Knowledge Task' (PPKT-1)* (Tarea de conocimiento potencial previo), que se llevó a cabo con una muestra de 63 personas en el contexto real de la recocina valenciana (al igual que el resto de tareas componentes de la evaluación) como una experiencia no estructurada de carácter cualitativo, compuesta por un post-test en el que se midieron los intereses y las motivaciones de los visitantes, sus conocimientos previos y teorías alternativas así como la capacidad de aprendizaje. Uno de los objetivos de esta tarea fue tomar la mayor cantidad de datos posible. Determinamos que no se trata de una tarea estructurada puesto que los visitantes no recibieron ningún tipo de visita guiada. Se les encuestó mediante preguntas abiertas sobre los personajes que aparecen representados, los objetos que les parecen más extraños y sobre sus dudas acerca de los diferentes elementos representados, las interpretaciones que hacen, y sobre las representaciones iconológicas e iconográficas de la recocina. La evaluación se complementó con una observación no estructurada durante el desarrollo de la tarea y éstas se llevaron a cabo con apoyo de un material gráfico impreso e individual.

En la siguiente tarea *'Induced Potential Knowledge Task' (IPKT-2)* (Tarea de conocimiento potencial inducido), los diferentes grupos recibieron una visita guiada entre el pre-test y el pos-test y fueron un total de 80 participantes. Lo que se evalúa principalmente son los intereses y las motivaciones de los visitantes, sus conocimientos previos (en el pre-test), la existencia o no de teorías alternativas, y la capacidad de aprendizaje de los visitantes (en el post-test). Lo innovador de esta tarea es el uso de la metodología SIPP (Sistema Interactivo de Participación de Público).

Por último se ha llevado a cabo una tercera tarea con una muestra de 142 sujetos, denominada *Suggested Potential Knowledge Task (SPKT-3)* (Tarea de conocimiento potencial sugerido). Ésta consistió en la presentación de un pre-test seguido de una exposición contextualizada, en la que se llevó a cabo una cata de chocolates siguiendo la receta de varios siglos (desde el siglo XV hasta el siglo XX). Después se suministró un post-test. Algunas de las preguntas de PPKT-2 fueron incluidas en esta fase para llevar a cabo un estudio comparativo.

Calendario.	Fases de la Evaluación.	Temas Principales.
Primera Fase. Segundo semestre del 2011. Primer semestre del 2012.	<i>Front end evaluation</i> (evaluación frontal)	Intereses y conocimientos previos del visitante, ideas erróneas, teorías alternativas, usabilidad, capacidad de aprendizaje.
Segunda Fase. Segundo semestre del 2012 (*)	<i>Formative evaluation</i> (evaluación formative)	Programa propuesto para el dispositivo, viabilidad en diferentes audiencias, capacidad de aprendizaje y comprensión.
Tercera Fase. Primer semestre del 2013 (*)	<i>Summative evaluation</i> (evaluación sumativa)	Eficiencia del sistema en diferentes audiencias, usabilidad y viabilidad, impacto, aprendizaje, mejora de la fidelidad del visitante, Análisis de costes-resultados.

6.- Resultados.

Un primer problema es que entre el público general del museo, la inmensa mayoría son adultos con una edad media que ronda los setenta y principalmente son mujeres, residentes casi todos en la Comunidad de Madrid. Además, los medios de difusión del museo no tienen una gran captación.

Teniendo en cuenta los resultados tras el análisis, el cuestionario resultó ser un método cualitativo eficaz proporcionando mucha información sobre lo que los visitantes piensan y sienten en la experiencia de la recocina. Por otro lado, el SIPP como herramienta de evaluación resultó ser un dispositivo eficaz a la hora de tomar datos tanto cuantitativos como cualitativos, y facilitó mucho el proceso de tratamiento de los datos y su gestión. Las preguntas funcionaron bien sin atender a un criterio específico.


En esta revisión los resultados no son aún concluyentes, sino orientadores, debido a que el proceso de evaluación no ha llegado a término aún. No obstante, posteriormente se analizarán los resultados cruzados de las diferentes etapas evaluativas y entre los diferentes ítems de una misma tarea para encontrar resultados más interesantes y alentadores. Lo que esperamos como resultado de este estudio de público, y como resultado de la adaptación del contenido del dispositivo de ARTSENSE a las necesidades del visitante, es poder facilitar al usuario de este dispositivo la oportunidad de llevar a su casa una vivencia interesante, un conocimiento significativo y centrado en sus intereses, evitando de cualquier modo caer en la transmisión de un mensaje vacío y carente de significado para el que lo recibe y construye.

A continuación, a modo de ejemplo, recogemos un ítem de la tarea 2. En dicho ítem podemos ver el tipo de evaluación y los tipos de resultados que conforman la evaluación.

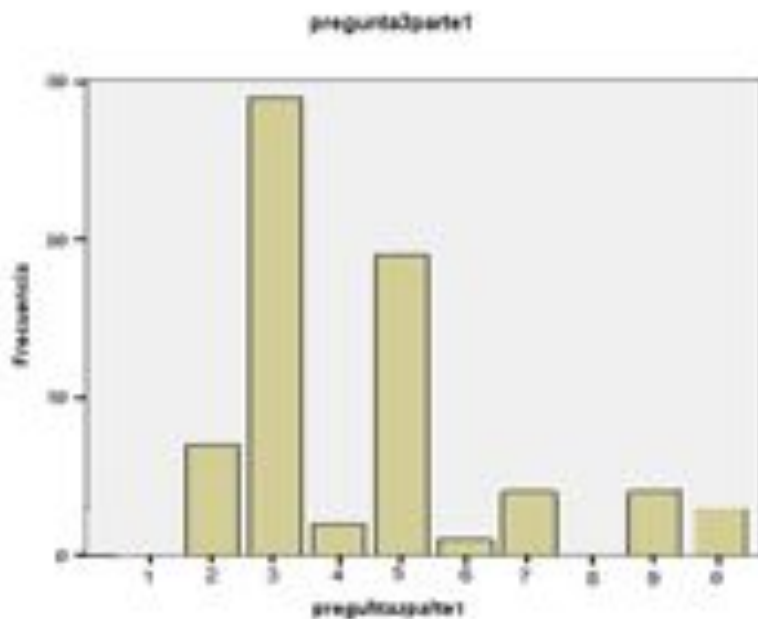
IPKT-2. Pregunta 3.

Evaluación del Proyecto Europeo Artsense.
Interpret-Lab - Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

Fíjese un momento en la ropa de los personajes.
¿Cuál de los ellos le llama la atención por cómo
va vestido?



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0



Sin duda la recocina valenciana es una de las piezas más llamativas del MNAD y, a día de hoy, aparece desprovista de un apoyo comunicativo suficiente. Los visitantes manifiestan en la evaluación, su incapacidad para comprender el contenido específico de la recocina sin un soporte comunicativo que contenga el mensaje expositivo de una manera clara y completa. Sin este soporte adicional, los visitantes aparecen más desmotivados y menos interesados por el propio sentimiento de incomprensión e imposibilidad. Sin embargo, a medida que van asimilando y construyendo de forma activa su conocimiento acerca de la recocina, muestran un mayor interés e implicación con las tareas de la evaluación. Un dato significativo es la reducción de valores perdidos en el análisis a medida que las tareas involucraban a los participantes y se les daba la oportunidad de actuar de manera activa.

Otro dato relevante es que la capacidad de aprendizaje de los visitantes y su nivel de conocimiento previo no varía significativamente antes y después de la visita, pero sí se reflejó una mejora en el reconocimiento de objetos entre el pre y el post-test en IPKT 2. Además, aparecieron un complejo de teorías alternativas con las que los visitantes llegaban a la recocina y que no se desmintieron sin un tratamiento informacional específico inserto en las tareas. Quizá la teoría errónea más importante es que el visitante llega desde un primer momento con la idea de que la recocina valenciana era una *cocina* y servía como tal, construyendo todo el significado en base a esa idea errónea. La recocina, como la venimos llamando hasta ahora, se trataría como una especie de *office* de la época, por lo que no era una cocina como tal, ni se cocinaba en ella. Lo que ha llamado la atención especialmente es lo poco que han interesado a los visitantes los personajes en general, y la forma en la que se fijan en unos y no en otros, que en principio se pensaba que eran los más representativos o llamativos, para sorpresa del personal del museo y la nuestra propia.

7. Epílogo.

La investigación sobre públicos en el proyecto que comentamos, solamente acaba de comenzar. La evaluación frontal está aportando datos sustanciales para conocer las claves del diseño de los contenidos que se implementarán en el dispositivo de

realidad aumentada. Algunos de las respuestas obtenidas han ido en contra totalmente de las expectativas de los conservadores de las colecciones, poniendo una vez más de manifiesto que los expertos no son buenos detectores del pensamiento 'naive' o no experto (en la línea de los trabajos de museos de ciencia, Borun et al, 2010).

Por su parte, la fase siguiente, de evaluación formativa, que ahora comenzamos, estará centrada especialmente en los aspectos de comprensibilidad y de usabilidad del dispositivo, lo que esperamos que mejore sustancialmente la ergonomía global del sistema.

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ANÁLISIS DE LAS WEBS DE MUSEOS DESDE LA PERSPECTIVA DEL VISITANTE¹

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RESUMEN

Nuestro trabajo revisa la utilización de las páginas WEB de los museos desde el punto de vista de las audiencias. Se presentan y se discuten los resultados de una investigación “Lazos de Luz Azul” (del Proyecto del Nacional de Investigación), realizada sobre 262 museos españoles. La metodología empírica utilizada es la observación con análisis interjueces de las web de los museos, utilizando una herramienta previa de análisis de indicadores previamente validado tanto método empírico como mediante el análisis entre expertos. La herramienta analiza: la información general de la página WEB; sus características sus servicios y sus audiencias objetivo; sus aspectos comunicativos; los servicios que ofrecen; los recursos y ofertas pedagógicas y de participación.

Los resultados muestran una gran distancia entre las posibilidades de las plataformas y el uso real que se está realizando. La mayoría de las páginas WEB se restringen a un plano informativo (nivel 1.0), presentando a menudo notables fallos de diseño y usabilidad. En general las páginas no están perfiladas a diferentes tipos de audiencias. Se muestra también unos niveles muy bajos de propuestas de comunicación (nivel 2.0); y salvo en casos muy puntuales y no sostenibles, una ausencia casi total de participación colaborativa (nivel 3.0). Por último se muestra igualmente la falta casi total de evaluación.

ABSTRACT

Analysis of museum websites as seen by the visitor

Our paper reviews the use of the websites of the museums from the viewpoint of the audience. We present and discuss the results of the study: "Loops of Blue Light" (the National Research Project) conducted in 262 Spanish museums. The methodology used is empirical observation, using a pre-analysis tool previously validated from an empirical study and an analysis from experts. The tool analyzes the overview of the website and its services, and presents their target audiences, their communicative aspects, their services, and discusses their educational resources and participation.

The results show a wide gap between the possibilities of the platforms and the actual use that is being made of them. Most web pages are restricted to an

¹ Una parte de los argumentos de esta reflexión han sido presentados en: Fernández, H. & Asensio, M. (2012) e-Heritage and e-Museums: technological resources for tourism planning. *International Journal of Web Based Communities (IJWBC)*, vol 8, nº 1, 5-23. Este artículo se enmarca en el ámbito del Proyecto de I+D+i, promovido por el Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia (DIGICYT), a través de la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, bajo la dirección de Mikel Asensio, titulado “Lazos de Luz Azul: Estándares de Calidad en la Utilización de la Tecnología para el Aprendizaje en Museos y Espacios de Presentación del Patrimonio” (SEJ2006-15352/EDUC); ver www.uam.es/mikel.asensio Y también se ha contado con la financiación de la Acción Complementaria: edu2009 – 06686-E/educ, del mismo organismo.

informational level (level 1.0), often associated with design flaws and usability problems. Overall the pages are not profiled toward different types of audiences. It also shows very low levels of communication proposals (Level 2.0), and, except in rare cases and probably unsustainable, an almost total absence of collaborative participation (level 3.0). Finally it also shows the almost total lack of evaluation.

RÉSUMÉ

Analyse des sites Web des musées du point de vue des visiteurs

Notre article passe en revue l'utilisation des sites Web des musées du point de vue des publics. Nous présentons et discutons les résultats d'une étude "Lazos de Luz Azul [Boucles de lumière bleue]" (Projet national de recherche), menée sur 262 musées espagnols. La méthodologie utilisée est l'analyse empirique (observation interjuges) de musée web, en utilisant un outil indicateur de pré-analyse préalablement validé à la fois comme méthode empirique et pour l'analyse des experts. L'outil analyse la vue d'ensemble du site, ses services et propose leurs publics cibles, de leurs aspects communicatifs, de leurs services, et offre des ressources éducatives et de la participation.

Les résultats montrent un écart important entre les possibilités des formats technologiques et l'utilisation réelle qu'on en fait. La plupart des pages Web sont limités à un niveau d'information (niveau 1.0), souvent associé aux défauts de la conception et à une mauvais convivialité. Globalement, les pages ne sont pas profilés pour différents types de publics. Il montre également de très faibles niveaux de propositions de communication (niveau 2.0), et sauf dans de rares cas et insoutenable, une absence presque totale de la participation collaborative (niveau 3,0). Enfin, il montre aussi l'absence presque totale de l'évaluation.

* * *

1 Introducción a las WEBS como el primer nivel de planificación de la agenda de los visitantes.

El desarrollo de la WEBS está cambiando la forma en la que se planifica la visita a los museos y a los espacios de patrimonio, los usos y los recursos disponibles, ampliando las tradicionales formas de comunicación y gestión (Mitsche, Reino, Knox y Bavernfeind, 2008, Sigala, y Leslie, 2005). El uso de Internet por el turismo ha tenido un incremento constante en los últimos años, llegando a convertirse, para porcentajes significativos de determinados tipos de visitantes, en el recurso habitual para planificar el viaje. El perfil tipo del turista actual coincide con una persona que organiza su propio viaje, con menos tiempo, más exigente y acostumbrado a contratar los servicios directamente (Buhalis y Law, 2008). Durante el 2008, más del 25% de las reservas de viaje se realizaron mediante Internet en los países del norte de Europa (OECD, 2010). La previsión es que esta tendencia continúe en aumento y se generalice a otros ámbitos (Law, Qi y Buhalis, 2010). Además, cabe destacar que uno de los segmentos de turismo con mayor demanda para la próxima década son los productos y actividades asociadas a la cultura (OECD, 2009), ya que, por sectores, el sector del turismo cultural es el que más está creciendo, con un techo que parece aún lejano. Aunque aún se planteen diferentes modelos sobre cómo gestionar los espacios de presentación de patrimonio, el turismo supone un reto importante para la puesta en valor del patrimonio local. Por ello, los datos relativos al uso de las WEB adquiere una dimensión central y global.

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Análisis de las webs de museos desde la perspectiva del visitante

Sin embargo, las pocas investigaciones aún realizadas sobre el uso de las WEBS por Museos, y espacios de presentación de Patrimonio, muestran un desfase considerable entre estas demandas crecientes y la oferta de recursos. La 'Gestión de Audiencias' (Asensio & Pol, 2008) es un concepto integrado de diversas áreas complementarias y supone una parte central de la gestión general de un Museo (además de la gestión de colecciones y la gestión de recursos humanos y económicos). Las WEBS parecen una herramienta muy importante en la gestión de audiencias, que podrían "aportar nuevas soluciones a viejos problemas", como es mejorar la capacidad de difusión, llegar a nuevos públicos potenciales, mejorar los programas públicos para el entretenimiento y el aprendizaje, y mejorar las campañas de comunicación. En suma, el uso de las WEBS para la planificación de las visitas permitiría a los centros patrimoniales manipular la 'agenda del visitante', un aspecto central de la gestión que idealmente debe realizarse antes de la llegada al centro patrimonial.

En los últimos años, los museos y espacios de patrimonio están generando un modelo de 'museo envolvente' que propicia un mayor protagonismo de la función interpretativa, que busca una experiencia más profunda, y no una mera contemplación superficial de arquitecturas, obras, piezas, fenómenos o artefactos (Asensio & Pol, 2008). Estos espacios se caracterizan por contener mensajes más elaborados, pensados desde el receptor, con más recursos comunicativos y con mensajes expositivos más impactantes, más eficaces como entornos relevantes para el 'aprendizaje motivado' (Asensio, Asenjo y Rodríguez, 2011). Estos espacios van conformando ofertas de ocio cultural más elaboradas, complejas y diversificadas, que implican una gestión más adaptada y una mayor planificación por parte de la institución y de los visitantes. Esta oferta debería jugar un papel central en el aumento progresivo de la oferta de turismo cultural entre las preferencias de ocio y las actividades de tiempo libre en los destinos turísticos. Esta concepción interpretativa es más efectiva en términos de impacto y de fidelización, pero resulta más exigente en cuanto a decisiones de planificación, ya que suele ser más exigente en términos de tiempo e implicación; aspecto éste que hay que planificar con antelación. Esta concepción iría más allá de la oferta turística de primer nivel, más superficial, donde se ha priorizado la motivación centrada en los aspectos lúdicos y de recreación. Estos espacios están comenzando a suponer intereses más profundos asociados a contenidos más complejos (Moscardo, 1996) y a la experiencia emocional (Poria, Butler & Airey, 2004).

2. Museos globales, y prácticas locales.

Las NTICs han ido imponiendo cambios con consecuencias en todos los ámbitos científicos, incluido el ámbito de la gestión del patrimonio, ampliando, de esta forma, las tradicionales herramientas utilizadas tanto en la conservación y en la investigación como en la difusión cultural (Geser y Arnold, 2008). Encontramos algunas referencias sobre estas aplicaciones en recientes trabajos de investigación y de recopilación en los últimos años (Bascones y Carreras, 2009; Mateos, 2008; Carrera y Munillas, 2005) que resaltan algunas de sus ventajas frente a otras herramientas tradicionales. Las potencialidades incluyen la posibilidad espacial y temporal de acceso, desde casi cualquier punto y en cualquier momento, hasta las grandes posibilidades de capacidad general del sistema para albergar opciones, lo que permite la facilidad de adecuación a los diferentes públicos y sus distintos intereses, pasando por permitir una significativa mejora en la accesibilidad visual y auditiva de personas con limitaciones sensoriales (Proctor, 2005). Las tecnologías digitales se han convertido en el medio elegido porque proveen aparentemente de recursos funcionalmente ilimitados (Kalay, 2008). "Sin embargo, cualquier medio que se elija para preservar el patrimonio no es neutral, impacta sobre la información representada y en la forma en que la sociedad lo

interpreta, pero aún no se ha investigado lo suficientemente su impacto sobre la preservación del patrimonio” (Kalay, Kvan y Affleck, 2008), ni tampoco sobre sus posibilidades y su gestión.

En esta línea, los resultados de estos estudios han puesto de manifiesto una enorme brecha aún existente entre las posibilidades y el nivel de implantación de las NTICs. Esto se aprecia en el desarrollo muy desigual que se ha seguido en las propias instituciones culturales y en los usos generados en los espacios de patrimonio (Geser y Arnold, 2008; Geiser y Pereira, 2004). Además, se produce un sesgo importante hacia el mayor énfasis en los aspectos relacionados con la accesibilidad técnica frente a otras consideraciones, no menos importantes en el acceso al conocimiento. Los retos de la actual agenda de investigación en las aplicaciones de las NTICs al patrimonio cultural van más allá, pues el futuro desarrollo de las tecnologías debe incidir en la importancia de lo que podemos llamar accesibilidad cognitiva y emocional, una accesibilidad no centrada exclusivamente en los recursos y en las aplicaciones, sino también en el usuario, quien asume cada vez un papel más activo y con mayores demandas (Hawkey, 2004; Soren, 2005; Marty, 2008; Alwi y McKay, 2009).

Aunque este despliegue de recursos para la gestión del patrimonio no podía ser imaginado ni siquiera en los años 90', cuando la WWW se encontraba en sus primeros años de vida, en el futuro generará continuos cambios tanto en su formato de presentación como en las aplicaciones disponibles. La Web está en constante renovación, como señalaba uno de los autores que han contribuido a su desarrollo desde los comienzos, Berners-Lee, cuando nos recordaba que el ritmo de creación del diseño de la Web se acelera y no está terminada. Las fases del desarrollo de las NTICs han seguido períodos aproximados de una década, como los cambios introducidos por la aparición de la llamada 'Web 2.0' a partir de 2003. Dicho término, definido por Tim O'Reilly, se crea porque la nueva plataforma superaba las posibilidades anteriores, al proveer de mayor conectividad y de un carácter más participativo que su predecesor. El término 'Web 1.0' se define en relación a los cambios respecto a su sucesor, la 'Web 2.0', destacando que fue la primera versión de la World Wide Web. Solamente permitía la lectura, se centraba en la publicación de páginas estáticas y no se daba la posibilidad de la interacción del usuario con los contenidos elaborados por el Webmaster. Por otro lado, la 'Web 2.0' significa un salto cualitativo en las potencialidades de este recurso, siendo más dinámica y participativa. En poco tiempo ha aumentado exponencialmente la complejidad de la Internet y la aparición de nuevas aplicaciones, cada vez más diferenciadas, así como la consideración diferencial del usuario. En la actualidad son ya muchos autores los que reclaman un análisis más preciso, diferenciando entre plataformas 2.0 y 3.0, ya que en el nivel más elaborado se introducen elementos a su vez muy dispares. A continuación proponemos un cuadro que marca diferencias notables entre los tres tipos posibles de plataformas que conviven en la actualidad.

	Plataforma 1.0	Plataforma 2.0	Plataforma 3.0
Herramienta	WEBS	REDES SOCIALES	ENTORNOS ELABORATIVOS
Objetivo básico de la plataforma	Informativo (consulta, muestra, reserva, compra)	Comunicativo (conecta, comenta, critica, opina)	Participativo (discute, aporta, crea)
Beneficio	Acceso a productos ya elaborados	Conexión con otros usuarios	Colaboración en nuevos productos cooperativos
Tipo de Conocimiento	Reproductivo	Acumulativo	Generativo
Participación de la Audiencia	No Perfilada	Seleccionada	Dirigida

Cuadro 1: descripción de la plataformas 1, 2 y 3.0

Es indudable la probada capacidad en la creación y en la difusión de contenidos en las plataformas digitales, pero también es importante plantearse cómo influyen sus resultados en la generación del conocimiento y en el aprendizaje. Este proceso de acceso a la cultura digital presenta grandes posibilidades y ciertos riesgos. El reto consiste en conseguir no sólo aumentar de forma ilimitada las aplicaciones sino que éstas a su vez sean más adecuadas para los distintos usuarios y adaptadas para los diferentes usos. Esto requiere conocer la forma en que los usuarios interactúan con ellas, sus dificultades o aprovechamientos, lo que en cierta medida determinará la consolidación y la pervivencia de unas tecnologías frente a otras. De esta forma, vemos de qué manera se refleja la necesidad de conocer cómo se ha ido implementando el uso de las plataformas digitales en los museos y espacios de patrimonio y, en especial, respecto a sus aplicaciones para la difusión y el aprendizaje. Sin embargo, como destacan Falk y Dierking (2008), “se ha producido poca investigación y evaluación sobre la efectividad educativa de las tecnologías digitales, y, en particular, sobre el valor real que añaden las tecnologías en comparación con otras intervenciones educativas”.

Ya en un informe elaborado por FutureLab (Hawkey, 2004) sobre el análisis de los museos en Internet se señalaba que “una mirada rápida a las Webs de museos revela casi todo tipo de posibilidades, desde lo aburrido y tedioso a lo imaginativo e innovador”. El panorama de los recursos digitales en museos está cambiando con relativa rapidez, en especial en lo relacionado con los soportes tecnológicos y con los aspectos técnicos, lo cual se aprecia en la necesaria actualización que requieren aquellos espacios patrimoniales más innovadores. Pero nos parece importante destacar que se hace necesario que la dirección de los futuros desarrollos pase por darles una mayor relevancia también a las aplicaciones para la accesibilidad y la “usabilidad” en un sentido más amplio, en especial para crear entornos con mayores

potencialidades educativas y para fomentar el aprendizaje (Ellis y Kelly, 2007; Marty, 2008; Bonini, 2008).

Por último, mientras que la oferta que realizan las WEBS y las redes sociales son globales, aparentemente abiertos a audiencias muy abiertas y distantes, la realidad es que el uso que se hace de ellas es muy local y restringido, limitado a audiencias muy dirigidas y cercanas, especialmente en los niveles de interactividad y colaboración de mayor nivel. Así, los contactos y demandas habituales desde audiencias globales, distantes geográfica social o psicológicamente, son muy superficiales, los informes indican que raramente sirven para planificar la agenda más allá de servir de información básica típica de guía turística. Esta contradicción entre la oferta y la demanda ha hecho que algunos autores califiquen la oferta digital de los museos como 'glocal' (mezclando los conceptos de 'glo-bal' con 'lo-cal') (Caldera, Asensio & Pol, 2010).

3. Impacto de la Web en los museos y en los espacios de patrimonio en España.

En la última década encontramos numerosos trabajos que no dudan en destacar las potencialidades de la Web para la comunidad científica interesada en la discusión e investigación acerca del aprendizaje informal a través de Internet (Crowley, Leinhardt y Chang, 2001). Estos trabajos recogen desde los diferentes resultados obtenidos en museos en el ámbito internacional (Hawkey, 2004; Soren, 2005; Veltman, 2005) hasta el interés por trazar una agenda para la aplicación de las tecnologías al patrimonio cultural (Geser y Arnold, 2008), y entre sus ejes está el desarrollo de los entornos de aprendizaje. Estos estudios se han centrado en diversos objetivos: desde el análisis de la satisfacción general en su "usabilidad" a las Webs de los propios museos (Fotakis y Economides, 2008) o la importancia del desarrollo de mejores sistemas para evaluar la actividad, el impacto, el perfil y los recursos de las Webs, como el estudio que se desarrolló en la Tate Gallery (Loran, 2004). En todos ellos se plantea la conveniencia de un enfoque centrado en el visitante dentro del desarrollo digital de los recursos para museos. En todos los estudios anteriores los resultados indican la limitación en la implantación de Internet en los museos y espacios de patrimonio de nuestro referente cultural.

La estructura y las posibilidades del uso de las WEBS y de la oferta digital en los Museos y el Patrimonio puede ser muy diferente. En este artículo nos estamos refiriendo a Museos y Espacios de presentación del Patrimonio reales y no virtuales o digitales, que incluyen en la exposición y complementariamente en Internet una serie de recursos digitales, especialmente las WEBS. Pero existen muchas otras posibilidades. Primero, el caso de los museos o de las experiencias patrimoniales desarrolladas exclusiva o prioritariamente en la red o en versión digital. Segundo, los museos virtuales que permiten que los propios visitantes conformen la exposición y selección de objetos, o complementen significativamente la documentación e investigación de las colecciones y los discursos expositivos. Un tercer caso sería el caso concreto de las ofertas de visitas virtuales que realizan algunos museos físicos que sí son museos reales. Estas opciones digitales complementarias a las visitas y ofertas físicas precisarían igualmente un estudio y tratamiento diferenciado. Desde hace tiempo existe la duda razonable sobre si estas ofertas virtuales o digitales ayudan o disuaden las visitas reales. En todos estos casos el uso de los recursos digitales, incluyan o no herramientas exclusivas en WEB, precisarían de un estudio y una valoración diferentes.

Como veremos posteriormente, a pesar de que en el ámbito de las nuevas tecnologías estamos acostumbrados a cambios vertiginosos en períodos relativamente breves de tiempo, no ocurre de la misma forma la implantación en los distintos sectores

profesionales; y comprobamos que el uso de las nuevas tecnologías de la información y de la comunicación en el ámbito cultural continúa planteando algunos problemas y limitaciones. Por ello, nos preguntamos hasta qué punto esas potencialidades en la accesibilidad son reales o sólo son una posibilidad, es decir, nos preguntamos si, en consecuencia, se han generado entornos de aprendizaje informal con mayor capacidad para atraer al público o para generar nuevos conocimientos, y todo ello basándose en las nuevas herramientas de comunicación. Por tanto, sería importante conocer el alcance del uso de Internet por parte del público y de sus aplicaciones e implicaciones para el aprendizaje informal, de la misma forma que se ha demostrado necesaria la evaluación de los contextos de aprendizaje informal en investigaciones anteriores (Asensio y Pol, 2002; Asensio y Pol, 2005). Dentro de este planteamiento, a continuación vamos a exponer un amplio estudio en el que se analiza en profundidad el uso de las nuevas tecnologías de la información y de la comunicación para el aprendizaje informal en las Webs de los museos y espacios de patrimonio en España.

4. El Proyecto de investigación “Lazos de Luz Azul”.

El equipo de investigación del proyecto Lazos de Luz Azul (LLA) diseñó una herramienta para evaluar las Webs de museos y espacios de patrimonio españoles, en concreto los recursos y las aplicaciones de las tecnologías para el aprendizaje (Asensio, 2010). Se elaboró un cuestionario donde se valoraron diversos contenidos relacionados con la información y los servicios ofrecidos por la Web de cada museo. Los aspectos considerados en el cuestionario abarcaban desde los más generales hasta los elementos donde se analizan las aplicaciones educativas y los modelos de aprendizaje implícitos en el desarrollo de los contenidos de la Web, y en el cual una parte del grupo ya trabajó con anterioridad (Ibáñez, Correa y Asensio, 2007).

Los contenidos evaluados fueron muy diversos:

- información general (denominación, localización, temática, uso del territorio, conexión en red y contenidos desarrollados),
- análisis de la Web (idiomas, destinatarios y servicios ofrecidos),
- aspectos funcionales y organizativos (eficacia, navegación y ejecución del programa),
- aspectos comunicativos (enlaces, búsquedas, bi-direccionalidad y entornos de colaboración, bases de datos y diseño Web),
- servicios que ofrecen distintas áreas funcionales del museo (documentación, exposiciones, gestión de públicos, programas, comunicación, marketing, personal, seguridad),
- aspectos pedagógicos (adecuación a usuarios, demostraciones, recursos didácticos, actividades de autoaprendizaje y programas).

El primer resultado global de esta investigación consistió en comprobar que la mayor parte de las páginas WEBS estudiadas de todos los tipos de museos incluían aspectos de las plataformas 1.0, siendo escasas las de plataformas que podríamos calificar de 2.0 y 3.0. Dividiremos los resultados en estos dos grandes bloques.

5. Algunos resultados empíricos.

A continuación, mostramos los resultados globales más destacados obtenidos del análisis de una amplia muestra que consta de 289 Webs de museos y espacios de patrimonio en España. Aquí vamos a presentar los resultados globales, aunque el

estudio se realizó considerando multitud de variables específicas (temática, localización, etc.) de forma diferenciada, como se muestra en la memoria final (Asensio, 2010).

Como decíamos antes, comenzaremos describiendo las características 1.0. por ser las más abundantes, por un lado, y las más básicas por otro. Estas características se refieren a los aspectos descriptivos e informativos de las plataformas Web.

Los idiomas utilizados en las páginas Web del estudio (véanse la Tabla 2 y la Gráfica 2) muestran un sesgo exclusivo en el uso de un solo idioma, el español, en todos los casos (100%), y sólo una tercera parte de ellas también dispone de una segunda opción en otra lengua, habitualmente en inglés (29,4%). Sólo una pequeña proporción de las páginas dispone de versiones de la Web en más de un idioma internacional, entre los que se pueden incluir: el francés (9%), el alemán (3,8%) y el italiano (1,4%). Sólo el 13,2 % de las páginas Web analizadas estaban traducidas además a otra lengua de las comunidades autónomas españolas, fundamentalmente en aquellas donde se localiza el museo (euskera, catalán, gallego). Aunque este dato es sólo orientativo, ya que no todas las comunidades autónomas están igualmente representadas en este estudio ni todas disponen de lengua propia. Sin embargo, estos datos sí denotan una falta de apertura y captación de público procedente de más allá de nuestras fronteras. Lo cual es bastante significativo cuando estamos hablando de un medio tan internacional como es Internet.

En relación al diseño de la Web para los distintos usuarios que acceden a la plataforma (véase la Tabla 3), en la mayoría de los casos se dirige principalmente a un público en general (99%), y sólo en determinados casos se distingue el acceso para otros públicos: escolar (28,7%), adulto (23,2%) y profesional (13,5%), como se refleja en la Gráfica 3. Una vez más, como en el caso del idioma, podemos confirmar el escaso interés general en nichos de públicos potenciales y específicos.

Según los tipos de servicios básicos ofrecidos por las Webs de los espacios patrimoniales, podemos destacar la información básica aportada, que es la más frecuente (97%), y la galería de imágenes (58,3%). Otros servicios menos habituales que encontramos son los que incluyen información sobre alguna oferta educativa, en menos de la mitad de las plataformas analizadas (38,9%), y aquellos que dan la opción de la visita virtual (19,4%). Sólo un reducido número oferta otros servicios: la participación en la Web (11%) y la respuesta a las preguntas frecuentes de los visitantes de la Web o FAQs (1,1%), como se puede observar a continuación (Tabla 4 y Gráfica 4).

Por otro lado, toda página Web deber tener unas características de usabilidad que permita al usuario tener, como mínimo, acceso a la información que contiene. Uno de los elementos importantes en la “usabilidad” de una Web es el de los servicios de navegación disponibles en la plataforma. En el análisis general observamos que los recursos habituales, como se detalla en la Tabla 5 y en la Gráfica 5, son: primero, la identificación clara de los datos, en el 84,2% de las veces; segundo, el menú de la Web estaba presente siempre en el 71,4 % de los casos; y, tercero, los hipervínculos resaltados (68,7%). Otros recursos disponibles que mejoran considerablemente la navegación pero que están presentes con menor frecuencia son: el índice temático (44,4%), el esquema de acceso (31,3%), el mapa de navegación (23,2%) y las ventanas de información (12,0%).

Se distingue claramente que las Webs de patrimonio están más dirigidas a ofrecer una información general de los contenidos expositivos que hacia ningún otro servicio. Por el contrario, tienen una escasa relevancia en las Webs de los museos tanto los entornos de colaboración como los recursos educativos -salvo a un nivel informativo-, comprobando así que son minoritarios en el desarrollo tecnológico. Un poco más

adelante hablaremos específicamente de las cuestiones de bidireccionalidad, colaboración y educación en su relación con aspectos 2.0. y 3.0., que se derivan de estos resultados.

En relación con otros aspectos comunicativos comprobamos que se dan con más frecuencia, pero sigue siendo minoritario que mediante las Webs de museos se acceda a la documentación (26%) y a las bases de datos (21,1%). En lo que se refiere a la documentación, se consideró si la plataforma permitía el acceso a catálogos de biblioteca, documentos y descargas completas de archivos. En las bases de datos consideramos la información que estaba disponible para el visitante y las características de la misma (temática, motores de búsqueda y actualización, etc.).

Por otra parte, la mayor frecuencia de uso de la Web por parte de los espacios de patrimonio se produce como un medio de difusión de las exposiciones (94,5%). La información está dirigida a la exposición permanente (90,7%) más que a la temporal (40,9%). Dentro de los recursos que se aportan para la exposición permanente se encuentran: la galería de imágenes (52,6%), el mapa (27%) o la visita virtual (17,6%). En todos los casos, la frecuencia con la que encontramos estas opciones en las exposiciones temporales es mucho menor.

En general, los recursos de la Web más habituales se dirigen a la propia exposición, y aun así comprobamos que pueden estar disponibles en sólo la mitad de las plataformas analizadas. En cuanto al ámbito educativo, el 40,7% menciona qué tipos de actividades se realizan en el centro y se aportan distintos tipos de información al respecto, que suelen consistir desde la mínima información (horario y breve descripción), que suele ser en la mayoría de los casos, hasta una gran cantidad de material relacionado, que aparece en escasas ocasiones.

En conclusión, estos resultados nos dibujan unos espacios de patrimonio en los que la tecnología está aún ausente, como también lo está en sus programas de público y programas educativos.

Queremos reflexionar sobre los aspectos 2.0. y 3.0. encontrados en la evaluación. Si como decíamos antes las plataformas 2.0. son aquellas en las que los usuarios pueden expresar cualquier tipo de mensaje, idea u opinión, los recursos que promueven dichas posibilidades, en su mayor parte, lo hacen de forma extremadamente limitada. En este sentido, hemos considerado los recursos de bidireccionalidad, que aunque encajan dentro de la Web 2.0., no explotan en absoluto las grandes posibilidades que ofrece esta última. Estos recursos son los más habituales (55%), pese a no consistir en nada más que en la opción de envío de correo electrónico solicitando información o aportar sugerencias. Otro criterio de bidireccionalidad que se acercaría un paso a la colaboración, sería el hecho de que esas solicitudes o sugerencias fueran públicas en la Web. En este caso se produce un descenso sorprendente, ya que sólo el 1,3% de los sitios Web evaluados publican estas cuestiones.

Otros recursos, que son más característicos del entorno Web 2.0, como son los recursos de colaboración, se producen con una frecuencia mínima. Esta variable evaluaba si la Web disponía de herramientas que promovieran el intercambio de ideas entre los interesados mediante foros, listas de distribución y *chats*. Como vemos en la tabla 8, los resultados son bastante desalentadores. De 289 sitios Web evaluados ninguno disponía de Chat, sólo un 2,4% tenía foros y un 5,5% listas de distribución.

Si el panorama es desolador cuando consideramos aspectos 2.0., aun lo es más si tenemos en cuenta lo que hemos denominado como características de plataformas 3.0., es decir, aquellas en la que el usuario puede interactuar y participar en los contenidos.

Los casos más prototípicos de esta categoría son las *wikis* y las narraciones conjuntas. Sin embargo, algunas acciones educativas en la red también pueden gozar de las mismas características. Si consideramos las acciones educativas implementadas en las páginas Web, sólo 27 de los casos evaluados tienen algo similar (9,3%), que hemos etiquetado como recursos didácticos libres, ya que el usuario puede tener acceso a los mismos a través de la Web en el momento que le parezca oportuno. En principio, conceptualizamos los recursos educativos libres como aquellas herramientas disponibles que permitan realizar alguna actividad que conlleve la exploración de algún tipo de contenido y que no sea simplemente leer. Por eso los consideramos como herramientas participativas o 3.0. Estos recursos se dividen en *offline* (6,9%) y *online* (5,9%). Sin embargo, descubrimos que la participación generada por esos recursos nunca tenía ninguna repercusión en la propia Web. Cada individuo realiza la tarea y se lleva consigo los resultados obtenidos y las vivencias, ideas o comentarios suscitados. Así que, aunque conlleven una actitud activa por parte de los usuarios, esa actividad no queda reflejada en la Web y, por lo tanto, no es compartida, ni puede ser enriquecida por otros, por lo que, en conclusión, ninguna de estas experiencias puede ser considerada 3.0.

6. A modo de conclusiones.

Un primer dato empírico de la evaluación realizada no provino curiosamente del trabajo de campo sino de la revisión teórica. Comprobamos que de la inmensa cantidad de experiencias digitales incluidas en los museos y espacios de presentación de patrimonio, un porcentaje mínimo incluyen una evaluación sistemática de dichas plataformas o experiencias. Limitándose en todo caso, en la mayoría de las ocasiones a valoraciones racionales sin una evaluación empírica real y mucho menos con visitantes reales. Reivindicar la necesidad de una evaluación seria y sistemática de las propuestas sería la primera reivindicación para que los criterios de análisis de uso no se realicen 'a posteriori' o sobre criterios superficiales en torno a la estética de las páginas, a criterios disciplinares o exclusivamente técnicos, o a la estimación de la accesibilidad o usabilidad predicha por el diseñador y no mediante evaluaciones con usuarios reales o potenciales.

En segundo lugar, los entornos digitales Web están sufriendo un importante cambio en los últimos años desde meros almacenes de datos a convertirse en entornos con muchas posibilidades comunicativas, interactivas y participativas. Sin embargo, todavía encontramos importantes limitaciones en el uso de las Webs de museos y espacios de patrimonio. El perfil de la Web que obtenemos en el estudio nos presenta una plataforma pensada para aportar una información básica, dirigida a los contenidos expositivos de la colección permanente, para un público general, nacional y casi exclusivamente "lector" de contenidos. Por el contrario, se da poco énfasis al desarrollo de aplicaciones y recursos que aporten un "valor añadido" a los propios museos, más allá de la información general. Como comprobamos, los recursos menos frecuentes son precisamente los que se relacionan con las opciones más interesantes de Internet en las distintas áreas funcionales, organizativas y comunicativas. A medio camino se sitúa, con una frecuencia media, el desarrollo de recursos para la gestión (marketing, programas, etc.), siendo aun así un porcentaje anecdótico para el alto nivel de implantación de estos servicios en otros contextos e instituciones.

Cuadro 2: Tendencia actual de utilización de los recursos digitales.

MUSEOS Y ESPACIOS DE PRESENTACIÓN DE PATRIMONIO	Plataforma 1.0	Plataforma 2.0	Plataforma 3.0
Herramientas	WEBS	REDES SOCIALES	ENTORNOS ELABORATIVOS
Objetivo básico de la plataforma	Informativo (consulta, muestra, reserva, compra)	Comunicativo (conecta, comenta, crítica, opina)	Participativo (discute, aporta, crea)
Uso actual	Generalizado	muy escaso	Puntual y experimental

Desde nuestro punto de vista, el desarrollo futuro no pasa tanto porque existan más recursos, sino que además éstos deberían mejorar lo bueno que ya tenemos en accesibilidad, “usabilidad” e interacción entendida en un sentido amplio, de forma que se favorezcan unos entornos productivos, amables, cómodos (intuitivos), así como el acceso al conocimiento. Siempre entendiendo las máquinas como entornos facilitadores al servicio de los ciudadanos.

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PLANIFICACIÓN DE LA GESTIÓN DE AUDIENCIAS EN MUSEOS DE BELLAS ARTES

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RESUMEN

Desde el punto de vista del visitante, los museos de arte responden al modelo de espectador 'contemplativo' hegeliano. Desde el punto de vista de las colecciones, los museos de Bellas Artes en nuestro país y, en general, en nuestro entorno cultural, también responden a un modelo de museo y de Historia del Arte del siglo XVIII, exponiendo sus colecciones según el espíritu clasificador decimonónico, con una concepción restrictiva del concepto de Bellas Artes que suele traducirse en la exposición de obras de arte plástico (sobre todo pintura y, en menor medida, escultura). Con el objetivo de generar un proyecto de un museo real de Bellas Artes (no solo en el nombre) se presenta un proyecto novedoso por los estudios sobre visitantes; por la variedad de contenidos (relativos no solo a pintura, escultura, dibujos o grabados, sino a arquitectura, urbanismo, música, literatura, otras técnicas u otras artes); por la variedad de recursos museográficos, que incitan a la participación; por las propuestas de ejes de contenido transversales; etc.

ABSTRACT

Planning audience management in fine arts museums

From the point of view of the visitor, art museums respond to the Hegelian 'contemplative' observer model. From the point of view of the collections, museums of fine arts in our country and, in general, in our cultural environment, also respond to a model of museums and art history of the eighteenth century, displaying their collections in the spirit of quality that evolved the nineteenth century, with a narrow concept of art which often results in the exhibition of works of visual art (especially painting and to a lesser extent sculpture). In order to build a project of a true Fine Arts museum (not just in name) the authors present an innovative project developed for visitor studies, for the variety of content (related not only to painting, sculpture, drawings, engravings, but architecture, urbanism, music, literature, other techniques or other arts), using the large potential of museographical resources that encourage participation.

RÉSUMÉ

Planifier l'accueil des visiteurs dans les musées des Beaux-arts

Du point de vue des visiteurs, les musées d'art sont structurés selon un modèle «contemplatif», dans une perspective hégélienne du spectateur. Du point de vue des collections, les musées des beaux-arts dans notre pays et, en général, dans notre environnement culturel, répondent également à un modèle de musée et histoire de l'art du XVIIIe siècle, exposant leurs collections dans l'esprit de la qualité né au XIXe siècle, avec une conception restrictive de l'art qui se traduit souvent par l'exposition d'œuvres d'art visuel (peinture en

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particulier, et à une sculpture dans une moindre mesure). Afin de générer un nouveau projet pour un Musée des Beaux-Arts, nous présentons un nouveau projet sur les grandes études des visiteurs, leurs besoins et les services que les musées peuvent proposer. Le projet propose également une nouvelle façon de structurer le contenu des beaux-arts (concernant non seulement la peinture, la sculpture, dessins, gravures, mais l'architecture, l'urbanisme, de la musique, la littérature, d'autres techniques ou d'autres arts). Et enfin, il met en valeur les ressources des musées qui encouragent la participation.

* * *

1-. Motivación.

El arte es considerado una actividad compleja, como lo han puesto de manifiesto los estudios de las obras de arte en el contexto y condiciones socio-históricas de su creación; los de la personalidad, carácter, circunstancias o intenciones del artista; los de la estructura interna, mental o social, que subyace en la obra; o los de la consideración de la obra de arte como un signo lingüístico, etc.

Pero si la Historia del Arte se planteó la complejidad del estudio de una obra o hecho artístico precisamente por el número y riqueza de factores que interactúan en su creación, los museos de arte que albergan la gran mayoría de los objetos artísticos exponen las obras de arte sin tener en cuenta esta riqueza.

La responsable del Museo de Bellas Artes de Córdoba se planteó que era hora de detener la inercia por la que el museo, como la inmensa mayoría de los museos de arte, atienden a la obra de arte despojada de toda contextualización. Sin el contexto cultural, social, técnico, económico o político, a la obra de arte solo le queda el valor estético (y en muchas ocasiones ni siquiera este, ya que permanece inaccesible para una mayoría de público que no posee los conocimientos suficientes).

Se planteó asimismo que era hora de romper con otra inercia. A saber, el museo expone una selección de las colecciones que han ido conformando sus fondos. Pero, aunque el museo se autodenomine de bellas artes, las colecciones están conformadas por pinturas, grabados, dibujos y, en menor medida, escultura (sin mencionar que son una muestra parcial de la producción artística cordobesa, ya que mayoritariamente se trata de obras de temática religiosa).

Definitivamente se precisaba un proyecto museológico en el que el punto de partida fuera mostrar las obras en su contexto cultural, a la vez que se recogieran las otras bellas artes no representadas.

Dio comienzo, entonces, a una serie de estudios, entre los que los estudios de visitantes constituyó el eje vertebrador del proyecto. Por un lado, se vio la necesidad de conocer a los visitantes y usuarios reales del museo, pero también se vio la necesidad de conocer los públicos potenciales (con estudios específicos de públicos locales y públicos foráneos).

En este contexto, describimos el proyecto de renovación de un museo de bellas artes teniendo en cuenta los públicos presentes y también los futuros (con sus intereses, demandas y necesidades), poniendo al día no solo los principios museológicos (misión, visión, objetivos, funciones, servicios, gestión, etc.), sino los contenidos a transmitir y las colecciones asociadas a esos contenidos.

2-. Programa de audiencias

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El programa de audiencias es un capítulo prioritario en todo museo moderno ya que resume el planteamiento de conexión con los destinatarios del museo, es decir, a todas las personas a las que va dirigido su mensaje institucional.

La Gestión de Audiencias se divide en tres aspectos fundamentales: a quiénes se está llegando con el mensaje expositivo y con la institución, qué medios constituyen la oferta de dinamización de la exposición, traducidos en programas públicos y educativos, y cómo se está transmitiendo esta oferta a las audiencias, el plan de comunicación. Se tiende a hablar de audiencias en un sentido genérico, admitiendo de hecho su diversidad y de públicos cuando estas audiencias están delimitadas según unos dimensiones técnicas que nos permiten segmentar las audiencias para su estudio y planificación de cara a concretar los programas y su comunicación.

Se realizó un estudio de público en el MBACó. Los resultados de aquel estudio nos permitieron conocer a quiénes estábamos llegando con la oferta actual, de dónde venían, cuáles eran sus expectativas, sus valoraciones, satisfacciones, demandas, sugerencias ...

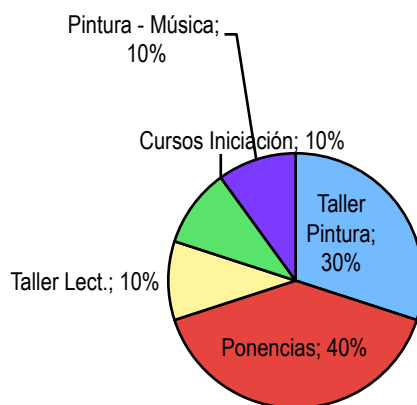
Respecto al 95% foráneo, un aspecto nos resultó especialmente llamativo y reorientó algunos aspectos del proyecto museológico: a nivel de expectativas los visitantes, sobre todo los extranjeros, esperaban encontrar un nexo con la Córdoba andalusí. Así, la base del presente proyecto no sólo encajaba en las demandas de los visitantes, sino que permitía cubrir una demanda al enlazar las colecciones del museo con la propia Córdoba y explicar qué ocurre a nivel artístico con la llegada de Fernando III. La producción artística de ese momento si bien no alcanza la cantidad y calidad del periodo califal, es mucho más rica de lo que se le reconoce al estar permanentemente comparándola con el periodo anterior.

Si esto tenía incidencia a nivel de programa expositivo, otra de las sugerencias y demandas estaba directamente relacionado con el Programa de Audiencias. Se trata del colectivo de público local, muy pequeño pero muy fiel, y el de los procedentes del resto de Andalucía. Estos visitantes y usuarios del museo tienen muy buena opinión de la oferta actual, tan buena que la demanda es que el museo pudiera ampliar la oferta de programas públicos y educativos. Conscientes de que con los espacios y recursos humanos que se disponen en la actualidad la actividad que desarrolla el museo es encomiable, sí demandan de cara al nuevo museo más espacios para talleres, conciertos y audiciones, espacios para muestras de artistas locales, espacios para desarrollar otros contenidos complementarios ... Sobre todo eran las familias las que con mayor énfasis nos transmitían que la experiencia era que los más pequeños demandaban más y más variada oferta, y sus acompañantes adultos demostraban mucho interés por poder participar con los pequeños y aprender con ellos. En definitiva, lo que nos demandaban era que el museo se convirtiera en un centro activo de educación artística, tanto a nivel conceptual o teórico, como a nivel procedimental o práctico.

Mostramos a continuación algunos de los resultados que estamos comentando.

¿QUÉ OTRO TIPO DE ACTIVIDADES LE PARECE QUE PODRÍAN ORGANIZARSE EN EL MUSEO?

Respondió el 55,5% de los encuestados.



Un 40% de los encuestados consideran que estaría bien que los niños pudieran asistir a ponencias adaptadas a su edad sobre las obras expuestas en el Museo, seguido de un 30% que considera que sería interesante que éste organizara talleres de pintura. Finalmente, un 30% propone realizar actividades en las que se relacione la música con la pintura, cursos de iniciación artística o talleres de lectura sobre las obras expuestas.

¿CUÁNTAS VECES HA VISITADO EL MUSEO?

Respondió el 100% de los encuestados.



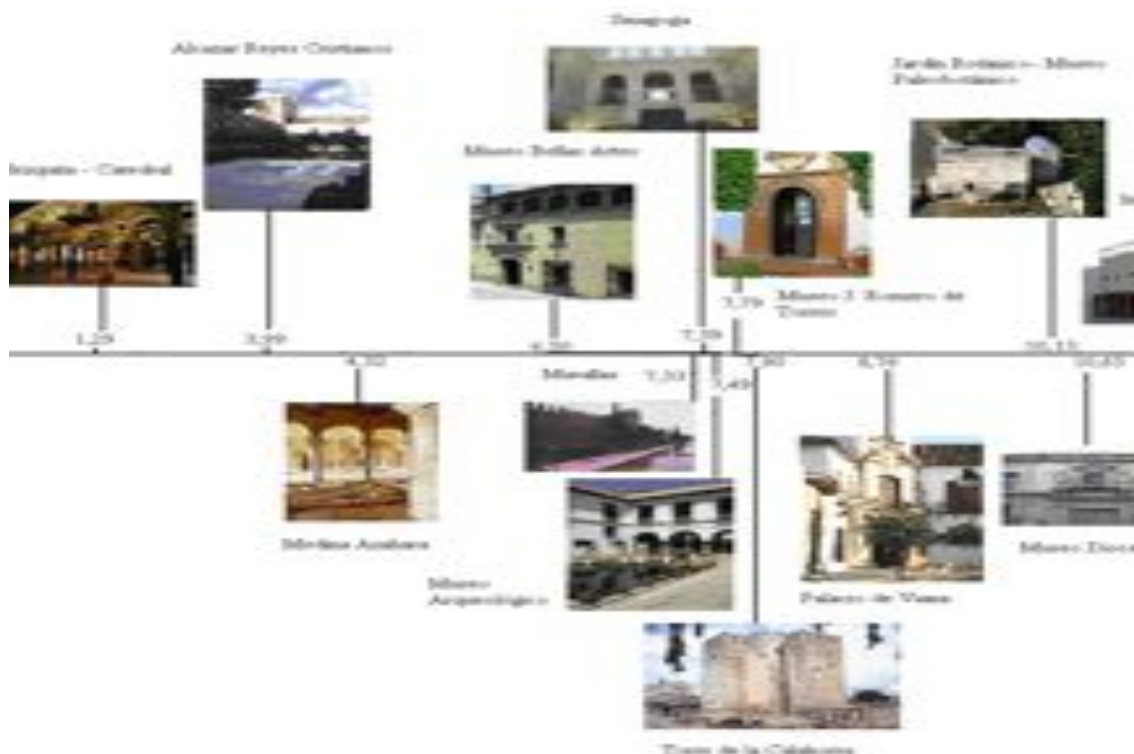
Como puede observarse, la participación en talleres del Museo cuenta con una fidelidad bastante alta, lo cual se corresponde con la valoración netamente positiva que los participantes hacen de las actividades. Esto nos indica que los talleres están captando muy bien el perfil de público aquí considerado, y con muy buenos niveles de satisfacción.

Así, los resultados del estudio de público, junto con la experiencia de estos años, nos proporcionaron información a la hora de tomar decisiones de cara al nuevo proyecto. Los propios espacios expositivos se diseñaron pensando en la posibilidad de desarrollar programas públicos y educativos en las salas y se ampliaron contenidos y obras y, algunos de los contenidos y montajes, por ejemplo, los relacionados con técnicas artísticas, permitirían que personal voluntario pudiese desarrollar demostraciones, dramatizaciones, cursos ... Además, se pensaron en espacios específicos para desarrollar talleres de producción artística y exposición de los obras de los participantes, desde pintura, grabado, escultura o dibujo animado; también espacios sobre percepción humana; sobre conceptos como color, perspectiva, soportes o restauración; espacios para audiciones y conciertos; para cursos y conferencias; etc.

También la última sala expositiva, se ha previsto poder atender a las demandas de los visitantes, sobre todo de los más jóvenes, que echaban en falta más obras de arte contemporáneo. Así, en colaboración con otras instituciones públicas y privadas, se prevé suplir en cantidad y calidad las obras de artistas cordobeses contemporáneos y recoger el testigo de lo que en los años 70 supusieron las galerías de arte como centro de dinamización artística local.

En definitiva, tanto a nivel museológico como museográfico se han definido las bases que permitirían poder desarrollar los más variados programas públicos y educativos. Además a nivel de gestión de audiencias, otros espacios de servicios demandados como restaurante, cafetería, áreas de descanso, etc., también están contemplados. Se prevé que el restaurante y cafetería, así como los exteriores alrededor del museo, etc., permitan desarrollar programas relacionados con gastronomía histórica, fiestas y celebraciones, y todo tipo de actos que estén relacionados directa o indirectamente con los contenidos y mensajes recogidos en el museo.

Por otro lado, aunque las restricciones para poder llevar a cabo el estudio de público potencial no nos permiten contar con datos suficientes para realizar afirmaciones tajantes, sí llevamos a cabo, entre los visitantes del museo, un estudio de preferencias y prevalencias. Uno de los resultados que más nos llamó la atención es que el museo se situaba en el cuarto puesto en intención de visita y valoración de su importancia. Estos resultados también nos han permitido pensar en desarrollar otro tipo de programas públicos para estos visitantes. Creemos que salir del recinto del edificio con programas específicos en la ciudad puede tener gran aceptación, a la vez que serviría de escaparate de difusión del propio museo y los servicios que ofrece (y por tanto de captación de visitantes e, indirectamente, de recursos). Queremos dejar constancia de que no se pretende competir con los servicios de guías de turismo sino de desarrollar otros tipo de programas complementarios a los que desarrollan en la actualidad otras instituciones.

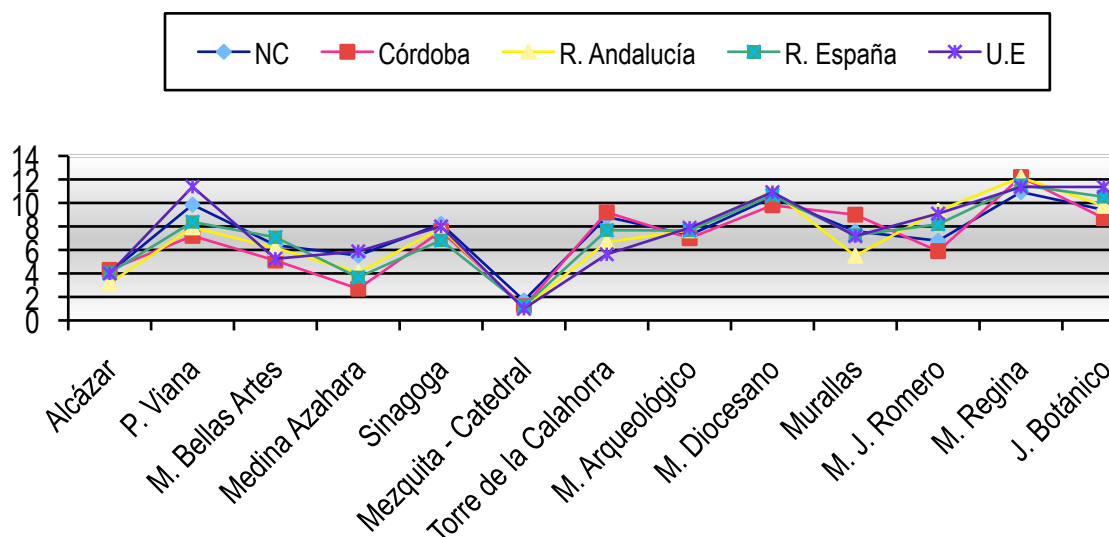


Tras pedir a los visitantes que puntuaran los museos y monumentos más relevantes de la ciudad (de 1 a 13) según el orden de importancia que ellos considerasen y tras haber obtenido las puntuaciones medias, encontramos que:

1. la Mezquita - Catedral es el monumento más importante para el público del museo, con una puntuación media de 1,29.
2. el Alcázar de los Reyes Cristianos con un 3,99.
3. Madinat al-Zhara (4,32),
4. el Museo de Bellas Artes (6,5) y
5. las Murallas de la Ciudad (7,33).

Debemos destacar, que de los seis Museos presentados, tan sólo el Museo de Bellas Artes (6,5) ha logrado alcanzar uno de los cinco primeros puestos, aventajando en popularidad e importancia al Museo Arqueológico (7,49) e incluso al Museo Julio Romero de Torres (7,79). Sin embargo, no debemos olvidar que las personas que han respondido al cuestionario se encontraban visitando el mismo y la nota media obtenida puede deberse en parte a:

- La deseabilidad social: El público del MBACó ha adaptado la nota otorgada al mismo ya que la demanda partía del propio museo.
- El público del MBACó ha mostrado un interés por éste ya que ha acudido a visitarlo, por lo que la nota otorgada será más favorable que la que pudieran dar las personas entrevistadas en otros lugares.
- Los monumentos o museos no visitados hasta ese momento habrán obtenido peor nota media, ya que a la hora de evaluar la importancia de los mismos pueden estar influyendo otros factores como por ejemplo la satisfacción general con la visita realizada. Por ejemplo, el resultado podría estar sesgado por posibles problemas de horarios al visitar otro Museo, como el Julio Romero de Torres. Es necesario, por tanto, tomar con precaución los datos obtenidos, pues no permiten discriminar estos factores.



Por último, aunque la gran mayoría de los que acuden por primera vez lo hacen por la información turística previa (a través de sus guías de bolsillo, de las oficinas de turismo o cualquier otro medio), así como por la recomendación de familiares y amigos, sí existe una queja en cuanto a la difusión de las actividades. Por esta razón, de cara al futuro museo se prevé desarrollar programas específicos entre aquellos intermediarios, como puedan ser los colectivos de hosteleros, taxistas, asociaciones, etc., para que estos colectivos posean información actualizada y correcta (además de una buena opinión de la institución) y poder optimizar la difusión del museo y sus actividades.

La participación en el cuestionario a través de la web también puso en evidencia la buena respuesta y acogida que entre el público local tiene iniciativas de este tipo que se prevé poder volver a realizar periódicamente de cara a recabar información y opinión, así como generar listas de difusión. Todo ello, deberá concretarse en el programa de comunicación, pero para ello consideramos importante contar con más estudios previos que nos provean de información más precisa para poder llegar de la forma más eficaz por los medios de comunicación más adecuados a los distintos públicos objetivo.

3. ¿Por qué ningún museo de bellas artes es de Bellas Artes?

Una de las razones es el peso que tienen aún hoy algunas de las concepciones con las que se crearon, superadas teóricamente pero vigentes en la práctica. Si revisamos la investigación, difusión y enseñanza de la Historia del Arte, observaremos que se centra casi con exclusividad en pintura, escultura y arquitectura. Desde el punto de vista científico, los denominados museos de bellas artes, son un reflejo de la Historia del Arte del momento, centrando sus esfuerzos en clasificar las obras de arte (fundamentalmente las pictóricas y escultóricas). El resultado es que los museos de bellas artes deben su denominación para distinguirlos de los arqueológicos o los etnológicos, aunque sería más correcto llamarlos de artes 'plásticas'.

Así que lo primero que se cuestionó es que debería aspirar a ser un museo de Bellas Artes abordado desde la actualidad científica, lo que obligó a iniciar una reflexión profunda del discurso y los mensajes a transmitir, incorporando la literatura, la arquitectura y el urbanismo, la música, la danza o el cine. También debería incorporar el contexto cultural que explica la producción artística y su significación para la sociedad del momento. El genio del artista, pero también el gusto, la demanda, las

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necesidades, las técnicas, las relaciones con otras artes o con otros artistas, o con la clientela, etc., conforman una realidad compleja, realidad que considerábamos que debíamos tener en cuenta. El horizonte del futuro museo sería acercar al visitante al global de la cultura en la que se inscribe cada obra de la manera más amplia posible a la vez que precisa, deteniéndose en la historia inherente a cada una. Se plantea también incorporar el *patrimonio intangible*.

Se comenzó con la ampliación del criterio de valor de las colecciones. Es decir, las colecciones se supeditaban al valor del discurso, donde se mantienen criterios clásicos, por ejemplo, el de obra maestra, y se incorporan otros como, por ejemplo, el de vehículo de transmisión de ideas.

Se analizaron los criterios de seguridad, de conservación preventiva, etc., y se optó por un diseño en torno a un primer 'anillo' de galerías, al que se asociaría un segundo 'anillo' de salas de contexto. Otras salas y espacios dentro de las propias galerías se destinarían a otros contenidos y colecciones especiales. Veámoslo.

Las galerías.

Los mensajes a transmitir se articularían en torno a las selecciones de pintura y escultura dispuestos en salas sucesivas, en función de los contenidos más relevantes de cada momento cultural diferenciado. Estos espacios se ordenan diacrónicamente, es decir, el comienzo es con la exposición de los fondos más antiguos que posee el museo y que nos permiten transmitir algunas de las preguntas más frecuentes de los visitantes (recogidas en los estudios de público realizados previamente a la definición del proyecto). Esta organización diacrónica no se efectúa sin embargo, exclusivamente en base a una cronología o unos criterios de estilo artístico, sino en base, fundamentalmente a los asuntos representados y a los significados más representativos de cada momento.

Un espacio especial dentro de las galerías: los estudios.

Los mensajes 'diacrónicos', al estar ligados directamente a unas obras concretas, considerábamos que no alcanzaba a conseguir los objetivos expuestos. Por ello, además, de estos mensajes asociados a un momento concreto sobre la base de unas colecciones limitadas en cuanto a representatividad (por ejemplo, son contados los fondos de pinturas murales), se pretende recoger unos contenidos de tipo sincrónico que se escogerían en cada sala en función de la pertinencia del momento y de los fondos específicos de este museo y no de otros. Se trata de incidir en cada sala en un *núcleo conceptual fundamental de la Historia del Arte*, como es el de cliente, la iconografía, iconología, estilo, mercado, técnicas, etc.; con el objetivo último de transmitir los múltiples aspectos que inciden en la creación e interpretación de una obra artística. Por ejemplo en la de época barroca, a través de la figura del artista Antonio del Castillo, se tratará a los 'pequeños' clientes en relación con la tienda que este artista poseía en la capital cordobesa (que regentaba su esposa). Lo mismo ocurriría con los otros núcleos conceptuales. Por ejemplo, se pretende ofrecer las claves de análisis formales de las obras, independientemente de que el núcleo conceptual del *estilo* se ejemplifique en la sala dedicada al barroco.

Se contemplan, además de los ya mencionados, la iconología en comparación con la iconografía; la relación entre los gremios, los oficios, los materiales y las técnicas empleadas; la importancia de la biografía de los artistas; la dialéctica entre el academicismo y la vanguardia; la función social del arte; y el mercado y el valor de la obra de arte. Se realiza de esta forma una propuesta de análisis transversal de los contenidos de las salas en base a lo más significativo de las obras expuestas en la misma y del momento histórico. A nivel museográfico, cada estudio se contempla diferenciado del resto de la sala (lo que permitiría identificarlos fácilmente), y con recursos distintos en cada una.

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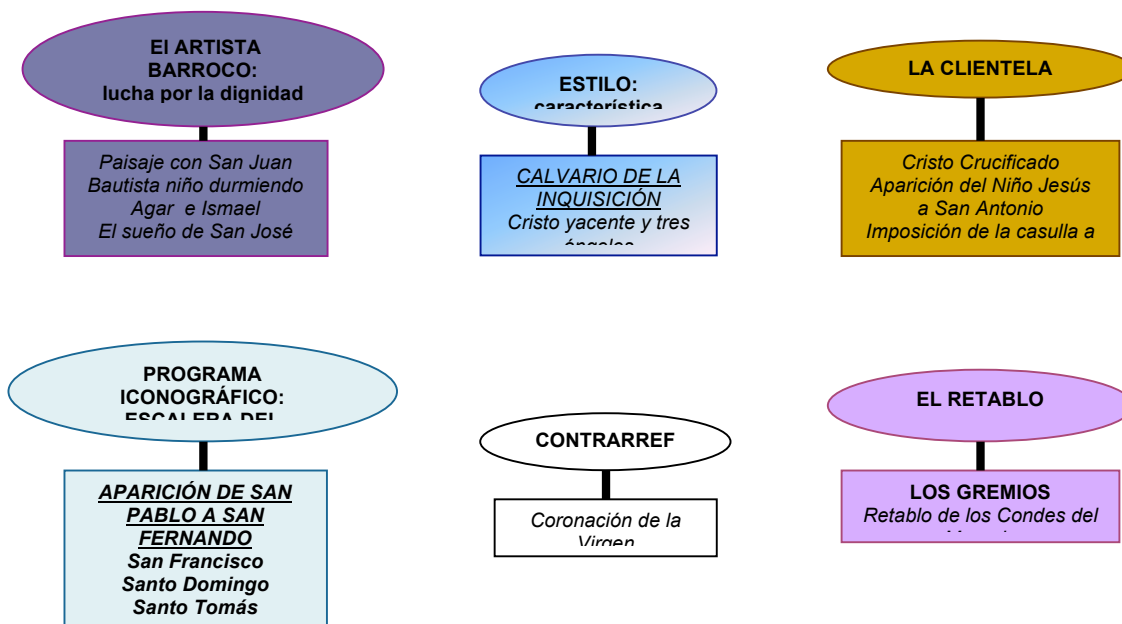
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SALAS Y ESTUDIOS	SALAS Y ESTUDIOS ASOCIADOS	SALAS DE CONTEXTO
Sala I Estudio	Impulso evangelizador. Del Gótico al Renacimiento. <i>El cliente, la orientación de la demanda</i>	Córdoba de las tres culturas
Sala II Estudio	El humanismo y la nueva piedad. El auge del Renacimiento <i>Los asuntos representados: la iconografía</i>	Córdoba, ciudad de grandes hombres
Sala III Estudio	Nuevos tratamientos de los viejos temas. Del Manierismo al Naturalismo <i>Los significados: la iconología</i>	Humanismo y espiritualidad
Sala IV Estudio	La Contrarreforma. El primer Barroco <i>Análisis formalista: la noción de estilo</i>	Esplendores del Barroco
Sala V Estudio	Antonio del Castillo <i>Los gremios, los oficios, los pigmentos, los materiales</i>	El artista del Barroco
Sala VI Estudio	Ecós del Barroco <i>Semejanzas y diferencias: entre el continuismo y el nuevo estilo</i>	Escenarios del Barroco
Sala VII Estudio	Antonio Palomino <i>La biografía del artista: el artista viajero</i>	Museo pictórico y escala óptica: teoría y práctica de la pintura
Sala VIII Estudio	Rafael Romero Barros. Del romanticismo al siglo XX <i>La eterna dialéctica entre la Academia y la vanguardia. La figura de Romero Barros</i>	El artista humanista El arranque de la Modernidad
Sala IX Estudio	Mateo Inurria <i>Procesos y principios de la escultura</i>	La escultura: el taller del escultor
Sala X Estudio	De las vanguardias a la actualidad <i>La función social del arte</i>	La modernidad cordobesa
Salas especiales	- Gabinete de dibujos y estampas - Sala de interpretación: El MBACó en la historia y la historia en el MBACó - Circa XX. Colección Pilar Cítoles	No llevan salas de contexto asociadas

Ejemplo: **Sala V: Antonio del Castillo**

Es esta la primera sala dedicada a un autor, en este caso a Antonio del Castillo, nos servirá para, a través de su vida y de su obra, analizar el contexto de época. Así centra su contenido en cinco aspectos a partir de pinturas concretas:

- Estilo personal del artista y características del barroco
- El artista barroco: *Ut pictura poiesis*, la lucha por la dignidad de la pintura
- Programa iconográfico: escalera del Convento de San Pablo
- La clientela
- El retablo
- Contrarreforma



La **sala de contexto, El artista del barroco**, se centra en los aspectos relativos al oficio de pintor en la Córdoba del XVII. Se propone transmitir los contenidos relacionados con la figura del artista barroco a partir de la recreación del taller y tienda del pintor y de esa forma se profundizaría en el análisis de la obra expuesta en la Sala. El caso de Antonio del Castillo permite adentrarse en el mundo del pequeño cliente (al disponer de tienda además del taller), el papel del grabado en la difusión de los grandes maestros fuera de su entorno directo de influencia, el papel de la mujer (como la esposa de Castillo que atendía las ventas en la tienda de pinturas)... Se tienen localizadas más tiendas de autores contemporáneos a Antonio del Castillo e información documental muy diversa de enorme interés.

Relacionado con ello, para el **estudio** de la sala se propone el análisis de **la formación de los artistas**. Por eso se utilizará la propia formación de Antonio del Castillo para realizar un análisis de las obras de arte desde los gremios, los oficios, los pigmentos o los materiales utilizados en su producción artística.

El contexto cultural

Pero habíamos dicho que queríamos transmitir y recoger las otras bellas artes: la música, la literatura, la arquitectura ... Así, se diseñan unas **Salas de Contexto** anexas a las Galerías en las que se dispondrían los contenidos de contexto artístico y cultural relacionados con su sala de referencia, diversas en cuanto a contenidos específicos y colecciones, y también en cuanto a museografía.

Las *salas de contexto* serán las que pondrán en relación las colecciones pictóricas y escultóricas expuestas con otras colecciones, para lo que se propone un plan específico de captación de colecciones que completen los fondos actuales, ligadas a determinados acontecimientos históricos y a las creaciones literarias, musicales, de artes decorativas, artesanía, arquitectura y urbanismo, etc.

Los contenidos seleccionados nos adentran en una historia religiosa, en una historia económica, social e incluso personal. Nos hablan también de la formación de los artistas, de sus modos de vida e incluso de su economía doméstica. Los fondos expuestos se relacionan así con los lugares para los que han sido creados; con los clientes que los han encargado o adquirido; con las funciones que desempeñaron; con otras obras que no pueden ser expuestas en el Museo por distintas razones, como por ejemplo, la arquitectura, la pintura mural o la escultura monumental repartida por la ciudad y la provincia de Córdoba. También se relacionan con las personas que las contemplaron y las usaron, con sus posiciones sociales, económicas o culturales, con sus creencias o con sus gustos estéticos.

Adentrarnos en el contexto de los bienes culturales, también implica prestar atención al proceso de producción, a las técnicas, las herramientas y los materiales. Por eso el proyecto plantea transmitir los condicionantes de cada técnica, sus restricciones materiales y sus resultados expresivos. Y eso tanto en pintura sobre tabla, sobre lienzo o en la pintura mural que aún decora muchas de las iglesias cordobesas; tanto en escultura como en grabado y con aquellos oficios que guardan relación directa con las colecciones del mismo.

Otro aspecto fundamental al que también nos llevan las colecciones, es a relacionar las obras expuestas con la arquitectura que se construía para albergarlas, y ésta con el urbanismo que progresivamente ha ido modificando el aspecto de la ciudad con el paso de los siglos. Nos lleva a saber por qué, en un momento determinado, la arquitectura hospitalaria cobra tanta importancia e implica detenernos en los estragos de la peste, que a su vez explicará por qué se representan ciertas imágenes y no otras. Desde esa relación que se establece entre las colecciones expuestas con la arquitectura y los espacios urbanos, se puede ofrecer al visitante ciertas claves para entender la ciudad, tanto en el momento de la creación de algunos de sus edificios más singulares como en la actualidad. Y, aplicando los mismos criterios, la música, la literatura o las artes decorativas, entrarán a formar parte de los contenidos a transmitir. Y ello no solo redundará en beneficio de que realmente estemos hablando de un museo de 'bellas artes' sino que de nuevo se le esta ofreciendo al visitante entender el hecho artístico dentro de ese contexto que le dota de significación.

Estas salas añaden varias ventajas, además de las señaladas a nivel de mensajes y patrimonio asociado. Estas salas, permiten la utilización de una variedad de recursos museográficos y comunicativos, favoreciendo las propuestas de participación e interacción, así como el desarrollo de los más variados programas, tanto públicos como educativos. También permiten ubicar áreas de interpretación (que son a la vez de descanso), con propuestas diversas adaptadas a los distintos públicos funcionales.

Por todo ello, desde el punto de vista del usuario, la *contextualización cultural* de cada momento artístico beneficia la interpretación de las obras expuestas ya que:

- beneficia la diversidad semántica (variedad de contenidos y de colecciones)
- beneficia la diversidad sintáctica (variedad de recursos museográficos y comunicativos)
- beneficia la pragmática expositiva (variedad de experiencias del usuario).

Implícitamente ya hemos ilustrado cómo se pretende transmitir el patrimonio intangible a través de determinados ritos, creencias, formas de vida, de transmisión de conocimiento, etc. Además, en algunos casos, se propone materializar ese patrimonio

a través de la gastronomía histórica (en el restaurante), de los pensamientos de los viajeros (en el mirador), de las celebraciones y fiestas (en el auditorio), etc.

4. Nuevos servicios y espacios para los usuarios

También se tuvo en cuenta que el factor más influyente de la experiencia museística es la calidad percibida de los servicios. El concepto con el que se concibe el *Programa de exposición* organiza también el diseño del programa arquitectónico, el de difusión, de educación y de comunicación. Así, a modo de ejemplo, los visitantes tendrán oportunidad de experimentar con las distintas técnicas de grabado o ensayar las dificultades de la perspectiva en los espacios que se proponen para el desarrollo de los programas públicos y educativos.

El proyecto recoge así las demandas de los usuarios reales del Museo a nivel individual (intereses, motivaciones, demandas de información, demandas de servicios, etc.), y a nivel colectivo, especialmente entre los ciudadanos locales (que demandan un centro activo donde el aprendizaje y el entretenimiento vayan de la mano y esté dirigido a públicos variados, desde los jóvenes, a las familias, pasando por las distintas asociaciones, etc.). Así, el futuro museo también aspira a cubrir huecos con altísima demanda social (uno es el relacionado con el arte musical).



Planificación de servicios desde el usuario: mirador sobre la ciudad y terraza restaurante.

5. Conclusiones

➤ Desde el punto de vista del usuario, consideramos que es fundamental una *contextualización cultural* de cada momento artístico en beneficio de la interpretación de las obras expuestas y con ello, en beneficio de la riqueza de la experiencia general, y de la artística y estética, en particular. Las colecciones se conciben como reflejo de una sociedad que las creó y que las disfrutó y de una sociedad que las conservó.

➤ En cuanto a la *cultura material e inmaterial de referencia*, las *colecciones* serían la relación tangible de los mensajes apoyados en dicho conocimiento y en una tradición. Para la consecución de los objetivos propuestos, el museo se plantea una labor de captación de nuevas colecciones. Como consecuencia del tratamiento de los

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contenidos y colecciones de referencia, se contempla ampliar las líneas de investigación.

➤ *Al individualizar cada obra*, detenerse en la historia inherente a cada una de ellas, la convertimos en documento primario para el conocimiento de nuestra historia presente y pasada.

➤ Por otro lado, especialmente en cuanto al público foráneo, el museo pretende proporcionar las claves para la interpretación del arte urbano *in situ*.

➤ Los contenidos, al igual que los montajes asociados se plantean teniendo en cuenta tanto la semántica, como la sintaxis y pragmática expositiva y se articulan según los *principios de la interdisciplinariedad y la transversalidad*.

➤ A nivel *museográfico*, el proyecto se plantea la diversificación de recursos museográficos y comunicativos, propuestas de montajes en las que los usuarios puedan participar y/o experimentar, áreas de descanso e interpretación, etc. El carácter participativo es fundamental ya que la reflexión sobre los mensajes a transmitir va ligada a cómo transmitirlos, y el éxito de un museo depende del nivel de implicación y participación de los usuarios y de la capacidad de proveer esas oportunidades de participación.

➤ En cuanto a la *viabilidad económica*, y posterior *sostenibilidad*, el proyecto ha tenido en cuenta los *intereses sociales* (recoge las demandas de los usuarios reales al Museo a nivel individual y a nivel colectivo, especialmente entre los ciudadanos locales) y los datos provenientes de los estudios sobre audiencias culturales. Por ello, los servicios a los usuarios y los programas y eventos adquieren igual o mayor relevancia que la atención al patrimonio.

En definitiva, el proyecto rompe con la dinámica de pinacoteca clásica con una concepción contemplativa del visitante, para convertirse en un centro activo y participativo, en el que la conservación, la investigación y exposición de sus colecciones se conjugan de pleno derecho con la versatilidad del nuevo planteamiento en relación con la integración de las artes producidas en la provincia de Córdoba desde la Edad Media a la actualidad.

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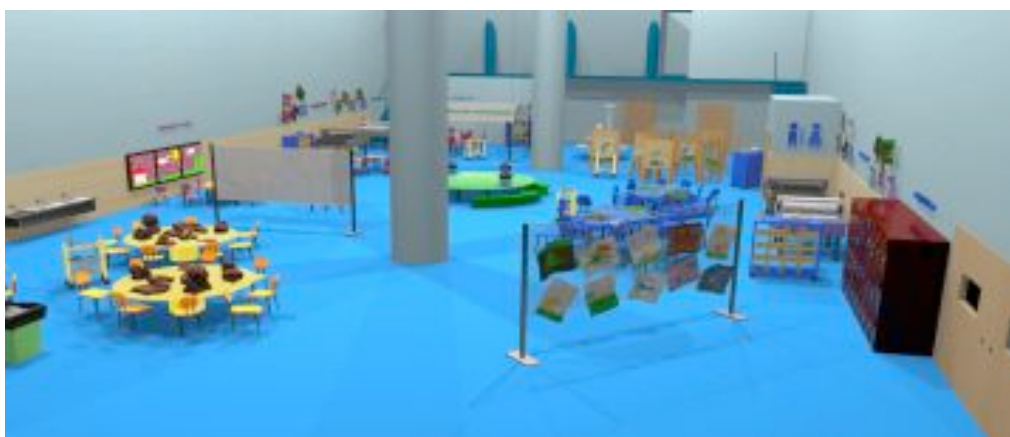
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SALA DE ACTIVIDADES ARTÍSTICAS



SALA DE ACTIVIDADES ARTÍSTICAS. Vista general de la sala. Vista uno.



¿QUÉ ENTIENDEN LOS VISITANTES DE NUESTRO MENSAJE EXPOSITIVO? UNA EVALUACIÓN EN EL MUSEO Y PARQUE ARQUEOLÓGICO CUEVA PINTADA

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RESUMEN

Los públicos de los museos se enfrentan a mensajes muy complejos que implican la utilización de conceptos de alto nivel de abstracción además del manejo de grandes cantidades de información. En muchas ocasiones, los visitantes se enfrentan a contenidos expositivos sobre los que disponen de conceptos previos erróneos. La literatura sobre cambio conceptual ha mostrado la enorme complejidad de la comprensión de este tipo de situaciones. El primer paso para la especificación de los problemas de comprensión de los museos es una adecuada evaluación de sus mensajes expositivos. El paper revisa las evaluaciones realizadas en el Museo y Parque Arqueológico de Cueva Pintada. El yacimiento, de los siglos VI y XVI, consta de una cámara decorada con motivos geométricos, y un poblado con más de 60 estructuras habitacionales.

Los estudios de comprensión se han realizado sobre 392 visitantes. Los resultados muestran la existencia de dos concepciones erróneas: la primera consiste en asociar el concepto cueva con Prehistoria, con considerables problemas de ubicación cronológica y espacial; la segunda consiste en asociar las sociedades más antiguas con procesos menos elaborados tanto en contenidos sociales como culturales o artísticos. Los resultados muestran también una comprensión adecuada de otros aspectos de identificación de la cultura material y el mensaje expositivo.

ABSTRACT

What do visitors understand of our exhibition message? An assessment in the Museum and Archaeological Park Cueva Pintada

The museum visitors are facing very complex messages that involve the use of very complex high level concepts in addition to handling large amounts of information. Many times, visitors are confronted with exhibition content from important misconceptions about the exhibit contents. The conceptual change literature has shown the enormous complexity to understand this type of situation. The first step in the identification of the problems of understanding of the museums is an appropriate assessment of its expository messages. The paper reviews the assessments made at the Museum and Archaeological Park Painted Cave. The site, dated between the VI and XVI centuries, consists of a chamber decorated with geometric motifs, and a village with more than 60 structures.

The studies about comprehension have been conducted on 392 visitors. The results show the existence of two fundamental misconceptions: the first is to associate the concept with the prehistoric cave with considerable problems of time and spatial location, the second is to associate the older societies with less elaborate processes in both social and content cultural or artistic. The results

also show a good understanding of other aspects of identification of material culture and the exhibit message.

RÉSUMÉ

Que comprend le visiteur du message de notre exposition ? Une évaluation dans le Musée et Parc Archéologique Cueva Pintada

Le public des musées est confronté à des messages très complexes qui impliquent l'utilisation de concepts d'un haut niveau d'abstraction, outre qu'il doit traiter de grandes quantités d'informations. De nombreuses fois, les visiteurs sont confrontés à des contenus de l'exposition sur ceux qui ont des idées fausses préconçues. La littérature sur le changement conceptuel a montré l'énorme complexité de la compréhension de ce type de situation. La première étape dans l'identification des problèmes de compréhension des musées est une évaluation appropriée de ses messages expositifs. Le document passe en revue les évaluations faites au Museo y Parque Arqueológico Cueva Pintada, dans les îles Canaries. Le site, des VI^e et XVI^e siècles, se compose d'une chambre décorée avec des motifs géométriques, et d'une ville de plus de 60 structures d'habitation.

Les études de compréhension ont été menées sur 392 visiteurs. Les résultats montrent l'existence de deux idées fausses: la première consiste à associer le concept à la grotte préhistorique, avec les problèmes considérables de temps et de localisation spatiale ; la seconde est d'associer les sociétés anciennes avec des procédés moins complexes, à la fois dans l'évaluation de la culture matérielle et les aspects sociaux et culturels. Les résultats montrent également une bonne compréhension des autres aspects de la culture matérielle et du message de l'exposition.

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1. La comprensión y el aprendizaje de la Historia en Museos y espacios de presentación del Patrimonio.

Los públicos de los museos se enfrentan a mensajes muy complejos que implican no solo el manejo de grandes cantidades de información, sino además interpretaciones muy complejas sobre los contenidos presentados en ellos. Llegar a generar un conocimiento elaborado y profundo sobre un museo es una tarea complicada que conlleva la puesta en marcha de muchos procesos psicológicos.

La mayor parte de los museos y exposiciones no se diseñan teniendo en cuenta los intereses y los conocimientos previos de los visitantes a pesar de la insistencia en esta línea en los últimos años (ver por ejemplo Asensio & Pol, 2012), ni siquiera aquellos que pertenecen a tipologías más sensibles con los aspectos cognitivos (Montpetit, 1996). En cada museo aparecen creencias y concepciones erróneas específicas del dominio científico de referencia de cada uno. En los de ciencias se pueden encontrar, por ejemplo, concepciones erróneas sobre la composición de la materia, la forma de la Tierra o la mecánica newtoniana.

A lo largo de estos años, en nuestro equipo hemos realizado diferentes proyectos de museo y en varios de ellos nos hemos encontrado con problemas de este tipo. En nuestro esquema de trabajo, cuando elaboramos un proyecto nuevo de museo o exposición, nos planteamos estudios de comprensión y aprendizaje de los contenidos específicos relacionados con los mensajes expositivos que se pretenden transmitir, de modo que podamos prever las dificultades que los visitantes tendrán con dichos contenidos y que la museografía trate de ilustrar por qué estas ideas erróneas no funcionan y, al tiempo, traten de apoyar las interpretaciones adecuadas. Todo esto se complica más cuando hay que razonar en contra de ideas previas bien asentadas en

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el individuo. La transmisión de estos mensajes choca con las ideas previas de los visitantes y suele distorsionar el significado en base a dichas preconcepciones o creencias. En concreto, en los museos de historia propiamente dichos, el problema es el mismo. Dentro de los proyectos de museos de identidad y museos de mentalidad (Caldera, Asensio & Pol, 2010; Asensio & Pol, 2012) desarrollados para la Red de Museos de la Junta de Extremadura, nos encontramos con varias de estas instituciones que planteaban problemas claros en esta dirección.

En la enseñanza de la historia, hay que distinguir entre los problemas de comprensión o el desarrollo de determinados esquemas procedimentales o conceptuales (por ejemplo del tiempo histórico, de la causalidad o del relativismo cognitivo), de los problemas provocados por la representación del conocimiento histórico en base a ideas previas, erróneas, alternativas, creencias, teorías, que adopten un formato más conceptual, esquemático o de teoría o modelo (Carretero & Limón, 2000). El alcance que tienen las concepciones erróneas es muy elevado y multitud de investigaciones versan sobre ellas. Una de las más destacadas consiste en percibir la historia como un proceso ininterrumpido que evoluciona hacia el progreso (Bransford & Donovan, 2005). Una concepción persistente es también la tendencia a interpretar todo desde el presente, siendo éste lo más avanzado (Muñoz, 2005). Otras ideas erróneas en la historia son las relacionadas con las fuentes primarias (Barton, 2005). Éstas se tienden a considerar más fiables que las secundarias, se ven como una fuente de notificación, como algo suficiente para investigar y comprender el pasado. Barton sin embargo, señala como más correcto usar diferentes fuentes para comprender la historia. Hasta los expertos en esta disciplina deben llevar a cabo un amplio conjunto de cambios conceptuales para llegarla a comprender adecuadamente y dejar de lado sus ideas previas (Vos, Wiley, 2006). Para ser más exhaustivos los autores Vos y Wiley elaboraron una lista con los diez procesos cognitivos que lleva a cabo un experto en historia.

Por otro lado, en las propias escuelas se encuentran diferentes objetivos a la hora de enseñar historia (Barton, 2008; Wineburg, 2001). Se pueden observar didácticas con objetivos más ilustrados y otros más románticos (Carretero, M., Castorina, J.A., Levinas, L., 2011). El objetivo ilustrado se basa en comprender el pasado y el romántico consiste básicamente en “amar” a tu país. La coexistencia de ambos objetivos es lo que puede llegar a dificultar el cambio conceptual. Ser crítico con la historia del lugar con el que uno o una se siente identificado es difícil si no existe un pensamiento complejo y una educación que fomente ese pensamiento crítico y elaborado. Alguna concepción errónea más que se puede encontrar en la enseñanza de esta materia, es aplicar “naturalmente” un esquema claro de a más antiguo menor elaboración, a más moderno mayor elaboración (Asensio & Pol, 2002).

La interferencia que se produce entre estas ideas previas y la comprensión de nuevos contenidos relacionados, junto a la resistencia al cambio de estas ideas previas y más aún cuando las mismas forman parte de mentalidades estructuradas, son los aspectos fundamentales estudiados en las investigaciones. Sería interesante profundizar la investigación a estos aspectos. De todas formas, la influencia y resistencia de las ideas previas no son la única fuente de dificultad sobre la comprensión de los contenidos de la historia. Los resultados de los estudios realizados por nosotros mismos sobre los contenidos de los museos a desarrollar, han mostrado estas tendencias generales de interferencia y resistencia. Por ejemplo, en el proyecto del Museo de las Ciencias del Vino, pretendíamos transmitir ideas como que el vino ha sido durante siglos un alimento y no un complemento, que en época romana la dieta incluía más de ¾ litros diarios, o que Extremadura es una de las regiones vinícolas de mayor tradición, o que durante siglos el vino blanco era el más apreciado y no el tinto, o que la cultura islámica prohíbe el emborrachamiento pero no realmente el consumo y de hecho, los árabes no levantaron las cepas plantadas con anterioridad al siglo siete (Pol, Asensio, Caldera, 2007).

1. Evaluaciones en el Museo y Parque Arqueológico Cueva Pintada.

1.1. El Museo y Parque Arqueológico Cueva Pintada.

En 1862 se descubrió el Yacimiento prehistórico de Cueva Pintada en Gáldar, Gran Canaria, fechado entre los siglos VI y XVI d.C. (MARTÍN DE GUZMÁN et al., 1993). El yacimiento consta de una cámara decorada con motivos geométricos aún no interpretados y un poblado con más de 60 estructuras y 5.000 m². En 1970 se realizó el primer proyecto de musealización del parque y en 1982, se culminó la elaboración de un proyecto que incluía este yacimiento en el Plan Nacional Experimental de Parques Arqueológicos. En Julio del 2006 se inauguró finalmente el Museo y Parque Arqueológico Cueva Pintada (MPACP). Los tres ejes que empezaron a articular la organización del museo desde entonces son: la conservación del patrimonio arqueológico, la investigación y la accesibilidad al público (SÁENZ et al., 2010).

El yacimiento recibe amenazas muy diversas que afectan a su conservación, por lo que es necesaria una monitorización constante de las variables que son sus indicadores más sensibles. En la musealización de la cueva se ha apostado por el 'modelo burbuja' que aporta ventajas interesantes frente a otros modelos como el de "neocueva" en Altamira o como el de "neocueva deconstruida" en Ekainberri (ver una discusión en ASENSIO et al., 2012). En el caso del MPACP, la cámara decorada queda protegida por una "burbuja", de manera que las visitas guiadas pueden acceder al original pero entrando en contacto de manera mínima y sostenible con el ecosistema interno de la cueva. Es un ejemplo de coordinación multidisciplinar entre arqueología y arquitectura (ONRUBIA et al., 1999).

Las colecciones y las piezas pretenden dar significado a la historia que se narra en el Museo. Además, es importante el uso de la restauración en los programas públicos y educativos, ayudando de este modo a la comprensión de la historia que guarda el museo. Estos restos intentan transmitir el contexto en el que se crearon y se usaron los objetos. El poblado prehistórico también quiere permitir experimentar en los visitantes qué era ser prehistórico (ONRUBIA, 2003). Se intenta fomentar la cercanía, la difusión y la narración, enfatizando la importancia de los personajes que convivieron con los objetos. Dentro de los programas educativos y públicos se cuentan cuentos, se realizan talleres, espectáculos de títeres, de música, conferencias y cursos, pero sobre todo, se proyectan audiovisuales durante la exposición que arrojan la interpretación mediante una narración personalizada apoyada en recursos tecnológicos de realidad virtual y en técnicas escenográficas y de teatralización (sin llegar a utilizarse técnicas de *'living history'*). A su vez, en el MPACP se ha diseñado, gracias a una metodología de arqueología experimental, la reconstrucción de cuatro casas, tanto el exterior como el interior de ellas, para situar al visitante dentro de lo que fueron los asentamientos prehistóricos.

La gestión del museo se considera igualmente, un aspecto central que articula las buenas prácticas de un modo global (SAINZ et al., 2011): la gestión del conocimiento, de la conservación y documentación, de los públicos y de los servicios a la comunidad, con el objetivo último de ser una institución al servicio de la sociedad que acerca la cultura y el patrimonio a su ciudadanía. Un elemento clave de la misma gestión es la evaluación. El MPACP lleva un plan de evaluación continua de los públicos, del funcionamiento de la exposición y de la gestión del centro.

1.2 El Sistema Interactivo de Participación de Públicos (SIPP).

Partiendo de la base de que evaluar es básicamente querer buscar soluciones a problemas (Ascenio y Pol, 2005), los museos pueden llevar a cabo estudios de público y evaluación de todas sus exposiciones. Un estudio de público llega evalúa

fundamentalmente tres aspectos: perfiles, impactos y comprensión / aprendizaje. Las técnicas y las herramientas pueden verse en Borun & Korn (1999); en castellano en Asensio & Pol (2005) y un resumen de las tendencias recientes en Klingler & Graft (2011).

Hace un par de años, nuestro grupo de investigación introdujo una novedad en el sistema de evaluación, mediante el uso del Sistema Interactivo de Participación de Públicos (SIPP), una nueva tecnología formada por un software, un receptor y un clicker o mando de respuesta que se aplica en distintos tipos de evaluaciones.

El procedimiento del SIPP es bastante sencillo. Consiste en proyectar preguntas en una pantalla controlada por un ordenador mientras los visitantes, cada uno con un mando de respuesta, vota las posibles respuestas marcando un botón, quedando éstas registradas directamente en el ordenador en formato digital. El SIPP nace como una herramienta educativa que facilita la motivación, el debate dentro del grupo, la participación y la colaboración. Su principal ventaja es la novedad y la propuesta de acción. El uso de dispositivos tecnológicos ayuda, a su vez, a captar y mantener la atención del público durante la tarea (algo mucho más complicado con las herramientas tradicionales de cuestionarios). Igualmente, al proporcionar los resultados instantáneamente, permite ver si un grupo se equivoca al responder a una respuesta y así explicitar sus ideas previas, lo cual podría llevar a mejorar el cambio conceptual y la toma de conciencia. Por consiguiente, el SIPP es tanto un sistema de participación como un sistema de evaluación, aunque, como ocurre con todas las nuevas tecnologías, sus ventajas dependerán del uso efectivo que se haga del sistema (en suma de la didáctica sobre la que se apoye), sin olvidar que puede generar también efectos perversos y malos usos que también habría que evaluar. Analizando aspectos más técnicos, los clickers aportan rapidez a los procesos de evaluación, eliminando pasos intermedios en las investigaciones. Facilitan el análisis de los datos ya que se vuelcan directamente en formatos digitales listos para el cálculo, ahorrando tiempo y dinero, y mejorando el control de la técnica evaluativa (Asensio et al., 2011).

2. Estudios de comprensión de los contenidos del MPACP.

El diseño de la evaluación para el MPACP parte de un marco teórico de la enseñanza-aprendizaje que se corresponde con el aprendizaje informal o de libre elección (Asensio & Pol, 2002), un aprendizaje contextualizado o situado, con un alto componente motivacional (recientemente llamado también aprendizaje motivado: Asensio, Asenjo, Rodríguez-Moneo, 2011).

Desde esta perspectiva, la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid elaboró para el MPACP en una primera fase, una evaluación de público real y potencial en la que se analizaban los perfiles, las expectativas, el uso de los espacios, de los elementos expositivos y el impacto (grado de satisfacción con las diferentes áreas del museo). En una segunda fase, esta evaluación incluía el impacto en los programas educativos y públicos. Y en una tercera fase, se evaluaba también la comprensión de los contenidos expuestos en el yacimiento. Durante todas las fases de este proceso, se quiso evaluar tanto al público como a los trabajadores del museo, ya que éstos son, a su vez, parte del mismo y piezas indispensables en la labor social.

La primera fase de evaluación, realizada en el 2007, estimaba, a través de auto-cuestionarios (rellenados a lápiz y en papel), perfiles, impacto, opinión y expectativas. Los auto-cuestionarios valoran con escalas la satisfacción en distintas áreas del museo: recorrido, montaje, audiovisuales, etc., y recopilan información demográfica del visitante. También se realizaron cuestionarios a los guías, a los profesores acompañantes, a los mediadores, cuestionarios web y se distribuyó un folleto comunicativo. En el segundo año (2008), se amplió con la evaluación de cursos y

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actividades propuestas por el museo, realizando a su vez *focus group* y *meaning maps*. En este mismo año, se empezó a evaluar la comprensión del mensaje expositivo a través de cuadernillos en papel rellenos a mano y se dejaron de aplicar los cuestionarios de expectativas, de mediadores, de profesores y el cuestionario web. A partir del 2009 se siguió evaluando la comprensión, pero esta vez en formato digital, mediante del SIPP y no con lápiz y papel. Se continuaba considerando perfil, impacto y opinión. Desde el 2011, se siguen utilizando los clickers para evaluar comprensión, impacto, perfil y opiniones. Sólo se mantienen en formato de lápiz y papel los cuestionarios para los guías y un nuevo cuestionario desarrollado este año para los tutores o tutoras de los grupos con necesidades educativas específicas (NEE). Este año se está diseñando un nuevo folleto comunicativo y un nuevo cuestionario web, además de continuar con los estudios de comprensión.

Diseño: En cuanto a las tareas de comprensión, se diseñaron específicamente un conjunto de preguntas para evaluar la del mensaje expositivo en los visitantes del MPACP. Las preguntas estaban relacionadas con temas sobre la cultura material e inmaterial de los nativos canarios, objetivo básico de dicho mensaje y todos ellos tratados durante la visita: la arqueología y sus colecciones, la vida en el poblado, la cronología, el arte, la sociedad, la economía o el lenguaje. Las visitas al MPACP son siempre visitas guiadas por los guías oficiales de la institución, los cuales aportan toda la información sobre los contenidos del museo.

Muestra: La muestra que se usó para llevar a cabo este estudio fue el segundo año de evaluación 139 sujetos escolares, de los cuales 69 son alumnos de Bachillerato con edades comprendidas entre los 15 y los 17 años y 70 son alumnos de 1º ESO de 12 a 14 años. Todos proceden de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, y el tercer año se evaluó la comprensión a un total de 392 visitantes: 165 escolares, 161 público general, 38 visitantes de la tercera edad y 28 jóvenes del taller de empleo.

Material: Para el segundo año, el material de evaluación consistía en preguntas repartidas en tres cuadernillos a rellenar con papel y lápiz. Cada cuadernillo respondía a una modalidad. La existencia de tres modalidades responde a la idea de no alargar el proceso de evaluativo, a la vez que se registran todas las preguntas diseñadas. El tercer año evaluado con el SIPP presentaba dos modalidades de preguntas: A y B. Cada modalidad se aplicaba a público escolar y a público general por lo que se trabajó con un total de cuatro modalidades: A y B para escolares y A y B para público general.

Procedimiento: Las evaluaciones se planteaban a los visitantes una vez que habían visitado el museo. Los grupos de personas eran dirigidos a una sala o área de descanso donde se sentaban y respondían con papel y lápiz en el segundo año y con los clickers en el tercer año, a un conjunto de preguntas sobre las sociedades prehispánicas, su cronología, su alimentación, sus orígenes, etc.

3. Resultados del estudio de comprensión del MPACP

El perfil del visitante del MPACP es bastante diverso en cuanto a la edad, la procedencia y el nivel de estudios. Durante el tercer año destaca un perfil de público de edad media, nivel de estudios medio-alto y procedencia de la isla de Gran Canaria, aunque también hay visitantes que proceden de las demás islas, de la península y de otros países. Se suele acudir al museo debido a recomendación de familiares y amigos. Por su parte, el perfil escolar tipo es un estudiante de entre 12 y 17 años de la isla de Gran Canaria.

En cuanto a los impactos, el MPACP recibe unas puntuaciones bastante altas. Las que obtiene ambos años en cuanto al museo en general, superan los 9 puntos sobre 10. También logra puntuaciones muy altas (mayores de 8,45) en aspectos como el audiovisual inicial, el montaje, el recorrido, la colección, el área del poblado y también

el museo en conjunto. Igualmente, se observa que la alta estabilidad en estas puntuaciones por parte del MPACP.

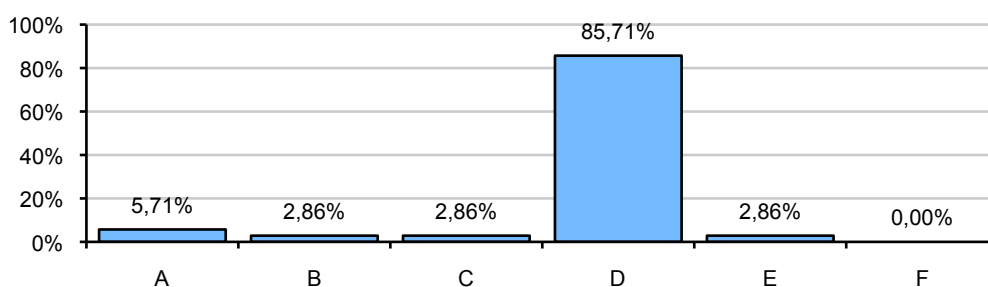
Centrándonos en los resultados, en primer lugar, a través de las respuestas de los sujetos a las tareas de comprensión, se aprecia una alta eficacia del mensaje expositivo del museo. La mayoría de las preguntas de evaluación se contestan correctamente. El público acaba conociendo la procedencia de los prehispánicos -los pueblos bereberes del norte de África-, así como que usaban el intercambio de productos, que hacían cerámica a mano, que existía una organización y una jerarquía social, que eran politeístas, que la transmisión era tanto matri como patrilineal, que tenían un lenguaje propio o qué alimentos consumían, etc.

De todas formas, aparecen a su vez preguntas peor contestadas. El principal problema del museo en cuanto a la comprensión, es que el MPACP no consigue transmitir la ubicación cronológica correcta del yacimiento. Este equívoco se basa en la concepción errónea que asocia el concepto “cueva” a la Prehistoria. Es decir, que Cueva Pintada se asocia a la época Prehistórica, a la época en la que se cazaba y se recolectaba, a la época a la que pertenecen las pinturas del paleolítico de la cueva de Altamira. Pero en realidad, Cueva Pintada está datada entre los siglos VI al XVI y, por consiguiente, es prehispánica y no prehistórica. Este error se aprecia muy bien en algunos de los ítems de comprensión.

En el ítem presentado a continuación se observa muy bien este error que comenten la mayoría de los visitantes del MPACP.

¿Cuál de estas pinturas es de la misma época que las de “Cueva Pintada”?

PINTURA FIGURATIVA



Un 85,71% de los visitantes contesta la opción D perteneciente a pinturas del paleolítico de la cueva de Altamira, mientras que la opción correcta es la B.

Otro ítem que también muestra este error común sobre lo que entienden los visitantes del museo de Cueva Pintada, es el eje cronológico que los participantes debían

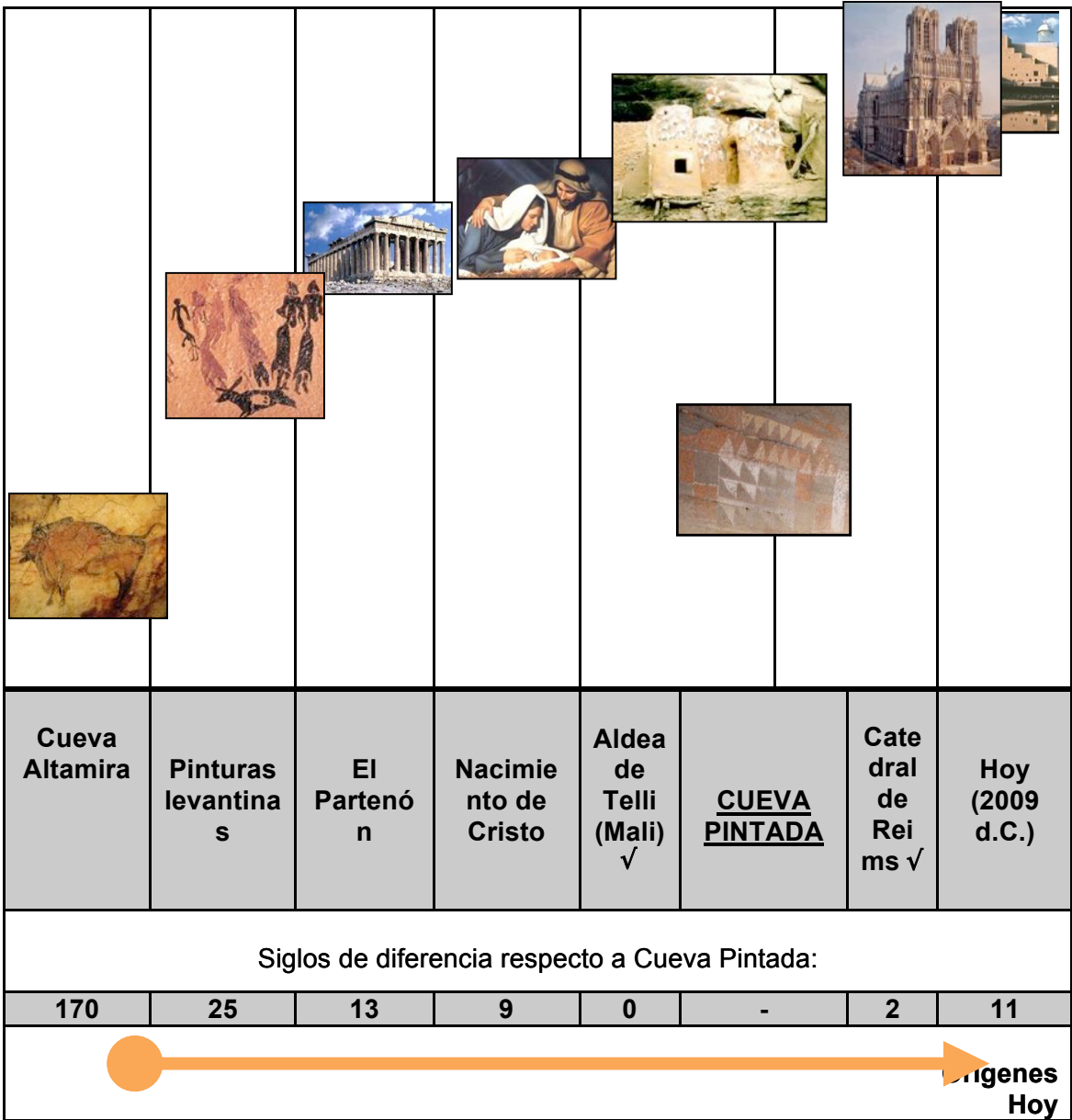
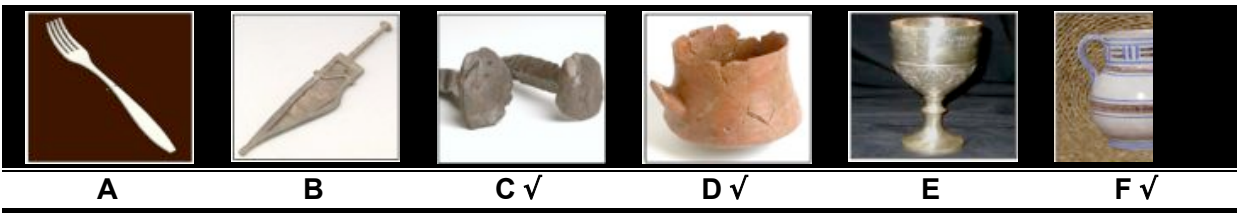
construir. La imagen de la pregunta que se expone a los visitantes a través del SIPP es la siguiente diapositiva.



A continuación se presenta un modelo de respuesta de eje cronológico correcto, que va desde nuestros orígenes al día de hoy. Lo interesante es conocer los resultados obtenidos tras la realización por parte del público, del eje cronológico. Los visitantes tienden a situar cronológicamente el yacimiento de Cueva Pintada antes del nacimiento de Cristo cuando, en realidad, estaría situado entre los siglos VI y XVI. Lo que perciben como más antiguo es el yacimiento de Cueva Pintada y en ningún momento lo acercan cronológicamente a ninguno de los acontecimientos más próximos. Este resultado aporta más fuerza a la concepción errónea comentada hasta ahora.

Como se puede apreciar en la figura superior, los visitantes del museo después de adentrarse y de conocerlo, se equivocan en más de 100 siglos al ubicar Cueva Pintada cronológicamente. Asocian Cueva Pintada con otras cuevas, como la de Altamira. Otro ítem que muestra una perspectiva diferente del error que cometen muchos de los visitantes es el siguiente.







¿Cuál de estos objetos se relaciona con el yacimiento de “Cueva Pintada”? (no decorativo)

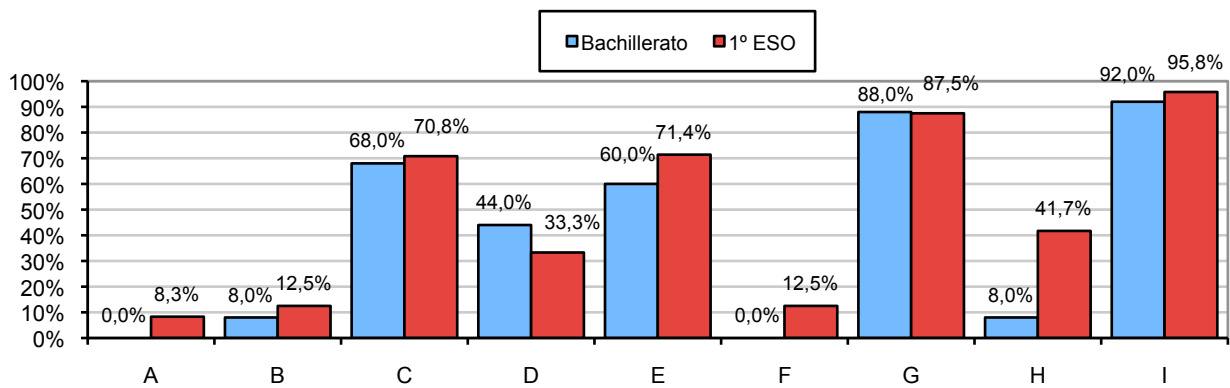


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Lo destacable de este ítem es el objeto que se muestra en la alternativa F. Éste se percibe como un objeto nuevo, que al no estar roto ni parecer antiguo no se asocia con Cueva Pintada, ya que ésta sería un resto prehistórico según las ideas previas de estos visitantes. Sin embargo, otra de las alternativas correctas, la D, se tiende a reconocer en la mayoría de los encuestados. Ya no solo se detecta el error de asociar cueva con prehistoria, sino que aparece el error de confundir lo antiguo con lo poco elaborado o con apariencia destruida y vieja. Esta misma idea previa aparece cuando se pregunta por otros objetos y cerámicas.

¿Cuáles de estas cerámicas son de la misma época que las de “Cueva Pintada”, pertenezcan o no al yacimiento?

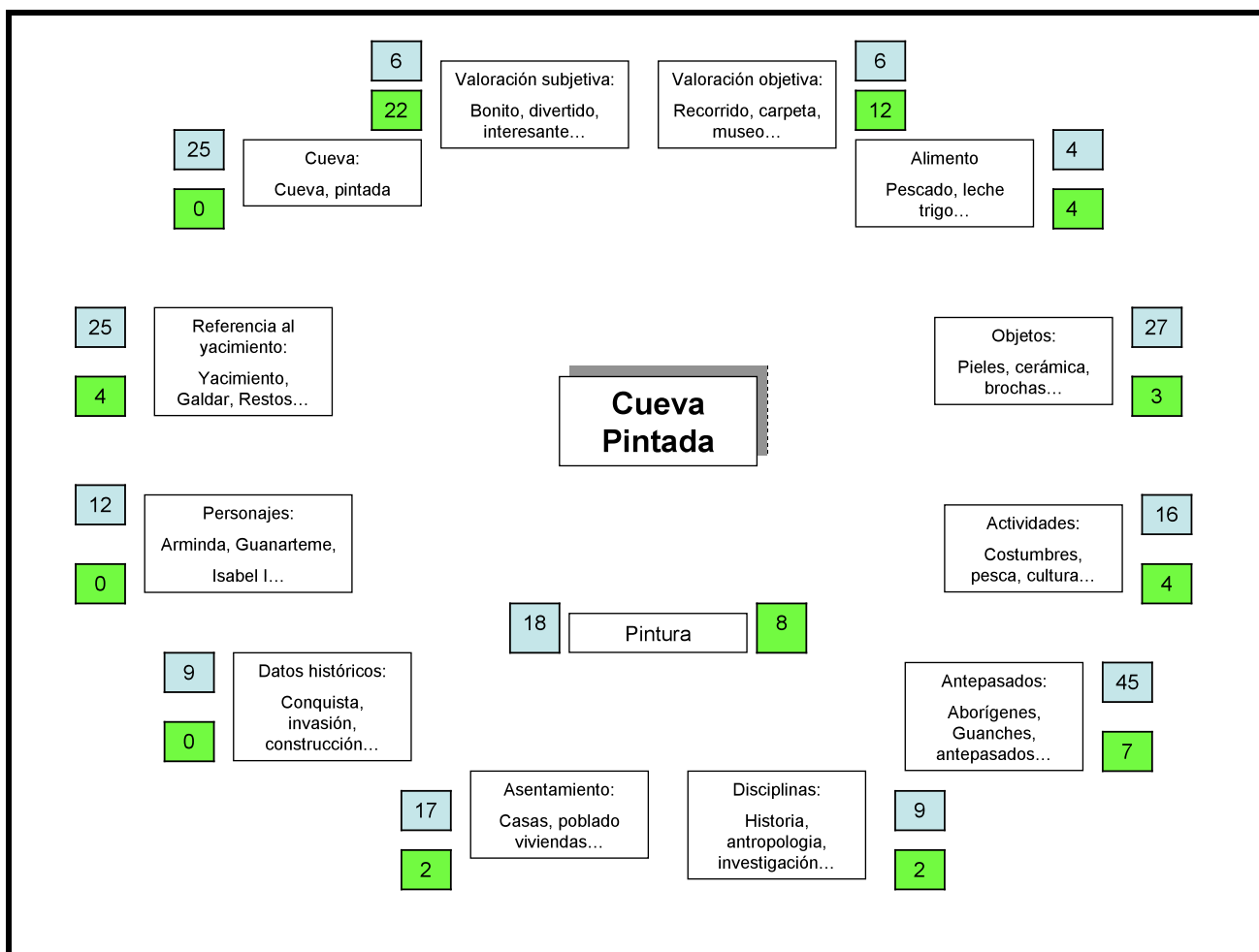
					
A	B	C ✓	D	E	F ✓
G ✓	H ✓	I ✓			



En este caso vuelve a ser la alternativa F, alternativa correcta, muy poco contestada. Justamente se trata de la cerámica que se encuentra en mejor estado de conservación. Vuelve a aparecer la idea previa que percibe el pasado como algo primitivo y el presente como lo civilizado. En algunos estudios se encuentran frases de estudiantes que a grandes rasgos representan esta misma concepción errónea: “no sé cómo podían vivir las personas antes”; “no tiene ninguna importancia saber cómo vivían de una forma tan elemental y rústica”.

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Los *meaning maps* son otras herramientas de evaluación que permiten conocer las representaciones e ideas que asocian los visitantes después de recorrer, en nuestro caso, el MPACP. Son mapas conceptuales con términos que los participantes evocan, uniendo éstos a través de líneas. Ellos se analizan posteriormente categorizando el significado de los conceptos usados. Los recuadros azules del gráfico siguiente hacen referencia a los alumnos de Bachillerato y los verdes a los alumnos de 1º de E.S.O de la segunda evaluación que realizó el MPACP.



Una de las lecturas de este *meaning map* global es la riqueza de categorías que evocan los escolares durante la evaluación. El yacimiento, la cueva, los objetos, la valoración personal y el sentido identitario son los aspectos más relacionados con el museo por parte de los estudiantes. Por otro lado, no se aprecian representaciones mentales muy profundas. Es decir, el museo no genera un procesamiento profundo de la información (la profundidad se mide en función del número de niveles de subordinación). El análisis del museo por parte de la muestra es bastante superficial ya que, básicamente, se trata de una reproducción de lo visto y escuchado durante la visita. Pero los datos más sustanciales del mapa de significados son los negativos: no se alcanzan niveles más elaborados de conocimiento, no se observan comparaciones con otros conocimientos, ni categorizaciones, ni inferencias a partir de los nuevos aprendizajes.

4. Conclusiones

Las concepciones erróneas no solo muestran las ideas funcionales y difíciles de cambiar con las que conviven los visitantes del MPACP, sino que suelen influir en la totalidad de la visita, sesgando la interpretación de las distintas áreas del museo.

De la evaluación continua de la comprensión del MPACP, se deduce que existen dos concepciones erróneas fundamentales aunque la mayoría de los contenidos se comprendan bien. Una de las ellas, consiste en asociar el concepto cueva con la Prehistoria y otra, muestra cómo se tienden a asociar las sociedades más antiguas con procesos menos elaborados, tanto en contenidos sociales como culturales o artísticos.

Los orígenes de ambas concepciones erróneas encontradas durante la evaluación, se pueden agrupar en tres bloques: los libros de texto, los profesores y la transmisión social, llevada a cabo a través de los medios de comunicación, la familia, etc. Este conjunto de factores influyen a la hora de formar estas concepciones que dificultan el cambio conceptual. Los libros de texto, los profesores o profesoras y la transmisión social influyen en la manera en que se percibe el mundo, son parte del contexto e intervienen en el proceso de socialización de los aprendices. Si un grupo escolar realiza la visita al MPACP cuando están estudiando la prehistoria, es fácil que las concepciones erróneas que detecta Cueva Pintada en su evaluación se refuercen, al igual que si los medios de comunicación realizan un análisis simple y rápido de conceptos como la prehistoria.

Para hacer frente a tales ideas erróneas e intervenir puntualmente de forma eficaz, se ha diseñado una tarea participativa en el museo para el público, a través de la cual se puedan manipular trozos de materiales, monedas y cerámicas. De este modo, se facilita que los visitantes construyan de manera más directa un conjunto de nociones que les ayude a conocer la cultura prehispánica. El resultado de esta intervención está siendo analizado durante este cuarto año de evaluación.

Otra aplicación educativa que unió el MPACP y la enseñanza, se llevó a cabo promoviendo el trabajo cooperativo (Gómez, Rodríguez, Victori, Hernández, Rodríguez, Asensio, 2011). Se desarrolló un proyecto para un grupo de 3º de E.S.O. y para un grupo de primer curso del Ciclo Formativo de Grado Superior de Técnico en Animación Sociocultural (TASOC), que consiguió de manera muy eficaz los objetivos propuestos en dicho proyecto.

Al analizar los datos del segundo año y el tercer año, se observa que la diferencia fundamental en cuanto a la herramienta de evaluación utilizada (lápiz y papel en el segundo año y clickers ó SIPP en el tercer año) no marca diferencias en los resultados. Es decir, que los clickers mejoran el aspecto metodológico pero no han supuesto un cambio en las tendencias de respuestas de los visitantes del museo, no han modificado las concepciones erróneas. Tampoco ese era el objetivo que se perseguía con el uso de los clickers. Esto demuestra la enorme influencia en las nuevas tecnologías del uso que se haga de ellas.

Como conclusión general, un museo eficiente es aquél que está comprometido con la sociedad, acercando la historia a las ciudadanas y ciudadanos. Es aquél que evalúa sus exposiciones y realiza estudios de público para ajustarse continuamente a sus demandas, generar reflexiones, coordinar sus acciones y darle sentido al propio museo y a su difusión cultural. Por eso, la evaluación continua es un aspecto tan importante y tan acertado dentro del MPACP.

El conocimiento sobre el cambio conceptual también puede ayudar a hacer más probable la eliminación de las concepciones erróneas. Así, su detección a través de estrategias metacognitivas (Carretero, Limón, 2000) tanto en los maestros, en los aprendices, en los museos y en sus visitantes, logrará resultados tremendamente

positivos. Los profesores y profesoras pueden añadir estos conocimientos a sus didácticas para así profundizar tanto en aspectos teóricos como en aspectos prácticos, aprendiendo, por ejemplo, a utilizar el método científico en la historia (Feliu & Sallés, 2011), fomentar la crítica y la reflexión, promover actividades de investigación, etc. Todo ello para mejorar la comprensión de la historia y generar conocimientos más complejos y no tan superficiales y repetitivos.

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PARTICIPACIÓN Y TECNOLOGÍA: PERCEPCIÓN Y EXPECTATIVAS DEL PÚBLICO DEL USO DE TICS EN MUSEOS

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RESUMEN

Desde la introducción de las primeras pantallas o las primeras audio-guías en los museos, las tecnologías auxiliares destinadas a los/las visitantes han ido ganando terreno en el espacio museístico y abriendo el terreno de su comunicación a través de las redes sociales. Más allá de su uso como soporte en exposiciones, muchos especialistas en e-learning ven en las TICs una herramienta fundamental para la transmisión de conocimientos en el espacio museístico y especialmente, para permitir una mayor participación de los/las visitantes como parte activa de las actividades de los museos. El panorama actual se debate en torno a la implementación de las TICs como una herramienta destinada a la participación del público en el museo. Las direcciones de los museos están divididas entre las reticentes ante la inmensidad de contenidos y usos posibles, y las optimistas que ven en las TICs un recurso indispensable para ampliar su capacidad de comunicación y acción. En este trabajo, hemos llevado a cabo un estudio sobre la percepción y expectativas por parte del público, del uso de las TICs como una herramienta destinada a disfrutar de una experiencia en el museo más activa y a facilitar la comunicación e interacción con éste de forma previa, durante y después de la visita.

Palabras claves: participación, TICs, redes sociales, multimedia, público

ABSTRACT

Participation and technology: perception and public expectations about the use of information and communication technology in museums

Since the introduction of the first touch screens or the first audio-guides in museums, auxiliary technology addressed at visitors has been empowering the museum scene and breaking ground in their communications. Beyond their use as a support in exhibitions, many specialists in e-learning see information and communication technology (ICT) as a fundamental tool for the transmission of knowledge in the museum sphere, especially allowing greater visitor participation in museum activities. In the current scene there are debates about the implementation of ICT as a tool intended for the participation of museum visitors. Museum management teams are divided between those who are reluctant when faced with the immensity of new content and their possible uses, and those who are optimistic and who see these technologies as an essential resource to widen the museum's capacity for communication and action. In this work we have carried out a study about public perceptions and expectations regarding the use of ICT as a tool aimed at enjoying a more active experience in the museum and making communication and interaction easier with the museum: before, during and after the visit

Keywords: empowering, information and communication technology, social media, multimedia, visitors.

RÉSUMÉ

Participación y tecnología : percepción y expectativas del público a propósito de el uso de tecnologías de la información y de la comunicación (TICs) en los museos.

Desde la introducción, en los museos, de los primeros pantallas táctiles o de los primeros audio-guías, las técnicas auxiliares destinadas a los visitantes han ganado terreno en el mundo museístico y abierto el de su comunicación a través de las redes sociales. Pero, más allá de su uso como soporte en las exposiciones, de numerosos especialistas del *e-learning* ven en las TICs un instrumento fundamental para la transmisión de conocimientos en el espacio museístico y, especialmente, para permitir una mayor participación de los visitantes en tanto que parte activa de las actividades del museo. En el escenario actual hay debates sobre el uso de las TICs en tanto que instrumentos destinados a la participación del público en el museo. Las direcciones de los museos están divididas entre quienes dudan ante la inmensidad de los contenidos y su uso posible, y los optimistas que ven en las TICs un recurso indispensable para aumentar su capacidad de comunicación y de acción. En este trabajo hemos realizado un estudio de la percepción y de las expectativas de la parte del público, con respecto al uso de las TICs como instrumento destinado a proporcionar en el museo una experiencia más activa y a facilitar la comunicación y la interacción con el mismo, en una forma adaptada previamente, durante y después de la visita.

* * *

Introducción

Las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación (TICs) como una herramienta para abrir el museo a la participación del/la visitante, más allá de ser un recurso expositivo, es un tema recurrente en la actual discusión sobre museos y tecnologías digitales. Tras el boom del fenómeno de la web 2.0 y de las redes sociales, sumado a la ubicuidad del acceso a información digital a través de dispositivos portátiles, parece que nos acercamos a un nuevo ciclo que supondría un nuevo paradigma en las relaciones entre museo y público, al enriquecer la experiencia expositiva y al traspasar el museo el espacio expositivo. El aprendizaje ubicuo¹, sus implicaciones en la personalización y autonomía del acceso a la información, así como el aprendizaje colaborativo² parecen suponer que las TICs están destinadas ya a ocupar un papel fundamental en el ámbito educativo y, por supuesto, en el museístico. Más allá de diferentes propuestas, experiencias y aplicaciones de TICs en museos³ que nos ilustran sobre las posibilidades, problemas y futuro de su implantación, en este estudio abordamos la percepción de las tecnologías digitales por parte del público de museos, con especial atención a sus expectativas y demandas. Hoy en día no cabe considerar las TICs como un fenómeno nuevo en nuestras sociedades; otra cuestión es cómo se puede optimizar y emplear en la relación de los museos con el público. Conscientes de las diferentes perspectivas con las que se puede abordar la relación entre los museos y sus públicos en el uso de las nuevas tecnologías, nuestra propuesta se ciñe al ámbito expositivo. Hemos realizado una investigación en la que entender como el

¹ Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis, *New Learning: Elements of a Science of Education*, Cambridge, University Press, 2008.

² David Jonson, Rogers Jonson and Edythe Holubec, *El aprendizaje cooperativo en el aula*, Buenos Aires, Paidós, 1999.

³ Christina Tsagaraki, *Museos Latinoamericanos y las Tecnologías de Comunicación: ¿Qué están haciendo?*, Costa Rica. Fundación ILAM, 2011, unpublished: Ana Benítez Ramos, "Reflexiones sobre los usuarios del museo y estrategias de captación a través de las nuevas tecnologías", *El escritor del museólogo*, 14th January 2011, <http://elmuseologo.blogspot.com/2011/01/reflexiones-sobre-los-usuarios-del.html> [Retrieved 12/02/2012]

público percibe el uso de las TICs en los museos que visita. Nuestra tesis es que si bien las TICs pertenecen ya necesariamente al ámbito del museo, su implementación ha de orientarse a las necesidades del público y supeditarse a las necesidades expositivas destinadas a ofrecer una experiencia más intensa bajo el principio de *universal design for learning*⁴ –así lo demandan los/las visitantes–, lejos de un uso espurio de recursos tecnológicos o como evolución de los soportes de información analógicos.

Metodología y muestra

El presente estudio se realizó en base a encuestas (con preguntas abiertas y cerradas) sobre una muestra de 115 personas, todas ellas visitantes de diferentes museos y que atienden a diferentes perfiles como público de éstos. Estamos, por lo tanto, alejados de un estudio de público, pues la población a la que hacemos referencia no está circunscrita a un grupo determinado de museos sino a la característica de haber sido en los últimos diez años parte de su público, así como tener entrenamiento y destreza en el uso de las TICs. En este sentido, nuestro objetivo no ha sido caracterizar al público, sino indagar sobre la percepción de los visitantes en relación con el uso de TIC's. Así pues, se escogió un grupo de visitantes que por sus características socio-demográficas tuviesen experiencia con el uso de TICs en sus actividades diarias, así mismo deberían de haber hecho alguna visita a un museo en los últimos 10 años. El abanico de edades va de los 17 a los 40 años, todos presentan estudios entre formación profesional y superior, con una composición de mujeres (56,5%) y hombres (43,5%), activos en diversos ámbitos laborales o no. Su nivel de alfabetización tecnológica se midió en base a su acceso a internet, uso de equipamiento electrónico (ordenadores, tabletas, smartphones) y uso de servicios asociados a las TICs (blogs, redes sociales, software de productividad, chat, compras on-line...) de diversos ámbitos. En esta comunicación vamos a analizar cuatro de los espacios concretos sobre la experiencia de la visita a los museos y las TICs: percepción (sobre los aspectos atractivos que presentan los museos de acuerdo a la apreciación de los/las visitantes), carencias (o las demandas generales que el público tiene de los museos), usos (que los/las encuestadas han hecho en sus visitas a museos de recursos TICs) y expectativas (de los/las visitantes sobre la incorporación de TICs en la experiencia expositiva). Presentamos pues, un análisis descriptivo como primera parte de una investigación más amplia que estamos llevando a cabo sobre el uso de estas tecnologías en los Museos.

Las encuestas se realizaron fuera del espacio de visita de estas instituciones, por lo que los datos hacen mención a la impresión que les queda a los sujetos entrevistados sobre su experiencia en ellas y no tanto sobre una visita concreta a un museo determinado.

Los/las encuestados podían elegir entre una serie de respuestas cerradas predefinidas a un estudio exploratorio previo. En tres de los cuatro temas abordados, debían marcar las tres opciones que consideraban más importantes de las ofrecidas como respuesta. De este modo se les obligó a establecer una serie clara de prioridades.

⁴ "Universal design for learning goes beyond physical accessibility. It involves creating multisensory, multimodal learning experiences from which all visitors can learn by touching, seeing, listening, smelling, and sometimes even tasting" Christine A. Reich and Anna May Lindgren-Streicher "Universal Design Literature Review", Boston, Museum of Science, 2005,1-5, <http://ebookbrowse.com/starkey-ail-605-7-issues-literature-review-universal-design-for-learning-pdf-d264013159> [Retrieved 7/1/2012].

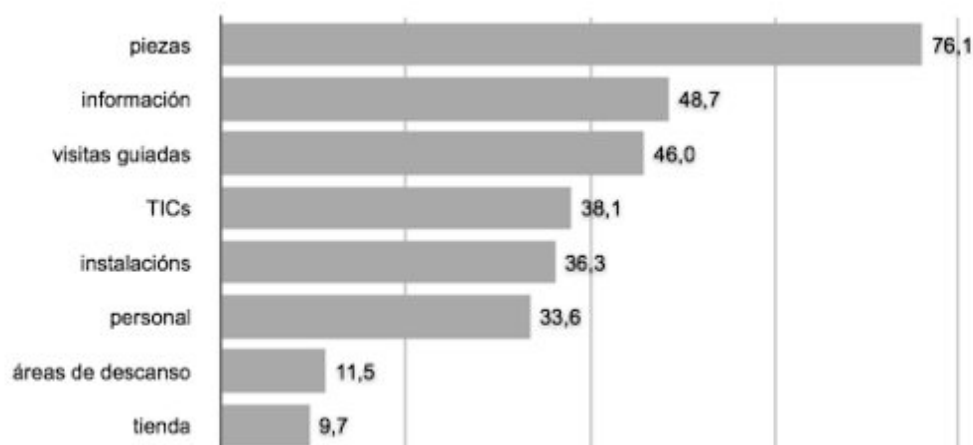
Percepción

Los/las visitantes, cuando acuden a un museo, tienen motivaciones diversas y no muy claras pero marcadas por la curiosidad y la receptividad previas⁵. El museo se puede entender como una caja de sorpresas, un ecosistema en sí mismo diferente del ámbito habitual. Los aspectos que resultan más atractivos de un museo no ofrecen sorpresas iniciales en las opiniones del público, que subraya la función conservadora y expositiva como las más identificables. Así, en una ponderación de los tres ítems preferentes: la colección exhibida es el elemento central que justifica la visita (véase gráfica). Aunque se ha identificado la colección como el principal atractivo de un museo (76,1%), la información que sobre ella se da se sitúa a una distancia considerable, en segunda y tercera posición, bien como información in situ (48,7%), bien a través de visitas guiadas (46,0%) –datos que se corroborarán en la falta de demanda de éstos, como se verá en el apartado siguiente–. Hasta aquí nos encontramos con el corpus convencional de un museo (piezas y discurso), en el cual las instalaciones en las que se recrea ese ecosistema se valoran en quinta posición (36,3%), así como la amabilidad del personal (sexta posición, 33,6%), ambas ligeramente por debajo de la presencia de TICs (38,1%). Parece paradójico que tanto las instalaciones y el personal, siendo partes fundamentales del museo, no sean valoradas de manera más positiva, pero esto se puede explicar simplemente porque son elementos que no se hacen evidentes durante la visita, y quedan desplazados por la experiencia directa centrada en la contemplación de la exposición. Resultan interesantes estos datos pues, avanzado nuestro estudio, podrían dar luz sobre si la visita a los museos se valora, por parte del público, como una experiencia global en el mismo sentido que son valoradas las actividades/destinos turísticos en los que se tiene en cuenta tanto los servicios como la experiencia, motivación...

En cualquier caso, la consideración de las TICs cabe entenderla a la luz de su papel auxiliar tanto para la muestra de piezas como de información. En este sentido, el atractivo de las TICs en el museo no se considera como una prioridad, lo que responde también al concepto clásico del museo como espacio expositivo⁶, y se aleja de los elementos como cartelas y textos que aportan información sobre el discurso y la colección.

⁵ “La necesidad cultural aparece como producto consecuente y paralelo al proceso educacional (social) que se desarrolla en diversas y progresivas escalas de valores desde la curiosidad hasta las cimas superiores del conocimiento” (Aurora León, *El museo: teoría, praxis y utopía*, Madrid, Cátedra, 1988. p. 172).

⁶ Con respecto a la motivación para realizar la visita, en el estudio realizado por el Ministerio de Cultura español, se aprecia como primer valor (46,4%) el conocer y apreciar las colecciones de los museos (Laboratorio permanente de público en museos, *Conociendo a nuestros visitantes. Estudio de público en museos del Ministerio de Cultura*, Madrid, Ministerio de Cultura, 2010).



Gráfica 1. Aspectos atractivos de los museos según los/las visitantes

Por el contrario, servicios no directamente ligados a la exposición, como áreas de descanso o tienda del museo ocupan las últimas posiciones (11,5% y 9,7%, respectivamente). Así observamos cómo, si bien el/la visitante no tiene una expectativa concreta de lo que se va a encontrar en un museo, sí que tiene una idea de lo que es un museo. Este se concibe como espacio expositivo articulado en torno al acceso a las piezas y a la información relativa a ellas⁷.

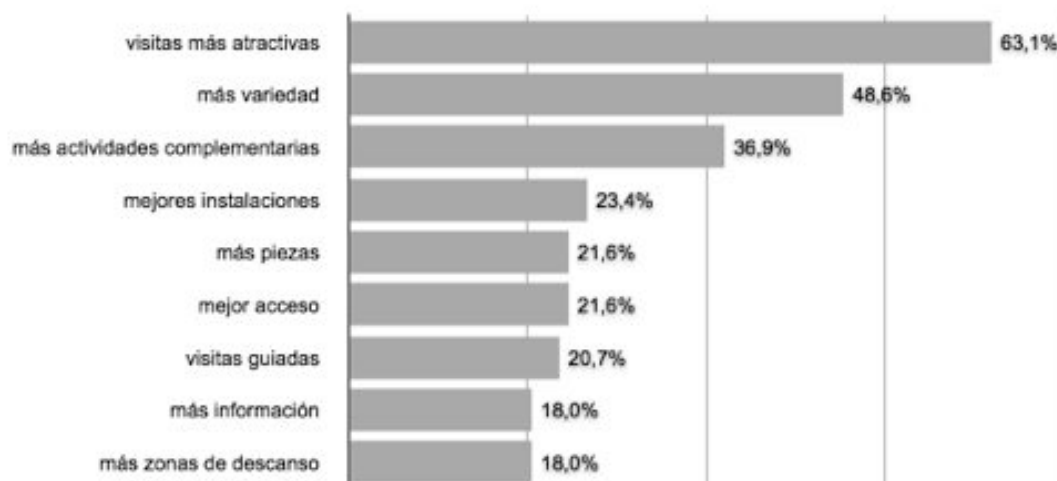
Carencias

En este apartado se recogieron las demandas generales que los/las visitantes hacen a los museos. En esta ocasión también se les pidió que eligiesen los tres aspectos que les parecían fundamentales. Los resultados nos muestran cómo hay una clara jerarquización de las carencias, orientadas principalmente a la visita al museo como una experiencia más enriquecedora (véase gráfica 2). En primera posición se solicitan visitas más atractivas (63,1%), queda abierto lo que cada persona encuestada considera que hace más atractiva una visita, pero en vista de las otras respuestas y según estudios previos⁸ ya podemos avanzar que se situaría en el ámbito de la intensidad en la visita, marcada fundamentalmente por un mayor nivel de experiencia (estímulo cognitivo y sensorial) y no ser un mero receptor pasivo de un discurso expositivo monocorde. En segunda posición, los resultados apuntan a que se desearía una mayor variedad en la exposición (48,6%). Teniendo en cuenta que ni la inclusión de más piezas (quinta posición, con un 21,6%) ni más información (octava posición, 18,0%) son prioritarias, esto nos hace colegir que la consecución de visitas más atractivas se sitúa, como indicábamos, en el terreno vivencial, con un mayor nivel de participación de la exposición o bien harían referencia a una exposición diseñada en función más de los impactos sobre el visitante que del discurso lineal. Esto nos llevaría ante un tipo de exposiciones que se articulen no como discursos cerrados, sino como universos a explorar e interpretar.

⁷ En este sentido también es interesante entender que los museos visitados fueron principalmente los grandes museos de estado y con especial incidencia las pinacotecas española y francesa.)

⁸ Kevin Walker, "Structuring Visitor Participation", in: Loïc Tallon and Kevin Walker (eds.), *Digital Technologies and the Museum Experience. Handheld Guides and Other Media*, Plymouth: AltaMira Press, 2008, p. 112.

Fátima Braña, *O Museo do Pobo galego: contedor de valores*, Santiago de Compostela, Fundación Antonio Fraguas, 2008.



Gráfica 2. Demandas de los/las visitantes a los museos

La solicitud de más actividades complementarias, siendo significativa (36,9%) ocupa la tercera posición, con una diferencia considerable con respecto a las dos anteriores. Parece que el objetivo principal de la visita puntual es conocer la exposición y en ese contexto se debe hacer la visita más atractiva y variada. Las actividades complementarias aun así, son una prioridad por encima de mejores instalaciones (cuarta posición, 23,4%), mejores accesos (sexta posición, 21,6%), o más zonas de descanso (novena posición, 18%) –ninguno de los/las encuestadas presentaba problemas graves de movilidad– lo que sitúa los contenidos de la exposición (piezas y mensaje) por encima de aspectos como la infraestructura o la dotación. Tanto la demanda de más información (octava posición, 18%) como las visitas guiadas (séptima posición, 20,7%) aun siendo significativas, se encuentran a la cola de las demandas explícitas, esto quizá se entienda en relación, por un lado, con la saturación informativa y, por el otro, por un deseo de autonomía del visitante durante la exposición, pero sería necesario profundizar en estos aspectos para poder ofrecer una explicación contrastada. Sin embargo, resulta cuando menos llamativo el hecho de que diferentes estudios de público indiquen la satisfacción en la visita, puntuando alto a los museos frente a nuestros resultados que, aunque parciales, son claros en este sentido. Entendemos que esta aparente contradicción se explica en la diferenciación metodológica entre el recuerdo de la visita y la práctica inmediata de la que se nutren fundamentalmente los estudios consultados a nivel estatal en España, donde la opinión de la visita es muy buena en un 69,7% de los casos y buena en un 27,2%⁹. En este sentido, sería interesante contrastar estos datos con variables que nos lleven a vincular los datos que hemos recogido en cuanto a valoración de la experiencia de estos usuarios y el concepto de fatiga museal¹⁰.

Usos

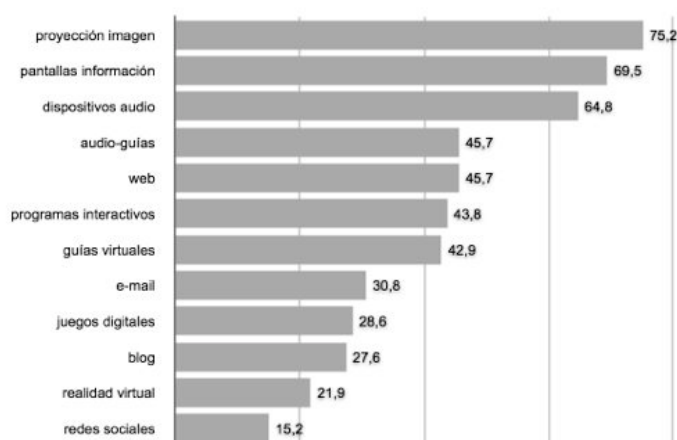
En la práctica real, el público encuestado demuestra una amplia experiencia o contacto con la implementación de TICs en museos, por lo que no se puede

⁹ Laboratorio permanente de público en museos, *Conociendo a nuestros visitantes. Estudio de público en museos del Ministerio de Cultura*, Madrid, Ministerio de Cultura, 2010.

¹⁰ Fatiga o cansancio en los museos es un elemento importante que se puso de manifiesto a partir de análisis de museografías y de arquitecturas en relación con la ocupación del espacio (Benjamin Ives Gilman, "Museum fatigue", *Scientific Monthly*, nº 12, 1916, pp. 177-189); Posteriormente con el cansancio psíquico y cognitivo (Ángela García Blanco, *La exposición un medio de comunicación*, Madrid, Akal, 1999; Chanler G. Screven, "Estudios sobre visitantes", *Museum internacional*, nº 178 (vol. XLV, n. 2), París: UNESCO, 1993, pp. 4-5).

considerar que sean ya una novedad. Los/las visitantes encuestadas incorporan las TICs a su vida cotidiana y están familiarizadas con su uso por parte de los museos, por lo tanto pueden valorar de forma contrastada la utilización que de ellas se haga. En este estudio, ante la cuestión 'Cuál de las siguientes TICs has visto/usado en un museo en el último año' (con respuesta múltiple), nos encontramos con un refrendo de la concepción expositiva convencional ya abordada anteriormente, pero en este caso que responde a la puesta en marcha de los propios museos.

Los visitantes de nuestra muestra entienden que el uso de las TICs se realiza fundamentalmente como medios de acceso a información predefinida y estructurada, muy semejante a los recursos expositivos tradicionales (piezas y paneles informativos) pero en soporte digital. Lo digital substituye funcionalmente a lo analógico pero no se implementa con un valor añadido en lo que corresponde a interacción, personalización y participación del/la visitante una vez que éste está en el museo. De esta forma, el recurso más percibido por nuestra muestra han sido los dispositivos de proyección de imagen (75,2%), pantallas de información (69,5%) y dispositivos de reproducción de audio (64,8%), como podemos ver, todas formas metonímicas del panel informativo impreso (o leído). La versión digital de la visita guiada, las audio-guías, se consideran presentes en cuarta posición (45,7%), ya con un salto significativo con respecto a los anteriores. Sobre este dato, creemos de interés comentar cómo sólo el 12,3% de los visitantes a los museos españoles ha utilizado las audio-guías. Es relevante también, indicar la reducida oferta de éstas por parte de museos de carácter regional o local, así como el coste y complejidad de su aplicación (mantenimiento de los aparatos, actualización de la información, diseño de contenidos específicos...). Las webs del museo son usadas con la misma frecuencia que las audio-guías (45,7%), de forma previa o posterior a la visita, como forma de búsqueda de información sobre los servicios de la institución más que sobre los contenidos de la exposición, lo que lo sitúa fuera de la experiencia expositiva como ocurre con el correo electrónico (30,8%), los blogs (27,6%) y las redes sociales (en última posición, 15,2%). Resulta destacable que, precisamente, en aquellos ámbitos en los que las TICs potencialmente podrían aportar más a la participación del público en el museo y a adquirir un papel más activo, no se usan de forma generalizada, no son los que las personas encuestadas destacan. Podemos inferir de estos datos, que el público sigue apostando por la visión tradicional de los museos como conservadores, expositores y las opciones que facilita 2.0 no están siendo aprovechadas por éstos. La pregunta es si no se usan por falta de interés o de disponibilidad, y si el uso de las TICs viene sobre todo definido por su puesta en marcha por las propias instituciones. Veremos más sobre este tema en el apartado siguiente.



Gráfica 3. Uso de TICs por visitantes en museos

Con respecto a las herramientas usadas en la experiencia *in situ* también observamos

de la misma forma, cómo las posibilidades de permitir una mayor participación del público o no se ofrece o no es utilizada por éste. Aunque en este sentido tanto programas interactivos (sexta posición, 43,8%) como guías visuales (séptima posición, 42,9%) gozan de una implantación no desdeñable, no así en el caso de juegos digitales (novena posición, 28,6%) y recursos de realidad visual (onceava posición, 21,9%). Si bien hay TICs que pueden ser incorporadas con un bajo coste en infraestructura (por ejemplo un blog), hay que tener en cuenta la necesidad de personal específicamente formado -no siempre asumible-, el gasto en recursos humanos y la necesidad de tener un concepto claro para su implementación¹¹, y una relación coste-beneficio¹² en términos de atraer, satisfacer y fidelizar al público. Y, por otro lado, otros usos como realidad virtual suponen una gran inversión en tiempo, recursos y dinero. Añadido a esto, hay que abordar la utilidad contrastada en aplicaciones concretas (y no su posible potencialidad), de muchos de estos recursos para facilitar una mayor participación del público, que éste asuma un papel más activo y pueda disfrutar de una experiencia museística más intensa.

Podemos agrupar el uso de las TICs según sean meramente informativas, como sería el caso de las webs en las que parece se buscan datos necesarios como usuario: horarios, precios... También tendríamos aquéllas que fomentan la acción/participación en la visita y que aún pudiendo ser usadas fuera del recinto del museo, se asocian a la visita como las audio guías, aplicaciones de realidad aumentada... Como se puede apreciar, es este último grupo el que cuenta con mayores porcentajes. Así pues, a la vista de estos resultados parece pertinente asociar el uso de las TICs con la tipología de visitantes según su grado de motivación. En ambos polos tendríamos desde los actores (visitantes activos en la visita que adaptan ésta a sus intereses) hasta llegar a los espectadores (visitantes pasivos que se limitan a la contemplación)¹³.

Expectativas

En este apartado incluimos la percepción de los entrevistados acerca de la potencialidad del uso de las TICs en los museos. Como se puede observar en la gráfica 4, la percepción acerca de la forma en la que las TICs deberían de ser implementadas en el museo ocupa rangos muy amplios. En esta ocasión los/las encuestadas debían indicar las tres opciones que consideraban prioritarias en el uso de las TICs, desde su punto de vista. En base a usos relativos a la experiencia en/con el museo, en el mayor número de casos (64,0%) las TICs deberían de servir para ofrecer mayor dinamismo en las visitas, una forma de ofrecer más estímulos y romper una narrativa expositiva monocorde. En segunda posición, se demanda un uso orientado a acceder a más y mejor información (60,5%), lo que demanda una alternativa a los paneles impresos junto a los objetos. Abierto queda cómo cada encuestado entienda subjetivamente qué implica más y mejor información, si se trata de más cantidad, más avanzada, sincrónica o diacrónica, en forma de texto, imágenes, archivos de sonido, etc., lo que deberá ser abordado en estudios posteriores. En tercera posición, se considera que las exposiciones podrían ser más entretenidas a través del uso de recursos en TICs (58,8%) ampliando así la experiencia de la visita. En línea de la ruptura de la narrativa plana se reclama también, una experiencia más activa en la visita, no únicamente de mero espectador pasivo. En cuarta posición se ha ubicado la opción "hacer el museo más atractivo"

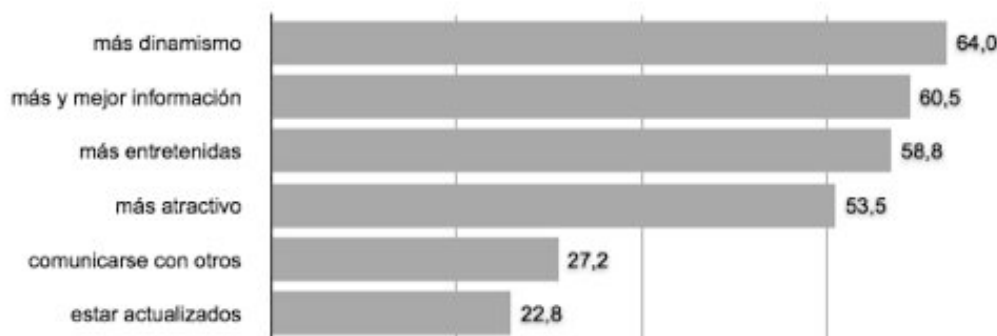
¹¹ Ben Gammon and Alexandra Burch, "Designing Mobile Digital Experiences", in: Loïc Tallon and Kevin Walker (eds.), *Digital Technologies and the Museum Experience. Handheld Guides and Other Media*, Plymouth: AltaMira Press, 2008, pp. 35-60.

¹² John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking, "Enhancing visitor interaction and learning with mobile technologies", in: Loïc Tallon and Kevin Walker (eds.), *Digital Technologies and the Museum Experience. Handheld Guides and Other Media*, Plymouth: AltaMira Press, 2008, p. 28.

¹³ Recogemos las líneas de esta tipología de visitantes según su motivación de Ángela García Blanco, "¿Usuarios o visitantes de museos?", *Museo*, nº 6, 2002, pp. 171-188.

(53,5%), lo que nos lleva a considerar que el uso de TICs puede ser un recurso importante a la hora de captar y atraer a más visitantes. Este ítem cabe entenderlo en coherencia con las tres prioridades anteriores.

Gráfica 4. Expectativas de los/las visitantes sobre la incorporación de TICs en los museos



Los ítems menos valorados son los referidos a la posibilidad de comunicarse con otros (27,2%), es decir, compartir la experiencia de la visita con amigos o conocidos. La visita al museo se entiende ante todo, como una experiencia en tiempo real, en el espacio expositivo, y vívida. La posibilidad de compartir la experiencia no se sitúa como una prioridad con respecto a los otros valores. Aquí cabe cuestionarse si la posibilidad de implementación de funciones ligadas al uso de las redes sociales tiene por sí misma una demanda significativa. Así mismo, la asunción de que las TICs deben ser parte de la evolución actual de los museos solamente se contempla en última posición (22,8%). De esta forma las personas encuestadas no esperan que los museos estén a la altura de los tiempos a través de las TICs. Como queda patente en los datos anteriores sí hay una aceptación latente de estas tecnologías, pero esto cobra sentido siempre y cuando se oriente de forma funcional a satisfacer las demandas de una mejor experiencia en relación a la exposición para el/la visitante y no como una mera situación dada por la posibilidad de acceso a la tecnología. Igualmente la consideración del museo más allá de su faceta expositiva no se manifiesta en los datos recogidos. Estos nos llevan a entender la idea de museo como un servicio expositivo de ocio y sus recursos web como opciones de acceso a información básica de este servicio que, como ya hemos visto, se espera esté centrado en la exhibición de la colección.

En este sentido, y de acuerdo a nuestros resultados, la expectativas de los/las visitantes con respecto a los museos, aun siendo abiertas, están marcadas por una concepción previa que debe de ser tomada en cuenta a la hora de organizar las exposiciones y otros servicios hacia el público. Esto no quiere decir evidentemente que el público deba determinar lo que se va a encontrar en un museo, pero hay una serie de ideas preconcebidas y preferencias que deberían de ser tenidas en cuenta a la hora de atraer a los/las visitantes, es decir, en qué aspectos y áreas los/las visitantes pueden ser más receptivos y activos o, por el contrario, más reticentes o indiferentes. En este sentido, coincidimos en que se debe de alcanzar un equilibrio entre estructura de la visita y posibilidad de exploración autónoma del/la visitante¹⁴.

A pesar de las posibilidades de las TICs, se observa una preferencia por una experiencia en vivo, directa y experimental, en donde las TICs pueden ser una

¹⁴ Jeffrey Smith and Pablo P. L. Tinio, "Audible Engaged: Talking the Walk", in: Loïc Tallon and Kevin Walker (eds.), *Digital Technologies and the Museum Experience. Handheld Guides and Other Media*, Plymouth: AltaMira Press, 2008, pp. 63-78.

herramienta que potencie estas demandas, pero no para sustituirlas dado el éxito de los museos que ofrecen al público la posibilidad de tener una experiencia sensitiva y cognitiva característica de los museos experimentales¹⁵. Recordemos que como los/las visitantes reclaman ante todo visitas más atractivas, la cuestión es en qué medida la incorporación de TICs, en forma, por ejemplo, de tecnologías multimedia, pueden satisfacer esa demanda de participación en la experiencia expositiva de una forma más activa, a través de un mayor grado de experiencias, personalización o autonomía en la visita.

Conclusiones

La percepción y expectativas por parte del público en el uso de TICs en los museos presentan una imagen compleja de claros y oscuros. A la espera de poder avanzar con más resultados, la potencialidad anunciada de las TICs hacia una mayor implicación y papel más activo de los/las visitantes de exposiciones museísticas parece no haber alcanzado aún un grado de madurez y desarrollo óptimo. Los/las visitantes no tienen una idea clara sobre la experiencia expositiva pero necesitan ser activados, para lo que la implementación de TICs y otro tipo de actividades que lleven una experiencia vívida y sensorial compleja son demandadas. En este sentido, se da una receptividad hacia el uso de TICs con finalidades expositivas, pero queda abierta la cuestión de si un uso previo o posterior a la visita hay que darlo por sentado, así como su empleo como activadores de una mayor participación del público. Las TICs no se consideran que deban ser implementadas necesariamente como una forma actual del panel de texto, del catálogo o de información en imágenes, sonido, guías multimedia en dispositivos portátiles, etc., sino como herramientas que enriquezcan la visita no ofreciendo más información, sino más personalizada, con diferentes discursos y, fundamentalmente, con posibilidades de experimentar y vivenciar una experiencia cognitiva y sensorialmente enriquecedora. Esto nos hace pensar un uso de TICs en las que el/la visitante sean parte activa del conocimiento y no una mera consumidora de información. Pero por otro lado, hay que asumir que el recurso de las TICs como instrumento orientado a conseguir una mayor participación del público y una experiencia más activa, debe de estar en conferencia con las expectativas de los/las visitantes, entre las que persiste una imagen del museo como un espacio expositivo de piezas, más allá de ser una herramienta ideal para estar en contacto y compartir información, realizar actividades culturales... Esto nos sitúa en la expectativa por parte de los usuarios de museos hacia un uso de tecnologías (analógicas y/o digitales) que operen en todos los ámbitos de la percepción humana (visual, olfativa, gustativa, auditiva y táctil).

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¹⁵ Sherry Hsi, "Designing for Mobile Visitor Engagement", in: Loïc Tallon and Kevin Walker (eds.), *Digital Technologies and the Museum Experience. Handheld Guides and Other Media*, Plymouth: AltaMira Press, 2008, pp.125-145.

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LA MUSÉOLOGIE DU DEVENIR : LE POUVOIR DES MUSÉES COMME ÉCOLES DES REGARDS

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RESUMÉ

Aujourd'hui, la muséologie est consacrée, entre autres choses, à une micro-recherche sur la démocratisation du pouvoir au sein des musées. Après presque 30 ans passés depuis qu'est né le mouvement de la Nouvelle Muséologie, les formes plus récentes de penser les musées ont placé la relation musée-visiteur au centre de la pensée muséale. Ainsi, le visiteur n'est pas un objet extérieur, mais il est au cœur du musée, et si la muséologie est une science humaine elle doit être plus orientée vers les personnes que vers les choses. Les musées, pensés comme des « *manières de voir* », ont une aptitude à la transformation continue. Ils sont des constructions de différents regards, et ils se construisent par l'autonomisation du regard du spectateur. Dans ce sens, l'écomuséologie s'est donné comme but de se mettre au service de l'expression des habitants d'un territoire et de permettre à des populations de se doter d'outils d'émancipation. Pour cette raison, l'écomusée représente aujourd'hui un modèle intéressant pour penser la muséologie. La muséologie du futur – grâce, peut-être, à cette expérience et à d'autres – est la muséologie qui met le musée au service de tous. C'est la muséologie qui accepte et expose les contradictions du réel et des points de vue différents. C'est la muséologie qui permet une pratique muséologique qui est aussi une pratique de vie et une pratique sociale.

Mots-clé: Musée. Muséologie. Public. Écomusée. Pouvoir.

ABSTRACT

Museology of the becoming: museums and their power as schools of perspectives

Today, museology is devoted, among other things, to the microscopic research of the democratization of power by museums. After almost 30 years passed since the movement of New Museology, the most recent forms of the museum have placed the relation museum-visitor at the center of museological thinking. The visitor is no longer a foreign object to the institution, it is at the heart of the museum, and if museology is a human science it is more oriented towards people than things. Museums, thought as “ways of seeing”, have an intrinsic aptitude to constant transformation. They are constructions of different looks, and they are constructed by the empowering of the spectator's perspective. On that sense, ecomuseology has the project of putting itself at the service of the expression of the people in a territory, to allow them to develop their own tools of empowerment. For that reason, the ecomuseum is an interesting idea for the museological thinking in the present. The museology of the future – thanks, perhaps, to this experience and to others – is the museology that puts the museum at the service of all. It is the museology that accepts and displays the contradictions of reality and the different points of view. It is a museology that

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allows a museological practice that is concomitantly life practice and social practice.

Keywords: Museum. Museology. Audience. Ecomuseum. Power.

RESUMEN

La museología del porvenir: el poder de los museos como escuelas de miradas

En la actualidad, la museología está consagrada, entre otras cosas, a una micro-investigación sobre la democratización del poder en el seno de los museos. Después de casi treinta años desde el nacimiento del movimiento de la Nueva Museología, las formas más recientes de pensar los museos han situado a la relación museo-visitante en el centro del pensamiento museal. De este modo, el visitante no es más un objeto exterior, sino que está en el corazón del museo y, si la museología es una ciencia humana, debe estar orientada hacia las personas más que hacia las cosas. Los museos, pensados como “*maneras de ver*” tienen una aptitud hacia la transformación continua. Son construcciones de diferentes miradas que se logran a través de la autonomía de la mirada del espectador. En este sentido, la ecomuseología se propuso como meta ponerse al servicio de la expresión de los habitantes de un territorio y permitir así a las poblaciones dotarse de instrumentos de emancipación. Por esta razón, el ecomuseo representa hoy un modelo interesante para reflexionar sobre la museología. La museología del futuro -gracias, tal vez, a esta experiencia y a otras- pone al museo al servicio de todos. Es la museología que acepta y expone las contradicciones de lo real y los puntos de vista diferentes. La museología que entiende que una práctica museológica es también una práctica de vida y una práctica social.

Palabras clave; museo, museología, público. Ecomuseo, poder.

* * *

La question du pouvoir est fondatrice des musées. Au cours de l'histoire moderne les musées ont été associés aux enjeux coloniaux, à la constitution des identités, à la création des nations et aux mouvements d'indépendance des pays colonisés. Après plusieurs années où l'anthropologie et les sciences sociales ont étudié ces moments décisifs auxquels les musées ont participé, parallèlement à la poursuite de ces mêmes études, la muséologie se consacre aujourd'hui, entre autres choses, à une micro-recherche sur la démocratisation du pouvoir au sein des musées. Les écomusées, musées régionaux, musées locaux, musées des banlieues, etc., ont été considérés par des spécialistes comme des musées liés au mouvement de *décolonisation de la muséologie*. Ces sont des exemples de musées qui ne donne pas les choses à voir, simplement, mais qui font les sujets du patrimoine participer dans le processus de muséalisation des choses.

Après presque 30 ans passés depuis la naissance du mouvement de la Nouvelle Muséologie, que peut-on dire des autres 'nouvelles' manières de concevoir les musées qui se sont développés plus récemment ? On peut affirmer maintenant que la muséologie ne se voit pas encore strictement reliée à la sociologie, et que pour être reconnue comme discipline indépendante elle a développé ses propres méthodes pour étudier les musées et leurs nouvelles formes d'ouverture sur la société.

Sur la relation musée-visitateur beaucoup a été dit et écrit, mais rares sont encore les recherches qui dépassent l'évaluation empirique pour atteindre une riche analyse théorique sur ce sujet. Le lien entre théorie muséologique et recherche empirique doit être exploré de façon à améliorer l'étude du musée dans sa diversité et son

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imprécision. En effet, depuis le développement d'une théorie sociale des musées – par des sociologues, des anthropologues et des muséologues – les recherches sur la réception ont bénéficié d'une réflexion sociologique pour penser les publics comme quelque chose qui n'est pas en dehors du musée, mais qui a toujours existé au sein de ces institutions. Dans ce sens, le visiteur n'est pas un objet extérieur, mais il est au cœur du musée, et si la muséologie est une science humaine elle est plus orientée vers les personnes que vers les choses.

La question « qui sont les visiteurs des musées ? » a été posée notamment comme une question sociologique par plusieurs auteurs¹. D'après les statistiques sociologiques du Ministère de la culture en France, seule une minorité de la population serait touchée directement par les manifestations émanant des musées. Aujourd'hui les publics des musées se sont diversifiés, et les *non-publics* sont étudiés – en opposition aux publics – comme une question muséologique et sociologique². La présence récurrente d'œuvres d'art comme images publicitaires ou les reproductions de tableaux dans les vitrines de boutiques ont contribué à l'émergence d'un public culturel occasionnel qui ne se rend pas nécessairement aux musées. Face au changement imprévu de ses utilisateurs, le *musée* est amené à changer ses pratiques et ses formes dans le but d'être incorporé à la vie des gens dans des contextes divers.

On veut prendre en considération l'idée bien connue selon laquelle les musées sont des endroits habités par plusieurs formes de pouvoir, pour penser une mise en scène du pouvoir par ces institutions, ainsi qu'entre elles et leurs publics. Dans cet article on veut exagérer les effets de la muséalisation et la question du *regard* au cœur du débat sur les publics. Après le procès de « décolonisation des musées³ » des années 1970 et 1980, comment les « nouveaux » musées s'adressent-ils aux nouveaux publics ? Dans ce sens, la responsabilisation du visiteur est-elle un exemple de distribution du pouvoir ou de décentralisation des musées ? Dans cet article nous allons explorer le comportement des musées dans leur échange avec les visiteurs et dans l'attribution d'un pouvoir à ses utilisateurs par l'acte même de donner à voir des choses par la muséalisation dans un contexte de circulation de pouvoir – pouvoir de regarder, pouvoir de changer, pouvoir de devenir. La muséologie contemporaine est le résultat de ces échanges.

1. Les musées en tant que « manières de voir »

Les musées sont des « manières de voir », comme les a caractérisés Svetlana Alpers⁴. En tant que « manières de voir », par l'acte de muséalisation, ils ont le pouvoir de transformer les choses du réel en représentation du réel. Ainsi, l'effet-musée, est cette capacité même de transformer les choses dans un cadre muséal. La muséalisation, selon François Mairesse⁵, c'est « l'opération tendant à extraire physiquement et conceptuellement une chose » de son milieu dit 'd'origine', et à lui donner un statut muséal. Mais l'objet transformé, l'objet *de* musée comme objet sacré et objet du

¹ Bourdieu, P., Darbel, A., *L'amour de l'art, Les musées d'art européens et leurs publics*, Paris : Minuit, 1969 (1966); Passeron, J.-C., Pedler, E., « Le temps donné au regard. Enquête sur la réception de la peinture », *Protée*, vol. 27 (2), 1999, pp.93-116 ; Salles, Georges, *Le regard*. Paris : Librairie Plon, 1939 ; Eidelman, Jacqueline, « Qui fréquente les musées à Paris ? Une sociographie des publics des musées de France », in : *Publics et Musées*, n.2, 1992, pp.19-47.

² Ancel, Pascale & Pessin, Alain. « Avant-propos », in: Ancel, Pascale & Pessin, Alain (dir.), *Les non-publics, Les arts en réceptions*, Tome I, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004. p.7-8.

³ Varine, Hugues de, «La décolonisation de la muséologie», in: Nouvelles de l'ICOM, n° 3, 2005, p.4.

⁴ Alpers, Svetlana, «A way of seeing», in: Karp, Ivan & Lavine, Steven D. (ed.). *Exhibiting cultures, The poetics and politics of museum display*, Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991, p.27.

⁵ Desvallées, André & Mairesse, François, *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de muséologie*, Paris : Armand Colin, 2011, p.251.

regard, n'est pas seulement un objet *dans* un musée; en effet, c'est un objet de pouvoir. Quand l'objet s'est transformé – et il change de statut, une nouvelle dimension du réel s'est créée pour libérer le spectateur de ses liens traditionnels avec le réel connu. Ce qui se passe, c'est une sorte de viol de l'objet qui conduit à un viol du regard, pour finalement le libérer. Alors, l'acte même de muséalisation est un acte de pouvoir et d'autonomisation de l'objet par rapport à des contextes originels – et, en même temps, c'est un acte d'autonomisation du regard. En revanche, il n'y a pas de muséalisation sans responsabilisation.

La mise en contact de le spectateur avec un objet dans un musée conduit à une « manière de voir » particulière qui revient à une mise en contact avec le pouvoir même du regard ou de l'autonomisation du regard. Regarder c'est pouvoir, comme nous l'avons appris avec l'histoire de l'art et surtout avec les peintres modernes. Pour mieux comprendre l'effet du musée, on peut se tourner rapidement vers *l'effet de l'art* (en tant que métaphore pour comprendre l'effet du musée) – présent dans plusieurs musées, et même dans les écomusées, comme un artifice de muséalisation – et vers Picasso, qui a inventé un nouveau rapport entre le spectateur et l'œuvre d'art.

Si l'on considère que, la plupart du temps, l'œuvre d'art a pour effet de limiter et de délimiter le regard humain et la réalité regardée, dans le même sens que le musée peut être aussi limité quand il essaie de présenter la 'pétrification' de la réalité vivante ; de nouvelles expressions artistiques doivent donc émerger pour bouleverser la tradition. Picasso, comme tout être en mouvement, dut reconnaître qu'un style ou une tradition sont en définitive préjugé et limitation, et chaque œuvre d'art un fragment, « si bien qu'on n'a pas le droit de se soumettre au style d'une œuvre particulière, mais qu'on doit toujours, au lieu d'adorer des fétiches, s'essayer au nouveau⁶. » Picasso n'a pas vu l'art comme prison et punition, mais comme révolte et libération.

Dans l'art qu'il a produit, Picasso a travaillé sans *a priori*. Comme Carl Einstein l'a défini, il faut appréhender l'œuvre de Picasso dans un mouvement d'ensemble. Selon l'auteur, « les tableaux ne sont pas des *bibelots*, mais des outils de l'esprit, et l'importance de l'œuvre de Picasso réside, pour une part considérable, dans son absence de fixation⁷. » Ce peintre, qui utilise des formes et des inventions comme des vêtements, a compris que chaque forme et chaque expérience ne trouve son intégralité que dans son contraire. Travaillant les formes d'un extrême à l'autre, l'artiste fait une révolution de la vision. Car, dans la vision, on se détache du souvenir et de l'histoire et on dépasse les formes héritées pour entrer dans le devenir. Ainsi, Picasso présente-t-il d'authentiques « formes tectoniques », par lesquelles ses tableaux deviennent des « forces pratiques » – dans le terme d'Einstein – qui sont utilisées sans ménagement et absorbées⁸.

Grâce à sa variété de styles, Picasso a soulevé des problèmes formels pour des générations – mais il n'a jamais cherché de solutions. Par les formes présentées les impératifs catégoriques et les contraintes de l'existence ancienne sont devenus caducs. Des fragments d'objets (ou de formes) sont convertis en moyens d'expression à l'intérieur d'un processus humain. La force n'émane plus des choses, mais de l'homme lui-même. Les objets sont simplement des symptômes d'un nouveau statut de l'homme. Ce qui se passe, dans les tableaux de Picasso, c'est un processus de '*dé-chosification*' des choses. Parce qu'il *dé-chosifie* la stabilité des objets et du réel en décomposant la forme – cette décomposition des formes, sur laquelle a écrit Georges Bataille⁹, qui entraîne celle de la vision. Et, ainsi, le monde que nous connaissons et

⁶ Einstein, Carl, *L'art du XXe siècle*, Arles : Éditions Jacqueline Chambon, 2011, p.121.

⁷ Ibidem, p.122.

⁸ Ibidem, p.124.

⁹ Bataille, Georges, « Soleil pourri », *Documents*, Hommage a Picasso, n° 3, année 2, 1930, p.174.

créons n'est plus le monde que nous voyons – il est autre, il est en fait plus que ce que nous voyons.

Par l'effet propre de l'œuvre de Picasso, le spectateur est à présent contraint de s'adapter à un événement pictural isolé, mais les formes tectoniques¹⁰ collectives lui facilitent cette métamorphose. À l'aide des formes picturales de l'artiste nous modifions le réel et déterminons de nouveaux objets. Picasso détache les objets et les représentations habituelles de la nature, afin que ces objets ne soient plus une entrave à la perception humaine directe et libre¹¹. Dans la logique inédite qu'il établit pour le regard, « c'est l'homme qui devient le moteur et le milieu un signe ». C'est pour cette raison qu'Einstein déclare qu'« un intervalle hallucinatoire », créé par l'œuvre elle-même, interrompt les relations habituelles entre l'homme et son environnement. Un tel changement se caractérise, selon l'auteur, par une construction libre, autiste, du tableau et des processus intérieurs isolés¹². C'est alors, que le cubisme redéfinit la représentation du réel par l'autonomisation des formes du réel.

Si nous revenons à l'histoire des musées en France et, par exemple, au travail mené par Marcel Évrard et les gens qui ont participé aux activités de l'Écomusée du Creusot-Montceau les Mines, dans ce cas là le langage de l'art a été utilisé en tant qu'instrument de transformation sociale. Les expositions temporaires du musée ont été pensées par ses concepteurs dans une double perspective : sociologique et ethnologique, d'un côté, et artistique, de l'autre. L'exploitation du terrain est donc illimitée, et les regards sur le patrimoine sont construits comme expérience ouverte. Selon Évrard, dans les premières années de l'écomusée, « si une entreprise d'auto-éducation peut être menée à bien, l'expérience du Creusot prouvera qu'elle doit être tentée au sein d'une communauté restant à l'échelle humaine.¹³ »

L'écomusée a montré ainsi que la distinction entre l'art et la société est un artifice de la muséologie traditionnelle. L'expérience poursuivie au Creusot a été trop expérimentale « pour être rattachée à aucune forme muséale existante¹⁴. » L'indéfinition du musée a permis l'usage de l'espace écomuséal par la communauté sur une approche interdisciplinaire. Les écomusées, en tant qu'écoles des regards, ont été responsables de la diffusion d'une muséologie nouvelle, multiple, intégrale.

Le musée utilise les choses du réel pour construire sa poésie du réel, poésie qui est complétée par le regard du public. Dans ce sens, la muséologie est une science du regard. Regard libéré, regard autonome, regard décolonisé.

2. Quand le musée est l'œuvre inachevée

Pour Picasso un tableau signifie un entraînement vers autre chose, vers ce qui est encore inconnu, vers l'inexploré. Par cette analogie féconde avec l'art, cet article propose la compréhension du musée comme étant l'œuvre d'un artiste, l'œuvre des regards, l'œuvre en construction, inachevée. Parce que, c'est en tant que construction que le musée se présente dans les sociétés. Connue par son pouvoir de nous montrer à nous-mêmes des alternatives de connaissance, d'autorité et d'identité par la manipulation des représentations du réel, le musée est un miroir du devenir.

¹⁰ Par tectonique, Einstein entend les éléments importants de notre expérience de l'espace, au-delà des objets, et il définit l'élément comme forme générale. Einstein, op. cit., p.133.

¹¹ Einstein, Carl, *L'art du XXe siècle*, Arles : Éditions Jacqueline Chambon, 2011, p.137.

¹² Ibidem, p.138.

¹³ Évrard, Marcel, « L'Écomusée de la communauté urbaine Le Creusot-Montceau les Mines », *Cracap / Informations*, n° 2-3, p.9-14, 1976. p.11.

¹⁴ Ibidem, p.9.

La muséologie, elle même dans son absence de fixation, dans son aptitude à la transformation continue, n'est pas une science qui a un objet défini. L'objet de la muséologie est l'indéfinition même du musée. Quand le réel est utilisé – dans les musées et dans les œuvres d'art – c'est comme signe contraire ou comme fragment de phrase dans une libre composition. La « performance » au musée n'est pas le réel en tant que réel, mais le réel comme un autre. La rupture avec le réel n'est que la libération des relations hiérarchisées des formes du réel. La représentation est libre des interprétations traditionnelles. Cette liberté, cependant, ne consiste nullement à nier le réel, ou à s'évader. Bien au contraire, comme l'a souligné Michel Leiris, elle implique la reconnaissance nécessaire du réel, qu'il faut de plus en plus « creuser et miner, pousser en quelque sorte jusqu'à ses ultimes retranchements¹⁵. » C'est surtout en ce dernier sens que l'on peut dire que Picasso est libre.

Les musées sont des institutions où les choses les plus importantes pour une société sont gardées pour être transmises. Leurs agents sont donc familiarisés avec leurs objets, de sorte qu'ils peuvent facilement les manipuler. Les musées sont libres parce qu'ils connaissent mieux le poids exact des choses, l'échelle de leur valeur, leur matérialité et leur immatérialité. C'est pour cela qu'un musée est ce qui fait le mieux la dé-chosification et qui va créer de nouvelles relations entre elles. Le musée, comme l'artiste, est un bricoleur de réalités libres.

Ainsi, la véritable liberté ne consiste pas à se couper du réel, mais à créer des liens avec le réel. Le pouvoir de la déformation provient de l'autorisation que l'artiste se donne à lui même pour manipuler le réel et les choses du réel.

En visant la libération, l'art de Picasso produit des '*images-actes*', ce qui veut dire des images qui ne sont pas fixées dans l'idéalisation par l'artiste, mais qui échappent à ses intentions et qui deviennent *images-vivantes* dans les yeux du spectateur. Dans ce sens là, c'est le regard qui change, parce que l'œuvre (ou l'expôt, dans le cas du musée) a aussi changé. Par l'action de ces images, le spectateur peut devenir, lui même, libre des encadrements de la perception.

3. L'autonomisation du regard : les écomusées et la décolonisation de la muséologie

Dans son livre « *Ce que nous voyons, ce qui nous regarde* », Georges Didi-Huberman a proposé : « Fermons les yeux pour voir¹⁶. » Selon l'auteur, l'acte de voir nous renvoie, nous ouvre à un vide qui nous regarde, nous concerne et, d'une certaine manière, nous constitue. En un sens, le regard n'est pas notre regard, il est quelque chose de construit par la rencontre entre celui qui regarde et ce qui est regardé (et qui renvoie le regard). Regarder est une expérience complexe parce que voir c'est sentir que quelque chose nous échappe inéluctablement ; voir n'est pas simplement un gain par les sens de ce que nos yeux touchent, mais c'est aussi, et plutôt, une *perte*. Ce que nous voyons nous pose donc des questions sur nous-mêmes, et sur l'autonomisation de notre regard.

Quand nous voyons, quelque chose d'autre nous regarde toujours. Il est toujours difficile d'établir, quand on ouvre les yeux, qui est l'observateur et qui est l'observé. Comment éviter la perte de soi dans les yeux d'un autre ? Comment avoir le contrôle sur ce qu'on voit ? Devant un tableau de Picasso, comment savoir si c'est nous qui faisons l'œuvre ou si c'est l'artiste ? En vérité, c'est la façon dont on regarde qui modifie l'œuvre de Picasso et pas seulement ce qu'on regarde. L'acte même de regarder est alors construit autant par l'artiste que par l'observateur. Mais Picasso

¹⁵ Leiris, Michel, « Toiles récentes de Picasso », *Documents*, n° 2, année 2, 1930, p.64.

¹⁶ Proposition qu'a faite antérieurement James Joyce dans son « Ulysse » (Joyce, 1922, in Didi-Huberman, 1992).

donne l'autorisation au spectateur de modifier ce qu'il veut dans son œuvre. Car regarder est un acte pratique – et c'est un acte de pouvoir.

Pouvoir c'est autoriser et autonomiser. Ce que l'art a fait pour le regard, les musées contemporains le font au bénéfice du public. Ils l'autorisent et lui demandent de participer à l'acte même de la muséification, à l'acte qui fait le musée. A partir d'une approche théorique sur le pouvoir dans la création, on peut dire que, par l'acte d'un auteur ou d'un artiste, le réel est réinterprété formellement et qu'il est déformé pour être libéré de toute convention. Chez Picasso, ce processus ne passe pas simplement par les mains du peintre, mais surtout par l'œil de l'observateur. « Créer, c'est chaque fois s'aliéner soi-même et se détacher de soi¹⁷. » Peu importe, dans ce sens là, qui est l'artiste et qui est son public. Georges Henri Rivière a répété lui même les mots de Jacques Prévert : « les tableaux de Pablo sont toujours mes tableaux¹⁸. » Nous pouvons dire aussi qu'un musée est toujours *notre musée*.

Ce manque de distinction entre créateur et public s'est retrouvé notamment dans les intentions des concepteurs de l'écomusée pendant les années 1970 et 1980. L'écomuséologie s'est donné l'ambitieux projet de se mettre au service de l'expression des habitants d'un territoire, de permettre à des populations de se doter d'outils d'émancipation « en s'appuyant sur une histoire ressaisie et réappropriée¹⁹. » En certains lieux connus, elle a permis une réappropriation par les gens de leur propre mémoire pour se transformer en de vrais sujets du récit de leur propre histoire. On pourrait dire que, dans les écomusées, selon François Mairesse, « l'ancien 'cœur' du musée – la collection – a été placé à la périphérie du système pour être remplacé par l'humain²⁰ », les gens à qui l'institution est destinée. À ses débuts, l'idée a été répandue selon laquelle l'écomusée n'avait pas de public, et qu'il ne s'adressait pas au touriste de passage mais à la population vivant sur le territoire sur lequel il s'est implanté. Cette population, par le moyen du nouveau musée, se fait le sujet de son histoire, et à la fois l'objet et l'auteur de son musée. Toujours selon Mairesse :

Le projet central qui s'impose au 'nouveau musée' consiste donc à rechercher, avec la participation de la population auquel il s'adresse, les racines d'une culture englobante, qu'elle soit rurale ou industrielle, des banlieues ou des bidonvilles²¹.

Dans les années 1970, l'écomusée va prolonger et renforcer des nouvelles expérimentations dans l'activité muséale. Les premiers écomusées vont se constituer en « laboratoires²² » pour amener les collectivités à se connaître mieux et à se reconnaître par l'appropriation d'un patrimoine, ainsi que par la *re-négociation* d'un passé. En effet, l'écomusée va transformer l'expérience muséale en donnant aux gens des outils pour construire eux-mêmes leur relation avec l'histoire, la mémoire, les identités, avec le pouvoir de définition et de redéfinition d'eux-mêmes dans l'espace et dans le temps.

Dans l'écomusée, le patrimoine est la matière de la création du nouveau, et pas seulement une référence au passé. Comme il est défini par Mathilde Bellaigue, c'est un ...

[...] Lieu possible de la "distraction", de nous-mêmes et de notre illusion, fortement et une fois pour toutes désigné comme exemplaire alors que le regard

¹⁷ Einstein, Carl, *L'art du XXe siècle*, Arles : Éditions Jacqueline Chambon, 2011, p.154.

¹⁸ Rivière, Georges Henri, *Documents*, Hommage à Picasso, n° 3, année 2, 1930, p.179.

¹⁹ Chaumier, Serge, « Écomusées: entre culture populaire et culture savante », *POUR*, Dossier Mémoires partagées, mémoires vivante, n.181, mars 2004, p.65.

²⁰ Mairesse, François, *Le musée temple spectaculaire*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2002, p.102.

²¹ Mairesse, François, *Le musée temple spectaculaire*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2002, p.103.

²² Rivière, Georges Henri. Définition évolutive de l'écomusée. *Museum*, no.148 (vol. XXXVII, n° 4, 1985), p.182-183.

même peut en détourner le sens ; patrimoine dont l'immutabilité est souvent collectivement désirée au milieu de l'inéluçtabilité du changement²³.

Ce que l'écomusée postule, plutôt qu'une participation du public, c'est une coopération des habitants²⁴. Coopération c'est 'action collective', dans laquelle les acteurs ne sont pas des figurants, ou simple contemplateurs. Ils deviennent de vrais agents dans leur propre vie. Cependant, dans les écomusées, dans la mesure où le musée invite les gens à participer, il leur donne une responsabilité. La responsabilisation de la représentation est la raison pour laquelle beaucoup de gens ne veulent pas participer. Néanmoins, il n'y a pas de participation sans responsabilisation.

L'écomusée signifie aujourd'hui un modèle intéressant pour penser la muséologie ; il a été conçu comme un objet de rupture avec la muséologie dite traditionnelle et récemment il lui a été incorporé. L'écomusée est un cas d'étude fécond parce qu'il a été pensé comme moyen d'autonomie et de démocratisation, et aussi comme forme de pratique culturelle libre (ou libérée). Quelque chose a changé avec le mouvement de décolonisation, une chose qui s'est aussi développée dans les pays industrialisés, comme l'a constaté Mairesse. Avec l'écomusée, de nouveaux concepts voient le jour, comme les concepts de « participation de la collectivité » ou d'« identité culturelle »²⁵ partagée et négociée. Un nouveau monde de pratiques pour la muséologie a été découvert pour ce qui concerne la « décolonisation des musées ».

Cet démarche a créé l'illusion selon laquelle l'écomusée c'est le réel et non pas la représentation. Mais tous les musées – de n'importe quel type – ne représentent pas simplement le réel; avec la performance les musées ajoutent quelque chose de plus au réel. La muséalisation est un processus réfléchi qui joue avec les choses du réel. En effet, ce n'est plus possible d'utiliser la métaphore du miroir pour parler des écomusée – d'autres métaphores se sont montrées plus efficaces.

La force du tracé de Picasso repose sur la richesse polysémique de ses relations et sur l'intégration des différents axes visuels qui représentent différents points de vue sur le réel. Il a montré que chaque forme peut être interprétée en fonction de plusieurs strates spatiales qui sont cependant reliées à un seul plan²⁶. Picasso a compris que l'autonomie du tableau provoque la mort de la réalité. En revanche, il la renforce en y projetant de nouveaux blocs d'imagination²⁷. Fermons les yeux pour voir.

4. Pour une muséologie du XXI siècle

Il n'a jamais vraiment existé 'une' mais 'des' nouvelles muséologies, dont les conceptions ont été toujours très différentes. Dans chacun des cas, l'adjectif 'nouvelle' a été utilisé pour s'opposer à 'l'ancienne muséologie', jugée obsolète pour ne pas s'ouvrir suffisamment aux sociétés. Mais la nouvelle muséologie, comme l'a défendue André Desvallées, « n'est-elle pas en fait que la première²⁸ », la seule muséologie qu'on peut connaître, et qui est en fait plurielle ? En effet, elle a un but d'ouverture qui a toujours été dans ses fondements. Elle est la muséologie qui met le musée au service de tous et pas seulement au service des seuls amateurs éclairés et des élites. C'est la muséologie qui accepte et expose des contradictions du réel et des points de

²³ Bellaigue, Mathilde, « Territorialité, mémoire et développement – l'Ecomusée de la Communauté Le Creusot/Montceau les Mines », *ICOFOM Study Series - ISS 2*, 1983, p. 36.

²⁴ Clair, op. cit., p.4.

²⁵ Mairesse, François, *Le musée temple spectaculaire*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2002, p.101.

²⁶ Einstein, Carl, *L'art du XXe siècle*, Arles : Éditions Jacqueline Chambon, 2011, p.153.

²⁷ Ibidem, p.154.

²⁸ Desvallées, André. « Présentation », in : Desvallées, André ; De Bary, Marie Odile & Wasserman, Françoise (coord.), *Vagues: une anthologie de la Nouvelle Muséologie* (vol. 1), Collection *Museologia*, Savigny-le-Temple : Éditions WWW-M.N.E.S., 1992. p.23.

vue différents. C'est la muséologie qui permet une pratique muséologique qui est aussi une pratique de vie et une pratique sociale.

On a récemment traversé la fin de l'utopie dans la muséologie mondiale où une idéologie sur la théorie et les pratiques dites 'nouvelles' a commencé à être perçue comme ancienne. Qu'est donc alors la muséologie du XXI siècle ?

Finalement la réalité figée n'est plus l'objet des musées contemporains. Nous avons déjà dépassé l'expression de Paul Valéry selon laquelle les musées ne seraient qu'une « succession d'œuvres congelées²⁹. » En fait, replacé dans l'histoire de l'institution, le musée n'a jamais été perçu comme plus dynamique que dans ses définitions actuelles. Ce dynamisme incontournable pose des problèmes théoriques à la muséologie contemporaine.

Le travail du musée est défini par 'l'appropriation' des choses du réel. Cette appropriation peut se manifester comme un acte de domination ou, parfois, comme un acte de résistance. S'approprier – ou, dans le même sens, se réapproprier – c'est faire sien, c'est rendre propriétaire quelqu'un d'une chose dont il a été dépossédé dans le passé. Ainsi, s'approprier sa propre culture, se faire sujet de sa propre histoire et de son propre musée, c'est une façon de prendre le pouvoir telle que l'a défini la muséologie des dernières années. « *Empower* », en anglais, c'est le terme qui décrit le mieux l'action de ces musées. Cela signifie « donner du pouvoir », ou « rendre plus fort et plus confiant »³⁰, et il est lié à une prise de conscience des sujets sur leur propre identité, leur culture, leur sociabilité et leur action. On ne peut oublier, désormais, que l'autre face du pouvoir est la responsabilité.

Ces 'nouveaux' musées dynamiques et responsables – qui sont nés, peut-être, avec les écomusées – représentent une manière de faire la muséologie pour les gens et par les gens, une muséologie toujours expérimentale et subjective. Ainsi, le musée, comme agent de changements sociaux, peut aussi fonctionner comme espace de créativité et de découverte, identifiant les dimensions de ses limites éthiques³¹. Ce musée qui s'approprie des objets pour créer des mondes nouveaux, a produit une muséologie qui place le patrimoine, cet « outil », selon Mathilde Bellaigue³², que le musée a pour mission de mettre au service de la société, au cœur des grands débats qui concernent l'humain. Ainsi, la muséologie tend à devenir une science humaine et sociale, avec un objet en construction qu'on appelle « le musée ». Bellaigue espère que le résultat de la recherche muséologique sera toujours l'invention, chaque jour, cas par cas et avec sagesse, d'une « écoute généreuse » et d'une « imagination fertile³³ ».

La marche en direction d'une vraie « nouvelle muséologie », en tant que discipline du musée au présent, est arrivée au moment de se percevoir comme un riche champ de réflexion sociale. Ce qu'était la nouvelle muséologie, paradigme des années 1980, cohabite maintenant avec de nouvelles théories et de nouvelles pratiques, dont quelques-unes ont été déjà légitimées en tant que lignes conceptuelles et méthodologies du travail muséal³⁴. Qu'est-ce que la muséologie du futur ? C'est une question imprévisible parce-qu'elle dépend du développement du musée comme phénomène social reconnu par son autonomie en tant qu'objet d'étude. Le travail de l'ICOFOM – le comité qui a travaillé depuis sa création en 1977 pour faire de la muséologie un champ autonome du savoir – a déjà défini l'importance d'une étude

²⁹ Valéry (1923, in Bellaigue et Menu, 1996).

³⁰ Oxford Dictionary, in: <<http://oxforddictionaries.com/>>.

³¹ Scheiner, Tereza, « Muséologie et philosophie du changement », in: *STUDY SERIES*, Paris: ICOM, n°8, 2000, p.23.

³² Bellaigue, Mathilde, « ICOFOM: 22 ans de réflexion muséologique à travers le monde », in: *STUDY SERIES*, Paris: ICOM, n° 8, 2000, p.4.

³³ Ibidem, p.5.

³⁴ Scheiner, op. cit., p.22.

continue et systématique du musée sous toutes ses formes. Et, en un sens, la muséologie est elle-même inachevée – heureusement !

5. La responsabilité du devenir

Le devenir est toujours l'inconnu. Et l'inconnu du devenir « *empower* » la création du nouveau. Le pouvoir du musée réside dans sa capacité de changement. Et c'est parce qu'il change que le musée peut être perçu comme source de pouvoir pour les futures générations. En un sens, la muséologie est une espèce de *futurologie*.

Aujourd'hui on peut définir plusieurs manifestations du musée, qui parfois se mélangent, se rapprochent ou se séparent : musée traditionnel, musée de territoire, musée de plein air, écomusée, musée de site, musée-parc, cybermusée... Il n'est pas possible d'épuiser les formes variées du musée ; néanmoins, la muséologie essaie de les définir. Cependant tous ces modèles posent des questions et ce qu'ils accomplissent est la redéfinition du champ muséal.

Comme l'a démontré l'exemple des écomusées, et comme l'a considéré Mathilde Bellaigue, la muséologie est capable de produire « une communication fine, détaillée, mouvante, d'une pluralité de sens³⁵. » L'écomuséologie a prouvé que les musées sont capables de redéfinir la distribution du pouvoir dans une société. Selon cette muséologie subjective de la décentralisation, il n'y a pas de modèle de musées applicable à différents contextes, parce que le musée est transformé progressivement par les gens qui l'utilisent, qui lui donnent du sens. Cette muséologie n'est pas une muséologie de modèle, mais une muséologie de *processus*. Dans ce sens, le patrimoine est le « lieu de nos racines face au besoin de vivre en créant du neuf³⁶. » Ce qui peut être perçu comme des restes ou des fragments du passé abandonné est, en effet, « substance 'active' » de la création patrimoniale et de la muséologie dans le présent.

La muséologie est une science du regard ; elle a pour base notre regard particulier sur les choses du réel. Le musée n'est pas un lieu pour garder les choses, mais, en fait, un lieu pour garder les différents regards sur les choses. Le musée est une vitrine privilégié du monde réel, parce qu'il est construit par le regard et qu'il construit des regards au même temps. La muséologie est alors plutôt liée à un acte (le regard) qu'à une chose (le réel cristallisé). Et, comme l'a démontré Picasso, le regard est construction et action, le regard est transformation – c'est le pouvoir du devenir.

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³⁵ Bellaigue, Mathilde, « Territorialité, mémoire et développement – l'Ecomusée de la Communauté Le Creusot/Montceau les Mines », *ICOFOM Study Series - ISS 2*, 1983, p. 35.

³⁶ Ibidem, p.36.

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THE ACTIVE ROLE OF THE VISITOR IN PRODUCING THE MEANING OF THE EXHIBITION: A NARRATIVE APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates how museum visitors “read” an exhibition, and how they construct textual meaning during the course of their visit, in an attempt to achieve a meaningful interpretation of the exhibition’s communicative function. The study takes narrative theories and reader-response theories as its theoretical basis. The research area chosen is the permanent exhibition of the Lanyang Museum in Yilan County, Taiwan; the research issues are explored by onsite observation and semi-structured interviews with museum personnel and visitors. The results obtained by the study show that the textual space of the exhibition is an open one, which will have different meanings for different visitors. A further point is that an exhibition has multiple levels of meaning, which permit a wide variety of interpretations. Finally, the study finds that, right from the start of their visit, visitors to the exhibition experience a process of recuperation and naturalization to link together and arrange the text, filling in gaps in the texts and making hypotheses, confirming and revising their expectations, thereby producing their own texts and achieving innovative comprehension.

Keywords: Museum visitor; exhibition; text; reader-response theories; Lanyang Museum

RÉSUMÉ

Le Rôle actif de visiteur dans la production de la signification de l'exposition : une approche narrative

Cet article étudie comment les visiteurs de musée « lisent » une exposition, et comment ils produisent le sens textuel pendant la durée de leur visite, afin de donner une interprétation significative de la fonction communicative de l'exposition. Les bases théoriques de cette étude sont fondées sur les théories narratives et les théories de réception et de lecture. Le terrain de recherche choisi est l'exposition permanente du musée de Lanyang du comté de Yilan à Taiwan ; et les questions de recherches sont explorées par observation sur le site et entretiens semi-structurés avec le personnel du musée et ses visiteurs. Les résultats mettent en évidence que l'espace textuel de l'exposition est ouvert, et qu'il peut avoir différentes significations pour différents visiteurs. Un point de plus est qu'une exposition possède des niveaux multiples de signification, permettant une grande variété d'interprétations. En conclusion, l'étude constate que, dès le début de leur visite, les visiteurs de l'exposition expérimentent un processus de récupération et de naturalisation pour lier et arranger le texte. Ils complètent les lacunes du texte, font des hypothèses, confirment et mettent à jour leurs attentes, en produisant ainsi leurs propres textes et réalisant de ce fait une compréhension innovante.

Mots clés : visiteur de musée, exposition, texte, théories de la réception et de la lecture, Musée de Lanyang

Wan-Chen Chang

The active role of the visitor in producing the meaning of the exhibition

RESUMEN

El rol activo del visitante en la producción del significado de la exposición: una aproximación narrativa

Este artículo estudia la manera en que los visitantes de museo « leen » una exposición y cómo producen el sentido textual durante el transcurso de su visita, a fin de dar una interpretación significativa de la función comunicacional de la exposición. Las bases teóricas de este estudio están fundadas en las teorías narrativas y las teorías de recepción y lectura. El terreno de investigación elegido es la exposición permanente del Museo de Lanyang del Condado de Yilan, en Taiwán y los temas de investigación son explorados por medio de la observación *in situ* y de entrevistas semiestructuradas entre el personal del museo y sus visitantes.

Los resultados ponen en evidencia que el espacio textual de la exposición es abierto y que puede haber diferentes significados para diferentes visitantes. Cabe destacar que una exposición posee múltiples niveles de significación que permiten una gran variedad de interpretaciones. En conclusión, el estudio constata que desde el principio de su visita los públicos de la exposición experimentan un proceso de recuperación y de naturalización para vincular y arreglar el texto; completan las lagunas del mismo, formulan hipótesis y ponen al día sus expectativas, produciendo sus propios textos mediante un proceso de comprensión innovadora.

Palabras clave : visitante de museo ; exposición ; texto ; teorías de recepción y lectura ; Museo de Lanyang

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I. Introduction

The 1970s saw the beginning of a tendency towards an approach to textual criticism that emphasized the way text and reader interact with and complement one another. Susan R. Suleiman suggests that this phenomenon reflects a current interest within the human sciences in the way texts are received and interpreted, along with an evolution towards self-reflexivity.¹ This new, reader-centered theory of textual criticism involved an in-depth exploration of readers' literary competence, expectation horizon and prior understanding, uncovering the bi-directional interaction that takes place between the reader and the text in the activity of reading, and placing literature within a broader, more clearly-defined historical context.² Umberto Eco expresses it in the following terms: "It is possible to speak of the text's intention only as the result of a conjecture on the part of the reader."³ A text may be difficult to read; it is only when the activities of the addressee (such as a visitor to an exhibition) make it possible to define the method of expression so that the text comes across in an ordered manner, making it possible to build shared topics, that a text can really be said to have been created. The present study seeks to show how an exhibition can be viewed as an "open" text, and suggests that the visitor to an exhibition has a key role to play in terms of his agency within the visiting process, and through his participation in the creation of textual meaning.

¹ Susan R. Suleiman, "Introduction: Varieties of Audience-Oriented Criticism", in: Susan R. Suleiman and Inge Crosman (eds.), *The Reader in the Text*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1980, p. 4.

² Although reader-response theories have developed in the 1970s, the matter is still subject to discussion and has been linked with concepts of "empowerment" in the twenty-first century. See Patricia Harkin, "The Reception of Reader-Response Theory", *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 56, no. 3, 2005, p. 417.

³ Umberto Eco, "Overinterpreting Texts", in: Stefan Collini (ed.), *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 64.

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Recognition of how the visitor, through his participation, moreover, constructs his own “exhibition meaning” should be seen as a reflection on empowerment.

With regard to research methodology, the present study relies mainly on the research results achieved in the fields of narrative theories and reader-response theories as its theoretical underpinnings. The study takes the permanent exhibition at the Lanyang Museum in Yilan County, Taiwan, as the focus of research. Semi-structured interviews with two Museum curators and 15 sets of visitors were used to explore the study’s research issues.⁴ In order to clarify the specific characteristics of this particular case study, the following section presents a brief description of the Lanyang Museum, which is one of Taiwan’s best-known regional museums.

II. Case Study Background

II-I. *Museum Buildings and Environment*

The Lanyang Museum, which was established by Yilan County Government, is located in Toucheng, Yilan County, on the site of what was once Wushih Harbour (before the harbour silted up in the 19th century). (Fig. 1) This is the first museum in Taiwan to present a comprehensive picture of a given region’s natural and human environment, as well as its culture and history. Throughout the preparatory period, the idea of creating an “eco-museum” remained the key element in the planning for the new museum.⁵ Since its formal opening, Lanyang Museum has become a major focus of attention as an independent museum in its own right, but it is clear that the Museum’s founders wished to position it as a “microcosm” of Yilan or as a “window” onto Yilan. This is why the Museum’s own official literature emphasizes the concept of “Yilan as a giant museum.”⁶ During one of the interviews conducted for this study, one of the Museum curators explained the concept behind the Museum as follows:

We sought to position the Museum as a kind of ‘window onto Yilan.’ The idea was that, after visiting the Museum, people would go on to visit other places in Yilan. So what the Museum was most concerned about was where people would go after they left the Museum. Viewing the Mountains Level exhibition might encourage them to go and visit Taipingshan. Viewing the Ocean Level exhibition might encourage them to visit Nanfangao. This was what we really wanted to achieve with respect to the Museum’s visitors.

II-II. Planning and Design of the Museum’s Permanent Exhibition

The permanent exhibition is the most important aspect of the Lanyang Museum. The permanent exhibition is laid out on four floors, “in order to present Yilan’s overall geographical environment, cultural and humanistic trails [sic], and extend people’s imagination.”⁷ When visitors enter the Museum, they purchase tickets and proceed to the Introductory Exhibition to view the *Birth of Yilan* interactive theatre presentation, before riding an escalator up to the fourth floor (the top level). They then work their way back down via the fourth-floor Mountain Level and the third-floor Plains Level to the first-floor Ocean Level, and then out into the lobby.

⁴ The author conducted the interviews with Museum curators at the Lanyang Museum on September 29, 2011. The interviews with Museum visitors were conducted on December 9 - 10, 2011. When undertaking the visitor interviews, the author began by observing visitors near the first floor exit, to identify those individual visitors, families and groups of friends who were still studying the exhibits closely even when they were approaching the exit. In all, interviews were conducted with 15 sets of visitors.

⁵ On the history of construction of the Lanyang Museum before 2000, see Hsin-yi Lo, “Local Museums in the New Era: Discussion of the Lan-yang Museum and the I-lan Museums”, *Museology Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2002, p. 48-50.

⁶ See the website of Lanyang Museum: http://www.lym.gov.tw/eng/en_about_4.asp

⁷ See the website of Lanyang Museum: http://www.lym.gov.tw/eng/en_infor_2.asp

As regards the story, the *Birth of Yilan* introduces visitors to the factors that have influenced the formation of the Lanyang Plain over the past million years or so, and outlines the key features of Yilan's natural environment. The story presented in the Mountain Level focuses on the natural environment of Yilan's forests and their biodiversity, while also showing how people have interacted with and developed the natural world since starting to expand into the mountain forests. (Fig. 2) The narrative shows how these areas have changed over time, while maintaining a clear spatial positioning.

The Plains Level story "focuses on the river, which was once influential to the socio-economic lifestyle on the Lanyang Plains."⁸ (Fig. 3) The Plains Level also introduces the historic sites and storylines left behind by each of the ethnic groups that have inhabited the Lanyang Plain and surrounding areas over the centuries, including the Kavalan People, the Atayal people, and the Han Chinese, who receive the most extensive treatment. The Lanyang Museum's official website notes that the purpose of this level is to explain "the people of Yilan's solution to their livelihood in adapting to the environment, as well as their attitude of symbiosis with nature."⁹

The Ocean Level outlines the impact of the Kuroshio Current on Yilan, and explains how humanity's pollution of the oceans led to the growth of an environmental movement aimed at protecting the marine environment, as well as how dependence on the sea has shaped the evolution of the region's fisheries industry, etc.; this level also looks at the effects of submarine volcanoes. (Fig. 4)

On every level, the narrative makes use of a combination of multiple different media, including reconstitutions, models, replica artefacts, specimens, graphics, writings, etc. Different units call for a different way of "reading" the exhibits on the part of the visitors, whether this involves reading written text, viewing video footage or photos, or touching and experiencing interactive installations. Clever sound and light effects (as well as mist effects) give visitors a real sense of actually being in the scenes that are being depicted. The final part of the permanent exhibition is the *Time Tunnel*, which details major historical events relating to Yilan along with some of Yilan's special achievements. The overall goal is to create a sense of the "Heart of Yilan."

Viewed in terms of the storyline used, the period of time covered by the permanent exhibitions is an extremely long one, and the progression from one era to another is not made particularly clear. The approach of having each floor of the Museum represent a particular type of space, however, helps to reinforce the idea that the Museum is presenting the people, phenomena and events that have emerged in this part of the world. Another Museum curator put it this way:

We are using space, not time. Everything, from the real space outside the Museum to the Mountains, Plains and Ocean levels inside, is linked together by water, not by time, hence the way the Plains Level is designed to feel as though it has no "end" to it. This whole approach is different from that used in most conventional museums; what we are aiming to achieve with this method is to help people to get to know Yilan, which is why water is the chief feature of every level, and thus serves instead of the more conventional passage of time as the connecting thread.

III. How the Exhibition "Creates" its Visitors

A text must have the property of being able to be received, and must possess meaning relevant to its target audience. Umberto Eco suggests that "the very existence of texts that can not only be freely interpreted but also cooperatively generated by the

⁸ *Op. cit.*

⁹ *Op. cit.*

addressee posits the problem of a rather peculiar strategy of communication based upon a flexible system of signification.”¹⁰ An exhibition therefore needs to give visitors enough indices to enable them to recognize that they are in an exhibition environment, to distinguish between the constituent elements that make up each level in the exhibition, and recognize the interaction between these elements; the exhibition environment may also need to “recommend” to the visitor what model should be adopted with respect to the relationship between the elements (such as viewing, imagining, reading, comprehending or appreciating), etc.

When it comes to achieving the goal of making exhibitions comprehensible to visitors, the establishment of a “model reader” or “ideal reader” can provide visitors with a guarantee that their visit has been “successful.” The idea of the “model reader” is based on concepts developed by Umberto Eco and Jonathan Culler; the “model reader” is a reader capable of having an “appropriate response” to the text. Umberto Eco claims that:

*To organize a text, its author has to rely upon a series of codes that assign given contents to the expressions he uses. (...) The author has thus to foresee a model of the possible reader supposedly able to deal interpretively with the expressions in the same way as the author deals generatively with them.*¹¹

In his *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature*, Jonathan Culler suggests that the “ideal reader” is a theoretical construct “best thought of as a representation of the central notion of acceptability.”¹² The “ideal reader” posited for a text is not “any actual reader,” but is in fact a construct – a “metonymic characterization of the text.”¹³ There is a similarity here to the conceptualization of “museum visitors,” who are not specific individuals, but rather an interpretive process located within the text that embodies the synthesis of a wide range of data and arises out of the text.

Like all other texts, an exhibition is meant to be read. As a rule, texts are subject to two major constraints: Firstly, in order to be read, the text must fix itself within a specific framework and set of rules that are familiar to the text recipient. At the same time, however, the text is also concerned with how to delay the addressee’s process of understanding, in order to protect its own existence. To achieve these goals, the text may incorporate elements that are unfamiliar to the reader, in order to create an enhanced level of difficulty, or it may seek to slow down the description of items that the reader is anticipating or is interested in.¹⁴ Culler feels that “to understand the language of a text is to recognize the world to which it refers.”¹⁵ To render a text comprehensible, its various constituent elements must be formed into a coherent whole:

*To assimilate or interpret something is to bring it within the modes of order which culture makes available, and this is usually done by talking about it in a mode of discourse which a culture takes as natural.*¹⁶

Culler refers to this process as “recuperation” or “naturalization.”

¹⁰ Umberto Eco, “Introduction. The role of the reader”, in: *The Role of the Reader. Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1984, p. 3.

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹² Jonathan Culler, “Literary competence”, in: *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature*, London and New York, Routledge, 2007 (reprint), p. 144.

¹³ Menakhem Perry, “Literary Dynamics: How the Order of a Text Creates Its Meanings [With an Analysis of Faulkner’s ‘A Rose for Emily’]”, *Poetics Today*, vol. 1, no. 1-2, 1979, p. 43.

¹⁴ Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, London and New York, Methuen, 1983, p. 123.

¹⁵ Culler, *ibid.*, p. 158.

¹⁶ Culler, *ibid.*, p. 158.

The Lanyang Museum positions itself as a microcosm of Yilan County; there is thus an easily referable relationship between the Museum and “reality.” This kind of frame of reference or “intertextual frames” (to use Umberto Eco’s term) can help visitors to engage in recuperation or naturalization. In practice, precisely because more or less any aspect of reality could have been included in the Museum’s exhibitions, the Museum staff had to think very carefully during the exhibition planning process. As one Museum curator put it:

“Creating an exhibition about Yilan, in Yilan, is not something that can be decided upon by just one or two people. It involved repeated meetings, and the decisions that were made at one meeting would be overturned at the next. There were so many themes that could have been included in the exhibitions; almost anything could have been included. The question was: how were you going to go about presenting it?”

The issue reflected here is that, the more someone understands about reality, the more demanding they will be with respect to a text’s *vraisemblance* [credibility] (in Culler’s word); the more someone knows about Yilan (whether they are an “expert” or an ordinary member of the public), the more qualified they will feel to express their own opinion about the exhibition, because the content of the exhibition is a part of their own life. This is why Culler views *vraisemblance* as being the foundation for the concept of intertextuality.¹⁷

In theory, visitors to the Lanyang Museum can move freely about on each floor, creating their own pattern of visitor circulation. The Museum staff, however, has placed the exhibits that they consider to be of the most importance at specific locations to attract the interest of visitors; that is to say, they have provided hints as to how visitors should go about constructing meaning from the exhibitions. In reality, the way a visitor observes and understands the exhibition elements will vary from person to person, and a given visitor may perceive two or more exhibition elements as either mutually reinforcing or contrasting. This situation can be summarized as follows: “Analepses are often used to provide information necessary to the reader, and prolepses to arouse the reader’s expectations; the story is abstracted by the reader from various indications dispersed along the text-continuum.”¹⁸ In this process of encouraging the visitor to participate in the process of creating meaning, the museum is “shaping” its own visitors. When the Lanyang Museum first opened, the Museum staff soon noticed that a number of exhibits were playing a key role in attracting the attention of visitors. These exhibits, which were also mentioned by visitors when they were interviewed for this study, are described below:

III-1. The West Gate Quay on the Plains Level:

This exhibit portrays the West Gate (*Hsimen*) commercial district of Yilan City, which in the past was an important transshipment center for river transportation in the region. The exhibit designers sought to portray the whole quay “eco-system” through the use of reconstructions and realistic models of human figures. This exhibit is located close to the *an-bian* ship model, at the point where visitors enter the Plains Level display area; it therefore tends to attract a great deal of attention. Among the human figures, the beggar is particular popular. (Fig. 5)

III-2. The *Ciang-gu* (“Grappling with Ghosts”) Ceremony display in the Folk Customs section of the Plains Level:

This exhibit introduces one of the religious ceremonies that have evolved in the Lanyang Plain. Because it is located in the middle and slightly towards the rear of the Plains Level, one might have expected that visitors would tend to miss this exhibit.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 163.

¹⁸ Rimmon-Kenan, *ibid*, p. 119.

Because, however, of its subject matter and the combined utilization of video content, reconstructions, text, etc., however, this exhibit has actually been very successful in drawing visitors. (Fig. 6)

III-3. The *Nanfeng No. 1* exhibit on the Ocean Level:

The *Nanfeng No. 1* is a real spear-fishing boat that used to operate out of Nanfangao. It has been put on display in the Lanyang Museum as testimony to the growth and subsequent decline of the Nanfangao fishing industry. The exhibit integrates text explanations, video footage and model fish, providing an extra highlight in what would otherwise have been the tail-end of the permanent exhibition. Visitors particularly enjoy having their photos taken in the boat as a souvenir of their visit. (Fig. 7)

The examination of the attitudes of Museum staff and visitors towards the permanent exhibition's textual framework shows that, while the visitors' interpretation of the exhibition cannot be viewed simply as blind acceptance of an interpretation forced on them by the exhibition designers, it is not completely free and unlimited, either.

IV. How Visits to Exhibitions Produce Textual Meaning of Exhibitions

When carrying out the interviews with visitors to the Lanyang Museum, the author focused in particular on how the visitors comprehend the exhibition when looking round the Museum, and on how, during their visit, the basic framework of the text becomes an open, dynamic process of meaning production. When they start to look round the Museum, visitors begin to interpret the content provided in the displays. The resulting ideas and points of view are retained, and are drawn up constantly during the remainder of the visit to make comparisons and gauge the validity of such comparisons. The visiting process is like a system for establishing hypotheses and frameworks, and it is used to make comparisons with the visitors' own understanding of reality and their own cultural conventions. The reason why visitors adopt a particular hypothesis is normally because that hypothesis can facilitate the development of other hypotheses.

When observing visitor behaviour in the exhibition halls, the author noticed that, when visitors first start to look around in the permanent exhibition, they spend a noticeably longer amount of time and move more slowly than they do later on in their visit. As noted above, after buying their tickets visitors start by going up to the second floor, where they view the *Birth of Yilan* interactive theatre performance. This area of the Museum is not particularly spacious and yet it is quite common to see visitors who are looking at the other exhibits in this area rather than watching the whole of the interactive theatre show, or who remain in the area after the show has ended. Visitors who are moving on after watching the show have to follow the circulation route specified by the Museum, which involves going up an escalator to the fourth floor, where they enter the Mountains Level. This floor had a smaller floor area than the other floors to start with, and it is also more densely packed with exhibits in order to present the full richness of forest eco-systems. In order to create a sense of being in a mist-shrouded forest, a spray of mist is released into the area at intervals. The Mountain Level's utilization of multiple display methods and its multi-layered captioning ensure that, after entering this area, visitors need to spend a reasonable amount of time to take it all in, and to explore the message that the exhibit is trying to get across. The Museum curators are aware of this situation:

Within the Museum circulation, there are some areas that are not big enough, where 'traffic jams' tend to develop. The other levels have a larger floor area, so that if you encounter a 'traffic jam' on those levels you can just walk around it, but because the Mountain Level is where visitors enter the permanent exhibition, and because they are examining the displays closely, pileups tend to develop here. Also, there aren't really any options for moving over to another area within

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the Mountain Level. On the other floors, you can go over to another area without anyone really noticing, but on the Mountain Level that doesn't seem to be possible.

These points relating to the Mountain Level seem to be in conformity with the finding in text theory research that readers tend to spend more time reading at the beginning of the reading process.¹⁹ We can deduce that this tendency to pay particular attention to the beginning of the exhibition reflects the reader's psychological reaction to the exhibition and the process of making judgments as to how the exhibition will develop. The results obtained in the interviews showed that visitors will read the text attached to exhibits in which they are interested, but that their first step is to rely on visual clues to choose exhibits that they wish to view :

"I do look at the accompanying text, but not every word of it. I only read the text if it relates to an exhibit that I am curious about, like the exhibit about tree rings, where the text explains how they are formed over time."

"I don't really read much of the text; I find that just looking at the exhibits usually gives me a pretty good idea of what it's about. I only read the accompanying text if it's something that I really don't know anything about; if the exhibit relates to something that I have a working knowledge of, then I just skim over the text."

"I look at the physical objects and graphics first, and then if I am interested in that exhibit I will go on to read the text. That's because there is too much text to read all of it."

"I take the view that, if they have gone to the trouble of installing it in the museum, then it must have some value. If, when we come here we only look at the stuff we are interested in, then we are going to come away with a one-sided impression of the museum. I see each floor of the museum as being like layers of fabric superimposed on one another; you need to work right through all of them, rather than just cherry-picking the bits you are interested in."

The way visitors went about constructing meaning from the exhibition during the course of their visit depended on which of the information on display they had been drawn to or chosen to examine. The factors that determine which exhibits visitors will be attracted to or will pick out for themselves appear to be quite complex. When they were asked which topics or exhibits they found particularly interesting, visitors gave a wide range of different answers, but many of them did mention the exhibits that the museum curators felt to be the highlights of the museum:

"The beggars! Beggars used to be able to make a lot of money!"

"Didn't Yilan used to have a lot of beggars and people who relied on the temples for support?"

"It's very impressive, the way they managed to get a whole ship inside the museum."

"The 'cianggu' exhibit – that is a very unusual ceremony. I like the way you can see the whole course of the ceremony; they show the whole thing."

"I'm more interested in the geography side of things, for example where they tell you about the different lakes. Everyone has different interests!"

When visitors are interested in something, they will start to look at it, and start to "read" it. A key activity that takes place at this stage is what could be described as "filling gaps." From a theoretical point of view, when a text reconstructs a world or story for the reader, the material provided can never be complete. No matter how detailed the description, there will always be questions that the reader could raise; in other words, there will always be gaps. Wolfgang Iser puts it this way:

¹⁹ Perry, *ibid*, p. 53.

"No tale can be told in its entirety. Indeed, it is only through inevitable omissions that a story will gain its dynamism. Thus whenever the flow is interrupted and we are led off in unexpected directions, the opportunity is given to us to bring into play our own faculty for establishing connections – or filling in gaps left by the text itself."²⁰

Rimmom-Kenan suggests that the reader's ability to integrate messages scattered about in different parts of a text and to fill in the gaps in the text is due to the frame of reference.²¹ Gaps in the text are not all of equal importance; some are extremely important, while others are minor, and can be filled in easily by the reader. A gap that appears at one place in the text may be filled in another place, or it may never be filled. When visiting an exhibition, visitors are free to choose their own frame of reference, but at the same time they cannot be sure whether the frame of reference they are using is temporary or permanent. In any event, the existence of gaps in the text helps to stimulate visitors' interest and curiosity, and leads visitors to become more actively involved with the text and to produce their own text.

Given that visitors to an exhibition construct the text in their own fashion, the question of how visitors go about filling in gaps in the text was another important focus of the interviews conducted by the author. On the whole, visitors relied on their own experience of life and their own knowledge to interpret the text. Some excerpts from the interviews are presented below:

"(I look at those things I am interested in) and have experienced for myself. For example, we all had the experience of getting water from a pump-well when we were kids, which is something people of your generation won't be familiar with. So it takes us back in time..."

"It brings back memories of the past. Something like the exhibit on rice-harvesting, that reminds us of what our lives used to be like. The exhibits on peddlers and carrying-poles – life in the old days really was like that."

"The exhibits on the third floor dating from the 1940s and before, that all makes you feel very nostalgic. Because we were a farming family, when we see those things, we think: Hey! We used to have one of those in our house!"

"I think having that ship there as part of the exhibit on fisheries helps to bring the topic alive. Having models of the different types of fish is good too, because you can talk about them with the children."

"Speaking for myself, I was most interested in the Plains Level exhibits, because that is the part of Yilan that we have most contact with. Things like duck-rearing and the agricultural implements, we often use to hear the older members of our family talking about them, so that gives it all extra meaning for us."

"I liked the Plains display and the human figures. It feels a bit like going back in time, going back to when I was a child."

Possibly because they didn't want to spend too much time talking to the interviewer, none of the visitors who were interviewed was able or willing to give a clear analysis of their feelings after viewing the exhibition. It may be that the process of constructing meaning does not end when a visitor finishes viewing the exhibition; instead, what the visitor has seen may remain in their mind, and continue to be mulled over. What can be said for sure is that, after their visit, visitors to the Museum try to interpret the exhibition as a unified whole, referencing their own life experience and seeking to verify the text that they have developed.

²⁰ Wolfgang Iser, "The reading process: a phenomenological approach", *New Literary History*, no. 3, 1971, p. 285.

²¹ Rimmon-Kenan, *ibid*, p. 123.

V. Conclusions

Through the use of documentary analysis, observation and interviews, it became clear that the exhibition had different meaning for different visitors. This relates to the fact that visitors' model of reality and their preconceptions can affect the way that they interpret a given text. A further point is that an exhibition may contain multiple levels of meaning, which permit multiple interpretations. When viewing the same exhibition, different visitors will create different meaning from it. This should not, however, be taken to imply that the meaning of an exhibition is random. As the author sees it, the exhibition can constitute a structured object; visitors need to possess a particular set of competences in order to comprehend the text. This regularity with respect to the exhibition and the visitor imposes constraints on the framework within which meaning is assigned to the text. At the same time, the text is, in and of itself, a structural framework containing a wealth of content, and the visitor has considerable creative potential. The interaction between text and visitor can create almost unlimited richness in the realization of textual meaning.

In the present study, it was found that visitors did not wait until after they had finished looking round the exhibition before seeking to understand the text. Right from the beginning of the exhibition, they are using a process of recuperation and naturalization to link together and arrange elements in the text, fill in gaps, make hypotheses, and confirm and revise their expectations, thereby producing the text, and achieving a kind of "innovative understanding." The majority of visitors are more interested in those exhibits that are linked to their own life experience; what the visitors are attracted to is not necessarily related to the display approach adopted by the museum curators. The whole activity of visiting an exhibition is a dynamic process; the end of the visit does not necessarily imply the end of the process of meaning production. The act of reading an exhibition is thus characterized by considerable variation in terms of both timing and meaning.

Audience power lies not just in making demands of the museum as regards aspects of the services it provides, but also in the sensory experiences that the audience undergoes in the course of its participation and in the learning aspects of personal growth. The present study uses an examination of how the process whereby visitors to a museum "read" an exhibition produces and constructs meaning to interpret the reality of the exhibition's communicative function. The study finds that the production of meaning in relation to an exhibition is a process of constant differentiation and evolution within time and space. The visitor's role lies in completing the exhibition text, the entirety of which cannot be constructed by the curator. It is anticipated that this finding should be of benefit with respect to understanding the essential nature of the way in which museum exhibitions operate.

Acknowledgements

This paper is one of the results of a research project (NSC100- 2410-H -144-012) sponsored by National Science Council, Taiwan, ROC. The author would like to thank the personnel of Lanyang Museum for their cooperation in accepting the interviews and providing a most appropriate and congenial research environment.

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Fig. 1: An outside view of Lanyang Museum. (Photographed by Sheng-Chang, Li, provided by Lanyang Museum)



Fig. 2: A view of Mountain Level (Photographed by Ya-Hui, Chuang, provided by Lanyang Museum)



Fig. 3: A view of Plains Level (Photographed by Ya-Hui, Chuang, provided by Lanyang Museum)

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Fig. 4: A view of Ocean Level (Photographed by Ya-Hui, Chuang, provided by Lanyang Museum)



Fig. 5: The Beggar of Lanyang Museum (Photographed by Ya-Hui, Chuang, provided by Lanyang Museum)

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The active role of the visitor in producing the meaning of the exhibition



Fig. 6: The *Ciang-gu* Ceremony (Photographed by Ya-Hui, Chuang, provided by Lanyang Museum)



Fig. 7: The *Nanfeng No. 1* exhibit (Photographed by Ya-Hui, Chuang, provided by Lanyang Museum)

Wan-Chen Chang
The active role of the visitor in producing the meaning of the exhibition

ENCOUNTERING NON-VISITORS: A CASE STUDY OF THE TAIWANESE MIGRANT WORKER PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION AND MY MUSEUM PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

“Voyage” means a long journey to anywhere. “(NT\$) 15840” is the minimum wage for workers in Taiwan in 2007. However, for migrant workers in Taiwan, it is the maximum. For the project, “Voyage 15840,” TIWA (Taiwan International Workers’ Association) gathered photos from 19 migrant workers in Taiwan. Then, TIWA made a critical tour exhibition to voice what they saw while working in Taiwan: the humanity and the society. Ludi community college was one of the exhibition sites in 2008. When “Voyage 15840” went to Ludi, I participated as a volunteer by contributing my museum practice. As a team, TIWA, Ludi staff and I, we decided to make a message board to understand visitor experiences. By using 3M Post-its to leave messages, visitors (most of them were museum non-visitors) told us what they thought and felt. The feedback was totally different from the stereotypical view of migrant workers, such as their being black, dirty, noisy and moving in crowds. In this study, “Voyage 15840” not only allows migrant workers to interpret, face up to and express what they feel and how they think through photography, but also lets visitors self-examine the stereotypes they have perpetuated. Through this opportunity, migrant workers and Taiwan citizens can really “see each other,” and this case study also gave Taiwan museum the point of the future on multicultural museum education.

Keywords: non-visitor, exhibition curating, migrant worker, Voyage 15840, multicultural museum education

RÉSUMÉ

La rencontre des non visiteurs : un cas d’étude de l’exposition photographique du travailleur migrant à Taiwan et ma pratique muséale

En anglais, «voyage» signifie un long voyage vers n’importe où. «(NT\$)15840» est le salaire minimum pour les travailleurs à Taiwan en 2007. Toutefois, c’est le maximum pour les travailleurs migrants à Taiwan. Pour le projet, «Voyage 15840,» TIWA (Taiwan Association internationale des travailleurs) s’est procuré les photographies auprès de 19 travailleurs migrants à Taiwan et en a fait une exposition itinérante pour présenter ce qu’ils ont vu pendant qu’ils travaillaient à Taiwan : l’humanité et la société. Le Collège Communautaire de Ludi a été l’un des lieux d’exposition en 2008. Lorsque “Voyage 15840” fut présentée à Ludi, j’y ai participé, en tant que bénévole, par l’apport de mon savoir-faire muséographique. TIWA, le personnel de Ludi et moi-même, avons décidé d’installer un panneau afin de comprendre l’expérience des visiteurs. En utilisant des post-its pour laisser leurs messages, les visiteurs (nombre d’entre eux ne fréquentent pas les musées) ont exprimé ce qu’ils pensaient et éprouvaient. La réaction a été totalement différente de la vision stéréotypée qu’on a des travailleurs migrants (que l’on imagine noirs, sales, bruyants et se déplaçant dans la foule). Dans ce cas d’étude, «Voyage 15840» permet non

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seulement aux travailleurs migrants d'interpréter, de faire face et d'exprimer ce qu'ils ressentent et comment ils pensent à travers les photos, mais permet également aux visiteurs d'autoexaminer les stéréotypes qu'ils conservent. Grâce à cette possibilité, les travailleurs migrants et les citoyens taiwanais peuvent réellement «se voir en face», et cette recherche a également donné aux musées taiwanais un regard sur le futur de l'éducation multiculturelle dans le cadre du musée. (traduit par Sandrine Cheng)

RESUMEN

El encuentro de los no visitantes: un caso de estudio de la exposición fotográfica del trabajador migrante en Taiwan y mi práctica museal

En inglés *voyage* significa un largo viaje hacia cualquier parte. « (NT\$) 15840 » es el salario mínimo de los trabajadores migrantes en Taiwan. Para el proyecto « Voyage 15840 » TIWA (Asociación Internacional de Trabajadores de Taiwan) se ha procurado las fotografías de diecinueve trabajadores migrantes de Taiwan y ha presentado una exposición itinerante para mostrar lo que ellos vieron mientras trabajaban en Taiwan: la humanidad y la sociedad.

El Colegio Comunitario de Ludi ha sido un de los lugares de exposición en 2008. Cuando « Voyage 15840 » fue presentado en Ludi, participé como voluntaria para aportar mis conocimientos museográficos. TIWA, el personal de Ludi y yo misma, decidimos instalar un panel a fin de comprender la experiencia de los visitantes. Utilizando post-its para dejar sus mensajes, los visitantes (muchos de ellos no frecuentaban los museos) expresaron lo que pensaban y sentían. La reacción fue totalmente diferente de la visión estereotipada que se tiene de los trabajadores migrantes (se los imagina negros, sucios, ruidosos y desplazándose en la multitud). En este caso de estudio, « Voyage 15840 » se les pidió interpretar, dar la cara y expresar a través de sus fotos lo que sienten o cómo piensan. El estudio permitió igualmente que los visitantes hicieran un autoexamen de los estereotipos que aún conservan. Gracias a esta posibilidad, los trabajadores migrantes y los ciudadanos taiwaneses pueden realmente « verse cara a cara » y esta investigación ha permitido dar una mirada -en el marco de los museos de Taiwan- sobre la educación.

Palabras clave: no visitante, curador de la exposición, trabajador migrante, Viaje15840, educación multicultural del museo

* * *

Foreword: TIWA and “VOYAGE 15840”

Taiwan International Workers Association (TIWA) was established on October 30, 1999. It is the first local NGO in Taiwan to work for the rights of both foreign spouses and migrant workers. The main aims of TIWA are to promote intercommunication between local and migrant workers, to fight for migrants' rights and to support migrant workers' self-empowerment, including helping them to organize their own independent organizations such as the Taiwan Indonesian Workers' Association (TIMWA) and KaSaPi (a Filipino workers' organization). TIWA also fights the racism and classism within Taiwanese society by organizing cultural events such as musical and dance concerts, cooking classes, poetry contests, and photo workshops, in order to challenge negative stereotypes of Southeast Asians in Taiwan. Their staff is made of experienced labor activists and members of local unions.

The “Voyage 15840 – Migrant Worker Photography Exhibition” (referred to as “Voyage 15840” in the following) was held by TIWA. At first, TIWA took the form of two half-year projects of photography workshops for Taiwan international migrant workers from 2006.

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This project focused on those workers' particular relationship and situation between their native home and this foreign island, Taiwan, which could be represented by their own cameras and words. Jing-Lu Wu, the executive director of TIWA, said, "Every migrant worker has their own point camera and shoot in Taiwan. When visiting a new place, they always like to take a picture and make sure of their now and here." At the same time, her colleague, Chen Su-hsiang, gave her "Photovoices: Shenzhen workers speak" (Slavick, 2005) as a gift. This observable habit and that book gave Wu the original idea of "Voyage 15840." From this she developed the team for the photography workshops.

The whole project involved an academic photographer and a PhD of the School of Interdisciplinary Arts, Ohio University, Jing-Fang Jiang, whose work was to design the whole program and develop the subject of each homework such as "Kitchen and Food" and "My 24 Hours." Jing-Lu Wu worked as a project coordinator and raised funds for the two projects with two volunteers, Chen Hui-Lu and Shu Hui-Lu. In the workshop, the migrant workers not only took pictures at home, but also had to tell others "why I shot", "how I felt when shooting", and "what kinds of stories I like to share" in public. It was really not easy for them. "There were several levels of difficulty and reasons," Jiang said. One of the main reasons was "I was absent when the first homework was given." Most migrant workers were used to observing as the third party and did not involve their own thoughts, feelings and opinions. It showed the really marginal situation of most Taiwan migrant workers. Facing there conditions, Jiang became a student and also participated in the project, with the questions of "what I think, I saw, I feel, I like, I disagree....."

After one year of workshops, 19 migrant workers participated and hundreds of photographs resulted. They tried to express "photovoices" through their own photos and words. In Jiang's opinion, what they shot was less important; the most important thing was that they had the opportunity to confront their inner ideas while taking serious action to observe, think, plan, and so on while shooting. And then they could double-check their own situation with those images and write it down. "Photovoices" just meant their courage and empowerment by sharing their critical voices, using images as a tool to question and then to share in public (Fig. 1). In this photography workshop, "I" could hide behind the lens when shooting, but "I" was affirmative in the subject of photovoices.



Fig1.

by using 3M Post-its to write down their own feelings, each photograph had its own stories. Retrieved May 7, 2012, from http://imagedancer.blogspot.com/2007_05_01_archive.html

Finally, a small outdoor park was booked for "Voyage 15840 – Migrant Worker Photography Exhibition," which was to be staged from June 3rd to 6th, 2007. It was held at the grand opening for Fu-Shun Park, which is on the second section of Chung-Shan North Road, Taipei, Taiwan (Fig. 2). In 2008, TIWA decided to go on an exhibition tour through Kaohsiung, Taipei County and Hua-lien. The most important thing was that TIWA gave this exhibition not only a poetic but also a political title,

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“Voyage 15840.” “Voyage” means a long journey to anywhere. “(NT) 15840” is the minimum monthly salary for a worker by the Labor Standard Law in Taiwan. However, for migrant workers in Taiwan, after deductions, it is usually the maximum.



Fig2.

the site of
“Voyage 15840 –
Migrant Worker
Photography
Exhibition” at Fu-
Shun Park,
Chung-Shan
North Road,
Taipei, Taiwan.
Retrieved May 7,
2012, from
<http://imagedancer.blogspot.com/2007/06/voyage-15840.html>

My first look at “VOYAGE 15840”

In the spring of 2007, after I completed my internship at the Cleveland Museum of Art, U.S.A. and came back to Taiwan, I happened to get the chance to visit “Voyage 15840 – Migrant Worker Photography Exhibition” To satisfy my personal curiosity, I decided to go on an exploration

The time I arrived at Fu-Shun Park was near the closing time of that day. While I was walking into the park, because of my academic training in museum studies, I looked for the title and the main introduction of this exhibition at the beginning. However, the little park is a public area, and there was a bus station nearby. And it is indeed a crowded area, for lots of people like residents, students and motor vehicles stopped by. That made me to decide to abandon the way I use to start viewing an exhibition. I went directly to the photography of migrant worker exhibit. Those pieces had no delicate frame but just a print out canvas, created by some cheap printing. In addition, I discovered there was no spotlight in particular for each piece, the simply-tied prints were fixed on a scaffold with natural light to illuminate them instead. Finally, I found the title of exhibition on a piece of red cloth hanging in a corner of the park.

The pieces of migrant worker photography are fulfilling, with the unknown and imagination integrating with the difference, humor and curiosity because of culture shock toward this foreign country, Taiwan, as well as the expectation of a better life in their new hometown. Some of the photographers were looking backward to their own lives in Taiwan, such as some friendly interaction with their employer and the friendships from hometown friends in Taiwan. The photos may have also been used when considering whether or not they wanted to stay or leave after the end of current employment. Of course, they displayed some tense relationships between the employer and employee, which eventually became the main topic of this exhibition. The gaze of tension is one that neither the migrant workers nor the visitors (audience) can avoid. One piece that drew my attention the most was “Keys on the lock” (Fig. 3) with the words (Wu, 2008:45):

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*This is a door leading to my room.
It is also the place where I do folding and ironing of their clothes.*

Notice the keys hanging on the door? They are always there.

I don't have the right to take away the keys, which means, I don't have any privacy.

Anybody can go inside at anytime, even during my sleep.

But it's all right. They are harmless, I believe so.

It's one of many things that I need to deal with while I am working here.

Fig3.Keys on the lock, shot by Charisse B. Sannoy, 2005. Retrieved May 7, 2012, from http://www.tiwa.org.tw/media/gallery/2006-03-16Charisse_keys_on_the_lock.jpg

That piece caused me to think of an environment and situation about a migrant worker at my home, A-Ti, who came from Indonesia, and also reminded me how I was nervous and anxious upon my first arrival in Cleveland, U.S.A. for my internship. Anyway, "Voyage 15840 – Migrant Worker Photography Exhibition" and the result, it brought to the visitors was totally differed from the exhibition strategy based on a traditional museum. It also challenged my understanding about "how to create an exhibition," and of the collections and exhibitions inside/outside the museum. I would like to know more details about the process of creating of "Voyage 15840," and how it got started from scratch. The curiosity and questions led me to explore my museum practices as a series of "action research."

My Museum Practice and "VOYAGE 15840"

After the first showing of "Voyage 15840" at Fu-Shun Park, TIWA made a critical exhibition tour through Kaohsiung, Taipei County and Hua-lien that continued through 2008 and put on "photovoice" what they saw while working in Taiwan: the humanity and the society. Ludi community college (Taipei County, below used "Ludi") was one of the exhibition sites, and I used to teach the course of "Let's create an exhibition" there. Due to this relationship, when "Voyage 15840" went to Ludi, I participated as a volunteer by contributing my museum practices.

Ludi community college was established in 1999 near the lower income area of Taipei Country. At first, most students there were blue collar workers; some were retired adults, and recently a few were foreign spouses and migrant workers. Ludi community college, led by Prof. Lin-Chin Hsia., a contributor to "action research" of Chris Argyris and Donald A. Schon (Schön, 1983), became a laboratory of radical adult education. When "Voyage 15840" moved to Ludi, TIWA, the Ludi staff and I considered the backgrounds of the adult students and tried to create more interaction between those photographs and the visitors' feelings. We decided to make a message board to understand visitor experiences and then I designed. At the same time, a member of the Ludi staff, Yu-nu Li, told me she had planned to invite her students, most of whom were foreign spouses in a class to learn Mandarin. The plan was in two parts: one was Jing-Lu Wu's brief introduction about "Voyage 15840," and another was to invite them to tell us what they saw and felt by using the message board.

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In order to invite more visitors to use the message board, I re-designed the DM of “Voyage 15840” with A4-sized color paper added more interpretation by shaping the Chinese title of “Voyage 15840”. “凝視驛鄉” could be translated as “Glancing at foreign hometown.” I added more interpretation below:

“Glancing” not only means to look around, but also to encounter each other with respect and tolerance.

“Foreign hometown” is the visual frame of migrant workers, but also points to Taiwan, where they -and we- live together.



Fig.4

the entry of “Voyage 15840” at Ludi community college, 2008, shot by Pang-Yen Cheng.

Fig.5

A visitor just wrote down his feelings about “Voyage 15840,” shot by Pang-Yen Cheng.

One of those photographs was shot by Lucile F. Alfaro, 2005. She is a Filipino worker and used to work in Hong Kong for 12 years, and then later in Taipei. Her photograph subject was the clock tower at Fu-Shun Park, Taipei



(Fig.6) with these words (Wu, 2008):

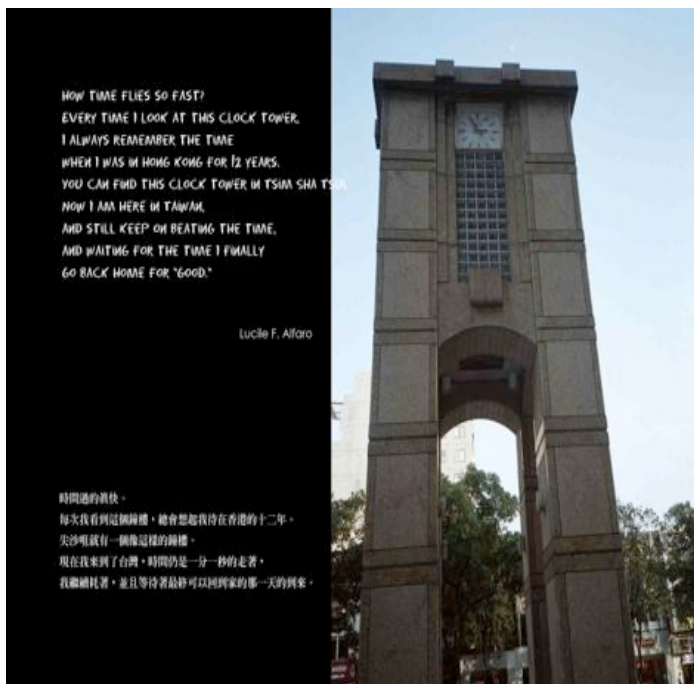
*How does time fly so fast?
Every time I look at this
clock tower, I always
remember the time when
I was in Hong Kong for
12 years.*

*You can find this clock
tower in Tsim Sha Tsui.*

*Now I am here in Taiwan,
and time still keeps on
beating, and I am waiting
for the time I can finally
go back home for “good.”*

Fig 6.

Time Flies, shot by Lucile F. Alfaro, 2005. Retrieved May 7, 2012, from <http://www.tiwa.org.tw/media/g>



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allery/2006-03-31Lucile_time_flies.jpg

When Lucile's artwork was shown at Ludi, a foreign spouse from Vietnam shared with us her feelings. She said, " *I had the same feelings as you. Every time I saw that clock tower, it always reminded me of my hometown. At my hometown, when the bell of the church was ringing, I knew, that's praying.*" (Fig.7, 8)

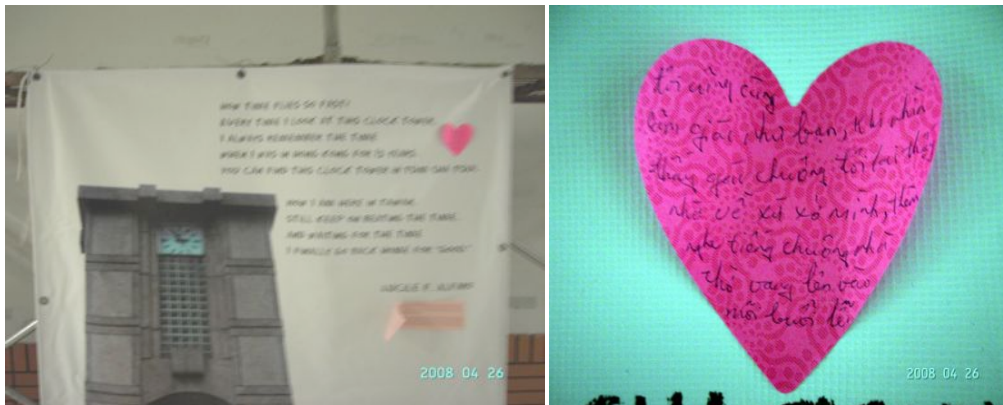


Fig.7 (Left) Time Flies and a visitor's message at Ludi community college, 2008.

Fig.8 (Right) a visitor's message, both shot by Pang-Yen Cheng.

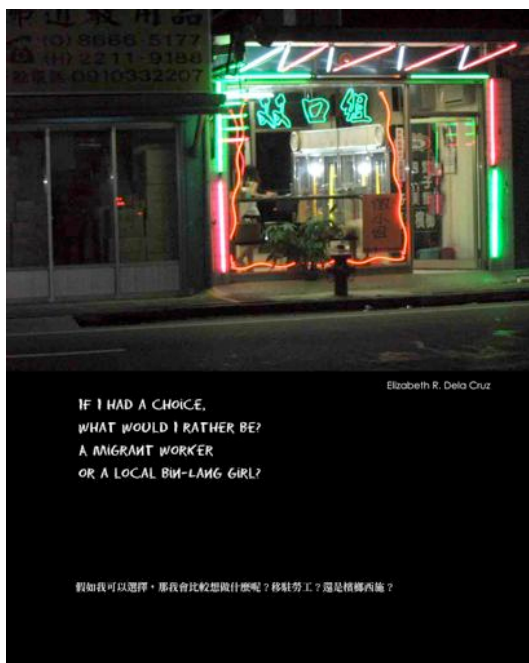
Another photograph was shot by Elizabeth R. Dela Cruz, 2005. She also came from the Philippines and was once a community organizer at her hometown. Her photograph was a bin-lang stall near the street at night (Fig.9). Bin-lang, or betel nut, is a mild stimulant and tastes refreshing. In Taiwan, there are many bin-lang stalls where young women in sexy outfits sit to attract blue collar customers. She took a picture and said (Wu, 2008):

If I had a choice, what would I rather be?

A migrant worker or a local bin-bang girl

Fig 9.

Bin-bang stall, shot by Elizabeth R. Dela Cruz, 2005. Retrieved May 7, 2012, from http://www.tiwa.org.tw/media/gallery/2006-03-29Beth_binlangtan.jpg



IF I HAD A CHOICE,
WHAT WOULD I RATHER BE?
A MIGRANT WORKER
OR A LOCAL BIN-LANG GIRL?

Elizabeth R. Dela Cruz

假如我可以選擇，那我會比較想做什麼呢？移民勞工？還是檳榔西施？

For Elizabeth, when she decided to shoot, a reflective conversation happened in her inner world and provided a chance to reframe her situation of being a migrant worker and to inquire to the relationship between her and the outside world. For another, one of visitors who felt Elizabeth was tired wrote the message " *In Taiwan, it is hard to make money, I hope you can find the right job you like*" (Fig.10, 11).

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Fig.10 (left) Bin-lang stall and and Fig. 11 (right) visitor's message at Ludi community college, 2008.

Fig.11 (Right) a visitor's message, both shot by Cheng Pang-Yen,

When a Taiwanese man married to a foreign wife gazed at the whole exhibition, he said, "*Migrant workers leave for an alien world and always meet several difficulties. Not only were their children taken care of by grandparents, but their marriages seldom were happy, because they had little time to be together. Taiwanese people should cherish what they own now, and share your friendship with migrant workers.*" Even a Taiwanese child shared his wishes "*I hope all of you live peacefully.*"

Meeting non-visitors: a preliminary experiential exploration on multi-cultural museum education

In the early 1980s, in *Museums for a new century* (Commission of Museums for a New Century [CMNC], 1984), AAM (American Association of Museums) already focused on several important changes of 21st century. One of those changes was cultural pluralism, and said "When it comes preserving cultural pluralism, museums have an important role to play. They represent cultural diversity in their collections and their exhibitions" (CMNC, 1984: 25). But museums how to play their job well, museum education is just the bridge, combined their visitors with museum collections. On the trend of cultural diversity, "multi-culture" became one of the more popular issues, and even in museum studies, several papers (Suina, 1990; Jessup-Woodlin, 1996; Golding, 1997) used it as titles.

In Golding's opinion, "multicultural museum education aims to increase knowledge and understanding of the world cultures through a study of actual cultural products and the wider world from which they came (Golding, 1997: 104)" and "is centrally concerned with objects, and the different ideas which we have attached to them. To handle real things and ask questions about them leads us to different pictures of our place in the world and alternative possibilities of being (Golding, 1997: 223)." Golding was employing Hans Georg Gadamer's "dialectical mode of conversation" for use with museum objects, through her several education programs at the Horniman Museum Education Center, London, and then those museum objects finally can be said to expand the mind and widen our "horizon" (this word was borrowed from Gadamer's term).

In the experience in Taiwan, most museums belong to the government and "Voyage 15840 – Migrant Worker Photography Exhibition" just happened outside museum. "Voyage 15840" had not only a poetic but also a political title, which reminded all of

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visitors of a critical “horizon” about those migrant workers’ situation in Taiwan, although not all of their photos focused on this tension. On the other hand, toward different backgrounds of visitors, such as native Taiwanese people, foreign spouses and migrant workers, they varied feelings, opinions and experiences about “Voyage 15840.” Even native Taiwanese visitors, they differed in ages, gender and classes had various feedbacks as one of visitors in Ludi, who married to a foreign wife, told us his inner voice. Probably, we could think, “Voyage 15840” provided visitors and non-visitors a dialectical mode of conversation. No matter what kinds of conversation just happened, it always modified visitors’ “horizon” and changed their “understanding” about the migrant workers -and -we who all live together in Taiwan.

After my internship, I began to work at one of “National Museums,” the National Palace Museum (NPM), Taipei, as an assistant registrar and collaborated with TIWA and Ludi for “Voyage 15840.” After this collaboration, Yu-nu Li and I visited in the NPM for a new exhibition, titled “Exploring Asia: Episode One of the NPM.” I liked to have another museum practice / action research to invite her foreign spouse students (most of them are non-visitors of museums) for “Exploring Asia.” But when Yu-nu Li looked around “Exploring Asia,” she told me she cannot find the right reason for the invitation. It meant Li thought there were no any connection and relationship between “Exploring Asia” and her students, but she told me “it would be a wonderful thing if “Voyage 15840” took place at NPM.” When I heard Li suggestion, I had a picture in mind immediately, “One Asia, two worlds. The one is Asian past and the other one is Asian now.”

“Exploring Asia” was a tradition museum exhibition based on NPM’s collection and aimed to know past Asia and its history from different Asian area of Buddhist sculptures, textiles, ceramics and other collections. “Voyage 15840” was not only an exhibition, but also a social movement, a kind of innovation about a social movement inside with museum practices outside. In “Can we live together? Equal and difference,” Touriane (1997, translated by David Macey, 2000) said,

..... At the political level, the recognition of cultural diversity leads to the protect of minority cultures... The same conception gives museum an increasing importance in our society, the views of those who believe that a modern society must eradicate the past and only to the future notwithstanding (Touriane, 1997: 173)."

In my opinion, “Voyage 15840” became not only an alternative kind of “public sphere” to know ourselves and each other again - it might just be the beginning for encountering non-visitors (especially those migrant workers and Taiwan citizens in Ludi community university) –it also gave Taiwan museum the point of the future about multicultural museum education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would like to thank Jing-Lu Wu, Jing-Fang Jiang, Han-Sheng Tseng, Taiwan International Workers Association, and Yu-nu Li, Ludi community college. Without their help and friendship, I had no opportunity to do my museum practice as “action research.” Special thanks to Prof. Lin-Chin Hsia, Assistant Professor Tsai-Wei Wang and Vice-Professor Wan-Chen Lu. Their encouragement made this study possible.

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MUSEUMS, PARTICIPATION, AND EMPOWERMENT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to reflect on empowerment in museums with a focus on the institutions' professionals and public. We begin with a discussion that draws the line between museological assessment and museum visitor reception research: assessment is a management tool – therefore in the realm of museography – while visitor research feeds museological theory – and therefore falls into the realm of museology. To this end, we begin with a discussion that differentiates between museological assessment and museum visitor reception research because assessment is a management tool – therefore in the realm of museography – while reception research feeds museological theory – and therefore falls in the realm of museology. We separate museum actors – professionals and public – to better understand how empowerment happens. We then give some examples of situations of empowerment in Brazilian museums to broaden discussion of the possibilities of understanding power in museum environments.

RÉSUMÉ

Musées, participation et responsabilisation.

Le propos de cet article est de réfléchir, dans le contexte du musée, à la responsabilisation qui concerne les professionnels de ces établissements et le public. Dans ce but, nous partons d'une distinction entre d'une part l'évaluation muséale effectuée à partir des études de réception du visiteur de musée, l'évaluation étant un outil de gestion et donc du domaine muséographique, et d'autre part l'étude de la réception qui alimente la théorie muséale et ressortit donc au domaine muséologique. Nous séparons les sujets du musée (les professionnels et le public) pour mieux comprendre comment se produit la responsabilisation. Après quoi nous donnons quelques exemples de situations de responsabilisation dans des musées brésiliens pour élargir le débat aux possibilités de comprendre les enjeux de pouvoir dans le contexte muséal.

RESUMEN

Museos, participación y empoderamiento

Este texto tiene como objetivo reflejar sobre empoderamiento en el ambiente del museo, considerando a los profesionales de esa institución y el público como actores. Para tanto, parte de una discusión que distingue evaluación museológica de investigación de público de museo, una vez que la evaluación sirve a la gestión – por tanto es museografía –, al paso que la investigación de recepción alimenta a la teoría museológica – así, está en los dominios de la museología. Separamos los sujetos del museo – profesionales y público – para mejor entender como el empoderamiento acontece. Después, damos algunos ejemplos de situaciones de empoderamiento en museos brasileños, para ampliar a la discusión de las posibilidades de entender el poder en el ambiente museal.

* * *

Introduction

The word 'empowerment' has different meanings. In short, it can mean an awareness of power, individual or collective. In regard to the collective, we highlight empowerment as the assertion of power in decisions regarding social rights.

With regard to management, empowerment is a strategy used to delegate responsibilities, decentralizing power by means of the participation, involvement, and division of responsibilities among co-workers in a given company or organization.

We will consider empowerment to be the gaining spaces for decision making, awareness building, forms of participation, responsibility sharing, overcoming certain situations, impact on the course of events and circumstances, the observation of civil rights, a breaking away from certain hierarchies or authoritarian ways, the provoking of course-changes and the broadening of horizons. Various concepts interlink with empowerment: citizenship, decentralization, emancipation, and so on.

A principle to take into consideration is that the more people feel they have inalienable rights, the more they feel responsible for attaining them, and the more they commit themselves, become involved, and seek creative solutions.

On the political level, empowerment refers to relations of power among different social agents with unequal power. Relations among people within different realms of power change when the parties perceive that both are important in any given process. In this case, power plays and the quest for power are inevitable, but not necessarily negative.

The object of this paper is to reflect on empowerment in museum environments with the institutions' professionals and the public as players.

1. Museum Visitor Research and Museological Assessment

In museums, assessment is part of the institutional culture. We can no longer talk about institutional models or management without taking assessment into account. Assessment must cover all sectors of the museum and can be carried out at different times and levels. For example, assessment can cover fields such as visiting public research and development, exhibition design and development, program design and development, installation design in general, and visitor services. As it may be understood in the context of institutional management, assessment covers the justification of the institution's value and/or its specific programs, collection of data to aid in long-term planning, help in formulating new programs, evaluation of program effectiveness, overall broadening understanding how people use museums by means of empiric study processes. Thus, assessment covers the visiting public, the merit of the various programs and services, the merit of the institution, the building's architectonic suitability, institutional planning, and so on.

Assessment is ultimately a professional tool aimed to improve and empower our field of endeavor, one we use to better understand the work we undertake. It is a means of professional and, consequently, institutional refinement, be it of work processes or the products that we conceive and implement. Assessment is a means to an end.¹

The museum assessment program includes the following types of assessment: preliminary or conceptual, formative, corrective, summative, technical, and critical. These six basic types of assessment are well known and widely disseminated in the field of museums. They can be carried out as follows: in-house self-assessment conducted by the museum personnel, empirical studies featuring the visiting public, and external assessment.

¹ Marília Xavier Cury, "Cultura da Avaliação", Capítulo III, in: *Exposição: concepção, montagem e avaliação*. São Paulo, Annablume, 2008. p. 124

Assessment is no novelty. It informs us about the museum actors: the professionals and the visiting public.

Assessment allows museum professionals to feel empowered by giving them the opportunity to see themselves in their work process and thus collectively discuss individual activities/endeavors, and the collective itself. Because assessment is a process, it functions together with the strategy of professional team organization. This strategy results from the institution's policies, because it goes beyond management's objectives to arrive at a form of interaction among peers who join to build quality team work processes.

Awareness of the existence of professional players in ongoing interaction simultaneously assumes the existence of an organizational culture, i.e., a conscious or unconscious creative process featuring how this interaction takes place in organizational environments. The arousal of awareness that each group or team acts in a specific manner according to their values and desires constitutes a valuable product derived from the planning strategy, and a valuable tool for their political participation in the destinies of the museological communication system.²

Given a strategy for implementing policy, museum professionals take part in an empowerment process.

On the other hand, museum professionals can clearly perceive their place in curatorship as museum curators. Curatorship is a process that involves all actions pertaining to musealized objects: formation and gathering of collections, research, preservation and documentation – safekeeping –, exhibition and education – communication. Given this outlook, the older concepts of curators as persons who study the collections are broadened to include all the other actions related to musealized objects, attaching due value to all types of action and all professionals involved. This constitutes empowerment because it shows that we all work actively and effectively to make the museum what it is.

Given assessment, museum visitors can feel cared for and respected because they perceive that their anxieties and/or opinions are important to the museum. It was only in the 1970s that this visiting public's influence on museum processes became possible. In that decade the field of communication underwent changes, evolving from the information-transferring model and its impact on people. That change occurred due to the strong influence of cultural studies showing that people interpreted in their own way, and were thus actively engaged in communication processes. Museums were slow in understanding this view. They upheld their objectives for quite some time, endlessly discussing to what extent the public grasped or failed to grasp the museums' aims, intentions, and expectations. Little by little the museums begin to respect the visiting public's approach and even go further by beginning to orient their actions toward the public's experience in museum environments. However, assessment, even when applied differently than it was in the information transferring model – feedback – comes to have a functional – or reactive – outlook because it wants to know the public's conceptions beforehand in order to define the communicational process in hopes of understanding how the public reacts in view of certain museum stimuli. If advances were made, we must understand what those advances represent.

The fact that museums have adopted assessment is an enormous plus. It brings extremely important elements to the institutions' routines. Above all, it shows that the institution wants to act with efficiency and quality, it wants to occupy its social place and exercise its rightful functions. Assessment is thus a predominant element of museography, i.e., of museum praxis implemented by a management project.

² Idem, "O processo de concepção e montagem de exposição", Capítulo II, in: *Exposição: concepção, montagem e avaliação*. São Paulo, Annablume, 2008. p. 95.

Assessment serves museums in the organization of daily routines, reflection on work culture, construction of practical knowledge, and for implementation of an intelligence of the praxis. Because it serves the museum, assessment lies in the realm of museography.³

Assessment is a means for institutions to adapt to the society. There is thus no way to implement a dedicated management project that fails to include assessment. There is no way to value the public and open up space for its empowerment unless a dynamic assessment process takes place and generates changes attuned to the public's demands.

But there are other perspectives that assessment suggests but falls short of implementing. These are cultural mediations that occur in people's everyday life, i.e., at the heart of the society. Assessment may point out such problems but fail to address them.

To museology, museological assessment becomes reception research or study, i.e., it is no longer an assessment of processes and results aimed to feed, correct, and adjust the management project and ultimately make it happen, but instead becomes a reception study, a study of how the visiting public uses the museum and of interactions generated by exhibitions in view of cultural mediations.⁴

The approaches – reception research and assessment – are actually quite closely related. The first – reception research – depends on the second – assessment – in order to develop, because it requires the description of museum collections that museography – of which assessment is an integral part – has to offer. In other words, we need a description in order to extrapolate to a comprehensive theory, ambitious and necessary, of people's relations with the musealized cultural assets.

Reception research, however, does provide the possibility of problematizing the museological fact (man-object relations mediated by the museum, whatever their format may be), learning to identify it and circumscribe it to empiric reality, understanding it. In short, the possibility of drawing the areas of communication and reception closer together to allow positioning of the public's everyday life and its interpretations and meanings in regard to the universe of musealized assets. In addition, to understand how museological messages are grasped, re-elaborated, and inserted in the visiting public's everyday life, i.e., how the museological messages are publicized in people's life and what sociological impact said publicizing has.⁵

The museum we see emerging from the changes in social and human sciences enhances public participation in the heritage conservation and musealization processes because it recognizes that the public is an engaged player; it questions interpretive boundaries; it understands that all narrative is local; it relativizes discourses in view of diverse contexts and circumstances; it is conjectural, playful, and personally engaged; it makes the sciences speak to one another; it is dialogic; it unites the different and reveals diversity; it produces diverse texts and subtexts, produces meaning, and understands that reception is a meaning-producing job, etc.

In this emerging museum, the public is recognized as the actor playing the leading role. The logic that the museum must seek to understand the public's ways of using the museum is present in the mediation, i.e., "places from which spring the constructions that circumscribe and configure the museum's social materiality and cultural expressivity".⁶ The museum must take accept meeting face to face with the visitor to

³ Marília Xavier Cury, "Museologia, novas tendências", in: Granato, Marcus; Santos, Claudia Penha dos; Loureiro, Maria Lucia de N. M. (Orgs.). *Museu e museologias: interfaces e perspectivas*. Rio de Janeiro: MAST, 2009. p. 34.

⁴ Idem.

⁵ Idem, p. 37.

⁶ Jesus Martín-Barbero, *Dos meios às mediações: comunicação, cultura e hegemonia*. Rio de Janeiro, Ed.

discover how that visitor understands/sees the museum. In this way there is institutional empowerment because the institution understands and exercises its social function. There is empowerment on the part of the professionals because their training is based on a complexity that demands new challenges of them. There is empowerment on the part of the visiting public because that public perceives itself as part of a major cultural and social dynamic mediated by the musealized cultural heritage.

2. Empowerment – Some Examples

We present some situations to enhance our reflections on empowerment. Initially, we briefly present three reception studies: 1) *Um Dia na Vida*, 2) *Ouroeste – 9 Mil Anos de História* and 3) *Beleza e Saber – Plumária Indígena*.⁷ We then relate an experiment with the cooperative method for the construction of a narrative in the first person – I/we – with the Kaingang and Krenak Indians. Then we highlight three projects focusing on the empowerment of players in situations of social vulnerability, those with special needs, and museum professionals.

In the first case – the exhibition project *Um Dia na Vida* (One Day in Life), the content of which addresses chronobiology (biological rhythms) – a narrative was drawn up featuring a circuit of 24 hours in the life of a city. This circuit shows the everyday life of people in various stages of development and their biological rhythms adapted to (or in conflict with) the social rhythm. The exhibition features an exhibition design on a nearly life-size scale. Visitors will stroll through the city as though they were actually in it, observing the characters in a manner that will lead them to recognize themselves in some of the situations depicted. The reception study was based on a reduced scale exhibition prototype, observed and commented on by 9th and 10th grade students of the Escola de Aplicação da Universidade de São Paulo (USP). The objectives were: to evaluate the narrative structure of the exhibition arranged in scenes; to discover the students' aesthetic preferences; to discover points of identification with the scenes and characters displayed; and to better understand what interests teenagers (one of our priority target publics) in terms of the exhibition's conceptual development. Fifteen students from the school appeared on the day before the study began. They were invited to stroll through the exhibition circuit and spontaneously express their viewpoints. The data collected revealed a feminine view and an age-related cut-off, some points of identification, and some of the teens' preferences. One instance of identification featured a night watchman, seen by a female student whose father works nights. The girl saw her life and that of her family associated to the scenes in which the characters (the watchman and his family) experience the conflicts of changing schedules. To her, it is very important to show moments in the life of this worker, demonstrating that his life is "backwards... (example, he has lunch later than all the others)". Another identification event occurred with the young characters of the exhibition, adolescents who, like the girls from the school, experience the conflict between biological rhythms and life in society. Faced with the scene in which a mother tries to wake up one of the teenagers, the girls say that the scene "portrays a teenager's daily life quite clearly".

— This scene shows us a lot about students who haven't slept at night, and that there is a teacher explaining something that turns out to be boring.

— We can recognize some of our classmates.

The girls also identified with the scene in which a family is gathered: "We found this scene really cool and creative and we identified with it".

UFRJ, 1997, p.304.

⁷ These three examples are part of the article by Marília Xavier Cury, *Museus em transição*, in: *Museus: o que são, para que servem?* Brodowski, ACAM Portinari, SEC, 2011.

However, the girls voiced their opposition to certain prototypes such as the character doing morning exercises – a blonde wearing tight clothes that showed off her shape. They ask “Why do women have to be blonde, have big boobs, and rounded butts? Large women exercise too”. But they admit to another stereotype, women and the color pink: “Why is the girl’s sheet the same as the boy’s? It should be pink!”, and “She [the girl in the scene] should be [dressed] in pink”. But we must consider that the taste for pink is common among many girls in the age bracket we are dealing with. What may have constituted a ‘stereotype’ for women of past generations who took part in the transformation of women’s role in society is not the case for youths who live in other times and are free to choose whatever color they like.

Very aware of details, the girls taking part in the reception research made lots of suggestions for the exhibition, above all regarding the decorative elements (table cloths and flowers for the restaurant scene, bedroom furniture, etc.) and fashion (hairstyles and styling, clothing for several different characters in various age brackets). They also suggested that we insert more exhibition design elements to improve the composition of various scenes, and use sound in diverse situations as elements of the favorable environment within the reach of the exhibition objectives and as a form of achieving a certain degree of realism.

Another stage of the reception study with the “One Day in Life” exhibition prototype will be held with boys so that, by placing the boys’ data alongside that of the girls, the results can provide meaningful elements for the displaying the exhibits. However, we must point out that the girls’ participation was spontaneous and voluntary, as was the absence of the boys.

The second case we present is the long duration exhibition “*Ouroeste – 9 Mil Anos de História*” (Ouroeste – 9 Thousand Years of History).⁸ In this case, two integrated reception studies were developed with students from Escola Estadual Sansara Singh Filho,⁹ one prior to conception of the exhibition and the other after its opening to the public.¹⁰ In the reception study of a conceptual nature, methodologically sustained by the preliminary assessment,¹¹ we noticed two points that we wish to highlight. The first is the students’ lack of territorial bonds with the City of Ouroeste, State of São Paulo, since the great majority of them came from other cities. In other words, they settled in the region just like the four pre-colonial groups that archeological research uncovered in the region. The second point refers to the students’ suggestions regarding the exhibition. They would like to see how the Indians lived. This request was fulfilled by exploring the formation of a territorial memory, or by describing the daily routine of the various pre-colonial groups. Another methodological approach was summative and revealed the preference of the young visiting public present at the exhibition and mainly, one side of youth manifested in a museum of archeology, which makes us think about the reach of communicational work in this type of museum. These are topics that arouse sensitivity and reflection among youths: the sense of death, social organization, family life, subsistence and eating habits. We saw clearly that ‘*aborrecente*’ [a pejorative term for adolescent meaning bothersome] is an invention that denotes prejudice on the part of our society, a reflection of its incapacity to see the moment that our youth and teenagers are experiencing as a phase of development, a concept that our museums must reject.

⁸ Museu Água Vermelha, municipality of Ouroeste, São Paulo. A regional archeological museum inaugurated in 2003 under the coordination of Marília Xavier Cury, Paulo de Blasis, and Erika M. Robrahn-González.

⁹ The studies are part of Marília Xavier Cury, *Comunicação museológica*. A theoretic and methodological view of reception, 2005. Dissertation (Doctorate in Communication Sciences) – Escola de Comunicações e Artes, São Paulo, with supervision by Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes.

¹⁰ The intention with these studies was not to compare ‘before and after’ data as though a ‘transformation’ of the public would occur after visiting the museum. There are changes that we prefer to treat as social impacts of the museum experience, a broader range than ‘before *versus* after’ methodologies can achieve.

¹¹ About reception (in the form of assessment) see CURY, 2008, cap. 4.

The third case that we present is that of the temporary exhibition “*Beleza e Saber – Plumária Indígena*” (Beauty and Knowledge – Indigenous Featherwork).¹² As the title suggests, the exhibition deals with the production of featherwork among the indigenous groups in Brazil represented in the MAE-USP collection. The reception study was based on comments written in a guestbook placed at the entrance to the exhibition during the period of October 2 to November 29, 2009.¹³ In this particular case, the data made the analysis possible. Thanks to a set of factors, we were able to categorize the data foster discussion. In general, the research showed the lack of knowledge Brazilians still have about the indigenous history in our territory, a fact that the visitors themselves pointed out. This came as no surprise to us, but it did make us think. However, among many other aspects, the research revealed, at the same time both appreciation (a positive side), prejudice (the negative side), and romanticism (idealism), all of which Indians in Brazil are subject to. The public, for example, felt proud to be Brazilian – because the Indians in Brazil produce artifacts aesthetically elaborate and beautiful. On the other hand, many see Indians as the ancestors of all Brazilians. For that reason, many see them as the true Brazilians. As to prejudice, the Indians are seen as still in the past, or a part of it, static cultures, and consequently backward in some ways. In addition, the visiting public has a romanticized vision of the indigenous people as those who know how to live in communion with nature, confusing them with it. So, what did the visitors to this exhibition tell us? Certainly a great many things. Visitors seek beauty and a perfection that may not even exist. They have not yet resolved the dilemma of diversity, and above all, of the role the ‘different’ play in the globalization process. The public also seeks (hyper)positive references for what they consider “pride in being Brazilian”. They seek Brazilian references they can identify with, such as Ayrton Senna or Pelé, i.e., they have identification issues that sports alone do not resolve. They seek references and were looking for them in the museum. Let us suppose that well-planned museological experiments may offer visitors what they are looking for but perhaps not in the manner they had expected. The museum will therefore be a positive surprise.

The experiment with the cooperative method we wish to present took place at Museu Histórico e Pedagógico Índia Vanuïre¹⁴ located in the City of Tupã, in western São Paulo state. This region, inhabited by indigenous people, among them the Kaingang, was colonized in the early 20th century. The colonization process resulted in a major loss of lives among the Kaingang and grouping of the remainder on reservations. The West was the social and cultural territory of the Kaingang tribe.

Between 2008 and 2009, the Museu Histórico e Pedagógico Índia Vanuïre underwent various types of renovations and updating.¹⁵ One of these was the conception of a long-term exhibition covering both theme of the museum’s collection: local history and indigenous ethnography. It was proposed at that time to ask the Kaingang to take part, thus incorporating a broader and more critical view of the Kaingangs’ current situation, and what the Kaingang represent in cultural terms. Museu Índia Vanuïre and others, such as the Museu Histórico e Arqueológico de Lins¹⁶, are beginning to question the older partnership policies, as well as reviewing their integration and their role in the region by bringing up topics for critical reflection. Our interest thus lies in shedding light on the cultural, museological, and educational issues – issues that involve the rights of

¹² Project of Museu de Arqueologia e Etnologia (MAE-USP), sponsored by CAIXA Cultural. Coordinated by Marília Xavier Cury and Carla Gibertoni Carneiro, with ethnological curatorship by Sonia Ferraro Dorta.

¹³ A preliminary analysis of the data generated the article by Marília Xavier Cury and Carla Gibertoni Carneiro. All things indian – Reception of the exhibition Beauty and Knowledge – Indigenous Featherwork. *Icom Education*, n. 21, p 66-73, [2011].

¹⁴ This experience as presented herein is part of a more detailed article in CECA Proceedings 2011, about to be published.

¹⁵ Promoted and carried out by the São Paulo State Secretariat of Culture and ACAM Portinari – Associação Cultural de Amigos do Museu Casa de Portinari.

¹⁶ Special reference goes to the actions engendered by Louise Alfonso and Márcia Lika Hattori with diverse groups, including the Kaingang.

the indigenous people that remain – and to propose means and venues for this segment of Brazilian society's effective and creative participation. Our main concern is the responsibility that museums should take in regard to heritage, musealization, and the construction of identities and memories.

The long-term exhibition was called "Tupã Plural". Its first module deals with the former indigenous territory and the colonization process, highlighting the conflict between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. Based on this introduction, it addresses the birth and growth of the municipality of Tupã. In the second module, we reserved a special space for the Aldeia Indígena Vanuíre and the Kaingang. The third module addresses Indians in Brazil, and the fourth and fifth modules comprise samples of the ethnographic collections of the various indigenous peoples. The Kaingang have two exhibition areas in the first and second modules – firstly, because they already occupied the territory and fought to keep it. Relegated to reservations, they lost their cultural and social support territory. Thus, before Tupã there were the Kaingang. The second module gave voice to the Kaingang themselves so that they could express their feelings and anxieties, recall the narratives of the elders, remember their ancestors, think about what took place in the past, etc. The Kaingang are therefore not something of the past; they live in the present, they stood up to history. The Indians are usually the first to be presented in exhibitions because they were Brazil's first inhabitants. The problem is that by doing so, we force association of Indians with the past – the result of a process of cultural resistance.

The whole process is educational in itself, for the Kaingang and for us, museum professionals. No initial plan was established. We knew that we were going to conceive and assemble a joint exhibition, but did not know what the process or the exhibition would be like. At each meeting – several over a period of ten months – ideas began to get clearer for all of us. One of the first decisions referred to objectives, i.e., what we wished to achieve with the exhibition. On one hand, the object was to prioritize Kaingang children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. The exhibition would aim to enhance their self-assertion, pride, and self-esteem. On the other hand, it should favor a dialectic relationship with the surrounding society – a society that lacks information regarding colonization of the region, Brazilian indigenous cultures in general, and the Kaingang culture in particular; these are two distinct objectives, both difficult, but for different reasons. It would be up to the Kaingang to rediscover and even reinvent themselves, because the past never returns and no culture is static. The surrounding society would have to peel away successive layers of attitudes incorporated over centuries, cultures resulting from a view – negative, demeaning, and prejudiced – built up as a strategy aimed to exclude indigenous contributions. Dismantling such structures and proposing others to include elements that make up Brazilian culture (Amerindian, European, and African) is one of the major challenges for ethnographic museums in Brazil, and perhaps one of its main responsibilities. Our view is that to start with, we must eliminate that imagery in ourselves – not an easy, uncomplicated, or quick process.

Regarding work methodology, we take into account three exhibition methods: autocratic, team, and cooperative. In short, the autocratic centers on the curator. This involves several professionals, but like in relay races, actions depend on "passing the baton" or, in other words, delegating. In the team method, decision making, covers various perspectives: museology, education, architecture and design, research, etc. The cooperative method features the same qualities as the team process, but incorporates representatives of the culture, from the exhibition's object of interest to the conception process. The narrative thus switches from the third person – he/they – to the first person – I/we. The museum does not delegate its responsibility, but brings other elements and characteristics to the process, which, due to their quality, enhance the institution's value.

We thus made all the decisions collectively. The Kaingangs' anxieties were fully respected. They set the "tone" of the exhibition's narrative as well as for the video that we especially prepared for the situation. We elected those who would speak and the focus of the testimonials. Recording and editing were carried out by a competent and sensitive team.¹⁷ We selected objects from the museum's collection and contemporary artifacts were produced separately. We point out that mediation played a major role and it is our opinion that the actions of the museologists, educators, cultural producers and other professionals¹⁸ could take place in this context because it was their job to manage other contracted professionals, acquainting them with and engaging them in the project. It was also up to them to realize the exhibition, i.e., it was their responsibility to fulfill the expectations of the Kaingang as well as our own – without doubt, a great responsibility.

It is very important to note that our views, the views of everybody, are transformed in the course of the work and the process tends to seem richer than the exhibition itself. Actually, that is not the case since the exhibition is there, fulfilling its educational role, that of a promoter of change. The exhibition is there for all of us, enabling us to become acquainted with and come face to face with another culture that was always very close, and yet always distant.

3. Final Comments

The examples presented here serve for thoughts on empowerment. They are not conclusive, merely motivating, and are only a very small part of the picture.

Some Brazilian experiences can still be highlighted, among many others, as promoters of the museum's political role and of the leading role of its agents – professionals and visiting public.

At the Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo we have three outstanding examples.¹⁹ One of these is the Sociocultural Inclusion Program (*Programa de Inclusão Sociocultural*).²⁰ The object of that program is to enable socially vulnerable groups by providing them with access to certain cultural institutions. The program's aim is to intervene in the everyday life of these groups, broadening their repertoire and helping to develop their feelings of cultural belonging through art. Another example is the Educational Program for Special Publics,²¹ which enables people with special needs – sensorial, physical, or mental – to gain access to art by means of sensorial stimulation in a playful manner. The project entitled Functional Conscience²² promotes dialogue among museum staff members, developing perception of the different professional activities, the purposes of museums in general, and art museums in particular. The program features exchanging knowledge gleaned from their life experience, their experience with art, and with the institution where they work.

In the Museu do Futebol (Soccer Museum) we highlight the Deficiente Residente (Handicapped Resident)²³ project. This is a pioneer project that places a person with special needs in the museum routine, changing that routine by humanizing it, and changing the residents by contributing to the development of their self-esteem.

¹⁷ Our thanks to Angélica Fabbri and Luiz Antônio Bergamo, the team of *Estúdio Preto e Branco*.

¹⁸ Marília Xavier Cury, Joana Ortiz, Tamimi David Rayes Borsatto, Marcelo Souza Damasseno, Valquiria Cristina Martins, Maria Odete Correa Vieira Roza, Raquel Maria F. Miguel S.de Luna, Lamara David Ruiz Estevam, Gessiara Castiglione Biazom, Pamela Adami de Souza Bonetti, Viviani Micheli Gonela Bononi, Anderson Cristiano de Souza.

¹⁹ See www.pinacoteca.org.br.

²⁰ Director: Gabriela Aidar.

²¹ Director: Amanda Tojal.

²² Director: Maria Stella da Silva.

²³ Director: Ialê Pereira Cardoso Brandão. See www.museudofutebol.org.br.

Some examples and highlights serve to demonstrate that a lot is being done, and that there is still much more to do. Empowerment in museums is a complex topic and we hope to have collaborated in discussion on the topic.

Museums are places of power, and therefore, of empowerment. We must understand these institutions in their critical role and in the critical positioning of their lead actors. Any approach that veils this criticality and the possibilities that museums have to offer – such as controversy, transgression, clarifying of the power game that is present in society, etc. – limits the political potential of musealized objects. There is no such thing as an apolitical museum because museum assets are never apolitical. There are always intentions behind processes of asset collection and musealization and these must be made explicit. To claim neutrality is to hide the extent to which the museum is political. Who does that benefit?

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INCLUSIVENESS, RELEVANCY & ENGAGEMENT: EMPOWERING LEISURE AT THE MUSEUM OF NEW ZEALAND TE PAPA TONGAREWA

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ABSTRACT

The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa strives to be 'Our Place' – a place to stand for all New Zealanders. Opened in 1998, and incorporating many facets of new museology, its success in attracting a larger and more diverse audience than its predecessor by being inclusive, relevant and appealing, has been met by some criticism that this devalues what it has to offer. This paper examines existing evidence to consider the extent to which Te Papa is empowering visitors through providing a range of leisure experiences, and through its collaborative exhibition programmes. Theories of leisure are used to analyse the ways in which museums can offer both playful and reflective leisure, which are complementary and mutually reinforcing in their potential to enrich and enable audiences.

RÉSUMÉ

Inclusion, pertinence et engagement : responsabilisation par le loisir au musée néozélandais de Te Papa Tongarewa

Le Musée « Te Papa Tongarewa » s'efforce d'être « notre place » - un lieu pour répondre à tous les Néo-Zélandais. Inauguré en 1998, ce musée incorpore de nombreuses facettes de la nouvelle muséologie. Malgré son succès pour attirer un public plus large et plus diversifié que son prédécesseur en raison de son caractère très inclusif et attractif, le musée national de la Nouvelle-Zélande n'a pas échappé à certaines critiques. Cet article examine la manière par laquelle Te Papa a renforcé au cours des années l'autonomisation des visites en offrant au public un éventail d'expériences de loisirs et de programmes d'exposition en partenariat avec des communautés ethniques minoritaires (communautés Maori, indienne, etc). Dans ce travail, les théories de loisir sont utilisées pour analyser les méthodes par lesquelles les musées peuvent proposer des visites à la fois ludiques et réflexives, permettant ainsi d'enrichir l'expérience du public.

RESUMEN

El museo de Nueva Zelanda « Te Papa Tongarewa » se esfuerza por ser « nuestro lugar », un lugar para responder a todos los neozelandeses. Inaugurado en 1998, este museo incorpora numerosas facetas de la nueva museología. A pesar de su éxito para atraer a un público más amplio y diversificado que su predecesor, en razón de su carácter muy inclusivo y atractivo, el Museo Nacional de Nueva Zelanda no ha escapado a ciertas críticas. Este artículo examina la manera por la cual Te Papa ha reforzado, en el curso de los años, la autonomía de las visitas ofreciendo al público un abanico de experiencias con entretenimientos para el tiempo libre y de programas de exposición asociados con comunidades étnicas minoritarias (comunidades maorí, india, etc.). En este trabajo, las teorías sobre el tiempo libre son utilizadas para analizar los métodos por los cuales los museos pueden

proponer visitas lúdicas y reflexivas a la vez que permiten enriquecer la experiencia del público.

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Introduction

The new museology and its 'turn to the visitor' has brought about a significant shift in the balance of power between museums and their audiences.¹ Calls for museums to be more democratic, give voice to minority groups and even be agents of social change have accompanied increasing pressure to attract more visitors in order to demonstrate relevance, generate revenue and justify public funding.² Repositioned as part of the leisure and tourism industry, museums must compete with an ever-increasing and tantalising array of activities that one can do in one's often scarce and highly-valued leisure time.³ In this sense, visitors have power. They decide whether or not to visit a museum. They decide how long they will stay and how often they will come. They advise others whether or not a museum visit is worthwhile.

Museums acknowledge this power by re-evaluating what they offer to visitors in order to develop and maintain a committed audience base. Visitor research is a key tool in this process, illuminating the myriad reasons people do visit museums and, perhaps more importantly, why others do not: typically because they do not perceive of museums as being the kinds of places that meet their leisure needs.⁴ In efforts to address these perceptions, 'new' museums focus on being 'relevant and appealing' and providing visitors with an 'experience', greater interactivity and multimedia for display and interpretation.⁵ More sociable and participatory experiences include public programs, special events and 'designed experiences' aimed at specific audiences.⁶ Movies, shops and cafes provide visitors with the opportunity to combine a museum visit with other types of leisure activities. At the same time, new theories of audience engagement that recognise visitors as not just passive learners, but as active interpreters with the power to negotiate, construct and perform their own meanings within museums, have led to greater consideration of how exhibitions can empower visitors by helping to facilitate these processes.⁷ Meanwhile, behind the scenes, 'new' museums are collaborating with the communities they are charged to represent in order to be more inclusive and connect with previously under-represented groups.

Museums that have embraced the call to broaden their audience base – and generate revenue – often face criticism both internally and externally that their traditional functions as educators, custodians and scholars are being compromised in the interests of tourism and entertainment. They have been likened to 'temples of cultural

¹ E Hooper-Greenhill, "Studying Visitors," in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. Sharon Macdonald (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006).

² Awoniyi Stephen, "The Contemporary Museum and Leisure: Recreation as a Museum Function," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 19, no. 3 (2001); Julia D Harrison, "Ideas of Museums in the 1990s," in *Heritage, Museums and Galleries; an Introductory Reader*, ed. Gerard Corsane (London; New York: Routledge, 2005).

³ R. Lynch et al., eds., *Leisure and Change: Implications for Museums in the 21st Century* (Sydney: University of Technology and Powerhouse Museum, 2000).

⁴ M Hood, "After 70 Years of Audience Research, What Have We Learned? Who Comes to Museums, Who Does Not, and Why?," *Visitor Studies* 5(1993); Lynch et al., eds., *Leisure and Change: Implications for Museums in the 21st Century*.

⁵ Kylie Message, "The New Museum," *Theory, Culture & Society* 23, no. 2-3 (2006).

⁶ Neil Kotler, "New Ways of Experiencing Culture: The Role of Museums and Marketing Implications," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 19, no. 4 (2001): 421.

⁷ L. Silverman, "Visitor Meaning-Making in Museums for a New Age," *Curator* 38, no. 3 (1995); Ann Baillie, "Empowering the Visitor: The Family Experience of Museums - a Pilot Study of Ten Family Group Visits to the Queensland Museum," in *Museums Australia Conference: Power and empowerment - preparing for the new millennium* (Sydney 1996).

consumption' or cultural supermarkets and accused of becoming 'less concerned with the power of objects and more with image and customer satisfaction'.⁸ There is concern that an emphasis on pleasure, retailing and catering diverts resources from education and the needs of local communities, and by relying on novelty and spectacle, they will fail to sustain and engage their audiences in the long-term.⁹

Nonetheless, inclusiveness, relevancy and engagement are well established ways in which museums endeavour to empower their visitors, in the sense of sharing authority and giving them a voice. Another sense of empowerment is the giving of qualities or abilities. This is empowerment in terms of what museums can enable visitors to do: the gifting of something that lasts beyond the temporality of a museum visit and endures in a way that enriches someone's life. This paper explores these different types of visitor empowerment through a case study of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa). First, it draws on visitor research to examine the extent of its success in being a 'democratic' museum, and the different leisure functions it provides for various audiences.

Second, I explore evidence of the extent to which Te Papa is connecting with and empowering their audiences through collaborative exhibitions. This discussion draws on research that provides a range of perspectives on the empowering dimensions of these exhibitions for community collaborators and visitors. These examples reveal some of the museum's successes and challenges in enabling its audience through inclusiveness, relevancy and engagement.

I conclude with some thoughts about different types of leisure, as a means of moving beyond the education versus entertainment debate when thinking about the variety of empowering experiences that visitors can have within museums. Leisure is often considered synonymous with pleasure and associated with trivial and superficial experience: that is, at the opposite end of the spectrum from the learning that museums aspire to promote. However, philosophical and sociological perspectives focus on leisure in terms of its enabling potential. These perspectives are useful for recognising that museums can empower their visitors by meeting a range of different leisure needs, which are complementary rather than compromising to its central mission. By embracing notions of reflective and playful leisure, museums can position themselves within the leisure and tourism sector, without feeling that by doing so they are joining the ranks of theme parks, shopping malls or multiplexes.

Case study of a 'new' museum: the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

In the 1980s, with visitation to the existing museum in decline, there was interest from politicians in New Zealand to establish a new national museum in Wellington, the capital city. During the planning stages for the new museum in the early 1990s, international research led to the decision to focus the museum on national identity and being 'enthraling, inspirational, affective in its teaching, educational and entertaining'.¹⁰ Four key principles were decided upon; in addition to being bicultural and focusing on

⁸ Volker Kirchberg, "Cultural Consumption Analysis: Beyond Structure and Agency," *Cultural Sociology* 1, no. 1 (2007); Irina van Aalst and Inez Boogaarts, "From Museum to Mass Entertainment: The Evolution of the Role of Museums in Cities," *European Urban and Regional Studies* 9, no. 3 (2002). Malcolm Foley and Gayle MacPherson, "Museums as Leisure," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 6, no. 2 (2000): 167.

⁹ Gayle MacPherson, "Public Memories and Private Tastes: The Shifting Definitions of Museums and Their Visitors in the UK," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 21, no. 1 (2006). James M Bradburne, "A New Strategic Approach to the Museum and Its Relationship to Society," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 19, no. 1 (2001).

¹⁰ William J Tramosch, "Te Papa: Reinventing the Museum," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 17, no. 4 (1998): 341.

scholarship, Te Papa was to be 'customer-focused' and 'commercially positive' with the implication that it would need to generate 25 percent of its annual operating costs.

Proposed revenue-generators included tours and audio-guides, gift shops, cafes, a restaurant, and conference facilities. The new museum, opened in 1998 in its new waterfront location, is seen as having been central to Wellington's revitalisation and 're-imagining' as an attractive place to visit and live.¹¹

Te Papa is mandated to be a forum for all New Zealanders to tell their stories. It was conceived of as 'a place to stand for all New Zealanders', and is marketed as 'Our Place'.¹² As part of this, it is tasked with enabling communities to contribute to the museum and to 'have regard to the ethnic and cultural diversity of the people of New Zealand'.¹³ It also strives to be a bicultural organisation that recognises, through its policies and practices, the principle of partnership with Māori, the indigenous people of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

As a national museum, Te Papa is tasked with attracting a certain number of visitors and with ensuring that its domestic audience 'broadly' reflects the demographic profile of New Zealand's adult population in terms of age, ethnicity and gender. It is recognised as a museum offering 'multi-voiced conflicting authorship' and providing a wide variety of visitor experience, from the participatory and interactive, to the more traditional and contemplative.¹⁴ Counter-balancing its success, have been critiques that it has sacrificed 'dignity' and 'authority' for popular appeal, and that it is more of theme-park or shopping mall than museum.

Audience diversity and commitment

Te Papa has been a resounding success in terms of overall visitation, being considered the most visited museum or cultural institution in Australasia.¹⁵ In its first financial year visitation was 1.6 million, and in the years following there has been an average of around 1.4 million visits annually. Te Papa attracts far greater numbers of visitors than the 'old' museum, where visitation averaged around 250,000 in the three years before it closed.¹⁶

Research on visitation patterns and reasons for visiting reveals the varying roles Te Papa plays for different visitor groups as a tourist attraction, a venue for social experiences and as a place to see one-off special events. For domestic and international tourists the museum is an important part of a holiday itinerary – one of the 'things to do' on a visit to Wellington. An important factor for overseas visitors, whose numbers have grown significantly over the past decade, is that it has a strong reputation and it is a place to learn about New Zealand. Reputation and curiosity are also important to first time domestic tourists, but for repeat visits from out-of-towners,

¹¹ Lorna Kaino, "What Different Does a Museum Make? Te Papa's Contribution to the New Zealand Economy," *Media International Australia, Incorporating Culture & Policy*, no. 117 (2005), <http://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=012863417972313;res=IELHSS>; Tara Brabazon, "Brand Wellington: When City Imaging Is Glam'ed: A Personal View," *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 5, no. 4 (2009); Simon Carey, Lee Davidson, and Mondher Sahli, "Capital City Museums and Tourism Flows: An Empirical Study of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa," *International Journal of Tourism Research* (2012).

¹² Jock Phillips, "Our History, Our Selves," *New Zealand Journal of History* 30, no. 2 (1996).

¹³ Stephanie Gibson, "Te Papa and New Zealand's Indian Communities - a Case Study About Exhibition Development," *Tuhinga: Records of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa* 14(2003).

¹⁴ Jennifer Harris, "Dialogism: The Ideal and Reality for Museum Visitors," in *The Dialogical Museum and the Visitor Experience*, ed. André Desvallées and Suzanne Nash, *Iofcom Study Series - Iss 40* (Taipei, Taiwan: International Council of Museums, UNESCO, Paris, 2011), 89.

¹⁵ Council of Australasian Museum Directors, "Annual Camd Survey Results 2007-2008," (2009).

¹⁶ Lee Davidson and Pamela Sibley, "Audiences at the 'New' Museum: Visitor Commitment, Diversity and Leisure at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa," *Visitor Studies* 14, no. 2 (2011).

the novelty of new and temporary exhibitions – particularly international blockbusters – and the opportunity for a social outing with family and friends provide the incentive to return.¹⁷

Te Papa's local audience are also drawn to visit by temporary exhibitions and changes in long-term exhibition spaces, but they visit for a range of additional leisure experiences, including social outings with family and friends, as well as specific learning opportunities and cultural experiences. One in ten regional visits are motivated primarily by either visiting the shop or eating at the restaurant, while many more combine their sociable outings with the retail and/or hospitality functions of the museum. This supports the notion that the museum is viewed as a place that can offer diverse cultural and leisure services, thereby broadening its relevance and role, particularly for its core local audience, and achieving this intended outcome of the new museology.¹⁸

While Te Papa does not currently collect qualitative information that could illuminate the values that underlie the kinds of social and leisure experiences that prompt visitation, other studies provide potential insights.¹⁹ Whatever the leisure experience sought – sociable, restorative, educational – these are enabling experiences for visitors. People who do not visit museums, according to Hood, place a high value on social interaction, active participation and comfortable and familiar surroundings in their leisure choices – attributes that they do not believe exist in museums.²⁰ The available evidence suggests that Te Papa has successfully overcome these perceptions for many New Zealanders.

While the museum has been largely successful in terms of meeting its targets for representation, for the past three to five years the demographic profile of its visitors has been changing to reflect a more traditional museum audience; that is, female, older and tertiary educated. This has led Te Papa to conclude recently that 'the challenge of relevance, nationally and internationally, remains as important now as it was in its planning period of the 1980 and 1990s'.²¹

Ethnic diversity is a particular challenge for Te Papa and this is likely to continue as the diversity of New Zealand's population is expected to grow over the next 20 years. Māori, who are better represented at Te Papa than other ethnic minorities (10% of visitors compared to 15% in the general population), are travelling from around New Zealand to visit the museum, with a quarter of Māori visitors saying they have travelled to Wellington specifically to visit Te Papa. A small but significant proportion of Māori visitors from outside the surrounding region are very frequent visitors.²² This suggests some success in Te Papa's mission to be a bicultural institution, including the Iwi Exhibition Programme (discussed below).

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Awoniyi Stephen, "The Contemporary Museum and Leisure: Recreation as a Museum Function.," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 19, no. 3 (2001).

¹⁹ Ela Beaumont and Pat Sterry, "A Study of Grandparents and Grandchildren as Visitors to Museums and Art Galleries in the UK," *Museums and Society* 3(2005); Jan Packer, "Beyond Learning: Exploring Visitors' Perceptions of the Value and Benefits of Museum Experiences," *Curator* 51, no. 1 (2008); B Longhurst, G Bagnall, and M Savage, "Audiences, Museums and the English Middle Class," *Museums and Society* 2, no. 2 (2004); Maree Thyne, "The Importance of Values Research for Nonprofit Organisations: The Motivation-Based Values of Museum Visitors," *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* 6, no. 2 (2001).

²⁰ M Hood, "Staying Away: Why People Choose Not to Visit Museums," in *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, ed. Gail Anderson (Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 2004).

²¹ Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, "Statement of Intent 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14," (2011), 24.

²² Davidson and Sibley, "Audiences at the 'New' Museum: Visitor Commitment, Diversity and Leisure at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa."

Although Pacific and Asian New Zealanders also remain under-represented, a positive sign is the relative youth of these visitors, suggesting that the youth audience may be becoming increasingly diverse. The significance of family outings and educational groups as the context of visiting for Māori and Pacific Islanders is also worth noting. One third of both Māori and Pacific Island visitors come as part of a family group, compared to a quarter of visitors overall.²³ This suggests that Te Papa's focus on sociable and participatory visitor experiences is likely to empower these visitors.

Although Europeans are more likely to be repeat visitors than any other ethnicity, for those who have visited previously, frequency is quite consistent across ethnic groups, with some variation by place of origin.²⁴ This is also encouraging in terms of the museum's aspirations to be an inclusive cultural and social space. If Kirchberg is correct, then repeat visits will lock-in a pattern of visiting that will overcome past 'structural' differences and sustain long term participation in the 'museum world'.²⁵

Collaborative exhibitions and visitor empowerment

Collaborative exhibitions are one of the ways by which Te Papa seeks to empower communities that comprise its audiences, and draw in under-represented groups by creating inclusive, relevant and engaging content for visitors. Two examples are the Community Gallery Exhibition *The Mixing Room: Stories from young refugees in New Zealand*, and the Ngāi Tahu Whānui iwi exhibition *Mō Tātou*.

Te Papa's Community Gallery sits within a long-term history exhibition on migration to New Zealand since 1800 (*Passports*) and rotates exhibitions on a different migrant community every two years. These exhibitions are developed collaboratively to provide 'a national platform for communities to tell their own stories and present their treasured objects in partnership with Te Papa' and 'allow for multiple histories and points of view'.²⁶ The Community Gallery is one of the ways in which Te Papa fulfils its corporate principle of meeting 'the needs and expectations of diverse audiences and communities' and functions as 'waharoa – an entryway for explorations of cultural identity'.²⁷ In its original conception this gallery was to be 'a celebration of cultural diversity', allowing different communities to 'actively participate in the telling of their own history' and thereby 'empower these communities by transferring specialist skills and research'.²⁸ Definitions of community at Te Papa have been based largely on ethnicity, with the exhibitions to date exploring Chinese, Dutch, Indian, Italian and Scottish migrant identity. There has been a shift with the current exhibition on refugee youth to a 'community of interest'.

While collaborative community exhibitions are not uncommon, particularly for local and regional museums trying to (re)connect with their audiences, Te Papa faces certain challenges as a large, national institution. The exhibitions are time and resource intensive and therefore, from the perspective of museum staff, the risks can be higher in terms of handing over control to an external group.²⁹ As the museum is ultimately accountable for the exhibition, communities must fit in with the museum's formal processes, including budget and timeframe. A Community Advisory Group (CAG) provides Te Papa with cultural expertise and knowledge, with a focus on content and

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Kirchberg, "Cultural Consumption Analysis: Beyond Structure and Agency."

²⁶ Gibson, "Te Papa and New Zealand's Indian Communities - a Case Study About Exhibition Development," 62.

²⁷ Michael Fitzgerald, "Te Papa's Community Gallery," *New Zealand Journal of History* 43, no. 2 (2009): 199.

²⁸ From the original exhibition Design Document for *Peopling of New Zealand*, quoted in Ibid.: 200.

²⁹ Gibson, "Te Papa and New Zealand's Indian Communities - a Case Study About Exhibition Development."

interpretation, as well as establishing networks and facilitating access to the community for museum staff. In this sense, curatorial staff give up their traditional role as subject expert. The CAG are invited to comment on the main themes and design concept. But while the community involvement is vital, the museum retains 'ultimate authority and responsibility'.³⁰

Museum staff are eager that the exhibitions avoid cultural stereotypes, and that celebratory storylines 'be complemented by coverage of problematic aspects'.³¹ Staff are also keen to see that stories are 'told in people's own voices'. Another key form of visitor empowerment is making the language of text panels as inclusive as possible. In the exhibition *AINAA – Reflections through Indian Weddings*, for example, Te Reo Māori (the indigenous language of New Zealand) was included in the introductory text panels, while all the main labels were in Hindi and English – the national languages of India.³²

For the communities involved there is pride at 'being showcased to a national audience', and members of the CAG consider it 'a privilege and an honour' to be invited to collaborate.³³ Once the exhibition is open, lectures and seminars allow community experts to share their knowledge and viewpoints on relevant issues, while second- and third-generation community members may re-engage with their traditional culture and practice through the exhibition and associated events, such as Diwali celebrations for the Indian exhibition.³⁴

But the process of sharing power and authority has also presented challenges. In earlier collaborations some community members felt there was a disparity in their relationship with the museum staff, who possessed 'inside' knowledge and had the power to make key decisions, while they remained 'outsiders', called upon for advice and comment when needed. Feedback from communities emphasised the importance of timely formal acknowledgement of their voluntary contributions, better communication, more open negotiation of roles and processes, and consultation meetings in the community itself and chaired by community leaders to enhance empowerment. It was also felt that Te Papa has a responsibility 'to provide appropriate tools to community members that will build their confidence and empower them to make positive contributions'.³⁵ Te Papa has endeavoured to act on community feedback where possible to improve its collaborative process.³⁶

Visitation to the community gallery space is high. The Italian exhibition, for example, had around one million visitors.³⁷ History curator Stephanie Gibson writes that:

visitors may find aspects of their identities and histories in Te Papa's community exhibitions, but they will not find everything. The hope is that Te Papa's exhibitions continue to present dynamic representations of identity and are helpful to New Zealanders and other visitors in understanding the complexities of this country.³⁸

³⁰ Ibid.: 66.

³¹ Fitzgerald, "Te Papa's Community Gallery," 203.

³² Gibson, "Te Papa and New Zealand's Indian Communities - a Case Study About Exhibition Development."

³³ Fitzgerald, "Te Papa's Community Gallery," 201. Pushpa Wood, "Community Consultation: Te Papa and New Zealand Indian Communities - the Other Side of the Coin," *Tuhinga: Records of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa* 16(2004).

³⁴ Fitzgerald, "Te Papa's Community Gallery."; Christy Ballard, "The Negotiation of Narratives: A Case Study of the Indian Community Exhibition at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa" (Master of Museum & Heritage Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, 2005).

³⁵ Wood, "Community Consultation: Te Papa and New Zealand Indian Communities - the Other Side of the Coin," 133.

³⁶ Fitzgerald, "Te Papa's Community Gallery."

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Gibson, "Te Papa and New Zealand's Indian Communities - a Case Study About Exhibition

The most recent exhibition in the Community Gallery, *The Mixing Room – Stories from young Refugees in New Zealand*, opened in April 2010 and continues until 2013. *The Mixing Room* was a departure from earlier community exhibitions in that it used a participatory community based arts model, guided by one of the Exhibition Project Goals that 'Nothing about us is without us'. This approach required 'thinking beyond the exhibition walls, and more broadly and expansively about what the product and results of the project will be'. Other exhibition goals were to engage with under-represented audiences (primarily youth, and refugee background youth in particular), build capacity within refugee youth communities, and to promote user generated content in order to 'introduce new voices and stories to the Te Papa experience'.³⁹

The exhibition has no objects. A series of workshops and mentoring in writing, photography, art, performance and video making were held for groups of refugee background youth to 'provide them with skills and materials to empower them to tell their stories their way'.⁴⁰ Content for the exhibition was developed through the workshops and is presented for visitors on computer interactives. An exhibition Blog provides information about the project, updates on refugee background youth in New Zealand, and invites these youth to contribute photographs and blog posts, from a 'scribble of a thought, a carefully considered poem or a quiet reflection'.⁴¹ Photographs can be added to the 'mosaic' which is a six metre high projection within the exhibition 'made up of thousands of photographs taken of and by young refugees that have participated in The Mixing Room project'.

A summative evaluation of *The Mixing Room* was carried out in November 2011. The original intention was to use the same participatory model as the creation of the exhibition, to ensure consistency with the spirit of the original project and to produce evidence of its contribution to the goals of social inclusion, community empowerment and 'inter-community respect'.⁴² This idea was unfortunately abandoned due to the logistical problems and costs of bringing the participants back together. The more conventional evaluation confirmed however that the exhibition was attracting the younger visitor and that it 'had a profound effect on a large number of the visitors who spent time in there; they found the space comfortable and the interactives particularly engaging. As a result the exhibition was responsible for a wide range [of] emotional reactions and changed perspectives'.⁴³

Some visitors found it a playful and interactive space, while others found it intimate, contemplative and reflective, depending on age, who they visited with and the way in which they engaged with the content. Some experienced an emotional engagement with the exhibition content created by the refugee youth. This often provoked them to compare the experiences of others with their own, and to reflect upon issues, as these visitor comments illustrate:

Hold on to your heart. It gives us all a better understanding of the hardships.

It shows we really need to be more welcoming, more patient.

I laughed. I cried. I thought about my sons and how good I have it.

If you're feeling depressed go have a read of that and get some perspective.

Development," 73.

³⁹ Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, "The Mixing Room: 90% Concept Document," (Wellington, NZ: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, no date).

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ <http://sites.tepapa.govt.nz/refugeesblog/>; retrieved 8 May 2012.

⁴² Richard Sandell, "Social Inclusion, the Museum and the Dynamics of Sectoral Change," *Museums and Society* 1, no. 1 (2003). Te Papa Visitor and Market Research Unit, "The Mixing Room Summative Evaluation: Options Paper," (Wellington, NZ: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2011).

⁴³ Lynne Carmichael Allan, "The Mixing Room - Stories from Young Refugees in New Zealand: Summative Evaluation," (Wellington, NZ: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2011), 7.

I felt like doing some volunteering and I want to learn more.

When you live in a country where it's really safe and peaceful you don't really focus on those places in the world where there's wars or people suffering from hunger...so once in a while you need a reminder that there are bad things happening around the world.⁴⁴

A Te Papa 'Host'⁴⁵ observed in a focus group discussion about the exhibition that:

one of the things I've noticed all around the museum, is when visitors can make a personal connection ... they love it ... whether it's because they recognise the name on the quote, or they recognise someone in a photograph ... it really kind of engages them, they really want us to know that they know the people in the photos.⁴⁶

The importance of being able to 'see oneself' in the museum and feel connected with the stories that are told, is particularly pertinent to Te Papa's Iwi Exhibition Programme (IEP). Part of the museum's partnership with Māori, the IEP allows iwi (indigenous tribal groups) from around the country to work collaboratively with staff to present their taonga (Māori cultural treasures) and tell their own stories in a national forum. Each exhibition is on the floor for around two years. Like the Community Gallery, the IEP complements a long-term exhibition, *Mana Whenua*, which tells a pan-tribal story about Māori history and culture. While *Mana Whenua* was created by Māori staff working with Māori communities in a facilitative role, the IEP provides 'a forum for iwi to express their cultural heritage in depth according to their tikanga [customary cultural practice]' and allows the museum to develop strong and enduring relationships with iwi which last beyond the life span of the exhibition'.⁴⁷

Mō Tātou: The Ngāi Tahu Whanui Exhibition (translated as 'for us') ran from July 2006 – August 2009, and told the story of the Ngāi Tahu people of the South Island. Previous iwi exhibitions had celebrated 'traditional rural tribal identity and heritage through customary art objects' in association with a story about contemporary efforts to settled past grievances and obtain compensation from the Crown. By contrast, *Mō Tātou* reflected on the experience of a tribe that had already completed this process and moved on to a new phase of economic and cultural development.⁴⁸ Incorporating the themes of 'tenacity' and 'innovation', the exhibition was 'diverse, contemporary and future-oriented, featuring a range of contemporary art as well as taonga', with 'a more chic and contemporary feel'.⁴⁹

An unprecedented 2000 iwi members attended the dawn opening ceremony for the exhibition. After it closed at Te Papa, *Mō Tātou* toured the South Island, with new local content integrated at each venue, 'further connecting Ngāi Tahu with their taonga and culture'. Record visitor numbers were reported at all museums, with almost 1 million visitors in total.⁵⁰

A survey of Ngāi Tahu iwi members found that 90% visited *Mō Tātou*, and 83% of those returned for further visits. A key motivation to visit was 'to learn and reconnect to their Ngāi Tahutanga [identity]: "I wanted to learn more about my heritage and experience it all" ... "It is part of who I am".' *Mō Tātou* also generated pride, optimism and new cultural aspirations, including learning te reo (language), whakapapa

⁴⁴ Ibid., 31-32.

⁴⁵ Te Papa Hosts circulate throughout the museum providing assistance and interacting with visitors. They are the 'friendly face' of Te Papa and an alternative to traditional museum security.

⁴⁶ Allan, "The Mixing Room - Stories from Young Refugees in New Zealand: Summative Evaluation," 32.

⁴⁷ Conal McCarthy, *Museums and Māori: Heritage Professionals, Indigenous Collections, Current Practice* (Wellington, N.Z.: Te Papa Press, 2011), 136. Ana Sciascia, "Iwi Exhibitions at Te Papa: A Ngāi Tahu Perspective" (Master of Museum & Heritage Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, 2011), 18.

⁴⁸ McCarthy, *Museums and Māori: Heritage Professionals, Indigenous Collections, Current Practice*.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 137-38.

⁵⁰ Sciascia, "Iwi Exhibitions at Te Papa: A Ngāi Tahu Perspective", 25.

(genealogy) and creative projects.⁵¹ The exhibition was particularly important as ‘an open, friendly forum’ for those just beginning to explore their Ngāi Tahu identity. As Puamiria Parata-Goodall, Project Manager for the touring exhibition, explains:

People would ... say “I’ve come because I’m Ngāi Tahu but I don’t know anything about it”, so we would take them around the exhibition. There were those nice connection points because it wasn’t a marae [meeting house] and when you think about it for us that’s often scary ... [they] may not even know which marae is theirs. So the exhibition was a real nice soft entry point for them and they would keep coming back every workshop and even if it was the same workshop as last month, they kept coming back because that was their one connection to their Ngāi Tahutanga. They’d learnt another little piece of information, a piece of the jigsaw.⁵²

Mō Tātou was also an important place for Ngāi Tahu families at the museum as Jane Davis, Chairperson of the Ngāi Tahu Fund, notes:

Seeing our people walking in places like this with their children, it’s wonderful! And appreciating what they are seeing, our children are growing up with this now. I mean I can’t remember being in a museum when I was a child; museums were always dead and dusty places.⁵³

Ngāi Tahu researcher Ana Sciascia interviewed both iwi and museum staff and found that although there were ‘operational challenges’ involved in the exhibition development, the collaboration had been beneficial for both parties and demonstrated that ‘iwi can engage with museums to advance their cultural aspirations and exercise their tino rangatiratanga [self-determination] within a bicultural institution’.⁵⁴ While Te Papa continues to refine the process, Sciascia argues that ‘collaborative exhibitions can play a role in the resurgence of iwi identity and tribal efforts to define their cultural heritage’. She concludes: ‘for my tribe this event was more than simply a museum exhibition but a means of closing a painful period of our past, of bringing the story full circle’.⁵⁵

Conclusion

Certain types of leisure activities and experiences have the potential to enable and empower people in multiple ways. Critiques of much of what passes for leisure in contemporary culture lament that it has been colonised by consumerism and that ‘the play and leisure most modern people experience are trivialised, dehumanising, and unproductive in the rich cultural experience that individuals and societies thrive upon’.⁵⁶ Too much of contemporary leisure is various commercialised antidotes to work, offering short-lived escape or stress relief, and too little is about awe, wonder, rapture and enthusiasm.⁵⁷ As Ramsey puts it, we must ‘reclaim leisure from a world that would eat it up in work, or in trivial and unsatisfying amusements’ and the way in which to do this is to find more playful and reflective leisure.⁵⁸

Playful leisure is about rest, refreshment and recovery, while reflective leisure focuses on meaning, and on realising ourselves and our potential. They are complementary, and ‘hybrid’ museums like Te Papa can offer us both. In sociable, participatory and

⁵¹ Ibid., 36-37.

⁵² Ibid., 60.

⁵³ Ibid., 61.

⁵⁴ Ibid., iii.

⁵⁵ McCarthy, *Museums and Māori: Heritage Professionals, Indigenous Collections, Current Practice*. Sciascia, "Iwi Exhibitions at Te Papa: A Ngāi Tahu Perspective", 69.

⁵⁶ Hayden Ramsey, *Reclaiming Leisure: Art, Sport and Philosophy* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 3.

⁵⁷ Al Gini, *The Importance of Being Lazy* (New York; London: Routledge, 2003).

⁵⁸ Ramsey, *Reclaiming Leisure: Art, Sport and Philosophy*

interactive experiences we find playful leisure, which may be characterised by spontaneity, serendipity, self-expression and group bonding. Activities as diverse as the annual celebration of Matariki (Māori New Year) at Te Papa or the themed rides in the long-term multi-media exhibition *Our Space*, can provide playful leisure.

Reflective leisure can be found in study, creative artistry, contemplation and aesthetic responses (among other things). This may be a visitor feeling pride and excitement at discovering their Ngāi Tahu identity in *Mō Tātou*, or a New Zealand European reading a poem by a refugee youth in *The Mixing Room* and feeling both sad and grateful as they compare their experiences with those expressed in the art work

And as Stebbins argues, despite valid criticism of the bulk of commercialised leisure, consumption and fulfilling leisure experiences can co-exist.⁵⁹ Consumption can both initiate and facilitate a playful or reflective leisure experience, without necessarily degrading or undermining it. Whether its buying a ticket for a blockbuster exhibition, sharing a cup of coffee and talking about New Zealand's refugee quota and resettlement programme after visiting *The Mixing Room*, or buying a book about Māori taonga from the shop after visiting *Mō Tātou*, to take home and further explore your cultural identity.

This paper has provided examples of the ways in which Te Papa is endeavouring to empower its visitors and, using available evidence, to consider the extent of its success in this regard. In doing so, I have argued that the museum's popular appeal does not mean it has compromised its authority but rather, that a broad range of empowering leisure experiences can take place with and within museums. Consumption in museums does not necessarily make them commercialised leisure venues like theme parks or shopping malls, where consumption (and perhaps play) are the primary focus of the experience. Museums are in the position of being able to offer their visitors both playful *and* reflective leisure in complementary and mutually enhancing ways, with the potential to enable, enrich and empower.

This is not to say that challenges do not remain. The museum is currently in the process of developing a new long-term strategy, with the vision of *Changing Hearts, Changing Minds, Changing Lives*, stating that 'We can change hearts through inspiring emotion; we can change minds through sharing knowledge and learning; and through changing hearts and minds we can change lives'.⁶⁰ If Te Papa is to live up to this new vision it must continue to listen to feedback and use visitor research to maintain a dialogue with its audience, particularly under-represented groups, and to learn more about how they can best facilitate experiences that empower them.

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⁵⁹ Robert A Stebbins, "Leisure and Consumption; Not Always the Same," in *What Ever Happened to the Leisure Society?*, ed. S. Redhead Caudwell, A. Tomlinson (Eastbourne, UK: Leisure Studies Association, 2008).

⁶⁰ Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, "Statement of Intent 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14," 14.

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EMPOWERING THE VISITOR: PROCESS AND PROBLEMS

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ABSTRACT

The empowered visitor achieves the experience she wants when going to a museum. She seeks meaning, her meaning, discovered in her own way. What might that experience be and how can it be achieved? Within museums there is a definite shift toward recognition of the importance of the visitor. But this mindset is not always followed by actions. This paper will look at some of the social pressures that are encouraging museums to pay more attention to their visitors' needs and wants and some of the problems behind so doing. Starting with motivations for visiting identified by John Falk, this paper will consider how these motivations might effect visitor empowerment. Next the paper will look at the positives and negatives of market forces. Then it will examine theories and modes of interpretation that influence empowerment and consider reasons for resistance. Finally this paper will explore an exciting and somewhat controversial example of visitor empowerment at the Art Gallery of Ontario.

RÉSUMÉ

Responsabiliser le visiteur : processus et problèmes

La responsabilisation du visiteur parachève l'expérience qu'il souhaitait faire en allant au musée. Il cherchait du sens, son sens, découvrait sa propre voie. Que pourrait être cette expérience et comment pourrait-elle se parachever ? A l'intérieur des musées il y a un changement avéré quant à l'importance reconnue au visiteur. Mais l'intention n'est pas toujours suivie d'actions. Ce texte veut examiner quelques unes des pressions sociales qui encouragent les musées à prêter plus d'attention aux besoins et aux manques de leurs visiteurs, ainsi que quelques problèmes restant à régler. D'abord les motivations à la visite identifiées par John Falk : ce texte veut considérer comment ces motivations pourraient réaliser la responsabilisation du visiteur. Ensuite, le texte veut regarder les forces qui sont exercées positivement et négativement par le marché. Puis il veut examiner les théories et les modes d'interprétation qui influencent la responsabilisation et considère les raisons de la résistance. Finalement ce texte veut explorer un exemple passionnant et quelque peu discutable de la responsabilisation du visiteur à la Galerie d'Art de l'Ontario.

RESUMEN

Empoderar al visitante: proceso y problemas

El visitante empoderado logra la visita que desea cuando va al museo. Busca el significado, su significado, descubierto a su manera. ¿Qué podría ser esa experiencia y cómo podría lograrse? En los museos se viene produciendo un cambio concreto hacia el reconocimiento de la importancia del visitante. Pero esa intención no siempre tiene un correlato en la acción. Este texto examina algunas de las presiones sociales que están alentando a los museos para que presten más atención a las necesidades y deseos de sus visitantes, como también a algunos problemas que esta situación conlleva. Tomando como punto de partida las motivaciones de la visita identificadas por John Falk, este documento toma en consideración cómo esas motivaciones afectan el empoderamiento del visitante. A continuación el texto toma en cuenta las

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Empowering the visitor: process and problems

influencias tanto negativas como positivas que ejerce el mercado. Para entonces examinar las teorías y formas de interpretación que influyen tanto al empoderamiento, como a las razones de la resistencia. Finalmente el texto explora un ejemplo emocionante y de alguna forma controversial de empoderamiento de los visitantes en la Galería de Arte de Ontario.

* * *

Motivation

We in the museum community have spent a considerable amount of effort trying to determine who visits museums, usually so we can try to attract those who do not. The resulting demographic studies have revealed that more women than men attend; more older than younger; more white than blue collar; more white than black. But these traditional predictors have not been very useful. First they are very general: every retired professional woman does not go to museums. Secondly, and more germane to our question of empowerment, these predictors do not explain what people in each demographic category get out of their visit. A few years ago The Nickle Arts Museum tried to find out what visitors want and what they felt they had got. A company that was reputed to be the best in Canada for museum surveys was hired. Unfortunately the person who wrote the survey was unable to compose questions which would adequately capture the complexity of the museum experience. The best she could do was to ask about satisfaction rates, and fell back on demographics. As a result we learnt a certain amount about who came to the museum, but little about why or what they did when they were there.

John Falk, concerned with these why and what questions, has spent a great deal of time studying the motivations of museum visitors. After hundreds of in-depth interviews, he has concluded that the reasons for going are very personal, highly varied and strongly linked to an individual's sense of identity. Furthermore, what is remembered about the visit is directly related to the reasons for going in the first place. The interviews revealed "how deeply personal museum visits are, and how deeply tied to an individual's sense of identity. Also striking is how consistently an individual's post-visit narrative relates to their entering narrative."¹ After much study, Falk has determined that there are seven main reasons, or motivations for visiting museums.²

These seven identity-related categories are:

1. Explorers: Visitors who are curiosity-driven with genetic interest in the content of the museum. They expect to find something that will grab their attention and fuel their learning.
2. Facilitators: Visitors who are socially motivated. Their visit is focused on primarily enabling the experience and learning of others in their accompanying social group.
3. Professional/Hobbyists: Visitors who feel a close tie between the museum content and their professional or hobbyist passions. Their visits are typically motivated by a desire to satisfy a specific content-related objective.

¹ "Reconceptualizing the Museum Visitor Experience: Who visits, why and to what effect?" ICOFOM Keynote speech, November 2011, posted on the ICOFOM website <http://network.icom.museum/icofom/meetings/icofom-annual-meeting-2011.html>, accessed 21 April, 2012, p.5.

² It is interesting to note that Falk has recently modified this number. In his 2006 article "An Identity-Centered Approach to Understanding Museum Learning", *Curator*, Vol. 49, no.2, April 2006, he concluded that there were twenty-five categories, twenty-five ways of segmenting audiences, since many visitors were enacting multiple identities. Of these twenty-five, five he called "main categories and 20 combinations of primary and secondary motivations." p. 156.

4. Experience Seekers: Visitors who are motivated to visit because they perceive the museum as an important destination. Their satisfaction primarily derives from the mere fact of having “been there and done that.”
5. Rechargers: Visitors who are primarily seeking to have a contemplative, spiritual and/or restorative experience. They see the museum as a refuge from the work-a-day world or as a confirmation of their religious beliefs.
6. Respectful Pilgrims: Visitors who go to museums out of a sense of duty or obligation to honor the memory of those represented by an institution/memorial.
7. Affinity Seekers: Visitors motivated to visit because a particular museum or more likely exhibition speaks to their sense of heritage and/or personhood.³

From this we understand that museum goers use their visit to satisfy what Falk calls “identity-related needs.”⁴ Furthermore these different motivation categories can be used to predict how visitors make sense of their visit, how they find meaning, recognizing that different motivations will engender different meaning making. Falk concluded that “individuals within a category behaved and learned in ways that were different from individuals in other categories.”⁵ This segmentation system, unlike the systems based on demographics such as race, age and income, can result in data predictive of the visitor’s museum experience. For example, if you take your children to a museum, you will be more concerned with how the children react to the exhibitions and programs rather than with developing your own knowledge. If you are seeking a restorative or contemplative experience, you will not bring young children with you.

Can this classification system help the visitor determine which museum to visit and what to see in that museum, in other words empower the visitor? Potentially. The problem, however, from the visitor’s side is one of self-knowledge and self-analysis. Can and will visitors precisely determine, in advance, what category they will fit into? When asked why someone visited a museum, the answers are often general and vague: “We wanted to go somewhere fun,” “I like museums,” or “I wanted to see the exhibition.” This problem in mind, Falk acknowledged that responses to “Why are you here?” “simply reflects a visitor’s perspective on why she or he ought to be in a place.”⁶

A further difficulty for visitor self-identification is that visits very often fall into multiple categories rather than just one. If I take my elderly mother to the art gallery, an outing she loves, and, while there, I examine display and lightening techniques, should I consider my identity to be that of a facilitator or a professional/hobbyist? If a veteran goes to an important memorial site with a group, what identity is dominant? This mixing of motives is not rare. The vast majority of the visitors to aquariums and zoos studied by John Falk, 93%, fell into multiple identity categories.⁷ Recently, revisiting the National Palace Museum in Taipei, I initially joined a tour and was conducted through a portion of their incredible collection. But the museum was very crowded, attracting up to 8,000 visitors a day, and I found it hard to see the objects, so I left the tour and went, on my own, to the special exhibition, where I assiduously read the wall panels to learn about the contents. As well I noted the display cases and the labels. Before I left, I poked into the shop. Then I joined friends for lunch in the museum café. Finally, needing some quiet, I wandered around the gardens, admiring the dramatic dragon fountain. Before I left the hotel for the museum, my purposes included seeing more of the collection, lunch with friends and shopping; as the day developed, these motives

³ Falk, “Reconceptualizing the museum visitor experience”, 9-10.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 10

⁵ John Falk, H., Heimlich, J., & Bronnenkant, K. “Using identity-related visit motivations as a tool for understanding adult zoo and aquarium visitor’s meaning making”, *Curator*, Vol. 51, no.1 (2008): 55-80.

⁶ Falk, “An identity-centered approach to museum learning”, 6.

⁷ *Ibid.* See also J. Heimlich, K. Bronnenkant, N. Witgert, and J. H. Falk, *Measuring the Learning Outcomes of Adult Visitors to Zoos and Aquariums: Phase I Study* (Bethesda, MD: American Association of Zoos and Aquariums, 2004).

shifted and expanded. Clearly my full visit fell into multiple categories and changed over the hours I spent there.

The visitor's problems in self-identification of motives are matched by the problems this poses for the museum staff. On the one hand many museums today are shifting their focus away from their collections toward their visitors. They aspire to be more democratic, more inclusive, less elitist and more pluralistic. Museum staff recognize, increasingly, that there is not one, true narrative but many stories, sometimes in conflict with each other. Museums are realizing that they must dismantle the barriers to widespread participation in their activities. They must become more community centered. At the same time, there is resistance to the abandonment of established museum norms and values, for professional and social identities are threatened, as is Bourdieu's "cultural capital."

Market Forces

Market forces are of increasing importance in museum management. These forces include pressures toward accountability, performance indicators, marketing and investment in visitor amenities, such as a shop and café. Over the past few decades many granting bodies, governments and philanthropists have demanded that museums operate more like business, more like the market, and have suggested that market forces should regulate museums. These market forces have not had a wholly deleterious effect on museums, for surely these very forces have helped to move museums to attracting a broader and less elite audience. Chasing money, museums sought to expand and increase their audience. Yet museums belong to civil society not to the market: museums are organizations for social good not for individual profit. Markets work because they stick to the clear financial bottom line. Social transformation, by contrast, is messy, with no clear bottom line, no clear marker of success. Markets exist to satisfy the needs of individual consumers who have the ability to pay; civil society exists to meet needs and rights regardless of people's ability to pay.⁸ Michael Edwards concluded:

...civil society is vital for social transformation, and [this is] why the world needs more civil society influences on business, not the other way around – more cooperation, not competition, more collective action not individualism, and a greater willingness to work together to change the fundamental structures that keep most people poor so that all of us can live more fulfilling lives.⁹

Sadly market forces in many aspects of life seem to be increasing in power and pervasiveness. Michael J. Sandel, a political philosopher at Harvard, recently published *What Markets Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets*¹⁰, in which he argued that market values are playing a greater and greater role in social life, not just in the exchange of material goods alone. Everything is for sale. Sandel, very much in tune with Michael Edwards, riles against this propensity for two reasons: one is about inequality, the other about corruption. In a society where everything is for sale, those with modest means find it harder. Money matters. Then there is the corrosive tendency of markets. Putting a price on good things we value, such as nature or education, can corrupt them. We do not allow citizens to sell their votes, Sandel notes, because "we believe that civic duties are not private property but public responsibilities." Equally we do not sell children.¹¹ The market degrades some of the good things in life if these are turned into commodities. "So to decide where the market belongs, and where it should be kept at a distance, we have to decide how to value the goods in question – health,

⁸ See Ann Davis, "The Market and Civil Society", *ISS 37* (2008): 47-56.

⁹ Michael Edwards, *Just Another Emperor: The Myths and Realities of Philanthrocapitalism*, New York: Demos, 2008: 80-81.

¹⁰ *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2012).

¹¹ "What isn't for sale?" *the Atlantic*, April 2012, 66.

education, family life, nature, art, civic duties, and so on. These are moral and political questions, not merely economic ones.”¹²

This notion that museums have a social rather than an economic value is highly germane to museums and their operation, but is not one much recognized and understood outside the museum community. Rather museums have become enslaved to quantitative measurement – how many visitors entered the museum today¹³ and how much did they spend in the shop – rather than qualitative value – what did each visitor get out of the visit and how can meaning making be improved. But there is some pushback. An article by Wang Jie entitled “Decline of China’s intellectual curators” reprinted in *English.news.cn* from the *Shanghai Daily*,¹⁴ explains that “The drive for profit touches many areas of art, and professional curating is one of them. Quite a few [free lance or independent as opposed to museum] curators are unqualified, uneducated in art and history and all too willing to write glowing paid review” of their artists’ exhibitions. The criticism here is leveled at the greedy, unqualified person being paid to propagate potentially bad art. Half a world away, museum directors recognize that the prevailing language has changed. The visitor is now often seen as a “consumer.” One British museum administrator complained “We need to raise income this yearyour aims and your mission is changing – you’re not there to educate, you’re there to get bums on seats....”¹⁵ Max Ross summed up this societal shift, the market pressure and the visitor as consumer.

[This] clearly relates to the much wider transformations taking place in contemporary society.... As the modern state engages in the process of redefining the public citizen as a consumer, key institutions of civil society including schools, universities and museums, are being forced into new ways of working that facilitate this redefinition.¹⁶

The concept of the visitor as consumer does not bode particularly well for the empowerment of that visitor having a non-consumer identity.

If the market is challenging the power of the visitor to find individual, non-commercial meaning, so too is the power of the museum staff being redefined and reduced. Analyzing the differences between modernism and post modernism, Zygmunt Bauman suggested that a public intellectual has now changed from being a legislator to being an interpreter.¹⁷ According to Bauman, in the eighteenth century, culture in the sense of human knowledge, was made by man rather than a given in the natural order of things. With the Enlightenment, the rational, thinking individual was considered malleable and flexible, an entity whose thoughts and feelings could be recast. Knowledge shaped behavior, and knowledge was provided by legislators, those who knew. In the nineteenth century when official institutions of culture, including schools and museums, were created, the state takes on the role of educator and becomes a legislator of truth, knowledge and morality. To Bauman “The authority involved the right to command the rules the social world was to obey; and it was legitimized by a better judgement, a superior knowledge guaranteed by the proper method of its production.”¹⁸ In the course of the nineteenth century, as the state’s reliance on culture for the reproduction of its

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ This counting is so ubiquitous that *The Art Newspaper* publishes annual attendance figures for hundreds of museums around the world. According to their calculation, in 2011, 8,880,000 visitors went to the Louvre, while 6,004,254 entered the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Martin Knelman, “ROM and AGO below million visitors mark”, *Toronto Star*, 12 April, 2012.

¹⁴ Jie Wang, “Decline of China’s intellectual curators,” 7 April, 2012, *Shanghai Daily*, reprinted in *English.news.cn*.

¹⁵ Quoted in Max Ross, “Interpreting the new museology”, *Museum and Society*, Vol. 2, no. 2 (July 2004): 89.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

¹⁷ Zygmunt Bauman, *Intimations of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1988).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

power is diminished, the role of the intellectual shifts to that of bureaucratic usefulness rather than legislative power. The market now assumes much greater strength as arbiter of culture. Today culture is seen as irreducible. Belief systems, creativity, and forms of knowledge are considered in relative rather than absolute terms. There is no standard or system for differentiating between cultures and ordering them hierarchically. The concept of the superiority of modern reason and the inferiority of non-western thought has been widely abandoned. In this process the role of intellectuals in the postmodern period has been redefined, shifting from legislator to interpreter.

With the increased power of the market rather than the state, Bauman shifted his attention to postmodernity and consumerism, for he contends that, by the latter half of the 20th century, modern society has altered from being a society of producers to one of consumers, in agreement with Edwards and Sandel. Now security had been given up in order to enjoy increased freedom to purchase, to consume and to have fun. Within this consumptive society, uncertainties certainly prevailed and they are diffuse and hard to identify, leading Bauman to call the new postmodern age, the present world, “liquid,” as opposed to the earlier modern age “solid.” Both the liquid consumer world and the shift of intellectuals to interpreter status are important for understanding museums.

The postmodern emphasis on consumerism, on the market, has, on the one hand, encouraged museums to expand and diversify their audience, but, on the other hand, has perforce emphasized the bottom line over visitor experience. In this liquid world, museum staff must be constantly aware of the need to raise funds and to account for them, often in excruciating detail. The emphasis on money making and managing diverts research and time away from the visitor and her experience.

New Interpretation

The shift from legislator to interpreter has had a positive, democratizing effect, evident in the rise of importance of educators vis-à-vis curators, but some problems are visible too. Museums around the world now make some effort, and some museums make a considerable effort, to provide multiple entry points for the visitor, multiple ways to enjoy and learn, through interpretation. New interpretive techniques are exciting. They all, to some extent, take into account that visitor empowerment, the shifting of power from the museum to the visitor, requires increased participation by the visitor.¹⁹ These techniques range from hands-on experiences with artefacts, interaction with objects to determine how they work, the careful reading of pieces as texts, and conversations that bring out different perspectives and meanings.²⁰ Some of these techniques involve the use of technology, smart phones, tablets and the like.²¹ Often emphasized is the importance of stories²², or narrative knowing. For Jerome Seymour Bruner narrative knowing is constructed knowledge that incorporates the unique experiences and perspectives of the person. This is different from paradigmatic knowing that is scientific, logical and objective.²³ Narrative knowing includes storytelling, such as stories about the people involved with the objects displayed, as well as visitors’ relations to the objects. This is a technique often used effectively in war or military museums, where

¹⁹ The classic paper on citizen levels of participation is Sherry R. Arnstein, “A Ladder of Citizen Participation”, *JAIIP*, Vol. 35, no. 4 (July 1969) 216-224.

²⁰ Scott G. Paris, “How Can Museums Attract Visitors in the Twenty-first Century”, in *Museum Philosophy for the Twenty-first Century*, ed. Hugh H. Genoways (Lanham: Allamira Press, 2006), 255-266,.

²¹ Ann Davis, “An iPod Experiment”, *The International Journal of the Inclusive Museum*, Vol. 3, no.2 (2010): 59–64.

²² Elaine Heumann Gurian, “What is the Object of this Exercise? A Meandering Exploration of the Many Meanings of Objects in Museums”, *Daedalus*, Vol. 128, no. 3 (1999): 163–183.

²³ *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1986).

veterans are on hand to tell of their experiences and to elicit comparable accounts from visitors. The emphasis has changed from knowledge transmission to knowledge sharing and making.²⁴

One of the most liberating theories of museums as centres of narrative knowing is that of museum as stage. This concept is beautifully adumbrated by Bruno Brulon Soares in his 2011 ICOFOM paper “Experiencing Dialogue: Behind the Curtains of Museum Performance.”²⁵ Here Soares explores the nature of performance, divided into ritual and theatre, contending that museums, vacillating between ritual and theatre, have never totally abandoned either and never should.

With ritual, museums perpetuate in societies the belief in their undisputed, sacred power, by performing the *museological drama* [sic] in which museums would be eternal temples of the truth. With theatre, on the contrary, they start recognizing their playful, subjective mood, revealing that a single truth does not exist.²⁶

Not all analysts agree with Soares’ accommodation of both ritual and theatre. Carol Duncan features ritual, the obedience to the script²⁷, while Helene Illeris prefers the theatrical, the play²⁸. Illeris explained that ideally the play would be reengineered every time to suit the particular visitor and the specific educator:

In my conception of gallery education as performance the script and the distribution of roles are ideally decided from time to time according to the ‘play’ you want to perform of the ‘game’ you want to play. Instead of talking about the educator or the participant as fixed roles, the encounter is conceptualized as an exchange between relationally constructed ‘positions’.²⁹

This flexibility, this confidence in visitor empowerment is not easy to achieve.

The visitor and the museum staff must be in sync. If we are modifying our systems of interpretation, if we are introducing Illeris’ play, for example, we have to guard against the museum changing faster than the visitor. Falk reminds us that visitor expectation is key to visitor satisfaction: if the visitor wants and expects a quite, respectful atmosphere, with few external distractions, but encounters a boisterous, demanding museum, filled with educators interested in play, that visitor will be disappointed, even if the museum staff are doing a great deal to make the visitors more engaged. Not only the nature of change, but also the rate of change have to be examined and visitors prepared for the new atmosphere.

Not all museum staff are comfortable with these conceptual shifts toward visitor empowerment, the performative nature of interpretation. Perhaps, as John Maynard Keynes said, the difficulty lies, not in the new ideas, but in escaping from the old ones. As Max Ross notes, one important reason for staff resistance to change is their education, the historic subject divisions and classifications that define and defend museum professional and social identities. We have traditionally been bounded by academic subject classifications. These boundaries demarcate the cultural territory of experts, defining what constitutes legitimate specialized knowledge. Do these conventions of classifications and exhibitions help to communicate to the non-specialist visitor? The truth is that often they don’t, but museum staff have been slow to recognize and react to this reality. Not much has changed in terms of museum display.

²⁴ Paris, “How can museums attract visitors”, 260.

²⁵ Bruno Brulon Soares, “Experiencing Dialogue: Behind the Curtains of Museum Performance”, in *The Dialogic Museum and the Visitor Experience*, ISS 40, 2011: 33–42.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

²⁷ Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

²⁸ “Museums and galleries as performative sites for lifelong learning: constructions, deconstructions and reconstructions of audience positions in museum and gallery education”, *Museum and Society*, Vol. 4, no 1, (March 2006): 23.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

While some temporary exhibitions do use a more multi-disciplinary approach, permanent collections often retain subject-specific identities. A public relations professional in a British museum noted:

Frankly I don't think the museum aims to tell any story at all, and the museum is really in itself, an historic document that tells you rather more about the curators who set it up than it does about the region in which it is placed.³⁰

The compartmentalized organization of artefacts and information does not necessarily help the visitor to enter into the story, the purpose of the exhibition. Museum displays too often tend to be “either chronological or hotch-poches, and they're more related to the collection and its display than they are related to actually leading you through a process....”³¹

An intelligent curator in a university art museum talks the talk of visitor empowerment, but, when it comes to facilitating this through exhibition content and design, never fully delivers. Her own education, her work with artists and her academic activities all mitigate against changing how she presents programs. She has two degrees in studio art, teaches in the art department, supervises graduate students and works actively with artists, thus for her the academic divisions and rigour of her discipline are constantly reinforced, superseding those of new museology. Another example of the failure of the multi-disciplinary approach is evident in universities. While universities are preaching inter and multi-disciplinarity, in practice students are often frustrated. Each department demands adherence to its own vocabulary, theories and formats, even if these conflict with those of the adjoining department and therefore leave the poor student attempting a multidisciplinary study confused and struggling. The result is that the student usually withdraws or switches to a non interdisciplinary topic.

Daniel Kahneman, winner of the Nobel prize in economics and author of the fascinating new book *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, has an explanation for this attachment to traditional museology, even by those who might be expected to be open to new museology and to visitor empowerment. Kahneman discusses a two-system approach to judgment and choice. The first is intuitive thinking, often automatic and unconscious; the second is deliberate thinking, conscious reasoning that decides what to think about and what to do. Intuitive thinking is easy and fast; deliberate thinking is slow and requires effort. The intense focusing on task that deliberate thinking demands can effectively make people blind, even to stimuli that normally attract attention. We have all had the experience of driving in heavy traffic, having to concentrate hard on the task, and thus missing the prominent signpost. The effect, Kahneman notes, is that “we can be blind to the obvious, and we are also blind to our blindness.”³² It is doubtful that many museum professionals are intentionally obstructionist. But perhaps some museum staff suffer from the blindness of deliberate thinking: required to perform too many demanding tasks outside their expertise or too many challenging tasks without sufficient time for their proper execution, these people cannot see the value in the empowered visitor.

An example at the Art Gallery of Ontario

The Art Gallery of Ontario is built around a historic house, The Grange. In 2007 The Grange announced that it had received the dairies of one Henry Whyte, who had served as the butler at this important Toronto house from 1818 to 1857.³³ In his 1828 volume Whyte talks of Mary O'Shae, whom he named Amber, a seventeen year old Irish woman who was hired as third maid. He wrote that he witnessed her scraping wax

³⁰ Ross, “Interpreting the new museology”, 96.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2011), 24.

³³ www.haeussler.ca/amber accessed 27 April, 2012.

from candle holders and forming these into small balls. Later he observed her placing these balls in various locations throughout the house, stables and garden. Eventually he made a map of her hiding places. When Archaeological Services Ontario were hired by the gallery to probe these hiding places, a veritable Pandora's box of items was uncovered. As part of the refurbishment and expansion undergoing in 2008 to 2010, the art gallery decided to make these excavations publically accessible for a limited time. Dr. Chantal Lee, the excavation coordinator, worked mainly in the oldest part of the house, the basement, to reconstruct Amber's biography and motives. Further investigation revealed a sealed chamber, a small room that appeared to be a kind of workshop for Amber, a stack of letters that may have been dipped in molten wax, and a bowl containing a slab of wax with what appears to be the imprint of a face. The workshop chamber was not emptied or cleaned up but left as if one was planning to return. Nothing is known of Amber after Whyte's diary ended in 1857. Why Amber crated these wax globules, the workroom and other items is a mystery, as is her biography.

From 2008 to 2010 visitors to The Grange were toured through this archaeological site, shown the workshop chamber, Dr. Lee's tools and office, and even given her calling card in case they wanted to email her with questions. With the tour guides, they speculated about Amber's history, whether, for example, she might have buried a stillborn baby on the property. Visitors in turn told the guides their own stories of immigration, customs and beliefs about death and witchcraft. At the end of the tour, visitors were given a short statement signed by Iris Häussler, which acknowledged that she, Häussler, a Toronto artist, had constructed the details. The project was a work of art, not a real archaeological site. Häussler explained

My work was created to be experienced as historic fact, as a method for a direct and personal involvement of the visitor. It creates an experience that is not filtered by the categories of contemporary art that we would normally apply to such a tour, it provides a participatory sense of discovery. This principle has been called 'haptic conceptual art', a practice that deals with deep questions of the human condition, but initiates them through direct experience, rather than through theoretical discourse.³⁴

The artist goes on to note that "There is a very large difference between thinking about emotions and actually experiencing them."³⁵ Furthermore she comments that there is "no exact substitute for actual presence, involvement, participation. Reality has an edge that imagination lacks. However, finally revealing the fictitious nature of Amber's story - after a time of reflection - is absolutely as much a part of my artwork as constructing the story is in the first place."³⁶ Presence, participation, reflection, are all, of course, central for the engaged visitor. Here then we have narrative knowing, Illeris' play and direct experience rather than theoretical or academically defined presentation.

The curator of the exhibition, David Moss, was equally focused on the visitors' experience.

Through overcoming one's skepticism and participating in the possibilities of the work - engaging the prospect that Amber is a kind of proto-feminist artist operating within the constraints of a historical era - one embarks on a creative path, moving from the realm of the possible into the domain of the real. Creating this new reality is akin to the artist's own process. The potency of the installation is that it allows for visitors to partake in the creative process.³⁷

Moss goes on to quote Hans-Georg Gadamer, in *Truth and Method*, 1960, "The work of art has its true being in the fact that it becomes an experience changing the person

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

experiencing it.”³⁸ Gadamer considers a work of art not to be a fixed object but rather a product that emerges from the process of the visitor engaging in a dialogue with the object. For him this means that to experience art one must be involved. “The key question” in this exhibition for Moss “is not whether her excavation is true or false, rooted in verifiable historical fact or based on fabricated narratives, but is rather to assess the intensity of a resonant art experience.”³⁹

The Art Gallery of Ontario reported that most of the visitors to the exhibition *He Named Her Amber* did have that intense experience. Many suggested their feelings changed. In fact some enjoyed the production, the play so much that they returned more than once. Not all visitors, however, felt that way. A few were so incensed that they had been duped, that they had been led to believe Amber’s story was real, that they cancelled their membership. The tour guides, the actors, were also very involved and clearly appreciated not only Häussler’s haptic purpose in creating the piece, but also her skill in using historical facts to provoke an experience, not something always desired or achieved in contemporary art.⁴⁰

The theory of visitor empowerment is strong. Based on the intense visitor and staff reactions to Häussler’s provocative exhibition *He Named Her Amber*, one can conclude that visitor empowerment is a very powerful and potent force, one that should be fostered whenever possible. The visitor who is personally engaged, who participates actively, who adds to the narrative by contributing her own stories, who enters into the play, who considers new material, becomes, as Gadamer suggests, a creator. This satisfied visitor will come back. But visitor empowerment has to battle a variety of social and educational forces. The centrality of the market system has promoted a search for ways to democratize audiences, but has also had the effect of directing attention away from visitor empowerment. Visitors themselves have not necessarily fully embraced the idea of empowerment, for it often requires both considerable self-knowledge and definite efforts. New interpretive methods favour engaged visitors rather than passive ones. Museum staff have also resisted. The forces that push against change, including tradition, education, and ways of thinking, are considerable.

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³⁸ Quoted on the website without pagination.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

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CONCÉDER AUX GAZELLES LES ATTRIBUTS DU LION : BEAUCOUP DE BRUIT POUR RIEN !

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RÉSUMÉ

L'examen de sept cas de jeux de pouvoir entre le musée et le visiteur, dans le contexte où ce dernier visite une exposition, montre qu'une diminution du pouvoir du musée n'entraîne pas nécessairement une augmentation de pouvoir du visiteur, et qu'une augmentation de pouvoir du musée peut se solder par une augmentation de pouvoir du visiteur.

ABSTRACT

Granting gazelles the lion's attributes ; much ado about nothing!

A study of seven cases of power games between museum and its visitors, in the context of the latter's visit, shows that diminishing the museum power does not entail a gain of power for the visitor, and that an increase of the museum power could even mean an increase of the visitor's power.

RESUMEN

Conceder a las gacelas los atributos del león: ¡Mucho ruido y pocas nueces!

El estudio de siete casos de juegos de poder entre el museo y sus visitantes, en el contexto de una visita de estos últimos a una exposición, muestra que una disminución del poder del museo no implica necesariamente un aumento del poder del visitante, y más aun que un aumento el poder del museo puede significar un aumento del poder del visitante.

* * *

L'expression "empowering visitors" semble apparaître pour la première fois dans les périodiques anglo-saxons de muséologie en 1988.¹ Depuis cette date, on en a fait grand usage. On lui a aussi accordé des sens divers et on a réalisé de multiples tentatives d'intervention dites "d'empowerment". L'examen de ces tentatives suscite deux questions majeures: 1) Quels sont les pouvoirs respectifs du musée et du visiteur? 2) Un gain chez l'un signifie une perte chez l'autre?

J'établirai d'abord la signification de la notion de pouvoir appliquée aux deux acteurs que sont le musée et le visiteur, dans le contexte où le musée accueille un adulte pour une visite d'exposition. Ensuite j'examinerai diverses tentatives "d'empowerment" et les jeux de pouvoir qu'elles suscitent. Enfin je présenterai une série de recherches qui aboutissent à des jeux différents. Il s'agit d'études effectuées par une équipe de l'Université de Montréal.² Les résultats de ces études permettront de reconsidérer le trop fameux transfert de pouvoir du musée vers le visiteur.

¹ Braverman, B. Empowering Visitors: Focus Group Interviews for Art Museums. *Curator*, 1988, vol. 31, no 1, p.43-52.

² Ces études ont reçu l'appui financier du Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada, du Fonds pour la formation de chercheurs et l'aide à la recherche du Gouvernement de la Province de Québec, et le soutien logistique de l'Université de Montréal.

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Quelques Définitions

La situation de visite d'un adulte permet d'identifier non pas un, mais une variété de pouvoirs aussi bien chez l'acteur musée que chez l'acteur visiteur.

Les pouvoirs du musée

Un pouvoir majeur ou primaire: Choisir le contenu de ses expositions. À titre d'institution, c'est-à-dire d'un ensemble de ressources rassemblées par la société pour lui rendre des services et exercer du leadership, il s'agit de l'une des attributions majeures du musée.

Un pouvoir secondaire: Choisir les modalités de diffusion des contenus proposés dans les expositions.

Un pouvoir tertiaire: Influencer le visiteur à travers l'offre qu'on lui fait.

Les pouvoirs du visiteur

Un pouvoir d'action immédiate: Posséder les capacités de traiter l'offre du musée, de la comprendre et de se l'approprier.

Un pouvoir d'action ultérieure: Penser ou agir à la suite d'acquisitions de connaissances ou d'habiletés acquises au cours d'une visite.

Un pouvoir de pression: Influencer sur le fonctionnement du musée.

DIVERSES TENTAVITES "D'EMPOWEREMENT" DU VISITEUR

L'étude des publications en langue française, anglaise, espagnole, italienne et portugaise m'a amenée à catégoriser les tentatives "d'empowerment" selon les cinq cas de figure suivants.

1. Le musée rassemble de l'information qu'il pourra, s'il le juge à propos, utiliser pour modifier le contenu de son offre ou les modalités de présentation de celle-ci. Par exemple, il analyse sa programmation,³ il mène des études sur les caractéristiques socio-culturelles de ses visiteurs,⁴ il crée un lieu où ceux-ci peuvent s'exprimer, faire des suggestions concernant de futures expositions,^{5,6} formuler des critiques soit dans des livres d'or,⁷ soit lors d'évaluations sommatives d'expositions.⁸

Dans ce type de tentative, le musée ne modifie pas son offre et rien ne change pour le visiteur. Toutefois, le musée semble disposé à s'ouvrir à une influence du visiteur (pouvoir de pression de ce dernier). Pour ces raisons, il semble préférable de considérer ces tentatives comme des interventions de "pre-empowerment".

³ Anderson, G. (ed.). *Reinventing the Museum. Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*. New York, NY: Barnes and Nobel, 2004.

* Une référence assortie d'un astérisque signifie qu'elle est donnée à titre exemplaire.

⁴ Pérez Santos, E. y Garcia Blanco, A. *Conociendo a nuestros visitantes. Estudio de publico en museos del Ministerio de Cultura*. Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, Subdirección general de bellas artes y bienes culturales, 2011.

⁵ Daignault, L. *L'évaluation muséale. Savoirs et savoir-faire*. Québec, QC: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2011.

⁶ Simon, N. *The Participatory Museum*. Santa Cruz, CA: Museum 20, 2010.

⁷ Poterie, S., O'Neill, M.C. et Dufresne-Tassé, C. Le livre d'or comme barographe du besoin de s'exprimer des visiteurs. Proposition d'un instrument d'analyse. Dans C. Dufresne-Tassé (ed.), *Familles, écoliers et personnes âgées au musée: Recherches et perspectives / Families, Schoolchildren and Seniors at the Museum : Research and Perspectives / Familias, escolares y personas de edad en el museo: Investigaciones y perspectivas*. Paris: Conseil international des musées, Comité international pour l'éducation et l'action culturelle, 2006, p. 267-278.

⁸ Coelho Studart, D. O Público de Familias em Museus de Ciência. Em M. Marandino, A. Mortara Almeida y M.E. Alvarez Valente (org.), *Museu: lugar do publico*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Fiocruz, 2009, p. 95-121.

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2. Le musée ne modifie pas son offre comme telle. Il lui ajoute plutôt de la médiation⁹ ou de l'interprétation¹⁰ telle que conçue par Tilden¹¹.

Ici, le musée bouge. Il s'occupe du visiteur. Ce dernier l'a influencé, même si ce n'est pas à travers une intervention directe et précise. Toutefois, ni le pouvoir primaire (contenu des expositions), ni le pouvoir secondaire du musée (modalités de présentation des expositions) n'en sont affectés. Mais son pouvoir tertiaire d'influencer le visiteur a augmenté. En effet, en gagnant un accès plus facile au contenu que le musée lui propose, le visiteur a probablement acquis des connaissances dont il n'aurait pas bénéficié autrement. Le visiteur a donc augmenté son pouvoir d'action ultérieure (penser et agir à partir des connaissances acquises) en même temps que le musée a accru son pouvoir tertiaire.

3. Le musée ne modifie pas le contenu de ses expositions, mais il tente d'en adapter les modalités de présentation au type de visiteur qui les parcourra, par exemple en réalisant des études de préfiguration¹² ou des évaluations formatives.¹³

Comme précédemment, le musée a bougé, mais il l'a fait différemment. Il a permis au visiteur d'influer sur sa façon de présenter le contenu de ses expositions et il a ainsi partagé son pouvoir secondaire. Quant au visiteur, il a probablement pu traiter plus facilement l'offre du musée, de sorte que celui-ci l'a probablement influencé davantage à travers le contenu de son exposition (pouvoir tertiaire). Et cette influence s'est vraisemblablement soldée par l'acquisition de connaissances et un plus grand pouvoir d'action ultérieure chez le visiteur.

4. Le musée sollicite la participation du public, par exemple de membres d'une communauté culturelle, à la conception et éventuellement à la réalisation d'une exposition.¹⁴

Ici le musée laisse le visiteur influencer sur le choix du contenu de son exposition. On peut donc dire qu'il partage son pouvoir primaire. En revanche, que gagne le visiteur? Si ceux qui sont intervenus "au nom du public" le représentent vraiment, il gagne une exposition correspondant à ses intérêts et à sa vision du monde du moment. Dans la mesure où ses représentants ont choisi l'ouverture à l'inconnu, le visiteur gagne habituellement beaucoup de connaissances et de pouvoir d'action ultérieure. Mais si ses représentants ont choisi pour thème d'exposition un sujet simplement divertissant ou à la mode, le visiteur ne gagne rien, car il a peu de chances d'acquérir des connaissances nouvelles. En somme, dans ce cas de figure, sous l'influence du visiteur, le musée cède certainement de son pouvoir primaire et probablement de son pouvoir secondaire, sans gagner de pouvoir tertiaire comme dans les cas 2 et 3. Toutefois, ce partage de pouvoir ne s'accompagne pas nécessairement d'un gain de pouvoir chez le visiteur.

⁹ Nardi, E. *Forme e messaggi del museo. / Shapes and Messages of the Museum*. Serie diretta da Benedetto Vertecchi. Milano: Franco Angeli, 2011.

¹⁰ Black, G. *The Engaging Museum. Developing Museums for Visitor Involvement*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2005.

¹¹ Tilden, F. *Interpreting our Heritage*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press (3rd édition), 1977.

¹² Van Praet, M. Une rénovation muséographique à la convergence d'un lieu, de publics et d'idées. La Grande Galerie du Muséum national d'histoire naturelle. *La Lettre de l'OCIM*, 1994, No 33, p. 13-24.

¹³ Castro, A.H., Pérez, L., Rosales, R. y Téllez, O. La investigación-evaluación como herramienta para transformar los museos. Dans C. Dufresne-Tassé (ed.), *Familles, écoliers et personnes âgées au musée: Recherches et perspectives / Families, Schoolchildren and Seniors at the Museum : Research and Perspectives / Familias, escolares y personas de edad en el museo: Investigaciones y perspectivas*. Paris: Conseil international des musées, Comité international pour l'éducation et l'action culturelle, 2006, p. 85-94.

¹⁴ Brady, M.J. *Discourse, Cultural Policy and Other Mechanics of Power: The Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American Indian*. Ph D. Thesis presented at the Pennsylvania State University in 2008.

5. Le musée prenant pour acquis la diversité de ses publics, sans toujours attendre les suggestions ou les critiques de ces derniers, modifie son offre d'expositions,^{15*} l'information qui l'accompagne (accessible avant, pendant ou après la visite) et même ses formules muséographiques.¹⁶

Ce cas de figure est particulièrement complexe. Pour en comprendre les jeux de pouvoir, il faut considérer les préalables aux modifications adoptées par le musée. A-t-il d'abord sollicité l'opinion de visiteurs? S'il ne l'a pas fait, on peut considérer qu'il n'y a pas, comme on l'a vu plus haut un partage, mais bien un abandon de pouvoir; cet abandon pouvant affecter le pouvoir primaire du musée comme son pouvoir secondaire et son pouvoir tertiaire. Qu'il s'agisse du premier ou du second pouvoir, si la diversification de l'offre muséale ne repose pas sur des études préalables, il y peu de chances que le visiteur y trouve un contexte favorisant l'acquisition de connaissances et de pouvoir d'action ultérieur. En somme, le musée abandonne en vain de son pouvoir. Par contre, si le musée diversifie son offre à la suite de consultations, on retrouve en gros les cas de figure 3 ou 4, avec le même résultat pour le visiteur: gain de pouvoir d'action ultérieure seulement quand l'exposition facilite l'acquisition de connaissances.

RÉPARTITION DE POUVOIR ET TYPES "D'EMPOWERMENT"

Les cinq catégories de tentatives précédentes représentent autant de cas de figure "d'empowerment" et de jeux de pouvoir entre le musée et le visiteur. Leur analyse permet de dégager les propositions suivantes:

- 1) Toutes les tentatives répertoriées ne doivent pas être considérées comme de véritables tentatives "d'empowerment". Certaines constituent des préalables à une intervention et pourraient être qualifiées de "pre-empowerment".
- 2) Le musée peut se mettre dans trois positions: ne pas bouger, partager son pouvoir ou l'abandonner.
- 3) Le pouvoir du musée se présente sous trois formes: primaire, secondaire, tertiaire.
- 4) Celui du visiteur peut potentiellement se présenter également sous les trois formes: action immédiate, action ultérieure et pression. Mais dans les tentatives identifiées, il n'a jamais pris la troisième forme.
- 5) Même dans une situation où le pouvoir du musée n'est pas affecté, le visiteur peut en gagner.
- 6) Le partage par le musée de son pouvoir peut susciter ou non un accroissement de pouvoir chez le visiteur.
- 7) L'abandon par le musée de son pouvoir n'entraîne probablement pas l'augmentation du pouvoir du visiteur.

De ces propositions on peut conclure que: a) "L'empowerment" du visiteur peut prendre plusieurs formes qui suscitent des jeux de pouvoir complexes et différents entre le musée et le visiteur; b) "L'empowerment" du visiteur ne signifie pas nécessairement la perte ou l'abandon de pouvoir pour le musée; c) Le partage ou la perte de pouvoir par le musée ne se solde pas toujours par "l'empowerment" du visiteur; d) Il en est ainsi parce que les types de pouvoir du musée et du visiteur sont parfois semblables, parfois différents, de sorte qu'un gain du visiteur ne signifie pas

¹⁵ Dufresne-Tassé, C. Ils ne veulent pas choisir. Ils veulent être fascinés. Dans Y. Bergeron, D. Arsenault et V. Ferey (eds), *Le musée, théâtre d'objets? Impacts des nouvelles tendances et responsabilités éthiques* (titre provisoire), À paraître.

¹⁶ Hughes, P. Scénographie d'expositions. Paris: Eyrolles, 2010.

toujours une perte pour le musée. La crainte d'une détérioration des attributions (prérogatives) de l'institution muséale à l'occasion d'un gain de pouvoir du visiteur est donc une crainte en grande partie non fondée au moins dans les cinq situations examinées.

DES JEUX DE POUVOIR DIFFÉRENTS

Deux séries d'études réalisées par l'équipe de l'Université de Montréal^{17 18} ont mis en relief une situation pour le moins troublante. En effet, elles ont montré que dans sept expositions thématiques de grande envergure présentées à Paris et à Québec,

- . Les visiteurs lisent environ 50% des textes qui leur sont offerts, mais le taux de lecture de chaque type de texte (panneaux introductifs, panneaux de section, cartels) varie considérablement d'une exposition à l'autre;
- . Ces visiteurs traitent entre 50% et 80% des objets exposés;
- . Ils abordent ces objets dans un ordre qui, souvent, diffère de l'ordre inscrit dans l'exposition par son concepteur;
- . Ils traitent la plupart de ces objets comme si chacun était sans rapport avec les autres, bien que, dans une exposition thématique, ils soient en principe agencés pour tenir un véritable discours;
- . De toutes les idées qu'ils développent en parcourant l'exposition, de 2% à 5% seulement constituent une synthèse, parfois assortie d'une réflexion, de ce qu'ils ont vu ou lu.

En somme, les visiteurs ne se préoccupent que d'une partie de l'offre du musée. En outre, ils l'atomisent. De plus, ils ne rassemblent guère les fragments qu'ils traitent, de sorte que l'univers sémantique qu'ils élaborent est pour le moins fragmentaire et sans cohérence. Malgré l'engouement actuel des adultes pour l'exposition thématique, il semble donc qu'ils tirent peu de choses de leur visite.

Ces conclusions ont amené mon équipe à développer deux volets de recherche. Comme on va le voir, dans chacun de ces volets, les jeux de pouvoir diffèrent de ceux qui précèdent, car le musée et visiteur y gagnent en même temps du pouvoir. Le premier volet vise l'accroissement des capacités de traitement des expositions par les visiteurs adultes, c'est-à-dire leur pouvoir d'action immédiate. Quant au second, il cherche à perfectionner l'exposition thématique. L'amélioration dont il s'agit ne consiste pas, comme on l'a souvent tenté, à adapter l'exposition aux caractéristiques de tel ou tel public.¹⁹ C'est une amélioration qui rend l'exposition plus performante, c'est-à-dire plus capable de véhiculer le discours du musée.

¹⁷ Marin, D. et Dufresne-Tassé, C. *"Xi'An, capitale éternelle". Traitement des données recueillies en pré- et post-visite.* Rapport de recherche déposé au Musée de la civilisation, 2002.

Marin, D. et Dufresne-Tassé, C. *"Gratia Dei. "Les chemins du Moyen-Âge". Traitement des données recueillies en pré- et post-visite.* Rapport de recherche déposé au Musée de la civilisation, 2003.

Marin, D. et Dufresne-Tassé, C. *"Le temps des Québécois". Traitement des données recueillies en pré- et post-visite.* Rapport de recherche déposé au Musée de la civilisation, 2004.

¹⁸ O'Neill, M.C. *Étude de la réception d'une exposition par ses visiteurs. À propos de l'exposition "Visions du futur: Une histoire des peurs et des espoirs de l'humanité", présentée aux Galeries nationales du Grand Palais.* Rapport de recherche. Paris: École du Louvre, 2001.

O'Neill, M.C. *Étude de la réception d'une exposition par ses visiteurs. À propos de l'exposition "L'or des Rois Scythes", présentée aux Galeries nationales du Grand Palais.* Rapport de recherche. Paris: École du Louvre, 2003.

O'Neill, M.C. *Étude de la réception d'une exposition par ses visiteurs. À propos de l'exposition "Matisse-Picasso", présentée aux Galeries nationales du Grand Palais.* Rapport de recherche. Paris: École du Louvre, 2002.

¹⁹ Holguin, M.C. y Baquero Martin, M.J. Los adolescentes, los museos y la virtualidad. Dentro M.C.

Remarque: Les études de l'équipe de l'Université de Montréal dont il va être question ont été réalisées dans des expositions thématiques de grande envergure et avec des visiteurs de type "grand public", c'est-à-dire qui fréquentent le musée trois fois par année ou moins.²⁰ Les conclusions qui en découlent ne valent donc que pour ce type d'exposition et ce type de public.

ACCROISSEMENT DU POUVOIR D'ACTION IMMÉDIATE DU VISITEUR

Le pouvoir d'action immédiate, ou pouvoir primaire du visiteur, est sa capacité de donner un sens plus ou moins complexe aux objets qu'il observe et plus généralement à l'ensemble de l'exposition qu'il parcourt. En d'autres termes, c'est sa capacité de traiter l'offre du musée, de la comprendre et de se l'approprier.

Stratégie de recherche

À partir des études dont sont issues les observations décrites plus haut,²¹ nous avons:

1. Identifié les habiletés qui permettraient une amélioration sensible de ce que font et produisent les visiteurs;
2. Conçu une intervention visant à favoriser l'accroissement de ces habiletés et vérifié les résultats.

Les habiletés permettant une amélioration de ce que font et produisent les visiteurs dans une salle d'exposition sont aussi celles qu'un adulte utilise lorsqu'il est sur le point de faire une acquisition nécessitant un choix réfléchi, comme lorsqu'il va acquérir un appartement ou un vêtement à porter dans une circonstance exceptionnelle. Cette particularité signifie que tout adulte possède ces habiletés à un certain degré et qu'il suffit d'en assurer le transfert à la situation muséale.

Les habiletés impliquées sont les suivantes: utiliser son imagination, son sens de l'observation, sa capacité de comparer, ses connaissances formelles et expérientielles;²² exercer son aptitude à donner du sens à un détail, à en rassembler plusieurs, à leur donner une signification, ou encore sa capacité de voir des implications ou des conséquences; traiter les impressions physiques qui naissent au contact de ce qui est près de soi; repérer le plaisir ou l'inconfort, les émotions positives ou négatives à mesure qu'elles apparaissent et s'y arrêter tant qu'elles livrent de l'information, quelle que soit la nature de cette dernière.²³

À trois reprises, nous avons offert à des groupes de 25 à 30 adultes un atelier au cours duquel ils pouvaient pratiquer les habiletés qui viennent d'être mentionnées et en réaliser le transfert à la situation muséale.

Résultats

Les participants au séminaire:

. Traitent avec aisance des objets d'art, d'ethnologie ou de sciences naturelles, mais certains sont encore rebutés par l'art contemporain lorsqu'il s'agit d'œuvres minimalistes, de "ready made" ou d'installations.

. Leur exploration des objets est à la fois plus longue, plus approfondie et plus complexe qu'auparavant. Elle fait appel à l'observation de même qu'à des apports

Holguin, M.J. Baquero Martin y M.A. Botero Salтарén (org.), *Educar: Aprender y compartir en museos*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Teseo, 2010, p. 158-177.

²⁰ Marin et Dufresne-Tassé, 2002, 2003, 2004 et O'Neill, 2001, 2002, 2003 déjà cités.

²¹ Marin et Dufresne-Tassé, 2001, 2002, 2003 et O'Neill, 2001, 2002 et 2003 déjà cités.

²² Les connaissances expérientielles résultent de ce que Claude Lévi-Strauss appelle le "bricolage".

²³ Dufresne-Tassé, C., Lapointe, T. et Lefebvre, H. Étude exploratoire des bénéfices d'une visite au musée. *The Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education*, 1993, vol.VII, p. 1-19.

personnels qui relèvent d'un fonctionnement affectif, imaginaire ou cognitif important et impliquant de nombreuses connaissances expérientielles.

. Leur traitement des objets les amène souvent à troquer le plaisir du contact avec l'objet sublime ou intrigant pour le plaisir fonctionnel issu d'une utilisation réussie d'une série d'habiletés, en d'autres mots, d'une utilisation compétente de soi-même.

. En outre, les participants allongent la durée de leur visite et préfèrent s'arrêter longuement devant certains objets qui leur plaisent plutôt que de "tout voir". Enfin ils gagnent assez de confiance en eux comme visiteurs et ils sont assez convaincus que le musée est un lieu où l'on trouve du plaisir à traiter des objets qu'ils amènent d'autres personnes au musée.

. Un résultat inattendu: plus des deux tiers des participants considèrent que la pratique des habiletés et leur utilisation au musée leur a permis d'en améliorer l'usage dans leur vie professionnelle. Un tel effet, que nous n'avons pas recherché, s'avère intéressant, car il indique que des acquis réalisés à l'occasion d'activités culturelles aident l'adulte à réaliser son travail, ce dont on doute encore chez les éducateurs peu familiers avec les musées.²⁴

Ce que l'on vient de voir permet de croire qu'il est possible d'améliorer sensiblement les capacités des visiteurs de type grand public à traiter des expositions thématiques de grande envergure. Avec quelques aménagements, l'atelier que nous avons développé pourrait devenir un programme muséal offert régulièrement aux adultes. Ceux-ci y gagneraient du pouvoir tout comme le musée d'ailleurs. En effet, une plus grande capacité de traiter des expositions représente, selon la définition donnée plus haut, un accroissement du pouvoir primaire du visiteur. Par ailleurs, cet accroissement s'accompagne automatiquement d'un gain de pouvoir secondaire, car si le visiteur traite mieux une exposition, il acquiert davantage de connaissances qu'il peut réutiliser. Ce faisant, le musée influence plus facilement le visiteur à travers son offre, ce qui lui vaut un accroissement de son pouvoir tertiaire. Toutefois, là n'est pas son seul gain, car des visiteurs qui approfondissent son offre "usent" moins rapidement et insistent moins sur un renouvellement constant des expositions. En somme, dans ce cas de figure, que l'on peut considérer comme le sixième, le visiteur gagne du pouvoir primaire et du pouvoir secondaire. Et pour sa part, le musée, loin d'en perdre, gagne du pouvoir tertiaire et une moins grande pression vers la multiplication de ses expositions.

ACCROISSEMENT DU POUVOIR DU MUSÉE PAR L'AMÉRIORATION DE SES EXPOSITIONS

Comme on l'a vu plus haut, la seconde ambition de l'équipe de l'Université de Montréal était de rendre l'exposition thématique plus performante, plus capable de transmettre son discours, c'est-à-dire les idées que le musée veut diffuser. Cette intervention crée le septième cas de jeux de pouvoir entre le musée et le visiteur.

Pourquoi tenter d'améliorer l'exposition? Deux raisons militent en faveur d'une telle tentative:

1) Le musée ne peut espérer que l'atelier déjà présenté, qui améliore certes le comportement du visiteur, soit suivi par une proportion importante des adultes;

²⁴ Dufresne-Tassé, C. et O'Neill, M.C. Transferring Their Skills in Order to Make Adults More Competent Visitors. In K.S. Ahn and S.H. Kook (eds), *Heritage, Museums and Non Visitors/Diversity in Museum Education*. Seoul: Korean Association of Museum Education and Museum Education Institute. 2007, p. 269-285.

2) Le fait que les visiteurs ne s'intéressent qu'à 50% à 80% des objets, traitent ceux-ci dans un ordre peu compatible avec les intentions du conservateur et comme s'ils n'avaient pas nécessairement de lien avec leurs voisins, porte à croire que le discours des expositions visitées n'était pas un discours fort, c'est-à-dire suffisamment structuré, clair et précis pour qu'on le saisisse facilement et en suive le développement avec constance. En somme, nous avons pensé que le traitement à la fois partiel et erratique des expositions dépendait principalement de leur manque de cohérence et nous avons développé un principe assorti de règles visant à assurer des rapports cohérents entre les principales composantes d'une exposition.

Stratégie de recherche

La démarche propre au second volet des études réalisées par l'équipe de l'Université de Montréal est plus complexe que celle du premier volet. Elle suppose en effet:

- 1) L'étude, au moyen d'une technique appelée "Thinking Aloud"²⁵ du fonctionnement psychologique du visiteur, plus précisément de ce qu'il pense, imagine ou ressent au moment où il parcourt une exposition.²⁶
- 2) La réalisation, pour chacune des expositions étudiées, d'un document photographique offrant à la fois une vue d'ensemble des expositions et une vue détaillée de la facture de chacune de leurs unités.
- 3) Le repérage de parties d'exposition où les visiteurs ont un fonctionnement "pauvre", par exemple, d'endroits où ils traitent très peu d'objets ou lisent peu de textes.
- 4) Une tentative d'identification des problèmes qui expliquent le piètre fonctionnement des visiteurs, et la vérification qu'il s'agit de problèmes de cohérence.
- 5) La vérification que ces problèmes se reproduisent dans plusieurs des sept expositions étudiées, dans d'autres expositions aussi,²⁷ et l'identification des modalités selon lesquelles ils se présentent.
- 6) L'élaboration de règles ayant pour but de corriger les problèmes identifiés.
- 7) La vérification qu'aux parties d'exposition obéissant à ces principes correspond un meilleur fonctionnement des visiteurs que dans les parties problématiques.
- 8) La recherche d'expositions autres²⁸ que les sept étudiées pour identifier les variations de matérialisation des règles élaborées.
- 9) La recherche d'expositions où l'ensemble des principes élaborés se trouvent concrétisés pour vérifier comment se présentent de telles expositions.

Une condition préalable

Avant de se préoccuper de la cohérence d'une exposition, il faut penser au confort psychologique et physique du visiteur. En effet, plusieurs études réalisées par des étudiants de fin de deuxième cycle de l'École du Louvre et de l'Université de Montréal ont montré que s'il n'est pas assuré, toute tentative d'améliorer une exposition est peu efficace.^{29*} Des recommandations publiées depuis 1975³⁰ montrent que le confort

²⁵ Ericsson, K.A. and Simon, H.A. *Protocol Analysis*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1993.

²⁶ Dufresne-Tassé, C., Sauvé, M., Weltzl-Fairchild, A., Banna, N. et Dassa, C. Pour des expositions muséales plus éducatives, accéder à l'expérience du visiteur adulte; Développement d'une approche. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 1998, vol. 23, no 3, p. 302-316.

Dufresne-Tassé, C., Sauvé, M., Weltzl-Fairchild, A., Banna, N. et Dassa, C. Pour des expositions muséales plus éducatives, accéder à l'expérience du visiteur adulte; Élaboration d'un instrument. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 1998, vol. 23, no 4, p. 421-433.

²⁷ Une centaine en Europe et en Amérique

²⁸ Idem

²⁹ Barbieux, C. et Gavaud, A.S. *La salle "Imagine" du Centre des sciences de Montréal: ses visiteurs, leur expérience et réception de l'exposition*. Mémoire de recherche déposé au Centre des sciences de

psychologique est assuré par la rigueur scientifique du contenu de l'exposition ainsi que par des textes faciles à déchiffrer et à comprendre, alors que le confort physique découle de locaux en bon état, d'une circulation fluide dans l'exposition, d'un mobilier et d'une muséographie qui facilitent l'observation des objets.

Un principe de cohérence

Nous avons emprunté à la linguistique textuelle^{31*} notre conception de la cohérence. Appliquée à l'exposition thématique, elle a donné lieu au principe suivant: "Le discours global de l'exposition est un discours fort et rigoureux. Il possède une structure évidente et progressive pour le visiteur. C'est aussi un discours d'une continuité parfaite, c'est-à-dire qui ne présente ni lacune, ni élément excédentaire."³²

Remarque: L'exposition étant une œuvre scientifique dont le caractère esthétique est poussé, mais aussi un instrument de communication pour le musée, beaucoup d'importance est accordée dans ce qui suit à l'effet sur le visiteur du respect de la cohérence.

Trois types de cohérence et sept règles pour les assurer

Les trois principales cohérences à assurer dans une exposition thématique sont:

- 1) Sa cohérence horizontale, ou le lien entre ses sous-thèmes;
- 2) Sa cohérence verticale, ou le lien entre ses principaux niveaux d'information (objet - cartel - panneau de sous-thème);
- 3) Sa cohérence textuelle, ou le lien entre les phrases d'un même texte.

Sept règles explicitent ces cohérences.³³

Cohérence horizontale

La cohérence horizontale s'exprime selon trois règles. La première concerne l'aspect conceptuel de l'exposition, plus précisément la relation entre ses sous-thèmes, alors que les deux autres détaillent la relation des aspects matériels (muséographie et objets) avec l'aspect conceptuel.

Règle 1 (vise la relation entre les sous-thèmes de l'exposition): "La relation entre les sous-thèmes est articulée selon une progression rigoureuse (logique); elle est rapidement, clairement exposée, de manière à faciliter l'anticipation des sous-thèmes avec le déroulement de l'exposition et de sa visite." (cohérence de type logique)

Cette cohérence s'applique chaque fois que le sujet de l'exposition est suffisamment ample ou complexe pour donner lieu à des idées secondaires ou sous-thèmes.

Justification

Sans un lien fort entre ses sous-thèmes, une exposition ne tient pas un véritable propos; elle constitue au mieux une série d'idées juxtaposées.

Exigences

- 1) La relation entre les sous-thèmes correspond à des structures familières à la pensée occidentale³⁴, comme les structures narrative, chronologique, démonstrative ou explicative. Lorsque ce n'est pas le cas, la structure doit être détaillée.

Montréal et à l'Université de Montréal en 2009.

³⁰ Hooper-Greenhill, E. *Museums and their Visitors*. London: Routledge, 1994.

³¹ Pépin, L. *La cohérence textuelle*. Laval, QC: Beauchemin, 1998.

³² Dufresne-Tassé, C. *Médiation culturelle, texte du cours donné en 1999*. Paris: École du Louvre, 1999.

³³ Dufresne-Tassé, C. *Notes de l'enseignement offert aux conservateurs de l'Institut national du Patrimoine*. Paris: Institut National du Patrimoine, 2010.

³⁴ Cette restriction est due au fait que la recherche a été réalisée en Occident seulement.

2) Cette relation est présentée de façon claire et facile à comprendre par le visiteur dans le texte introductif, c'est-à-dire à l'entrée de l'exposition. Chaque sous-thème est ensuite repris et explicité dans la partie d'exposition qui lui correspond de manière à rappeler périodiquement le fil de l'exposition.

Règle 2 (vise la relation entre la muséographie³⁵ et l'organisation des sous-thèmes): "Chaque sous-thème, c'est-à-dire chaque partie conceptuelle de l'exposition, est clairement marquée dans l'espace par la muséographie, en d'autres termes, chaque sous-thème est au moins physiquement délimité dans l'espace." (cohérence de type correspondance)

Justification

Une exposition étant une production à la fois visuelle et intellectuelle, ses parties physiques sont aussi importantes que ses sous-thèmes, et les deux doivent concorder.

Exigences

- 1) Les divisions physiques de l'espace (que l'on appelle souvent sections) sont perçues par le visiteur comme une indication du passage d'un sous-thème à un autre.
- 2) Lorsque des "distracteurs" visuels se présentent, les marqueurs de division sont plus forts qu'eux.

Règle 3 (vise la relation entre les objets et les sous-thèmes): "La progression des objets – de leurs caractéristiques visibles – et celle des sous-thèmes sont parallèles." (cohérence de type correspondance)

Justification

Le but de cette règle est, ici aussi, d'harmoniser les aspects perceptuel et conceptuel de l'exposition.

Cohérence verticale

La cohérence verticale est régie par trois règles. Les deux premières précisent la continuité qui doit exister entre les sources d'information que sont l'objet, le cartel et le panneau de sous-thème (de section). La troisième indique le rôle de la muséographie.

Règle 4 (vise la continuité objet-contenu du cartel): "L'information contenue dans le cartel doit permettre au visiteur d'identifier l'objet, et s'il s'agit d'un cartel allongé, elle attire l'attention sur des aspects observables de l'objet, puis en amplifie la signification en accord avec le discours de l'exposition." (cohérence de type continuité)

Justification

Sans un lien étroit entre ce que le visiteur observe et ce qu'il lit, l'objet devient un "électron libre", un élément détaché de l'ensemble de l'exposition, et la partie "allongée" du cartel, un mini- exposé sans véritable fonction. Il se crée alors une béance sémantique que le visiteur ne peut combler parce qu'il ne possède pas les connaissances spécialisées qui lui permettraient de le faire.³⁶

Exigences

- 1) L'information qui apparaît sur la partie identificatoire d'un cartel - nom de l'objet, auteur, matériau, provenance, date de création ou de fabrication, etc. - est absolument nécessaire au visiteur, car elle répond à son besoin pressant de savoir ce qu'il regarde ou de vérifier la justesse de ce qu'il pense à son sujet.³⁷

³⁵ Comme le veut la tradition nord-américaine, la muséographie englobe la scénographie.

³⁶ Ce qui n'est habituellement pas le cas du spécialiste.

³⁷ Dufresne-Tassé, C. *Notes de cours. Enseignement aux étudiants du Diplôme de recherche appliquée de l'École du Louvre*. Paris: École du Louvre, 2004.

2) L'information ajoutée au cartel identificatoire doit prendre le relais de l'observation, c'est-à-dire partir de ce que le visiteur voit, et l'amener plus loin. Le cartel allongé se trouve ainsi à détailler de façon très précise le propos de l'exposition.

Règle 5 (vise la continuité entre les textes des cartels et celui du panneau de sous-thème [ou de section]): "L'information contenue dans le panneau reprend le sens général du sous-thème. En outre, elle encadre et intègre l'information de l'ensemble des cartels compris dans la partie d'exposition correspondant au sous-thème." (cohérence de type continuité)

Explicitation et exigences

Habituellement le panneau de sous-thème reprend l'idée générale de la section d'exposition correspondante et détaille cette idée ou l'approfondit. Il présente donc un texte de niveau de généralité plutôt élevé, alors que le texte de chacun des cartels, on l'a vu, offre une information limitée parce que tout à fait particulière au sens de chaque objet. Il faut que le visiteur puisse faire le lien entre ces deux niveaux, et pour cela, le panneau doit offrir une synthèse des cartels de la partie d'exposition qu'il coiffe. S'il ne joue pas ce rôle, le visiteur se trouve devant un fossé, une béance sémantique qu'il ne peut franchir à cause de son manque de connaissances.³⁸ En fait, le panneau de section doit offrir au visiteur un aperçu de ce qu'il trouvera sur les cartels ou, inversement, élargir le sens de ce qu'il aura lu sur eux.

Règle 6 (vise la relation de la muséographie avec les objets et leurs cartels): "Les éléments de muséographie qui entourent la présentation des objets sont en priorité utilisés pour mettre chacun en relief, pour soutenir les idées que le conservateur veut leur faire exprimer, et éventuellement pour mettre en évidence ceux qui présentent les idées majeures." (cohérence de type correspondance-renforcement)

Justification et exigences

Comme chaque objet (ou groupe d'objets) "dit" une partie du discours d'une exposition, il faut que la muséographie le soutienne, et lorsqu'un objet représente une idée majeure, la muséographie doit le mettre en relief.

Tout élément de muséographie possède au moins trois fonctions: une fonction utilitaire, comme protéger ou tenir à distance; une fonction esthétique, qui contribue à l'agrément des formes, des volumes et des espaces de l'exposition; et une fonction sémantique qui consiste à véhiculer du sens.³⁹ Ce rôle sémantique doit cohabiter harmonieusement avec le rôle utilitaire de la muséographie et ne jamais souffrir au profit de son rôle esthétique.

Cohérence textuelle

La cohérence textuelle est régie par une seule règle, la règle 7.

Règle 7 (vise à assurer la cohérence des phrases d'un texte): "La succession des phrases d'un texte est logique. Elle ne présente ni information manquante, ni information excédentaire qui rompent ou brouillent l'enchaînement des idées." (cohérence de type logique)

Justification

Un texte incohérent est difficile à comprendre et suscite de la confusion chez le lecteur.⁴⁰ Au musée, le visiteur attribue habituellement ses difficultés de compréhension ou sa confusion à un manque d'attention de sa part. Cela ne l'empêche pas

³⁸ Ce qui n'est pas le cas, encore une fois, du spécialiste.

³⁹ O'Neill, M.C. et Dufresne-Tassé, C. Augmenter notre compréhension de l'impact de la muséographie sur les visiteurs. *Culture et Musées*, 2010, No 16, p. 239-244.

⁴⁰ Van Dick, T.A. *La noticia como discurso. Comprensión, estructura y producción*. Barcelona: Ediciones Paidós, 1990.

d'exiger de comprendre d'emblée. Si ce n'est pas le cas, il se met à lire partiellement et sporadiquement.⁴¹

La cohérence de l'exposition, le pouvoir du musée et celui du visiteur

Pour des raisons d'espace, j'ai limité ma présentation de la cohérence aux principales règles auxquelles une exposition thématique doit obéir.⁴² Le respect de chacune est essentiel, car il favorise un traitement fructueux d'aspects différents de l'exposition. Toutefois, l'ensemble de ces règles est encore plus important, car celles-ci se complètent et se renforcent. Ce faisant, elles produisent une exposition nettement articulée, d'une grande précision et d'un enchaînement évident pour le visiteur. Ainsi ce dernier saisit facilement les idées secondaires de l'exposition aussi bien que ses idées principales, de sorte qu'il lui est facile de synthétiser le tout et d'y réfléchir.⁴³

Pour peu que l'exposition plonge le visiteur dans un univers qui lui est peu familier, il acquiert de nombreuses connaissances. Autant dire que le musée accroît son pouvoir tertiaire, c'est-à-dire son influence sur le visiteur, pendant que ce dernier gagne en même temps du pouvoir d'action ultérieure.

Remarque: Le gain de pouvoir tertiaire du musée diffère ici de celui qu'il réalise dans les cas de figure 1 à 5. En effet, quand il améliore son exposition, il développe intentionnellement un moyen plus puissant de diffusion de son discours, alors que dans les autres, il modifie son discours ou en facilite l'accès.

Accroissement de pouvoir différent pour le visiteur et pour le musée

Dans les deux séries de recherches menées par l'équipe de l'Université de Montréal, le musée et le visiteur gagnent du pouvoir parce que chacun augmente sa force comme acteur. En effet, dans la première, le visiteur accroît ses capacités de traiter l'offre muséale, et dans la seconde, le musée perfectionne son offre, la rend plus efficace, plus capable d'influencer le visiteur. Cette dernière façon pour le musée d'accroître son pouvoir tertiaire diffère grandement des autres moyens, qui consistent à partager son pouvoir ou à offrir de la médiation ou de l'interprétation qui permettent au visiteur de se débrouiller avec une offre qui lui semble hermétique.

SOMMAIRE ET PERSPECTIVES

Trois types de pouvoir interviennent dans les jeux impliquant le musée (pouvoirs primaire, secondaire et tertiaire) et le visiteur (pouvoirs d'action immédiate, d'action ultérieure et de pression) quand ce dernier visite une exposition. Dans les sept cas de figure présentés, les gains et les pertes sont les suivants.

Cas tirés d'une série de publications

Pouvoirs du visiteur

Pouvoirs du musée

Cas 1

Aucune modification de pouvoir

Aucune modification de pouvoir

Cas 2

⁴¹ Dufresne-Tassé, C. *Médiation culturelle, texte du cours donné à l'École du Louvre en 1998*. Paris: École du Louvre, 1998.

⁴² Il en existe d'autres, notamment les règles qui visent le rapport entre le titre de l'exposition et le contenu de son texte introductif ; entre les éléments d'une vitrine ou d'une vitrine avec ce qui l'entoure.

⁴³ Dufresne-Tassé, C. When Building an Exhibition, Do not Forget its Coherence and the Visitor's Meaning Making. In L. Teather (ed.), *The Museum Professional Network: Career, Connexions and Community*, To be published.

Gain de pouvoir d'action ultérieure
Gain de pouvoir de pression

Gain de pouvoir tertiaire

Cas 3

Gain de pouvoir d'action ultérieure
Gain de pouvoir de pression

Partage du pouvoir secondaire
Gain de pouvoir tertiaire

Cas 4

Selon le contexte,
Gain ou pas de pouvoir d'action ultérieure
Gain de pouvoir de pression

Partage du pouvoir primaire et
probablement de pouvoir secondaire

Cas 5

Selon le contexte,
Gain ou pas de pouvoir d'action ultérieure
Gain ou pas de pouvoir de pression

Selon le contexte, partage ou abandon de
pouvoir primaire et/ou secondaire et/ou
tertiaire

Cas créés par les résultats de l'équipe de l'Université de Montréal

Cas 6

Gain de pouvoir d'action primaire

Gain de pouvoir tertiaire

Cas 7

Gain de pouvoir d'action ultérieure

Gain de pouvoir tertiaire

Ce résumé des gains et des pertes de pouvoir du musée et du visiteur permet d'affirmer que:

- . Le pouvoir du musée n'a pas nécessairement à être affecté pour que le visiteur en gagne;
- . Le partage du pouvoir du musée ne s'accompagne pas toujours d'une augmentation du pouvoir du visiteur;
- . L'abandon du pouvoir du musée n'entraîne probablement pas une augmentation de pouvoir du visiteur;
- . L'accroissement du pouvoir du musée peut se solder par une augmentation du pouvoir du visiteur.

Il semble donc permis de conclure qu'il n'est pas nécessaire que le musée perde du pouvoir pour que le visiteur en gagne. Pour peu que le musée explore de nouvelles avenues comme la recherche d'expositions plus performantes ou l'amélioration des capacités des visiteurs de les traiter, il peut en même temps gagner du pouvoir et en faire gagner au visiteur.

Cohérence et autres caractéristiques d'une exposition thématique

Une exposition cohérente ne se limite pas à offrir une bonne compréhension de son contenu, la possibilité de le synthétiser facilement et d'y réfléchir. Comme un bon roman, elle représente aussi une trame, un fil rouge qui soutient le fonctionnement psychologique du visiteur, et à partir duquel il apporte toutes sortes d'ajouts personnels. Ces ajouts enrichissent d'autant le contenu de l'exposition. En outre, ces apports constituent une source de bénéfices secondaires comme le rappel de souvenirs ou de connaissances qui, sans de telles occasions, resteraient plus ou moins inertes dans la mémoire de l'adulte et s'y altéreraient.

On pourrait craindre que le fonctionnement intellectuel particulièrement intense favorisé par la cohérence ne bloque les fonctionnements affectif et imaginaire du

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visiteur, gages d'une expérience qu'il recherche et que le musée désire lui procurer.⁴⁴ Il n'en est rien, car aussi bien la lecture d'informations correctement structurées que l'observation d'objets pertinemment mis en valeur suscite des émotions, des sentiments, des souvenirs et du plaisir.⁴⁵ En fait, un fonctionnement cognitif fort favorise les fonctionnements affectif et imaginaire.⁴⁶ Mais il est aussi possible, tout en maintenant une forte cohérence de l'exposition, de favoriser directement ces deux types de fonctionnement par des façons de "jouer" avec les objets, les textes et la muséographie. L'équipe que je dirige explore actuellement des moyens de le faire, de sorte que le développement de règles de cohérence ne représente que le début des études visant à rendre l'exposition thématique, le musée et le visiteur plus puissants.

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⁴⁵ Carr, D. *The Promise of Cultural Institutions*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003.

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TURNING TO THE VISITOR'S BODY: AFFECTIVE EXHIBITION AND THE LIMITS OF REPRESENTATION

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ABSTRACT

As museums have found themselves needing to express concepts and events for which we seem not to have an adequate verbal language, they have begun to turn to the physical body of the visitor in order to find a way to express the inexpressible and to represent the unrepresentable. Affect, physical bodily sensations that precede emotional understanding, are being foregrounded in museum exhibition. Unsettling, unpredictable visceral responses are being provoked as some museums seem to be saying that conventional object-based exhibitions seem exhausted. Examination of three museum spaces that operate entirely on the affective level is used to demonstrate the emerging role of affect as a key museum tool. Affect centres the visitor in the exhibition resulting in the greatest power in the museum that the visitor has ever had.

RÉSUMÉ

Se tourner vers le corps du visiteur : l'exposition affective et les limites de la représentation

Alors que les musées se trouvent dans une position où ils ont besoin d'exprimer des concepts et des événements pour lesquels il ne semble pas y avoir de langage verbal adéquat, ils se tournent à présent vers le corps physique du visiteur pour découvrir une façon d'exprimer l'inexprimable et de représenter ce qui ne peut être représenté. L'exposition du musée éveille l'affect et les sensations physiques du corps qui précèdent la compréhension émotionnelle. Des réponses viscérales dérangeantes et imprévisibles sont suscitées, au moment où le message de certains musées semble être que les traditionnelles expositions d'objets sont à bout de souffle. Une étude de trois espaces-musée fonctionnant entièrement au niveau affectif est utilisée ici pour démontrer le rôle émergent de l'affect comme instrument-clé dans le contexte d'un musée. L'affect place le visiteur au cœur de l'exposition, lui accordant sur le musée le plus grand pouvoir qu'il ait jamais exercé.

RESUMEN

Volcarse hacia el cuerpo del visitante: exposiciones afectivas y los límites de la representación

Como los museos se han encontrado a sí mismos en la necesidad de expresar conceptos y acontecimientos para los cuales parece no existir un adecuado lenguaje verbal, han comenzado a apelar al cuerpo físico del visitante a fin de encontrar un camino para expresar lo inexpressable y representar lo que no puede representarse. En las exhibiciones museales pasan a primer plano afectos, sensaciones corporales que preceden a la comprensión emocional. En algunos museos se provocan imprevisibles e impredecibles respuestas viscerales como una forma de expresar que las exposiciones tradicionales basadas en el objeto están a punto de agotarse. El estudio de tres espacios museales que operan exclusivamente sobre el nivel afectivo es utilizado aquí

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para demostrar el rol emergente de los afectos como una herramienta clave en el contexto de los museos. Los afectos ponen al visitante en el corazón de la exposición y el resultado es que el visitante ejerce un poder como nunca antes lo pudo hacer.

* * *

Expressing the inexpressible and representing the unrepresentable are the nearly impossible tasks of museums in the post colonial and post Holocaust eras. In conjunction with these challenges is a waning of faith in Enlightenment rationality. The entrenchment of the institutionalised idea of the museum throughout the world has rested substantially on a rational belief in the one-to-one correspondence between objects and meanings, separate from any meanings derived from visitor experiences. An assemblage of objects is used by museums for the work of representation - of a concept or an historical event. When confronting natural disasters and historical calamities, however, the power of the museum object often fails to represent adequately the enormity of an event and this failure opens up museological questions about the exhibition potential of museums. Faced with failing object power and the rising power of the visitor, museums are now experimenting with new exhibition styles. Immersion environments, especially, are centred on the visitor leading museological study to examination of the growing empowerment of visitors. From once standing, possibly mutely, before glass cases, visitors are now essential to museum environments. Where visitor response was once irrelevant to museum work, now it is central.

This paper analyses an emerging affective role of the visitor in an era when museology faces both the depleting power of the use of the original object and the failure of language to express the deepest of affecting events. Some progressive museums have turned to the visitor in order to find a way to begin to overcome the near impossibility of expressing certain human experiences. They have done this by centring the affect of visitors, that is, their pre-emotional bodily intensities. Bodily responses, rather than the visitor's mind or indeed the museum object, become the focus of the exhibition. Such exhibitions prioritise evoking affective, immediate responses from visitors rather than aloof, intellectual reflections.

Although the argument of this paper emerges from the apparent exhaustion of the power and authority once ascribed to objects, it does not deny the formidable resonance of some original objects. For example, in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C., visitors, find it extraordinarily powerful to confront lethal Zyklon B crystals used in gas chambers in World War II and bunk beds from the Auschwitz death camp; the objects have a testimonial weight seeming to bear direct witness to horror.¹ Despite the shock experienced by many visitors on seeing such objects, there is, however, enormous difficulty for museums in sustaining such impact. The object challenge is all the greater in this era of the everyday intimate and immediate rewards enjoyed in computer use, the computer offering a thrilling loop resulting in a visceral link of human and machine. The proliferation of interactive experiences in museums is a sign of museums' attempts to tap into this link.

The expectation of multiple and contradictory meanings in a postmodern institution poses huge challenges to museums in grappling with monumental topics. This is the case because of both the long term collapse of belief in the rational mission of the

¹ The Auschwitz bunk beds are on long term loan from the Polish government. There is now a possibility that they will need to be returned to Poland thus diminishing one of the most arresting spaces in the US Holocaust Memorial Museum (reported in the *Inclusive Museum Newsletter* 4 April 2012). This underscores the exceptional power of these objects and highlights, by comparison, the failure of most displayed objects to ignite passionate audience attention.

museum, and the diminution of the power of objects which often seem lost in the institutional flow of highly aestheticised information. The ever increasing emphasis on design and aesthetic considerations in exhibitions steadily overwhelms the power of the object. The exhibitionary turn to affect offers museums a way to respond.

This paper commences with a brief overview of the theoretical field of affect before considering the new, centred role of visitors in three museum spaces: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, in Wellington; Imperial War Museum, London and the Jewish Museum Berlin. It argues that visitors are empowered through the provocation of affect.

AFFECT

Affect is bodily intensity, it is the raw experience we have before we make sense of moments in the body. It is difficult to name these physiological sensations, most writers turn to the work of Tomkins and Izard who argued that there were nine affective states: interest-excitement; enjoyment-joy; surprise-startle; distress-anguish; shame-humiliation; disgust (dis-taste); dissmell (dis-smell); anger-rage and fear-anxiety.² O'Sullivan notes that we are not conscious of these moments of perception, but that they are fundamental aspects of daily living, indeed, the very things that connect us to the world.

Much of the work on affect has been in response to the work of Deleuze, and Deleuze and Guattari³ who examine affect in relation to the idea of the human becoming-animal, an aspect of human life that has often been erased from thought.

They [previous thinkers] see the animal as a representative of drives, or a representation of the parents. They do not see the reality of it becoming-animal, that it is affect in itself, the drive in person, and represents nothing.⁴

In earlier work Deleuze examined affect as sensation through the art of Francis Bacon.

[Sensation is]... Being-in-the-World... at one and the same time I *become* in the sensation and something *happens* through the sensation, one through the other, one in the other. And at the limit, it is the same body that, being both subject and object, gives and receives the sensation.⁵

Deleuze and Guattari rethink the subject away from received, hackneyed responses that are trapped in ideology and repetitious representation. They theorise the subject as having multiple subjectivities - emerging, clashing, retreating - in response to events and time thus producing highly specific and non-ideological individual experiences. They describe the haecceity or "thisness" of the "you".

You are longitude and latitude, a set of speeds and slownesses between unformed particles, a set of nonsubjectified affects. You have the individuality of a day, a season, a year... a climate, a wind, a fog, a swarm... A cloud of locusts carried in by the wind at five in the evening; a vampire who goes out at night; a werewolf at full moon. It should not be thought that a haecceity consists simply of a décor or backdrop that situates subjects... it is the entire assemblage in its individuated aggregate... The street enters into composition with the horse, just

² Silvan Tomkins and Carroll Izard, *Affect, Cognition and Personality: Empirical Studies*, New York, Springer Publishing Company, 1964.

³ See for example, Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, London, The Athlone Press, 1994, and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, London, Continuum, 2004, and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Minneapolis and London, University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Minneapolis and London, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 259.

⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2003, p.31.

as the dying rat enters into composition with the air, and the beast and the full moon enter into composition with each other.⁶

O'Sullivan says:

We might say that affect is a more brutal *apersonal* thing. It is that which connects us to the world. It is the matter in us responding and resonating with the matter around us. Affect is, in this sense, *transhuman*. Indeed, with affect what we have is a kind of transhuman aesthetic.⁷

To paraphrase Massumi, affect is movement between our bodies and the world as the world impinges on our bodies.⁸ Paraphrasing Wissinger, affective responses link us to the world showing that there is no break or boundary between ourselves and other selves.⁹ With continuous linkages and responses we are always in states of becoming. Our responses never stop because the world is always pressing on us, we are always moving and responding.

Affect is bodily feelings of response which are prior to emotion. Tomkins and Izard attempted to name affects which most critics now agree cannot be named. By contrast, emotions are the name we give to affects *after* we have interpreted them. Affect, therefore, is the experience we have prior to naming the experience of an intensity and making sense of it. Some writers argue, however, that there is a rapid slide between affect and emotion, a slide so rapid and visceral that it makes sense to discuss this bundle of bodily experiences as if they were one and the same, see for example, Ahmed¹⁰. Ahmed moves between affect and emotion in her discussion of the crucial role of emotions in making sense of the world, even to the point of knowing who we are. She describes the "sticky" nature of our existence as we stick to bits of the world as it presses on us calling forth a response that creates us. She says, "emotions are not "in" either the individual or the social, but produce the very surfaces and boundaries that allow all kinds of objects to be delineated"¹¹. In contrast to Ahmed, most critics discuss affect, not just as prior to the cerebral sense-making of emotion, but as a central human experience that demands exploration.

Paying attention to affect highlights the body and, in the words of Wissinger,

allows more than an analysis of discourses, meaning systems, and the social construction of the body; it also allows for an analysis of the dynamism of the body's matter, such as the body is thought as a center of action and reaction, a site of energy flows and changes in intensity.¹²

Similar language is used by Massumi who writes of "resonance" to describe lived experience:

The levels at play could be multiplied to infinity: already mentioned are mind and body, but also volition and cognition, at least two orders of language, expectation and suspense, body depth and epidermis, past and future, action and reaction, happiness and sadness, quiescence and arousal, passivity and activity, and so on. These could be seen not as binary oppositions or contradictions, but as resonating levels. Affect is their point of emergence, in their actual specificity, and it is their vanishing point, in singularity, in their virtual

⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, London and New York, Continuum 1987, p. 262.

⁷ Simon O'Sullivan, *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, p. 50.

⁸ Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*, London, Duke University Press, 2002, p. 31.

⁹ Elizabeth Wissinger, "Always on display: affective production in the modeling industry", in Patricia Ticineto Clough and Jean Halley (eds), *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2007, p. 232.

¹⁰ Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, New York, Routledge, 2004, p. 6 and p. 25.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 10.

¹² Elizabeth Wissinger, *op. cit.* p. 232.

coexistence and interconnection - that critical point shadowing every image / expression - event.¹³

Critiques of the power of the body are illuminating in relation to affect. Griffiths argues that when language fails there are opportunities. "Portals of entry into a forgotten world. They reveal the bodies buried in memory, left outside history..."¹⁴

Likewise, affect shows us that attention to the sensory world offers us new ways of experiencing the world. Highmore¹⁵ and Massumi¹⁶ argue the political potential of paying attention to the sensory world. O'Sullivan, and Seigworth and Gregg argue that political potential arises because affect is not first about meaning, but about reaction and doing.¹⁷ In the body, as an interface to the world, there is an impulse to act. Although the effect of affect is unpredictable, nevertheless it produces energy, an undirected and free flowing energy explained by Wissinger.

Intensity is felt in the moment of energy flow between bodies. It is not an energy directed toward anything in particular; it is the source of actions, although the effect of affective flow is always indeterminate until after it is registered and narrated as a physical state.¹⁸

Despite the critical insistence that affect is prior to emotion and outside of representation, affect is centred in some emphatically representational museum environments. Following this very brief summary of the critical background of affect, the paper now looks at affect in representational immersive exhibits where the visitor is crucial to the exhibit.

Affect in environments derived from life and represented in the museum

The controversiality of the first exhibition floor of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (always abbreviated to Te Papa), in Wellington, springs from its apparent Disneyland features. Complaints about hyperreality and ubiquitous globalised elements are made frequently about this floor. Visitors are invited to time travel in a style of dark ride car associated with Disneyland and other theme parks. Similarly, there are opportunities to try wind surfing by mounting a machine-driven wind surfer while watching a screen which responds to the movements of the rider. By looking at Te Papa and, below, the Imperial War Museum, this section considers the recreation in museums of real environments and the ways in which affective responses are the central meaning of the visitor's engagement as textual distance is erased. By making affective responses the focus of meaning in the exhibition, the museum necessarily makes visitors the centre of the exhibition. This is a most empowering place after 150 years of looking through a glass case or standing behind a silk rope. Distanced, the visitor knew that s/he was incidental and unimportant to museums.

One of the immersive opportunities at Te Papa is called "Earthquake House", an experience that was developed more than a decade before the 2011 series of catastrophic earthquakes destroyed the centre of Christchurch. Visitors walk inside a small timber frame cottage; when they are inside, heavy shaking commences consistent with a strong earthquake. Visitors are tossed about and likely to stumble. They lose control of their environment.

¹³ Brian Massumi, *op. cit.* p. 33.

¹⁴ Quoted in Chacon, RosaMaria, book review of Jennifer L. Griffiths, *Traumatic Possessions: The Body and Memory in African American Women's Writing and Performance*, Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 2009, in *Women's Studies*, no. 39, pp. 905-908, 2010, p. 907.

¹⁵ Ben Highmore, "Bitter aftertaste: affect, food, and social aesthetics", in Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth (eds), *Affect Theory Reader*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2010.

¹⁶ Brian Massumi, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ Simon O'Sullivan, *op. cit.* p. 22 and p. 52; Gregory Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, "An inventory of shimmers" in Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth *op. cit.* p. 14.

¹⁸ Elizabeth Wissinger, *op. cit.* p. 238.

Conventionally, to illustrate the destructive power of earthquakes, museums usually use an assortment of methods: displaying photographs of ruined buildings, making available oral histories of memories of the experience and giving scientific data such as Richter scale measurements. These exhibition methods rely on textual distance between the visitor and the exhibit. The visitor is asked to stand back and make comparisons, the visitor is not part of the exhibition text. By dramatic contrast, "Earthquake House" slams the earthquake shock right onto the body of the visitor. There is no time or space for comparison, aloofness or reflection. The visitor is caught in the shaking. Reactions to the shaking come from the body with the heart racing, and sweating and yelling highly likely. There is no place for textual distance.

Far from intimate bodily responses, dominant visitor reactions in conventional museum spaces come from the intellect and do so towards exhibitions which are designed to reproduce narratives. Museums make sense to us because although they might introduce new material, they do so within narratives which are already well known, offering formulaic ways of making sense of the world. It is for this reason that museums so often seem highly repetitive even if we cannot quite identify why this is the case. When, however, affective responses are targeted by a museum, high unpredictability is the result. This is not to say that most visitors would not agree that an earthquake experience is frightening, but to acknowledge that physiological responses are likely to be multiple and unpredictable. Interpretations of them, therefore, will vary. The result is a museum moment / space that asks the visitor to experience something via the body and then to make sense of the world. The conventional, didactic, curatorial-centred museum takes a sharp back step leaving the visitor empowered. Wissinger observes that

The effects of affect... are not predictable; affective change from passivity to activity, from inertia to motivation, for example, is not reducible to a single stimulus. In fact, a "circus of affective responses" can result from a single stimulus and differ in any one body at different times."¹⁹

Although "Earthquake House" leads to theorisation of an empowered visitor, it by no means denies the direct, anarchic links to the fairground and Disneyland, sites which are often regarded as politically effete. Henning implicitly observes the topsy-turvy fairground connection in her comment on the "madness" of museums and the inadequacy of the Foucaultian disciplinary model in understanding the breadth of museums. "The analysis of museums as disciplinary institutions underplays the madness of museums, the over accumulation which militates against clarity, sense and orderliness."²⁰

Museums, fairgrounds and theme parks share many exhibitionary aspects. In the well trodden international tourist circuit, many visitors, on their previous plane stop, are likely to have been in Los Angeles where they are likely to have visited both Disneyland and Universal Studios where they probably entered the burning house from the film *Backdraft*. In this house, visitors stand in a burning ruin; near the end of the experience just when they are confident that they quite safe, the viewing platform inside the house appears to collapse, leaving screaming visitors grabbing safety rails. They are shocked to have the safety of their world disappear. This unforgettable moment in Universal Studios is derived entirely from affective responses - hearts beat faster, mouths open in shock, knuckles turn white, screams and shrieking laughter overpower the tremendous sound of the fire. Although visitors remember that a burning house is frightening, it is the individual affective response which dominates memory.

Museums now draw on immersive fairground methods in order to provoke affective responses. This is a huge political and theoretical leap for museums because

¹⁹ Elizabeth Wissinger, *op. cit.* p. 232.

²⁰ Michelle Henning, "Legibility and affect: museums as new media", in Sharon Macdonald and Paul Basu (eds), *Exhibition Experiments*, Maldon, MA, Blackwell Publishing, 2007, p. 43.

museums are always placed in the category of high culture while fairgrounds are always placed in the category of low or popular culture.²¹ The immersive environment offered by the fairground is now inspirational to museums despite the long history of their apparent mutual cultural opposition. Drawing on the fairground, the museum visitor is placed into representations of real environments and invited to have a response which seems to be drawn from the marrow of the bones.

Far from New Zealand, in the Imperial War Museum in London, the stirring “Blitz” exhibit places visitors into an historical context with no foregrounded written curatorial interpretation. It demands nothing but affective responses and echoes fairground experiences. Visitors are invited into a recreated cellar complete with objects that might have been stored in the 1940s during the period of the London blitz.

Visitors sit on uncomfortable, narrow benches around the walls of the darkened cellar. Apparently from a long distance, they hear the dull thud of German bombs “hitting” city targets. There are irregular, disturbing pauses between explosions; visitors instinctively whisper to each other. An air of solemnity fills the cellar as visitors have no choice but to empathise with Londoners of the 1940s. Eyes roam around in the semi-darkness inspecting fellow visitors and the close walls of what would have been the only protective environment available during the war. The air is stale and heavy, we become aware of our breathing and, unfortunately, of others exhaling also into the dank atmosphere. Visitors can feel a little anxious in the near proximity to strangers - this must have been the case in the blitz. Memories of accounts of the famous pluckiness of the London war time spirit are recalled. Memories of war photographs begin to flood back - memories of images of bodies sleeping cheek by jowl in the protection of the deep underground train stations. Did they really endure the close company of strangers night after night? How did anyone sleep in those awful conditions? Skin begins to prickle and sweat lightly from this close sitting and discomfort in the museum, then it sweats seemingly in empathy with the people who lived through those historic events. Minds roam around pouncing on memories of famous war images and relating them to this war experience in the Imperial War Museum. After a time, nervousness is paired with boredom. After all, we have been sitting here for a long time listening to the sound of distant bombs. Is this what the blitz was like? Frightening certainly, but also boring? How could war be boring, surely terror does not go hand in hand with boredom?

Then, from seemingly nowhere, comes an almost direct hit on the cellar. The blast overwhelms the polite arrangements of bodies in the small space. People scream, they clutch each other. Now we know from the inside, from our entrails, something of the terror of the blitz. We are relieved to rush from the claustrophobia of the cellar and to find ourselves alive.

Massumi argues that in the rush of affect a person feels fully alive. One experiences beyond words “one’s own vitality, one’s sense of aliveness, of changeability”²². This is an exhilarating experience rarely felt in a museum before the creation of immersive environments. The visitor is asked to respond because this is the most effective way to enable visitors to know. How much more powerful it is to make the heart race in the foetid air of the sealed cellar than to show us a photograph? No matter how much we might be pierced by an image of the blitz, it cannot match for visceral response, the body’s discomfort, boredom and ultimate fear in the bleak cellar. Photographs are eloquent and authoritative in any exhibition, but they have the effect of distancing us because we need to stand aloof in order to perceive them. By contrast, the effect of placing us in a wartime cellar during the blitz does the opposite. It centres our bodies as it pushes away the distancing effects of intellectual engagement and pulls us in on an affective level.

²¹ See Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Poetics and Politics of Transgression*, London, Methuen, 1986.

²² Brian Massumi, *op. cit.* p. 36.

One of the key elements of affective response is the dissolution of boundaries, this is particularly important in the above examples. Ahmed²³ argues that when considering the effects of an affective environment, we can see that bodies begin to merge. Probyn quotes Moira Gatens who argues that affect leads us to

question commonsense notions of the privacy or “integrity” of bodies through exposing the breaches in the borders between self and other evidenced by the contagiousness of “collective” affects.²⁴

The provocation of empathy is highly likely to be achieved in affective exhibition. Ahmed argues that the highlighting of the pain of others is doubled back on ourselves producing a world of bodies touching and being touched.

An ethics of responding to pain involves being opened to being affected by that which one cannot know or feel... Much of the thinking on pain, however, contrasts the ungraspability of the other’s pain with the graspability of my own pain...as I respond to this other’s pain... I come to feel that which I cannot know. I realise that my pain... is unliveable to others, thrown as they are into a different bodily world... Such a response is not simply a return to the self... in the face of the otherness of my own pain, I am undone, before her, and for her.²⁵

Deleuze, likewise, observes that the body in proximity to others is the key to that body knowing itself. “A body affects other bodies, or is affected by other bodies; it is this capacity for affecting and being affected that also defines a body in its individuality.”²⁶ Museums, of course, have always worked from the position that bodies were quite separate, both physically and intellectually, from each other and the objects. Today, as museums embrace immersive environments as part of their exhibitionary possibilities, they necessarily rethink the body and slowly, albeit implicitly, come to regard it as linked to other bodies and, indeed, as central to the museum mission.

Affect and an open metaphoric museum space

A metaphoric space can rip open a received version of history. Stories of the Holocaust are very well known and repetition of the line “the murder of six million” is one of the tragic markers of the twentieth century. Despite the fact that there are many museums which tackle the Holocaust and numerous memorials, it remains an event so monstrous and unsettling that representation can never approach its monumentality. The Jewish Museum Berlin with its famous building by architect, Daniel Libeskind was inaugurated in 2001 with the directors insisting that it was not a museum limited to the Holocaust, but investigated all aspects of German-Jewish life. It opens with deliberate avoidance of representation. In place of representation is an open, metaphoric, disorienting space; this area is the focus of this section of this paper. Tunnel, ramp-like roads lead off in several directions. Sloping floors make walking difficult and visitors have no guide posts. The bewilderment, fear and anger visitors experience as they try to find their way through the opening spaces of the museum soon emerge as the productive exhibitionary forces of this part of the museum. To the astonishment of many visitors, they find - or rather lose - themselves at the frightening centre of the exhibition.

The Jewish Museum Berlin, like Te Papa and the Imperial War Museum, provokes affective responses and, by doing so, cuts across the received nature of Holocaust history. The argument of this paper is that there are certain areas of human experience that are beyond the representational power of conventional object-based museology and, therefore, this paper is consistent with the assumption that trauma is

²³ Sara Ahmed, *op. cit.* p. 10 and p. 24.

²⁴ Elspeth Probyn, “Writing shame”, in Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, *op. cit.* p. 76

²⁵ Sara Ahmed, *op. cit.* p. 30-31.

²⁶ Gilles Deleuze quoted in *ibid.* p.77.

unrepresentable.²⁷ Noteworthy, however, is a recent study in Israel which found that objects in a family context might “engender person-object interaction, empathy and imagination” across generations, but were resistant to public display.²⁸ This paper examines representation in the very different public museum context, but is mindful of Kidron’s observation that mini Holocaust museums are beginning to appear in community and geriatric centres.²⁹ The extension of the private trauma realm, to the context of a semi-public museum, is a possible future for representing trauma. This paper, however, examines the problem today and finds that grappling with some unfathomable aspects of life has led some museums to realise that the strongest and most direct way that a visitor can begin to understand is via his or her own body.

The Jewish Museum Berlin jolts visitors. Whereas, the New Zealand and London institutions did so by recreating realistic environments, the Berlin museum refuses to do so. It moves, therefore, into the realm of visitor affect without the support of the representation of recreated environments referencing reality. It riskily approaches an exhibition ethos that appears inconsistent with museum activities and more akin to a non-representational metaphoric memorial. This is especially so given that since 2005 the museum has shared the tourist - historic landscape of central Berlin with Peter Eisenman’s *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*. His huge undulating field of 2711 black stelae refuses representation.

Visitors enter the Jewish Museum Berlin through a baroque building, the Collegienhaus, one of the few surviving old buildings in the Kreuzberg district of post-war Berlin. With no guidance, visitors are immediately plunged downstairs to the tunnel structures which lead to three possibilities. One is a windowless, roofless, claustrophobic cell called the Holocaust Tower. This void leaves night visitors in total darkness. By day, the tapering walls reveal a small patch of sky high above. Another harshly lit tunnel road leads to the Garden of Exile and Emigration, a bleak outdoor garden constructed on a tilted square in which willow oaks are bunched together and planted above the ground. There is no possibility of walking between the trees or finding a comfortable place to rest. This cheerless space perpetuates disorientation. The third exit leads to a more conventional museum upstairs which asserts - almost optimistically - a story of German-Jewish continuity. Despite the apparent familiarity offered upstairs and the relief at finding museum spaces that offer objects and curatorial text, the famous building intrudes, denying visitors any security or comfort. It flashes like a lightning bolt through the Kreuzberg district and inside offers few comfortable spaces. Angular voids smash through the building at every level, interrupting exhibition space and leaving visitors marooned. Even the staircases are not designed simply for mounting to the next level, they are suffocatingly narrow and the visitor is threatened by the angular placement of overhead beams which create sharp, alien forms.

In the tunnels, visitors are made acutely and uncomfortably conscious of their bodies - there is no boundary between the museum and us, we flow in and around it. As Seigworth and Gregg argue, affect pushes the body towards “becoming an ever more worldly sensitive interface, toward a style of being present in struggles of our time”³⁰. Although centred on our own bodies, I observed in my visit in January 2012 that visitors tended to keep to themselves, alone and silent. In confronting our own bodies, other bodies become unbearable. The affective experience, however, insists that we feel each other’s presence.

²⁷ Saul Friedlander, *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the “Final Solution”*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1992.

²⁸ Carol Kidron, “Breaching the wall of traumatic silence: Holocaust survivors and descendant person - object relations and the material transmission of the genocidal past”, *Journal of Material Culture*, no. 17(1), pp. 3-21, March 2012, p. 16.

²⁹ Kidron (*ibid.*) p. 19.

³⁰ Gregory Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, *op. cit.* p. 12.

The demolition of intellectual space caused by the insistence on affect focuses us on the relationship between bodies and the world. In the Holocaust Tower, the sloping walls press in, narrowing over bodies so that heads tingle in the crushing space. Eyes search for a patch of light, high above, unreachable. The garden is alien with its tilted base and hard surfaces, legs work hard to carry you around the square. You can find yourself turning back to the museum, only to remember that inside await the ramp tunnels and the Holocaust Tower. One wonders: what would I have done if I had been in Germany during the war? Who might I have been? The body is linked to the suffering bodies of the Holocaust, but is also stranded in a place of such discomfort that there is acute awareness of every sensation. The affective human capacity insists on endless movement between bodies and the world. Before entering the museum we might have seen ourselves as sympathetic and rational witnesses to history, but once inside, dealing with pre-sense making affect, we are denied that rationality. We are not visitors who stand back to view or read, we can only experience. Wissinger describes the flow of the body in the world, not as a

discrete entity with a fixed essence or an organism contained and bound by the skin. This move to think the body as continuous with the environment - as thoroughly social yet stubbornly material - has led to conceptualizing the fluidity of embodiment, rethinking the matter of the body as dynamic. This is a move beyond a strictly social constructionist account of the body toward a "mattering" of the body, where agency arises not only from subjectivity but from other forms of energy, coursing below the level of conscious subject identity. These forces move bodies and constitute bodies in this movement.³¹

It is clear that Libeskind has used our bodies to propel us into some Holocaust sensations. It was such a monstrous event, he seems to say, that it can never be conveyed by statistics and photographs, it is beyond language, it is only by turning to our bodies that there is any hope of feeling it / knowing it. Further, there are infinite ways of knowing through the body. There are as many meaning potentials in this place as there are visitors and sensations. The museum refuses to lock down the Holocaust to any confined meaning. The museum insists, by highlighting the visitor's body, that the Holocaust is an open event, not capable of being owned by any group, not even by the Jewish people. Moving away from affect for a moment, it is evident, therefore, that one of the museum's political messages is that the Holocaust can happen again and that we should be on guard.

Libeskind describes the effect of the museum. "The Jewish museum has a multivalent relation to its context. It acts as a lens magnifying the vectors of history in order to make the continuity of spaces visible."³² This is a significant statement by the architect in making sense of the building. Further, at some point around or during a museum visit, the visitor discovers that it is heavy with symbols. Libeskind explains the symbolism of the Garden of Exile and Emigration.

The columns contain earth and an underground irrigation system which permits willow oak to emerge and bind together at the top. Forty-eight of these columns are filled with the earth of Berlin and stand for 1948 - the formation of the State of Israel. The one central column contains the earth of Jerusalem and stands for Berlin itself.³³

These are not transparent symbols, they are symbols that need explaining. Discovery of the symbols seems textually rich, but also entirely superfluous. Being in the garden has already been such a powerful experience, do we need to know it through symbols? We have felt / known it through our bodies. The symbols function as added layers and, therefore, have the meaning effect of highlighting the fact that we have first known the

³¹ Elizabeth Wissinger, *op. cit.* p. 231.

³² Bernhard Schenider, *Daniel Libeskind: Jewish Museum Berlin*, Munich, Prestel Verlag, 1999, p. 27.

³³ *Ibid.* p. 40.

place through affective responses rather than through the intellect. The cerebral nature of the symbols points us back to the body. It has been more powerful to know the garden through the body.

The museum is a controversial space, early critics pondered whether it was likely to “turn German - Jewish history into a Disney spectacle”³⁴. The “Disney” accusation had been heard before by the foundation project director, Ken Gorbey, a New Zealander who had worked on Te Papa. Reading some of the early critiques gathered by Klein³⁵ about this immersive experience, one sees that there has been difficulty in finding a language to describe the achievement, even by the staff which seems to have been split between anxiety that the museum institution was losing its traditional authority and, by contrast, delight that the space was question-raising. The language of affect, however, helps us to speak about this space without either accepting the loss of museum authority or Disneyfication.

Conceptualising a museum as offering either traditional authority or a Disneylike space crucially ascribes almost no power to the visitor. If the museum is seen to have a traditional authority then it is a didactic institution which tells people how to make sense of history. If we look at the apparent polar opposite, a site synonymous with Disneyland³⁶, we find the same assumption of no visitor power. If we understand this place, however, through the multiples of affect, we discover Deleuze and Guattari’s “lines of flight”³⁷, the infinity of possibilities discovered through the body that empower visitors to feel and make choices.

As if to underscore the power of the visitor in the tunnel roads of the Jewish Museum Berlin, we find what amounts to a museological critique embedded in the museum. Tucked away in very small cases along the walls of the tunnel roads are original objects. Spectacles, a book, some photographs... they function not only as relics with direct links to real people, but to show us how empty and powerless a museum object can be. We look at the photographs and spectacles and wonder why we are doing so. The power of the self in being in the tunnel overwhelms the little objects. When we go upstairs and visit the conventional spaces with their photographs, maps, oral histories and swathes of curatorial text we miss the terrifying and exhilarating space below.

Conclusion

The visitor is empowered by a visit to these three museums and their affective exhibitions. The Jewish Museum Berlin moves beyond representation by forcing possible exhibition effects, via affect, thus centring the visitor and decentering the museum and its objects. The museum, therefore, more or less, silences itself, passing the role and power of sense making and feeling to its visitors. Clearly, enabling a visitor to be affectively active in history is a dynamic museum achievement. Future consideration, however, needs to be given to the apparent blurring that is occurring between museums and memorials, memorials being often metaphoric and intellectually demanding of visitors. The impact of conventional museums as effective object-laden spaces needs also to be examined as those museums appear to pale beside affective exhibition.

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³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ In the Klein quote the idea of Disneyland is used evidently to mean a politically vacant entertainment place. I strongly resist the position that popular culture has no power and that its participants are intellectually passive.

³⁷ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, *op cit.*

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EL PROTAGONISMO DE LOS VISITANTES DENTRO DEL MUSEO

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RESUMEN

Analizar cuál debe ser el protagonismo de los visitantes que se acercan a los museos implica preguntarse antes por qué va la gente a los museos, qué esperan encontrar en ellos y qué experiencia se llevan después de su visita. De eso dependerá que vuelvan o no de nuevo a visitarlos. Es evidente que, a pesar del aumento de visitantes experimentado dentro de los museos debido al desarrollo del turismo cultural, es aún más numeroso el grupo de personas que no se acercan a los museos y que, por tanto, no poseen un conocimiento mínimo de lo que contienen sus salas. Pero lo que es más importante, es conocer las causas por las que una gran mayoría de la población, como pueden ser los jóvenes, no tienen ningún interés por acercarse a los museos, al considerar que no pueden aportarles nada importante a sus vidas. Ante esta realidad, el museo ha de reaccionar para conseguir que la sociedad se conciencie de la importancia que tiene el conocer y disfrutar de la cultura que nos ha sido transmitida. Para ello, el museo ha de asumir modelos más participativos, donde los visitantes sean sujetos activos en la programación y en el desarrollo de las exposiciones. Basándose en las teorías del comisariado colaborativo, propias de una nueva pedagogía cultural, está surgiendo un nuevo modelo de museo, el museo social, que pretende ser un museo participativo, comunitario y abierto al diálogo con el público. De su aceptación o no dependerá, en gran medida, que el público acuda o no a los museos.

Palabras Clave: Público, museo social, comisariado colaborativo, pedagogía cultural.

* * *

A la hora de estudiar la relación estrecha que se da entre el museo y sus visitantes, hemos de detenernos en el análisis de algunas preguntas clave que hemos de hacernos para saber por dónde hemos de caminar a la hora de presentar las colecciones que el museo alberga.

1. ¿Por qué la gente va a los museos?

En primer lugar, hemos de preguntarnos por qué la gente visita los museos. Diversos son los motivos que llevan al público a visitar los museos, que pueden estar entre la mera curiosidad personal, el buscar nuevas relaciones sociales, identificarse con personas de un determinado estatus social, pasar un rato agradable o contemplar, descubrir y experimentar sensaciones y significados nuevos. Conseguir que todos estos objetivos puedan colmar los anhelos y expectativas de los visitantes no resulta fácil y, por eso, los museos, a la hora de programar sus exposiciones, han de buscar los mecanismos didácticos y pedagógicos necesarios capaces de comunicar un mensaje claro, global y significativo que sea capaz de llegar eficazmente al visitante. No es de extrañar que se hayan llevado a cabo una serie de investigaciones sobre cómo reforzar las visitas de los grupos y cómo planificar las experiencias de los

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El protagonismo de los visitantes dentro del museo

visitantes a partir de un contenido dado. De ahí que se haya dado una gran importancia al desarrollo de la investigación del público, teniendo presente no sólo el marketing tradicional, sino también las estrategias de desarrollo de los diferentes públicos fundamentándose en los conocimientos ofrecidos por la psicología. A partir de las experiencias realizadas en este campo, se ha profundizado en las reacciones que los visitantes tienen cuando se encuentran dentro del museo. Ya no se trata tanto de preguntarnos por qué debe venir la gente a los museos, sino de comenzar a cuestionarnos por qué lo hacen cuando tienen otras muchas oportunidades de disfrutar y divertirse de manera más lúdica y festiva.

El conocimiento del público que se acerca a los museos es fundamental a la hora de programar las exposiciones y las diversas actividades con el objeto de lograr que, quienes los visitan, experimenten un cierto grado de satisfacción. Mérito de los estudiosos estadounidenses ha sido el estudio del público llevado a cabo ya desde comienzos del siglo XX cuando Benjamin Gilman (1916) escribió su artículo sobre la “el cansancio de los museos” y mostraba la dificultad que un visitante cualquiera experimenta a la hora de situarse ante las obras de arte. Pocos años más tarde, el mismo A. W. Melton (1935), alertaba de que los visitantes solían escapar de las exposiciones por la primera salida que encontraban a su paso. Y dado que los conservadores no estaban en condiciones de estudiar las características de los visitantes del museo, era necesario buscar gente especializada que pudiera analizar las características del visitante que se acerca a los museos.

La American Association of Museums, consciente de que es preciso llevar a cabo un estudio serio sobre el público que va a los museos, invitó a Edwuard S. Robinson (1928), profesor de psicología en la Universidad de Yale, para que dirigiera sus investigaciones en dicho campo. Éste, acompañado de A. W. Melton (1935), se puso a trabajar publicando sus primeras conclusiones. Los visitantes serán sometidos a una serie de experiencias museográficas, de manera que se pueda conseguir la información necesaria sobre el comportamiento que éstos tienen cuando se ponen delante de un cuadro. Todos sus movimientos, reacciones y el tiempo que pasan junto a una obra de arte, son analizados minuciosamente para ver qué estrategias se han de seguir a la hora de presentar las colecciones y que puedan ser apreciadas y valoradas por el público de manera satisfactoria.

Podemos decir que, mientras en los años 20 y 30 del siglo pasado, los estudiosos analizaban el comportamiento del visitante, durante los años 40 y 50 e incluso en los 60, experimenta un mayor desarrollo la idea de la exposición como mensaje (Hernández, 2011:223). Pero también sufre las críticas de los que cuestionan dichas teorías, muy unidas a las que soportaban los medios de comunicación, manifestadas en el análisis de la audiencia y en el estudio de los efectos del mensaje sobre los visitantes (Schiele, 1992:79). A partir de los años 60 el análisis se centra, principalmente, en el estudio de la eficacia a corto plazo de los media sobre los visitantes o receptores (Breton y Proulx, 1989:149). Las evaluaciones que se realizaban durante los años 20 y 30 se basaban en las observaciones realizadas sobre los visitantes, mientras que en los 40 y 50 se tenían más en cuenta las entrevistas que se les hacían. Dentro de este contexto se inician las primeras reflexiones sobre la concepción del diseño de las exposiciones, que se aplicará a los museos científicos, donde se desarrollará la museología de la idea.

La evaluación de las exposiciones surge con los primeros estudios sobre los visitantes. Estos han tenido un gran desarrollo desde los años 60 y han sido determinantes, en muchos casos, en el proceso de elaboración de las exposiciones. El interés de este tipo de estudios surge en Estados Unidos en los centros educativos (Scriven, 1967). Con posterioridad, será aplicado a otros medios de educación informal como los museos. Uno de los primeros en aplicar la evaluación fue H. Shettel (1968), que la

aplicó a la exposición *The Vision of Man*, organizada en varios museos norteamericanos. Por su parte, Screven (1976) definirá la evaluación como la apreciación sistemática del valor de una presentación, de una unidad de exposición, de una sala de exposición, de una película, de un folleto o de una visita guiada, en función de los objetivos educativos y con el propósito de tomar decisiones al respecto. De este modo, distingue dos tipos de evaluaciones: la evaluación formativa que se desarrolla durante la concepción y realización de una exposición, y la evaluación sumativa que se realiza después de la apertura de la exposición.

Es evidente que, poco a poco, se va desarrollando el concepto de “estudios de visitantes”, en un intento de mediar en la relación que existe entre los visitantes y los museos. A finales de los años 80, el estudio del público conduce a la investigación de las conductas y reacciones que los visitantes tienen dentro de los museos, tal y como lo exponen Falk y Dierking (1992) en *The Museum Experience* y el mismo Falk (2009) en su libro *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience*. A través de sus estudios nos van mostrando cómo cada visitante tiene una experiencia distinta de la exposición según sea su nivel de conocimientos o sus expectativas de lo que espera ver. La disposición del visitante será un aspecto fundamental a tener en cuenta a la hora de analizar su comportamiento dentro del museo. Cada visitante se acerca al museo con una disposición y unas perspectivas distintas y su percepción de lo que ha visto será diferente según haya sido su experiencia. Esto significa que el visitante se convierte en un elemento activo dentro del museo. Ya no se contenta con contemplar los objetos, sino que exige se le dé la oportunidad de ser protagonista activo, crítico y creativo no sólo en la exposición, sino también durante todo el proceso de la misma. El visitante necesita entrar en diálogo con el museo y decir su palabra para que se le tenga en cuenta. En otras palabras, el visitante desea implicarse activamente a la hora de definir cuáles han de ser los contenidos que han de exponerse.

2. ¿Qué espera encontrar el público en los museos?

Con frecuencia solemos escuchar la queja de que la gente y, en especial los jóvenes, no van a los museos porque éstos no suelen ofrecerles nada interesante. Y, sin embargo, resulta sorprendente que, siendo los museos lugares donde se guardan y exponen los objetos que definen lo que solemos denominar la cultura, donde se intenta conservarla y promocionarla, no sepan cómo atraer al público en general y a los jóvenes en particular. La experiencia nos dice que vamos a los museos de pequeños, con el colegio o el instituto y, en alguna ocasión con la familia. A medida que nos hacemos mayores, vamos poco a los museos y, cuando lo hacemos, vamos como turistas intentando justificarnos, dotando a nuestro viaje de un cierto contenido cultural. Pero los jóvenes se van a otros lugares, desaparecen de los museos o les echamos a la fuerza hasta que se convierten en ciudadanos adultos o adecenados, como afirmaba una joven en el *Diario de Noticias, Milenio*, de Internet, en mayo de 2006, y entonces vuelven a los museos con sus hijos como cerrando el ciclo. Este comentario de la joven nos demuestra que existe una falta de conexión con los intereses del público y, en especial de los jóvenes, y que no siempre se escucha con atención las sugerencias que se hacen para remediar las carencias que, a veces, se encuentran en las exposiciones.

Los estudios de comportamiento cultural nos indican la relativa frecuencia con que el público visita los museos. De hecho, entre 1985 y 2008, en España apenas se llegaba a un 31% de gente que había visitado un museo en el último año, frente a un 35% que no había visitado nunca un museo (Alcalde y Rueda, 2008). Si, además, vemos cómo hoy se están llevando a cabo estudios sobre el no-público de los museos, caemos en la cuenta de la falta de asistencia generalizada a los mismos. Algunos autores

distinguen entre visitantes potenciales y no-público, considerando a los primeros como aquellos que no han utilizado los museos, pero que no se descarta que puedan visitarlos en el futuro; mientras que los segundos serían aquellas personas para las que existen barreras de exclusión, que no les permiten visitarlos. Es verdad que el número de personas que tradicionalmente visitan los museos han aumentado, al igual que lo ha hecho la oferta museística, dato que corrobora ese aumento. También el turismo y la participación de los museos como productos dentro de la oferta turística. Pero no hemos de olvidar a los no usuarios de los museos que constituyen el porcentaje más elevado de personas que no visitan los museos y que, además, existen otros sectores de población que prescinden totalmente de ellos. ¿Causas? Tal vez porque los museos suelen dirigirse a los segmentos de población que les prestan atención o porque otros sectores no encuentran en los museos respuestas a sus problemáticas e intereses y, en consecuencia, no experimentan la necesidad de verse incluidos (Alcalde y Rueda, 2007).

Si el público no encuentra lo que busca en los museos, se olvida de ir a ellos, tal vez porque tienen otros problemas más acuciantes que resolver, y los museos no pueden hacer nada por él. Para mucha gente, los museos son sinónimo de aburrimiento porque está prohibido charlar y comentar con los amigos lo interesante que resulta lo que estás viendo, sino que has de guardar silencio y, acto seguido, comentar con ellos, que te estás aburriendo soberanamente. Las antiguas concepciones culturales poseían un fuerte carácter fetichista y elitista al rodear al objeto único e irrepetible de una reverencia casi sagrada. Pero esta visión fue sacrificada hace tiempo por la sociedad de consumo y el supuesto “estado de bienestar”, dando lugar a una cultura basada en el diseño y no en el arte, en el disco y no en el concierto, en el cine y no en el teatro. Sin embargo, hoy cualquier persona tiene a su alcance las herramientas necesarias para pertenecer a esa élite fetichista. Pero, ¿qué interés pueden tener los jóvenes en ello?

El público y los jóvenes necesitan satisfacer sus deseos e inquietudes de una manera realista y natural. Y tiene que haber otras formas de romper la inercia que les impide visitar los museos. La experiencia que en muchos museos se lleva a cabo con la celebración de la “Noche de los Museos”, donde se abren las puertas hasta altas horas de la madrugada, y en la que acuden numerosas personas de todas las edades es una prueba de que a los jóvenes no sólo les interesa el botellón. Habría que preguntarse si tienen otras alternativas a las horas en que masivamente han decidido encontrarse con su grupo de amigos de la misma edad. El público necesita contar con museos más participativos donde pueda sentirse protagonista, necesita que se le ofrezca algo que tenga que ver con su vida, con sus experiencias, con sus necesidades emocionales.

El museo está obligado a ofrecer unos servicios que se acerquen lo más posible a las expectativas del visitante, teniendo siempre presente que el museo está llamado a ejercer una función social y cultural que le otorga su razón de ser. Por eso es importante para el museo conocer lo que el visitante espera encontrar en su visita, y cuál es su opinión después de haberla realizado, con el objeto de detectar en qué áreas se ha de actuar y mejorar su actuación para que la experiencia del visitante sea satisfactoria. Porque un visitante satisfecho repetirá su visita al museo y animará a otros futuros visitantes. La satisfacción que el visitante experimenta tras la salida del museo es determinante para el diseño de una metodología que permita al museo identificar los aspectos que mayor repercusión tienen en la opinión y en la satisfacción de los visitantes. El museo ha de identificar los elementos y componentes esenciales de la experiencia de la visita que intervienen de manera decisiva en la construcción de la satisfacción del visitante.

Hoy constatamos que se está perdiendo la confianza en las instituciones culturales y museísticas, así como en los medios de comunicación tradicionales. Por el contrario, ha aumentado dicha confianza en las redes sociales de Internet, como Facebook, Twitter, Flickr o YouTube, y todo lo que en ellas se comenta es objeto de un continuo seguimiento y análisis. Por eso, si el público y, en especial los jóvenes, no van a los museos, habrá que ver cómo hacemos para que, a través de las redes sociales y los blogs, consigamos que el público se adentre en el colectivo y participe activamente con sus opiniones y sugerencias. Nunca como hoy se han dado las circunstancias propicias para crear entornos colaborativos en los que se pueda trabajar en red y ser protagonistas al mismo tiempo, aportando ideas y experiencias propias.

Si hoy los modelos tradicionales de marketing y comunicación ya no nos sirven para atraer al público a los museos, habrá que ver qué otros contenidos, canales y modos de relación nos pueden ayudar a conseguirlo. Los museos necesitan crear nuevas estrategias de diseño de exposiciones y nuevas formas de comunicación. Invertir más en innovación y apostar por dinámicas colaborativas será una forma de afrontar el serio problema de la gran ausencia de público en los museos. Habrá que realizar un esfuerzo para personalizar las diferentes audiencias que tienen los museos para poder llegar a todos los públicos. No es lo mismo presentar un museo a un niño de la misma manera que lo hacemos a un adulto, ni contempla un cuadro del mismo modo un especialista que un visitante cualquiera. Los museos tienen que cambiar, han de estar dispuestos a abrir sus puertas a todos los públicos y a todas las audiencias, por muy diversificadas que éstas sean. Porque, si es verdad que existen diferentes modelos de museos, también lo es que los visitantes aportan múltiples expectativas y experiencias al entrar en contacto con las obras expuestas (Solano, 2012). Precisamente, esta pluralidad de modelos, a veces muy fragmentada, está abriendo horizontes para crear una dinámica interrelacional entre el público, el arte y los museos. Sólo así será posible dar a cada uno el protagonismo que le corresponde.

3. ¿Qué experiencia se lleva el público tras su visita al museo?

Lois H. Silverman (2009), profesor de la Universidad de Indiana, afirma que el público que entra en un museo, independientemente de los contenidos que éste ofrezca, construye significados mediante un proceso constante de remembranza y conexión. A medida que los visitantes se adentran en el recorrido del museo y contemplan los objetos, son invitados a recordar otras experiencias tenidas en diferentes lugares. Se trata de un proceso abierto y multidireccional donde se van yuxtaponiendo ideas y experiencias de ayer y de hoy. Cuando el visitante entra en contacto con la obra, éste experimenta una serie de sensaciones cognitivas, donde el presente y el pasado se entremezclan de manera extraordinaria. La cultura pone una dimensión subjetiva porque surge como fruto de la acción de unas personas concretas que viven en unas circunstancias dadas. Por eso el museo es el resultado de las aportaciones de sus diferentes públicos y está llamado a exponer las manifestaciones de su sensibilidad y de las ideas de todas ellas, a las que está llamado a servir. El público es plural y, en consecuencia, el museo no está para servir a sus dirigentes políticos, ni para ratificar un concepto exclusivista de identidad, sino que ha de estar para servir y satisfacer a los visitantes. Si no existe una imagen única de público, el museo puede con mayor facilidad convertirse en agente generador y potenciador de comunidades y en un instrumento de inclusión, evitando con ello dar una imagen evanescente y mercantil del visitante.

Una de las tareas de los museos es atraer nuevos visitantes y, al mismo tiempo, saber gestionar de forma óptima esa experiencia, de tal manera que los visitantes no sólo repitan la visita, sino que se conviertan en portavoces de los valores que dicha visita

posee, incitando a sus conocidos a que tengan esa misma experiencia. Importante es atraer nuevos visitantes a los museos, pero también lo es intentar establecer una serie de relaciones estables con los mismos y que se consiga que se impliquen personalmente con el museo, de manera que esa implicación genere un nuevo valor en relación al encuentro entre visitante y museo.

Aquí deberíamos hacernos la pregunta sobre de qué dependerá que el visitante vuelva de nuevo a visitar el museo. Dado que el museo ofrece una serie de servicios que pueden proporcionar una experiencia gratificante y de utilidad para quien lo visita, podemos afirmar que se han satisfecho las necesidades y expectativas previas de las personas que han visitado el museo. Según Ojeda Sánchez (2008:59), la satisfacción final está condicionada por dos componentes complementarios: las expectativas previas con las que el visitante se acerca al museo y su percepción de los servicios que se le han ofrecido. De ellas dependerá si la satisfacción es positiva porque la percepción supera a las expectativas o negativa porque las expectativas superan a la percepción del visitante. El primer elemento escapa al control del museo porque éste no puede saber con certeza qué necesidades desea satisfacer el visitante. Sin embargo, el segundo elemento sobre la percepción que el visitante obtiene sí puede controlarlo el museo, puesto que desarrolla los servicios que el público recibe.

4. El visitante, sujeto activo del museo

Cuando hablamos de que los museos han de asumir modelos más participativos, estamos asegurando que esto supone algo más que oír la opinión de los visitantes e implica hacer que, en ocasiones, puedan formar parte de los procesos del museo. Partiendo de esta idea, y ligado al fenómeno del *crowd power*, surge el *crowdcurating* o comisariado colaborativo, que podría ser un medio importante de potenciar la participación de los visitantes dentro de los museos. Hoy constatamos que la labor educativa y cultural se mueve en una dinámica abierta a nuevos proyectos interdisciplinarios, donde tienen cabida artistas, educadores, museólogos y cualquier otra persona que se mueva dentro del ámbito de la cultura. Podemos afirmar que ha surgido un nuevo marco de trabajo colaborativo entre las distintas instituciones culturales que ponen su punto de mira en la pedagogía cultural, como una manera de trabajar en dicho campo de manera colaborativa, y que pensamos debería aplicarse también al campo de los museos. La pedagogía cultural apuesta por un espacio colaborativo en red donde se elaboran proyectos educativos y artísticos, abiertos siempre a las diversas disciplinas. Tiene como objetivo principal formar grupos de trabajo interdisciplinarios que sean capaces de aprender, a través del diálogo, a trabajar en colaboración con otras personas que se encuentran en entornos socioculturales diversos, con el propósito de diseñar proyectos futuros.

Para llevar a cabo este proyecto de comisariado colaborativo se utilizan todas las herramientas propias de las culturas juveniles como la imagen, la instalación, los mapas y cartografías alternativas, y formatos más interdisciplinarios como el vídeo interactivo, las plataformas de Internet 2.0, el diseño participativo, las aplicaciones de realidad aumentada, infografías animadas o la contra-publicidad. Todo ello para asegurar que el trabajo colaborativo posibilite la creación de espacios de aprendizaje diversos entre todas las personas involucradas. En el fondo, se pretende profundizar en las distintas formas de colaborar y producir proyectos pedagógicos y participativos dentro de las instituciones y centros educativos, sociales y culturales. Su metodología no puede ser sino participativa, en la que todos tratan de aportar sus ideas a través del estudio compartido, los talleres de análisis y diseño y, sobre todo, de la investigación participativa.

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No es de extrañar que, cuando nos enfrentamos a un proyecto pedagógico colaborativo dentro del museo, sea preciso romper con todos aquellos esquemas que impiden a la persona encontrar su sitio. Ante un determinado proyecto de exposición es preciso que comisarios, artistas, educadores, museólogos y públicos estén dispuestos a entrar en una dinámica de ruptura para abrirse a nuevos procesos más creativos. Porque, en la medida que todos se cuestionen el proceso seguido, serán capaces de sugerir nuevas formas de abordar cualquier proyecto artístico y museológico, utilizando la práctica pedagógica adecuada. A nadie se le oculta que la práctica colaborativa implica la existencia de tensiones inevitables cuando trabajan juntas diferentes personas que representan a instituciones y pensamientos diferentes dentro de los marcos actuales de la política cultural. Que existan tensiones no ha de ser considerado como algo negativo, sino que deben considerarse como momentos en los que pueden surgir nuevos aprendizajes de colaboración. El museo ha de tener en cuenta que la exposición ha de ser considerada como un dispositivo pedagógico relacional donde esté permitida la participación de los educadores, conservadores, artistas y públicos diversos. Tal vez el museo deba plantearse cómo crear, a través del espacio, el cuerpo y la palabra, un clima relacional capaz de cuestionar aquellas metodologías de trabajo que, por obsoletas, impiden ofrecer otras miradas sobre la realidad que vivimos en nuestra sociedad.

Hoy, a la hora de programar una exposición, contamos con nuevas fórmulas que hacen posible que el visitante sea un elemento activo dentro de la misma. La utilización de la museografía interactiva permite que el público pueda decidir qué es lo que quiere ver, pero es preciso ir más allá si queremos que una exposición sea realmente participativa. El visitante no puede ser considerado como un mero espectador, sino que ha de ser el protagonista de la visita. Y no sólo eso, sino que tendrá que ser partícipe también del proyecto de la exposición. Un ejemplo lo tenemos en la exposición fotográfica *“Click! A Crowd-Curated Exhibition”*, organizada por el Museo de Brooklyn con el significativo título de “La sabiduría de la multitud”. Dicha exposición se llevó a cabo en tres fases distintas, en las que primero se hizo una convocatoria a los artistas para que enviaran sus respuestas, el público y la comunidad *on line* del museo eligieron las obras y, finalmente, se realizó la exposición en el museo. Todo el proceso se acompañó con diferentes evaluaciones que ofrecieron una visión de cómo el público percibe una obra en función de su experiencia previa. La exposición tuvo muchas críticas por parte de los analistas del arte, pero James Surowiecki (2004) contestó en el blog del Smithsonian señalando que, a lo largo de la historia del arte, siempre se ha considerado mucho más el saber de las élites que la opinión del público, pero que la exposición *Click* era el verdadero reflejo de lo que piensa la colectividad.

Otros museos americanos, como el Museo Smithsonian, el Museo Walker o el Zoo de Houston, han realizado exposiciones colaborativas. Sin embargo, en España ahora se está comenzando a utilizar estos modelos de comisariado colectivo, en los que el público es invitado a participar de manera activa en el proceso. Así, la Biblioteca Nacional, ha propuesto a su comunidad *on line* que colabore a través de Facebook mediante la propuesta de textos para su primera exposición sobre libros de artista. Por otra parte, el proyecto de Museos Científicos Coruñeses “Dona tu Neurona” solicita la participación de la comunidad escolar en la creación de la exposición, y el Centro de Cultura Contemporánea de Barcelona ha organizado el proyecto “Pantalla Global” creando una plataforma virtual con varias líneas temáticas en las que el público puede participar enviando sus propuestas audiovisuales. Y el Museo del Prado ha inaugurado una exposición en la que unos 490 visitantes del museo se convirtieron, sin saberlo, en los protagonistas de la creación fotográfica realizada por Francesco Jodice.

No cabe duda que Internet ha hecho posible que el público pueda ser actor y no sólo espectador pasivo de las exposiciones. Pero hemos de seguir avanzando para crear exposiciones colaborativas en las que el público será realmente protagonista. Es más, aunque somos conscientes de que serán muchos los impedimentos que se le pongan, sobre todo por parte de los grandes museos e instituciones culturales. En la era de la participación, los visitantes de los museos ya no se conforman con recibir información sobre una obra, sino que desean participar en la planificación de las exposiciones, implicarse en la organización de las actividades culturales y ayudar en el proceso de promoción de las mismas. Y es posible que hasta estén dispuestos a colaborar económicamente para financiar actividades culturales que sean de su interés. Ahí están las nuevas formas de financiación colectiva, como el *crowdfunding*, o de creación colectiva como el *crowdsourcing*, que vienen en auxilio de las viejas fórmulas de financiación como las subvenciones o el patrocinio. Que existan plataformas como Verkami o Lanzanos.com, que facilitan la búsqueda de financiación de muchos artistas para que lleven a cabo sus proyectos, es un signo de que algo está cambiando en el mundo de los museos.

Es verdad que es solo un apunte de unos pocos, que aún queda mucho por hacer para atraer al no-público a los museos. Pero estas pequeñas señales de cambio nos están indicando que algo nuevo está brotando dentro de los museos. Podemos decir que nos encontramos ante un nuevo modelo de museo, el *museo social*, que pretende ser un museo participativo, comunitario y abierto al diálogo con su público. Este modelo de museo es consciente de que no sólo ha de servir a los visitantes, sino que ha de implicarles activamente en la construcción del conocimiento artístico y museológico. Y a esto está ayudando la sociedad de la Información quien, gracias a las Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación, está llamada a convertirse en la sociedad del conocimiento. De tal manera que la gestión documental, sirviéndose de las herramientas utilizadas en los aprendizajes colaborativos, se transforma en la gestión del saber, como ya se está viendo en la Web 3.0 o Web semántica, y donde las tecnologías de inteligencia artificial asumirán un gran protagonismo (Quijano Pascual, 2012). De hecho, los museos virtuales están invitando a los visitantes para que se conviertan en críticos y aporten sus propios contenidos como si fueran los propios comisarios de las exposiciones. El visitante puede ser a la vez, creador y conservador de los contenidos que otros generan, facilitando así una nueva forma de conocimiento colectivo y haciendo posible un nuevo modelo de museo que no puede existir sin la presencia activa del público.

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PUTTING THE VISITOR FIRST

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ABSTRACT

Analysing the role of protagonist that museum visitors should be granted means first asking why people go to museums, what they expect to find in them, and what experience they take away with them after the visit, since whether or not they visit them again will depend on this. Despite the increase in the numbers of visitors to museums owing to the growth of cultural tourism, there are evidently even more people who do not go to museums, and who therefore have no knowledge at all of what is to be found in them. The most important thing, however, is to ascertain why large majorities among the population, one possible instance being young people, show no interest in going to museums in the belief they have nothing important to contribute to their lives. In the face of this, the museum has to react to make society aware of the importance of learning about and enjoying the culture that has been transmitted to us. The museum therefore needs to adopt more participative models where visitors will play an active role in programming and conducting exhibitions. On the basis of the theories of collaborative curatorship proper to a new cultural pedagogy, a new model of the museum is emerging. This is the social museum, whose aim is to become a participative community museum open to dialogue with the public. Whether or not the public will go to museums depends largely on its acceptance.

Key Words: Public, social museum, collaborative curatorship, cultural pedagogy.

RÉSUMÉ

Primauté aux visiteurs dans le musée

Analyser la sorte de primauté que doivent recevoir les visiteurs de musée implique d'abord que l'on se demande pourquoi les gens vont au musée, ce qu'ils espèrent y trouver et quelle expérience ils ont retiré depuis la visite. De cela dépendra qu'ils voudront ou non faire une nouvelle visite. En dépit de l'augmentation du nombre des visiteurs de musée due à la croissance du tourisme culturel, il y a même évidemment plus de gens qui ne vont pas au musée et qui n'ont alors aucune connaissance de tout ce que l'on peut y trouver. Cependant, la chose la plus importante est de vérifier pourquoi une grande majorité de ces gens (un exemple possible étant les jeunes) ne montre aucun intérêt à aller au musée, considérant qu'ils ne peuvent rien apporter d'important à leur vie. Face à cette réalité, le musée doit réagir pour rendre la société consciente de l'importance de la connaissance et du plaisir qui nous ont été transmis. Le musée a alors besoin d'adopter plus de modèles participatifs où les visiteurs joueront un rôle actif dans la programmation et au développement des expositions. Sur la base des théories de la conservation collaborative, propre à une nouvelle pédagogie culturelle, un nouveau modèle de musée est apparu, le musée social, qui se veut un musée participatif, communautaire et ouvert au dialogue avec le public. Que le public aille ou non au musée dépend largement de cet accord.

* * *

When studying the close relationship that holds between the museum and its visitors, we should first analyse some of the key questions to be asked in ascertaining the path to follow when presenting the collections housed within the museum.

1. Why do people go to museums?

First of all, we must ask ourselves why people visit museums. There are a variety of motives prompting the public to go to museums, ranging from mere personal curiosity to a search for new social relations, identification with people of a certain social status, and the desire to spend a pleasant time or contemplate, discover and experience new sensations and significances. It is not easy to cater for all the longings and expectations of visitors, and so when programming exhibitions, museums have to search for didactic and pedagogical mechanisms that are able to communicate a clear message of global significance which will reach visitors effectively. It is no wonder that research has been carried out on how to reinforce group visits and how to plan visitor experiences on the basis of a given content. Considerable importance has therefore been attached to research on the public, taking into consideration not only traditional marketing but also strategies for the development of different publics whose foundations lie in the knowledge offered by psychology. Experiments in this field have looked more closely at the reactions of visitors inside the museum. It is no longer so much a question of asking why people ought to come to museums as of starting to wonder why they do so when they have so many other leisure options of a more festive nature.

Knowledge of the public that goes to museums is essential for programming exhibitions and other activities aimed at securing a certain degree of visitor satisfaction. American scholars have been engaged in meritorious study of the museum public since the early 20th century, when Benjamin Gilman (1916) wrote his article on “museum fatigue” and showed the difficulty experienced by the average visitor in taking up a position before works of art. Not many years later, A.W. Melton (1935) alerted museums to the fact that visitors generally escaped from exhibitions through the first exit they encountered. And since curators were not in a position to study the characteristics of museum visitors, it became necessary to find specialised people who could analyse those characteristics.

The American Association of Museums, aware of the need for a seriously conducted study of the museum-going public, invited Edward S. Robinson (1928), a professor of psychology at the University of Yale, to direct its research in this field. Together with A.W. Melton (1935), he commenced work and the first conclusions were duly published. Visitors were to be subjected to a series of museographic experiences so as to obtain the necessary information on their behaviour when standing in front of a picture. All their movements and reactions, and the exact time they spent alongside each art work, were to be minutely analysed to see which strategies needed to be followed in presenting collections, and which would be appreciated and valued as satisfactory by the public.

Whereas researchers in the 1920s and 1930s analysed visitor behaviour, those of the 1940s, the 1950s and even the 1960s worked more on developing the idea of the exhibition as message (Hernández 2011: 223). However, this notion was also criticised by those who questioned the theories supporting it, very closely linked to those applied to the mass media, and manifested in audience analyses and the study of the effects of the message upon visitors (Schiele 1992: 79). After the 1960s, the analysis was focused principally on the study of the short-term effectiveness of media on visitors or receivers (Breton and Proulx 1989: 149). The assessments made during the 1920s and 1930s were based on observation of visitors, whilst those of the 1940s and 1950s attached more importance to interviews with them. It is within this context that the first reflections emerged on the conception of exhibition design, and it was through their application to science museums that the museology of the idea was developed.

Evaluation of exhibits appears with the very first visitor studies. Such analyses have undergone considerable development since the 1960s, and have been decisive in many cases for the process of setting up exhibitions. Interest in this type of study emerged in the educational centres of the United States (Scriven 1967), being later applied to other media of informal education like museums. One of the first to apply evaluation was H. Shettel (1968), whose object of research was *The Vision of Man*, an exhibition held at several American museums. Scriven (1976) meanwhile defines evaluation as the systematic appreciation of the value of a presentation, of an exhibition unit, of an exhibition room, of a film, of a leaflet or of a guided visit in terms of educational objectives, and with the purpose of taking decisions in that respect. In this way, he distinguishes two types of evaluation: formative evaluation, which is carried out during the design and installation of an exhibit, and summative evaluation, which is performed after the exhibition has opened.

Evidently, the concept of “visitor studies” is gradually developing in an attempt to mediate in the relationship between visitors and museums. In the late 1980s, visitor studies led to research into the conducts and reactions of visitors inside museums, as expounded by Falk and Dierking (1992) in *The Museum Experience*, and again by Falk (2009) in his book *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience*. These studies show that each visitor has a different experience of the exhibition according to his or her level of knowledge or expectations regarding what is to be seen. The visitor’s predisposition becomes a fundamental factor to take into account when analysing comportment inside the museum. Each visitor goes to the museum with a different predisposition and perspective, and each will have a different perception of what they have seen in accordance with their own experience. This means that the visitor becomes an active element within the museum. No longer content to look at objects, the visitor now demands the chance to be an active, critical and creative protagonist, and not only of the exhibition but also of the whole process leading up to it. Visitors now need to establish a dialogue with the museum in which they can truly have their say. In other words, the visitor wants to be actively involved when it comes to defining the contents to be exhibited.

2. What does the public expect to find in museums?

Complaints are frequently heard that people, and young people in particular, do not go to museums because museums have nothing interesting to offer them. Yet it is surprising, given that museums are places for keeping and exhibiting the objects that define what we call culture, and for trying to preserve and promote it, that they should prove unable to attract the public in general and the young in particular. Experience tells us that we go to museums when we are children, on school trips or occasionally with our families. As we grow older, we go less often to museums, and when we do, we go as tourists, trying to justify ourselves by giving our journey some kind of cultural content. Young people, however, go to different places. They disappear from museums, or are thrown out of them until they become responsible adult citizens, as a young girl claimed on the *Milenio* web page of *Diario de Noticias* in May 2006. They then return to museums with their own children, as though completing a cycle. The girl’s remarks demonstrate that there is a lack of connection with the interests of the public and especially of the young, and that sufficient attention is not always paid to suggestions that might help to remedy the deficiencies sometimes encountered in exhibits.

Studies of cultural behaviour indicate the relative frequency with which the public visits museums. Between 1985 and 2008, in fact, barely 31% of those surveyed in Spain claimed to have visited a museum in the last year, whereas 35% stated they had never visited a museum at all (Alcalde and Rueda 2008). Now that research is moreover being carried out on the non-museum-going public, a realisation is dawning of how widespread the lack of museum attendance is. Some authors distinguish between potential visitors and the non-public, seeing the first as those who have not used

museums but do not rule out visiting them in the future, while the second would be those who are prevented from visiting them by barriers of exclusion. It is true that the number of people who traditionally visit museums has increased, and that this is corroborated by a corresponding increase in what museums have to offer. There is also more tourism, with museums taking part as products available to tourists. However, we must not forget the non-users of museums, who constitute the highest percentage of people who do not visit museums, and neither should it be ignored that there are other sectors of the population that do without them completely. The reason for this may be that museums generally target the segments of the population that give them their attention, or that other sectors do not find answers in museums to their problems or interests, and consequently feel no need to be included (Alcalde and Rueda 2007).

If the public does not find what it is looking for in museums, it will not bother to go to them, perhaps because its members have other more pressing problems which the museum can do nothing about. For many people, museums are synonymous with boredom because visitors are forbidden to chat with their friends and discuss the interesting things they are seeing. Instead they have to remain silent, and so they remark afterwards only on how bored they have been. Former cultural conceptions had a strongly fetishist and elitist character, surrounding the unique and unrepeatable object with an almost sacred reverence. However, this vision was sacrificed some time ago for the consumer society and the supposed “welfare state”, giving rise to a culture based on design rather than art, the disc rather than the concert, and the cinema rather than the theatre. Nevertheless, everybody now has access to the tools required for belonging to that fetishist elite. What interest, though, could the young find in this?

The public and the young need to satisfy their desires and urges in a realistic and natural way, and there have to be other ways to break the inertia that stops them visiting museums. Many museums are now experimenting with specially designated ‘museum nights’, when they remain open well into the early hours and are visited by large numbers of people of all ages, proving that young people are not interested only in drinking. It is worth asking whether they have other alternatives to offer at the times when large groups of youngsters regularly meet up with friends of the same age. Visitors need more participative museums where they can feel like protagonists, and they need to be offered something that has to do with their lives, their experiences and their emotional requirements.

The museum is obliged to offer services that will come as close as possible to the visitor’s expectations, always bearing in mind that the museum is called upon to fulfil a social and cultural function that provides it with its *raison d’être*. That is why it is important for the museum to know what visitors expect to find during a visit, and what opinions they have of it afterwards, in order to detect areas where action is called for and improvements are necessary if the visitor experience is to be satisfactory, for satisfied visitors will return to the museum and encourage other future visitors. The satisfaction felt by a visitor after emerging from a museum is crucial to the design of a methodology which would permit the museum to identify the aspects with most bearing on the opinion and satisfaction of visitors. The museum has to identify the essential elements and components of the visitor’s experience which intervene decisively in the construction of visitor satisfaction.

Today, there is evidence that confidence in cultural institutions and museums is being lost, as it is in the traditional mass media. By contrast, there is growing confidence in the social networks on the internet, like Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and YouTube, whose discussions are constantly monitored and analysed. If the public, and especially the young, do not go to museums, we shall have to see how social networks and blogs can be used to bring the public within the collective and enable it to participate actively with its suggestions and opinions. Never have the circumstances been so propitious as they

are today for the creation of collaborative environments in which people can work online and enjoy the protagonism of contributing their own ideas and experiences.

If the traditional models of marketing and communication are no longer useful for attracting the public to museums, it must be seen what other contents, channels and modes of relation might help us to achieve this. Museums need to create new strategies of exhibition design and new forms of communication. More investment in innovation and collaborative dynamics would be one way of confronting the serious problem of the absence of the public from museums. An effort will have to be made to personalise the different audiences for museums so that every kind of public can be reached. It is not the same thing to show a museum to a child as to present one to an adult, nor is a picture viewed in the same way by a specialist as by an ordinary visitor. Museums must change in readiness to receive all publics and all audiences, however diversified these may be. For while it is true that there are different models for museums, it is also the case that visitors contribute a multitude of expectations and experiences when they come into contact with the works on display (Solano 2012). It is precisely that plurality of models, sometimes very fragmented, which is now opening horizons for the creation of an interrelational dynamic between public, art and museums. Only in this way will it be possible to give each one the protagonism it merits.

3. What experience does the public take away from a visit to the museum?

Lois H. Silverman (2009), a professor at the University of Indiana, asserts that visitors who enter a museum, regardless of its contents, construct meanings through a constant process of remembrance and connection. As visitors progress on their tour of the museum and view the objects, they are invited to recall other experiences they have had in different places. This is an open and multidirectional process in which ideas and experiences from yesterday and today become juxtaposed. When the visitor comes into contact with the art work, he or she experiences a series of cognitive sensations in which past and present are extraordinarily intermingled. Culture adds a subjective dimension because it arises as the result of the action of specific people living in given circumstances. For this reason, the museum is the result of the contributions of its different visitors, and it is therefore destined to serve them by displaying manifestations of all their sensibilities and ideas. The public is plural, and so the museum is not there to serve political leaders or to ratify an exclusivist concept of identity, but should instead serve and satisfy its visitors. If there is no single image of the public, it is easier for the museum to become an agent for the generation and enhancement of communities and an instrument for inclusion, thereby avoiding the danger of thrusting an evanescently mercantile image upon the visitor.

One of the tasks facing museums is that of attracting new visitors and, at the same time, learning how to optimise their experience in such a way that not only will they return, but they will act as spokesmen for the values embodied in that visit, inciting their acquaintances to partake in the same experience. While it is important to attract new visitors to museums, it is also vital to try to establish stable relations with them and involve them personally in the museum, an involvement which will generate new value for the encounter between visitor and museum.

It is at this point that we should ask ourselves what it takes to make a visitor want to visit a museum again. Since the museum offers a series of services that can lead to a gratifying and useful experience for its visitors, we might affirm that the prior needs and expectations of the people who have visited the museum have in such cases been fulfilled. According to Ojeda Sánchez (2008: 59), final satisfaction is conditioned by two complementary components: the prior expectations with which the visitor goes to the museum, and his or her perception of the services that have been provided. The level of satisfaction will depend on these factors, scoring positively if perceptions surpass expectations, and negatively if expectations exceed the visitor's perceptions. The first

factor is beyond the control of the museum, which cannot have any certain knowledge of the needs the visitor wishes to satisfy. However, the second factor, the perception obtained by the visitor, can be controlled by the museum, since it is the museum which manages the services received by the public.

4. The visitor, active subject of the museum

When we say museums need to adopt more participative models, we are affirming that this means not merely listening to visitors' opinions but also accepting that they can occasionally form part of the museum's processes. On the basis of this idea, and in tandem with the phenomenon of 'crowd power', the concept of 'crowdcurating' has emerged, a form of collaborative curatorship which could well prove an important means of increasing visitor participation in museums. It is apparent today that educational and cultural activity is moving dynamically towards an open encounter with new interdisciplinary projects, with room for artists, educationalists, museologists and anyone else moving within the field of culture. It can be affirmed that a new framework for collaborative work has arisen among the different cultural institutions that turn to cultural pedagogy, a field whose collaborative work methods should in our opinion be similarly applied to the field of museums. Cultural pedagogy seeks to create a collaborative network for the production of educational and artistic projects that are always open to the different disciplines. Its main objective is to form interdisciplinary work groups who will be able to learn through dialogue to work in collaboration with other people in different socio-cultural environments, the aim being to design future projects.

A crowd-curating project is carried out with full use of all the tools of young culture, such as the image, the installation, alternative maps and cartographies, and more interdisciplinary formats such as interactive video, internet 2.0 platforms, participative design, augmented reality applications, animated infographs and counterpublicity. All this is to allow collaborative work to create diverse spaces of learning among all the people involved. The ultimate purpose is to explore the different forms of collaboration and produce pedagogical and participative projects within social and cultural institutions and educational centres. The methodology cannot help but be participative, with everyone trying to contribute ideas through shared study, analysis and design workshops and, above all, participative research.

When we embark on a collaborative pedagogical project within the museum, it should come as no surprise that we have to abandon any outlook that prevents a person from finding his or her place. In any particular exhibition project, it is necessary for the curators, artists, educationalists, museologists and visitors to be ready to enter into a dynamics of shedding preconceptions and opening up to more creative processes. As all these agents question the process that is being followed, they will be able to suggest new ways of tackling any artistic and museological project with the right pedagogical practice. Nobody is unaware that collaborative practice implies inevitable tensions, for the different people working together represent different institutions and modes of thought within the current framework of cultural politics. Tensions should not be regarded as something negative but as moments when new collaborative learning can emerge. The museum needs to realise that the exhibition must be considered a relational pedagogical device in which the participation of educationalists, curators, artists and all kinds of visitors is permitted. Maybe the museum should ask itself how space, body and word can be made to create a relational climate with the capacity to question working methods which, being obsolete, prevent us from offering new visions of lived reality in our society.

Today, when programming an exhibit, we have new formulas that make it possible for the visitor to be an active element within it. The use of interactive museography allows the public to decide what it wants to see, but it is necessary to go further if we want an exhibit to be truly participative. The visitor cannot be regarded as a mere spectator, but

must be made into the protagonist of the visit. Furthermore, the visitor must also participate in the exhibition project. We have an example in *Click! A Crowd-Curated Exhibition*, a photography exhibition organised by the Brooklyn Museum under the inspiration of a book significantly entitled “The Wisdom of the Crowds”. The exhibition was held in three different phases. First, artists were called upon to send their responses. Next, the museum’s public and online community chose the works, and finally the exhibition was held in the museum. The whole process was accompanied by various evaluations that offered a view of how the public perceives a work in terms of its prior experience. The exhibition came under a lot of criticism from art analysts, but James Surowiecki (2004) replied on the Smithsonian blog that while the knowledge of the élite has always been much more highly regarded throughout the history of art than the opinion of the public, the exhibition *Click!* was the true reflection of collective thought.

Other American museums, like the Smithsonian Museum, the Walker Museum and Houston Zoo, have organised collaborative exhibitions. However, use is now also starting to be made in Spain of models of collaborative curatorship where the public is invited to take an active part in the process. The Spanish National Library, for instance, has offered its online community the chance to collaborate by proposing texts on Facebook for its first exhibition on artists’ books. In the meantime, “Donate Your Neurone”, a project implemented by the Science Museums of A Coruña, asks for the participation of schools in the creation of the exhibition, and the “Global Screen” project at the Barcelona Centre for Contemporary Culture is a virtual platform with several thematic areas in which the public can participate by sending in its own audiovisual creations. Finally, the Prado Museum has inaugurated an exhibition in which about 490 visitors to the museum unsuspectingly became the protagonists of a photographic creation by Francesco Jodice.

There is no doubt that the internet has made it possible for the public to be an actor and not merely a passive spectator in exhibitions. However, we must continue to progress towards collaborative exhibitions in which the public will truly be the protagonist, even if we are aware that many obstacles will be placed in their way, especially by the large museums and cultural institutions. In the era of participation, museum visitors are no longer content to be given information about an art work, but want to take part in planning exhibits, involve themselves in the organisation of cultural activities and help in the process of promoting them. And it is even possible they might be prepared to collaborate financially in funding cultural activities of interest to them. There are new forms of collective financing, like ‘crowdfunding’, or of collective creativity, like ‘crowdsourcing’, already coming to the aid of old forms of financing like subsidies or patronage. The existence of platforms like Verkami or Lanzanos.com, which help many artists to search for funding for their activities, is a sign that something is changing in the museum world.

It is true that this is merely one of a few initial ideas, and that much remains to be done to attract the non-public to museums. But these small signs of change are indications that something new is sprouting inside museums. We can now say that we are before a new model of a museum, the social museum, which aims at being a museum of community participation, open to dialogue with its public. Such a model exists in awareness that its task is not merely to serve visitors but to implicate them actively in the construction of artistic and museological knowledge. Help is to be found in the information society, which is destined, thanks to Information and Communication Technologies, to become the society of knowledge. With the help of the tools used in collaborative learning, the management of documentation is thus transformed into the management of knowledge, as we are already seeing on Web 3.0 or the semantic Web, with artificial intelligence technologies ready to play a leading role (Quijano Pascual 2012). Indeed, virtual museums are already inviting visitors to become critics and contribute their own contents as if they were the curators of the exhibitions. The

visitor can be both creator and curator of the contents generated by others, so facilitating a new form of collective knowledge and enabling a new model of museum which could not exist without the active presence of the public.

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Translation by Philip Sutton

STUDYING THE OPINION OF THE VISITORS: AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS IN RUSSIA

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ABSTRACT

One of the most topical problems in museology is the development of adequate forms of work with visitors which consider their needs, both in national regional contexts. Today in the Russian museum world there are new and diverse types of museums offering original “museum products”. The consumer of this “product”, the museum visitor, is also different today compared to the 20th century. The problems of museum communication and the interaction of the museum with new visitors are among the most topical and least studied in our country.

The paper presents the Russian experience in propagating the processes of museum communication, fostering the empowerment of visitors, as well as the projects focused on research of their opinions, identification of progressive and protest forms of visitor behavior, and the development of programs helping visitors to satisfy their socio-cultural requirements, all of which may facilitate solving the problems of the lack of museum communication.

The interdisciplinary project “Integration of museums in the regional socio-cultural environment” realized at present by the Russian Institute of Cultural Research (Moscow) and the Novosibirsk Institute of History (Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences) is a project focused on optimizing the mechanism of interaction between the local community and the museum through multi-faceted research on museum visitors.

RÉSUMÉ

L'étude du visiteur : la formation du sens historique

Elaborer de nouvelles approches à raisonner des formes adéquates de travail avec les visiteurs, en prenant en compte leurs besoins et leurs particularités nationales et régionales, est un des points chauds de la muséologie actuelle. Aujourd'hui, il existe en Russie de nombreux types de nouveaux musées qui offrent des produits muséaux originaux. Les problèmes de la communication du musée et de l'interaction des musées avec ces nouveaux visiteurs font partie des problèmes les moins actuels et étudiés en Russie.

La présentation de l'expérience russe de généralisation des processus de communication muséale contribuant à la position active des visiteurs, ainsi que des projets visant l'étude de leur opinion, la mise en évidence des formes progressives ou le protestations du comportement des visiteurs, la formation des programmes les aidant à satisfaire à leurs besoins socioculturels pourront pallier aux problèmes indiqués ci-dessus.

Dans ce sens, l'Institut russe de recherche sur la culture (Moscou) et l'Institut d'histoire de la Branche sibérienne de l'Académie des sciences de Russie

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(Novossibirsk) ont développé un projet interdisciplinaire de type ouvert intitulé «Intégration des musées dans l'espace régional et socioculturel» qui est très perspectif. C'est un projet innovateur qui vise à étudier l'optimisation de l'interaction des musées et de la communauté locale par l'intermédiaire d'une étude polyvalente du public des musées.

RESUMEN

El estudio del visitante; formación del sentido histórico

Uno de los puntos álgidos de la museología actual es la elaboración de nuevas aproximaciones para desarrollar formas adecuadas de trabajo con los visitantes, teniendo en cuenta sus necesidades y particularidades nacionales y regionales. En el mundo museal ruso, existen hoy numerosos tipos de museos que ofrecen "productos museales" originales. De todos modos, el consumidor de estos "productos", el visitante del museo, es diferente hoy de lo que era en el siglo XX. La problemática de comunicación e interacción entre los museos y sus nuevos visitantes forma parte de los problemas menos actualizados y menos estudiados en Rusia.

La presentación de la experiencia rusa que generaliza los procesos de comunicación museal con el propósito de contribuir a la responsabilidad de los visitantes, así como los proyectos que contemplan el estudio de su opinión, la identificación de formas progresivas y las protestas por el comportamiento de los mismos y el desarrollo de programas para ayudarlos a satisfacer sus necesidades socioculturales, podrán facilitar la solución de los problemas indicados más arriba.

En este sentido, el Instituto Ruso de Investigación de la Cultura (Moscú) y el Instituto de Historia de la Rama Siberiana de la Academia de Ciencias de Rusia (Novossibirsk) han desarrollado un proyecto interdisciplinario, de tipo abierto, titulado "Integración de los museos en el espacio regional y sociocultural". Es un proyecto innovador, cuyo eje es la optimización de la interacción de los museos y de la comunidad local por medio de un estudio polivalente y complejo del público de museos.

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One of the most topical problems in museology is the development of new approaches to understanding the modern museum world. Determining the role and value of the human factor (museum staff and specialists) in understanding of the activities of museum and public for which the museum is intended is fundamental if museums are to achieve their mission.¹ Discussion and solution of these problems may be furthered by presenting the Russian experience and generalizing museum communication practice that is aimed at empowering visitors. This includes projects focusing on investigating their opinions, identifying progressive and protest forms of visitor behavior, and forming programs that help visitors satisfy their socio-cultural needs.

Until the 1990s traditional forms of work with visitors prevailed in Russian museums. The visitors were weakly differentiated, neither gender nor age nor the ethno-cultural specificity of visitors were taken into account. They were assigned the role of passive listeners and contemplators.

During the first decade of the 21st century changes in the socio-economic sphere, expanding international cooperation, and democratization processes in Russia

¹ André Desvallées, Mairesse, François, *Key Concepts of Museology*, Moscow, ICOM of Russia, 2012, p. 19-21.

significantly influenced the development of new forms of museum work with visitors, taking into consideration their educational interests, hobbies and regional identity.

In modern society museums have become a favored means of communication in the curriculum of additional education. From the results of a number of surveys it is apparent that Russian visitors see the museum mostly as a place where they may become familiar with a subject, a collection, or an exhibition, a place where they may continue and deepen their education and, lastly, a place for their leisure time. However there are other opinions as well. The Dutch researcher Frans Schouten believes that contrary to the survey data the visitor comes to the museum not to obtain knowledge but to be entertained (with insignificant cognitive interest) and uses the museum as a means of communication.² The same trend may be found in Russia: according to survey data from several museums 92 % of respondents would like to spend a weekend or holiday in the museum; visitors – apart from contemplation – would like to be involved in creative activities together with their children, to participate in competitions and games and theatricalized festivals.³

Despite different opinions the majority of researchers point out the decreasing public interest in museums as “passive show-cases” displaying masterpieces and rarities. The popularity of the concept of the museum as a place for discussion and active dialogue is mentioned by an increasing number of visitors with different cultural and social backgrounds. According to a number of surveys the reliability of the information in historical museums is rated higher than the information in textbooks and films. For example, in the visitors’ book of comments in the State Historical Museum in Moscow the motivation of the majority of visits is comprehensive information on the history of the country, a desire to see the understandable exhibitions and the readable texts, i.e. the visitor is oriented toward the dialogue for which he or she often has insufficient knowledge or awareness.⁴

However, in our contemporary situation neither the high quality of museum collections nor traditional methods and forms of work guarantee that the museum will become an important and interesting place for a city dweller who has an impressive amount of leisure time and knowledge. According to research by the Public Opinion Foundation for the year 2009 only 16% of Russians visited at least one museum during the last 2-3 years. At that only 1% visited scientific and technical museums, 7% visited museums of arts, and 9% visited the zoo; a slightly better situation is observed only in libraries with 16% visitors from the Russian population.⁵ Most visitors are as usual school children who are taken there and do not necessarily come of their own accord.

That the museum as socio-cultural institution takes one of the foremost places in modern culture is explained by its specific function, i.e. to store and present original objects of the cultural heritage to society. Museums appear to be centers of forming the cultural and social identity of different territories; it forms their cultural environment, introduces people into the entire spectrum of historical and cultural heritage and moral values of their predecessors, thereby increasing the level of civil initiative and responsibility. The objects of historical and cultural heritage included in museums serve today as a resource for strategic development and modernization in the regions as well as for the education of youth in a spirit of patriotism.

² Frans Schouten, “Overcoming the barrier between professionals and visitors”, *Museum*, vo. 50, no. 4, 1998, p. 27-29.

³ E. A. Bogatyrev, «Новый посетитель в музее» [New visitor in museum], in: *Muzei i obschestvo. Materialy mezhdunarodnoy konferentsii*, Krasnoyarsk, Sitall, 2002, p. 23

⁴ Skripkina, L.I. «Музей в современных социокультурных условиях» [Museum in Modern Socio-Cultural Conditions], in: *Muzei v sovremennov mire*, Moscow, Izdat. GIM, 1999, p. 81.

⁵ Концепция Музея науки и техники на базе Политехнического музея [Concept of Science and Technology Museums Based on Polytechnic Museums], Moscow, 2011, Vol. 1, p. 160

Globalization sets in motion adaptive processes in different cultures, in forming nations, states and the entire world system. Migration and urbanization processes as well as social mobility have created a greater need of people for institutes of social stability and requirements for adaptation that are increasing beyond the historical context. As a result of the conditions of social instability we observe growing xenophobia and a lack of mechanisms and practices of “cultural adaptation”, socialization and integration of migrants into the hosting community. Tourists also have to become familiar with the local cultural and historical specificity although their needs do not have the urgency of the local population.

It should be also taken into account that museum as a prestigious institution also serves as public relations for the territory and the means of its promotion; it plays an important role in the formation of the entire image of the region. Museums, performing an informative function in the development of the regional image, may attractively present its nature, geography, history, economic, cultural and administrative development, its structure and population, specific features of its culture and life style. Additionally museums may efficiently perform a communicative (integration) function in the formation of the region’s image and facilitate its inclusion in the intellectual Russian and world community.

In Russian practice there are nine basic models of museum interaction with the local community, grouped into three categories: **1. Museums as a system forming enterprise:** the museum as principal employer, the museum as a point for realizing local products and services; the museum as a measure of standards; **2. Museums and territory development:** the museum as a tool for forming local brands; the museum as a site for cultural initiative; the museum as a creator of new values; **3. Museums as an instrument for improving the quality of life:** the museum as a place of merit; the museum as a means of social protection; and the museum as a place for social gathering.

In this respect it is necessary to identify the forms whereby the museum documents and presents territorial human resources as an aggregation of knowledge on human beings, the experience of the past generations, the intellectual and creative potential of the people, the system of conventional norms and their values and rules. The museum must then develop recommendations on how to introduce the adaptation processes of the life-support culture of the population in the considered region, including its historical dynamics, into the museum’s exhibition, research and educational practices. The increase of people’s adaptability and cultural competence will contribute to their greater self-realization, satisfaction with life, self-tolerance and tolerance of other people, and the growth of self-respect.

The crucial element is developing a strategy to work with local people, using specialists in sociology and psychologists, identifying the target groups, and increasing the attractiveness of museums. The idea of support to different groups of visitors with dissimilar education and motivations has gradually become part of the concept of some museums’ development. The researcher from the USA, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, believes that in general it is necessary to transfer the emphasis from the internal activities to the external ones, i.e. to the visitors. According to this author museums should clearly identify what audience they want to address and strive to set up the necessary connections.⁶

As it was correctly mentioned by museum specialists building communication systems, it is necessary to combine the solutions of conceptual problems of museum development with the need to satisfy the requirements of different categories of visitors, regularly monitoring and responding to the changes in their demands.

⁶ Eilean Hooper Greenhill, *Museums and their Visitors*, Routledge, 1994.

A significant discovery in the research on socio-demographic groups of museum visitors, observed in the west and unfortunately only starting here, is a conscious civil responsibility on the part of museums to attract wider groups of the population. According to observations from the past few years, museums who study their visitors have become centers of attraction for people from different ethnic, demographic and social groups that are ignored by other cultural institutions. However, at present the problem of enquiries based on museum visitors has not deserved due attention from the Russian museum community.

Research on the social status and the educational level of the visitors in Russian museums, their interests and cultural preferences, is an important task that not all museums are ready to tackle. During the last few years sample surveys have been carried out by some central and large-scale regional museums. Recently sociological surveys were carried out in the Russian Federation by the Moscow Kremlin Museum (2009) and the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts (2010); a preliminary evaluation of the visitors was analyzed with a new concept developed by the Polytechnic Museum (2010). The data obtained was often contradictory and definitely insufficient to make a "portrait" of a museum visitor, especially to allow forecasts for the future and to be a basis for the development of an adequate communication system.

At present museum workers do not have a clear idea about the laws and peculiarities of the visitors' perception of exhibitions and expositions, nor are they informed about the influence that different forms of cultural and educational activities may have on the museum audience, which could allow optimizing communicative processes and efficiently carrying out the museum mission. Research in Russia mostly target children as a special audience and practically ignore requirements of other participants of museum communication.

Today in the museum world of Russia there are entirely innovative and diverse types of museums offering new "museum products". Compared with the 20th century the consumer of this "product" – the museum visitor – is also new today.

The search for a new language facilitating dialogue with the visitor is closely related to the museum's ambition to avoid global standardization has two facets: First is an attempt to define the museum's place in modern culture and to place it among the issues of presenting culture to the community. Second, defining the museum's place is bound with the museum's search for a proper and special place in the system of new flows of information.

The Krasnoyarsk "Museum Biennale", a biannual museum exposition with as many as 50 competitors presenting individual small displays often simple but brilliant techniques has become internationally known since its launch in 1995. Its activities are large-scale, and problems are conceptual and original (2001 – Art of memory; 2003 – "Historic fiction"; 2005 – "Shifting values and the value of shifting"; 2007 – "Drawing of Siberia"; 2009 – "Expanse"). The integration of artists and museum staff creates a spatial environment of cultural memory for the visitors and provides an opportunity for broad debates (forums, "museum nights", master-classes, and discussion clubs) on the numerous exhibits participating in the biennale and the development of appropriate creative forms that express the themes of this event.

One well-known initiative in Russia is the cultural and communication center "Surgut at the turn of century" in Surgut Museum of Local History. In addition to the modern exhibition it includes computer classes and several Internet sites covering public events where city initiatives are demonstrated and simulated. The project "The Museum is a Land of Equals: from Dandies to Punks" (2009), focused on describing youth subcultures (from 1960ies to the present) by means of the subculture's art (music, costume, photography, painting and language) is planned as a long-term evolving exhibition. Live current urban culture becomes a part of the museum environment.

The exhibition projects of the Novosibirsk City Museum aim at the empowerment of visitors in terms of their contribution to forming the museum environment, the expression of their attitudes to historic events, their influence on city social life, and the dissemination of creative ideas with information technology. Among them the exhibition “Tags” is related to topical youth problems and devoted to digital art that is popular on the Internet. Young artists and computer designers from many cities of Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia took part in this exhibition.

Every participant in the project “Novosibirsk: Human and City” could contribute with requests, notes and recommendations on the development of the city and the museum in a special album called “If I were the Mayor of Novosibirsk...” that was placed on an especially reconstructed desk of the Mayor. On the site of the Novosibirsk City Museum there are important on-line socio-cultural projects reflecting new attitudes toward the interests of the museum audience and helping visitors to become familiar with their cultural heritage.

The museum today provides a continuity linking the past, the present and the future. The encompassing and attracting forces of museums inevitably involve people with different levels of education, belonging to different social and confessional groups that reflect their interpretation of their history and their intention to find the roots of the world order.

This is evidenced by the existing network of museums of local history and community-museums actively developing in Russia. The initiative to create “houses of memory” and museums of a particular city quarter comes from city and town dwellers concerned with the preservation of their cultural and national identity. The term “living musealisation” reflects the essence of this phenomenon in the best possible way.

The experience of the Bagration Kizlyar Museum of local history (Dagestan) and its collection is especially interesting in this respect. The active participation of city dwellers in museum projects allowed creating the exhibition “Old apartment”. This project became an important element in the cultural life of both the museum and the people of the city: their own creation and their own story.

The interregional traveling exhibition “Germans in Siberian History – Siberia in German destinies”, addressing the interests of Russian Germans, was an opportunity to show documentary and objective evidence of their life and adaptation in these territories. The program of cultural events that accompanied the exhibition included various communicative forms taking into account age and gender as well as the visitors’ ethno-cultural profile. For the older generation of Germans it was planned as “a meeting with their collective memory”; for young Russian Germans it was seen as “participation in maintaining intergenerational continuity and introduction to the cultural values of their people”; and for the representatives of all nationalities the aim was “familiarization with the original ethnic culture of Germans and their participation in intercultural cooperation”. During the exhibition in the Novosibirsk State Museum of Local History there were public lectures in German, folklore music bands, singers and dancers gave performances, and special “master-classes” were held in traditional German handicrafts (lace crocheting and watch production) that had been preserved and developed in Siberian conditions. Competitions, including one for the best national food, and quizzes around the theme of Germans in Siberia, added visitor acitivity to the cultural events.

The problem of the preservation of cultural heritage and cultural values is based on the diverse approaches of the world community to cultural and historical legacy as a national asset. It has been identified in UNESCO documents on cultural diversity, on the development of cultural tourism and on the intangible cultural heritage. The approach to the cultural heritage and the cultural values of Russian citizens is fixed in legal norms and regulations. The character is first of all protective and provides conditions for the preservation of the entire of cultural heritage. At the same time,

understanding the necessity of reconsidering our attitude to cultural heritage, making the transition from the “protective” concept to the concept of a “sustainable development of the territory” where its legacy is considered as a potential resource, is the first step on the way to new paradigm of “integration of the cultural heritage into the contemporary social context”. This change of social attitudes to heritage can in turn allow not only preserving it as a niche of special value in the structural and functional system of culture, but reveal its uniqueness and importance for the organization the historical and cultural environment of the region.

At present, apart from the preservation and revival of elements of national culture, new traditions have been introduced in Russian museum practice. The Ethnographic Museum of Agan village deserves significant attention. Working with non-material examples of the heritage and folklore of the Agan Khanty, the daily life of the ethnosis enriched by forgotten artifacts and traditions: in the museum-studio “Verte kat” of Korliki village ethnic traditions of economy are maintained and transferred to new generations. Thus museums facilitate forming a contemporary image of traditional culture and cultural and national identity, creating signposts for the local community and respectively positioning themselves in a multi-cultural environment.

A special role in bringing heritage to life in local communities is played today by memorial museums. Historical personification and the return of forgotten names are especially important today for the socio-cultural development of the regions, since they help the local community to understand its potential and the people to adapt to the contemporary situation where there seems to be an ideological vacuum and lack of positive ideals and values. Among such projects the ones that help keeping up national identity are particularly important, where personality becomes an important reason for discussing socially significant issues marking the social environment.

A number of memorial museums and projects may well be designated as socio-forming ones, and it is especially noticeable in small villages with their usual set of social, economic and other problems. One of the most efficient and interesting museums is the Chekhov Museum-Reserve in Melikhovo (Moscow Region). In the project “The District Doctor Chekhov” the important component is its social focus. In the territory of the country estate the Doctor’s surgery that was set up at the end of 19th century by A.P. Chekhov was reconstructed; it now combines the memorial and the operating medical center so much needed by the district inhabitants. This project demonstrates how a modern museum can be lively, skilful at developing its potential and needed by the community while keeping sound conservation and mending broken relations between tradition and innovation, between people of the 19th and the 21st centuries.

Several museum projects that foster territory development have been realized in distant Russian regions. The project on the development of the museum of G.I. Choros-Gurkin, the first national artist of Siberian peoples, will restore this village and make the museum into a cultural center of Altai and Siberia, attracting new generations of the cultural and political elite and tourists.

In spite of vast positive experience, a focus on social issues is the weakest point among Russian contemporary museum activities. Museum specialists are not quite prepared to work with visitors; they have difficulties in creating “museum products” and services adapted to the needs of different categories of visitors. When museums draw up plans for a project they have to take into account visitors of the present and future, modern knowledge and museum technologies, and integrate approaches to science, culture, education.

Cooperation between scientific, cultural and educational institutions becomes very important for achieving adequate and far-seeing museum development. The Russian Institute of Cultural Research (Moscow) and the Novosibirsk Institute of History (the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences) have developed an open interdisciplinary project entitled “Integration of museums into the regional socio-cultural

environment”.⁷

It is based on a set of target programs in different fields of studies that are both concrete and historical, theoretical and methodological, aiming at the solution of the problem specified in the project title. Implementing the project will allow: 1) setting up strong connections between museology and practice as well as with museum studies at the national level; 2) up-dating interregional connections (museums – administrative bodies, museums – local communities) for an organic integration of museums into the socio-cultural environment, 3) facilitating improvement of communication and participation technologies in museology and development work with the visitors at a national scale.

The project is based on the notions defined in *The Dictionary of Topical Museum Terms*. For instance we proceed from the fact that in modern society the museum mission is:

- “1) The purpose (overall goal) of museums, determined as generating the culture of present and future periods on the basis of the preservation and actualization of the most valuable part of all types of legacy;
- 2) element of strategic planning of the activities of specific museums...”

The realization of the museum mission is closely bound to the character of the museum audience determined as:

The community towards which the museum is oriented. It is characterized in accordance with appropriate socio-demographic parameters (gender, age, education, residence)..., it is divided into real and potential, constant and unstable, traditional and new (handicapped people, migrants, and youth indifferent to museums). The detailed segmentation of the museum audience, taking into account the particularities of different categories of visitors, and orientation to a larger audience are the sources of quality indicators of the cultural and educational activities of the museum...⁸

This research may significantly change our idea about how museum educational programs and exhibitions should be organized. The necessity for new large-scale research using modern methods has become vital.

Based on the above research we can highlight a number of points:

1. In the museum of our post-industrial society the visitor appears to be not a passive contemplator but an active participator of the communicative process, and even the form of information reception may be determined by the visitor himself – a significant contribution to visitor empowerment. Even when assigning the mission of social education to museums by presenting original evidence of cultural heritage it is necessary to ensure that the museum audience is the primary object of study and to be certain that visitors may competently assimilate museum communication.
2. The development museum audiences shall proceed by: (a) widening the museum’s approach to many segments of the population and attracting new groups to the museum; (b) specific museums creating target audiences which should ensure the success of the majority of museum projects. (c) timely response to the visitors’ needs to ensure formulating their requirements and visitor satisfaction.

⁷ Irina V. Chuvilova, S. B. Orlov S.B & Olga N. Shelegina, «Открытый междисциплинарный проект «Интеграция российских музеев в региональное социокультурное пространство» [Open Interdisciplinary Project “Integration of Russian Museums into Regional Socio-Cultural Environment”], in: *Sovremennye tendentsii v razvitiu muzeev I muzeevedeniya. Materialy Vserossiyskoi Nauchno-Prakticheskoi Konferentsii*, Novosibirsk, NSU, 2011, p. 336-339.

⁸ Maria E. Kaulen, A. A. Sundieva, Irina V. Chuvilova, Olga E. Cherkaeva et al. «Словарь актуальных музейных терминов» [Glossary of Museum Terminology], in: *Muzei*, No. 5, 2009, p. 49, 55.

3. In the context of globalization, museums have the task to be the specific places where the past, present and future meet; their role in the regional cultural policy has become indispensable, as it is in the actualization and expedient usage of the natural and historical and cultural heritage, and in the socio-cultural integration of people.

Specific features of this overarching project are as follows:

- The development of the “portrait of the museum visitor” together with the analysis of the contemporary conditions of museum activities and the cultural policy in selected regions. Since cultural preferences may significantly vary depending on local traditions, competitive proposals, climate and other factors, museum programs shall be focused first of all on regional specificity and specific segments of the local community;
- An interdisciplinary approach to the problem of research on museum audiences (at the intersection of museology, sociology, psychology and social adaptation) will open new perspectives for the development of clearer and more accessible exhibitions and the improvement of the working methods of all types of museum institutions, while taking into account different regional and communication approaches aimed at solving different research results.

Practical use of the results of investigation will allow improving the quality of museum work provided to local communities and tourists, and comparing the quality of museum services with the requirements of different segments of the museum audience; additionally it will provide wider accessibility to cultural goods for different social groups (national, confessional, disabled people, etc.) During the research publications will regularly appear on the Internet, on the sites of the Russian Institute of Cultural Research and Institute of History (Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences), as well as on the sites of the museum communities.

Deeper and multilateral studies on the interests, reactions and specific features of visitor perception may be considered as a beginning of new dialogue between museums and communities, whose aim, from the inception of the research projects launched by the Russian institutes to their realization, has been the empowerment of visitors.

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EMPOWERING DIGITAL MUSEUM AUDIENCES TO FOSTER MUSEUM COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper offers a definition of “Digital museum audience” as a significant segment of the museum public at large and presents museum trends that take place on-site and off-site, representing the ways museums can address their online audiences effectively and foster on-site communication. The article analyses examples of museum online activities (participative and narrative) as part of the pre-communicative and post-communicative phases of museum communication. Digital audiences have already begun to demonstrate to museum workers the necessity of engaging in online activities either on the official website or on integrated social media at a number of conferences and via blogosphere, which is having a considerable effect on major museums’ online policies. The launch of such projects as MuseumNext.org and Museum-Analytics.org, is the way the internet community is trying to draw museums’ attention to efficient online social engagement as opposed to broadcasting information. The paper aims at demonstrating the most representative trends in this area.

RÉSUMÉ

Responsabiliser l’audience du musée numérique pour favoriser la communication muséale

Cette contribution offre une définition de « l’audience du musée numérique » en tant que fraction significative parmi le public de musée, en général, et présente les tendances qui, de nos jours, prennent place *sur-site* et *hors-site*, en représentant les voies au moyen desquelles les musées peuvent effectivement s’adresser à leur public et favoriser la communication *sur-site*. L’article analyse des exemples d’activités (participative et narrative) de musée *en ligne* comme étapes communicative et post-communicative de la communication muséale. Le public numérique a déjà essayé de démontrer au personnel du musée qu’il était nécessaire de participer à des activités *en ligne*, ou bien sur le site officiel, ou bien sur les médias sociaux intégrés à une série de conférences via la blogosphère, ce qui a un effet considérable sur la politique *en ligne* des grands musées. Le lancement de tels projets, comme MuseumNext.org et Museum-Analytics.org, est le moyen pour la communauté internet d’essayer d’attirer l’attention des musées sur l’efficacité de l’engagement social en ligne, opposé à l’information radiophonique. Cette communication vise à montrer les tendances les plus démonstratives de ce domaine.

RESUMEN

Empoderar la audiencia digital de los museos para favorecer la comunicación museal

Este artículo ofrece una definición de "Público digital de los museos" como un segmento significativo entre público museal en general y presenta las tendencias museales que hoy en día existen in situ y ex situ, representando las formas en las que museos pueden interactuar eficientemente con su público en

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Empowering digital museum audiences to foster museum communication

línea y incluso fomentar la comunicación dentro del museo. El artículo analiza ejemplos de actividades en línea de museos (participativas y narrativas) como parte de las etapas pre- y post-comunicativa de la comunicación museal. El público digital ya ha intentado demostrar a los museólogos la necesidad de actividades de participación en línea en el sitio web oficial o en las redes sociales en una serie de conferencias y a través de la blogosfera, lo cual está teniendo un efecto considerable sobre las políticas en conexión de los museos principales. El lanzamiento de proyectos como MuseumNext.org y Museo-Analytics.org, es una forma en la que los internautas están tratando de llamar la atención de museos hacia participación social eficiente en línea en contraposición a una mera emisión de información. El artículo pretende mostrar las tendencias más representativas en este ámbito.

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Definition

In the Russian language the term “*museum visitors*” as a collective noun is becoming less appropriate, since a broader concept of “*museum audience (or public)*” now sounds more relevant as it indicates not only people who are inside the museum walls, but those who are part of pre- or post-communicative (off-site) phases of museum/audience relationships. This is being adjusted in terminological dictionaries, such as the Russian Dictionary of actualized museum terms (2009)¹ and the Key Concepts of Museology (2010). The latter defines *public*, or *audience*, as “the whole of the population addressed by the establishment”², which also indicates not only those who entered physically the museum building, but those who are being influenced by museum activities wherever they are.

“Digital audience” (not to confuse with “Social Media audience”, which has a narrower sense) is an increasingly recognizable notion in a number of industries (mass media, music, etc.). It is not yet popular with the museum community however, which can be clearly seen when analyzing museum official websites and their page in social media. From Russian perspective, many of Russian ‘big name’ museums ignore the world internet trends and the powerful tools they are offered to engage with the audience online. Internet users got used to social networking and its rules, which are referred to as Web 2.0 (e.g. user-generated content, sharing, event planning, etc.). While the internet trends are indicating the arrival of Web 3.0, the overwhelming majority of museum websites hasn’t passed to web 2.0 so far. While many of American and some of European museums develop their online presence, there are still plenty of museums far from world trends, therefore, away from the new audiences (according to the last calculations, there are about 55000 museums in the world³, the number of museum social media accounts is around 3200, according to Museum-Analytics.Org⁴).

“Digital museum audience” can be defined as visitors to museum websites who look for relevant information about their future visit and/or participate in museum online activities (*pre-communicative* phase), and/or use portable digital devices to interact

¹ "Extracts from the Dictionary of Actualized Museum Terms, Russia, 2009", in: *ICOFOM Study Series - ISS 38*, Musée royal de Mariemont, 2009. p. 320-321

² André Desvallées and François Mairesse (eds), *Key Concepts of Museology*, Armand Colin, 2010. p. 71-72.

³ Walter de Gruyter Saur, *Museums of the World 2010*, 17th Revised edition, Walter de Gruyter & Co, 2010.

⁴ The accurate number on 7 May 2012 is 3230, of which 887 do not have a Facebook page and 1315 do not have a Twitter account. To check the updated information visit <http://www.museum-analytics.org/museums/>

with exhibition material (*communicative* phase), and/or visit museum website or social network pages after visiting the museum (*post-communicative* phase).

As for defining pre- and post-communicative phases, the author of this article finds it crucial to see the pure “communicative phase” as the one that takes place in a real museum space with *original* museum exhibits. That is why the communicative (interactive and participative) activities found on the websites are regarded by the author as preliminary or posterior to a visit to the museum on-site.

Digital museum audiences are as varied as those museums use to studying indoors. Many of these visitors are a tech-savvy audience that lives with constantly changing trends, and their expectations are linked to their overall digital experience (mostly to social media trends: “like”, “share” buttons, content managing, etc.). Also part of the digital audience might never visit a specific museum (because of living a long way from the museum or being disabled), and it depends on museum policy whether to help them feel welcome or to ignore them showing what they miss if they can't get to an on-site exhibition.

Measuring and predicting the digital audience's needs

The analysis of the subject matter and content of presentations at the Electronic Visualisation and the Arts conferences (EVA, running since 1990), International Cultural Heritage Informatics Meetings (ICHIM, since 1991), Museum and the Web (MW, since 1997), UK Museums on the Web (since 2001), Digital strategies for Heritage (DISH, since 2004), MuseumNext (since 2009), and some others shows that more participants every year convey the idea that many museums create some kind of presence on Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and other social media, but see it as part of public relations or marketing. Another idea that comes through many of the recent papers and presentations is that technology is not always about money investment, it's all about openness of minds: a sensible use of social media can substitute an official website if a museum cannot afford it.

There are some online platforms that address the topic of museum online audiences and are aimed at reflecting their voices and feedback. The first one is the *MuseumNext* (www.museumnext.org), which unites annual conferences and blogs, and has proved to being one of the biggest think tanks in the cultural sector. Jim Richardson, its guiding hand, has written some provocative articles and blog entries, such as “The audience is dead – let's talk participants instead” offering to pay attention to visitors as to “people who live increasingly digital lives, where they are not spectators, but active participants, positively engaged through outreach programmes and projects”⁵, and “What would your visit to the museum of the future look like?”, in which he depicts the way visitors will communicate in 5 or 10 years:

In the lobby of the museum projections update with the latest activity and comments from around the museum, two visitors are discussing an object from the collection, one is standing in the gallery space with the object while the other is thousands of miles away in America and viewing the collection online. [...] As the visitor enters the first gallery, the app on their smart-phone tracks their progress feeding them information about the objects which they are looking at.⁶

Another web project – *Museum Analytics* (www.museum-analytics.org), launched in November 2011, offers a daily updated report with information about online and offline audiences for over 3000 museums with a simple mission “to increase transparency in

⁵ Jim Richardson, “The audience is dead – let's talk participants instead”, *MuseumNext*. 6 July, 2011. http://www.museumnext.org/2010/blog/museum_audience_development.

⁶ Jim Richardson, “What would your visit to the museum of the future look like?”, *MuseumNext Discussions* on linkedin.com. December, 2011. <http://www.linkedin.com/groups/What-would-your-visit-museum-2314795.S.79508033>

the cultural sector". Although the initial idea was to draw museums' attention to the number of their digital audiences, now it also measures museum's online feedback, showing the most engaging activities on museum social media accounts, which can become an inspiration for other museums and a measuring tool for digital audiences' interests.

The creation of a Facebook page or some social media account is not an engagement in itself. That is another statement that could be heard at many of the conferences mentioned above. Museums have to find time to listen to their followers and to be responsive to their needs both on-site and off-site. When conducting a visitor research many museums are asking demographic questions (income, gender) aimed at marketing, and not measuring needs and desires of the audiences at large. As a result, many visitor surveys collect statistical information, which does not contribute to introducing changes in museum work. The situation may vary from one country to another; nonetheless, we'll find very few museums carrying out non-statistical surveys.

The most popular museological idea of the last 3 years is the one that found its expression in *Participatory Museum* by Nina Simon. As Nina Simon puts it, "The institution serves as a "platform" that connects different users who act as content creators, distributors, consumers, critics, and collaborators"⁷. Simon didn't refer to museum surveys, but to Forrester Research tool, primarily designed in 2008 to help businesses understand the way different audiences engage with social media online. The researchers grouped online audiences into categories by activity: Creators (24%), Critics (37%), Collectors (21%), Joiners (51%), Spectators (73%), Inactives (18%)⁸. This **activity approach** borrowed from social media has already opened up a lot of possibilities for museums, and it also suggests the existence of non-participating audience members who can go on communicating with museums in more conventional ways. Most importantly, it covers more audiences that could find visiting a museum boring.

Communication

There have been a number of articles on museum communication models, beginning with the simple one offered by Duncan Cameron in the 1960s: transmitter (museum professional) - channel (museum exhibit) - receiver (museum audience). Analysing models is not the aim of this paper, but it's important to mention here that in any model the main "participant" is the original museum exhibit and the communication unfolds around it.

In this article we are going to see a wider linear pattern of communication, introducing "pre-communicative" and "post-communicative" phases, which are not new for the Communicative Theory⁹, but are not yet spread in theoretical museological thought. As mentioned above, by "communicative phase" we consider processes that take place within museum (on-site) with *original* museum exhibits. Online activities are made around *digital copies* of these objects, that is why we do not refer to them as pure *communicative* stage.

Online (off-site) communication is becoming more important as it is creating a good image of museum in audience's minds, no matter before or after the on-site visit. There are some tendencies museum professionals have to accept, many of which are unconscious for their bearers. For example, users instead of looking through the website to find the information that interests them, can ask a direct question via twitter or facebook, because it is faster (direct questions to professionals instead of googling

⁷ Nina Simon, *Participatory Museum*, Santa Cruz (Cal.): Museum 2.0, 2010, p. 2

⁸ Ibid, p. 8

⁹ These terms are mostly used in foreign language teaching, when referring to activities before or after communication exercises.

is one of the Web 3.0 peculiarities). The museum's twitter reaction is not expected to be silence, "we don't know", "check out our website" or sharing the link to the page that has plenty of information to digest before getting to the desired answer. Digitally savvy audience expects the exact professional and human response. If a tweeter asks a question which can look unimportant and inappropriate to ask a "big name" museum and this museum ignores it, the visitor will be more likely to go to a smaller museum that will be happy to answer his questions. These examples took place on twitter, and some more were mentioned at conferences. Museums online are expected to have human face.

Pre- and post-communicative phases

The perception of a cultural institute starts with the first glance at their website. Everything means there. John Falk in his talk to German museum workers in 2010 mentioned that when he decided to have a look at German museum sites to get the idea of how they worked he was surprised at not seeing any image of people in the museum¹⁰. That is a view of a museum professional, whilst museum audience in such circumstances can unconsciously get the idea that they are not welcomed and the website is for scholars.

The pre-communicative phase opens up a lot of opportunities because it allows museums to study online audiences, their reactions, and most importantly, from communicative perspective, it can be used as a tool to help audiences get ready for the exhibition. Unfortunately, many museum websites still post very vague information about the upcoming events that looks like a press-release, while they can provide educationally rich material, which would help know more information before entering the museum and get less tired on-site, because visitors won't have to be exposed to extensive reading there. The museum site is not only a place to read something about what the museum can offer once they come into the museum, it may also provide some activities as educational online games and others.

The online activity that was launched back in 2008, but is still very up-to-date is Brooklyn Museum's "*Tag! You're it!*"¹¹, a game (it can be also defined as "*online content curation*"), which helps the museum to organize their collections into tag-oriented search with the help of online visitors. From audiences' perspective, his activity is rewarding for the useful work digital audience is doing and, from the communicative perspective, it is raises awareness of collection. This social tagging experience helps the future visitor to the museum not only reflect on the exhibit, but also to read information about it beforehand and this way he will start learning before the communication process in the museum itself. A slightly different game "Freeze Tag!" encourages collection taggers to be even more attentive when studying the image of the museum exhibit and the full record of all the tags in order to evaluate th offered by other users'.

One of the current trends in museums is *narrative-building by ordinary people*, which is usually part of the "participatory museum" concept mentioned above. Museums are becoming places to learn through participation and narrative-creation, and they need to respond to these expectations:

The rise of live storytelling in recent years is remarkable [...] A few storytelling events are held at museums, but that's not the same as museums telling stories in their own exhibitions or programs. [...] Museum people often speak of exhibitions as "telling the story" of so-and-so, or collections as "telling the stories" of a particular time and place. [...] You've seen plenty of exhibitions with

¹⁰ John Falk "Rethinking the Museum Visitor Experience", in: Formidlingsseminar 2010. <http://vimeo.com/10357615>, min. 34

¹¹ http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/tag_game/start.php

a historical shape, and a beginning, middle, and an end. But when's the last time you came out of an exhibition feeling like somebody had told you a story?¹²

Some museums have already responded to the trend, which can be regarded as pre- or post-communicative phases, which allow digital audiences to interact with museum collections while listening to stories. The “*Yorkshire Favourite Paintings*” project attracted a lot of attention in the Spring of 2011, because it encouraged internet users to share their stories about museum paintings (www.yorkshiresfavourites.org). Later on, the Metropolitan Museum launched a new project “*Connections*” (www.metmuseum.org/Connections) that features museum staff telling their stories. Now we can see such oral history projects as “*Share Your Story*” on 9/11 Memorial website (www.911memorial.org/StoryCorps), which tells a multi-voiced story.

The narratives will hardly be read without interpretation, and today we have to accept that there is no ideal museum communication model that would guarantee that one hundred per cent of curators' messages are understood: watching exhibition spaces, just as reading a book, is a process full of personal interpretation, and if we look closer the traditional communicative models suggested in the past decades, we can see that it is centred not on the museum exhibit itself but on the codes it contains. And the museum audience has such diverse backgrounds that it is probable that some of them won't read the encoded messages left by museum professionals, but they can read messages left by other people ('participatory museum' concept fills this niche). As Francisca Hernández wrote in 2011:

If the cultural range of visitors is plural and diverse, the museum is obliged to alter its patterns and search for different and differentiated ways to address them, creating new meanings that can be understood by each and every visitor.¹³

This quote resonates with the emerging storytelling activities and events in museums.

Sometimes there is no difference between pre- and post-communicative stages as in cases with storytelling. The pure post-communicative phase can be regarded as the one that allows building rapport between the museum and its audience, and inviting to come back. One of the most common examples is the museum use of Flickr photostreams. Museum visitors who participate in some museum activity are photographed and they know that the photos will appear online, and this way they are encouraged to visit museum websites and integrated social media after the visit, which can build a community of followers and supporters. Both pre-communicative and post-communicative phases can be either educationally rich through texts or simply participative (as *warm-ups* to get ready to see the exhibits and learn something about them through online activities).

Communicative phase

Since a lot of museums are experimenting with ways to put mobile devices in more central roles and there is a growing demand for tablet content designed for on-site museum visits, a new generation of visitors is emerging.

The following position might not be widely accepted, but I offer to include the visitors who actively use their personal gadgets, such as smartphones and tablets, for interaction with exhibition material when visiting the museum, to the *digital museum audience*. These digitally-savvy users might see and experience exhibits a bit differently when walking into museums with gadgets: “The app can go deeper than the

¹² Peter Linett "Do cultural institutions tell stories? A new bestseller gets me thinking", *Sloverlinett Strategies: Audience research and planning for the mission-driven world*, April 06, 2012, <http://www.sloverlinett.com/blog/2012/april/do-cultural-institutions-tell-stories-a-new-bestseller-gets-me-thinking>

¹³ Francisca Hernández Hernández, “Dialogic museum and social communication”, in: *ICOFOM Study Series - ISS 40*, Taiwan, 2011, p. 103.

average wall plaque; short audio clips from the artist even accompany some of the written descriptions.”¹⁴

There have been some concerns about digital gadgets within museum in the blogosphere. The most representative opinion was published in the *New York Times* in 2010:

Last month in Paris, I was astonished to find that visitors to the Musée de l'Orangerie were not even viewing the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings but rather simply holding up their cellphones to snap a photograph before moving on to take a photograph of the next painting. They were not actually looking at the work.

It reminded me of the historian Daniel Boorstin's concept of the “pseudo-event,” in which an event is considered real and meaningful only when viewed through the media. In this case the individual is not actually seeing the paintings in the museum but rather photographing them for future consumption.¹⁵

Apart from this new challenge to original museum exhibits, there is another linked to narratives. The museums that are responding to current cultural trends have to deal with two types of narratives, the one built by ordinary people, and the other being told by the museum professional narrator, one that should not be lost among other voices.

Conclusion

Recalling Wan-Chen Chang's words in the descriptive paper, “empowerment represents both a process and an outcome involving visitors' ability to recognize their value and to meet self-determined goals by linking them with museum resources, helping them gain self-knowledge and completing certain tasks”, it should be added that by shaping compelling narratives, letting *real life stories of ordinary people living today* enter an exhibition and responding to online audiences' needs, museums have to deal with very complicated situations where the communicative processes are going beyond traditional communication models. Museums have to accept that the curator's voice sometimes can be lost among other voices.

The examples of online projects mentioned above show situations in which museum visitors and museum workers express themselves leaving their ideas as ordinary people's voices, which also reflects the trend of museums becoming more *amateur* as opposed to unquestioned museum *professionalism* in the 19th and 20th centuries.

By empowering the digital audience we, museum professionals, have to accept that exhibits oriented to common people's voices are in demand, and we are expected to be there to help them build new narratives, both on-site and off-site.

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¹⁴ Joshua Brustein, "An Extra Set of Eyes at the Museum", *New York Times*, November 18, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/20/nyregion/technology-goes-to-the-museum-app-city.html>

¹⁵ Claudia J. Keenan, "Art for App's Sake", *New York Times*, October 5, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/06/opinion/l06museum.html>

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EMPOWERMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED: SEEKING MODELS FOR INCLUSIVE MUSEUMS

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the power held today by groups characterized as social minorities, in a wide variety of situations and activities that are encompassed by the context of social inclusion. Rising visibility and participatory actions for taking decisions in society have been construed as empowerment. It focuses on accessibility for the category of “the visually impaired”, representing a special segment of the public visiting Museums, a group that socially who as a group gives voice to the communication difficulties encountered within a museological context. With museums acknowledged as places of research that also disseminate knowledge, communication processes must be assured for different publics visiting their displays and exhibitions. This procedure is related to what is known as the Inclusive Museum, meaning a cultural institution whose daily routines include services providing special information and assistive (or adaptive) technology resources for use in musealized spaces. Through this approach, they respond to demands for the conditions needed to welcome visitors with the necessary care and attention, founded on the social functions of the museological field.

Key Words: Social inclusion and the visually impaired; Accessibility for the visually impaired in Museums; Empowerment; Special Information and the Museum.

RÉSUMÉ

Responsabilisation et inclusion sociale pour les mal voyants: à la recherche de modèles pour des musées inclusifs

Cet article aborde le pouvoir conquis de nos jours par des groupes caractérisés comme minorités sociales dans plusieurs situations et activités, et comprises dans le contexte de l’insertion sociale. Cette croissante visibilité aussi bien que les actions de participation à la prise des décisions au sein de la société sont interprétées à présent comme signe d’autonomisation et de responsabilisation (*empowerment*). Ce qu’on focalise ici c’est l’accessibilité de la catégorie «des handicapés visuels», un segment spécial du public visitant les Musées, qui fait comprendre en tant que groupe social les difficultés de communication rencontrées dans un contexte muséal. Puisque le Musée est reconnu comme un espace de recherche et de diffusion de la connaissance, il faut absolument garantir que la communication soit effective auprès des différents publics qui

¹ Located in the City of Rio de Janeiro, this Institute is a national reference center for visual impairment. It was founded by the Emperor Pedro II in 1854 as the Imperial Institute for Blind Boys (*Instituto Imperial dos Meninos Cegos*).

visitent ses expositions. Ce procédé a rapport à ce qu'on entend par « musée inclusif » (*Inclusive Museum*), à savoir, une institution culturelle dont l'ordre du jour comprend des services offrant une information spéciale et une assistance technologique utilisable dans les espaces muséalisés, afin de répondre à la demande de conditions nécessaires à l'accueil des visiteurs, avec le soin et l'attention indispensables, fondés sur les fonctions sociales qu'offre le champ muséal.

Mots-clés : Insertion sociale et handicap visuel – Accessibilité du handicapé visuel au musée – Autonomisation et Responsabilisation (*empowerment*) – Information Spéciale et Musée

RESUMEN

Empoderamiento e inclusión social para los discapacitados visuales : a la búsqueda de modelos para museos inclusivos

Este artículo aborda el poder conquistado en nuestro tiempo por grupos caracterizados como minorías sociales en la mayor parte de las situaciones y actividades comprendidas en el contexto de la inclusión social. Esta creencia visibiliza también que las acciones de participación y la toma de decisiones en el seno de la sociedad son interpretadas en el presente como signo de autonomía y empoderamiento. Nos focalizamos acá en la accesibilidad de la categoría de discapacitados visuales, un segmento especial del público que visita los museos, que nos ayudará a comprender en tanto que grupo social las dificultades de comunicación que encontramos en el contexto museal. Como reconocemos a los museos como un espacio de búsqueda y de difusión de conocimiento, se hace necesario garantizar que la comunicación sea efectiva para los diferentes públicos que visitan sus exposiciones. Este procedimiento está relacionado con lo que entendemos por «museo inclusivo», una institución cultural cuyas rutinas diarias incluyan servicios que ofrecen información especial y asistencia tecnológica usable en los espacios musealizados. Respondiendo de ese modo a la demanda de condiciones necesarias para la acogida de los visitantes con el cuidado y atención indispensables, teniendo en cuenta las funciones sociales específicas del campo museal. .

Palabras clave: Inserción social y discapacitados visuales – Accesibilidad del discapacitado visual a los museos – Autonomía y Empoderamiento – Información especial y Museo.

* * *

[...] although it is undeniable that our society offers everyone the *pure possibility* of appreciating works displayed in Museums, what happens is that only a few have the *real possibility* of doing so. (author's italics)

Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel

* * *

By definition, Museums play a leading role in the preservation of history and heritage. This is among their basic functions in terms of the Cultural Heritage Assets (in the broadest sense, including those originating in Nature) that fall under its responsibility and also their conceptual status as social institutions designed to welcome the public, thus being inherently open to the world. Consequently, they must offer conditions that ensure easy access to their buildings, their collections, their diverse spaces and other musealized elements.

In order to fulfill their cultural and social functions, Museums must thus serve as venues offering pleasure, learning, self-knowledge and affirmation of the social and cultural identity of all their visitors.

In the collective field, the Museum works on minds through cognitive stimulation actions that extend through the contacts that they establish and the roles they play, which:

[...] is not to reveal the implicit or the explicit, nor to rescue the submerged; it is not to offer a voice to the excluded (nor the included...), nor offering data or information. In brief, the Museum is not a donor of culture. Its social responsibility is to prompt reflection on the multiple relationships between the present and the past through objects displayed in its halls (our underscore).²

And for the publics known in international healthcare areas Special, in terms of the specific conditions required for inclusion in the social context through what is known as accessibility, this may be correlated with the International Council of Museums, ICOM, that recommends:

Physical Resources. 1.4 Access. The governing body should ensure that the museum and its collections are available to all during reasonable hours and for regular periods. Particular regard should be given to those persons with special needs.³

When indicating a different type of treatment for a specific segment of the Museum public, the phrase taken from the official text might suggest that privileges should be granted; however, what is fact suggested is that the set of conditions must be made available as required by the specific characteristics of each individual, in order to ensure equality in the social world.

This awareness of the presence of social demands calling for equality within a context of differences among people arises from the understanding that has been firming up – with some difficulty – in response to reactions in society reflecting indifference or rejection that were frequently meted out to people who were ‘different’ in some way. Today’s stance is the outcome of the struggle by people with disabilities to ensure their citizens’ rights, through social battles in which they have been supported by groups, civil society associations and legislators in several countries.

The track-record of what is today called empowerment was built up under the under the aegis of the Social Sciences, when the first surveys were conducted in order to study gradual gains in social clout, which must include actions calling for shared powers of decision to the benefit of the claimant group.

Empowerment is a joint representation of attitude and conditions, forming an inclusionary profile that was gradually acquired by certain groups whose images and voices have been ignored for too long, finding it hard to obtain due acknowledgment in the social world. They have been identified as social minorities in various aspects.

The process of empowerment, which means building up clout within society in order to act as an agent and, with this status, engage in active interaction and interlocution as a participant at the decision-taking level. In broader terms, this may be explained as:

[...] collective action undertaken by individuals when sharing privileged areas for taking decisions, heightening awareness of social rights. This awareness extends beyond individual initiatives, deployed to explore and move beyond specific situations (reality) and extending to include an understanding of

² Francisco Regis Lopes Ramos, *A danação do objeto: o museu no ensino da história*, Chapecó: Argos, 2004, p. 131.

³ International Council of Museums-ICOM, *Code of Ethics for Museums*, ICOM, Paris, 2006, p. 1.

complex webs of social relationships that shape broad-ranging economic and political contexts.⁴

It is also acknowledged that the struggle to change conditions is paving the way for people (or the groups they represent) to achieve emancipation as individuals and, according to this same author, “in terms of the collective awareness required to surmount social and political dependence”.

Furthermore, in the long history of social inclusion underpinned by empowerment, an outstanding feature is the drive – grounded on social struggles by minorities and their representatives – to ensure their rights to immediate, ongoing and regular access to the common spaces of life in society, meaning resources and services. This context includes access to cultural life.

Among the widely varied groups analyzed through the phenomenon of empowerment and the classes of study that they represent are the visually impaired, who are classified, according to Barraga⁵, as: “blind”, “partially sighted” or “people with poor sight”. Together, they total some 285 million people worldwide with some type of visual impairment. Among them, 39 million are defined as blind, with some 246 million rated as having poor sight.⁶

To an increasing extent, these people are being integrated into many types of participation in society, reflected in cultural representations such as museums, for example.

In this context, museum visits are a cultural activity that involves access and time spent in the physical surroundings of the institution, underpinned by links between a special public and responses to its “needs, rights and potential” in order to conduct the cognitive process in an area that defines itself as:

[...] institution in the service of society and of its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, the tangible and intangible evidence of people and their environment.⁷

It is worthwhile asking what empowerment requires of the Museum, grounded on the concept that acknowledges, accepts and implements conditions for the exercise of diversity for life in society, in the context of any ‘special’ public.

The reply was already given during the 1980s in one of the papers written by museology author Waldisa Rússio⁸ who, although not specifically addressing the public categorized as people with special needs, highlighted the appropriate social relationship that must exist between the Museum and its visitors. This author states that “the Museum arises from the community, and *the time has now come to make the Museum with the community rather than for the community*” (author’s italics). The stance imposed by this phrase leads to reflection on thinking about making the Museum *with* disabled people rather than *for* people with special needs.

⁴ Ferdinand Cavalcante Pereira, “O que é empoderamento (Empowerment)”, Available online: <<http://www.fapepi.pi.gov.br/novafapepi/sapiencia8/artigos1.php>> Consulted, April 2012, p. 1.

⁵ Natalie Barraga, *Visual handicaps and learning: A developmental approach*, Wadsworth Pub. Co, 1973, p. 51.

⁶ Donatela Pascolini and Silvio Paolo Mariotti, “Global estimates of visual impairment: 2010”, British Journal Ophthalmology Online First published December 1, 2011, Available online: <<http://bjo.bmj.com/content/early/2011/11/30/bjophthalmol-2011-300539.abstract>> Consulted, April 2012.

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⁸ Waldísia Rússio, “Texto III”, In: Arantes, Antônio Augusto (Org.), *Produzindo o passado: estratégias de construção do patrimônio cultural*, São Paulo, Brasiliense, CONDEPHAAT, 1984, p. 60.

Sharing musealized space is the meaning and also the verb that underscores the meaning imposed by the definition of Accessibility, which is taken to be:

Conditions for the safe, independent use, either alone or assisted, of spaces, urban equipment and facilities, buildings, transportation services and devices, information systems and means of communication by people with disabilities or limited mobility.⁹

And it is in Museums that undeniably constitute informative and communicative spaces dominated by visual aspects in the daily routines of their visitors, focusing specially on the visually impaired, that countless stumbling-blocks are noted, hampering the progression of the process. These barriers are related to architecture, attitudes and above all communications.

The first example includes physical obstacles in the outdoor and indoor circulation areas set aside for visitors, particularly exhibition circuits. The second consists of using only printed matter (hard copies) for communications, written in ordinary language, with labels and captions in small fonts or with little or no contrast; and the absence of the various types of assistive technologies that have been developed and are still being produced as an ancillary resources for Museum users. Finally, mention may be made of a lack of training among Museum employees, teaching them how to welcome visitors with disabilities, as they may well be unaware of how to respond appropriately to their special needs, providing the type of attention required by each situation.

In today's world, and also according to modern terminology, Assistive Technology is defined as: [...] "a branch of scientific research directed towards the development and application of instruments that enhance or fully restore human functions"¹⁰.

Pursuing autonomy and enhanced quality of life for people with disabilities, it thus helps the visually impaired to surmount the barriers imposed by their special needs.

In order to remove the stumbling blocks imposed by the constraints described above, using Assistive Technology as a resource that transfers the desired content to the visitor, work is required within Special Information context on the Information Science model whose predicates include the theoretical knowledge called Information Representation, which analyzes, interprets, describes and communicates as required by the set of informational needs of the demand.

Opening a parenthesis in the paper, it is important to mention that the set of steps deployed to remove barriers form a curving timeline that begins in the 19th century with the invention of the Braille System in 1825, extending through to contemporary Information and Communication Technology (ICT) resources, such as software with voice synthesizers often used by the visually impaired.

From a contemporary standpoint, it may affirmed that when Louis Braille created his universal communication system for the blind, he took the first step – in fact a major leap – forward in terms of quality and information fostering social inclusion. An individual action can serve as a collective instrument that paves the way for the inclusion of the visually impaired through the transfer and mastery of information, constituting a milestone in the process of attaining social power for a minority.

⁹ Brasil-Decreto Nº 5296, de 2 de dezembro de 2004, Regulamenta as Leis nºs 10.048, de 8 de novembro de 2000, que dá prioridade de atendimento às pessoas que especifica, e 10.098, de 19 de dezembro de 2000, que estabelece normas gerais e critérios básicos para a promoção da acessibilidade das pessoas portadoras de deficiência ou com mobilidade reduzida, e dá outras providências, Artº 8º, I, Available online: < http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2004-2006/2004/decreto/d5296.htm> Consulted, April 2012.

¹⁰ Brasil-Ministério da Ciência e Tecnologia (MCT), "Inclusão Social", Available online: <<http://www.mct.gov.br/index.php/content/view/307898.html#>> Consulted, April 2012.

The voice of Louis Braille¹¹ is heard in the following excerpt, ranking him as a pioneer in terms of what is known as special Information that, in today's world, falls under the aegis of the resources of empowerment and assistive technology.

In the broadest sense, access to information is access to knowledge, and this is vitally important for us to cease being scorned, dependent on people who can see. We do not need pity, nor do we need reminding that we are vulnerable. We need to be treated with equality – and communication is the way to do so.

The invention by this blind young Frenchman is based on sensorial information arising from stimulation through the sense of touch that allows people to 'see' by touch, offering the visually impaired the conditions needed to expand their 'perceptions' beyond themselves, of human beings in general, in addition to the pleasure of novelty, prompting reflection on their identity, in parallel to cultural affirmation and access to knowledge.

Closing the parenthesis... Within the context of the information and communication requirements for application in Museums that are intended to remove the obstacles hampering adequate services for the public in question, consideration must be given to the relationship between any type of barrier and the assistive resources needed to remove them.

Consequently, the approach follows domestic and international recommendations issued by institutions addressing the topic of accessibility for the visually impaired in different contexts, including visits to Museums. The recommendations come from several studies and experience is linked to universities, such as those of Professor Francisco José de Lima, for example, the Coordinator of the Inclusionary Studies Center at the Pernambuco Federal University, Brazil, and the creator / editor of the *Brazilian Visual Translation Review (Revista Brasileira de Tradução Visual)*¹² as well as schools providing special services, international entities and others representing the visually impaired that are acknowledged within their communities. There are others that serve as references for other regions and countries, such as: Instituto Benjamin Constant, IBC, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; -- Organização Nacional dos Cegos do Brasil, ONCB, São Paulo, Brazil; -- Fundação Dorina Nowill, FDN, São Paulo, Brazil; -- Organización Nacional de Ciegos Españoles, *ONCE*, Spain; United Nations Organisation – *UNO*; *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation* – UNESCO. Based on sources for consultation, an academic survey was conducted at the Federal University of the Estate of Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO)¹³ in 2011, when three key points were established in order to underscore the elements needed to allow the autonomy of people with disabilities within Museum settings.

1 -- The first key point is moving around the museum setting. This involves sensorial perceptions that require adequate representation of informational content, in order to communicate the specific characteristics that ensure full orientation of the person in the museological space, meaning the Spatial Information presented through physical data that can be recognized by people with special needs: – Guideline (on the floor, with contrast ensured through texture or color); – Handrail along the exhibition circuit (indicates continuous areas, interruptions and deviations along the way); – Circuit touch map (with captions in Braille and / or large letters describing the exhibition); – Audio-descriptions (sound resource) of the exhibition circuit; – Indication of other

¹¹ E. R. Lemos e J. B. Cerqueira e J. L. Venturini e T. F. O. Rossi, Louis Baille – sua vida e seu sistema, São Paulo, Fundação Dorina Nowill para Cegos, 1999, p. 8.

¹² Revista Brasileira de Tradução Visual, Available online: <<http://www.rbtv.associadosdainclusaocom.br/index.php/principal>> Consulted: April 2012.

¹³ Ana Fátima Berquó, Dedos de ver: informação especial no museu e a inclusão social da pessoa com deficiência visual, Dissertação de Mestrado, Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro-UNIRIO, Museu de Astronomia e Ciências Afins-MAST, 2011, Orientadora: Diana Farjalla Correia Lima.

spaces for visitors. It is suggested that these information items be made available together.

2 – The second key point is another type of communication action related to multisensorial Information including different resources based on touch, reading and sound. The list includes indicators that might not be present, in contrast to those mentioned above in item 1, although the absence of some of them does not adversely affect commitments to information that ensure individual autonomy. Examples of such informative items include: – *Original object* (collection) that can be touched; – *Reproduction for touching when the original cannot be handled*; – *Touchable models* of the objects; – *Three-dimensional objects and mock-ups* based on the original works; – *Three-dimensional reproductions* of two-dimensional works; – *Enlargements* of small objects; – *Miniatures* of large objects; – *Sound bites* on the objects; – *Braille system* for captions (labels) on displayed items and reference print-outs; *use of large fonts* for captions (labels) on displayed objects; – *Audio-descriptions* ..

Both spatial and multi-sensorial information are displayed resources of special information and assistive technology, which work with the senses through touch and hearing.

With regard to touch, it is stressed that this requires a blend of perception through the skin, movements of the fingers, hand and arms, as well as information on how our limbs move and are positioned in relation to our bodies as a whole and what is being touched. This involves an inter-relationship among rhythm, contact, self-perception (balance, posture and localization), articulation and pressure for recognizing shapes, spaces, sizes, textures, temperatures, vibration and responses.

The sense of touch cannot be replaced by sight, because there are perceptions that are specific to each sense. Fine touch, for example, can feel aspects that are not perceived through sight; the quality of a piece of fabric or a plank of wood is generally assessed better with the fingers and hands, than with the eyes.

Furthermore, touch may be used subconsciously, as much as a skill. It can be trained and developed. Like other senses, touch is used with various levels of acuity. It must be quite clear that this is not a skill that blind people acquire automatically and adroitly. It is noted that people who learn Braille young generally develop an accurate sense of touch. And according to the scientific evidence, prolonged tactile experiences result in a certain degree of reorganization and specialization of the cerebral cortex. This takes place through intensive practice, rather than by some magic sensorial compensation process, as might be imagined.

Regardless of the degree of skill, touch is a primary way of learning about objects that can supplement poor sight, confirming or contradicting ambiguous visual perceptions. In these cases, partially sighted visitors to museums will use touch in exactly the same way as people with perfect sight use it in order to bridge the inevitable gaps and uncertainties of sight. Notably, touch is frequently used to help visitors construct visual images.

With regard to sound information, audio-descriptions, it is particularly noteworthy as a resource to be used by a minority social group, which is a proposal that became well known in a technical and conceptual format during the mid-1970s in the United States of America through the dissemination of a Master's degree dissertation by Gregory Frazier -- Master of Arts, San Francisco State University USA ¹⁴.

¹⁴ Gregory Frazier. *The autobiography of miss Jane Pitman: an all audio adaptation of the teleplay for the blind and visually handicapped*, San Francisco, San Francisco State University, MA – Thesis, 1975.

When addressing its application through electronic media, an audio-guide is used, which is a device widely available in Museums, although when using it for spoken descriptions (Audio-descriptions), there are differences in the content and presentation of the information to be transferred. Although based on specialized information in the thematic area related to the Museum collection, scripts prepared for the sighted public do not require the content of the Special Information to be adapted specifically for the message directed to the visually impaired. This resource consists of

[...] the translation of images into words. It is thus also defined as a type of intersemiotic audiovisual translation, in which the visual sign is transposed to the verbal sign. This transposition is characterized by an objective description of the images that, in parallel and together with the original speech, allow a full understanding of the full audiovisual narratives. As the name says, an audiovisual content consists of sound and image, which supplement each other. Audio-description thus bridges a gap for the public with visual impairment.¹⁵

3 – The third key point involves human resources information which is related to the presence of staff in the museum: professionals trained to welcome and assist the visually impaired.

For the third and last key point, it is possible to blend personal assistance with the hands-on technique of Audio-description in the museological space. Although audio-descriptive activities require specialized training and there are courses available for this purpose, it may not be forgotten that, over the years, what is today an audiovisual interpretation technique:

[...] *was, previously handled informally, thanks to the sensitivity and good will of a few people.* This occurs and occurred when the more curious among the visually impaired started to ask questions and clear up doubts during film screenings, plays and other types of shows. However, not everyone accompanying them is prepared or trained to render this type of service. Furthermore, these escorts also want to watch the film or show and, if required to provide additional information, may lose track of the plot, failing to understand certain things and scenes.¹⁶ [italics added by the author]

In the Museum, this resource of an agent playing the role of a descriptive narrator, personally describing what is being displayed, does not disturb other visitors who often also benefit from the Special Information (description) offered to the visually impaired, while also paving the way for greater socialization of this visually impaired segment of the public, in terms of accessing information or contents in Museums.

Consequently it is worthwhile highlighting examples of three successful experiences of activities that are under way in Museums, in the city of São Paulo, Brazil, and grounded on the concept of social inclusion. The purpose of these activities is to allow permanent access to services and physical spaces. The first is the Alike Different (*Igual Diferente*) Program run by the Museum of Modern Art; another action is the Special Public Educational Program at the State Art Gallery (*Pinacoteca*), and the most recent is offered by the Soccer Museum.

The services that they offer taken into consideration the diversity of their users, and thus the actions undertaken by these Museums are indicators that these facilities not only serve as stimuli but also create the conditions needed for a practical model to be followed by other institutions and their specialized professional staff.

¹⁵ Eliana Franco, Definições de Audiodescrição, Available online: <<http://www.vercompalavras.com.br/definicoes>> Consulted, April 2012.

¹⁶ Livia Maria Villela de Mello Motta, Audiodescrição - recurso de acessibilidade de inclusão cultural, 30 jul. 2008, Available online: <<http://www.bengalalegal.com/livia.php>> Consulted, April 2012.

There are also other Museums that use Braille captions along part of the exhibition circuit, welcoming visually impaired visitors, provided that these trips are scheduled in advance. Others also have a certain number of reproduction objects available for touching, although Audio-descriptions have not yet come into widespread use in the daily routines of Museums.¹⁷

As affirmed, particularly within the context of Communication, the presence of the image is constantly strengthened in contemporary society, constituting a vast and significant repository of information in the course of people's daily lives. As a result, the universe of images has been moving steadily ahead into a leading position. It cannot be denied that, in the modern world, we live mainly within a context where images 'speak' the whole time, meaning that it is necessary to 'translate' for the visually impaired the messages transmitted by the images constructed by the museological visuality of the exhibition.

It can never be stressed too often that

[...] the way in which society solves the problems created by the presence of underprivileged minorities with special needs reflect its underlying concept of the nature and value of human beings and the basic assumptions of its obligations as a community to individual citizens.¹⁸

Consequently, within the context of accessibility for the visually impaired, the concept of empowerment that implies social inclusion requires a social procedure of the Museum that ensures adequate contextualization in order to produce participatory stimuli, guiding responses and the cognition processes.

Moreover, it might even be said that it is becoming necessary for visually impaired visitors to move beyond the limits of merely listening to descriptions of what their fingers cannot reach, but for these visitors, Museums should offer a blend of these two actions: listening and touching. This is because, for the visually impaired, the fingers correspond to the eyes of the normally sighted, constituting one of the channels of perceptions through which they learn about the world.

There can be no doubt that making the museum inclusionary underpins the social process of empowerment. This involves and implies the creation of programs and activities that open up possibilities for people with disabilities – in this case, the visually impaired – to participate actively through the resources required for this purpose. This demands changes in regular practices, policies and the procedures adopted.

From this standpoint, which is focused on inclusion, and through its practice, Museums will be able to fulfill their social mission completely, by encompassing everyone in museological programs, consequently contributing to the steady formation of an inclusionary society with adequate perceptions that is keenly aware of the issue of differences. This approach will foster a better understanding of the importance of adapting physical facilities and information media to meet a wide variety of special needs.

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¹⁷ Anderson Pinheiro Santos (org.), *Diálogos entre Arte e Público*. Recife, Fundação de Cultura Cidade do Recife, v. 3, 2010. p. 136, Available online: <<http://dialogosentreateepublico.blogspot.com.br/>> Consulted, March 2012.

¹⁸ C. Telford e G. M. Sawrey, *O indivíduo excepcional*, Rio de Janeiro, Zahar, 1976, p. 50.

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EMPOWERING THE VISITOR: PROCESS, PROGRESS AND PROTEST

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the subject of museum empowerment by examining what museums are doing and whether what they are doing is empowering. To this end, museums have employed various strategies in response to changes in the public mood, in an effort to address a declining visitorship. Competition from other sources of learning, knowledge gathering, idea exchange, and entertainment has made this an important priority for museums. When it comes to empowerment, however, museums seem to have chosen to modify and redefine this term in concert with its own circumstance and the lengths to which it will go in respect of its visitors. But is this really empowerment? Or, is this merely a tactic to retain power while giving the appearance that there has been a shift? If so, this would mean that the granting of empowerment to the visitor has become superficial and museums have turned out to be manipulative. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that for the purposes of its own culture and its perceived societal obligation, the museum's definition and application of "empowerment", from their perspective, probably suffices until protests arise. This will occur when museums and visitors perceive empowerment from widely disparate points of view.

RÉSUMÉ

Responsabiliser le visiteur : processus, progrès et protestation

Cette communication traite du pouvoir qu'ont les musées de responsabiliser le public, tout en examinant ce que les musées font à cet égard, et si ce qu'ils font responsabilise le public. Les musées ont recours à des stratégies diverses pour répondre à la fois aux changements d'attitude du public et aux efforts mis en place pour contrer le déclin du nombre de visiteurs. Ceci s'avère d'une grande priorité pour eux en raison de compétitions provenant d'autres sources d'apprentissage, d'accumulation des savoirs, d'échanges d'idées et de divertissements divers. S'agissant de la responsabilisation du public, il semblerait cependant que les musées aient choisi de changer et de redéfinir ce terme en fonction à la fois de leur propre projet et de l'importance accordée au rôle des visiteurs. En l'occurrence, est-il vraiment question ici de responsabilisation ? Ou s'agit-il simplement d'une tactique pour garder le pouvoir tout en donnant l'impression d'un changement ? Dans l'affirmative, cela signifierait que cet octroi de pouvoir au visiteur demeurerait superficiel et que les musées seraient devenus des manipulateurs. Dès lors, qu'il soit permis de conclure que du fait de la culture qui leur est propre autant de qu'il en est de la perception de leurs obligations sociales, la définition et l'usage par les musées du concept de responsabilisation soient probablement acceptables jusqu'au moment où s'élèveront des protestations. Ceci surviendra quand les musées et les visiteurs auront une perception de la responsabilisation basée sur des points de vue radicalement divergents.

RESUMEN

Empoderar al visitante: proceso, progreso y protesta

Lynn Maranda

Empowering the visitor: process, progress and protest

Este texto aborda el tema del empoderamiento en los museos examinando qué es lo que los museos están haciendo y si lo que están haciendo puede ser considerado empoderamiento. Con este fin los museos han empleado variadas estrategias como respuesta a los cambios de los hábitos del público, en un esfuerzo para dar solución al problema de la disminución de la cantidad de visitantes. La competencia con otras instituciones, fuente de conocimiento, de acumulación de saberes, de intercambio de ideas y de entretenimiento, ha contribuido a que este tema sea de prioritaria importancia para los museos. Pero cuando se trata del empoderamiento del público, pareciera sin embargo que los museos han elegido modificar y redefinir este término en función de su propio proyecto y de la importancia que atribuyen al rol de los visitantes. ¿Se trata verdaderamente de una cuestión de empoderamiento? O es una mera táctica para retener el poder dando apariencia de que se ha producido un cambio? De ser así, esto significaría que se garantiza el poder del público de una manera superficial y que los museos devienen en manipuladores. Sin embargo, se podría concluir que la definición y aplicación del “empoderamiento” en el contexto de los propósitos de su propia cultura y de la percepción que tenga de sus obligaciones sociales desde su propia perspectiva, será probablemente aceptable hasta que se produzca la protesta. Esto ocurrirá cuando los museos y sus visitantes perciban al “empoderamiento” desde puntos de vista radicalmente divergentes.

* * *

This paper focuses on the subject of museum visitor empowerment by examining what museums are doing and whether what they are doing is empowering.

For some decades now, museums have been sensing something in the public mood that has caught their attention. It might be the result of a shift in demographics, of changes in cultural and social relevancies, of what is in vogue and what is not, of questions concerning ownership and voice, of challenges to authority and control. Also included in this mix is feedback from media and funding sources, from other like institutions and organizations, from professional associations, from the general populace, and from museum visitors. Whatever the case, public disposition has led to a continuous decline in visitor numbers for nearly all except the newest, largest, or most prominent museums. Museums are feeling the competition especially from other sources of learning, knowledge gathering, idea exchange, and entertainment, which digital technology has now made available even from the comfort of home.

Sensing that there has been a change in the public mood, and this is concurrent with the decline in audience attendance, museums are taking steps to identify and come to understand what is out there and adjust accordingly. Museums, therefore, are asking whether they are really doing what people want and whether they are doing the right thing. They are doubting what they are doing and how they are doing it, and question whether it can be done differently.

To this end, museums have developed mission statements and prepared policies incorporating their contemporaneity in the societal structure. They have made these public and have been prepared to change in response not only to their own long range goals and objectives, but also to the current trends of the public mood. Museums have incorporated simple techniques such as comment books and suggestion boxes, and have conducted surveys to gauge visitor temperament. The quantitative results of surveys and the findings emanating from the qualitative research methodology used in focus groups have enabled museums to delve deeper into assessing their place in the community. In addition, museums have mounted forums for discussion and debate, have undertaken consultations, have engaged in collaborations, and are cautiously venturing into partnerships. Further, museums have

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formed associations and invited membership subscriptions, they have pursued donors for monies to support their probing activities, and they have encouraged the move to an increased visitor participation in its programmes and activities.

The public mood has directed museums to inform the community as to what they (museums) are all about – what they represent, what they are doing, and where they are heading. The community has come to the realization that there is a collective public ownership in museums, that museums are only the stewards of a shared heritage, and is calling for transparency and disclosure from these institutions. In response, museums, whether directly or through their governance bodies, have developed mission statements and set definable goals and objectives as a start to meeting these conditions. These are backed up with policies which define operational parameters and with procedures which map the course of fulfilling policy requirements. As the collections are central to museum existence and the focus of most of its activities, policies addressing this institutional responsibility tend to be the first that appear and are those most often disseminated to the community as evidence of good intentions. Over the years, museum goals and objectives may change direction, as may its collections mandate, its name, its whole persona. Consequently, mission statements and policies will change to conform to the new reality and to keep pace with directions gleaned from the public mood. In addition to the public mood, funding and other support sources are in want of these as well and they, too, are also steering production of these statements and documents from the museum.

In order to more directly determine visitor temperament as to how it is performing, elementary level tools which museums use include informal surveys by way of comment books, often placed at kiosks strategically situated in association with a particular presentation such as an exhibition or a programme, suggestion boxes located, for example, in the museum foyer, or a person behind a ticket desk who can receive oral submissions and even thank visitors for their contribution. While solicitation of opinion by way of comment books can be rather random, it is normally targeted to cover a specific subject or event, unlike suggestion boxes which, by their nature, normally serve to invite remarks on any aspect of the museum. In fact, through comment books, opportunities are provided for feed-back for specific reasons, reasons which diverge from any perceived impressions visitors may have that they are actively contributing to a process that may effectively have meaning for the museum's developmental consciousness. Exhibitions and programmes cost considerable money and museums are required to be accountable to donors and granting agencies as to how the products produced with funds approved are received by visitors. Within this framework, by selectively choosing positive or complimentary statements, museums use their visitors' comments in support of fulfilling funding report requirements. Such remarks are also utilized in funding applications and in promotional and marketing materials.

Surveys in the form of questionnaires also aim to test the public mood and to garner information which museums can use for their own ends. Unlike comment books, surveys are highly structured and aim to focus visitor responses in particular ways as prescribed by the nature of the question. These may be in the form of a document which invites written answers or they may be verbal during which selected visitors respond to questions asked by personnel conducting the survey. Carefully constructed surveys are illustrative of a deliberate museum approach to gather quantitative data from public sources for the purpose of incorporating the findings into objectives that have more to do with the securing of funding and the development of marketing plans to increase attendance. As in the case of comment books, there is a visitor-based expectation that the information being conveyed will contribute in some way to the "betterment" of the museum. Nevertheless, the museum already has a specific goal in mind and may not be seeking to confirm, cancel, or change its planned course or to plot a new one, thus negating any real opportunity for visitor empowerment.

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In the course of a survey aimed at developing a marketing plan to increase its attendance, Museum “x”, for example, included a list of almost 20 types of exhibitions and asked respondents to prioritize the entries in terms of their level of appeal. The results revealed that of those surveyed, the top rated exhibition was one on “Egyptian archaeological digs and treasures”, and at very the bottom, an exhibition on the “toy soldier collection”. Buoyed by this revelation, Museum “x” was eager to secure a first-rate exhibition of Egyptian antiquities. After a number of years had passed, however, the museum mounted an exhibition of its toy soldier collection, even though at least one blockbuster exhibition of ancient Egyptian treasures from the British Museum had been twice offered exclusively to the same museum. With a price-tag of some 2.5 million dollars, the Egyptian exhibition was well beyond the comprehension of the museum’s decision makers. This chance for visitor contribution fell by the wayside as the museum chose to ignore the mood of its survey respondents.

Focus groups are another method of surveying visitors although under quite different conditions. This strategy is normally carried out by private companies who retain professionals specially trained to undertake the work, analyze the data received, and synthesize the findings into a report for use by the client. This kind of qualitative research methodology is one where selected individuals from specific demographics are invited to join one of several small groups where a trained facilitator conducts proceedings in a rather informal and to some extent, unstructured manner. Participants are asked for their observations and opinions on subjects relating to the museum, can respond in any way they wish, and are free to talk and interact with each other. Sessions tend to be lengthy and intense. In the end, the findings may be the result of consensus rather than of individual responses to the questions posed, and may incorporate a certain amount of empirical research. While the participants may believe they are actively engaged in making a meaningful contribution towards the museum’s future, what eventuates from such encounters again is most often used by the museum to report on funds spent, to secure funding for future undertakings, and to develop marketing plans. The focus group level of visitor input has the real potential for the museum to instigate genuine opportunities to empower visitors, but this is rarely the case.

Museums often mount forums for discussion and debate on specific topics to which the public are invited to attend. In order to give structure to such encounters, a panel of “experts” or individuals “appropriate” to the topic would normally be invited to conduct the formal proceedings, with questions for panel members and comments from the public gallery, often being left to the end. Forums for discussion and debate are normally subject specific and serve as an addition to or an augmentation of an exhibition or a programme mounted by the museum. While information flows in one direction from the panellists to the audience, it does allow for audience generated discussion. Depending on the topic of the forum and whether it is of a contentious nature, discussion can become intense and range beyond the confines of the subject matter. One such event took place in association with an exhibition which addressed the encounter between Native Americans and Jesuit priests in the mid 19th Century. It was thought a good idea that the Salish peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast and those of the Plateau meet in a forum to discuss common ground and issues of the past as reflected in the exhibition. The panel was comprised of Salish peoples from local First Nations groups with a few Native American Salish, with much of the audience being a mix of local First Nations and non-Aboriginal attendees. The discussion soon developed into an emotional exchange in respect of past wrongs perpetrated against First Nations and Native Americans and became a sounding board not only for ongoing pain and anger, but also as one more step in the healing process. Non-Aboriginal visitors to the forum that day could not but have felt the intensity of the issues raised and could only have left with a new perspective on the struggles Aboriginal peoples have had to endure. Except to ask questions, this faction was all but silent throughout. The First Nations and Native Americans on the other hand, were provided with a

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platform which allowed them a short-lived level of empowerment to air grievances, to give voice to their relationship with non-Aboriginal peoples, governments, and museums, and to attempt to sensitize others. In this instance, the struggle for “real empowerment” came face to face with the museum.

The foregoing are just some of the more common strategies used by museums for communicating with and soliciting input from their visitors. Further to these, museums have also moved into problematic areas involving individuals or groups within the community by way of consultations, collaborations, and most recently, a far more difficult relationship forged through partnerships. Each of these levels involves an incremental dimension with consultations on specific topics requiring expertise not present in the museum amongst its staff compliment being the least complicated, and partnerships, at the far end of the scale, being the most challenging. The range goes from the simple receipt by museums of relevant data from an outside individual or group (consultation), to a joint enterprise between museum and outside individual or group in the creation of a shared product whether or not it is physically centered within the museum but over which the museum maintains ultimate control (collaboration), to a shared venture between the museum and an outside faction where the external collaborator is in a position to vie with the museum for control and over which the ultimate authority does not necessarily rest with the museum but ultimately may rest only jointly with the external entity (partnership, full and equal).

Consultations come in all forms from simple telephone calls for information to extensive meetings with experts or persons of interest whose knowledge or expertise can assist the museum with any of its events or projects. Virtually all museums utilize this technique especially whenever there are not adequate staff resources to cover the knowledge or skills base required. Collaborations grow out of a need for much closer consultation and an alliance, for example, to jointly undertake a project is formed between the parties, with such being initiated by either the museum or the outside individual or group. Special interest private individuals or groups can be of particular concern for the museum and while an alliance may be initiated by the museum seeking a special affiliation to produce an identifiable product beneficial to the museum's programmes, there are many occasions when the museum is not the originator but enters into a collaborative relationship with an individual or group offering an enticing opportunity which may be difficult for the museum to refuse. Such arrangements may be made, for example, with private individuals owning collections relevant to the museum's exhibition mandate, the ethical dilemmas notwithstanding, or with scholars or commercial enterprises who become Guest Curators, Designers, and etcetera. Nevertheless, those collaborating with museums in such a manner have an empowerment opportunity afforded to few visitors and which their special circumstances allow.

Partnerships are probably the most challenging of all of the techniques by which the museum interfaces with its visitors. This level of interactivity is becoming the norm particularly for those museums which work with Aboriginal peoples. Of course consultation and collaboration figure into this equation as well, but it is primarily and ultimately a full and equal partnership that is being sought. While consultation can, for example, identify projects to be undertaken, and while collaborations can be achieved through, for example, the mounting of particular exhibition openings or other events following traditional Aboriginal formats, the actual development, mounting, interpretation and implementation of all aspects of a project, from initial conception to any residual activity extending beyond completion, as an equal partner, is the demand that is being voiced. This has become a huge issue for these museums as their authoritative position is being severely questioned and their power structure summarily challenged. The question of empowerment here is one which is not necessarily emanating from or granted by the museum, but rather one which is being appropriated by Aboriginal peoples and to which museums, in concert with issues of contemporary

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moral behaviour in such circumstances, are complying as they have little or no other recourse.

Such a partnership was formed between a western Canadian museum and three local First Nations to prepare an exhibition. The partnership *per se* was formalized in a Protocol Agreement which detailed how all of the parties agreed to work with each other. The First Nations representatives chose the subject matter and theme of the exhibition, jointly applied with the museum for a grant to develop and realize the project, chose all of the objects for display along with the attending illustrations and graphic embellishments, wrote all of the texts and labels, were heavily involved in the design of the presentation including the choice of colours, text and label format and size, the lighting, and so forth, commissioned the audio component and the manufacture of some replicas as needed, prepared the objects for display and did any repairs and cleaning as required under the guidance of the museum's conservator, undertook to develop and deliver the accompanying educational programming in collaboration with the museum's education department, liaise with local media, and conduct the opening ceremonies in true First Nations style. Essential to this project was the fact that all 3 First Nations insisted on controlling those funds, awarded to the museum for this project, which were to be paid to the "cultural researchers" (in fact, the co-Curators), one from each of the three Nations. This meant that the co-Curators were employees of their respective Nations and not of the museum, and it was the Nations themselves who set the employment parameters of the curators, all three of whom took their primary guidance from their representative on the project's Steering Committee. The dynamics of the situation all but precluded the museum from any role as pace setter and decision maker, relegating it to one of museological broker and project facilitator, with little or no call upon its authority. Time was an issue with which the museum struggled throughout and the rigidity of its own "corporate" pre-planning schedule ultimately had a sizeable affect on when expected deliverables appeared. The process was entirely out of the museum's hands, even to the extent that the opening of the exhibition had to be postponed several times.

The museum's perceived loss of control over this exhibition in favour of First Nations demand for "voice", instilled a level of caution in respect of subsequent dealings with these Nations to the degree that several years later, when an exhibition, with an important Aboriginal component, was being developed, the same three Nations were invited to participate, but only long after all the rest of the elements had been decided and a preliminary design prepared. Needless to say, the First Nations representatives were highly offended. Shortly thereafter, some nastiness ensued and the First Nations walked away from the project altogether.

Protest arises not only from such an instance as described in the previous paragraph, but also from a range of perceived insults from wherever such may originate. The issue over an 1988 exhibition entitled, *The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples*, mounted by the Glenbow Museum during the Calgary Winter Olympics, was caught up in the politics surrounding the land claim initiated by the Lubicon Lake Cree in northern Alberta. While the Lubicon took advantage of the Olympics to voice their dispute with the federal government, their attention ultimately turned to the exhibition which they claimed the Glenbow had mounted over the objections of a First Nations group not represented in the presentation. The inclusion of, in particular, Shell Oil, a prime target in the Lubicon's land claim, as an exhibition sponsor, provided additional aggravation. Resulting from the ensuing controversy was the 1992 document, *Turning the Page: Forging New Partnerships Between Museums and First Peoples*, a Task Force report jointly sponsored by the Assembly of First Nations and the Canadian Museums Association, which outlined principles and made recommendations in respect of how the two parties should work together in partnership arrangements, and in particular, how museums must treat First Nations peoples and their ancestor remains and objects of cultural patrimony.

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The following year, in 1989, the Royal Ontario Museum's exhibition, *Into the Heart of Africa*, with its contextualization focusing on the subject of white Canadian imperialist history, bore the full brunt of displeasure from Toronto's Afro-Canadian community. Particularly offensive were some not so subtle, large blown-up images depicting the subservience of the African peoples to the imperiousness of the foreigners. The museum was picketed and protesters demanded that images and exhibition texts be changed. The fact that the Royal Ontario Museum steadfastly stood by their intellectual prerogative and did neither, fuelled an already volatile situation. Consequently, all four institutions (two Canadian and two American) scheduled to receive the exhibition when it closed in Toronto, quickly cancelled their bookings, and the exhibition's guest curator, who taught at the University of Toronto, was forced to resign from her professorial job as a result of threatening invectives she received from her students.

Beyond these techniques, there are other possibilities the museum can follow in which to more fully engage the visitor and these are through various avenues of participation. Over the last decade, in the light of declining visitorship and the recently arrived digital age where museum audiences are turning more and more to other sources for learning, knowledge gathering, the exchange of ideas, and entertainment, this has become an important matter for museums. While it is difficult for the museum to compete with all that technology has to offer, it can still utilize such a tool in building a base for visitor participation in its own sphere of influence. In fact, this is only one of many ways the museum can move visitors from passive consumers to actively engaged participants and even to a point where exhibitions and programmes can become visitor driven. In this engagement mode, the visitor can be not only consumer, respondent or critic, but also contributor, creator, purveyor, facilitator, discussant. Nevertheless, there are endless avenues which museums can and do create for visitor participation, including enticements to join a museum's association or "Friends" group, to become a volunteer, to donate funds in support of museum exhibitions or programmes, and so forth.

To empower means to give or grant power or authority to someone, to enable someone to be imbued with power or authority. Empowerment implies a transference of power and is predicated on the ability that it can effect a change. For the museum, empowerment would mean, for example, granting authority for developing policies and standards of operation, for acquiring and repatriating collections, for setting the course for exhibitions and programmes, for steering didactic and intellectual parameters, and for all the other important work museums do. Decision making would be transferred to others, away from the museum governance, operational and management bodies.

"Empowerment" has become, however, a current buzz word, a construct now ranging across disciplinary and conceptual boundaries and bearing many interpretive variables depending on perspectives, contexts and applications. As there appears to be no concrete definition, it is a concept open to debate. Yet, empowerment has also been described as a social process which has multiple aspects and which fosters power in people to enable them to gain control over their own lives by acting on issues they define as important. It emphasises self-management and self-determination by building abilities and equipping the individual with the tools and authority for making decisions.

In its struggle to gain a contemporaneous place in the affairs of social intercourse and wide-spread acceptance, the museum has adopted current vocabularies, notions and activities to suit its interface with the publics it serves. In this way, the museum hopes to gain the attention it so anxiously craves to garner public recognition, approval and support, thus securing, along with a growing visitorship, its sustainable relevance in the world of today. So, enter "empowerment". Sounds good, even conciliatory, which, along with many other factors of recent origin, the museum believes will enable it to position itself amongst and one with its public for the benefit and in the service of

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society and its concomitant aspirations. Through an ongoing introspection and search for an uninterrupted recognition and confirmation of its own lasting existence, the museum is taking hold of many a modernity as confirmation of the course it chooses to take. Since “empowerment” is *au courant*, then this is one the routes the museum has chosen to follow. The museum is in constant fear of being labelled socially incorrect, resistant to, or out of synchronization with the trends of the day, all of which have the potential of leading to its loss of relevance and thus its fall from favour within the social milieu. As a trend seeker and adapter, the museum, therefore, builds its own form of pan-societal continuum in the best interests of its own perpetuation.

The concept of empowerment seems, however, to have different meanings to museums and their interpretation of this concept seems to range far and wide. Museums think they are implementing a state of empowerment, from acts of responsiveness to visitor needs to an outright capitulation of its previously ascribed authority in favour of another entity. Whatever the case, the museum sets limits in both time and scope as to how far it is prepared to go to divest itself of what it continues to believe is its authoritative prerogative, regardless of its perceived attentiveness to its newly set course. In fact, the museum has re-interpreted empowerment in its own image of its accepted position in society and regularly balks at taking it further for fear of losing its own persona.

While it might be argued that the first act of a museum-based empowerment was the allowing of the public into seeing collections of man-made artifacts and natural specimens that once comprised those private cabinets of curiosity, the hundreds of years of museum evolution have led not only to the inclusion of an “in the service of society” sentiment in current definitions of “museum”, but also to the need to respond to the current trend of “empowering” the museum visitor. This has become a warm and fuzzy sentiment in the museum world and while museums “think” they are empowering the visitor, there is all too often a fundamental slippage in the museum’s interpretation of this concept.

It is the case that there has arisen a growing movement from within the ranks of the museum visitor in respect of how they would wish to interface with these institutions. Museums have heard this call and are responding to meet the stated wants emanating from their clientele. After all, museums’ responsiveness can be traced to the dialogic process they are following by which they constantly seek to find out what they are by gathering information from variable sources to enable them to discover themselves, and in so doing, evolve within society. The visitor has become not only a sounding board in this process, but also a catalyst for museum change. In its search for contemporaneity, museums are paying heed to visitors’ concerns and undertaking to comply with many of these.

Many of these concerns have tended to be more practical than scholarly in nature and as such, the museum has been seen to submit with little or no consequence to its intellectual prerogative or budgetary bottom line. Some of the primary public gripes have included such issues as poor signage, hard to read labels, too little or too much information, too low lighting (difficulty in seeing objects), inability to touch the objects, nowhere to sit down and rest, no coat check, no cafeteria, and so on and so forth. Some of these are an easy fix, while others may not be so readily addressed either in the short term or even at all, and still others are simply not practicable. Nevertheless, a positive response to such concerns fits squarely into the realm of the museum’s expansion of services and has little if anything to do with visitor empowerment. Shifting priorities and interests toward visitors can be done at many different levels, but it is important that the museum be able to delineate the difference between providing improved services, being seemingly inclusive, soliciting input, and visitor empowerment.

As outlined above, museums conduct surveys, provide books for visitor commentaries, and hold focus groups in order to gauge how it is performing in the public’s eyes.

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While museum motives may be honest and perceptibly in the best interests of the community, the results of many such initiatives tend to be shelved and remain, for the most part, unreferenced and in a state of perpetual limbo. This is a pity because some of these actions involve budgetary allotments and thus an implicit statement that there will be consequential actions when the findings are known.

On their part, museum visitors arrive at the museum either for a predetermined specific reason – to see a new exhibition, to attend a workshop, to hear a lecture, etc. – or simply for a visit to the museum for whatever purpose. By and large, each visitor's motives and experiences are as different as each individual. Many may wish to be actively engaged with the museum in a way they identify meaningful to themselves, while many may wish to be totally anonymous with no engagement whatsoever. Many may want the museum to “guide” them around and set the course of visitation, while many may want to feel that they have the freedom to make choices and are in control of their experience by being able to move about freely, plotting their path, proceeding at their own pace, and withdrawing when they decide they have had enough. There are thus “active” and “passive” visitors and a whole range of identifiers between these two polarities. Thus, effecting a state of visitor empowerment, with so many variables in the mix, is difficult for museums to identify. For visitors just to comment on and make suggestions in respect of museum facilities, programmes, exhibitions, etc. might equate, in museum eyes, to an attempt to the granting of empowerment to the visitor, and visitors may feel empowered to the extent that they believe they are making a meaningful contribution to museum growth and development, and perhaps, that they may even effect a change in museum policy.

So, how is empowerment realized? If visitors feel empowered by certain actions that the museum takes, then is visitor empowerment achieved? This needs to be asked in the light of the reality of a true empowerment which, at the museum level, has to do with funding (money) (who funds activities?), decision making (who ultimately makes decisions?), and power (where does the power reside?). Since the museum retains control of all of these activities and the answer to the bracketed questions remains “the museum”, then seemingly, empowerment from the museum perspective is to be located elsewhere. To this end, museums seem to have identified a state of visitor empowerment to equate with providing opportunities for visitors to have a say, to make choices, to feel included, to be engaged, to participate, to construct meaning, and to experience a level of self-determination and self-directed control. Although this may identify the consequences of what the museum is doing, the question still needs to be asked whether this is really empowering. It would seem that the intent of “empowerment” has thus been modified or diluted to suit the museum circumstance and to conform to the lengths to which the museum may only be prepared to go in respect of its interface with its visitors. This has meant that the granting of empowerment to the visitor has become superficial and museums have turned out to be manipulative.

While they feel they may be espousing a kind of participatory democracy, museums still subtly positioned themselves to retain power even though they may go to lengths to give the appearance that there has been a shift. It would seem that the word “empowerment”, and all that goes with it, may be the wrong term to use, since it is rather doubtful that “real” empowerment will ever be achieved. An exception to this may be those partnerships some museums are forming in relation to Aboriginal and other minority groups. Such partnerships are making museums feel decidedly uncomfortable as they now risk losing their authoritative position and their ability to control the decisions they make, having to defer to groups which, while they may not be inputting monies, carry an equivalent political currency.

Nevertheless, for the purposes of its own culture and its perceived societal obligation, the museum's definition and application of “empowerment”, from their perspective, probably suffices. Since the most common way visitors participate with museums is

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through contribution in one form or another (feed back, source of objects for the collections, stories, memories, pictures, and so forth), most will more than likely remain relatively content in their relationship with museums. Of course, there are those that will want more from museums and they will make their desires and expectations known. On their part, museums will continue to engage its visitors in its activities, seeking new avenues for their participation. In the long run, it is certain that protests will arise especially when museums and visitors perceive empowerment from widely disparate points of view.

PUBLIC DES MUSÉES : DE LA QUALITÉ DE LA VISITE À L'USAGE DÉMOCRATIQUE

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RÉSUMÉ

Cet article propose une réflexion ouverte sur le rapport dialectique entre le musée et le ou les publics. Il interroge l'idée même de « visiteurs ». Il suggère d'explorer les désirs et les vœux non seulement des publics effectifs mais aussi de l'ensemble de la population, les non-publics compris. Il situe la question de la prise en compte des désirs et des vœux des visiteurs dans le champ de la démocratisation de l'accès à la culture et de la compréhension du rôle symbolique central du musée dans la société. Il tend à démontrer que l'attention portée à l'implication des publics dans la vie des musées ne doit pas se limiter à l'ajustement des dispositifs scénographiques, mais doit concerner l'ensemble de la chaîne opératoire muséale. Si l'exposition est le champ naturel de la prise en compte des désirs de la population, l'attribution du statut patrimonial, la sélection des objets de collection et les politiques de valorisation et de diffusion peuvent s'ouvrir à une démarche démocratique et participative.

La progression de la connaissance des pratiques et souhaits en matière culturelle ne peut plus se contenter d'adapter l'offre à la demande, selon les préconisations des enquêtes de type marketing. Elle doit permettre d'élaborer une nouvelle relation à la population, le musée assumant la population comme un acteur de la dynamique patrimoniale. De nouvelles formes de participation de la population doivent alimenter un processus qui aboutisse à renouveler les finalités de l'action culturelle publique et ses modalités de mise en œuvre. A quelle expérience de production créative et patrimoniale, la population aspire-t-elle, à une époque où elle dispose de moyens technologiques permettant tout à la fois de recevoir des contenus et d'être en interrelation avec eux dans une posture de production ? Quels nouveaux modes de relation mettre en place, pour nourrir une dynamique de participation démocratique et aller vers la co-construction du sens de l'action culturelle publique ?

La responsabilisation de chacun des acteurs de la « chaîne culturelle » complexe et multiple incluant les nouvelles technologies, dans un rapport de réciprocité entre prescripteurs et récepteurs, doit permettre de créer les conditions de la dynamique de la vie muséale et sociétale.

ABSTRACT

The public and museums: from the quality of the visit to its democratic usage

This article proposes a reflection on the dialectical relationship between the museum and its public(s). It questions the concept of visitor. It suggests investigating needs and wants not only of the public but also of the whole population, non-visitors included. It puts these issues in the field of cultural democratization and deals with the understanding of the symbolic role of museums in society. It shows that the involvement of the public in the museum's life does not have to be limited to perfecting exhibition techniques, but must to involve the whole museological operating chain. If exhibitions are the natural

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place where people's wishes count, the attribution of patrimonial status, the selection of collector items, and the evaluation and distribution policies can also be opened to a democratic and participative approach.

Our growing knowledge of the practices and the desires in cultural fields can no longer be satisfied by adapting the supply to the demand as marketing assessments recommend. It has to build a new relationship with the population; the museum takes charge of the population as an actor in patrimonial dynamics. New forms of the population's involvement have to feed a process which must renew the aims of cultural action for the public and its methods of implementation. In creative and patrimonial production, what kind of experience does the population want, when new technology possibilities may at the same time receive contents and interact with them as a producer?

What kind of relationship can fulfill and increase a leitmotiv of democratic participation and go towards the co-construction a meaning for cultural action? The empowerment of each actor of the complex and multiple "cultural chain" which includes new technologies must lead to creating conditions for museum and social life dynamics in reciprocal interaction between influencers and receivers.

RESUMEN

Público de museos: de la calidad de la visita a su utilización democrática

Este artículo propone una reflexión abierta sobre la relación dialéctica entre el museo con él o los públicos. Cuestiona la misma idea de "visitante". Sugiere explorar los deseos y necesidades no sólo de los públicos efectivos, también los del conjunto de la población, incluyendo a los no-públicos. Pone el acento en la puesta en cuestión de los deseos y las necesidades de los visitantes en el contexto de la democratización, del acceso a la cultura y de la comprensión del rol simbólico central del museo en la sociedad. En el texto se procura demostrar que la intención de implicar al público en la vida de los museos no debe limitarse al ajuste de dispositivos escenográficos, si no que debe involucrar al conjunto de la cadena operativa museal. Si la exposición es el campo natural donde se toman en cuenta los deseos de la sociedad, la atribución del estatus patrimonial, la selección de objetos de la colección y las políticas de puesta en valor y de difusión pueden abrirse a un abordaje democrático y participativo.

El progreso en el conocimiento de las prácticas e inquietudes en materia cultural no puede contentarse con adaptar la oferta a la demanda, tal como lo preconizan las encuestas de tipo marketing. Debe permitir elaborar una nueva relación con la sociedad, en la que el museo asume a la población como un actor de la dinámica patrimonial. Las nuevas formas de participación de la sociedad deben alimentar un proceso que tienda a renovar las finalidades de la acción cultural pública y sus métodos de implementación.

¿A qué experiencia de producción creativa y patrimonial aspira la población en una época en la que dispone de medios tecnológicos que le permiten al mismo tiempo que recibe los contenidos, está en relación con ellos y también los produce? ¿Qué nuevos modos de relación debemos buscar para nutrir una dinámica de participación democrática y marchar hacia la construcción conjunta del sentido de la acción cultural pública? El empoderamiento de cada uno de los actores de la compleja y múltiple "cadena cultural" que incluye las nuevas tecnologías, en una relación de reciprocidad entre prescriptores y receptores, debe permitir crear las condiciones para una dinámica de la vida museal y social.

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D'où vient qu'on s'interroge sur la prise en compte des désirs et vœux des visiteurs? L'enjeu de cet intérêt correspond-t-il à une stratégie de démocratisation de la culture ?

Y a-t-il une demande de la part des publics ? Si oui, par quoi est-elle motivée?

Qui sont les visiteurs des musées ? Pourquoi choisissent-ils cette pratique socioculturelle? Que vient-on chercher au Musée ? Ce qu'on y trouve remplit-il l'attente théorique ? Le retour de satisfaction de la visite d'une exposition est-il différent de l'attente de la fréquentation d'un centre culturel, du visionnage d'un documentaire filmé, ou de la réponse « wikipédia » ? Les musées doivent-ils répondre à la demande identifiée? Sont-ils impliqués dans un jeu d'offre et de demande ?....

Cet article propose une réflexion ouverte sur le rapport dialectique entre le musée et le ou les publics. Il nous permettra d'entamer une ébauche d'analyse de l'institution musée, sans esquiver la question du public. A l'origine, en France tout au moins, la création de l'institution muséale correspond à la volonté de rendre accessibles au peuple, les trésors artistiques conservés dans les collections régaliennes ou privées de l'aristocratie. Pour comprendre le terme public, il faut l'élargir à l'acception sociétale de population.

Entendre « population » là où apparaît le terme « public », permet de penser aussi la notion récurrente de non-public. Les études de public ont introduit le concept de non-public (souvent au pluriel). Il a permis d'enrichir les analyses qui avaient atteint leurs limites de pertinence si elles se limitaient à l'observation des seuls visiteurs acquis.

Cette position permet de situer la question de la prise en compte des désirs et des vœux des visiteurs dans le champ politique de la démocratisation de l'accès à la culture, ou, pour ce qui concerne les musées, de l'appropriation par la population des objets des collections légitimées.

Les résultats de l'observation des publics pratiquée dans les musées depuis l'origine de l'institution sont intéressants bien au-delà des enjeux que leurs commanditaires leur ont assignés dans beaucoup d'établissements. Ils servent souvent des perspectives consuméristes. Que ce soit dans un dessein strictement commercial et entrepreneurial ou dans un engagement à visée d'élargissement démocratique, le public y est observé en tant que consommateur plus ou moins avisé. De ce fait les méthodes développées empruntent au marketing. Cependant certaines enquêtes permettent de suggérer qu'en élargissant le champ des populations observées, en prêtant attention à la croisée des différents modes de communication modernes (programme Visite + de la Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie, Paris, 2008)¹, en

¹ Visite+ est une innovation culturelle et technologique, conçue initialement par la Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie et le laboratoire Communication, Culture et Société de l'ENS Lettres et Sciences Humaines (Lyon), sa logique de développement, du point de vue des pratiques culturelles auxquelles il répond et du point de vue du type de recherche-action dont il est issu, est un processus de création et d'adaptation continu, conduit ensemble par des musées ou structures culturelles, et des laboratoires qui s'associent pour l'exploiter et le faire évoluer. C'est pourquoi le dispositif est proposé en licence gratuite. Les concepteurs ont souhaité ainsi prolonger cette démarche avec les institutions culturelles et laboratoires intéressés dans le cadre d'un groupement « Musée/Recherche » destiné à partager les expériences, les développements et la recherche dans les domaines contenus dans la proposition Visite+ : personnalisation, articulation des temps de la visite, extension de la visite à l'espace Internet.

Le concept Visite+ a comme point de départ la prise en compte des pratiques culturelles des visiteurs. Les initiateurs de l'expérience montrent comment cet outil créé pour les visiteurs un lien nouveau avec le musée au-delà de la simple visite et suscite, dans le cadre d'une recherche-développement collective, une remise en question des formats classiques de collaboration entre une institution muséale et un laboratoire de recherche. Pour le concepteur, Visite+ est un agencement composite d'outils de communication, évolutif, qui mobilise un ensemble de supports dans plusieurs espaces (au musée, chez soi). Il y a bien création technologique. Mais cette création ne vise pas à la production d'un objet technique achevé. Elle consiste plutôt en un développement « incrémental » qui s'enrichit régulièrement et vit au rythme des

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intégrant des problématiques territoriales (Champigny sur Marne, 1997-2006)², elles peuvent contribuer à refonder le rôle des musées dans la société et, plus encore interroger sur la fabrique des patrimoines, sa fonction et ses acteurs dans les sociétés démocratiques.

Les études de comportement et des demandes des visiteurs ne sont-elles pas arrivées aujourd'hui à des résultats attendus et convenus si elles ne s'appliquent qu'à des ajustements d'« aménagements muséographiques » ? L'idée d'implication des visiteurs ne contient-elle pas, plus radicalement, une réflexion sur l'avenir de l'institution muséale en tant que telle ? Ne faut-il pas y rechercher le sens nouveau de la présentation des collections dans un contexte sociétal en pleine révolution culturelle.

Dans un contexte de société de consommation, le musée a toujours été conçu comme une offre parmi d'autres dans le grand champ de la production culturelle. Une offre entre les mains de professionnels qui se sont appliqués de leur mieux pour se conformer aux désirs d'un public consommateur auquel une attention accrue s'est attachée.

1- Le Musée : citoyenneté et consumérisme

La question du rapport entre l'institution muséale et la société, c'est-à-dire des enjeux politiques du musée est ontologiquement corrélée à l'histoire de la naissance du concept.

L'évolution des pratiques muséales interroge le modèle muséal lui-même. Né de la Révolution française, dans l'objectif de transférer la propriété des œuvres d'art et des collections de l'aristocratie au peuple, à la *res-publica*, le musée - et symboliquement son modèle régalien, le Louvre - s'inscrit délibérément dans un engagement citoyen et démocratique. Selon les aléas qui accompagnent l'acception philosophique du peuple, de la république, de la démocratie³, participative ou délégatrice, de la culture et de la production artistique, l'institution se fait l'écho des postures dominantes. Les conduites normées par le pouvoir induisent un contenu à la visite et à sa pratique et assignent au public des rôles spécifiques oscillant sans cesse entre deux pôles : consommateur ou acteur culturel.

En Europe au 19ème siècle, les pratiques culturelles se sont modifiées, imposant la séparation entre formes populaires et formes savantes. La création, transmise par la tradition orale a été progressivement disqualifiée. Le partage de l'émotion artistique collective exprimée dans les espaces publics, la rue en particulier, a été marginalisé et discrédité au profit d'une consommation des plaisirs, plus intimiste, érigée sur la scène, le musée, la salle de concert, espaces dédiés de spectacle et de création savante. Ainsi la création et la détention du savoir, remises entre les mains d'une élite légitimée par les Ecoles et les Académie induisit-elle une différenciation de valeurs et pratiques. Les espaces de consommation de l'art et de la culture diffèrent des espaces de création. Salle d'expositions, musée, salle de concert, deviennent les lieux de la délectation du public passif; par opposition à l'espace domestique et à la rue où s'élaborent des formes d'expressions populaires. Plaisir intime et solitaire d'esthète

besoins qui s'expriment pour chaque nouvelle exposition. En effet, dans la mesure où Visite+ est né en réponse à ce qui s'exprimait dans les pratiques des visiteurs, il est destiné à évoluer et à « suivre » les visiteurs dont les pratiques culturelles ne sont pas cloisonnées par les frontières entre établissements, et à entrer dans la réflexion muséologique des concepteurs d'exposition.

² Claude Paquin et Geneviève Goutouly-Paquin, *L'action culturelle publique, de l'entre-soi à la relation*, Janvier 2006 en concertation avec Danièle Bellini, directrice des Affaires Culturelles de Champigny-sur-Marne - dans la perspective d'une réflexion-bilan de la ville de Champigny-sur-Marne, dix ans après le processus d'évaluation de 1997 conduit par Tertius à la demande de la ville et en partenariat avec la DRAC Île-de-France et l'Observatoire des politiques culturelles de Grenoble.

³ Front populaire – création du Musée des arts et traditions populaires- Les années 80- Ecllosion des écomusées-

d'un côté ou partage collectif des émotions. Même si avec l'entrée dans la modernité des années 20, l'académisme est remis en cause, la distinction⁴ entre les deux formes d'espace de transmission culturelle se rejoue systématiquement dans bien des courants artistiques. La visite au musée prend une valeur individuelle et sociétale de distinction, dans le même temps où elle se constitue en « produit » soumis aux règles de l'offre et de la demande.

Il est opportun, ici, de rappeler l'analyse de Pierre Bourdieu, quelque peu rangée sous le boisseau, aujourd'hui, mais qui prend un certain relief dès lors qu'on s'interroge sur la volonté réelle d'une partie des acteurs de la production culturelle de développer une communication active avec le public. Il insiste sur le fait que les intellectuels et les artistes entretiennent avec tout ce qui touche à la démocratisation de la culture une relation d'une extrême ambivalence car l'entreprise culturelle se lit comme une progression initiatique ordonnée selon une subtile hiérarchie des œuvres et pratiques. La distribution entre les classes d'un bien ou d'une pratique a pour effet d'en diminuer la rareté et de menacer la distinction des anciens détenteurs.

« Interrogés sur les améliorations à apporter à la présentation des œuvres dans les musées, les membres de la classe dominante essaient d'échapper à la contradiction en opérant une dissociation entre ce qui est souhaitable pour les autres et ce qui est souhaitable pour eux-mêmes. C'est parce que le musée est comme il est qu'il est leur privilège exclusif; il est donc comme il faut pour des gens comme eux, c'est à dire pour des gens faits pour lui. Changer le musée pour le rendre plus accessible, c'est donc leur enlever quelque chose, une part de leur mérite, de leur rareté. Mais ils ne peuvent manquer d'être sensibles au fait qu'on les interroge en priorité, eux, les familiers, sur la politique à suivre, parce que c'est leur reconnaître le privilège d'accorder aux autres une part de leur privilège. En acceptant les améliorations pédagogiques, c'est leur musée, celui qu'ils étaient seuls capables d'avoir, c'est à dire le musée austère, ascétique et noble, qu'ils acceptent de livrer aux autres⁵. »

Le texte de Pierre Bourdieu de 1982 montre combien, à l'époque, la compréhension du rapport du musée et de ses visiteurs et/ou acteurs est marquée par la question de l'ajustement de l'offre et de la demande : qu'il s'agisse de l'orchestration objective des logiques des champs de production et de celle des champs de consommation ; qu'il s'agisse de la volonté « citoyenne » de rendre accessible le savoir en adaptant aux besoins les contenus et les techniques de muséographie, ou qu'il s'agisse de logiques commerciales. L'approche consumériste se généralise aux espaces culturels, en développant les mesures de fréquentation. Elle opère un rapprochement entre les musées et les médias considérés comme industries de la communication, relevant d'une analyse essentiellement technique et économique.

Musée citoyen et musée marché se retrouvent sur le même objectif d'accroître numériquement la fréquentation. Les méthodes d'exploration de la demande des visiteurs sont donc sensiblement identiques. Dans la démarche marketing, tenir compte des désirs des visiteurs, c'est personnaliser le parcours de l'exposition, proposer les interactions sollicitées, c'est ajuster l'offre technique aux désirs exprimés. Le public y est considéré comme l'ensemble des individus et des groupes qui ont un usage effectif de l'établissement muséal. Dès lors, les enquêtes développent des stratégies pour faire émerger l'énonciation des vœux des consommateurs culturels dans une logique facilement et immédiatement convertible en schémas d'action, vœux qui seront retenus s'ils peuvent donner lieu à une adaptation technique. Ce cadre conceptuel a conduit à des adaptations fonctionnalistes et mécanistes de la muséologie.

4 Au sens littéral mais aussi bourdieusien du terme : Pierre Bourdieu, *La distinction*, Paris France, Editions de minuit, 1982

5 Pierre Bourdieu, *La distinction*, Paris France, Editions de minuit, 1982

2- Stratégie d'écoute des désirs et des vœux : Comment entendre et évaluer la demande des visiteurs ?

Le degré zéro de la tactique de recueil des impressions réside dans les « livres d'or » où les visiteurs déposent leurs remarques diverses, leurs recommandations ou réclamations. Celles-ci portent le plus fréquemment sur l'écrit (la taille des caractères graphiques des cartels ou l'absence de contraste avec leur support, les fautes calligraphiques et orthographiques), ainsi que sur l'inconfort de la perception (lumière, distance à l'objet, reflets et contre-jours) ; généralement sur des points strictement formels. Les plus jeunes témoignent plus généreusement à propos du plaisir ou de l'ennui éventuel provoqué par la visite (souvent contrainte). Cependant, rares sont les commentaires de fond sur le parcours, le sujet. Aussi primitive qu'apparaisse cette méthode, le fait même que ces livres existent depuis l'origine du principe d'exposition, montre l'antécedence de la volonté de créer un lieu d'interaction entre émetteurs et récepteurs des « produits culturels ».

L'évolution des techniques de recueil d'opinion élaborées par les sciences cognitives et la sociologie, ont trouvé tout naturellement un terrain d'expérimentation dans les musées⁶. Les recherches sur les pratiques des visiteurs sont nombreuses mais difficilement cumulables, dans la mesure où les enquêtes s'effectuent souvent au coup par coup, à l'occasion d'une exposition, ou dans un établissement particulier. Les chercheurs qui se sont investis dans la réflexion sur les publics des musées sont porteurs de visions perspectives relativement longues sur leurs propres travaux, mis en relation avec ceux de leurs collègues, et par conséquent, d'éléments de comparaison sur les pratiques du public. Les comparaisons peuvent porter sur les pratiques des publics d'un même établissement suivi dans la durée⁷ ou inversement sur les pratiques des publics de très nombreuses expositions de différents types (comme c'est le cas des recherches menées par une même équipe avec une même approche, dans des musées et des expositions de sciences, d'art, ou de société). Elles portent aussi sur l'évolution conjointe des formes de la communication, et de pratiques des visiteurs, comme le rapport à l'écrit, ou aux dispositifs d'accompagnement de la visite. Les visions perspectives peuvent également replacer l'évolution des rapports aux musées dans des mouvements plus généraux, comme l'évolution des pratiques culturelles, ou des rapports à la connaissance et aux institutions, comme nous le verrons plus loin.

Cependant, certains chercheurs estiment que les enquêtes, basées sur la verbalisation des perceptions, sont limitées par ce filtre. En collaboration avec les neurobiologistes, des expériences de lecture directe au niveau corporel par recueil des données sur les organes sensoriels ou neuronaux sont lancées pour observer et analyser les émotions produites par le parcours muséal. Elles nécessitent la mise au point d'équipements technologiquement pointus, des capteurs de comportement (eye ad postural trackers)⁸. Il est encore trop tôt pour estimer la pertinence des résultats obtenus par ces méthodes qui requièrent la mise en place de protocoles déontologiques innovants et rigoureux. Gageons que, comme chaque fois que se présentent des avancées technologiques, l'ampleur de leur impact dépendra de la finesse et de la largeur de vue du projet et de l'énoncé des hypothèses.

6 Voir Le Marec Joëlle, L'institution muséale gardée par ses publics : confrontation de modèles au musée, www.indiscipline.fr, 7 avril 2007

7 A la cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie, le public de l'établissement est suivi depuis près de 20 ans.

8 Le programme Equipex « Matrice », est un programme de recherche international franco-américain (NY University), piloté par le Pres HéSam et le Centre d'histoire sociale du XXe siècle (UMR 8058), qui réunit 25 partenaires (Pres HéSam, le CNRS, l'école Polytechnique, l'INA, France Télévisions, une dizaine de laboratoires, mémoriaux, fondations). Il s'agit d'une enquête sur la construction des grands récits nationaux à partir des corpus de témoignages (écrits, oraux ou audiovisuels) de ceux qui ont participé aux grandes tragédies de l'histoire très contemporaine, autour de deux moments clés : la Seconde Guerre mondiale et le 11 Septembre 2001. Les visiteurs des mémoriaux constituent le panel d'informateurs dont les comportements à la visite sont testés par installations de capteurs et d'Eye and Postural Trackers. Le Mémorial de Caen et le Mémorial du 11 septembre sont les principaux lieux de mémoire partenaires.

De fait, les enquêtes par sondage fournissent des ordres de grandeur, des indications de tendance, mais les résultats sont souvent prévisibles à l'expérience. Elles peuvent difficilement prétendre traduire la diversité des pratiques ou appréhender directement la multiplicité des logiques et des mécanismes à l'œuvre.⁹ Depuis les années 80, initiée principalement par les professionnels québécois, et dans la mouvance du principe d'association des citoyens au fonctionnement institutionnel des écomusées, l'organisation des groupes de travail ou de réflexion, en amont des projets d'exposition, a peu à peu permis d'associer les usagers au processus de programmation et d'élaboration des contenus muséaux. Ces groupes thématiques, partie prenante des études de public, organisant la rencontre des professionnels, des politiques et des publics sont des lieux d'énonciation des demandes, d'élaboration des projets, de choix de stratégies d'accompagnement et de production collective des savoirs.

3- Les niveaux d'incidence de l'implication des publics sur la production muséologique

De l'ensemble de ces méthodes mises en œuvre depuis une quarantaine d'années, il est possible d'évaluer les aspects des processus muséologiques impactés par les prescriptions des publics : « Le guidage » (recueil de profil et d'attentes du visiteur, orientation et suivi dans l'exposition, mémorisation de l'expérience de visite, évaluation et valorisation, marketing et fidélisation des visiteurs), « La muséologie » (personnalisation du parcours de l'exposition, proposition de nouvelles interactions), « L'offre de ressources » (accès à des contenus adaptés à chaque visiteur)¹⁰. Ainsi il est couramment admis d'intégrer les desiderata des visiteurs à l'élaboration des programmes culturels, à l'adaptation de procédés techniques dans la scénographie des expositions (on peut rappeler ici la technique québécoise d'évaluation qualitative de l'exposition par des groupes d'usagers - échantillon de public- en amont de la programmation d'une thématique d'exposition et de sa stratégie d'attaque, afin de tester la demande tant du thème que des questions les plus communes soulevées et attendues par le public), à l'accompagnement de la visite (exemple canadien des étudiants-animateurs, il Museo Guatelli - Italie Parma ou du Musée Corto Maltese à Venise). Il s'agit de « jauger » la qualité de visite souhaitée par le visiteur et adapter l'offre à chacun, à l'évaluation qualitative de l'impact de la visite sur la « compréhension » du sujet.

Ces prescriptions restent liées aux résultats des démarches marketing et communicationnelles des analyses de fréquentation, qui aussi fines soient-elles, ne concernent que le statut de consommateur du visiteur. L'en extraire pour l'introniser dans la catégorie des sachants-prescripteurs procède d'une démarche plus radicalement citoyenne. *Au-delà de ces observations-implications, désormais classiques, l'exposition doit être l'occasion de responsabiliser le visiteur sur le travail de recherche et d'étude*, en particulier dans les musées de société ou d'histoire contemporaine. Si ces préconisations concernent la scénographie et le suivi de la visite, un pas de plus doit être franchi vers son implication dans le travail de scénario de l'exposition. L'introduction du paramètre « avis des visiteurs » sur le cœur même du sujet traité, et non sur la surface, bouscule la chasse gardée des professionnels, en remettant en cause l'exclusivité de leur discours et la critique potentielle de leur légitimité de détenteur d'un savoir incontestable. Cette attitude dénie le caractère sacré du discours « montré », l'exposition, comme un produit fini, compris comme un bilan-état des connaissances à l'instant t ; l'exposé est alors projeté dans une dynamique et

9 Sylvie Octobre, Olivier Donnat in *Les publics des équipements culturels - méthodes et résultats d'enquêtes - séminaire 99/2000* - coll. les travaux du DEP, p. 96.

10 En l'an 2000, la direction générale de la Cité des sciences de Paris demande au département Interactivité et Multimédia de concevoir ce qui va devenir le programme Visite+.

est destiné à se modifier et évoluer sous les suggestions correctives émises par les visiteurs pendant l'exposition et/ou à l'occasion d'une nouvelle version. L'exposition n'est qu'une étape, qu'un moment mobilisateur dans le processus d'enquête et de réflexion mené avec la population.¹¹ Les expositions sont alors conçues, comme outils de la recherche et non comme des produits finis à consommer.

Poursuivant cette démarche de responsabilisation des visiteurs dans le processus muséologique global, les équipes des musées peuvent lui tailler une part active dans la constitution des collections. L'échantillon de population devient un partenaire constitutif du consensus social qu'il convient de dégager autour d'un objet pour lui conférer son label patrimonial, acte de légitimation traditionnellement strictement réservé aux professionnels agréés. Le visiteur peut agir comme indicateur culturel dans la constitution des collections.

Les musées sont tout autant des lieux d'élaboration de la mémoire collective que des lieux de distraction.

Qu'il s'agisse des productions plastiques, des objets-témoins de la vie quotidienne, de la faune et de la flore ou des objets techniques et scientifiques, dans tous les cas, ce qui fait le socle commun, ce qui constitue la mission partagée des musées c'est leur rôle de conservatoire de témoins matériels. Les présenter et les faire parler : la mission de la muséographie, justifie, au présent, l'acte de conservation. Les musées sont les alambics de l'usage sociétal de la mémoire, procédant à la transmutation d'un simple ensemble d'objets en corpus patrimonial. L'un des éléments de cette alchimie: le consensus populaire ou l'appropriation par le corps social dont l'échantillon observable au musée, est son public. Comment une conscience sociale se développe-t-elle autour de la question patrimoniale et quelle en est la nature?

Les rapports établis entre populations désignées et définies comme porteuses de liens sociaux traditionnels, de savoir-faire artisanaux et les objets constitués en patrimoine se sont modifiés au cours de ce siècle d'histoire des musées de société, dans le même temps où évoluaient les pratiques des « indicateurs »: notabilités locales, folkloristes scientifiques, militants régionalistes, ethnologues et conservateurs de musée, administrateurs (anciens élèves de l'École nationale de l'administration), galeristes....

Dans un premier temps, ces populations n'ont constitué que le sédiment dans lequel les notables éclairés venaient puiser leurs trésors. Puis elles sont devenues des objets d'étude, auprès desquelles les chercheurs obtenaient les informations documentant les objets en usage qu'on troquait contre le matériel moderne adapté à l'attente des usagers. Ces objets, sacralisés par leur présence dans les musées, devenus «œuvres d'art populaire» ou clef de voûte des «monuments» identitaires régionaux, dotés de ces labels, ont alimenté des marchés. Les nouveaux champs de recherche, axés sur l'observation des systèmes de représentation contemporains, positionnent le corps social comme acteur. Les informateurs d'antan deviennent eux-mêmes les indicateurs de documents témoins. Nous proposons de nommer les objets ainsi choisis par les communautés patrimoniales¹² elles-mêmes pour devenir objets de collection, sous le néologisme d'objets « émiques¹³. » *L'expérimentation* de la collecte des objets

¹¹ Ainsi au MnATP Paris, lors de l'exposition *Artisans de l'élégance*, 1994, un espace réservé aux artisans eux-mêmes, les invitait à présenter leur histoire, leur technique, leurs produits, leurs interrogations pour l'avenir. L'occasion pour le musée de collecter les objets ainsi désignés par les acteurs eux-mêmes. L'exposition *Parlez-moi d'Alger, 2003, MuCEM* a expérimenté une Carriole culturelle, qui se déplaçait dans les centres sociaux des quartiers nord de Marseille, invitant les populations à présenter un objet de leur choix. Le contenu de la carriole, grossi de jour en jour, a terminé son périple dans l'exposition «officielle», ayant permis d'identifier des objets à acquérir (cf. rapport de Claire Saez)

¹² La communauté patrimoniale a été définie par la Commission Européenne dans la convention de Faro (2005)

¹³ *Emique*. J'ai construit cet adjectif à partir du verbe *émètre* (ex-mettere, projeter hors de soi) qui a un triple sens : to issue (mettre en circulation), to express (formuler exprimer), to transmit ou to broadcast

émiques a été initiée au MnATP par une inscription dans le processus de production des expositions, autour de l'exposition *Parlez-moi d'Alger, 2003*¹⁴.

La collection issue de l'enquête collecte *histoire et mémoire du sida*, comprend une grande majorité d'objets émiques. Elle a été précédée de plusieurs années de recherche participante auprès des associations de lutte contre le sida sur les thèmes du deuil et de la mémoire. Cependant, force est de constater que les objets contemporains collectés, même émiques, ne font pas nécessairement consensus patrimonial. La présentation d'un téléphone portable, première génération, en manière de test dans une exposition de préfiguration du MuCEM, a concentré les expressions d'incompréhension des visiteurs. Cet objet a fait figure d'intrus dans la vitrine où était attendue une œuvre d'art populaire. Les voiles islamiques, les affiches d'Act Up, ont également soulevé des débats, en d'autres circonstances qui soulignent la difficulté d'articuler les mémoires (ou les volontés d'oublis) individuelles et la mémoire collective.

Renforcer l'implication du public dans les fonctions des professionnels de musées interroge *l'appareil culturel* lui-même dans ses logiques de fonctionnement. L'essentiel de l'action culturelle s'est fait sous l'égide des valeurs dominantes, une culture posée comme référente et universelle et le pouvoir d'agir renvoyé à des élites légitimées, reléguant dans les limbes de *l'inculture* la grande masse de la population. S'est ainsi engagé un long dialogue de sourds entre le « *nous savons ce qui bon pour vous* » des prescripteurs, et le « *ce n'est pas pour moi* » des récepteurs supposés. Si les réponses à ces questions relèvent des acteurs eux-mêmes et des chercheurs, par contre les effets de ces choix sont bien d'actualité : on ne disqualifie pas culturellement, pendant plusieurs décennies, la grande masse de la population, sans devoir un jour en assumer les conséquences¹⁵

Les résultats des enquêtes conduisent à la nécessité de concevoir l'extension de la notion de public et de ses responsabilités patrimoniales.

Associer le public à la mission des professionnels de l'institution réinterroge non seulement la relation des visiteurs à un produit culturel, mais plus globalement questionne son interaction avec l'objet social même : le musée. Le cœur de métier dans l'institution culturelle est centré sur l'objet, sur l'œuvre, plutôt que sur la relation à la société, au territoire, à la création. Les nouvelles approches placent clairement le professionnel en situation de coopération, de co-élaboration, d'accompagnement, position souvent fort éloignée de son rôle initial de prescripteur.

Les études des publics, menées en particulier par les agences de marketing, ont certes permis de multiplier les informations concernant les visiteurs des musées, mais passent sous silence la manière dont le public lui-même se pense et pense la relation à l'institution. Force est de se rendre à l'évidence que la pratique muséale prend son sens dans une inscription dans une stratégie culturelle et patrimoniale globale. Si

(produire des ondes, des sons) et de *ex-mei* (venant de moi ; mis à côté de moi). Le terme qualifie ces objets désignés par les populations elles-mêmes (c'est-à-dire des objets volontairement sortis de leur contexte d'usage – mis hors de soi, ex-traits) pour opérer le processus de patrimonialisation, à la différence des objets de collections classiques sélectionnés par les chercheurs, conservateurs ou collectionneurs étrangers à la communauté... Objets que les populations investissent d'une valeur symbolique.

¹⁴ Cf. note 10 Voir également le catalogue de *Loin de l'Ararat, les petites Arménie d'Europe et Méditerranée* qui a permis l'esquisse de critères pour définir des objets migratoires.

¹⁵ Claude Paquin et Geneviève Goutouly-Paquin, *L'action culturelle publique, de l'entre-soi à la relation*, Janvier 2006

l'objectif des enquêtes fut l'élargissement de la base sociale des visiteurs, il faut dépasser cette notion restreinte de « public » de musée pour en saisir l'objet fondamental, c'est à dire la perception même de l'objet de la visite. Ce positionnement propose de recontextualiser la pratique muséale dans l'ensemble des pratiques sociales et historiques. En fonction de tel ou tel type d'offre, se constituent des coalitions ou des regroupements éphémères, selon les mots de Jean-Louis Fabiani¹⁶, de plus en plus précaires, en raison notamment de l'intensification de la concurrence entre les offres dites culturelles de toute nature et de toute provenance... Cette concurrence oblige le musée à se situer avec l'ensemble des pratiques culturelles dans la construction d'un parcours citoyen. Considérer la population et ses relations aux espaces d'expression, c'est entrer dans l'épaisseur des rapports sociaux, c'est prendre en considération la complexité de la réalité de la production patrimoniale, c'est se donner la possibilité de saisir les pratiques culturelles des individus dans leurs logiques singulières de sociabilité. Dans les sociétés occidentales contemporaines, le paysage culturel urbain ne se conçoit plus sans le musée. La valeur symbolique de l'institution est si forte que le désir de musée est l'expression première de la revendication d'identité populaire de populations qui ne fréquentent pas la structure créée. C'est effectivement le lieu identifié qui permet la reconnaissance des mémoires individuelles comme partie constitutive d'un discours mémoriel collectif. Le musée est aussi le lieu de la « matérialité » dans une société globale valorisant la virtualité. Rôle symbolique qui concerne aussi les non visiteurs. On peut être concerné par le musée sans en être visiteur, sans le pratiquer.¹⁷ La responsabilisation des publics s'applique à la visite, les pré- et post-visites certes, mais aussi à la présence du projet muséal même dans la non-visite. Le public se superpose alors à l'ensemble des citoyens, même à ceux qui ne visitent pas le musée. L'attention portée à un public plus large oblige les concepteurs à rendre plus perceptibles leurs intentions. Elle les engage à penser leur projet culturel à l'échelle de la société toute entière, dépassant les limites de la satisfaction de la petite minorité qui constitue le public des musées. Ainsi s'établit un rapport de réciprocité d'énonciation des volontés entre concepteurs et population.

Conclusion

Les enquêteurs et les enquêtés pensent et observent les pratiques du public à l'intérieur d'un modèle muséal communément admis et intégré. Ce modèle s'inscrit dans le système que Bourdieu décrit comme « celui des possibles éthiques, esthétiques, politiques, qui sont effectivement offerts à un moment donné, *constituant* sans doute une dimension essentielle de ce qui fait l'historicité des manières de penser et des visions du monde et la contemporanéité des individus et des groupes liés à la même époque et au même lieu.»¹⁸

Ce système « global » lui-même change avec les modifications du paysage sociétal (internet, les modes de communication, le virtuel...) et des représentations du public. On est sans doute au commencement d'une révolution culturelle aussi importante que celle à laquelle on a assisté au 19^{ème} siècle quand se sont instituées en lieu et place des pratiques populaires (fêtes de village, théâtres et musiciens ambulants, veillées et conteurs...) des pratiques dites « savantes » avec salle de spectacles, musées, lieux des connaissances, des savoirs et des plaisirs esthétiques légitimés...

Le musée est une institution qui prend son sens dans un rapport politico-culturel situé au croisement de l'histoire des goûts, du rapport aux images et de la notion de propriété. Sa pratique est donc totalement « territorialisée » ou « ethnocentrée ». Elle

16 Jean-Louis Fabiani : « Publics constatés, publics inventés, publics déniés- les sciences sociales et la démocratisation de la culture », dans *Enseigner la musique* n°6 / 7.

17 *Loin de l'Ararat, Petites Arménie d'Europe et Méditerranée*, exposition temporaire, MuCEM 2007

18 Bourdieu, *La distinction*, Paris France, Editions de minuit, 1982, note 10 p. 256

peine à s'imposer hors du contexte européen. Son adaptation à d'autres aires géographiques suppose une profonde révision du concept. L'analyse des comportements des publics a tendu, jusqu'ici, à favoriser une évolution-adaptation des contenus dans la conformité aux modèles savants et aux enjeux « citoyens » assimilés par deux siècles d'histoire occidentale. Cependant, selon Joëlle Le Marec¹⁹ « un des rôles essentiels des études de public paraît être, non pas l'optimisation d'une bonne gestion des rapports au public, mais la mise en cause continue de stéréotypes du public, qui ont sans cesse tendance à devoir se figer pour les besoins d'une vision gestionnaire et fonctionnelle de ce rapport au public, alors celui-ci est sans cesse "travaillé" par les publics eux-mêmes. »

Il faut interroger le choix de la visite au musée comme pratique socio-culturelle dans le panel des propositions et sollicitations que les communications modernes mettent à la disposition des publics ; aller vers la responsabilisation de chacun des acteurs de la « chaîne culturelle », s'impliquer dans la société.

La progression de la connaissance des pratiques et souhaits en matière culturelle ne peut plus se contenter d'adapter l'offre à la demande mais doit permettre d'élaborer une nouvelle relation à la population, l'institution culturelle musée assumant la population comme un acteur de la dynamique patrimoniale.

Ces premières constatations engagent à une réflexion sur les politiques culturelles, sur de nouvelles formes de participation de la population et des différents acteurs, culturels ou non, pour alimenter un processus qui aboutisse à renouveler les finalités de l'action culturelle publique et ses modalités de mise en œuvre. A quelle expérience de production créative et patrimoniale, la population aspire-t-elle, à une époque où elle dispose de moyens technologiques permettant tout à la fois de recevoir des contenus et d'être en interrelation avec eux dans une posture de production ? Quels nouveaux modes de relation mettre en place, de la prescription à l'implication, pour nourrir une dynamique de participation démocratique et aller vers la co-construction du sens de l'action culturelle publique ? Les professionnels et les politiques n'ont pas vocation à maîtriser la vie culturelle mais plutôt à créer les conditions de sa dynamique, à la soutenir et à formaliser l'expérience de manière à en permettre la valorisation, la mémoire et la transmission.

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19 Joëlle Le Marec, op. cit.

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EMPOWERING WOMEN IN MUSEUMS: THE PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we present an experimental process of women's empowerment in museums. The starting point is our perception of a frequent exclusion of women in the work developed by Portuguese museums. We adopt a position in the field of museology defined as the study of the relation between human beings with their cultural heritage. We broaden the scope of museological research to the subject of "women" by integrating the analytical category of gender, and adopting an integrated gender perspective in museum work. We focus our attention on museum exhibitions considered as the privileged means of communication in museums and we present the most frequent images of women in some Portuguese museums through the categories of women and dominant feminine stereotypes. Finally, we present the stages of the project "*Feminine Museum*" by stressing the adopted methodology with particular emphasis on the contribution of the integration of a gender perspective in the design and organization of museum exhibitions as a contribution to women's empowerment.

RÉSUMÉ

La responsabilisation des femmes au musée : le processus.

Dans cette contribution, nous présentons un processus expérimental de responsabilisation des femmes dans les musées. Notre point de départ est notre constat de la fréquente exclusion des femmes dans les activités des musées portugais. Nous avons adopté une position dans le champ de la muséologie qui la définit comme l'étude de la relation entre les êtres humains et le patrimoine culturel. Nous avons élargi l'étendue de la recherche muséologique pour y inclure le sujet des « femmes » en lui intégrant la catégorie du sexe et en adoptant un point de vue qui intègre le sexe dans l'activité muséale. Nous concentrons notre attention sur les expositions de musée en les considérant comme le moyen privilégié de communication muséale, et nous présentons les images de femmes dans certains musées portugais à travers les catégories de femmes et les stéréotypes féminins dominants. Finalement, nous présentons les étapes du projet « *Musée féminin* » en mettant l'accent sur la méthodologie adoptée, et en soulignant particulièrement comment, en contribuant à l'intégration d'un point de vue sexué dans la conception et l'organisation des expositions des musées, on contribue à responsabiliser des femmes.

RESUMÉN

Empoderando a las mujeres en los museos: el proceso

Presentamos un proceso experimental de empoderamiento de las mujeres en museos. Nuestro punto de partida es la percepción de una frecuente exclusión de las mujeres de lo trabajo desarrollado en los museos portugueses. Nuestra investigación se sitúa en la museología considerada como lo estudio de la relación entre los seres humanos con su patrimonio cultural. Alargamos esta

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definición a lo sujeto “mujer” integrando la categoría analítica género y adoptando una perspectiva de género en los museos. Consideradas como un medio privilegiado de comunicación, analizamos un conjunto de exposiciones en museos portugueses para mostrar las imágenes de la mujer más frecuentes en las exposiciones museales a través de las categorías de mujeres y los estereotipos femeninos dominantes. Por fin, presentamos las etapas de lo proyecto “*Museo en Femenino*” demostrando la metodología, con realce para la contribución de la integración de una perspectiva de género en la concepción y planificación de las exposiciones museológicas como proceso de empoderamiento de las mujeres.

* * *

Introduction

The starting point of this article is our perception of a frequent exclusion of women in the work developed by Portuguese museums.

This exclusion is partly due to the way museum collections were formed, many of them composed by male collectors, reflecting upon the historic male dominance of society. On the other hand, this exclusion is due to the existence, even among women in general and women museologists in particular, of a masculine approach to collections and design of museum exhibitions.

When women are represented in a museum exhibition, they frequently appear in a residual, stereotyped, and depersonalized way. To make women’s participation visible in the dynamics of societies implies that museology and museums must rethink the concepts of heritage preservation, collections and incorporation policies and the techniques of presentation of cultural objects in museum exhibitions.

We consider that it is possible to use cultural objects preserved in museums to understand gender relations, and we support the idea that museum exhibitions can be a tool that contributes to equality between men and women and to their empowerment.

We start first by presenting the theoretical framework that relates museology with the analytic category of gender. Second, we introduce an analysis on museum exhibitions by focusing our attention on the predominant images of women. Finally, we present an experimental process to empower women in museums.

Museology and Gender: a theoretical approach

The understanding of Museology as a science or a theoretical-practical discipline that deals with all matters relating to museums, their history, mission and organization is outdated. Today we acknowledge a concept of museology with a relevant social function, in close relationship with the community and taking as a starting point the social practice and not the collections. These changes are so deep that we speak of Sociomuseology.¹

We accept the definition of museology initially developed within ICOFOM by Waldisa Rússio, Anna Gregorova and Stransky among others²: museology as the study of the relationship between the individual and the cultural objects or cultural heritage, a relationship that occurs in a museum or a territory.

Resulting from this understanding of museology, museums today are defined and

¹ Mário Moutinho, *Definição evolutiva de sociomuseologia. Proposta de reflexão*. Communication presented at XII International Atelier of MINOM. Lisbon, 2007.

² “Museology: science or just practical museum work? *MuWop*, n.º 1, 1980 and “Interdisciplinarity in Museology”, *MuWop*, n.º 2 1981.

experienced as active social institutions that reflect on what is happening in their surroundings. Museums are considered active participants and not passive observers, responsible for mediating strategies of identification and appropriation of cultural heritage and not merely storage sites.

The relation between museology and gender is yet to be deepened. Gender as an analytic category has been contributing to deepen the knowledge of human and social sciences, to change their theoretical and conceptual corpus, to modify or embrace new methodologies, and to open new research perspectives and broaden their field of study.

Being a cross analysis category that changes in time and space and intersects with other categories that promote inequality between men and women, such as class, race/ethnicity or age, to integrate the category gender in the scope of museology and museum work is an important step to make women visible as social beings and to clarify their participation in society.

We accept the definition of gender by Aurélia Martín Casares³ that considers it as an abstract analytic category applicable to the construction of femininity, masculinity, androgyny and all other social-biological categories. Gender as analytic category enables the study of gender roles, stereotypes, power relations and social stratification and also the cultural construction of personal identity, and permits to understand how hierarchies, domination relationships and social inequalities are created and how they are reproduced.

Within the relation between museology and gender, we studied the images of women in some Portuguese museums to confirm the possibility of developing a feminine approach to museological exhibitions.

Images of women in Portuguese museum exhibitions

When we enter into contact with cultural heritage in a museum exhibition, we usually recodify the objects, images and texts with our previous mindset, namely through social representations, stereotypes and social roles.

A museum exhibition is distinguished from others by working with heritage and memories, but also for having an "underlying communication strategy" based on heritage.⁴

Within the framework of the relationship between the visitor and the exhibition, women as a representation in museological context are presented through images, texts, objects from a feminine universe, material traces, fragmented memories and largely represented by men.⁵

If direct testimonies of women are scarce, the images that represent them are plentiful. This apparent contradiction is justified by the historical role of social dominance played by men and is an indication of how they control the social images of women that are transmitted and assimilated.

Following the methodological path proposed by Griselda Pollock⁶ we analysed images of women exposed in museums as "sites of production of meanings" and as "cultural practices" with the ability to intervene in cultural and social life. Following this idea we

³ Aurélia Martín Casares, *Antropologia de Género. Culturas, mitos y estereótipos sexuales* Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra. 2008, p. 68.

⁴ Marcelo Cunha, *Teatro de memórias, palco de esquecimentos: culturas africanas e das diásporas negras em exposições*. PhD Tesis in Social History. Catholic University of São Paulo, 2006, p. 5-14.

⁵ Georges Duby, *Imagens da Mulher*. Oporto: Edições Afrontamento, 1992, p. 16-17.

⁶ Griselda Pollock, *Virtual Feminist Museum. Time, space and archive*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002, p. 10.

rejected the usual categories of classification of objects, according to material, artist, date, period, nationality or style, which imposes upon objects and excludes other possible relations or connections.

We approached the images of women as a common museum visitor, the one that does not have expertise in any of the cultural heritage areas covered by the exhibitions. The fact that we didn't seek previous specific and specialized information on the exhibited objects and images, allowed us to interpret the exhibitions by using our own mindset, personal conceptual framework and our pre-existing social representations.

Using social gender stereotypes and gender roles, we tried to understand what are the most frequent images of women used and transmitted in exhibitions by Portuguese museums⁷.

As a representation in musealized objects, women appear mainly in three ways: as a symbolic woman (associated with Christianity - the saints - and associated with power - the queens), as a depersonalized or unknown woman and as an absent woman.

As for the most frequent images we found paintings, photos, mannequins, sculptures and textiles. This means that in museums we have real women (photography and portraits) and represented women (mannequins, sculptures, textiles and costume).

The most common categories of women in the analysed exhibitions were woman-mother, woman-spouse, woman-housewife and woman-worker.

The stereotypes identified in these images correspond to maternal, beautiful, fragile, submissive, slender, elegant, honest and suffering woman.

Based on the analysis we conducted, we can say that Portuguese museum exhibitions transmit the current dominant social stereotypes of women. Museum exhibitions tend to perpetuate social representations, stereotypes and gender roles, not playing the active role in society that could allow them to make women visible as social beings, with an active participation in the construction of society.

The analysed museums mainly organize their exhibition discourse in a chronologically ordered narrative. The exhibition discourse is always neutral and generally there is no room for individuality and museums choose a representation from a standardizing group perspective.

To contribute to the visibility of women in museum exhibitions demands the introduction of new themes, new techniques, and the elaboration of exhibition discourses with a gender perspective. To introduce gender in museum exhibitions implies the development of an inclusive gendered exhibition discourse, the holding of customized and personalized exhibitions; the elimination of gender stereotypes in communication, the adjustment of museum exhibitions contents and museum discourses to the understanding of both men and women in order to increase accessibility and the use of participatory techniques.

This led us to develop an experimental process for women's empowerment in museums: the project entitled "*Feminine Museum*".

Empowering women in museums: an experimental process

Despite the recent changes that occurred in museology, we continue to see a lack of attention on the part of museums regarding the issues related to gender, including the equality between men and women, the greater visibility of women in museological

⁷ The analysed Portuguese museums were: The National Museum of Theatre, The National Museum of Costume, The Museum Francisco Tavares Proença Júnior, The Museum of Fado, The Museum of Work and The Museum of Portimão.

processes and their empowerment.⁸

That is why we ask, how can we develop empowerment processes involving a museum institution usually focused on the cultural objects? How do we develop a process of empowering women in the so-called "traditional" museums?⁹

We can find three major trends in the proposals for integrating women concerns in museums:

1. Proposals to change the museography and language used in museum exhibitions;
2. Proposals to change the themes of exhibitions in order to cover issues related to women or gender issues;
3. Proposals to create women museums.

The museologist Hild Hein¹⁰ considers that some work areas and new problems arise in museums from the theoretical change caused by the integration of a feminist perspective in museology. We mention the following which we consider determinant: the challenge to the traditional conventions and classifications of objects according to their material characteristics; the responsibility and authority in the interpretation of exhibits on display are to be shared by the visitors that decode them and the museum curators that present them; a greater attention is paid to emotion instead of reason towards the relationship of people with musealized heritage; a lesser importance is given to the hierarchy between museums that usually tend to consider art museums in a superior position – art being traditionally associated with male production; the tendency to accept multiplicity of opinions and points of view in the approach to heritage.

Hilde Hein¹¹ suggests that museums should assume themselves as a place to test these new ideas and changes caused by both the feminist theory and the integration of the analytical category of gender, testing and experimenting and, if necessary, modifying them, assuming museums in their role as socially responsible institutions.

We decided to adopt and implement some of these proposals and by positioning ourselves in a "Museology of Gender"¹² and in the action of participatory museums¹³, we implemented the project "*Feminine Museum*"¹⁴ aiming at the empowerment of women.

"Feminine Museum (1)"

The project "*Feminine Museum*" was designed to target the empowerment and visibility of women in museums. The project, still ongoing, was composed until now of two temporary exhibitions: the first one dedicated to women artists and the second one dedicated to women represented in works of art by men artists.

In both exhibitions, we used works of art (paintings and sculptures), which are part of

⁸ Aida Rechená, *Sociomuseologia e Género: Imagens da Mulher em exposições de Museus portugueses*, Lisbon, University Lusófona de Humanidades e Tenologias, 2011, p. 159.

⁹ We consider traditional museums the ones that maintain an organization inherited from the nineteenth century.

¹⁰ Hilde Hein, Looking at Museums from a Feminist Perspective in Amy Lévin. (Ed.). *Gender, Sexuality, and Museums*, New York, Routledge, 2010, p. 56.

¹¹ Hilde Hein, op. cit, p. 57.

¹² Aida Rechená. *Museologia d(e) Género*, Communication presented at the III Seminário Iberoamericano de Museología, Madrid, 2011.

¹³ Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum*, Online Edition, 2012.

¹⁴ In Portuguese language the word "museum" is masculine. We tried to develop a process as if the word museum was "feminine".

the collection of the Francisco Tavares Proença Júnior Museum¹⁵. This is a collection of Portuguese art, which is hardly representative on the national scene, with works by women artists included in the *acquis* of the eighties of the last century and works by men artists dated from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries and incorporated over the centennial life of the museum.

In the exhibition “*Feminine Museum (1): women artists in the Museum collection*”, we aimed at organizing an initiative that would go beyond the mere presentation of women artists. In order to achieve that, we decided to address the socio-cultural conditions of Portuguese women artists, their multiple roles and the identities that they take on daily, the contextualization of their works, highlighting the needs, desires, difficulties and successes.

In this exhibition, we intended to make women visible, to highlight them as “creators”, to give them a voice as “social beings”, to promote them as active participants: we wanted to know who they are, what was their life path, why some of them abandoned art and why others decided to continue producing and what it is like to be a female artist in Portugal.

The goal was to create an exhibition built with the active participation of women artists and that was the result of their involvement in this museological initiative. For this, we developed the following process of empowering of women:

- a We abandoned the traditional exhibition criteria of organization: artistic, aesthetic, thematic, technical or chronological.
- b In the exhibition, we presented female artists in alphabetical order to highlight all of them equally, regardless of style, age, artistic school or reputation.
- c A legend was placed near the paintings on display, that began with the name of the artist, (not the name of the work of art), and with the biography of the painter (and not the interpretation of the work of art).
- d We asked the artists to reply in writing to three questions about their work on display, about the condition of female artists and about the relationship between men and women artists in contemporaneity. Those answers were placed aside the works of art as their testimony, giving voice to women artists.
- e We complemented the exhibition with a round table attended by six of the eighteen artists represented in the exhibition.¹⁶ This round table aimed at understanding how they see themselves in Portugal and the following topics for discussion were suggested:

Is there a feminine art? Do others classify your works of art as feminine art?

As artists, do you feel you are conditioned by social norms to paint certain themes? That is, do you feel that there are themes considered inappropriate for women to treat in their paintings? Did you have any trouble in developing your career associated with the fact of being a woman?

Do women have the same visibility and the same acceptance as men in the Portuguese artistic scene?

¹⁵ The Museum “Francisco Tavares Proença Júnior” is situated in the city of Castelo Branco (Portugal); it was created in 1910 as an archaeology, art and ethnography museum.

¹⁶ We should note that from the eighteen artists represented in the contemporary Portuguese painting collection at the Francisco Tavares Proença Júnior Museum, nine are already dead, two are living outside Portugal and six attended the Round Table and participated in the preparation of the exhibition.

Can Portuguese women artists support themselves as artists only? Or do they have to take on other roles/tasks at the same time?

One of the questions addressed by the movements of female artists is the dependence on motherhood. A man who is an artist defines himself only as such. Do women define themselves only as artists?

Is there really a social pressure to choose between career and motherhood?

The impact of the exhibition "*Feminine Museum (1)*" fell short of our expectations. Since the beginning of the planning and the execution of the exhibition, the existing works of art in the museum collection have conditioned us: some of them are conceptual, others rather naïve; some are very expressive, others belong to the early stages of the artist's career and others to highly consolidated stages in their experience as artists.

Another constraint of the exhibition was the fact that only half of the women artists are still alive. This situation puts us on alert in two ways: a first one regarding the need for participatory inventories to collect information on contemporary cultural assets that become part of the museums while their producers are alive. Frequently, the information included in inventories is laconic and concerns only to the material nature of the objects. A second alert leads to the need of museologists to find contemporary alternatives to the actions of interpretation and exhibition in museums when participatory inventory is no longer possible.

We also found that (despite the fact that the exhibition was focused on women artists and the fact that they were identified in the exhibition and not the works of art) the exhibition failed to cause the expected reactions on visitors, the media and other museum professionals. Some visitors described the exhibition as "feminist", but the notions of "gender", of "empowerment" or "inclusion" were not perceived. This means that we needed to go further on the inclusion of a gender perspective in museological exhibitions.

"Feminine Museum (2)"

In the exhibition "*Feminine Museum (2): women in the eyes of men*" we presented works of art from the collection of the Francisco Tavares Proença Júnior Museum representing women. All these works of art belong to the museum collection and the selection criterion was the fact that they were produced by men artists.

This exhibition resulted from my personal interpretation as a museologist who took on the role of a communicator and communication manager through museographic language. As a communicator, we moved away from the material nature of objects and the factual and purely technical information they provide. However, we used cultural objects for their ability to represent and produce meanings and considered them as places for symbolic meanings.

As a communication manager we tried to present, in a way that is not always obvious, the memories and meanings of museum objects used in an exhibition, adding to them new layers of significance. In this case, the exhibition results from a materialization of ideas and concepts and not from the gathering of objects.

By assuming this position, we organized the works of art in the exhibition "*Feminine Museum (2)*" in four cores, corresponding to the four categories of women we identified in the works of art produced by male artists: "women and power", the "biblical and mythological women", "humble women" and "eroticized women".

We included in the category of "women and power" the works of art that represented queens and other women associated with powerful social classes or women married to powerful men. In the category of "biblical and mythological women", we included the

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representations of the Virgin Mary, the Saints and other biblical and mythological women. The category “humble women” included paintings that represented young women, women in the household or women doing household chores and women in the rural world. Finally, the category “eroticized women” included the feminine nude and women in sensual poses and those in which the body is valued over the action they are doing.

These four categories resulted from an analysis of the images of women existing in the collection of the Francisco Tavares Proença Júnior Museum based on the social categorization and stereotyping of women.

For the production of the exhibition "*Feminine Museum (2)*", we developed the following process of women's empowerment:

- a We adopted a concept of exhibition that refuses the classical chronological, aesthetic or technical organization and we organized the objects by “categories of women”, combining oil painting, drawing, sculpture, some by renowned artists and others by unknown authors, from the seventeenth to the twentieth century;
- b We took on the position of communicator and communication manager assigning new layers of meanings to the objects on display with the objective of making women visible;
- c The planning of the exhibition had no participation of men;
- d The exhibition had no participation of women in addition to the museologist in charge of the content, this being a personal view and interpretation;
- e Initially, we let the sequence of the works of art in the exhibition speak for itself, but then we decided to introduce titles and explanatory texts in the four cores so that men and women visitors could relate the images of women with the categories in which we organized them.

In this process, we found that in order for the message to be explicit and that visitors understand that women on display corresponded to different social categories, it was necessary that a guide accompanied visitors drawing their attention to that fact.

The museum visitor is not apt to interpret or read an object beyond the aesthetic, material and formal aspect because that has been the preferred way for museums to communicate and that is what people expect to find in museums. This leads to the need to promote the education of the public who usually do not question what museums present and state. As Barbara Smith puts it: “audiences are apt to see what they have been taught to see and remain blind to what they have been taught to ignore”.¹⁷

By organizing the exhibition "*Feminine Museum (2)*" according to a previously selected idea - the social categories of women - we were confronted with this question: would visitors classify women represented in the works of art in the same way we did or would they propose other categories according to their own experiences?

With the aim of answering this question we are organizing a workshop with two work groups, a feminine and a masculine one, divided in two age groups – university students and retired people. We will ask each one (individually and in groups) to assign a category of women to the images of women on the works of art used in the exhibition "*Feminine Museum (2)*". The objective of the workshop is to give voice to the visitors in the interpretation process of the works of art included in the exhibition.

¹⁷ Barbara Clark Smith, Applied Feminist Theories. In: Janes R. Glaser and Artemis A. Zanetou, (Ed.). *Gender Perspectives. Essays on women in museums*, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington and London, 1994, p. 142.

The results of this workshop will help to assess the importance of visitors participation in the planning stages of exhibitions that would result from the input from a broad group of people and not only from the museologist. We often talk about the community and visitors participation in museums actions, but we rarely test the validity and consequences of that participation.

“Feminine Museum (3)”

Following the construction of this process of women’s empowerment in museums, we are preparing a “participatory exhibition” entitled “*Us... women*” with some objects that visitors can manipulate and use; they will be placed near works of art representing women.

The objective of this “participatory exhibition” is to place the visitor in the role of the represented women: the woman in sensual poses, the woman that wears a corset, the woman at work or using household utensils, the woman in archaeological illustrations often represented on her knees, etc.

Each visitor/participant will be asked to answer a set of questions on the feelings the experience gives him/her, which will later be integrated into the exhibition.

By advocating a museology in which the role played by individuals and communities is essential in the construction of museological processes and in the performance of museological functions assigned to the museums, we want to test the impact on women’s visibility contributing to their empowerment, by organizing a participatory exhibition with an integrated gender perspective.

We want this exhibition to be an awareness of the represented stereotyped images of women in art and simultaneously ones that integrates the different perspectives of visitors in the exhibition itself, avoiding the approbatory role that museums and museologists assume most of the times.

This will be an exhibition under permanent construction and transformation since it incorporates the input from visitors throughout the exhibition and its content.

Final remarks

The process of empowering of women in museums that we are testing with the project “*Feminine Museum*” is characterized by the following principles applied to the different stages of the project:

We first planned a set of exhibitions with an integrated gender perspective, trying to contribute to women’s empowerment.

Secondly, we involved women artists in the exhibitions so that it could give them a voice and so that the visitors entering the exhibition connect with the ideas and feelings of the female artists and not only the ideas and feelings of the museologist.

Thirdly, we organized the objects by abandoning the traditional exhibition criteria of organization: artistic, aesthetic, thematic, chronological, and technical. We decided to organize the exhibition contents according to a pre-established theme in order to convey a message to visitors beyond the material information inherent to the cultural heritage.

Fourthly, we assumed the role of communication manager and established relationships between the works of art and let them speak for themselves in the exhibition. However, we soon realized that this position would be insufficient to convey the intended message and we placed written information and conducted guided tours.

Fifthly, we will involve a group of citizens and potential visitors in the interpretation of

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the works of art and we will include that information in the exhibition to free the communication from the domain of the museologist.

Finally, we will present a “participatory exhibition” in which visitors will experience situations and feelings similar to those of women represented in the works of art in an attempt that museum visitors are guided “by the experience instead of a prescriptive label”¹⁸. The exhibition thus constructed is a process in permanent renewal and in the end it will result from the joint work of the museologist and the visitors.

The difficulty experienced by museums when expressing ideas and addressing themes beyond the physical nature of objects makes us question how far can we go with projects similar to the “*Feminine Museum*” if we assume a stronger approach attached to the gender perspective, women’s empowerment, equality between women and men and women’s visibility.

Regardless of the solution adopted and the results obtained, we must stress that because we introduced a gender perspective in the exhibition “*Feminine Museum (1): women artists in the collection of the Francisco Tavares Proença Júnior Museum*” and by moving our attention away from the works of art to the women that produced them, many of the artists presented had the opportunity to be included in an exhibition without their work being the target of criticism or comparison with the works of male artists that is usually more valued.

By establishing since the beginning of the project that we were valuing female artists and not the paintings, giving voice to women and not the art, they all had the opportunity to be seen from an equal angle: the fact that they are women and artists.

In the exhibition “*Feminine Museum (2): women in the eyes of men*” by choosing to interpret the works of art outside the classical organization by chronology, typology, school or artistic movement, but by content, by ideas and by social categories of woman, we drew the attention to women as they are represented in museum collections: in a partial and stereotyped way.

We identified only four categories of women in the 33 works of art on display: “women and power”, the “biblical and mythological women”, “humble women” and “eroticized women”. But we believe that introducing the participation of a group of citizens in the interpretation and categorization process of images of women would produce distinct results.

The workshop will validate or refute the categorization we did as responsible for the exhibition, enabling a glimpse on the way the public decode the objects on display in museums and clarifying the role of museologists in the construction of exhibitions. We hope to present the results of this workshop soon.

Finally, we want the “participatory exhibition” to be an enriching experience from the point of view of the public’s involvement and the museum’s ability to promote reflection among visitors making the communication process in museums truly bidirectional. We hope to enable the knowledge of the “Other”, in this particular case “Women”, promoting their empowerment through the creation of a critical awareness of feminine stereotypes.

Based on the two exhibitions already held, we believe that the integration of a gender perspective in all museological actions will be one of the possible paths to women’s empowerment in museums, enabling these institutions to take on an active role in social inclusion.

Although the project “*Feminine Museum*” is still under way, it seems appropriate to present to the museological community the results of the actions taken so far and our future expectations. Many of the exhibitions presented in museums result from a long

¹⁸ Hilde Hein, op.cit. p. 60.

reflection, but that information is not conveyed in the exhibition, in the catalogue or in the presentation panels. In this way, a wealth of information and thoughts by competent and experienced professionals is lost.

By advocating a socially responsible museology and museum professionals as social workers, we advocate the accountability and sharing of our work. It is in that sense that this research must be understood.

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EMPOWERMENT IN PROCESS: MYTH AND REALITIES IN THE RELATIONSHIP WITH MUSEUM COMMUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

The article refers to the importance of empowering individuals and communities through museum experience. It starts with an approach to the term empowerment and its meanings, followed by comments on the myths and realities about empowerment in museums. Special relevance is given to the relationship between empowerment and social, cultural and psychological inclusion. It also mentions self-recognition and social recognition as necessary steps towards empowerment; and defends the importance of museum experience related to the empowerment of the weak. Finally, it reminds us that only those who are able to promote self-change will be able to promote experiences for the empowerment in the Other.

Keywords: Museum. Museology. Empowerment. Inclusion. Communities. Recognition and Respect.

RESUMEN

Empoderamiento en proceso: mitos y realidades en la relación entre museos y comunidades

El artículo se refiere a la importancia del empoderamiento de individuos y comunidades a través de experiencias museales. El texto se inicia con un abordaje del término empoderamiento y sus significados, para enseguida comentar los mitos y realidades sobre el empoderamiento en museos. Atribuye importancia especial a las relaciones entre empoderamiento e inclusión social, cultural y psicológica. Menciona el auto-reconocimiento y el reconocimiento social como pasos necesarios al empoderamiento; y defiende la importancia de desarrollar experiencias museales relacionadas al empoderamiento de los necesitados. Finalmente, hace acordar que apenas los que sean capaces de promover el cambio en sí mismos estarán aptos a promover experiencias hacia el empoderamiento del Otro.

Palabras-clave: Museo. Museología. Empoderamiento. Inclusión. Comunidades. Reconocimiento y respeto.

RÉSUMÉ

Le processus de responsabilisation : mythes et réalités dans la relation entre musées et communautés.

Le texte se réfère à l'importance du processus de responsabilisation d'individus et de communautés, par l'expérience muséale. Il commence avec une approche du terme *responsabilisation (autonomisation)* et ses significations, suivi pour des commentaires sur les mythes et réalités de l'autonomisation en musées. Une importance spéciale est attribuée à la relation entre responsabilisation et inclusion culturelle, sociale et psychologique. Le texte fait aussi mention de la reconnaissance sociale et de soi comme étapes nécessaires vers la responsabilisation; et défend l'importance des expériences

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muséales dédiées à la responsabilisation des défavorisés. Finalement, il remarque uniquement que ceux qui sont capables de se changer eux-mêmes pourront développer des expériences d'autonomisation de l'Autre.

Mots-clés : Musée. Muséologie. Responsabilisation. Inclusion. Communauté. Reconnaissance et respect.

* * *

Foreword

What is empowerment? How can museums empower their visitors? When and why do they do it right, when and why do they do it wrong? Do all museums have visitors?

But - what is a museum?

Museology has been discussing such issues for almost a century now, and much has been said and written on the matter. Yet we must recognize that many of the issues concerning the relationship between museums and visitors fall out of the sphere of museum theory and could be very well analyzed and debated as issues in museum management and/or museum education or politics. Most already are.

Trying to find the right approach to the matter from the vision of museum theory, we are tempted to start by discussing the meanings of the term 'empowerment'. A first look at the dictionary reveals that to empower is to authorize, to give powers to and, in a metaphoric sense - to qualify. The term 'power' relates to 'faculty, capacity, authority, command, influence'¹, but not to the development (or unveiling) of the inner potentials of the individual.

Literature mentions a *Philosophy of Empowerment* which relates to the development of strategies and techniques that intend to make individuals able to 'handle successfully anything that life brings their way'². This is a post-existentialist, post-objectivist movement that has to do with mind development, self development, and with the fulfillment of one's existential potential no matter the cultural/social context. That is, a 'philosophy' for quality of life. There is even a *'Working Minds' Philosophy of Empowerment*, based on the ideas of transactional analysis "with a little quantum physics and many other ideas... plus a host of original thought"³, and considered by those who follow it as "innovative, pragmatic, and progressive"⁴. Entirely devoted to Reason, it announces that "Reason is the only frontier left, (...) necessary to prevent Mankind's senseless self-destruction"⁵.

The empowerment philosophy is based on the premise that human beings have the capacity to make choices and are responsible for the consequences of their choices. Empowerment is defined as an educational process designed to help [individuals] develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and degree of self-awareness necessary to effectively assume responsibility for their (...) decisions. (...) Topics such as well-being, self-image, motivation, adaptability, stress management, problem-solving, social support, self-awareness, and hope, are discussed⁶.

¹ Michaelis Portuguese-English Dictionary. São Paulo: Melhoramentos, 1989 p. 103; Webster, 1979, p. 575.

² *Working Minds: A Philosophy of Empowerment* (web-based essays and journal) <http://www.working-minds.com/> Accessed in May 6, 2012.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Anderson C. Feste, "Empowerment: from Philosophy to practice », *PubMed*, US Government. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/7494713>. Accessed in May 6, 2012.

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Empowerment models are used in therapeutic approaches and in social services, against physical, mental, verbal, sexual, emotional, psychological or economic abuse. They intend to offer "support, resources, advocacy, information, and education"⁷, with the aim of equalizing power between individuals and their environment. They are also used in the health care industry, connected with the idea of rehabilitation, as a tool to respond to the needs of individuals with disabilities, helping them "move from positions of dependency in their community toward positions of independency in a community of their choice"⁸.

Let us remember that to assume control and authority over one's own life is a process that starts in the individual's body and mind, and spreads over his/her physical, social and cultural environment. This implies that the 'outer' world has to be prepared to cope with such needs and to respond to them with adequate physical infrastructure and social behavior, creating a 'framework for well being'.

One of the difficulties of creating such framework, though, is to establish *a priori* the proper balance between what people need and what people really want. The concepts of independence, social freedom, capability and qualification are among the most fluid and complex of modern and contemporary culture. The literature in the field of political science reminds us that:

The life of a person can be seen as a sequence of things that constitute a collection of 'functionings' – doings and beings the person achieves. 'Capability' refers to the alternative combinations of functionings from which a person can [effectively] choose. Hence, the notion of capability is essentially one of freedom – the range of options available to a person in deciding what kind of life to lead⁹.

Among the basic capabilities considered by political and social sciences we may include reading and writing; the ability of living in democratic equality; and the 'cultivation of humanity', that is,

...the capacity of critical examination of oneself and one's traditions; the ability to see oneself not simply as a citizen of some local region or group but also, and above all, as a human being bound also to other human beings by ties of recognition and concern; and the ability to imagine oneself in other people's shoes¹⁰.

Ricketts¹¹ draws attention to the fact that the connection between power and empowerment is tangible, since the term "empowerment" includes power in its definition. And since power is defined behaviorally as the ability of one individual or group to affect the actions of another, it has to do with leadership, and (in its actual sense) with the capacity to encourage and motivate individuals, to stimulate decision-making. Power influences decision-making at personal and community levels, and consequently affects the steps towards the future.

Traditionally connected with the idea of leadership, the concept of power has changed over time, to encompass the idea of 'group power'. The focus has moved 'from 'having

⁷ <http://sojournercenter.org/go2/index.php/aboutus/empowerment-philisophy-mainmenu-67>. Accessed in May 6, 2012.

⁸ William G. Emener, Adele Patrick and David Hollingsworth, *Critical issues in rehabilitation counseling* (Springfield, Ill: Thomas, 1984), 6. Quoted in: William G. Emener "An empowerment philosophy for rehabilitation in the 20th century", *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation*, vol 57, no. 4 (1991): 13-20, accessed May, 2012.

⁹ Dreze and Sen, 1995, 35, quoted In: Avner de-Shalit. Political Philosophy and Empowering Citizens. In *Political Studies*: vol.52 (2004): 802–818.

¹⁰ Martha Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 8–10, quoted in: Avner de-Shalit, "Political Philosophy and Empowering Citizens", *Political Studies*, vol. 52, 4 (2004): 802–818.

¹¹ Kristina G. Ricketts, *Community and Leadership Development. The Philosophy Behind Empowerment*. In. Empowerment, Part I. College of Agriculture, Univ. of Kentucky. <http://www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/elk2/elk2104/elk2104.pdf> Accessed in May 7, 2012.

power over' followers to 'sharing power with' [others]"¹². At present, the idea of power has been renovated by the idea of empowerment: "to empower means 'to enable or permit' - to give power to an individual or group of people"¹³ to decide and control their own destiny. Empowerment allows the sharing of rights, opportunities and responsibilities, at individual, institutional and interpersonal levels. It allows togetherness.

Developed into a concept at its own, empowerment may be analyzed and approached in three main ideas: self-empowerment, organizational or interpersonal empowerment, and social action. Self-empowerment is about the individual sense and capacity of control over one's own destiny, it is related with the capacity to succeed; group empowerment is about open and democratic leadership and the capacity of a specific group to share responsibility and power. As for social action, it relates to the idea of "removing structural barriers in political or social systems so that disadvantaged populations can have greater control over their own futures"¹⁴ - that is, with the building of collective strength by improving connections that prevent social, cultural and psychological marginalization.

And why do we need to examine the concept of empowerment in the field of museology? It is because this concept is at the root of the idea of an Inclusive Museum.

Museums: inclusive to whom? Myths and realities about empowerment

As we already know, museum theory considers the museum as phenomenon - a communicational phenomenon which only exists in (and consists of) a relationship. This idea is completed by communication theory, which considers the Museum as an event, an instance of mediation, able "to retain, and at the same time modify the registers of reality"¹⁵. Hence, it is possible to represent (and interpret) the world without the presence of what museology has convened through time as 'museum objects'.

The force of representing and interpreting reality is one of the basic powers of the museum. And today museums fulfill this promise by making use of imagery (fixed image, moving image, digital image), operated in different dimensions: illustration, documentation, interpretation, and creation (or re-creation). "Imagery makes possible not only to make present the world in museums, but also to make present the museum in the world"¹⁶. It was by force of the image media that traditional museums became mass vehicles, redesigning themselves as multifaceted spaces where the significance of objects is relativized by the plurality of forms, sounds, colors and images which turn each exhibition into a special event.

Museums were thus empowered as cultural institutions of a very special kind, and in some cases became centers of cultural consumption, where a harsh 'museomania' turns exhibitions into spectacular shows. Objectified as "the key-paradigm of contemporary cultural activities"¹⁷, they are mostly influenced by the logic of the wonderful, to the point of confusing themselves with their exhibitions. Even in traditional, orthodox museums, the old dichotomy 'permanent collection vs. temporary exhibit' now loses its meaning, due to successive arrangements and movements which influence museum presentations. This influence extends to the so-called 'cultural

¹² Kristina G. Ricketts, *Community and leadership development*, opus cit.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Tereza Scheiner, *Apollo and Dionysus in the Temple of the Muses. Museum: genesis, concept and representations in Western culture*. Masters Thesis. Rio de Janeiro, ECO/UFRJ, 1998, 115.

¹⁶ Tereza Scheiner, Loc. Cit.

¹⁷ Jean Baudrillard as quoted in Andreas Huyssen, *In the Shadow of McLuhan: Jean Beaudrillard's Theory of Simulation* (Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, 1989)

areas' (inhabited territories, historic neighborhoods, archaeological sites, cities as monuments) now musealized, that is, officially incorporated in the museum sphere.

All this leads to new perceptions of the relationships between museum and collection, museum and object, museum and visitor. Issues that are essential to the understanding of such dynamics are reopened, now focusing museums as instances of empowerment and inclusion.

I personally consider that the base of this matter lies the connection between museum theory and practice, that is, the understanding of the conceptual models according to which museums develop. This is only a simple question in appearance: in fact, it is deeply polemical, since the conceptual profile of each museum deeply reveals the 'idea of Museum' internalized by specialists - and vice-versa.

Those who perceive museums from the realities of the traditional, orthodox museum¹⁸ will naturally believe that empowerment is about facilitating the museum discourse and enlarging the understanding that visitors may develop of displayed collections. Such belief resides in the nature of these museums: traditionally linked to documentation, conservation and research, they have developed communication with society essentially based on a mode of apprehension where the *logos* dominate the senses. Here, the concept of empowerment is largely influenced by the idea of knowledge and of opening up museums to all kinds of audiences. This is exactly the proposal of the 18th century - enlightenment. But, can enlightenment guarantee the feeling of inclusion?

The advent of the exploratory museum (a sub-type of the traditional museum)¹⁹ has enlarged the possibilities of contact with the visitors and the development of a gestational approach of the contents to be communicated. Exploratory museums have enabled specialists to perceive museums in process and to understand the relevance of the interfaces developed at all levels: among professionals themselves (as cultural experiences), between specialists and other museum servers, and between each museum and the different social groups defined as potential or real 'visitors'. This is what led, from the 1990s, museums to being understood as a phenomenon that operates through relationships²⁰.

Exploratory museums facilitate a concept of empowerment that has to do with holistic exploration: knowledge is an adventure of the senses and of the mind, and does not necessarily depend on an exhibition setting organized in traditional ways: it is focused on the relationship each visitor establishes with the experiment. The adventure of exploration may raise a deep sense of inclusion: initiatives that ally the artistic experience to scientific knowledge are especially relevant and help developing holistic experiments that affect not only the *logos*, but all human senses.

Contemporary Museology is full of examples of museums that integrate representations of the two conceptual models - traditional orthodox and traditional exploratory. The idea is to link architecture, design and communicational devices to operate as 'articulators of senses'. Among the many examples, some are especially outstanding - like the *Phaeno*, a science center opened in 2005 in Wolfsburg, Germany. This is a museum that operates on the border between art and science, using works of art to facilitate public understanding about scientific phenomena. Inspired by the San Francisco Exploratorium and the California Science Center, USA, its expressive architecture integrates local geography with inner spaces simulating

¹⁸ Architectonic space that collects material evidence from the world for purposes of study, conservation, documentation and communication.

¹⁹ From the point of view of museum theory, exploratory museums are traditional museums - that is, delimited architectural spaces containing collections which are kept, studied and preserved to be communicated. They differ from traditional museums because they are founded not in the existence of collections, but in the relationships they develop with their visitors.

²⁰ Scheiner, 1998. Op. Cit.

natural environments. It is an experimental ambience with a high aesthetic level, with experimental nuclei articulated in thematic groups, intermediated by works of art. The name itself is expressive, since *Phaeno* derives from '*phänomen*', that is, phenomenon in German. What could be more expressive to museology than a museum that celebrates its phenomenal nature, as well as its links to science and art as phenomena?

As for site museums, community museums and ecomuseums, they have highlighted the holistic tendencies, defending the idea of a 'total' experience where not only individuals but a whole community becomes empowered, by taking in their hands the protection and management of their entire heritage. This has to do with group empowerment by social action - with the sharing of responsibilities over heritage. Here, knowledge takes second place and the sense of belonging is what defines relationships.

To empower communities through the celebration of identity is indeed a great proposal – not yet fully accomplished by all site museums and ecomuseums. Group empowerment is a rather complex process, which depends of highly fluctuating levels of leadership, inside and outside the musealized area itself. All those involved in the development and management of ecomuseums know that very well. In the case of ecomuseums, it must also be remembered that the idea of 'visitor empowerment' is to be considered in a very specific sense: ecomuseums are not about visitors, they are about co-management of heritage. This means that, while very inclusive in what refers to the communities they represent, they tend to be very exclusive of those who live outside of their borders.

Finally, virtual (digital) museums have inaugurated a new and interesting facet in the relationship with the individual - and with society. It starts with the possibility, offered by virtual reality to each individual or group, to create their own museum. The total control of the creative process inspires a deep feeling of power, in its best and most positive sense. Here, knowledge is not a consequence of a 'visit' to the museum - it is in the very root of the experience: without a minimum knowledge of new technologies it is not possible to create and/or operate a virtual museum. But the greatest and more encompassing feeling of empowerment is given by the possibility, offered to every individual, to access the museum and modify it, or be a part of it. Anyone can become a 'visitor' of the museum, or participate in its development. Total immersion, total inclusion - at least in theory, since we know that not all individuals and/or communities are able to have access to the Internet. According to each experience, the virtual museum can thus be totally inclusive or rather exclusive. It is known today that the Internet experience does not always realize the idea of the 'great *agora*', where we will all bathe in the same light, as predicted by philosophy²¹.

Hence, we may infer that:

- a) there is an immense gap between theory and practice, regarding museums as instances of empowerment: most of the principles enumerated in theory are not really feasible in practice;
- b) empowerment and inclusion are limited to each museum experience - that is, no museum can offer experiences of absolute and total empowerment, absolute and total inclusion;
- c) the levels of empowerment and inclusion will vary, according to each experience - and are directly related to the conceptual model to which museums relate and in which they develop;

²¹ Pierre Lévy. "E-mail from Heraclitus and replay", 15 Oct. 1994. In: <http://www.caosmose.net/pierrelevy/email.html>. Access on May 6, 2012.

- d) the power of the specialist to interfere in such realities is also limited - by the experience itself and by a complex network of controllable and non-controllable variants.

Considering that the idea of visitor and/or community empowerment resides mostly in the realm of myth, we must start from the assumption of this pre-condition to be able to develop actions that really - and not only apparently - prove to be empowering and (consequently) inclusive. And this has a direct relation to the development of narratives of reality that each museum is able to develop.

I personally defend the idea that such narratives must be developed from outside in, that is, that their thematic and orientation develop from society to museums. This implies that museums become 'porous', permeable to the expectations and needs of different communities, different social groups. To develop such porosity doesn't mean to abandon technical control (essential to the survival of musealized collections and of the geographic, virtual and/or symbolic territories considered 'museums'); it means allowing to percolate, towards the sphere of the museum, the real identity profile of the groups and communities that are the aim of each museum.

As we all know, to define this profile is a difficult, but not an impossible task - as proved by the hundreds of studies already made, focusing the relationships between museums and society. But this is not the task of museum theory.

Yet, for us theorists, it could be interesting to analyze the different levels of resonance between the narratives developed by museums and the communities they serve. And this implies a sensible perception of the different levels of mutual acceptance between museum and individual, museum and community.

Chaumier²² reminds us that, since the conceptions of reality differ accordingly to each group of social actors, it is more than natural that museographic choices reveal the scale of values and self-representations of each group, even when they work together within the same museum space. Cultures of reference, for example, are seen differently by sponsors and by professionals, and such difference is clearly revealed in the conditions of presentation²³. The intrinsic logic that forms the organization of exhibits must be thus analyzed: not only what exhibit design solutions are based on, but also the mediations that accompany them.

This is especially important in what regards small, local museums, community museums and ecomuseums - which develop an ambivalent relationship with the process of musealization. Originally conceived to reconstitute to the locals their own heritage, those museums were long considered essential for providing basic information on their heritage, especially to the younger generations - who did not have easy access to the major museums in the great cities. As pointed out by Kenneth Hudson²⁴ thirty years ago, small museums are usually considered charming, innovative, an invitation to enthusiasm.

Yet new technologies and recent communication developments have provoked a series of changes in the ways that museum exhibitions are acknowledged and perceived. With the spread of information media and opportunities for the development of knowledge, society became more demanding - and the search for spectacular solutions has turned many museums into 'wonder machines'. More and more concerned with appearance, they tend to push essence to a secondary plan.

²² Serge Chaumier, *Des musées en quête d'identité*. (Paris, L'Harmattan, 2003), 27

²³ "Les cultures de référence (...) sont différentes chez les bénévoles et chez les professionnels (...). L'expression de ces différences s'exprime en particulier dans les conditions de présentation" (...). Chaumier, 2003, 27

²⁴ - "Le charme et la taille font rarement bon ménage". Hudson, 1992, *Des musées qui établissent leurs propres règles*. in Chaumier, 2003, 29.

But no matter the conceptual model, the size and kind of the museum, the important road towards visitor empowerment is the development of experience through the senses. Beyond the development of integrative narratives which tend to shorten the gap between *logos* and *physis*, museums must emphasize initiatives that reinforce the affective links between visitors and their experience of the exhibition, between communities and their experience of heritage.

Bellaigue, writing about the waves of resonance that derive from the idea of exhibition, reminds us that the act of displaying always and inevitably brings a transformation:

some ideas collapse when expressed... a film when exposed to light gets impressed, it is modified in such a way that it will never return to its original state, but forever will bear the reflection of one moment of reality (...). To expose is to run a risk - the risk of being modified.²⁵

This is what matters when searching for empowerment and inclusion.

Knowing the limits of language as a system of signs, to refer to a 'language of exhibition' would thus be to adventure into the domain of risk - a fluid sphere, where the said, the non-said and what is to be said interlink. One evident quest is to apprehend the true and effective space of response between what the museum offers and the real possibilities of dialogue. This is no theory, but mastering of museum practice: it has to do with a sensible mastering in the museographic treatment of references.

That is why museology not only refers to the disposition and composition of registers to be museographically treated, but mainly to their potential for unveiling reality and increase awareness about it. As Bellaigue comments, registers touch sensibility:

The latter [art museums] play with museographical arrangement and composition, so as to appeal more to sensibility which is prior in the process of apprehending the mysterious field of creation. There is no more reason then to mention the objectivity neither the subjectivity: it is only a question then about the relations between sensibilities"²⁶.

The potential that waits to be revealed is the potential of the language that encompasses all the senses, fed by the subtleties of sight, of the mind, of gestures, of sound and movement. "Between the silence of oblivion and the unbearable polyphony of information, this may be, today, a possible alternative for communication in museums"²⁷.

I believe in the development of a total relationship between individual and museum, between individual and symbolic space, between individual and object; one that penetrates all the senses, to impregnate hearts and minds, as light impregnates the image in the photographic plaque - leaving the permanent mark of that 'fold of reality' through lived experience²⁸.

Traditional museums (either orthodox or exploratory) may emphasize the relationship between hands on and hearts on to provoke an extended synchrony between the individual and observed (or experienced) object/phenomenon, which museology recognizes, since 1972, as "a total relationship". But such proposals will only be possible if museums can provide experiences that offer some level of constancy, enabling the permanence of stimuli for a span of time that provokes impregnation.

²⁵ Bellaigue, Mathilde, *From speech to secret: the language of exhibition*. ISS 19, 1991, p. 28

²⁶ Bellaigue, *From speech to secret: the language of exhibition*, 29.

²⁷ Tereza Scheiner, "Patrimonio, Museología y Sociedades en Transformación: reflexiones sobre el Museo Inclusivo". In: *O Pensamento Museológico Contemporâneo / El Pensamiento Museológico Contemporáneo* 1a. ed. Buenos Aires: ICOM / ICOFOM, v.1, (2011): 42-55.

²⁸ This proposal denies, to a certain extent, the ideas of Bourdieu, who "operated a radical distinction between communion and communication, introducing the idea (...) that all communication would suppose a mediation, [the existence of] intermediaries (...) opposed to an eye to eye communion, immediate, fusional, and not rationalizable" (Porcher, 2006, p. 10).

Methodology varies from scientific experiments with formal methods to observation of phenomena, from the creation of artifacts to the development of immaterial manifests.

Empowerment and inclusion must be felt from within. The empowered must achieve it with the feeling of belonging, in all circumstances. This is especially important for individuals and/or communities with special needs - low income, limited access to education, senior citizens or people with physical and mental difficulties; or to members of traditional communities.

Recognition - a necessary step

A necessary step towards the development of inclusive experiences in museums is the genuine recognition of the importance of the Other. It must be considered that "to be inclusive is to integrate, to encompass, to bring to oneself what is different"²⁹. To become inclusive is a matter of attitude, of strong ethical belief. It implies not only recognition of traditional practice and celebration of symbolic and material memory, but also

... to recognize and respect the links between different communities, their geographic and symbolic territories and their cultural processes and products; (...) to promote participation and sharing of knowledge, responsibilities and authority over the processes of recognition, definition, musealization and use of the references considered as 'heritage'; to emphasize the relevance of imagination and creativity, as well as the emotional character of heritage; to avoid considering other groups [and/or individuals] as 'minor', 'exotic', or 'ethnic', needing to be interpreted by specialists foreign to their cultural roots³⁰.

Empowerment through inclusive action is also about recognizing people as heritage, and being able to stimulate processes of symbolic re-appropriation - an efficient tool against social exclusion. It implies understanding heritage not as a totality, but as a multiple - an instance that is able to generate new forms of universality and fraternity.

To recognize the cultural significance of the past as an instance of mediation with the present is a powerful movement that has all to do with museum theory and practice. This does not mean that museums should repeat what they already do, but that the past must be understood as something that remains in the present. Museums must also be recognized as hypertexts - instances of possibilities that shelter the seeds of the future (in this sense, all museums are virtual).

Work with difference - and with the Different; give voice to the Other - and listen; emphasize difference - and accept it; offer to those who are at the margins a significant space. Those are necessary movements that foster empowerment and inclusion.

One example of empowerment through museum action is the work developed by professors of the Graduate Program in Museology and Heritage with the 'quilombo' São José da Serra - a community of slave descendants localized in Valença, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This community covers a world of 13 similar communities in the state and more than 1,000 similar communities spread all over Brazil. The inhabitants of São José arrived in the area in 1850, and developed a religious and cultural nucleus dedicated to activities of traditional handicraft and agriculture of subsistence. It is a poor yet active community, now integrated by some 200 people who live in houses made of earth and wood - and fight to disseminate black culture and to keep the ownership of their land, a right guaranteed by the Federal Constitution since 1988.

²⁹ Tereza Christina Scheiner, "Patrimonio, museología y sociedades en transformación : reflexiones sobre el museo inclusivo", Conferencia magistral in *El pensamiento museológico contemporáneo en los países de lengua portuguesa y española*, II Seminario, Buenos Aires, 2011. p. 42-53

³⁰ Ibid.

The recognition of the value of their culture has turned them into a famous 'root community', visited by researchers to study their intangible heritage, shown in afro-Brazilian music (jongo, root-samba and others), cooking techniques (in wood burning stove) and religion (Catholicism and Umbanda).

Researches of the program have included this community in the sphere of the project "Education as personal and cultural heritage: ethno-knowledge for ethno-recognition". Inscribed in the Ministry of Education for financial support, the project is developed in partnership with the University of Coimbra, Portugal³¹, and includes a series of academic activities related to the study and debate about the interfaces between traditional black culture and contemporary culture. Visits to the community happen several times a year, and there is constant contact with their leaders. The 'quilombo' is considered by our professors as a 'living museum', where the community has total power over its own heritage. Some decades ago it would have certainly been proposed to transform this community into an ecomuseum. Yet contemporary Museology does not necessarily need to apply 'museum-like' methodologies to experiences that already follow into what is considered by the field as a 'total heritage experience'. If ever the community members feel the need to become 'musealized', they will have our help and assistance; but no suggestion is made in this direction. This is real empowerment: to let the community decide whether they wish or not to become an 'official' ecomuseum.



Masters of the Jongo in the S. José community

³¹ Faculty of Psychology and Sciences of Education / Center for Interdisciplinary Studies of the XX Century - CEIS20.



Dance



Traditional cooking

Experiments with traditional communities are only one of the many alternatives of empowerment and inclusion to be developed with the help of museum specialists. A look beyond museum formalities may unveil the most amazing experiences, even in the sphere of traditional museums - such as those developed in the slums (favelas) of the city of Rio de Janeiro.



One example is the *Museum of Maré* (Museu da Maré), the first of the kind in the country, a traditional museum conceived and developed by the local community, an old slum near the international airport of Rio. Those who do not know the experiment may think it's a recent development - yet, although the museum itself is quite recent (2006), since the 1960s the community has been developing an experiment achieve self-knowledge and document its own memory.

Growing from self-knowledge and self-pride, this museum is an emblematic example of group empowerment from within.

The presence of specific cultural subjects in musealized spaces may also contribute to the development of integrated living experiences, with different conceptual models and results, especially in communities that are considered 'marginal'. Another interesting project developed in Rio de Janeiro is a private NGO, founded in 2008 by cultural leaders in the slums of Pavão, Pavãozinho and Cantagalo. Created by a group of locals, most of them with superior education, and Named *Museu de Favela* (MUF), it is a site museum dedicated to the memories and cultural heritage of this group of slums. Their vision of future is to transform the area into a touristic monument that documents the history of the development of slums, the cultural origins of samba, the culture of the migrants from the Northeast and black culture, through visual arts and dance³².

³² <http://www.museudefavela.org/sobre-o-muf/sobre-o-muf>. Access on May 7, 2012.



The museum is located on the steep slopes of the Cantagalo mountain, an area of 12 acres between Ipanema, Copacabana and the Lagoon, in the Southern zone of the city. It adds up to a material heritage of more than 5.300 houses, connected by an impressive labyrinth of alleys and stairs, in a natural setting of Atlantic forest with outstanding panoramas of the city. The 'collection' is formed by some 20 thousand inhabitants and their ways of life, a live example of an important part of the history of the city.

The founders of MUF are a group of 16 persons, 81% residing in the area. Among them are visual artists, musicians and composers of hip-hop and samba, journalists, artisans, photographers, an architect and a lawyer - all of them committed to the valorization of the collective cultural memory and the strengthening of good community values. The personal and professional profile of its creators is a proof that not only thieves and drug dealers live in the slums. They fight for a vision of future that implies the transformation of the conditions of life in the slums, through memory and local culture - defending its dignity and fighting against social segregation.

The area is being musealized with the help of Brazilian museologists, considering three points of concern: heritage, networks and cultural projects. An open air gallery and 'house-canvases' form the exhibition, unveiled through a circuit that links the slums.



Images of the visual circuit of MUF

The magical adventure of empowering the weak

Another alternative for the fostering of inclusion is to develop experiences of empowerment of the weak, linked to the museum environment.

A thesis recently defended in São Paulo, Brazil³³, analyses the work carried out between 2008 and 2010 in museum spaces with six children between 7 and 9 years old with brain paralysis and other brain damages. The aim of this work was to increase the perception of their bodies in space and of the relationship between the different body parts (proprioceptive system), as well as to explore the possibilities of their different senses: vision, hearing, smell, taste, sensitivity of the skin (exteroceptive system). All the children use wheelchairs; some do not speak and are visually

³³ Ana Amélia Barbosa, *Além do corpo: uma experiência em Arte/Educação (Beyond the body: an experiment in art education)*. São Paulo: 2012.

impaired. This outstanding experience was developed through art education experiments in museum exhibitions, as a means for cultural inclusion - all of them coordinated by a professor who is mute, visually impaired and doesn't move: she works from her wheelchair, through computer operated programs³⁴ especially designed for her. "The development of body conscience and cultural literacy was associated not only with visits to cultural institutions, but also with the presentation of works of artists and with the presence of artists [who were] invited to work with them"³⁵.



Source - Barbosa, Ana Amélia.
2012.

The experiments included the use of the body as canvas through corporal painting made by artists, and also exploration of movements in space, with the use of wheelchairs. Emblematic art museums of São Paulo such as the Tomie Otake Institute and the Sculpture Garden in the Park of the Light (Parque da Luz) were chosen to support the experience.

A series of activities was also developed in the exhibition *Art for Children*, at SESC Pompéia, where children explored a reinterpretation of the Magic Square 5, by Brazilian artist Hélio Oiticica. Visits were previously prepared with the educational services of each institution, in order to obtain positive effects of each experiment. The techniques, inspired by Dewey, aimed at developing predisposition to literacy by enlarging perception in the whole body.

Experiments like this reconcile body and mind, giving relevance to aesthetic and knowledge acquired through the senses, fighting the belief that there is no place for the body, that "the subject is what is left when the body is taken out"³⁶. They give relevance to the flux of information between the inner and outer parts of the body, believing in the opening of body sensitivity to the world, as a tool for the development of knowledge. They make us understand that "it is our experience as a desiring body that initially constructs us [...]. In this sense, the body is not only an object to be trained, but a subject that teaches us, that turns us into what we are"³⁷.

Those examples prove the capacity to use the human body as an instance of impregnation of experiences, interlinked with the mind in a 'common texture' that turns every experience into an occasion of intense resonance. This is what empowerment is about: allowing the sense of totality. Therefore, I propose that museum theory deepens investigation on the different concepts of terms such as impregnation, resonance, inclusion - and their relation to Museology.

As a conclusion, I would repeat that positive and socially important museum projects do not necessarily need to involve huge professional teams, immense budgets or pharaonic buildings: they will become necessary by responding to social demands with sensitivity, creativity, competence and respect. Museology is not about huge buildings, best collections or an impressive catalogue of tangible and intangible heritage. It is about people - about connecting people to reality and promoting self-awareness, self-knowledge, self-respect, at individual and group level. This is the real living heritage that must be taken care of.

³⁴ Such programs were specially designed for her, at the Sarah Kubitscheck Hospital, in Brasília.

³⁵ "O desenvolvimento da consciência corporal e da alfabetização cultural estava associado não só com a visita a instituições culturais, mas também com a apresentação de obras de artistas e a presença de artistas convidados para trabalhar com eles na sala de aula". Ana Amélia Barbosa, In Op. Cit. .

³⁶ Santaella, Corpo e comunicação: sintoma da cultura (São Paulo: Paulus, 2004),15.

³⁷ Coelho J R., 1997, p.402, in Vanessa Caldeira Leite. Corpo Impregnado pela Arte: implicações no campo da Educação, p. 3. Article presented to ANPED. In: <http://www.anped.org.br/reunioes/32ra/arquivos/trabalhos/GT24-5493--Int.pdf>. Access on May 7, 2012.

Yet such experiments will only be possible if and when those who develop them are able to promote self-change and become, themselves, thoroughly inclusive. As Mahatma Gandhi already said, "we must become the change we want to see".

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VISITOR EXPERIENCE IN THE SALAR JUNG MUSEUM

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study: Visitors' Experience in Salar Jung Museum, was twofold, to understand how different segments of the population perceive the museum, and to know their views and opinions in order to improve the general ambience of the museum. The visitors were divided into two categories, rural and urban. A separate questionnaire and interview schedule was designed for each segment. The urban visitors, primarily from high and middle-income groups, perceived the museum visit as a form of entertainment, whereas the rural visitors perceived the museum visit as educative, informative and inspiring. To meet these different expectations, museums must first understand the needs of the various visitor segments in order to tailor exhibitions, museum activities, and marketing. As a first and timid step towards visitor empowerment, preparing for a more focused museum experience will have a higher chance of meeting visitor expectations. Unfortunately, visitor empowerment has not been a serious consideration of Indian museums. However, it is the duty of all museums to ensure quantitative and qualitative public participation, which will validate their subsistence on taxpayers' money.

RÉSUMÉ

L'expérience des visiteurs au Musée Salar Jung

Le but de l'étude sur l'expérience des visiteurs au Musée Salar Jung à Hyderabad, Inde, avait deux volets: d'une part de comprendre comment les divers composants de la population perçoivent le musée, et par la suite l'utilisation de ces divers opinions afin d'améliorer l'ambiance générale du musée. J'avais séparé les visiteurs en deux catégories : la rurale et la urbaine. Un questionnaire et une grille d'entretien étaient conçus pour chaque groupe. Les visiteurs d'origine urbaine, issus principalement des couches aisés de la population, perçoivent une visite au musée comme une forme de divertissement, alors que les visiteurs d'origine rurale la perçoivent eux comme une source d'information, d'éducation, voire d'inspiration. Afin de répondre aux attentes différentes, le musée doit d'abord comprendre les divers secteurs de la population s'il veut adapter les expositions, les activités du musée et le marketing aux besoins des visiteurs. Un premier pas timide vers la responsabilisation du visiteur, soit la préparation d'une expérience plus adaptée aux attentes, aura plus la possibilité de réussite. Malheureusement la responsabilisation du visiteur n'a pas été prise au sérieux par les musées en Inde. Pourtant c'est le devoir de tous les musées d'assurer une participation quantitative et qualitative du public, ce qui peut valider les allocations financières qu'ils reçoivent à travers les impôts versés par le public.

RESUMEN

Experiencia de los visitantes al Museo Salar Jung

El estudio, titulado "La experiencia de los visitantes en el Museo Salar Jung", tenía como propósitos comprender cómo es percibido el museo por los visitantes de diferentes segmentos de la población, y conocer sus puntos de vista y opiniones con el fin de mejorar el ambiente general del museo. Los visitantes fueron divididos en dos grupos, rural y urbano. Un cuestionario y un

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programa de entrevistas fue diseñado para cada uno de los grupos. Se encontró que los visitantes urbanos, principalmente de los grupos de altos y medianos ingresos, perciben las visitas al museo como una forma de entretenimiento, mientras que los visitantes rurales las consideraron como educativas, informativas e inspiradoras. Estas diferentes expectativas deben ser tenidas en cuenta, con el fin de adaptar las exposiciones, las actividades del museo, y el material de marketing. Dicha adaptación dará lugar al empoderamiento de los visitantes, y a que la experiencia del museo tenga una mayor probabilidad de cumplir con las expectativas de quienes lo visitan. Desafortunadamente, el empoderamiento de los visitantes no ha sido seriamente considerado por los museos de India. Sin embargo, es responsabilidad del museo el asegurar una participación cuantitativa y cualitativa del público, que valide su subsistencia a partir del dinero de quienes pagan impuestos.

* * *

A museum without visitors is a catalogued storehouse of collections. Visitors are an integral aspect of the museum institution's objectives. To achieve this objective effectively, museum professionals have to understand the needs and preferences of the general public. In line with this view the former Director of the Salar Jung Museum, Dr. M. L. Nigam wanted to understand the needs, perceptions and actual experiences of the visitors to the museum to successfully reach out to the general public. In 1987, I was commissioned by the authorities of the Salar Jung Museum through the Department of Psychology, Osmania University, to research the reactions of the visitors to various aspects of the museum and learn their opinions and suggestions for further improvement. The recommendations of this study were implemented by Dr. M.L. Nigam. The current paper is based on this research conducted from 1987 to 1993, as part of my PhD thesis under the guidance of late professor Dr. N. Yadgiri Reddy, department of Psychology, Osmania University and Dr. M.L. Nigam, former director of Salar Jung Museum, and a follow-up with the new director of the museum in 2012.

Contact with art may look simple superficially, but it has the power to awaken latent sensibilities. When the visitor is able to comprehend and identify with the art objects, he undergoes various cognitive, affective and psychological changes. The reaction of an individual to any stimulation is the result of the complex interaction between the individual's genetic make up, his upbringing and cultural milieu. Furthermore, when an individual enters the museum he brings with him his attitudes, hopes, aspirations, cultural background; in short his emotional and intellectual makeup. Therefore, to account for the differences in the structure of the different groups of visitors, two sets of questionnaires and interview schedules were developed to study the visitors' museum experiences. The study was divided in two parts on the basis of visitors' demographics, and visitors' suggestions and opinions. The study used a random sampling method and the data obtained for each group was subject to statistical and qualitative analysis. I will only present here the results and discussion.

Part 1

Reaction of urban visitors to the Salar Jung Museum

Research Design

An open-ended questionnaire was developed consisting of four simple questions: 1) their income level, 2) they were asked whether they were repeating their visit to the museum, 3) the visitors were shown 10 photographs of museum objects and were asked to choose the three they liked the most, and 4) they were asked what was their

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opinion regarding their museum visit. These questions were in asked in English and the national language Hindi. Later the responses in Hindi were translated into English and subjected to data analysis.

Summary and Results of Urban Visitors

Figure 1: Breakdown of the three income levels of urban visitors

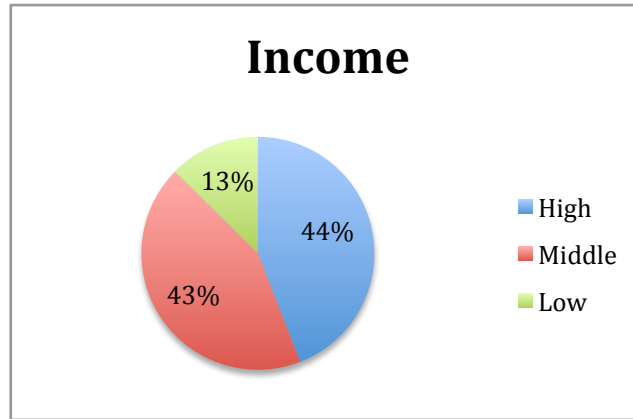


Figure 2: Percentage of urban visitors repeating the museum visit

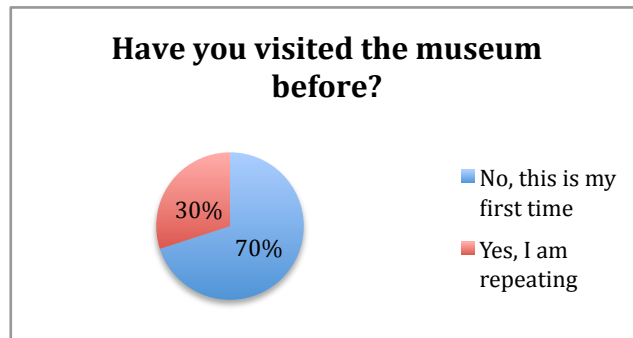


Figure 3: Breakdown of preference for particular museum objects

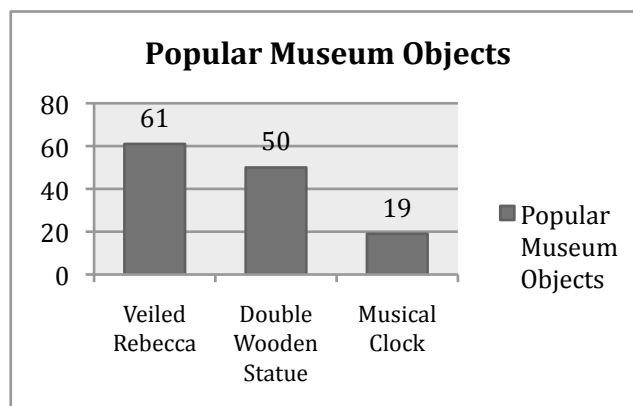
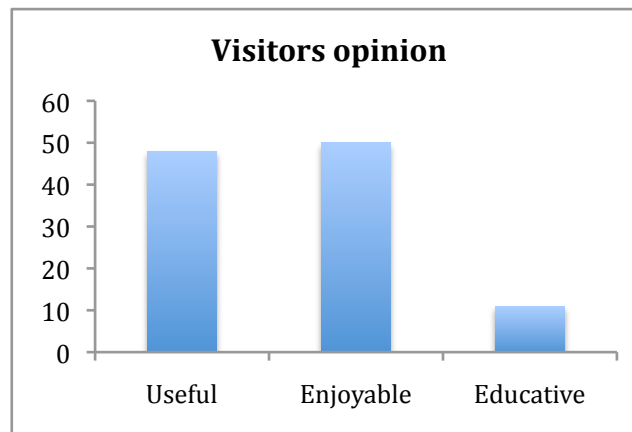


Fig 4: Urban visitors' opinion of the museum visit



Discussion

1. The above results in Figure 1 indicate that a majority of the urban visitors to the museum were from the high and middle-income group.
2. Figure 2 shows that the first time visitors outnumber people making repeated visit to the museum. The people who visit the Salar Jung museum for the first time are mainly tourists. Moreover, as Salar Jung museum is a well-known tourist attraction, this has motivated them to make time and visit the museum.

People repeating the visit fall in two categories: a) art enthusiasts who enjoy aesthetic pursuits and thus like visiting the museum; b) people who may not be art enthusiasts, but accompanied visiting guests.

3. The results in Figure 3 show that the most popular objects are the Veiled Rebecca, the double-sided Wooden Statue and the Musical Clock. The urban visitors spent more time before these objects. The museum has popularized these objects by making them icons of the Salar Jung museum, using them in advertising campaigns in the process of reaching the urban population. This also shows that there is a direct relationship between familiarity with a work of art and the public's preference for it.
4. Urban visitors regard the museum visit as meaningful entertainment. The majority of the visitors' incidental learning occurs during a museum visit. A small percentage of the visitors' intentional learning occurs as they have specifically visited the museum to learn and delve deeper into a specific field of interest. The urban visitors were critical about the general amenities in the museum like availability of clean drinking water, rest spots, clean toilets etc.

Reaction of Rural Visitors to the Salar Jung Museum

Research Design

Measuring Instrument: An open-ended questionnaire was specially developed consisting of four simple questions:

- 1) how the visitors came to the museum;
- 2) what objects they were able to remember and recall after seeing the museum and what objects they liked;

3) what they gained from their museum visit and

4) what would tell their friends and relatives about the Salar Jung museum.

The visitors were chosen based on random sampling method. The questionnaire was read out in Telugu, the regional language of Andhra Pradesh and the answers were noted down in Telugu and later translated into English and subjected to content analysis. The interview based on the questionnaire was made towards the end of the visit to the museum.

Observations:

1. The villagers were generally shy and felt more comfortable when the interviewer wore traditional clothes and spoke in their native language.
2. They moved about in groups and preferred to respond to the interview together in a group.
3. They were aware of Indian history and mythology and to some extent aware of the Mughal period and the British rule in India. Even the less educated rural people knew and understood Indian art and history to some extent.
4. They were mostly first time visitors and their experience in the museum seemed stimulating.
5. The rural visitors said that they would share their experience about the Salar Jung Museum with friends and relatives; they were especially keen with regard to their children.

Results and discussion of rural visitors:

Figure 5 shows the percentage of rural visitors' mode of museum visit

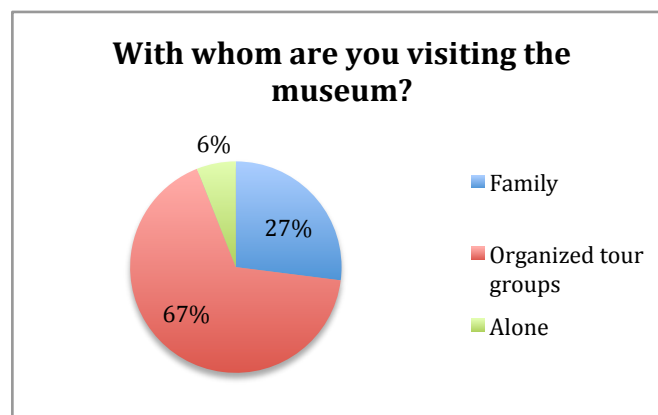
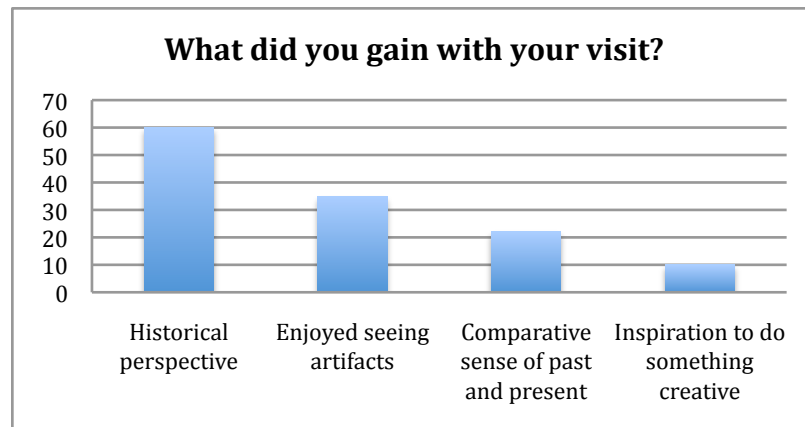


Figure 6 shows the percentage of rural visitors' outcome of the museum visit



Discussion

Figure 4 shows that the rural visitors came to the museum mainly as part of organized tour to the museum.

On being asked what they had seen in the museum and what they liked most the rural visitors, they said they liked Indian textiles, ivory collection, bronze collection, arms gallery and porcelain.

Figure 5 shows that the rural visitors identified with the museum objects and felt that their visit to the museum gave them a historical perspective. Overall they felt that their visit to the museum was informative, educative and in a small percentage even inspiring.

PART 2

To upgrade the facilities of the museum and know the opinions of visitors a separate interview schedule was developed and used. To describe it briefly the instrument was of a semi-structured nature consisting of lead questions spread over the following areas of the general upkeep of the museum:

1. Effectiveness of labels
2. The language preferred for labels
3. Type of publication preferred.
4. Exposure to museum programs
5. Visitors' views and suggestions on the general improvement and upkeep of the museum.

Results and Discussion

1. Labels:
 - 80% of the visitors interviewed perceived the labeling of the exhibits as poor.
2. Language preferred for labels:
 - 21% prefer labels of exhibits in the regional language.
 - 30% prefer labels of exhibits in Hindi.

- 35% prefer labels of exhibits in English.
3. Type of Publications Preferred:
- 78% of the visitors prefer brief bulletins.
 - 14% of the visitors prefer detailed publications.
4. Exposure to museum programs:
- 85% of the visitors are unaware of the various museum programs that Salar Jung has to offer.
5. General improvement and upkeep:
- 90% of the visitors emphasized the need for a map of the museum to be incorporated at the entrance of the museum.
 - 80% of the visitors felt that amenities such as guide service, clean toilets, adequate seating, and rest spots, needed improvement. A few visitors remarked about using the courtyards as green spaces, which could also be used as rest spots.

The impact on the museum was a first step towards visitor empowerment; acting on visitors' concerns and criticisms proved to be beneficial. Dr. M. L. Nigam, former director of Salar Jung Museum, on receiving this report, implemented the recommendations. A map of the museum was set up at the entrance of the lobby. Subsequently, an indexed plan was also placed on each floor. As a large number of visitors were rural, the regional language was also introduced in exhibit labels. Theme oriented exhibition techniques, with graphic explanations were used for upgrading various galleries. This technique was able to overcome the cumbersome use of multiple languages and was successful in reaching out to the highly diverse audience of the museum. Guide services of the museum were increased. More seating arrangements outside each gallery were introduced. The courtyards were beautified creating refreshing rest spots. The museum continues to enjoy enormous numbers of visitors and can keep in step with contemporary India.

Conclusion

Art museums are unique storytellers, which possess historical objects to narrate their stories and present them in a historical context. Their success lies in how well they can hold the interest of their diverse visitors. Urban visitors consider a museum visit as a form of entertainment, whereas rural visitors consider the museum experience as educational. This difference in perception implies that different segments of the population have different expectations: in order to attract visitors from various sections of the population the museums must tailor their marketing to align with the expectations and preferences of each group composing the population. Familiarity and exposure to art objects prior to the museum visit also plays an important role in capturing visitors' attention. People not only prefer and spend more time before familiar objects but also show higher percentage of recall ability for them. Furthermore, familiarity with an object also influences preference for similar types of objects.

The visitor to the Salar Jung is still a recipient of the information and not a creator of it. In this sense the improvements to the Salar Jung, inspired by visitor reactions, is only partly empowerment, nor can we measure if these visits gave some people an empowered sense of themselves. However, the improvements brought the museum up to a new level of contemporary museum practice which benefits all visitors.

A short introductory film highlighting the important museum objects and their historical and social significance improved the visitors' museum experience by giving them a flavor of the upcoming visit. By showing the cultural and social context in which the objects were created and the associated legends, the museum could mentally prepare

its audience for the show ahead; it tremendously enhanced the museum experience of first time visitors.

Mass media can be instrumental in moving latent energies towards understanding and enjoying art. Documentaries, virtual art galleries of museum collections can be instrumental in helping people know about artists and understand the historical, social and cultural significance of the museum's art objects. Virtual art galleries give people access to museum collections at their leisure, thereby allowing them to study and understand them. This can start the familiarization process that will eventually help prospective visitors identify with the objects on an emotional and cognitive level. People like and appreciate what they are able to comprehend. They also exhibit better recall ability for art works they are able to understand. Thus exposure, familiarity and comprehension are the three underlying factors of enriching the museum experience. A memorable museum experience also makes visitors informal brand ambassadors, as they talk about their experience with family and friends and thereby create prospective visitors.

According to Dr. Nagendra Reddy, Director-in-charge of the Salar Jung Museum, about 1.23 million people visited the museum in 2011 showing a gradual increase in the number of visitors over the years. According to Dr. Reddy, the majority of the urban visitors are still from the high and middle income groups and from rural and semi-urban towns of Andhra Pradesh and its neighboring states. Similar to the results of my earlier study the statue of Veiled Rebecca, the Double Sided Wooden Statue and the Musical Clock continue to be the most popular objects with the urban visitors.

Dr. Reddy states that museums have to compete with other modes of entertainment in order to attract visitors, especially the younger generation. The young come to museums as part of school or college tours. Very few make an effort to come on their own. He wants to work towards attracting the younger generation to art museums. The Salar Jung museum organizes about 20 to 25 programs per year to involve the people of Hyderabad. It also organizes workshops by bringing master craftsmen from the small towns and villages of Andhra Pradesh, thus playing an active role in popularizing and revitalizing the traditional arts and crafts of India. However, Dr. Reddy is noncommittal about the need for further research into the expectations and needs of visitors to the museum and the empowerment of visitors.

Salar Jung museum is still one of the better performing museums of India, unlike the Andhra Pradesh State Art and Archaeological Museum, which stands in complete neglect, sitting on a treasure trove of a rich cultural heritage in a prime place of Hyderabad.

The empowerment of visitors was an unknown concept in India in the 1990s. The majority of the museums in India, even in the present, do not take the initiative nor feel the need to study or understand the needs of the visitors. Unfortunately, in the twenty-five years following the initial research few visitor studies have been undertaken. Dr. Supreo Chanda, Associate Professor of Museology, University of Kolkata, said in a telephone interview that he was not aware of any serious scientific study of visitors to art and archaeological museums that was done in India apart from my study. He also mentioned that if a study was carried out it was not reported or published in Indian journals of museum studies in the last twenty-five years.

Indian museums depend on the Indian Government funding. Museum curators and directors of art and archaeological museums in India are hardly interested in knowing the expectations and aspirations of the general public. They may be apprehensive of negative results such studies can produce, which will in turn result in their losing the government funding. According to Dr. Supreo Chanda, majority of the museum curators and directors are art historians or archaeologists, very few museums in India have professional museologists at the top level. So they are unable to gauge the needs and expectations of the museum visitors and are not aware of the importance of visitor

studies. Moreover, Dr. Supreo Chanda states that the historian's perspective makes him look at the object from a historical point of view. Therefore they design museum programs according to their level of expertise and interests. This may not capture the attention of the general public. Therefore, public participation in museums and their various programs is miniscule. In short, empowering the visitors is still not a serious consideration of art and archaeological museums of India.

As a social institution, museums strive to fulfill the expectations and aspirations of the people. Therefore it is imperative for museum professionals to know and understand what the people they serve require and expect from the museum. The museum will achieve its social objectives with greater success if they give the visitors the power to express their needs and be heard. Fruitful interaction with the community is the activity that earns a museum its place in society and public esteem. Public participation is concerned with how to induce people to visit museums and benefit from such visits. It is the responsibility of all museums to ensure optimum quantitative and qualitative public participation, which will validate their subsistence on taxpayers' money. The goal of any museum is service to the public and that service must be conceived of as building up of a better, more thoughtful and informed public, who in turn will have a voice in the life of this institution.

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FOLLOWING VISITORS' COMMENTS IN DESIGNING A MUSEUM RENOVATION: IDENTITY AND AUTHENTICITY

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ABSTRACT

Planning the renovation of a museum must take many aspects into consideration. Among the most important ones, as our experience taught us, are visitors' expectations and respect of the authenticity of the museum's cultural product. The experience we had when rethinking the renovation of the Museo Civico di Sansepolcro (home town of Piero della Francesca and the building in which originally the *Resurrection* was painted by the Master) gave us an unexpected learning experience. The choice of updating the communication system with explanatory, interactive and multimedia tools had to take second place to the acknowledgment that visitors had no complaint about the lack of information or modern devices but instead, the bareness of the museum and the outdated fitting of its display can allow visitors to get in direct relation with the artistic essence of Piero's masterpieces. In this case, the museum's identity is a whole with the authenticity of its cultural product: the exhibition of the history of art in the very space in which it was created and collected during the centuries could have the power to erase all the other possible "noises" in the background, enhancing the visitors' experience in the direct and unmediated exposure to art. *The analysis of theories normally applied to other fields of science (Heuristic, Consumer Culture Theory and Theory of Entertainment) can help defining the correct strategy in planning the best environment in which to allow visitors to experience their visit to the museum.*

RÉSUMÉ

Suivre les commentaires des visiteurs en concevant la rénovation d'un musée : identité et authenticité

Pour planifier le renouvellement d'un musée, de nombreux aspects doivent être pris en considération. Parmi eux, selon notre expérience, les plus importants sont les attentes des visiteurs et le respect de leur authenticité de l'offre culturelle du musée. Dans les faits, l'expérience à laquelle nous avons dû faire face en repensant l'équipement du musée civique de Sansepolcro (ville natale de Piero della Francesca et bâtiment dans lequel le maître a peint l'original de *La Résurrection*) nous a donné un enseignement inespéré. Le choix de mettre à jour le dispositif de communication avec des instruments explicatifs, interactifs et multimédia devait atténuer la prise de conscience du fait que les visiteurs ne se plaignaient nullement du manque d'information ou de dispositifs modernes, mais, au lieu de cela, la nudité du musée et l'équipement dépassé de sa présentation pouvait permettre aux visiteurs d'entrer directement en contact avec l'essence artistique des chefs-d'œuvre de Piero. Dans ce cas, l'identité du musée forme un tout avec l'authenticité de son offre culturelle : l'exposition d'histoire d'un art dans l'espace réel où il avait été créé et recueilli pendant des siècles pourrait avoir le pouvoir d'effacer tous les autres « bruits » de fond possibles du contexte, en mettant en valeur l'expérience de vie des visiteurs

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dans le contact direct et immédiat avec l'art. *L'analyse des théories normalement appliquées à d'autres champs de la science (heuristique, théorie de la culture de la consommation et théorie du divertissement) peut aider à définir une stratégie correcte pour programmer le meilleur environnement qui permette aux visiteurs de faire une expérience en visitant le musée.*

RESUMEN

Escuchar las opiniones de los visitantes al diseñar la renovación de un museo: identidad y autenticidad

Planifica la renovación de un museo debe considerar muchos aspectos. Entre ellos los más importantes, ya que nuestra experiencia no nos ha enseñado, son las expectativas de los visitantes y el respeto de la autenticidad de la oferta cultural del museo. En los hechos, la experiencia nos enfrentamos de reorganizar el Museo Civico di Sansepolcro (ciudad natal de Piero della Francesca y edificio en el que originalmente la "Resurrección" fue pintada por el Maestro) nos dio un aprendizaje inesperado. La opción de actualizar el aparato de comunicación con instrumentos explicativos, interactivos y multimedia tuvo que retroceder con el reconocimiento de que los visitantes no tenían queja sobre la falta de informaciones o de los dispositivos modernos, pero en su lugar, puede el vacío del museo y el equipo obsoleto de su mostrar permiten a los visitantes ponerse en relación directa con la esencia artística de las obras maestras de Piero y de los otros artistas. En este caso, la identidad del museo es un todo con la autenticidad de su oferta cultural: la exposición de la historia del arte en el espacio en el que se creó y se había recogida durante los siglos podría borrar todos los otros posible "ruidos" y aumentar la experiencia que los visitantes viven en la exposición directa e inmediata con el arte. *El análisis de las teorías que normalmente se aplican a otros campos de la ciencia (heurística, CCT y Teorías de l'Entretenimiento) pueden ayudar a definir la estrategia correcta en la planificación del mejor ambiente en el que permitirá a los visitantes disfrutar de su visita al Museo.*

* * *

In 2006, the Museo Civico of Sansepolcro (Arezzo, Italy) commissioned a feasibility study for the renewal of its display. The city is the birthplace of one of the historical *Maestri* of Western Art, Piero della Francesca, and the building itself, in Piero's time, was the public palace of the governors where Piero was appointed to paint the fresco of the *Resurrection* that was referred to by A. Huxely as "*the most beautiful picture in the world*"¹

The majority of the museum's art collection is the result of the governors' resolve during centuries to enrich the City Hall; therefore, these paintings have been exhibited in the building since they were acquired. Among them can be seen art works by the artists Bassanos, Raffaellino del Colle and Leonardo Cungi, in addition to a dramatic *San Sebastian* by Pontorno. Many other paintings and frescos entered the exhibition after the suppression of religious orders under Great Duke Leopold² in the late 1700s and Napoleon³ in early 1800s when it was decided the paintings, removed from their

¹ Aldous Huxley in *Attilio Brilli, Borgo San Sepolcro. Viaggio nella città di Piero, Città di Castello, 1988, pp. 110-111.*

² Zeffiro Ciuffoletti, *La soppressione degli enti ecclesiastici in Toscana, secoli 18-19: nodi politici e aspetti storiografici*, Florence, 2008. Anna Benvenuti, Riccardo Nencini, *La soppressione degli enti ecclesiastici in Toscana, secoli 18-19: censimento dei conventi e dei monasteri soppressi in età leopoldina*, Florence, 2008.

³ Orianna Baracchi, *Il patrimonio artistico ecclesiastico: inventari delle soppressioni napoleoniche*,

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original locations, should be hosted in the building in order to reduce the danger of deterioration. This is the reason why, in 1901⁴, the *Madonna della Misericordia* polyptych, commissioned to Piero della Francesca in 1445 by the local *Confraternita della Misericordia* (Fraternity of Mercy) for their chapel and finished only 15 years later, became part of the collection owned by the town. In the 1920s, the museum was formally established as an art gallery.⁵ Since then it has undergone a series of restorations and embellishments until the late 1980s when an entrance and a reception hall were designed in something of a shopping-centre style, destroying the original little cloister and modifying the layout of the whole building.

When we started working on it, it was clear that nothing structural could be made at the moment due to economical reasons, but the director and the Board of the Institution of the museum decided to work on the display of the artworks and their exhibit, enhancing the communication within the museum and reorganizing the museological plan and visitor flow.

We started our meetings imagining a very interactive model of a museum, with a large usage of multimedia devices and technological tools meant to provide a comprehensive organic understanding of the masterpieces of Piero della Francesca on the one hand, and the virtual relocation in their context of the artwork coming from the repressed churches of the area on the other.

The underpinning idea was to strongly assert the museum's identity with its territory, first of all as the museum of Piero and then as the museum of the history and art of the surrounding area, empowering visitors – both residents and tourists – with an interactive and absorbing route through the visit, providing them with the most innovative tools (touch screens, holograms and computers). The fact that Piero's art works are scattered around Italy and around the world, due to his appointments to the most important Italian courts of his time and to the history of collecting, convinced us that we had to draw together all of his works in a virtual way in order to offer visitors an overall view of his career, giving the opportunity to compare images, getting into them and accessing multilevel information. From our point of view, it was the best way to allow visitors to create their own experience of their visit, supplying them with different tools and with the most appropriate reference materials which might fulfill their wish to deepen their knowledge of the subject. At the same time, we thought it could provide the easiest way to lighten their time in the museum, diverting their attention from a constant peaked concentration (given the amount of important artworks they were faced with) to self-learning moments of creative rest. We also considered it, in fact, as a sort of hands-on experiment since we were planning to give visitors the possibility to touch and follow in a very interactive way the development of history of art related to the area they were visiting.

We tried to organise the sequence of the rooms of the building in our theoretical narration path, removing anything not connected to the spirit of the museum and its mission (i.e. the little archaeological collection or the diocesan collection deposited since the 1970s in the semi-basement of the museum). The plan was redesigned basing on the rationalization of the flow of visitors. Currently, the museum presents a circular path of visit on each of the three-storey levels forcing visitors to enter rooms they already visited in order to reach the higher and the lower storeys. The entrance and the exit coincide through the same reception room where the shop is also placed,

Modena, 1991

⁴ Enrico Verrazzani, *Il Museo Civico di Sansepolcro nel costume cittadino: da piccola raccolta d'arte all'inaugurazione come istituzione comunale*, Florence, 2009, p. 66

⁵ Enrico Verrazzani, *Il Museo Civico di Sansepolcro nel costume cittadino: da piccola raccolta d'arte all'inaugurazione come istituzione comunale*, Florence, 2009, p. 83

just in front of the entrance door, opposite the ticket desk, which cannot be seen right away. This is the reason for some congestion at different times of the year when large groups arrive and linger in the reception hall. Reaching the flight of stairs or the elevators is also confusing since it entails mixing two different functional actions as well as passing through an already visited room, which lessens the value of the room itself as it becomes a hallway. Therefore we wished to avoid the sense of uncertainty and annoyance which can occur from wandering and poorly (or over-) signalled paths and from the lack (or redundancy) of well balanced information, limiting to the minimum the “noise” that might arise during the visiting process. In fact the action of smoothing the process of the visit within the museum area might increase visitors’ attitude to live cultural experiences in a fuller and more involved way, as we see in behavioural studies and heuristic science applied to space.⁶

Our overall aim was to offer visitors an unusual experience, which could deeply change their approach to their museum visit, overcoming the extraordinary and unforgettable feeling that most visitors could feel due to the aesthetic and cultural exposure⁷ to Piero’s masterpieces, by building a *flow experience*⁸ so much more complex and absorbing. In fact, a well balanced structure of levelled information – on both a cognitive and a spatial level - in an exhibition framework can lead visitors to achieving an understanding of what they are observing and can give them the chance of building their own visit through the exhibition, each time in a different way. They can follow their interests, their knowledge, their curiosity or their mind-set of that very moment within the frame of logic that provided by the guiding direction of the general path, starting out an informal and continuous process of self-learning.⁹

We had some unexpected surprises. When we started on weaving a story about the city focusing on Piero’s artistic life and its meaning for the area and broadening it in space and time, we also began to study the comments that visitors had left in five years of filling the presence books. At that time, the museum did not have a proper system for measuring the visitors’ satisfaction, although – even after the adoption in 2007 of the form issued by Regione Toscana – the most relevant comments still can be found in the visitors’ books, filled in by the visitors still today.

The outcome of our study of this ancient but efficient and user-friendly system of creating a communication thread with the public, though, made us review our plans to modernize the museum and its communication equipment. The bare simplicity of the rooms and their minimal informational apparatus was not perceived as a minus in the visitors’ expectations of the museum, since the main reason of their visit was the direct and not mediated contemplation of the Piero’s *Resurrection* - even more than the *Polyptich* -, a masterpiece they are aware they cannot see anywhere else but in the very place where it was painted. Lighting and climatic control were reported as items which had to be improved, as we already scheduled, but no claims for more technological or interactive equipments were raised in the visitors’ comments.

⁶ Daniel Kahneman, Amos Tversky and Paul Slovic, eds. *Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics & Biases*. Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 1982; Koyanagi Fumiko, Kon Tadashi, Higashiyama Arata, *The Recommended Path Indication System in Hakone Open-Air Art Museum with Time Designation*, Journal of the Faculty of Science and Technology Seikei University, 2006, vol. 43, no. 2, pp.1-8; Rika Burnham, Elliott Kai-Kee, *Teaching in the Art Museum: Interpretation As Experience*, Los Angeles, Getty Publications, 2011, pp. 97-98; Torsten Reimer, Konstantinos Katsikopoulos, *The use of recognition in group decision-making*, Cognitive Science, 2004, n. 28, pp. 1009–1029

⁷ Following the definition of *peak experience* in Abram Maslow, *Religion, values and peak experiences*, New York, Viking, 1964; Gayle Privette, *Peak experience, peak performance, and flow: A comparative analysis of positive human experiences*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1983, Vol. 45, pp. 1361-1368

⁸ Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: the psychology of optimal experience*, New York, Harper and Row, 1990

⁹ David A. Kolb, *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1984

We could list a series of values in our report, such as: emotion, glory, immersion, excellence, discovery, harmony, happiness, enthusiasm, care, sublime, fulfilment ...

The authenticity¹⁰ of the cultural product that the museum has to offer its uniqueness, and its complete consistency with the visitors' expectations. The impact experienced of the museum's almost out-of-time setting makes any other request for modernisation vanish. In this sense, following the *less-is-more effect*¹¹ rule that "*less information can lead to more accuracy*"¹² is not in conflict with the PAD theory or with the theory of entertainment.¹³

In fact, the ostensive appearance of the fresco on the original museum wall (except that research does not support this)¹⁴ can be compared to the appearance of an "essence" – Christ for the Christians or "Art" for everybody else. The strength of authenticity, in this case both iconic and indexical,¹⁵ forges a unique experience that overcomes any possible superstructure and carries the observer into a sort of time warp where the museum environment fades away and becomes again the palace of the governors in Piero's times. Nothing else is required: any other informational support or technological equipment that will be perceived as "noise" – even labels could distract concentration and diminish the experience. In this case the concept of authenticity in itself and the *less is more effect* converge to create the fulfilment of the visitor's desire to have an authentic cultural experience, as defined by Spooner.¹⁶ The same concept is well expressed by a paraphrase of George-Henry Rivière's statement¹⁷ in which he said that the success of a museum doesn't depend on the number of visitors but on the number of visitors to whom it teaches something, a phrase that can be turned into the concept that the success of a museum depends on the level of authenticity perceived and experienced by the visitors throughout the visiting process.

Authenticity, then, is composed of a mixture of functions that, in the end, will represent the success of the museum's cultural bid and the satisfaction of its admirers. The

¹⁰ See a deeper introduction to the concept of authenticity in Museums in M. C. Vannini, *La ricerca di autenticità nel processo di visita museale*, in *TafterJournal*, 2012, n. 4

¹¹ D. G. Goldstein, G. Gigerenzer, *Models of ecological rationality: The recognition heuristic*. *Psychological Review*, 2002, vol. 109, pp. 75–90.; Torsten Reimer, Konstantinos Katsikopoulos, *The use of recognition in group decision-making*, *Cognitive Science*, 2004, n. 28, pp. 1009–1029

¹² Konstantinos V. Katsikopoulos, *The less-is-more effect: Predictions and tests*, *Judgment and Decision Making*, vol. 5, 2010, pp. 244-257

¹³ A. Mehrabian, *Pleasure-arousal-dominance: a general framework for describing and measuring individual differences in temperament*, in *Current Psychology: Developmental, Learning, Personality, Social*, 1996, vol. 14, pp.261-292; M. Csikszentmihályi, *Flow: the psychology of optimal experience*, New York, 1990; M. Csikszentmihályi, R. E. Robinson, *The art of seeing: an interpretation of the aesthetic encounter*, J. Paul Getty Museum Publications, LA, 1990; S. W. Gilroy, M. Cavazza, M. Benayoun, *Using affective trajectories to describe states of flow in interactive art*, *Proceedings of the international conference on advances in computer entertainment technology*, New York 2009; R. Plutchik, *Emotion: theory, research and experience: vol. 1. Theories of emotion*, New York 1980; R. Plutchik, *Emotions and life: perspectives from psychology, biology and evolution*, Washington, DC: American Psychological Association 2002

¹⁴ In 2007 Opificio delle Pietre Dure – Firenze and the Soprintendenza SBAAS Arezzo started a research project for testing with the most innovative and non invasive scientific devices if the wall of the *Resurrection* is in its original position or – as some of the documents of the time might seem to hint – it was moved from the subsequent room in that where it is located today.

¹⁵ K. Grayson e R. Martinec, *Consumer Perceptions of Iconicity and Indexicality and Their Influence on Assessments of Authentic Market Contenting*, in *Journal of consumer research*, Vol. 31, 2004, pp. 297-298; ; A. J. McIntosh – R.C. Prentice, *Affirming authentic, Consuming cultural heritage*, in *Annals of Tourism Research*, 1999, vol. 26, pp. 589-612

¹⁶ B. Spooner, *Weavers and Dealers, the Authenticity of an Oriental carpet*, in *The social life of things: Commodities in cultural perspective*, Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 195-235.

¹⁷ Georges Henri Rivière, in *Territoires de la mémoire, les collections du patrimoine ethnologique dans les écomuées*, sous la direction de Marc Augè, postface de Claude Lévi-Strauss, Édition dell'Albaron et Fems, 1992, p. 7.

functions or fundamental elements that we recognized in the mix of authenticity correspond to the four points of the *cultural diamond* as defined by Griswold¹⁸ to which we added a fifth element (Communication) and a variable (Time).

The four elements are the *brand of the museum* that must be recognizable and reliable for its public; the *cultural object*: the main object or objects of the exposition, consistent with the museum's brand image; the *social world* in which the interest towards the cultural object arises; the *receivers*, such as the visitors, willing to live a fruitful experience. If these four elements are well balanced, the cultural bid is cognitively consistent with what is expected and what the visitors found in the museum. All of these four elements are connected with the fifth one which is *communication*, namely both the environmental and architectural display and the messages the museum wishes to communicate with the related techniques and tools that must be as clear and direct as possible.

The museum visit, thus, can be characterized as any other consumer practice and therefore it undergoes to a process that is very similar in its steps to the one drawn in the *Consumer Culture Theory*.¹⁹ It is important to highlight that the process of visit doesn't begin at the museum entrance but it can be related to the individual cultural personality structure where the "consumption of museums" can be included among the issues found at the highest level of the Maslow's pyramid. Closer to the moment of the choice of visiting a museum, informational materials and tools, such as an appropriated and easy-to-be-browsed web site, are very important.

As with any consumer practice, the variable of time has a relevant role in keeping attention focused on the cultural content, and usually represents a critical point for permanent exhibitions. This was the general idea that guided us at the beginning of our work, therefore initially we started out considering the complete renewal of the museum's fitting in order to renew also the level of attention both of the visitors (residents and tourists) and of the local constituencies.²⁰ Nevertheless the analysis of the level of authenticity of a museum and of its cultural content, as we saw, can avoid the need of constant and recurring overall renewal, limiting it to minor modifications and updating. As we learnt, in fact, in the Museo di Sansepolcro, the cultural object is so outstanding that overrides the lack of an appealing and modern display but also is so strong and powerful as to maintain its appeal to visitors throughout time. Thus, visitors feel free from any pre-established frame set.

Therefore, in the cultural diamond scheme, adapted to incorporate also the elements of *communication* and *time*, the museum - and above all its brand - becomes a construction connected to the cultural objects that are exhibited and to the social world related to it. The museum (and its brand) acquires value from these two elements. In turn, communication is a superstructure elaborated by the museum in function of the cultural objects and the social world it refers to, reaching the point that communication is considered the real cultural product of the museum itself.

¹⁸ W. Griswold, *Sociologia della Cultura, il Mulino 2005*; J. S. Bruner, *Lo sviluppo cognitivo*, Milano, 1994

¹⁹ DB Holt, *Why do brands cause trouble? A dialectical theory of consumer culture and branding*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 2002; E. J. Arnould – C. J. Thompson, *Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty Years of Research*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 31, 2005, pp. 868-882; E.J. Arnould – LL Price, *Authenticating Acts and Authoritative Performances: Questing for Self and Community*, in Ratneshwar, S., DG Mick, C. Huffman *The Why of Consumption. Contemporary Perspectives on Consumer Motives*, Routledge, 2000, pp. 140-163; Beverland, M. B. and Farrelly, F.J., *The quest for authenticity in consumption: Consumers' purposive choice of authentic cues to shape experienced outcomes*, in *Journal of Consumer Research*, 2010, vol. 36, pp. 838-856.

²⁰ We talk of constituencies instead of stakeholders in order to highlight the values - not only and merely economic - conveyed by local people, institutions and associations and who have interest in the Museum.

In the example of Museo Civico di Sansepolcro, albeit a weak brand reputation in general due to a lack of advertisement, the “aura”²¹ of the museum and the indexical authenticity of the masterpieces exhibited increase the value of the cultural object that becomes the reason - the need, the desire – why the public decides to go and visit that very museum.

The authenticity of the art works and the lack of communication superstructures turn the museum visiting experience into a deeply authentic experience, which visitors have the power to live at their ease.

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ACKNOWLEDGED AND EMPOWERED VISITORS IN SOCIALIST CROATIA: A DIACHRONIC EXPLORATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper is based on the results of a diachronic exploration of the attitudes towards museum visitors in Croatia. The introduction brings the interpretation of insufficient interest of museum visitors within the museological research area of Ivo Maroević. The reason for that is that museology has a long standing history of relying on information science in Croatia, and the fact that the use of the museological approach that originated in the Eastern European countries and the global informatisation process and structuralism as a theoretical framework within which museology was formed. Visitors were covertly introduced into the theoretical arena in 1999 as interpreters in a schematic presentation of semiosis of museum objects in the act of collecting¹.

On the other hand, numerous examples can assert that museum practice acknowledged visitors long before that and in a much open way, even in the socialist period that lasted from 1945 to 1991.

Museums' interest in empowering visitors was put on hold during the Croatian War for Independence due to the imperilled existence of heritage. However, it was reaffirmed in the first decade of the 21st century when it enjoyed a boom. We have interpreted it in light of the new social order which is based on making profit and achieving growth.

RÉSUMÉ

Reconnaitre et responsabiliser les visiteurs en Croatie socialiste : une vision diachronique

Cet article est basé sur les résultats de la recherche diachronique de l'attitude envers les visiteurs de musée en Croatie. L'introduction remarque d'abord que, dans le cadre de sa recherche muséologique, Ivo Maroević a prêté un faible intérêt aux visiteurs de musée. La raison s'en trouve dans le fait que, en Croatie, une ancienne dépendance de la muséologie des sciences de l'information, fait usage d'une approche muséologique s'inspirant de celle des pays d'Europe de l'Est, dans le processus globale de l'informatisation et dans le structuralisme comme un environnement cognitif dans lequel ce système est créé. Le visiteur a été secrètement introduit dans l'arène théorique, en 1999, en tant qu'interprète dans la représentation schématique de la signification de l'objet muséal dans l'acte de collecte. D'autre part c'est bien plus tôt que la pratique muséale a reconnu les visiteurs, et de manière plus ouverte, même pendant la période socialiste, qui a duré de 1945 à 1991 – de nombreux exemples en témoignent. L'intérêt du musée pour la responsabilisation des visiteurs fut mis en attente pendant la guerre d'indépendance de la Croatie, avec la menace de mise en danger du patrimoine. Cependant, il fut réaffirmé

¹ Žarka Vujić, "Museum object and museum collecting as viewed by *semiotics*", *Informatologia*, 1999, Vol. 32, No. 3-4, pp. 200 – 208.

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pendant la première décennie du 21^{ème} siècle, quand les musées ont connu un boom. Nous l'avons interprété à la lumière du nouvel ordre social qui est fondé sur la réalisation du profit et de la croissance.

RESUMEN

Reconocimiento y empoderamiento de visitantes en la Croacia socialista: una visión diacrónica

Este documento se basa en los resultados de la investigación diacrónica de las actitudes hacia los visitantes de museos en Croacia. La introducción nos llama la atención sobre el escaso interés hacia los visitantes de museo en el área de investigación museológica de Ivo Maroevic. Encontramos que la razón para esta situación puede explicarse en una antigua dependencia que la Museología como ciencia ha tenido con las ciencias de la información, el uso de un abordaje museológico originado en los países europeos del este, el proceso de informatización global y el estructuralismo como marco teórico en el que la Museología fue concebida.

Los visitantes fueron subrepticamente introducidos en la arena teórica en 1999 como intérpretes en una esquemática presentación de la Semiología de los objetos de museos en el acto de coleccionar².

Por otro lado, los visitantes fueron reconocidos en la práctica museal de una forma mucho más abierta, aun en el período socialista que duró desde de 1945 hasta 1991. Situación que puede ser comprobada porque existen numerosos ejemplos que dan testimonio de ella. Sin embargo se ha reafirmado en la primera década del siglo 21, cuando los museos han experimentado un boom. La interpretamos a la luz de un nuevo orden social basado en obtener ganancias y en lograr crecimiento.

* * *

Introduction to the position of visitors within museology as an information science

² Žarka Vujić, "Museum object and museum collecting as viewed by *semiotics*", *Informatologia*, 1999, Vol. 32, No. 3-4, pp. 200 – 208.



III.1 Schematic presentation of the semiosis of museum objects in the act of collecting

The creation of the semiotic model of collecting based on the original understanding of semiosis as sign formation required:

- merger of material and form into the material reality of the object
- introduction of the reality from which the object or heritage item was taken (as an equivalent phenomenon referred to by the sign)
- introduction of those who create signs – people, that is, interpreters

Ever since the creation of this model, we have been stressing that the interpreter, as a constituent part of the model, should be understood as having a wide range of roles - from someone who first comes into contact with objects or heritage and explores and interprets them, to someone who selects tools and creates forms of interpretation to visitors and users who use the provided interpretation. Museum visitors and users were silently, and hiding under the term “interpreters”, introduced into theoretical museology in the late 1990s³. Following the statement of the Canadian museologist Lynn Teather we could also say that we have finally become aware that “people, not the object or the information, are at the centre of the museum experience”⁴, and even more broadly defined heritage-based experience, which should, together with the participants in these experiences, be in the focus of museological research. It was for that reason that we launched the *Research of Heritage Users*⁵ project in 2006. One of the project objectives is to diachronically explore the implementation of audience research in museums and galleries in Croatia. Some of the results of this exploration will be used in this paper.

Visitors and the Croatian museum practice in the socialist period

³ We were aware of this development in the same way as we were aware of the fact that museums ceased to be exclusively information institutions, comparable to libraries and archives, and became primarily institutions of interpretation.

⁴ Lynn Teather, “A Museum is a Museum...Or Is It?”, *Exploring Museology and the Web*. http://www.museumsandtheweb.com/mw98/papers/teather/teather_paper.html (2 May 2012)

⁵ The project has been funded by the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sport. Some of its results include a glossary, bibliography, web site and defended MA and PhD theses. The project has contributed to raising awareness of the role of visitors in Croatian museums and galleries.

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While the museological theory took a rather long time to find a connection with visitors, museum practice in Croatia had long before recognized the importance of visitors, their demographics and the knowledge of the frequency of their visit, their preferential museum experiences and the like.

Collecting quantitative data on museum visitors began in the period when Croatia formed part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and especially since the foundation of the Croatian National Statistical Office in Zagreb in 1874. Numerical information on visitors was used by Izidor Kršnjavi, the father of the so-called museum science, which was a term borrowed from the Austrian professional jargon and used in Croatia to mean practical museology. In his newspaper articles, Kršnjavi used collected data on visitors to exhibitions on show at applied art museums in the region, but also data on library users, visitors to lectures held in museums and on those visitors who copied the exhibited works of applied arts in exhibition galleries. His articles thus provide us with a significant insight into the forms of museum communication developed and used in the 19th century. His texts also witness to the fact that even then numbers were a powerful promotional tool serving, among other things, to promote the concept of a new sort of museums which Kršnjavi wished to introduce in Croatia. In passing, it is worth mentioning that a recent detailed investigation of Kršnjavi's literary legacy led to the realization that the concept of applied arts museum played a revolutionary role for the world of museums in the 19th century, similar to those played by ecomuseums in the second half of the 20th century. The same attributes were used to describe the museums, namely words like living and active, and the foundation of these museums were meant to achieve similar effects which included the use of applied arts as the gravitational centre of the community and the use of interaction not solely for the preservation of heritage and its presentation for educational purposes, but for achieving economic development as well.

Public use of quantitative data was also found to have occurred during the 1930s (the number of visitors to the Modern Gallery in Zagreb) when it served for criticizing the work of a museum director.

However, special attention to the typology of museum visitors and the frequency of their visit was also acknowledged in Croatia in the period after the Second World War and during the socialist years within the Yugoslavian federation. The first proof of that was discovered last year while conducting research on the Croatian artist, art historian, scenographer and designer Ljubo Babić (1870 – 1974) and his contribution to museum practice. By running through documentary material, we discovered a photo album and a collection of newspaper clippings which show that the international exhibition *The Medieval Art in Yugoslavia* designed by Babić in 1950 and mounted at the Chaillot Palace in Paris (Museum of French Monuments) was done in an exceptionally professional way. A clear evidence of this is an elaborated plan of the display with designated orientation, photographs of the exhibition model, hundreds of sketches of different views of the display seen through the eye of an artist. In addition to that, there were two charts with the title *Exhibition Visitation Report*, which we found rather surprising. The report is a careful interpretation of quantitative data on visitors of the exhibition including details such as the note "transportation workers on strike" which can be interpreted as a comment on the small number of visits in the first period following the opening of the exhibition. Naturally, this note is a historic record of the strike staged by the drivers of city buses and underground trains in Paris. Moreover, what is especially interesting is the fact that the collection and interpretation of the data and their schematic presentation was not done by French museum professionals, but by the Yugoslav exhibition organizers.

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All this should not make us forget the historical and social circumstances in which this exhibition took place. It was the first significant international project of the young Yugoslavian country within which it wanted to present itself to Europe after the break of cordial relations with the USSR in 1948. It is interesting to note that the presentation was decided to be made though the medium of an exhibition on an art historical topic illustrating Yugoslavia's undeniably common past with Europe. As the great Yugoslavian writer and the creator of the exhibition concept Miroslav Krleža (1893 – 1981) stated, this exhibition was an *artistic mirror of our bygone medieval past*. The organization of the exhibition included a great number of participants and considerably large funds. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that the reception of the exhibition was also given an equal amount of attention which can be attested by the aforementioned charts and a big collection of newspaper articles published in the French press, and in newspapers in Croatia and throughout Europe.

As for the evaluation of Croatian exhibitions or museum practice in general, the first audience research was conducted in 1968 in the Croatian History Museum in Zagreb. In spring of the same year, the most popular Zagreb daily newspaper published an exceptionally interesting article entitled *What does the audience want?*⁶ The article brings the first results of the survey conducted with 600 citizens of various vocations and professions. The journalist called the survey unusual and clearly stated that it represented the first public opinion poll on the museum work in Croatia.

Friends and well-known visitors of that museum, teachers and professors who visited it with their pupils and students and the rest of the citizens whose addresses were in the museum's records were mailed a questionnaire which they filled in and returned to the museum. The aim of the survey was to measure the visitors' opinions on the exhibitions shown at the museum in the course of 1967. The respondents were asked to state the most successful exhibition⁷, comment on the accompanying programmes, and suggest new activities and services which could be offered by the museum to all its supporters, such as organized visits to historical sites, dinners for the friends and members of the Croatian History Museum, and the like. If we take the term of empowering visitors to mean their active role in stating their own needs and wishes to be met by a heritage institution⁸, then this process undoubtedly began in Croatia exactly at that moment.

The same year, the collector and museologist Antun Bauer (1911-2000), the then director of the Museum Documentation Centre in Zagreb informed the professional public about the first comprehensive survey conducted among pupils and tourists in the capital – *What do the youth and tourist think of museums?* Around 600 pupils from schools in Zagreb completed the survey and answered to only three questions – How many museums have you visited? What is your general opinion about museums? What improvements would you suggest for museums? Although his interpretation and analysis of the data was not based on a scientific method, Bauer still managed to provide a useful overview of young people's attitudes to museums. He mentioned:

⁶ *Večernji list*, 19 March 1968, p. 7.

⁷ The most successful exhibition was the one showing the history of Croatian regions and cities. It should be noted that Croatia was then part of the Yugoslavian federation and expressed sympathies towards national history at that time; this can be interpreted from the present day perspective as civil courage.

⁸ Patterson B. Williams, "Educational Excellence in Art Museums", *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 19 (Summer), 1985, p.122.

a surprisingly high interest and intriguing remarks and observations relating to objects in collections, labels and spatial arrangement, squeaky floors, relationship of museum guards to visitors etc⁹.

The survey of tourists' opinions was conducted at the Pleso Airport and at the bus station in Zagreb. Bauer's report also brings a selection of answers by international and Croatian tourists. While the former group was represented by their frequent answers, the latter was represented by their distinctive comments¹⁰. This survey illustrates an audience research which ventured outside the walls of museums and took place with actual visitors to museums as well as with potential visitors (Maroević).

We were at first puzzled by this marked orientation towards museum visitors in Croatia during the late 1960s, but then we found a piece of information which led us to the so-called Blue Book of Museums – *a feasibility study on the conditions and problems of museum work*. It was a sort of SWOT analysis of Croatian museums which took into account all known resources of a museum institution – the condition of the building, professionalism of employees related to collecting and exhibiting, amount of available funding necessary for the functioning of the museum etc. Although commissioned by the socialist authorities, the study was created by independent professionals. It was based on actual data without any additional improvements and it was professionally developed to point to problems which were to be solved through time. Looking upon this study from the current perspective, and having an insight into several cultural policies and strategies developed in Croatia since 1991 which treated museums and galleries only as a small segment in a wider framework of cultural and heritage institutions, this study seems to show a very high importance given to museums¹¹ by the socialist regime.

They were visited by genuinely empowered visitors. This statement can be well supported by the article published in 1968 in the best selling national newspaper which reported almost entirely the opinion of young visitors to Trakošćan Castle¹². They wrote an open letter to the editorial of the newspaper expressing their discomfoting experience as visitors to the closed museum in the castle and rude guards. They clearly articulated their opinions and used the sympathy of the media in their own favour. That was the true generation of 1968!

Another return to the issue of visitors in the professional museum arena occurred in the early 1980s with the opening of the so-called Museum Space (1982), a big exhibition complex situated in the renovated Jesuits monastery in Zagreb planned to hold the collection of A. Topić Mimara. The collector himself, supported by the state authorities refused to place his art works into what he believed to be an unsuitably adapted building. So the space began its life as a gallery for small and big exhibitions, primarily artistic ones. The position of the gallery director was appointed to Ante Sorić, a lawyer experienced in cultural management. It was the first time that the head of a cultural institution in Croatia was appointed outside of the museum profession. This was felt in all aspects of museum practice. The main objective of the museum was making profit and it relied primarily on admission fees¹³. The number of visitors became particularly

⁹ *Vijesti muzealaca i konzervatora Hrvatske*, No. 1, 1968, pp. 18-19.

¹⁰ Today, these remarks can be interpreted as the author's cloaked criticism of society (one respondent said that he had no time for museums because he was preoccupied with his managerial functions).

¹¹ Interestingly, this study was preceded by the so-called White Book on general problems in culture, and then a separate and more thorough analysis was made of museums. We should note here that we do not have any information of the museum practice posing bigger problems compared to other cultural institutions.

¹² *Večernji list*, 1 March 1968, p. 5.

¹³ The opening of the first museum shop with a specially designed products on offer alongside each

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important and was expressed not only as individual, but also group visits, which became a new unit of measurement. Although we still have not succeeded in acquiring real proof¹⁴, we know from personal experience that each exhibition was accompanied with a visitor survey. The surveys aimed primarily to identify visitors' demographics, while exhibition evaluation came second. Taking a look at the past professional opinions and round table discussions from the present standpoint, it seems that the Museum Space introduced a positive commotion among museum professionals. They all eagerly returned to the topic of attracting audiences, critical consideration about the quality of mass visits and stronger support for the introduction of museum educator, which was at that time a new profession in Croatia. Discussions about audiences were certainly welcomed. Bauer's texts also show his personal use of the method of visitor observation during the days of mass visits. All things considered, the European museum boom also hit the small socialist Republic of Croatia. Unfortunately, soon after, it was hit with yet another incident, this time caused by weapons in what was the Croatian War for Independence.

In lieu of conclusion or how visitor research has become the *sine qua none* of museum work in the context of neo-liberal capitalism

The Croatian War for Independence made museum professionals, as well as the Croatian people in general, reorder their priorities. Precedence was given to heritage protection and, where it was necessary, relocation. Requirements were also made for better documentation which could facilitate protection, whereas presentation was made with the sole purpose of promoting national interests and struggle for independence. It should not thus come as a surprise that in such circumstances an inspiring lecture of the esteemed expert Paulette McManus in Zagreb in 1993 was attended by not more than ten museum professionals¹⁵. At that time, the small number of people was interpreted as lack of interest. However, looking from a distance of two decades, we believe that the reason for that might not have been so much the lack of interest as the war circumstances and the insufficiently effective flow of information among museum professionals, especially those outside of Zagreb.

The first decade of the 21st century was dominantly oriented towards improving skills and knowledge of museum professionals in relation to audience research. It seems that neither museums nor museum visitors are aware of these developments as a sign of transition to a new social system, the system which is principally based on making profits and achieving growth: the growth in the number of individual visitors, the growth in the number of groups that participate in museum educational programmes, the growth in the number of online visitors to museum web sites, and the growth in museums' financial resources other than state funding etc.

Croatian museums have also lived to see an increase in the numbers of visitors, primarily at heritage sites such as the Dubrovnik city walls, the Arena in Pula, the Brijuni islands on the Adriatic¹⁶ etc. They have also witnessed a great number of visitors in one night. As you might have guessed, the night in question is the Museum

exhibition should certainly be mentioned.

¹⁴ We are waiting for the permission to access documentation on exhibitions held at the former Museum Space and the present Klovičevi Dvori Gallery.

¹⁵ Paulette McManus, "Evaluation: Describing and Understanding Museum Visitors, their Needs and Reactions", *Informativa museologica*, No. 1-4, 1994, pp. 70 - 73

¹⁶ Continental Croatia has still remained unrecognized as a tourist destination. The data on the most visited museums and heritage sites were accessed at: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-77-07-296/EN/KS-77-07-296-EN.PDF, pp. 44-45.

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Night¹⁷ which has since 2006 been overflowing with liveliness, but also numbers which veil the issues posed by the safety of museum material, security of museum buildings and visitors and provision of quality experiences. Equally so, the creation of a specific sort of audience by this programme – the ones who enter, or better yet run through museums once a year – has been given sparse attention. The moment of resistance from museum professionals seems to have arrived, and it looks like the real audiences will join in.

This gives room for serious, level-headed and critical thinking by museologists who should insist on maintaining a balance between all museum functions¹⁸. They should insist on the importance of the community and constantly remind museums that they exist for community members, their education and memory, and they should support and advocate qualitative research methods... Perhaps we are talking here about empowering museologists after all?

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¹⁷ This event started in 1997 by the Berlin museums, first within thirty days of the Museum Month, whereas today it is held twice a year. It is interesting that Croatian museums accepted the celebration of ICOM's International Museum Day in 1954, but this event lasted for seven days.

¹⁸ Half of the material owned by Croatian museums still remains undocumented, and many institutions have problems with providing professional conditions for its storage.



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ISBN 978-92-9012-406-1