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CAMOC MUSEUMS OF CITIES REVIEW

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What are museums' strategies for community engagement?

PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES IN CITY MUSEUMS

Education programmes for children and teenagers in museums

MONOVA: MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES OF NORTH VANCOUVER • CITY MUSEUM OR THE CITY AS A MUSEUM? • REVEALING DUBLIN'S PAST AT 14 HENRIETTA STREET • FOREIGNERS EVERYWHERE

CAMOC MUSEUMS OF CITIES REVIEW

CONTENTS

Spring-Summer 2025

COVER PHOTO CREDITS:

FRONT COVER: *YOUR TENEMENT MEMORY INTERVIEW. © DAN BUTLER*
BACK COVER: *EARLY VISUALISATION OF THE PAST TIME DISPLAYS, 2019. © SECCHI SMITH*

EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor's Note

Dear CAMOC Members,

This new *CAMOC Review* brings to you articles from London, Dublin, Paris, Rome, Vancouver, Miami and beyond. The main subjects in this issue are oral history in city museums and education programs dedicated to different audiences, from wellbeing and care practices in museums to initiatives in sustainability and climate change. Decolonisation is another big theme here, and there will be more about that in a special issue dedicated to decolonisation practices in city museums coming in November 2025 for the ICOM 27th triennial conference in Dubai.

What are city museum strategies for attracting diverse audiences, and what is the museum's role in fostering a sense of community and cultural citizenship? How are museums using the concept of hospitality to make themselves welcoming places? How representative are a museum's visitors of the demography of its local population? Some answers to these central questions to any city museum are discussed in the articles you'll find in the following pages.

The importance of oral history in creating museum narratives that speak to cities' inhabitants

City museums are cultural institutions that aim to be more than just a place for exhibitions; rather, they strive to be gathering places for dialogue, exchange and community building. As editor, my goal is to bring together articles that show the variety of city museums around the globe as well as to highlight museums that have social museology at their heart, thus creating meaningful community connections.

Accessibility and social engagement are key concepts that many city museums focus on by creating accessible experiences through diverse educational activities and interactive exhibits that enhance multiple levels of interpretation of a city's history, architecture and contemporary challenges.

Museums can use emotional connections (museology of emotions)[1], empathy[2] and visitor participation to enhance engagement and create transformative experiences. The goal is for visitors to feel welcome, have fun and leave the museum with a new perspective. Many museums are forging exhibition narratives in the hopes to deal with growing anxiety, fear, despair and nostalgia caused by the current context of global crises (humanitarian, health, environmental and economic). As Marzia Varutti points out in an article called "The 'emotional turn' in museum practice" (2022)**:**
"In the face of new emergencies, museums are no longer

[1] Witcomb, A. 2015. 'Toward a Pedagogy of Feeling' in International Handbook of Museum Studies, S. MacDonald and H. R. Leahy, eds., Oxford: Blackwell, pp.321-344.

[2] Jennings, G., et al. 2019. 'The Empathetic Museum: A New Institutional Identity,' in Curator: The Museum Journal Vol. 62, No. 4, pp. 505-26.

Andréa Cristina Delaplace at the H'ART museum, Amsterdam 2025. © Annemarie de Wildt.

merely sites of representation; increasingly, they are promoters of social change and sites of social activism. Curatorial practice is adapting rapidly by forging exhibition narratives that explicitly invoke vulnerability, resilience, and empathy, offering a roadmap with which to navigate the emotional volatility and uncertainty of our times."[3]

What are museums' strategies for community engagement? How can city museums employ strategies like fostering dialogue (between people, objects and ideas), thus incorporating interactive elements, and using oral history to promote active learning and emotional connection?

One contributor taking up these questions is Laura Keogh, writing about the 14 Henrietta Street Museum in Dublin, Ireland (featured on the cover of this issue). Her article follows up our continuing theme of museums exploring social housing, and how engaging local communities in these projects creates a museum that not only tells the history of housing and urbanistic changes in the city but also fosters dialogue.

In their article, Mark O'Neill and Suzanne MacLeod share findings from a research project addressing museum attendance and the benefit gap in the UK. As they point out in their article, interpreting visitation data aims to encourage innovative thinking to engage a wider set of visitors who can help shape genuinely civic museums:

"From their origins, most city museums have been symbolising civic identity, places where different groups of citizens - and visitors - can mingle while appreciating the publicly owned collections. In the context of polarisation of society, and in light of the evidence that museum audiences are persistently unequal, we believe that the aim of city museums to have representative audiences is the best story for us today. More than any, this story about who visits, more than any specific impact, fits with museums' deepest and most humane values and represents our most urgent potential contribution to society. We recognise that our research agenda aspires to a level of innovation which may elude us, but we hope that, by sharing it in this uncertain state, we have offered you is a place to start the new analysis, experimentation

[3] https://icom.museum/en/news/the-emotional-turn-in-museum-practice/

and organisational development which may lead to the breakthrough insights we need to overcome our blind spots and create genuinely civic museums."

The articles dedicated to the new London Museum and the project of a city museum in Rome reflect on potential roles for city museums today and the challenges of creating exhibitions that capture the contemporary challenges and societal changes of any major city in a world that is in profound crisis and deep transformation.

The importance of education programmes for children and teenagers in museums

How to target different audiences? Many museums cater to diverse audiences, including local residents (especially subscribers and retirees), school groups, families (especially during summer and holidays), and tourists (regional, national, and international).

Museums adapt their programming based on the time of year (audience segmentation by season), targeting different demographics during summer (tourists, families), fall/winter (local residents, families, school groups, retirees), and holidays (families). The articles from History Miami, STAM Ghent and Musée Carnavalet - Histoire de Paris focus on activities and museum narratives for children, school groups and younger audiences in general.

City museums' decolonial perspectives: Upcoming special edition of the *CAMOC Review*

Are city museums taking action towards "decolonisation"? Are they addressing colonial issues and heritage within their structure (including new policies for acquisition, hiring, exhibition themes, work processes, etc.)?

How have city museums been integrating "decolonial narratives" into their long term exhibitions?

How are transnational memories and landscape traditions in the city context integrating decolonial processes in museums' narratives?

The goal of this publication is to contribute to interdisciplinary research on decolonisation within the disciplines of art, social sciences and museum studies by sharing decolonial practices being implemented in city museums around the world. In the current issue, two articles focus on decolonial practices: "Collaboration Is Essential to Museum Work," focusing on collaborative practices at Canada's MONOVA - Museum & Archives of North Vancouver and "Indigenizing the Museum?" dedicated to contemporary Inuit art in Canadian museums broadly.

We also have an article dedicated to the upcoming Dubai programme as part of the ICOM 27th triennial conference. Our chair, Glenn Perkins, shares experiences from the ICOM Symposium organised last year in Dubai to prepare for the triennial. Looking forward to seeing you during our next CAMOC Conference!

Andréa Cristina Delaplace
Editor *CAMOC Review*

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

Seeking the Intangible in Dubai

GLENN PERKINS*

In November I made my first trip ever to the Arab peninsula. Representatives from fellow international committees across ICOM gathered with the ICOM Executive Board and local organizers of the triennial conference for the international symposium. CAMOC secretary Johanna Vähäpesola and I went together on behalf of our committee. There were a lot of things about the trip that surprised me, things I found both familiar and unfamiliar. But after just a few days in the United Arab Emirates, I left wanting to know more about its cities, its cultures, and its diverse residents.

The older part of Dubai stretches along a tidal inlet. Dubai Creek, as this wide stretch of water is called, is more than a kilometre across at its widest point. The first night in the city I stayed in the Al-Fahidi neighborhood at a hotel converted from one of the old-style residences merchants built in this area in the 1940s as Dubai was undergoing a significant period of growth. You can see modernist buildings in the international style all along the Creekside. People travel up and down the waterway, and back and forth from one side to the other on small wooden boats called dhows. A lot of the riders are tourists exploring the district's souks, full of imported fabric and rug stalls, spice sellers, and souvenirs. These reconstructed markets build on Dubai's history as a trading hub for goods circulating through the Gulf and all around the Indian Ocean.

You don't have to walk too far out of Al-Fahidi to get a sense of Dubai that is quite different from the gleaming skyscrapers and exclusive resorts that are often depicted. When I returned home, I was able to get hold of a book that some one from Dubai culture had recommended to me: Khaled Alawadi's *Lifescapes Beyond Bigness* was published to go with the UAE Pavilion at the 2018 Venice Biennale. Throughout this enormous volume, Alawadi, a professor of sustainable urbanism at Khalifa University, and his collaborators investigate everyday places (or lifescapes) in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and other Emirati cities. They discover and document informal gardens, carpark ball fields, streetcorners that elders stake out as lounges, makeshift mosques and more. The descriptions of intangible, everyday urbanism resonated with what I sensed walking around some of the neighborhoods.

The idea of the intangible came up frequently in Dubai, reflecting the nomadic heritage of the Emirati people. It was a key piece of the discussions for the daylong ICOM

Glenn Perkins and Johanna Vähäpesola near the Dubai World Trade Center. The Museum of the Future, in the background, exemplifies the wealthy, shiny side of the city. © Glenn Perkins

Symposium, which addressed the Triennial Conference theme, "The Future of Museums in Rapidly Changing Communities." Each subtheme of the conference had a dedicated expert panel session. These sessions explored *intangible heritage* as a dynamic source of inspiration; *new technologies* that place museums at the forefront of innovation for cultural creation in audience engagement; and *youth power* positioning museums as vibrant centres for innovation and cooperation.

The discussions around youth power and creativity were particularly interesting. One of the speakers, Sultan Sooud Al Qassemi talked about establishing the Barjeel Art Foundation and its insistence on collecting and showing work by modern and contemporary Arab women artists. Two expatriate youth artist/curators who have created cultural organizations joined him: Munira Al Sayegh of the Dirwaza Curatorial Lab and Osemundiamen Ekore of Bootleg Griot.

The cultural activities punctuating the symposium discussions were of a more traditional bent. A group of men in traditional kanduras greeted arrivals at the Etihad Museum with Al-Ayyalah, a traditional ensemble of chanted poetry, drumming and movement. Inside the

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

museum were demonstrations of calligraphy, embroidery, coffee ceremonies. Also, two female chefs offered modern twists on traditional Emirati cuisine for a delicious lunch and dinner.

The day after the Symposium was dedicated to exploring a little around Dubai. Our group spent a long time at the Dubai Expo site, seeing some of the high-tech exhibitions and attractions there including Terra, an immersive journey into nature and sustainability, and Aliph, an exploration of the giants of Arab history (with some literally giant figures along the way). At the end of the day we were able to spend some time at Al Shindagha Museum, located back

A barjeel, or wind tower, on a traditional-style house in Al-Fahidi. © Glenn Perkins

near Al-Fahidi. A series of pavilions, Al Shindagha highlights regional traditions like pearl diving and perfume, as well as the growth and expansion of Dubai as a global city.

So what will CAMOC's part of ICOM's Dubai Triennial look like? That is still taking shape, but below are a few important points.

We have several key goals for our overall programme: We want to connect with colleagues working in urban-focused museums in order to strengthen network ties across the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia (MENASA) region. We want to explore everyday urban landscapes in Dubai and learn about how people experience and interpret them. And we want to examine similarities and differences in city museums and urban heritage approaches in different parts of the world.

The intention is to explore concepts of people, process and power as they relate to urban heritage and city museums. People both produce and live varied forms of urban experience, and of course, those of us who work as museum or cultural heritage professionals, researchers, or advocates are people, too – looped into the urban experience we aim to interpret objectively. Process is how we try to unpack those experiences, which acquire and generate new kinds of meaning and connection in museum settings. Power is key to all of this, too. Museums express power, often at the behest of the powerful. But museums can also be places to grow, concentrate, or reimagine local community power to challenge dominant forces or narratives.

During three main conference sessions and an additional full CAMOC day, we will explore areas like tangible and intangible urbanism, cultural placemaking in cities, everyday urban landscapes, and art and creativity in Arab cities through paper presentations, discussion panels, and visits to sites around the Al-Fahidi district.

It's going to be an opportunity to discover a lot. Much more information about all the activities is online at https://camoc.mini.icom.museum/conferences/dubai-2025/

REFERENCE

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View across Dubai Creek from the Grand Souk – Bur Dubai. © Glenn Perkins

MONOVA: Museum and Archives of North Vancouver

ANDREA TERRON, ZOE MACKOFF DE MIRANDA*

At MONOVA: Museum and Archives of North Vancouver, we respectfully acknowledge that we operate on the traditional, unceded lands of the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish) and səl̓ílwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) First Nations, whose ancestors have stewarded these lands for millennia. We are profoundly grateful for the opportunity to live, work, and learn in partnership with these communities on Coast Salish Territory, acknowledging their enduring connection to the land, water, and all living things.

Traditional Welcome at a MONOVA Event. © Alison Boulier

Collaboration is Essential to Museum Work

MONOVA sits on land that has been stewarded by the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh and səl̓ílwətaɬ Nations since time immemorial. Nestled between the mountains and the sea, this land is renowned for its stunning beauty and enriched lifestyle. However, like many parts of Canada, it has a complex and difficult history—a history that has often been challenging for museums to acknowledge and engage with authentically and truthfully. Based in two distinct locations and across two local municipalities—the Museum of North Vancouver in The Shipyards and the Archives of North Vancouver in Lynn Valley— they share a common goal: reflecting on the land's history, connecting it to the present, and envisioning a collective future. Through these efforts, we aim to foster a deeper sense of belonging and connection across the diverse communities that call this land home.

The synergy between the Museum and Archives forms the cornerstone of MONOVA's work. Our exhibits serve as a gateway to understanding the complex relationships

* Zoe Mackoff de Miranda, Director. Andrea Terron, Curator. MONOVA: Museum and Archives of North Vancouver

MONOVA Indigenous Cultural Programmer Tsawaysia Spukwus Welcoming Guests. © Alison Boulier

between humans and the natural world, encouraging visitors to explore these interconnections in new and thoughtful ways. Collaboration between the Museum and Archives is fundamental to this, with archival materials providing a rich foundation for the creation of exhibits. By integrating authentic historical documents, photographs, and artifacts from the Archives, MONOVA ensures that each exhibit is both informative and engaging, fostering meaningful dialogue, and offering a multi-storied and layered view of North Vancouver's past and its ongoing narrative. In doing this, we honor the rich cultural identities, heritage, and languages of the communities we serve – documenting their stories through written records and oral histories. This collaboration is powerful, with archival materials fueling the creation of exhibits and communities inspiring the growth of our collections.

Though each site offers unique experiences, both locations share a common purpose: to spark meaningful conversations through learning and research. Our archival materials are publicly accessible, and we actively invite residents and visitors to explore the evolving cultural legacy of the North Shore, gaining a deeper understanding of the region's past and its trajectory.

As an educational institution, we embrace an interactive and reciprocal approach that values both the materials we present and the passions of our diverse communities. MONOVA welcomes people of all ages, backgrounds, and interests to engage with our collections and contribute their own stories and knowledge. We offer a variety of school and public programs, allowing participants to learn, share, and gain insights into the histories of North Vancouver communities.

Framework for Community Museums

A fundamental aspect of all our work, especially within the Canadian context, is our unwavering commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Report with its 94 Calls to Action. UNDRIP stands as a global human rights beacon, while the Calls to Action address the profound impacts of Canada's residential school system. We actively invite and encourage visitors to uncover these historical truths, using them as a catalyst to take their own steps toward reconciliation.

The Commission's Report and the Calls to Action provide museums and archives with the knowledge and tools needed to understand and foster reconciliation. The outlined principles and practices serve as a framework that guides decisions, processes, and the prioritization of projects and partnerships. Under this commitment, MONOVA plays a crucial role in fostering reconciliation by sharing difficult truths. One way we do this is by including a section on Residential Schools in our permanent galleries, where we share oral histories from survivors of the Residential School in North Vancouver.

Decolonizing as an Ongoing Process

A decade ago, as MONOVA planned for organizational changes and the construction of a new museum, an Indigenous Voice Advisory Committee (IVAC) was established to provide Indigenous perspectives on content, messaging, event protocol, and program development. In collaboration with the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh and səl̓ílwətaɬ Nations, MONOVA and IVAC agreed to create and sign Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between MONOVA and the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh and səl̓ílwətaɬ Nations. The core principle of these agreements is to work collaboratively with the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh and səl̓ílwətaɬ communities to incorporate their worldviews, perspectives, cultures, and the truth about our shared history into all MONOVA activities.

Today, the Indigenous Voices Advisory Committee is co-chaired by Chief Dr. Janice George of the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Nation and Carleen Thomas of the səl̓ílwətaɬ Nation. IVAC is in place to help ensure MONOVA is meeting the goals and commitments as laid out in the MOUs, and that we are working together and establishing open relationships with Nation members. Through this relationship, MONOVA can share cultural histories, teaching methods, traditions, and practices in ways that honor customs, provide authentic engagement, and respect protocol. Instrumental to this are two Indigenous Cultural Programmers on

MONOVA Indigenous Cultural Programmers Tsawaysia Spukwus and Jordan Dawson of the Squamish Nation. © Alison Boulier

our staff who bring their personal perspectives and experiences to their work. We are very grateful to our current Indigenous Cultural Programmers Tsawaysia Spukwus (Alice Guss) and Jordan Dawson who generously share their knowledge and culture through their work. Creating space for Sḵwx̱wú7mesh and səl̓ílwətaɬ culture sharing and incorporating Coast Salish perspectives into our activities allows MONOVA visitors (and staff) to appreciate the diverse context we live in, embrace it, and continue seeking dialogue and learning opportunities.

Why are MOUs important from a Nation's perspective? Why do the Nations want to be engaged with the Museum and Archives? Co-Chair of our Indigenous Voices Advisory Committee, Chief Dr. Janice George from Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw, shares:

"From my personal perspective, I grew up learning the history of my people and was very proud of what my ancestors did. All people have something in history that they look back on with pride. It's hard to describe how it feels to be in a museum where you are working on things that your ancestors made, that your grandparents made, and how much pride that brings you."

From her conversation with us, it is clear that one of the most important elements of this collaboration is to showcase items that instill pride in the youth—such as their ancestors' teachings and belongings—helping youth develop a deeper appreciation for their culture. *"We can try and surround our children with the teachings everywhere they go."*

Additionally, this collaboration teaches non-Indigenous people about the contributions Indigenous people have made. Chief Dr. Janice George:

"Until recently, Coast Salish communities have held their culture very close, fearing it would be used in the wrong way—commercialized or misrepresented. But Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw has done a lot of work in cultural healing. The community has participated in many programs, and we are ready to share, but we need confidence in knowing what to share and what to hold sacred while passing on valuable teachings."

MONOVA recognizes that museums play a vital role in supporting the ongoing process of reconciliation. By creating space for dialogue around difficult subjects—such as the legacy of residential schools— and working in partnership with local Coast Salish communities to ensure they are involved in how and when their stories are told, we aim to inform and inspire, fostering understanding and healing.

The Changing Role of Museums

Museums have never been neutral. Originating from colonialist endeavors with often one-sided stories, muse-

ums must now evolve to meet the needs of our time. They should not be passive entities that simply store history—they must be active participants in shaping the future. Museums offer a platform for telling uncomfortable truths and confronting difficult pasts, allowing communities to come together, reflect, and move forward in a spirit of inclusion and respect.

It is worth remembering that the word "museum" originates from the Ancient Greek word "mouseion," meaning "seat of the Muses," which refers to conversations rather than exhibitions. Since their inception, museums have been spaces for discussion, research, and knowledge. Museums have always been physical institutions for organizing collections, but they have also been places of narratives. Traditionally, these narratives have often told a single story. However, as part of the decolonization process, we are incorporating voices and perspectives that have been historically underrepresented and need to be included in new narratives.

This shift requires museums to take a stand. While doing so may expose us to criticism—especially from those who believe museums should remain neutral—we assert that neutrality often equates to failing to serve the needs of underrepresented communities and human realities. By creating space for understanding, dialogue, and even disagreement, museums fulfill their responsibility to society. They must be places of action, not merely repositories of the past.

MONOVA Museum & Archives of North Vancouver, Educational Programmer Sarah Mosher. © Alison Boulier

At MONOVA, we are committed to decolonizing—shifting from a model that prioritizes collection-building to one that focuses on community engagement, collaboration, and co-creation. We are actively engaged in the processes of repatriation – what we now refer to internally as "returning belongings". We are updating the language in our database and exhibition texts, ensuring that all records include the necessary background stories to enhance understanding of our collections. We are initiating conversations with IVAC and our Indigenous Cultural Programmers to develop a policy and strategy for the restorative process of returning belongings to communities. Additionally, we aim to learn how to discuss this subject with other Nations to foster partnerships and collaborations. MONOVA is thinking from the present to the future, not only repeating facts from the past.

In an article for Museum International in 2024, Sakiru Adebayo notes, *"We must begin to build, from scratch, institutions of memory, heritage and arts that are not exploitative, carceral, or colonial, but life-affirming for all human, non-human and object beings" (Adebayo, 2024)*[1]. This call-to-action challenges us to rethink our practices and envision museums as transformative, inclusive spaces that reflect a broad spectrum of lived experiences.
Those in the museum sector who had the chance to participate in and review the changes to the ICOM museum definition in 2022 discussed how to define museum spaces and the importance of reflecting the evolving needs of the world. Ultimately, the following definition was adopted:

"A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets, and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection, and knowledge sharing."[2]

While there must be respect and continuity for traditional perspectives—acknowledging the fundamental respon-

[1] Aljas, A., & Cai, Y. (2024). Re-Imagining the Museum. *Museum International*, *76*(1–2), vi–ix. https://doi.org/10.1080/13500775.2024.2422737

[2] **International Council of Museums.** (2022). *ICOM Extraordinary General Assembly 2022: Museum definition working document*. https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/EN_EGA2022_MuseumDefinition_WDoc_Final-2.pdf

sibilities of museums in preservation, conservation, and security—there must also be room for change, as societal needs continue to evolve. How do we find that balance? The revised definition was necessary because it establishes boundaries, provides a framework, and solidifies career paths within the sector. With a shared definition, we—as institutions, museum professionals, consultants, partners, and researchers—become a community, united by a common purpose.

The shift from a collection-centric focus, as seen in the original 1970s definition, to one centered on community, learning, accessibility, and inclusivity marks a crucial and transformative change. Continuous adaptation is essential to keeping museums relevant and engaging for visitors and communities, who now have more opportunities to participate actively in their institutions. This definition serves as a roadmap for the future, ensuring that museums remain spaces of inclusion and information, evolving to meet the diverse needs of cultures and societies.

Across the world, we can already observe this transformation taking place in museums. Curators and educators are adopting new, more inclusive methods of engaging with the public, emphasizing immersive, collaborative, and socially responsible approaches to learning. These shifts reflect the recognition that museums must stay relevant to the contemporary world, responding proactively to its challenges and opportunities.

MONOVA and The Future

With a new strategic plan for 2024-2027 MONOVA commits to follow and pursue our guiding principles:

Inclusivity: Our approach will reflect the social, emotional, physical, intellectual, creative, and cultural spirit of the people and places we serve.
Empathy: We will create space for diverse perspectives and honest dialogue.
Relevancy: We will actively listen and seek to understand our current context.
Memory: We will remember the past to know the present and plan for the future.
Co-Creation: We will deliver on our mission through active participation and collaboration.

Truth & Reconciliation Day Gallery Tour with Indigenous Cultural Programmer Jordan Dawson. © Alison Boulier

Truth & Reconciliation Day Program at MONOVA. © Alison Boulier

Trust: The strength of our inter-connections and relationships will speak boldly through exhibits and programs.
Innovative and Forward Thinking: We will embrace new approaches, technology, and ideas to enhance audience experience.

MONOVA honors our relationship with the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh and səl̓ílwətaɬ Nations who continue to steward the ancestral territories now recognized as North Vancouver. The signed MOUs are integral to our ongoing commitment to working together in partnership and MONOVA ensures we honor the principles and objectives of the MOUs, work collaboratively with Sḵwx̱wú7mesh and səl̓ílwətaɬ Nations and establish effective working relationships, approaches and protocols that help guide this collaborative work in the best possible way.

Looking ahead, MONOVA is steadfast in our commitment to push boundaries. We envision a future where museums do more than preserve history—they actively shape a more inclusive, compassionate, and connected world. Our journey will continue to evolve, embracing new technologies, methodologies, and partnerships to ensure we remain a vibrant and forward-thinking institution for generations to come. As we build on the past, we will continue to forge strong collaborations with communities and partners, ensuring that MONOVA plays a meaningful and transformative role in the lives of all who engage with our collections, exhibits, and educational programs.

Revealing Dublin's past at 14 Henrietta Street

LAURA KEOGH*

14 Henrietta Street Former Resident Peter Brannigan. © Julien Behal Photography

Winner of the European Museum of the Year 2020 Stiletto Prize, 14 Henrietta Street is a social history museum of Dublin life, from one building's Georgian beginnings to its tenement times. The museum, located in the heart of Dublin city, connects the history of urban life over 300 years to the stories of the people who called this building home. At the heart of the museum experience is the house, which is interpreted through objects, stories of former residents, and the tour guides accounts of the everyday realities of the people who lived there.

The history of Henrietta Street and formation of the museum

Originally built in the 1720s for wealthy families, Melanie Hayes (2021) writes that Henrietta Street was "pioneering in its scale and sophistication" and "quickly became Dublin's most exclusive address." 14 Henrietta Street was built in the late 1740s by Luke Gardiner. Its first occupant was The Right Honourable Richard, Lord Viscount Molesworth and his family. Subsequent residents in the 18th Century included the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, the Bishop of Clogher, and Charles 12th Viscount Dillon.

Timothy Murtagh (2020) charts the decline of the city and Henrietta Street from 1800-1922 and notes that by the mid-19th century Dublin was increasingly becoming home to the poor. He explains that unlike the purpose-built tenements found throughout the British Isles "in Dublin, tenements tended to be eighteenth-century houses, usually grand homes that had been built for a single wealthy family. They were now being converted for use by as many as fifteen or twenty families." 14 Henrietta Street did not become a tenement until 1883, as Donal Fallon (2021) notes it was "still home to legal and

* Laura Keogh, Head of Engagement, Dublin City Council Culture Company.

social institutions of note right throughout much of the nineteenth century." However, by 1911 over 100 people were living in 14 Henrietta Street which was then divided into separate apartments. Fallon (2021) continues this trajectory of tenement life in Dublin and writes that by the mid-1920s conditions had worsened and 78,934 Dubliners now resided in one-roomed tenement accommodation. Fallon states that "within popular Dublin memory the descent from grandeur to decline is encapsulated in a single moment of history, the 1800 Act of Union, while in reality the demise of much of the city was more gradual."

14 Henrietta Street remained a tenement for many years with the last residents living it in until the late 1970s.[1] Dublin City Council began the process to purchase 14 Henrietta Street in the 2000s.

Following its 2008 purchase of 14 Henrietta Street, the building underwent a 10-year restoration journey to rescue, stabilise and conserve the house, preserving it for generations to come. The purchase and conservation of 14 Henrietta Street was a direct result of the Dublin City Heritage Plan 2002 – 2006[2] and the Henrietta Street conservation plan[3]. 14 Henrietta Street is owned and conserved by Dublin City Council and run by Dublin City Council Culture Company who opened the museum to the public in 2018.

The Dublin City Council Culture Company continues to develop 14 Henrietta Street with the aim of protecting, sharing and adding into the cultural life of the city, with a strong emphasis on personal testimony and social history relating to the house. The company's vision is for a Dublin where culture connects everything and everyone, and it has developed a people-led approach to placemaking and cultural heritage programmes and buildings.[4]

Involvement of the local community in the museum's development

Henrietta Street is now home to the museum, artists' studios, Na Píobairí Uilleann (The Society of Uilleann Pipers), private residences, a residential religious charity, a school and an adult education learning centre. Located in the north inner city of Dublin, the community has experienced the emergence of significant clusters of high deprivation, in close proximity to a new emerging affluent population. The area is undergoing some regeneration with new business and residential developments, along

14 Henrietta Street Staircase. © Ros Kavanagh

with a new university in close proximity. Local residents are proud of their community and heritage, and most of the families have lived here for many generations.
A key part of the people-led approach to the museum was the inclusion of local voices in its development process. As Graham Black (2011) states:

> A history museum's most important exhibit should be the locality it serves and museums are increasingly seeking to encourage local communities to investigate their own pasts, share their experiences and enthuse museum visitors to go out and actively explore the locality, using local voices (live or audio) to reach below the surface patina.

A cross-sectoral steering group was involved in the development of the museum which included former residents, historians, cultural and heritage sector experts, artists, architects and local authority representatives. Throughout this process, local community consultation and the gathering of oral histories played a large part in the

Dublin Exterior of 14 Henrietta Street. © Ros Kavanagh

[1] Further information on the history of the house is available here https://14henriettastreet.ie/about/history-of-the-house/

[2] Available at https://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/2018-05/dublin_city_heritage_plan_2002_2006.pdf

[3] Available at https://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/2018-05/plean_caomhantais_shraid_henrietta_street_conservation_plan.pdf

[4] Dublin City Council Culture Company Strategy 2025-2030 available at https://www.dublincitycouncilculturecompany.ie/companystrategy/

Former Resident Paddy Shiels and the museum's Engagement Team. © Oliver Deane

formation of the visitor experience of 14 Henrietta Street. The process began in 2015 with a series of memory evenings in the museum and in other locations in the local community. These events encouraged former residents to come forward and share their memories for the first time and formed the beginnings of the museum's oral history programme.

A team of historians and academics worked closely with former residents of 14 Henrietta Street, to research the museum's narrative and ensure that the human stories were as prominent as the documented historical facts. Former residents of the house have also been directly involved in the display and decoration of certain rooms, have donated artefacts of relevance to their lives in the building, as well as being part of the museum advisory groups.

The guided tours of the museum

The guided tours of the museum bring to life the stories of the people who lived in the house over a period of 300 years, through their changing circumstances, their experience of family life, politics, and the impact of world affairs. 14 Henrietta Street tours are communicated through the stories told by the tour guides and a carefully curated selection of historic objects, which are exhibited in recreated immersive rooms and supported by audio-visual and specially commissioned artistic responses which illuminate the stories further. Many of the tour guides have strong local connections and bring a wealth of personal knowledge to each tour.

Although 14 Henrietta Street tour guides all deliver the same, curated tour narrative, they use the museum's archival research material to develop and personalise their tours with the particular aspects of social history connected to the house that most interest them or that relates to their own experiences. While the narrative is broadly the same for every tour, each individual tour offers visitors a unique perspective on the house and its history, which is supported by the guides' personal research and augmented by the museum's oral history collection. The tours are in constant development and space is always made for visitors on the tour to join in and add their own personal recollections, creating an equal exchange between the visitors and the guides, acknowledging the many versions of the stories being told.

The museum's collection

14 Henrietta Street takes an innovative approach in telling the history of a building. This is reflected in the museum's collection. Rather than being solely made up of physical objects, 50% of the collection is made up of the building itself, 20% are physical objects, 25% is the oral history collection and 5% are artistic responses.

The historical fabric of the building has been preserved and conserved so that it communicates the multiple layers of history and the many stories of the individuals who inhabited the building. Therefore, the building itself forms the most significant part of the museum's collection.

The curation and development of the collection at 14 Henrietta Street began with the core collection of fragments and objects that were recovered from the house during its renovation, in addition to the donation and purchase of objects with a direct relationship to the house. These objects are used in the museum exhibition spaces to provide a starting point for visitors and people to understand the city of Dublin and its history, materially supporting stories of former residents and preserving their social history for future generations to learn from and appreciate.

Your Tenement Memories is the oral history project for 14 Henrietta Street and is an essential part of the museum's collection. It is a series of ongoing conversations with people across the city that gathers memories of tenement life in Dublin. The museum gathers memories and stories of Dublin in order to understand people's experiences of tenement life and the city, and responds to and shares

Your Tenement Memories participant June Keely Tongue, her family and the museum's Engagement team. © Oliver Deane

them through programming, publications and the tours of 14 Henrietta Street. By listening and learning, the museum preserves and shares stories and connects people to the heritage of the city.

This oral history collection plays an integral role in the museum and invites people, including former residents of the house, to share their memories, which are recorded digitally for the 14 Henrietta Street collection. The museum's Engagement Coordinators collect the stories and experiences of the people of Dublin through audio and written testimonies. In their discussion on the uses of oral histories in museums, Anna Centro Bull and Chris Reynolds (2021) note that "oral history enables multivocal recollections of the past…As a result, the complex tapestry of how the past was experienced and is remembered can be uncovered, exposed and better understood." Your Tenement Memories enables 14 Henrietta Street to learn from the perspectives of the people who experienced tenement life in Dublin and to weave their stories into the guided tours of the house, preserving multiple perspectives on a period of life in Dublin. These stories constantly continue to add to the tour guides' accounts of life in tenement Dublin, and the first-hand accounts of the lives of those who lived in and close to Henrietta Street bring authenticity and relevance to the tours.

This collaborative project has enabled the museum to engage with individuals and communities across Dublin and its suburbs. As Lynn Abrams (2016) discusses, the process of an oral history interview is a collaborative endeavour between the interviewer and the interviewee and describes it as "not usually a question-and-answer session but give and take, collaborative and often cooperative, involving information-sharing and auto-biographical reminiscence, facts and feelings." The museum invests time in building and developing relationships with the participants of the Your Tenement Memories project ensuring that they remain connected to the house and the project as it develops. This includes inviting them to join the museum's advisory group, to come in person to meet the tour guides, to participate in the programme of Teatime talks and to partake in the museum's annual celebration "Neighbour's Day" which is a social afternoon when local people and former residents are invited to the museum.

Along with the oral history collection, 14 Henrietta Street also creates opportunities for creative engagement and responsive programming. The museum develops different pathways to engage with groups and individuals and collaborates with artists, to co-create responsive projects and cultural activities.

An example of this is a collaboration with renowned poet, Paula Meehan, who grew up in tenement housing in Dublin. Meehan was invited to respond to the varied history of 14 Henrietta Street and the lives of those who lived there. This collaboration with a poet, enabled a new interpretation of tenement life in Dublin inspired by the house. This led to the creation of Museum, a book of 11 specially created sonnets alongside photographic artworks by Dragana Jurišić, all taking their inspiration from the fabric of the house.

On the guided tours, these artistic elements are used to further bring parts of the story to life and form 5% of the museum's collection. In a bedroom in the house, an audio-visual rendition of one of Meehan's specially commissioned poems, is projected onto a bed which was donated to the museum. The incorporation of an artistic response directly into the tour adds another layer of interpretation to the story of the house and creates a different pathway for visitors to experience the history of the house.

Conclusion

The cycle of citizen consultation and responsive programming continues to support the development of the museum. As a social history museum, 14 Henrietta Street is committed to continually adding to the collection and to conducting new research, creative engagement projects and oral history interviews on an ongoing basis to inform programming and tours, enhance the collection and build a record of life in Henrietta Street and of tenement living in Dublin.

By listening and talking with visitors, historians, local residents and their families and through the knowledge of others, the museum continues to discover and share new stories. The impact of this approach can be heard through the words of former resident Peter Brannigan, speaking about his involvement in the development of the museum:

> If I want to hear my mother and father and my brothers and sisters, this is where I come. I've always come, that's why I come to this street, that's why I come to this house, because I can hear, I can hear their voices. I feel so humbled I was allowed to be part of what's happened here today, I really am. Just very great.[5]

Connecting with people and maintaining these relationships is essential, and ongoing collaboration creates the opportunity for creative practitioners, individuals and community groups to play an active role in developing the museum. As a result, 14 Henrietta Street creates a unique experience for visitors, which combines the sensitive conservation and restoration of a 300-year-old house with the intangible memories and experiences of those who lived in it.

[5] Available on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5OoAxGFmkc

Your Tenement Memory Interview. © Dan Butler

More information at *www.14HenriettaStreet.ie*
14 Henrietta Street is owned, conserved and funded by Dublin City Council, and operated and curated by Dublin City Council Culture Company.

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A NEW LONDON MUSEUM

ANNETTE DAY*

Aerial visualisation of the new London Museum, 2019. © Secchi Smith

INTRODUCTION

In 2022, the Museum of London closed its doors to the public. It rebranded itself as London Museum in 2024, in anticipation of reopening in a new location at Smithfield in central London in 2026. A decade in the making, the new London Museum will be based in two historic market buildings, the previously disused Victorian General Market and a former railway goods depot beneath it (Stage 1, opening 2026), and the 1960s Poultry Market which was still in operation until 2023 (Stage 2, opening 2028). The project is one of the largest contemporary cultural developments in Europe, forging a museum worthy of our capital city. It will contribute to the creation of a dynamic new cultural quarter, preserve these two historic buildings, and provide a destination for millions of visitors every year, of all ages and from London, the UK and the rest of the world. The project is funded by the City of London Corporation, Greater London Authority, and a range of foundations, sponsors and private philanthropy.

This article offers a brief overview of the interpretative strategies which set the direction for the new galleries, before moving on to outline the narrative structure and collaborative and creative approaches used to develop the content for the historical displays, entitled 'Past Time'. It begins by placing the project in the context of the history of the museum, which was the starting point for the team who have been working on the galleries since 2016.

A NEW CHAPTER

This project is a major new chapter in the history of a museum which has its roots in two earlier institutions, the Guildhall Museum and the London Museum. The genesis of the older of these, the Guildhall Museum, can be found in 1826 when the Common Council of the City of London Corporation[1] asked its Library Committee to 'consider the propriety of providing a suitable place for the reception of such Antiquities as relate to the City of London and Suburbs, as may be procured, or presented to the Corporation'[2]. Over the following decades, a collection began to develop, housed in various premises of differing suitability, before the library and museum settled in the 1870s in a new building by the City's Guildhall. Its emphasis was on London's early history and archaeological evidence, then coming to light during a period of significant infrastructure development and rebuilding of the City. This is in some respects echoed today as the area continues to be redeveloped, enabling new excavation.

* Annette Day, Head of Content Delivery, London Museum

[1] The City of London Corporation is the governing body of the City of London, the financial district of the London also known as the Square Mile, which operates alongside the 32 boroughs of the city

[2] City of London Corporation, Library Committee Journals, 21 January 1826, quoted in Francis Sheppard, *The Treasury of London's Past, 1991*

Aerial view of the General Market during redevelopment, 2023. © London Museum

The second, the London Museum, came into existence at extraordinary speed, driven by three individuals, Lords Beauchamp and Esher and the Hon. Lewis Harcourt. The idea for this museum was first conceived in 1910, an appeal for support was published in *The Times* newspaper in March 1911, and it opened in April 1912 with a royal visit and long queues. It started and ended its life at Kensington Palace, with a significant intervening period at Lancaster House, near Buckingham Palace. One of a number of notable city museums that emerged around this time, its 25th anniversary publication described its purpose as being to 'illustrate the daily life and history of London in all ages'[3]. Its initial collection was in part built through the appeal to the public, alongside generous and important gifts from collectors. It also collected contemporary items from the beginning, including through the First World War.

In 1965, these two museums were brought together by Act of Parliament to become the Museum of London, which opened in 1976. An early statement of intent for the displays is striking in its resonances today, not least that 'One has to accept that history must be re-written every so often because the strands which historians bring into focus are to some extent suggested by events and preoccupations of their own time'. Other aspirations laid out in the document – by the last team to take on the task of creating a brand new museum about and for London – also chimed and challenged, perhaps particularly that it should offer a 'full-blooded interpretation', that 'the display should not be above the head of the ordinary visitor, nor beneath the notice of the scholar', and that 'the emphasis should be on a continuous and developing experience, like the unfolding of a story, a play, or piece of music'[4].

A NEW MUSEUM

The Museum of London was located in a 1970s purpose-designed building at London Wall in the City of London, just north of St Paul's Cathedral. Its galleries were organised as a long, unwinding chronological journey extending over two floors, from prehistory through to the then present day, across some 4,000 sqm of display space. Over its 46 years of operation, all of its galleries inevitably were redeveloped – at different times, resulting in a somewhat uneven visitor experience – but the chronological structure stood firm. Its predecessor the London Museum was also largely organised with galleries devoted to different historic periods.

The new buildings at Smithfield, less than a mile to the west of our former site, are a completely different architectural proposition: two historic meat market buildings, each with a number of floors, and its own expressive architectural identity. Creating a museum within these spaces demanded complete rethinking and offered the opportunity to reconsider what the museum could be for 21st century audiences – not so much a move but a new museum.

[3] *Twenty-Five Years of the London Museum*, 1937, quoted in Valerie Cumming, Nick Merriman, Catherine Ross, *London Museum*, 1996

[4] Proposed Designers' Brief for the London Museum, not dated

As part of starting up the project in earnest in 2016, the museum team set out to think afresh about the displays, their purpose and shape, and the experiences they would offer for visitors. In support of this, Ralph Appelbaum Associates were appointed to help the core content team create first an Interpretation Strategy (2017) and then an Interpretation Masterplan (2019).

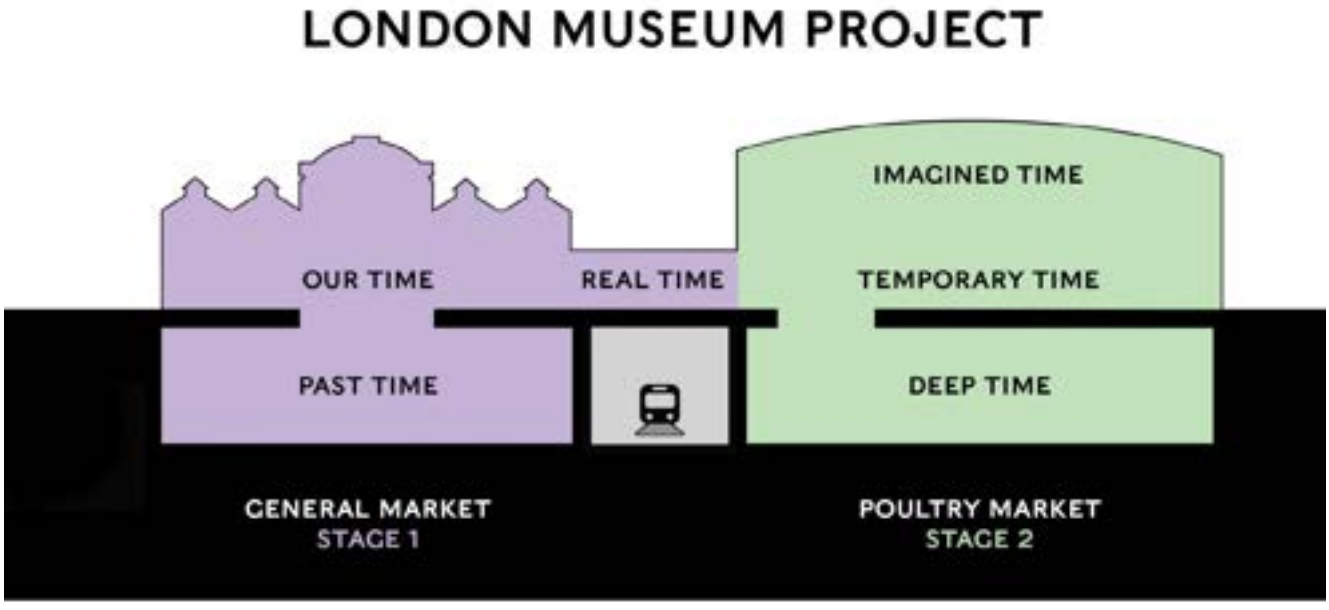
The Interpretation Strategy set the direction for the new museum's galleries, public spaces and programmes. This included a commitment to connecting with visitors emotionally, including through drawing out personal stories from the museum's collection; reflecting the complex diversity of Londoners today and across time; and including the voices of Londoners. It recognised the importance of drawing in expertise from beyond the museum, defining this broadly to include academic scholarship, creative practice, and lived experience, with a commitment to working with Londoners. An intent to consider how 'London shaped and was shaped by the world', to explore London's past, present and future, and to look at London through the lenses of time, people and place were also first articulated in this Strategy[5].

The Interpretation Masterplan subsequently built on this Strategy, part of an iterative process of interrogating and honing ideas. It was informed by a wide-ranging, free-thinking and often hands-on phase of work in 2018. This process included the generation of more than 100 ideas for possible displays, curatorial exploration of specific ideas through a series of defined 'research packages', and a number of workshops – one involving members of the museum's Board of Governors, so engaging with them around content – trying out different content configurations in space, using the low-fi approach of post-it notes applied to building plans.

Under the heading of 'opening up the conversation', provocations and critiques were also commissioned from external 'critical and creative friends', discussions held with the museum's Academic Panel, and ideas tested with existing and potential audiences through focus groups, interviews and a survey of over 1,200 people. The outcomes of this work were many and complex and underpinned the subsequent development of content and interpretation. It informed our narrative structure and balancing of 'big themes' with personal stories, reinforced our commitment to supporting visitors' imagination and emotional responses, and guided our approaches to ensuring diversity of representation and drawing out contemporary resonances to help visitors make connections with their own lives and see their place in the story.

One particularly tangible result was the confirmation of an organising principle based on ideas of time, expressed in a simple diagrammatic form which has become one of the stabilising elements of what is an extraordinarily complex project. Most visitors will enter through 'Real Time', capturing London in the moment. In the General Market they will first encounter 'Our Time', before descending to the historical galleries of 'Past Time' below. The Poultry Market will, in due course, provide a hub for the London Collection in 'Deep Time', as well as the museum's temporary exhibitions space and reflections upon London in the imagination.

[5] London Museum Interpretation Strategy, 2017



The interpretative 'organising principle' for the new London Museum. © London Museum

Visualisation of the new London Museum at night, 2019.
© Asif Khan Studio Mir

This up front positioning of London now and in the recent past is a shift for the museum, though one contemplated by our predecessors[6]. 'Our Time' will comprise thematic 'anchor installations' in which the voices of Londoners will have a defining presence, acting as a setting for a creative programme of events and small exhibitions, these together offering a dynamic take on London in our lifetimes, broadly the last 80 years. Much of our early audience testing suggested the value of beginning not at the beginning – that is, not with prehistory as the previous museums did – but rather with London in living memory, because of the levels of confidence, personal connection and emotional impact offered to visitors by the familiarity of this content.

A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO EXPLORING 'PAST TIME'

The 'Past Time' galleries were the first to be progressed in detail, as the largest and most complex. The Interpretation Masterplan enabled their development with the confidence of understanding their place within the wider context of the museum. They will occupy an atmospheric 2,500 sqm space beneath the General Market, once the goods depot of the Great Northern Railway. This consists of a large open space and a series of striking vaulted areas. Atelier Brückner were appointed as Lead Exhibition Designer for these spaces in late 2019.

The core lenses of time, people and place were first articulated as a way of looking at the past in the Interpretation Strategy. They were explored further during the Interpretation Masterplan, evolving into a key part of the spatial organising construct for 'Past Time'. Unlike the previous museum, whilst still central, chronology will not be the all-encompassing structural driver of the new London Museum.

'London's Story' will offer a rich but concise and accessible overview of London's history from the arrival of the Romans in 43 CE through to 2012, across a mere 800 sqm of display space. It will be presented in five chapters, with the chapterisation informed not by conventional historical periods but by shifts in London's place in the nation and world. The end date was selected for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, when the world looked at London and London looked at itself. 'London's Story' will be the anchor and a stepping off point for other displays in 'Past Time', so offering visitors a range of experiences and content.

The lenses of people and place will underpin two further core displays, 'London Landscape' and 'London Life'. Freedom from chronology here enables the juxtaposition of objects from different periods in discrete creative installations expressing broad ideas, respectively, about the physicality of the city and dimensions of living a London life. These installations will be set within the vaulted areas of the space, browsable rather than linear, intended as provocations, and often with contemporary resonances to help visitors make personal connections.

A number of smaller, more immersive spaces will sit around 'London's Story', providing further experiential texture. Choosing these was perhaps the biggest challenge of all, with more than 100 ideas having been proposed. The question that unlocked this decision-making was, 'what would London Museum be unimaginable without?'. The answers were found in the coincidence of the museum's strongest collections and subjects firmly fixed in the national school curriculum, resulting in displays that will be of particular appeal to schools and families.

As a final unexpected encounter, within the displays visitors will find a window with a view onto a live train line that passes by – part of a strategy across the museum campus to reveal rather than conceal the physical fabric and previous histories of these extraordinary buildings.

A CREATIVE AND COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

The new museum project prompted a review and shift in some of our working practices. Core content teams were established which include Content Leads from the museum's curatorial team working with Audience & Interpretation Leads, these latter being new posts created to bring a strong audience-focused perspective and interpretation expertise to the project.

Ensuring the project is drawing on current scholarship and achieving diversity of representation are fundamental

[6] In the early Proposed Designers' *Brief for the Museum of London*, it was suggested that the displays should 'form a sort of deceleration from the 20th century into history', though this was not implemented in practice

and related commitments. Long-term specialist advisors have supported the museum team from the outset with respect to colonial and post-colonial, disability and LGBTQ+ histories and representation. Their guidance and support has been supplemented by more than 100 critical friends and researchers who have offered expertise across a huge breadth of subject matters, including representations of faith and class, and wide-ranging specific topics from Roman animal paw prints to post-war music.

We have also undertaken projects working with people whose expertise derives wholly or in part from lived experience. For example, the museum was a partner in a programme entitled 'Curating for Change', led by Accentuate[7], which aimed to increase the representation of D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people in curatorial roles within the museum sector. The Head and a group of the Fellows from this programme worked with the museum team to create a brief for a series of artistic films which will reflect the lives and experiences of past disabled Londoners in the city. The personal and professional insights they were able to contribute unquestionably brought a level of depth, authenticity and authority to the brief.

Exceptional storytelling is a key aspiration, with creative practice recognised as its own form of expertise. Working with Storythings, the museum commissioned writers and poets to write the top-level interpretative texts for 'Past Time'. Each writer was carefully chosen for the synergy of their craft with the display in question, and each worked closely with the museum team to ensure historical accuracy and alignment of content. This will bring suitably epic and beautiful storytelling to the displays. A number of artists were also commissioned to create illustrations, at all scales from caption-level to a full room in one case.

[7] More information about Accentuate can be found here: screensouth.org/accentuate

This powerful visual storytelling, alongside films and other media exhibits, will include the representation of people of diverse backgrounds in an immediate way. All of this is aimed at achieving our ambition to create multi-dimensional experiences for visitors that will support imagination, emotional responses and personal connection, as well as enable learning and provoke thought.

Testing with audiences has been a key component throughout, including commissioned research projects with existing and potential audiences; a number of long-term audience panels including a Teachers' Panel, Family Panel, and Access Panel of people with lived experience of disability; regular online surveys with Londoners; and extensive 'pop-up' testing of exhibits through all stages of development within the museum's existing galleries.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

One of the advantages of such a large project, with two stages of opening, is that it is possible to apply lessons from early stages to later ones. Work is now progressing on 'Our Time' and beginning on the content for the displays in the Poultry Market. Future reflections will be shared as these develop, alongside visitor responses to the museum when it opens.

As part of developing the Interpretation Masterplan, the museum commissioned a number of creative thinkers to write provocation pieces in response to one big and essential question, 'What could a new London Museum be and do for Londoners?' One of these was Niellah Arboine, then Lifestyle Editor for gal-dem, an online and print magazine produced by women and non-binary people of colour. As part of her piece, she wrote in 2019, 'A museum is so much more than its exhibitions, it's about how it makes you feel'. When the museum opens in 2026, this perhaps will be the most important test of all.

Early visualisation of the Past Time displays, 2019. © Secchi Smith

Addressing the Museum Attendance and Benefit Gap or Is there a better story for museums?

MARK O'NEILL[1] & SUZANNE MACLEOD[2*]

Introduction: Do we make measuring success too complicated?

Why is it so hard to explain what museums do and why they are important? In many countries, people say they value their museums, but they also accept that they are first to be cut when public finances are under pressure. Why do these difficulties persist despite decades of research on the impact of museums – on the economy, on learning, on health and wellbeing? This is in part due to the fact that, once you have accepted that you need to justify museums' existence primarily on the basis of impact, you have lost the argument. If you have a good story, the evidence to back it up is supplementary, not the main actor. While any public servant would want to understand the outcomes of their work so that they can learn to do better, is there something fundamentally wrong with the impact approach? We believe that there is (MacLeod 2021, O'Neill 2023).

The overarching, cultural role of civic museums is to represent the life of the city (or region or country), past and present, to its citizens, to be a place where everyone can feel they belong and mix with their fellow citizens on an equal basis. This reflects one of the deepest, most ancient ambitions of civic institutions in many cultures, to promote reflective individuals and active citizens, inspired by the ideals of philosophies as diverse as those of Socrates, Confucius or the African concept of Ubuntu. And if this is our story, the key metric is very simple: how representative are the museum's visitors of the demography of its local population?

Museums and university scholars devote precious, scarce, research resources to the search for 'impact' but there are many possible benefits to visiting museums. In terms of the equitable distribution of the public service that museums provide, the most important question is not the precise nature of those benefits (interesting as this is), but who gets those benefits; the sharing of a civic cultural experience with a representative audience of one's fellow citizens is the impact. We know that across the world, very few, if any, museums have a visitor profile that represents their local populations. And we don't really understand why this is the case.

This article is about a research network in the UK, funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council, which brought together museum scholars, sector leaders and directors, along with sociologists, philosophers, health improvement methodologists and activists to try to find out what is going on. Our aim was to develop a research agenda to identify the new knowledge, theories and practices we would need in order to understand and address the persistence of the museum attendance and benefit gap.

Unchanging Inequalities in Museum Attendance and Benefit

Museum visiting follows the general socioeconomic profile, in that the people who are better off and better educated tend to have better life chances, get better jobs, have better mental and physical health and live longer, also visit museums more frequently. The first question therefore is whether museums – in societal terms, a small sector with insecure funding – can go against the grain of major structural inequalities and change these deeply embedded patterns. There is ample evidence that they can. Some museums make huge efforts to attract visitors from underrepresented groups; others go through the motions because of funder requirements and societal norms. (You're not fooling anyone: we all know who you are!). The result is that individual museums across the world vary hugely in how representative their audiences are, and many have consciously – and with some success - set out to attract social groups who were underrepresented amongst their visitors. The result is that there are many more, and more accessible, museums now than ever before. So, museums have agency; we can make a difference.

But we nonetheless face the problem of persistent unrepresentative museum audiences. We know that, at a population level, the gap in the percentage of lower

[1] Former Head of Glasgow Museums, Associate Fellow of Research Centre for Museum Studies.

[2] Professor, Museum Studies, University of Leicester, Co-Director of the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries.

and upper socioeconomic groups who visit museums hasn't changed in decades. In the UK this gap has been about 24 percentage points since 2005, and may have increased since the global financial crisis of 2010/11, and further since COVID. A number of European and American publications confirm this is an international pattern (European Commission, 2017). Despite the avowed aim of increasing inclusion of government policy, professional guidance, great numbers change of government to in government of museological publications and the commitment of most museums, there is little or no recognition of the undeniable evidence of the persistence of the attendance and benefit gap. Best practice advice to increase inclusion is 'more of the same', when, according to a 2022 book by Hadley, 'the policy of the democratisation of culture, and the practice of audience development, appear to have failed' (2022:234). After an in-depth review in Germany, Mandel found that 'traditional concepts of audience development do not lead to sustainable changes in the social structure of the audience. More substantial institutional changes are necessary, supported by new cultural policies' (2019:121).

But can you really plan for breakthrough thinking?
The implication of the persistent gap is that museums need breakthrough thinking to move beyond 'traditional concepts of audience development' and to identify the 'more substantial institutional changes' which would enable these innovations. There is no guaranteed way of identifying what would in effect be a paradigm shift, in the full sense the term was used by Thomas Kuhn - otherwise committed museums would already be working in this mode. But we believe we have identified a number of potentially fruitful starting points.

Museums in Denial – the primacy of educational attainment
The first is that sociological literature makes it clear that the single most important demographic characteristic which predicts museum visiting is level of formal educational attainment – more than income, occupation, or ethnicity. Analysis by Dr David Bartram, a Network member showed that in the UK, the tendency to visit museums increased with every additional educational qualification, with the biggest jump for those with university degrees. This is occasionally acknowledged in museum literature, but there is no exploration of why this is the case, of how this factor exerts its influence or of its implications for museum strategy. Consider for example how it is dealt with in what are probably the two books which have most inspired museum practice in promoting inclusion in the past 30 years, *The Museum Experience* (Falk & Dierking 1992) and *The Participatory Museum* (Simon 2010). In the latter it is not mentioned at all. In the former Falk says, quoting a Swedish study, that 'Education…appeared to be a far greater determinant of museum-going than did income, employment, or hobbies' (21). The updated edition (Falk & Dierking 2013) says 'why higher education continues to be so strongly correlated with museum attendance is less clear – if only because there are so many intervening forces at work between the formal process of getting an education and the leisure choice of attending a museum (55)'. In the 21 years between the two editions, there has been no advance in understanding the primacy of education in predicting museum visiting. The relationship between museum visiting and educational inequality is important, as educational inequality is both a result of, and a major cause of other forms of inequality. A major research question therefore is whether attendance and benefit gap is at least in part due to the fact that the organisational and public culture of museums favours the most educated and otherwise most included sections of society, so that people with fewer qualifications and especially those who are educationally disadvantaged are less likely to visit, not as a result of their choices, but because their cultural, social and leisure preferences are not catered for.

While there have been suggestive sociological (Danielsen 2008) and ethnographic (Heikkilä 2023) studies of the relationship between education and cultural engagement, the task of exploring how this plays out in museums in ways which might lead to innovations in practice remains to be done. In terms of the 'substantial institutional changes' that might be needed to drive these innovations, it is difficult to overstate the significance of this knowledge gap in museums: we have little or no understanding of the how the primary predictor of museum visiting (and not visiting) works. Many museums do not even collect data on level of educational attainment, much less use it as a key driver of inclusive strategies and organisational change.

Learning from our visitors
The socioeconomic pattern of museum attendance is a gradient. While the most elitist institutions have negligible numbers of visitors with no or few educational qualifications, most museums have some, and the more inclusive museums have many more than others. This means that there is a population of museum visitors who share this key characteristic (i.e. low educational attainment) with the larger numbers of people who don't visit museums. What makes them different from those who share their demographic? Is there something that distinguishes them that we can learn from, and attract more from this group? We couldn't find a single study of this important group.

Museums need better analysis
Looking at this situation it seems reasonable to assume that museums need significant analytical support to go beyond intuitive understandings not just of educational inequalities, but of inequality in general. We often lack the data skills (or the partnership with university data experts) to analyse national survey data on museum

visiting in terms of a much deeper understanding of inequalities. Museums continue to assume that they operate in a context where socioeconomic inequalities, especially within developed countries, are being reduced, when the opposite is in fact the case. Developing a historical understanding both of the deep (Savage 2021) persistence of inequality and of its changing forms (in terms of education, gender, ethnicity and class) over time is essential if museums are to contribute to creating a fairer, more democratic society (Savage 2021). This is all the more important given the recent emergence into the mainstream of forces opposed to the vision of social progress which has shaped museums since World War II, with the probable consequence of increased and new forms of inequality.

Museums need to rethink small projects

One of the symptoms of museums' lack of awareness is the lack of a relationship between large scale inequalities in museum visiting, and museum activities. If asked about their relationship with underrepresented groups in society, most museums will point to projects they have done with refugees, immigrants, people with mental health issues, neurodivergent people, women's groups and so on. These may involve a range of intensity of engagement from attending workshops to co-production of displays or events. While a lot of research effort is devoted to discovering the impact of these on the participants, the numbers involved are so small that it makes little sense for museums to claim that that constitute a contribution to societal wellbeing, employability or inclusion – and there is no evidence that they make any difference to how representative the audience is. Co-production may sensitise the museum to nuances about the experiences of particular social groups, so that they are better represented in displays, but these changes are not enough on their own to attract new audiences. In the context of the persistence of the attendance and benefit gap, the effort expended on these small projects, and on researching their impact, has to be questioned.

Methodologies: rethinking museums services

In terms of applied visitor research, it would seem useful to have a far more rigorous way of selecting, describing, implementing and evaluating the methodologies that might be used to attract more representative audiences. In this regard, we would want to build on work such as that of Packer (2008) on the nature of the visitor experience, and of Warran et al. (2021) on the 'ingredients' of cultural experience. But to take a really systematic approach we think we need to draw on Implementation Science, a methodology for studying how medical organisations implement techniques which have been scientifically proven to be effective. It is a method developed in response to the shocking finding that the average time it takes for medical research to be translated 'from bench to bedside' is 17 years – and that the period in between is called 'the valley of death'. Within the far less scientific culture of museums, identifying and implementing the most effective changes will be correspondingly more difficult. Museums rarely make the crucial distinction between testing an innovation designed to attract new audiences and the context or methods of its implementation. The result is that there is a very low level of generalisability in relation to museum practices, and of understanding of the organisational barriers and enablers of the kind of changes required. Implementation Science has recently taken a huge step forward. In 2022 Laura Damschroeder published a synthesis of the key features of over 70 different approaches to studying effective implementation, producing the Consolidated Framework for Implementation. We believe that translating the relevant features of (CFIR) into the world of museums has the potential to enable us to be much more rigorous in identifying and analysing the changes we need to make.

Methodologies: changing organisations

There are many studies of organisational change in museums. Most are accounts by insiders of how they changed their museums, and by university scholars studying museums. But these have not identified the 'substantial institutional changes' we need to make the paradigm shift. We believe that the insider-outsider dichotomy needs to be bridged, with university academics embedded within the museum, working jointly with staff to carry out practical experiments in attracting more representative audiences, while simultaneously identifying the organisational changes that are needed to enable the lessons of the experiments to be absorbed into the museums institutional culture. While co-production may feature in these experiments, user-testing/ formative evaluation is the key step that is required to ensure innovations work for target groups, and for other stakeholders. Our core museum partner will be Birmingham Museum Trust, who have demonstrated a strong commitment to attracting a more representative audience and to using evidence not primarily for advocacy but for organisational learning. As part of the project, we hope to develop a community of practice with other museums committed to engaging with these issues.

From their origins, most city museums have been representing civic identity, places where different groups of citizens - and visitors - can mingle while appreciating the publicly owned collections. In the context of polarisation of society, and in light of the evidence that museum audiences are persistently unequal, we believe that the aim of city museums to have representative audiences is the best story for us today. More than any, this story about who visits, more than any specific impact, fits with museums' deepest and most humane values and represents our most urgent potential contribution to society. We recognise that our research agenda aspires to a level of innovation which may elude us, but we hope

that, by sharing it in this uncertain state, we have offered you is a place to start the new analysis, experimentation and organisational development which may lead to the breakthrough insights we need to overcome ourlack of awareness and create genuinely civic museums.

Members of the Citizens' Jury. © Mark O'Neill

Members of the Citizens' Jury organised by Birmingham Museums Trust which is a core partner in the Addressing the Museum Attendance and Benefit Gap project. A group of 28 residents, who were statistically representative of the city's superdiverse population of 1.1 million people, met for 30 hours over six sessions to discuss what they wanted from their civic museums. Their in-depth conversations were facilitated by an independent charity dedicated to democratic renewal called Shared Future (https://sharedfuturecic.org.uk/). The Jury's recommendations can be read here: *https://birmingham-museums.files.svdcdn.com/production/Documents/BMT-documents/Birmingham-Museums-Citizens-Jury-Report.pdf?dm=1740401806* And a video about them is here: *https://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/about/what-we-do/citizens-jury*

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The Association du Vieux Montmartre & Musée de Montmartre: the history of the city from an artistic perspective

ANDRÉA DELAPLACE*

View of the Montmartre Museum. © Andréa Delaplace

Created in the 1880s, the Musée Carnavalet - Histoire de Paris, the official city museum of Paris presents an extensive chronological exhibition on the history of the French capital. But did you know that this is not the only city museum in Paris? The Musée de Montmartre is dedicated to the history of one of the most iconic and representative Parisian neighbourhoods. Its permanent exhibition presents changes to the urban landscape, following Haussmann's extensive planning for the *City of Lights.*

The museum (and Renoir gardens[1]) is installed within a group of buildings that includes the Hotel Demarne, the Bel Air House and the studio-apartment of artists Suzanne Valadon and Maurice Utrillo. Inaugurated in 1960, it was refurbished in 2011 and since then has organised several temporary exhibitions that mostly focus on the artists who lived in Montmartre. The Association Le Vieux Montmartre is at the core of the collections of the Musée de Montmartre. In this short article we are going to take a close look at this unique museum.

The Association du Vieux Montmartre: a historical and archeological society more than a hundred years old

Founded in 1886, the Society of History and Archaeology called Le Vieux Montmartre, was recognised as a public utility in 1967. Since 1960, its collections have been presented at the Musée de Montmartre, 12/14, rue Cortot, which has been awarded the Musée de France label since 2003.

This historical association has built a collection of more than 6,000 works of art: paintings, sculptures, prints and photographs, either illustrating the history of Montmartre or having been created by local artists.

It is also rich in specific collections, in particular, one devoted to French songs (*chansonnier français*). This set constitutes nearly 100,000 documents and is an archive recognised by researchers all over the world for its historical value.

Published annually, the society's bulletin brings together articles on the history of Montmartre written by experts.

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[1] The gardens were named in homage to Auguste Renoir who lived in one of the buildings where the museum is now located from 1876 and 1878. While living there he painted some of his most famous paintings: *La Balançoire* (1876, today at the Musée d'Orsay), *Jardin de la rue Cortot à Montmartre* (1876, today at the Carnegie Museum of Art) and *Le moulin de la galette* (1876, today at the Musée d'Orsay).

The cultural centre offers many activities to members and the public including conferences, shows and cultural visits.

The main mission of the association is to carry out various projects, including making documentation more accessible to researchers by using digital technology. It wants to deepen its role as a learned society by increasing the frequency of its publications. It also actively seeks out patrons and sponsors to set up temporary exhibitions and finance new acquisitions.

The Musée de Montmartre: a small city museum dedicated to local history and art

The Musée de Montmartre was established in 1960 in one of the oldest buildings in Montmartre. Built in the 17th century, the Maison du Bel Air is surrounded by beautiful gardens and was a creative space for many artists including Auguste Renoir, Émile Bernard, Raoul Dufy, Charles Camoin, Suzanne Valadon, and Maurice Utrillo.

The permanent collections explore Montmartre at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th. From the bustling atmosphere of its artists' studios (like the Bateau-Lavoir or the Cortot buildings where the museum stands today) to the atmosphere of its famous cabarets (the Lapin Agile to the Moulin Rouge), the traces of bohemianism (*la bohème montmartroise*) and artists who lived in Montmartre are at the heart of the permanent collections and exhibition. For example, one room is dedicated to Montmartre's iconic artists, while another showcases shadow theatre, the dreamlike setting that made the Chat Noir cabaret famous. This historical period is very important in the history of Paris becaming the international capital for arts and culture or as Walter Benjamin describes it, as the *capitale du XIXème siècle*.

These collections immerse you in the history of Montmartre. During the 19th century, the landscape began to transform, and Paris annexed Montmartre in 1860 following the the city's landscape by Haussmann. From a small countryside village on the outskirts of Paris it became one of its neighbourhoods (part of the 18th arrondissement), thus suffering the deep urban transformations that were affecting it. But Montmartre was in many ways spared from drastic urban changes and kept a certain picturesque quality to its landscape that attracted many artists and tourists. Artists began settling there in the 1870s. Cafés and cabarets proliferated in the 1880s. Montmartre quickly became known for its vibrant, creative energy.

Atelier Suzanne Valadon. © Andréa Delaplace

The museum's gardens represent the diversity of Parisian flora and create a little oasis for visitors. Between rose bushes and trees, the visitor is immersed in a picturesque and very charming setting. Indeed, the museum's communications highlight this by proclaiming it, "The most charming museum in Paris"[2].

One of the main features of this charming museum is the atelier of Suzanne Valadon, a pioneer woman painter who moved into her studio-apartment in 1912. Suzanne Valadon, Maurice Utrillo (her son), and André Utter (her husband) left their iconic marks at 12 rue Cortot. Thanks to its recent renovation, the soul of this eternal trio (or known as the trio infernal) has reinvigorated the space: the stove has been reinstalled, the studio's mezzanine has been recreated, and Utrillo's bedroom panelling and window screen have been restored.

Because all of the original equipment was removed, the scenographer Hubert Le Gall was obliged to hunt for all the

[2] For more information please check the museum's website: https://museedemontmartre.fr/

View of the old apartments of Suzanne Valadon and her son Maurice Utrillo. © Andréa Delaplace

pieces now displayed in this studio-apartment. To be as faithful as possible to the period, he relied on letters and writings evidence of life in the past, as well as historical photographs of the premises.

In 2010, the museum was threatened with closure due to a lack of funding to keep it open. After negotiations with the City of Paris (the owner of the land and historic buildings), which wanted to annex the collections of the Musée de Montmartre to the collections of the Musée Carnavalet, an agreement was reached to preserve the collections in the buildings on Rue Cortot. Since July 1st 2011, the St Jean-St Vincent Company of Mr. Kléber Rossillon has managed the Musée de Montmartre. It is, therefore, a museum owned by the City of Paris but managed by a private company as a Musée de France.[3]

[3] The *musées de France* labels are state-approved museums and receive priority support from the state, according to the law of January 4, 2002. The designation "Museum of France" may be granted to museums belonging to the state, another legal entity under public law, or a non-profit private entity. More than 1,200 museums benefit from this designation.

The museum presents a collection focused on the history of Montmartre and events such as the Paris Commune. These events are the basis of the collections of Old Montmartre (and the archives), and the origins of the Museum of Montmartre. The museum therefore has two main areas of focus: first, the collections of the history of the Montmartre district (city museum) and second, the histories of the artists (painters, writers, composers) who lived there. The old buildings and workshops are now devoted to exhibitions.

Temporary exhibitions are more focused on artistic movements and artists. Central to these is the reopening of Suzanne Valadon's studio. The exhibitions are all about the artists who lived in Montmartre, thus creating a connection between local history and art history. It is a city/neighbourhood museum that is focused on art.

Montmartre still preserves the atmosphere of the countryside in the middle of Paris. With its small houses, small squares and hidden gardens, what was once the peaceful village of Montmartre still echoes in the small, cobbled streets of the hill.

The museum also plays with tourists' romantic images of Paris and 'Frenchness.'[4] This idea of an imaginary Frenchness, based on clichés, is not specific to the Montmartre district (which is extremely touristy). The charm of Paris is therefore also one of the things exploited by the museum to attract visitors (for example, the products sold in the giftshop or the information on the museum's website that highlights its proximity to the place du Tertre or Le Bateau Lavoir).

But the museum doesn't really speak to the urban transformation of Montmartre and the gentrification process that has been changing many famous Parisian districts, such as Saint-Germain and the Marais, for example.

The Musée de Montmartre maintains a profound historical and artistic connection with the Bateau-Lavoir, the legendary artist residence located in Place Émile Goudeau. Though no longer open to public visits, this historic site once hosted some of the most influential figures of modern art, including Pablo Picasso, Juan Gris, Kees van Dongen, and many others who contributed to the

[4] Valérie Guillaume spoke about this in 2021 *(published in the CAMOC review*) when she highlighted the importance of developing research on the development of the tourism industry in France after the Second World War and the strong influence of American tourists (and the travel industry) in creating a romanticised imaginary around the city that would be diffused internationally through Hollywood films and American literature.

rise of Cubism and avant-garde movements in the early 20th century. While access to the interior is restricted (as it is now private studios), a specially designed display window—installed by the museum—offers a glimpse into the building's artistic legacy, featuring portraits and biographies of the renowned artists who lived and worked there.

Each October, the museum becomes a vibrant hub of activity during the Fête des Vendanges, Montmartre's annual grape harvest festival. Visitors flock to the area to enjoy local traditions and purchase wine produced from the Clos Montmartre, one of Paris's few remaining vineyards, located just a short walk from the museum. This festive occasion highlights the museum's deep connection to the cultural and agricultural heritage of the neighborhood.

The museum also places a strong emphasis on education and cultural engagement. Its educational programs are diverse, offering hands-on workshops for children and teenagers that explore painting, sculpture, and other artistic disciplines, all thematically linked to the museum's temporary and permanent exhibitions. In addition, guided tours are available for adult groups, schools, and educational institutions, with bookings available upon reservation. These initiatives foster a dynamic exchange between the museum and the local community, as well as visitors from around the world.

In essence, the Musée de Montmartre is a compelling example of an associative history museum that has grown into a specialized institution dedicated to exploring the rich cultural and artistic life of Montmartre in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Its unique blend of historical preservation, community involvement, and educational programming ensures its continued relevance and appeal in the contemporary museum landscape.

In 2022, I had the experience to work at the Musée de Montmartre in the education department, conducting then some of the activities for young children, school groups and families. I also did guided tours of the permanent collections and the temporary exhibition "Fernande Olivier et Pablo Picasso, dans l'intimité du Bateau-Lavoir"[5], from October 14, 2022 to February 19, 2023 as part of the Picasso Celebration (1973-2023). It was a wonderful experience to be able to tell the history of Paris (and its social and urban transformations)

[5] For more info please check the Museum's website: https://museedemontmartre.fr/exposition/expo-fernande-olivier-picasso/

View from the exterior of the atelier. © Andréa Delaplace

through the lens of the artists that lived in this bohemian neighborhood. It is a museum that certainly deserves a detour while in Paris.

View of the entrance of the Bateau-Lavoir. © Musée de Montmartre

City museum or the city as a museum?
The case of Rome

PIETRO FENICI, PAOLA PORRETTA*

Columns at Parco archeologico del Celio, Rome (2024). © Pietro Fenici

The idea of establishing a city museum in Rome began to take shape in the early 20th century. In the second half of the 20th century, the debate on the organisation of Rome's city museum developed around two well-defined and still relevant positions: on the one hand, the discussion concerning the creation of a new city museum; on the other, the idea of enhancing the city itself as a museum.

Rome is particularly complex due to the extraordinary richness of its heritage and the many existing museums in the city itself across its territory. Today the Museo di Roma, located in Palazzo Braschi, is not able to fully convey the complexity of the capital.

Rome, therefore, still lacks a museum dedicated to its urban history and its inhabitants, a place capable of narrating its past and present and reflecting on its future. In *Per un Museo della città di Roma* (1995), the renowned Italian art historian Giuliano Briganti already highlighted the critical issues and organisational challenges

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surrounding Rome's case:

> Rome lacks a museum that illustrates the city's history. The Museo di Roma at Palazzo Braschi, cannot be considered as such. Many European capitals, by contrast, have museums dedicated to their city's history, particularly remarkable are those in London and Amsterdam. A study of these museums, designed using modern principles, could serve as a foundation for a city museum of Rome (Briganti, 1995, p. 155)[1].

Given these considerations, it is crucial to address the issue of the lack of a city museum capable of narrating Rome's ever-evolving history. For this reason, it is useful to place the Roman case within a broader national and international framework concerning city museums.

A few possible definitions

A valuable starting point emerges from the statement of Nichola Johnson, who defines the role that a city museum should play:

> The best city museums act as a starting point for the discovery of the city, which can lead people to look with fresh, more informed and more tolerant eyes at the richness of the present urban environment and to imagine beyond it to past and possible future histories (Johnson, 1995, p. 6).

With the publication of the *Barcelona Declaration on European City Museums* (2013), drafted by the City History Museum Network of Europe, several common characteristics of a city museum are outlined at the European level. By covering multiple areas, the declaration addresses urban history and heritage, highlighting the museum's role in tourism:

> As an institution with a scope extending beyond its actual building to include the entire town, a city museum can offer innovative sightseeing strategies and help develop more profitable and sustainable tourist programmes. City museums can contribute to interpreting the urban fabric, its monuments and its architecture, in new and stimulating ways[2].

It is important to take into account these considerations regarding the idea of a potential new city museum in Rome. It becomes clear that Rome's current museums - such as the Museo di Roma - are far from embody these characteristics despite their intention to tell the history of the city. Reflecting on the Roman case means comparing it with other European realities and analyzing their strengths. In this context, selected case studies could come into play, including the Musée Histoire de Paris Carnavalet, the Museu d'Història de Barcelona (MUHBA), and the Amsterdam Museum, which, although adopting different approaches, represent valid reference models.

Brief history of the current Museo di Roma

The Museo di Roma, originally located in the former Pastificio Pantanella building on Via dei Cerchi, was inaugurated on the 21st of April 1930, the day that the foundation of the city is celebrated. The inscription "Palazzo dei Musei di Roma" was painted on the facade of the building. Closed in 1939 due to World War II, the Museum reopened to the public in 1952 at its current location in the 18th century Palazzo Braschi, situated in the historic centre of the city in Piazza di San Pantaleo, between Corso Vittorio Emanuele II and Piazza Navona.

The former Palazzo dei Musei di Roma in the former Pastificio Pantanella building on Via dei Cerchi, Rome (2025). © Pietro Fenici.

In its initial setup, the Museum was primarily oriented towards illustrative and documentary pruposes. From the early years until its closure in 1939, the Museum's collections were expanded considerably, combining the documentary value of the collections with an increasing historical-artistic value.

At Palazzo Braschi, the Museum's collections were enlarged and reorganised several times until 1987, when the building was closed for structural restoration. The restoration did not begin until 1998, and the

[1] All translations of quotations originally in Italian are by Pietro Fenici.

[2] City History Museums Network. (2013, November 8). *Barcelona Declaration on European City Museums*. https://cityhistorymuseums.wordpress.com/

Entrance to the former Palazzo dei Musei di Roma in the former Pastificio Pantanella building on Via dei Cerchi, Rome (2025). © Pietro Fenici

Museum was partially reopened to the public in 2002 with the inauguration of the exhibition entitled *Il Museo di Roma racconta la città*[3].

The setting of the current Museo di Roma

Temporary exhibitions have always been a pivotal element of the Museum's organisation since its opening, and they continued to be relevant even after its reopening in 1952 at the new venue. The original character of the exhibitions still influences the museum's structure today. As the archaeologist Daniele Manacorda (2008) observes, "the experience of Palazzo Braschi was essentially about narrating the story of Rome through a selection of its art and little more" (p. 229). Indeed, the Museo di Roma can be understood as an institution where the narration of the city primarily relies on the exhibition of artworks. While offering a glimpse into its history, this approach is insufficient to convey the layered complexity of the city, which demands a broader, multidisciplinary perspective capable of integrating multiple narratives. This need is clearly evident in the description provided by the historian Daniele Jalla (2009) who emphasises how the gap between reality and museum representation is particularly evident in the city's museums:

> In city museums, perhaps even more so than in other types of museums, the gap between reality and its museum-based interpretation is immediately evident: their subject, the city, is just outside the museum door, while their content, in some ways, serves as its container. […] Interpreting the city as a multifaceted and complex reality is especially challenging, as it requires capturing both its diachronic and synchronic dimensions; the *urbs*, the visible and constructed city, and the *civitas*, the invisible city of the men and women who have inhabited and shaped it. A city museum - to truly be one - must simultaneously be a museum of the urban structure as a living community and of the relationships that define it, both internally and in connection with the territorial, social, economic, and political context of which it is part (pp. 11-12).

[3] On the history of the Museo di Roma, without claiming to be exhaustive, please refer to the following texts: Muñoz, 1930; Tittoni, 2002; Ilie & Travaglini, 2008.

Although similar to that of other city institutions, the current structure of the Museo di Roma pursues different objectives, struggling to offer an articulated vision of the city. The focus on collecting works of art has progressively aligned it with a traditionally structured art museum, limiting its ability to represent the multiplicity of aspects that characterise such a layered and, therefore, complex reality. This reality, in fact, is not confined to just material heritage, such as architectural or archaeological heritage, but also includes intangible elements, such as social inequalities, the sounds of the city, toponymy, and popular music. Only an approach that integrates both tangible and intangible dimensions can fully convey the richness and stratification of Rome.

The Museo di Roma today: some data

For the reasons outlined above, the Museo di Roma proves to be an ineffective means for understanding urban dynamics, both from the perspective of the citizens who live in the city every day and from the perspective of tourists eager to explore and deepen their knowledge of it. This trend is highlighted in 2024 by the data published in the Municipality of Rome statistical yearbook in Chapter 7 concerning culture. The document provides a clear overview of the current situation of the Museum, comparing it with other major museum institutions in the area:

> In almost all civic museums, there has been an increase in visitors compared to 2023. The most significant exception is the Museo di Roma at Palazzo Braschi (72,822, -61.4%), for which the Sovrintendenza Capitolina notes that the number of visitors is primarily linked to the exhibition programme. In fact, the exceptional figure of 188,606 visitors in 2022 was influenced by the large turnout for the Klimt exhibition, which beganin 2021[4].

Most of the visits to the Museo di Roma today are from temporary exhibitions, which often address themes entirely unrelated to its presumed mission. In the past, temporary exhibitions were closely connected to the city, such as the *Mostra della fotografia a Roma dal 1840 al 1915*, organised in 1953, a year after the Museum's reopening. Thus, the Museo di Roma cannot properly answer the needs of a city museum as a place that is intended to offer a comprehensive narrative of the urban context, nor does it serve as an expression of the local community.

The possible role of a city museum in Rome today

The city of Rome, unique for its extraordinary richness of historical, archaeological, artistic, and urban heritage, makes the complexity of the topic even more evident in a museum context.

In such a layered city, a city museum could play the role of a heritage Interpretation Centre: a reference point within a museum network, a structure able to connect to multiple cultural realities – and other aspects – of the city's territory.

As Daniele Jalla (2009) explains, an Interpretation Centre would not merely acquire and preserve objects but would be configured as an open institution capable of enhancing contexts and themes and providing tools to understand heritage in its entirety. Indeed, "[…] just as the 'museum-collection', by acquiring objects, is introverted and tends to be centripetal, so an 'interpretation centre', favouring conservation *in situ* and enhancing a context or theme, is extroverted and centrifugal" (p. 13). From this perspective, the museum would become a place where citizens themselves could identify themselves, fostering a shared memory. As George Steiner (2019) stated, "A society that actively cultivates a common memory is in contact with its past. More importantly, it protects the core of its individuality" (p. 23).

The model proposed by Jalla could be particularly suitable for the Roman context: a diffuse museum with an Interpretation Centre that works as its heart and brain, functioning both as a gateway to the city and as a presidium for the active protection of urban cultural heritage. This would be an alternative to the current static organisation of the Museo di Roma. In this vision, the city museum would no longer be a mere container of artworks but a true instrument for knowledge, debate, and the preservation of the city's memory. Not a one-way museum but a centre capable of generating continuous questions about the evolving city, offering visitors new possibilities to read and understand it with greater awareness.

CONCLUSIONS

The possibility of creating a future city museum in Rome remains a central topic of the debate, crucial for the development, understanding, and dissemination of the Capital's cultural identity. The establishment of a new city museum conceived as a starting point for the enhancement of Rome as a diffuse museum, is not merely a matter of managing exhibition spaces but reflects a broader vision of the relationship between historical memory, contemporary development, and future perspectives. According to Aldo Rossi (1978), the memory of the city is a "collective memory[5]" (p. 177), and it also

[4] Municipality of Rome. (2024). *Statistical yearbook 2024.* Chapter 7, Culture. URL: https://www.comune.roma.it/web-resources/cms/documents/07_Cultura_Annuario_2024.pdf

[5] This definition is given by Aldo Rossi based on the words of Maurice Halbwachs: Halbwachs, M. (1968). *La mémoire collective* (Pref. J. Duvignaud, Intr. J. Michel Alexandre). Presses Universitaires de France, Paris.

serves as a foundational element of Rome's urban identity. Within the context of the museum, this memory becomes the cornerstone of its narrative.

For Rossi (1978) "[...] the city itself is the collective memory of the peoples, and just as memory is linked to facts and places, the city is the *locus*[6] of collective memory. This relationship between the *locus* and the citizens thus becomes the preeminent image, the architecture, the landscape, and as facts enter into memory, new facts grow within the city" (p. 177).

Given these considerations, the creation of a city museum in Rome cannot overlook this identity dimension, as museum spaces themselves directly impact the collective narrative of the city. As Aldo Rossi (1978) continues: "[...] collective memory becomes the transformation of space brought about by the community; [...] Memory, in this way, becomes the thread binding together the entire complex structure; through this, the architecture of urban facts distances itself from art, conceived as an element existing independently" (p. 178).

In conclusion, a city museum in Rome should not merely serve as a repository of artworks but also as a vital vehicle for organising and transmitting the narrative of the city, contributing to building and strengthening the perception that citizens have of their history and their connection to the territory.

[6] Aldo Rossi (1978) defines *locus* as "a singular yet universal relationship that exists between a certain local situation and the constructions in that place" (p.135).

The current location of the Museo di Roma at Palazzo Braschi viewed from Piazza di San Pantaleo, Rome (2025). © Pietro Fenici

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Earth Optimism and Youth Action at HistoryMiami Museum

OLGASABRINA RUEDA*

Braddock students teaching plarn to peers. © HistoryMiami

Founded in 1940, HistoryMiami Museum (HM) is the oldest continuously operating cultural institution in the city and for decades has served Miami youth through diverse educational projects. HM's mission is to safeguard and share Miami stories to foster learning, inspire a sense of place, and cultivate an engaged community and it accomplishes this mission through not only research, collections activities, and exhibitions, but also a wide variety of programs for learners of all ages. These educational initiatives include offerings for students at the museum, in their classrooms, and at historic sites throughout the Miami area.

Between September 2022 and December 2024, HM participated in an innovative, youth-oriented project focused on environmental sustainability. The Earth Optimism Youth Action & Leadership (EOYAL) initiative was a national program created by Smithsonian Affiliations[1], in collaboration with HM and six additional Smithsonian Affiliate organizations across the United States of America[2]. During this second iteration of the EOYAL project, each of these museums engaged two Title 1 high schools to undertake this special effort[3].

[3] A Title 1 school is a school that receives federal funding to support students from low-income areas.

Everglades field trip. © HistoryMiami

* Olgasabrina Rueda, Manager of Education and School Initiatives, HistoryMiami Museum

[1] HM has been a Smithsonian Affiliate since 2011. Smithsonian Affiliations is a national outreach program of the Smithsonian Institution that "creates long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with museums and other cultural and educational organizations to fulfill the Smithsonian's mission," a mission that focuses on the "increase and diffusion of knowledge." In collaboration with more than 200 Affiliate organizations, "the Smithsonian reaches millions of visitors each year and many times more in classrooms and online with engaging and innovative learning opportunities. By sharing their collective resources with communities near and far, they create a greater impact on those we serve." (Smithsonian)

[2] The other six affiliated museums were: The Museum of Natural Sciences in North Carolina, The Mayborn Museum Complex in Texas, Aquarium of the Bay in California, The Museum of the Rockies in Montana, The Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium in Iowa, and The Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West in Arizona.

Morikami field trip. © HistoryMiami

The EOYAL Project

The purpose of EOYAL was to empower youth around the nation to improve their environmental literacy skills and become stewards of their communities in relationship to environmental change. Participating youth were tasked to create a climate action plan to benefit them and their community. This plan served as the basis for creating their own environmental projects to implement in their school or community, with seed funding from the program. Along with developing a plan, the program encouraged affiliated organizations to offer youth field trips and/or outdoor experiences, opportunities to network with local leaders, and paid internships.

In addition to offering these activities for youth, EOYAL provided opportunities for participating teachers. The project awarded teachers a stipend for their time and provided them with various online professional development workshops. Collaborating organizations such as the World Wildlife Fund and the Smithsonian Science Education Center led these learning opportunities with the goal of preparing the teachers to help their students create the desired action plan. During August 2023, the Smithsonian Institution also invited participating teachers to a summit at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center in Edgewater, Maryland, where participants met fellow teachers and museum professionals.

EOYAL in Miami

Miami is often cited as being ground zero for the impact of climate change and sea level rise in the United States, making the city an appropriate location for the EOYAL project to take place. When the Smithsonian Institution invited HM to participate, we wondered how the museum could address the intersection of climate science and history. We asked ourselves: "Why not go to the local science museum?" After further discussion, however, we concluded that environmental history is part of Miami's story and always has been. With this initiative, we facilitated conversations centered around how Miamians have dealt with climate issues over time. We believed that the participating youth would benefit from learning about the past as they developed their climate action plans.

After committing to the initiative, we selected Ronald Reagan-Doral Senior High and G. Holmes Braddock Senior High as the participating high schools. The museum has a longstanding relationship with each, as they have participated in other youth projects the museum has hosted and/or their students have visited the museum on field trips. We started our EOYAL journey by inviting both school cohorts to visit HM where we introduced the program, our museum, and how we would assist them in developing their environmental leadership skills and connect them with local leaders and organizations.

Next, we established a monthly meeting to help guide each school group in selecting and achieving their project. Besides these monthly meetings, we also planned outings for the youth to connect and learn from local environmental leaders. One of these excursions, for example, featured a Park Ranger at Everglades National Park. For many of the students, this field trip was their first time visiting the Everglades. They learned about the significance of the park to South Florida's environment, including that the Everglades supplies most of the water used in the region and the consequences of damaging this vital natural resource.

Of special note is that HM organized a joint outing for both schools to have an opportunity to get to know each other and share their developing projects. This trip took place at Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens in Delray Beach, Florida, where they met with the museum horticulturist to learn about different techniques used to care for native and non-native plants in the garden. Afterwards, each group had time to present and discuss its EOYAL project related to its school or community. These outings and


(Left) Reagan and Braddock cleaning up Brazilian Pepper trees. (Right) Reagan students working on their action plan. © HistoryMiami

guest speakers were instrumental in helping the groups form their project ideas.

Direct2Success:

Braddock Senior High chose to create an after-school club called "Direct2Success" (D2S). With eight core members, D2S seeks to "educate our peers on how to help homelessness while also helping save our Earth." (Direct2Success, 2023) The club teaches peers in their school and nearby schools how to repurpose plastic bags into plarn (**pl**astic-y**arn**), which can be used to crochet various items such as tote bags, mats, blankets, and more. This effort enables the group to remove plastic waste from the city's landfill and teaches others how to use resources more sustainably. The makers can use their creations or donate them to the Homeless Trust Network, a local organization that helps individuals to find housing. HM contributed to this project by organizing clean-ups at local parks and beaches and by hosting three plarn workshops for the public.

Reagan Four:

Reagan Senior High, on the other hand, incorporated the EOYAL project into their classroom curriculum. This cohort split into four teams, each creating a different project to benefit their school, neighborhood, or the city overall. Two teams (OneRecycle and GreenforGood) developed action plans to benefit the school, and the other two teams (Task Force Earth and Project Prosper) created projects focused on impacting their community.

- **OneRecycle** audited their school's recycling program and discovered that the contents of the recycling bins inside the school did not get added to the outside bins, which are the ones taken to the recycling plant. With HM's assistance, the group found new bins for inside the school that would be used properly.
- **GreenforGood** formed a new school club and created a produce garden for their school cafeteria and other schools around them.
- **Task Force Earth** developed an educational channel on YouTube and a segment for the school TV announcement that features animated videos about the importance of caring for the natural environment.
- **Project Prosper** focused on ways to remove invasive plant species in the area. HM helped them organize an invasive plant clean-up at Historic Virginia Key Beach Park, where they removed non-native Brazilian Pepper trees. This group also attended neighborhood town hall meetings to raise awareness of proper techniques to care for non-native pets to prevent them from being released into the wild and becoming potentially harmful invasive species.

Conclusion

Since the beginning of this project, the participating students have graduated and started their university careers. Several have expressed interest in pursuing an environmental degree, a museum degree, or a degree in an adjacent field. The teacher sponsor for both D2S and GreenforGood has stayed in contact with HM, keeping the museum updated on the clubs' work since the end of the EOYAL project. New students have continued D2S and GreenforGood at their respective schools, with the original team members serving as mentors. D2S, for example, recently created plarn tote bags for an Easter egg hunt at a local shelter.

If your institution is seeking to create or restart a youth program focused on the environment, building on existing relationships with schools, community organizations, or other collaborators can provide a foundation for success. HM's commitment to engaging participants through listening and collaboration helped make EOYAL in Miami a success, not only for the youth empowered to become effective leaders, but also for our institution to impact our community and its future.

Resource Links:
HistoryMiami Museum
Smithsonian Affiliations
Smithsonian Magazine
Smithsonian Learning Lab
Direct2Success Instagram
Reagan Earth Optimism Instagram
Green for Good Instagram

Reinforce, renew and expand: learning and engagement at STAM

EMMA VERSCHRAEGEN AND EEF ROMBAUT*

At STAM (Ghent City Museum) we study city and urbanism and, together with our public, we also question these concepts. Our new policy plan outlines the three main pillars that support this undertaking through learning and engagement. We reinforce and deepen our existing offering to the public, renew that offering by means of co-creative projects with stakeholders, and broaden our scope with an accessible programme of activities that promotes inclusivity. With the first year of our new policy plan behind us, we can reflect on those three pillars, each in the context of an actual case study.

Reinforcement and expansion

Guided tours spanning pre-school to adult education have always been a constant at STAM. In our permanent exhibition 'The Story of Ghent', a chronological trail through the city's history, in addition to standard guided tours, we also offer themed guided tours, which expand on story lines from our permanent collection. For example, we are now offering a guided tour on the theme of eating and drinking ('Hunger for Ghent') and another on the history of the museum site ('The Bijloke Sisters').

* Eef Rombaut and Emma Verschraegen, Team Education and Public Engagement, STAM

Our guided tour for secondary schools titled 'Blood, sweat and care on the Bijloke site' is a further illustration of this reinforcement. It explores the history of our museum buildings, which were once part of a site where care was provided for the sick, and makes that context relevant to students today. We took our existing content as our starting point and now reach schools that previously would have been less inclined to visit the museum. Ninety percent of the classes that followed this guided tour were attending training courses in the care sector.

Renewal through co-creation

Our educational team is in constant contact with the work sphere and uses informal and formal channels to identify new educational needs. Final attainment targets and minimum objectives are reinforced with discussions with teachers, educational institutions, pupils and guides. When developing a new offering, we at STAM go full circle and invariably make testing, asking for feedback and adjustments part of the process.

By way of illustrating this approach, we might look at our 'Democracity' workshop, which is designed for secondary schools. In recent years, we at STAM have noticed an

Workshop Democracity. © Ghent Museum

increasing demand for dialogue, interaction and hands-on participation. After all, reflecting on and talking about city and urbanism invite action. So we researched and tested new forms of interaction, which encourage pupils to engage more in debate, actively question opinions and roll up their sleeves. In so doing, we also take into account pupils' different learning styles and interests.

These experiences, along with signals from stakeholders about the need for 'safe spaces' in which to discuss complex subjects with young people as a class, led to the development of the 'Democracity' workshop (in collaboration with the BELvue Museum in Brussels). The content of the workshop revolves around identity, diversity, democracy and substantiated dialogue and works towards multi-perspectivity. Pupils form political parties and build their ideal city together. They converse, voice different opinions and make collective decisions. We understand from feedback from teachers that this helps young people overcome their reluctance to discuss social issues in class. Whereas in the classroom such discussions are in danger of degenerating into heated arguments and polarization, we provide a solid workshop structure headed up by external facilitators. In 2024, an important election year in Belgium, a total of four hundred pupils attended this workshop.

An accessible and inclusive programme of activities
Apart from reinforcing and renewing our offering, we also provide activities designed to widen our audience. In essence, this is about reaching target groups who are less likely to set foot in a museum, such as young children, people in poverty and newcomers who are non-native Dutch speakers. Special exhibitions target specific groups and offer them more content-related input through a programme of engaging experiences.

As a case in point, let us take a recent special exhibition titled 'Ghent's Land', which explored the relationship between town and countryside. As part of the programming around the exhibition, we organized (among other things) country bike rides, lend-a-hand days on farms and a harvest feast, all in association with a series of partners, including guiding organizations, local tradespeople and farmers. These peripheral activities enabled us to introduce a wider public to a fairly specialized subject.

Accessibility, interaction and dialogue are the cornerstone of STAM's current and future learning and engagement programme. Feedback from our stakeholders confirms that we are building a richer vision of the city - past, present and future - for our regular visitors and also for a new audience.

'**The Story of Ghent**' is STAM's permanent exhibition. This online selection of fifteen objects gives a flavour of the *story: www.stamgent.be/fromdottodot.*

This digital display showcases the video testimonies that featured in STAM's **Ghent's Land** exhibition (22.03 - 29.09.2024):
www.stamgent.be/gentsland

Museum workshop. © Martin Corlazzoli

General activities children's track. © Ghent Museum

Indigenizing the Museum: The Case of Contemporary Inuit Art in Canada

JULIA ETOURNAY-LEMAY*

In an article published in American Indian Quarterly in 2011, Lisa King draws on the concept of rhetorical sovereignty, which she defines as: "To claim rhetorical sovereignty is to claim the right to determine communicative need and to decide as a people how Native nations should be constructed in public discourse" (King, 2011, p. 79). For First Nations and Inuit museum professionals in Canada, taking control of their own narrative is a key issue in the process of indigenizing the museums. Far from being confined to the cultural sphere, exhibitions raise a major, deeply political, question: who has the right, the capacity, and the legitimacy to define what Indigenous art is, especially through its presentation in museums?

These questions are particularly sensitive in the case of contemporary Inuit art, whose history is inextricably linked to the colonization of the Arctic. It emerged at the turn of the 1950s in response to demand from the southern Canadian market and provided a source of income for many Inuit during the period of forced sedentarization imposed by the federal government. For a long time, exhibitions of Inuit art were shaped solely by Western perspectives. A first rupture occurred in 1992 with the Indigena exhibition at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, which marked the beginning of Indigenous-led curatorial practice. The exhibition took place in a context of growing political and cultural activism among First Nations and Inuit communities, following the 1987 Glenbow Museum controversy.

It was also during the 1990s that July Papatsie, regarded as the first Inuk curator, received his training. After graduating in 1995 from the first session of the Cultural Industries Certificate Program, founded by the Inuit Art Foundation, he was hired by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, for which he organized several Indigenous and Inuit art exhibitions. However, it was not until the 2020s that Inuit curators began to take up significant institutional roles, such as Jocelyn Piirainen, who in 2022 became the first permanent Inuk employee of a museum, after her appointment as Associate Curator of Indigenous Ways and Decolonization at the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa). The work of these curators breaks away from the tropes of earlier exhibitions by reclaiming and shaping their own narratives of Inuit history and culture, thus striving toward rhetorical sovereignty.

How Recontextualization Leads to Rhetorical Sovereignty

Reclaiming control over the story that is told begins with recontextualizing the artworks. Since the 1950s, exhibitions have tended to trap Inuit art in a contradictory binary. On the one hand, traditional museums have valorized the "authenticity" of the works, expecting them to embody a singular, idealized Inuit identity—untainted by Western influence. It led the institutions to emphasize also the so-called "primitive" nature of the artworks. On the other hand, museums often aestheticized Inuit cultural objects by stripping them of their context of use and creation, turning them into mere objects of contemplation.

As a result, Inuit artworks are still occasionally described with terms like "freshness" and "exoticism," for example

Jimmy Inaruli Arnamissak, Mother and Child Preparing a Fish, Brousseau Art Collection. © Jimmy Inaruli Arnamissak Succession

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in the introductory text to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts' permanent collection until 2021. This vocabulary echoes the rhetoric used in the exhibitions from the 1960s. Such adjectives obscure the aesthetic and discursive richness of Inuit art—which accounts for its enduring appeal—while reinforcing colonial rhetoric.

Inuit curators challenge these conventions by redefining both the identity assigned by the Other and Inuit art itself. They re-situate the artworks in time and space, linking them to traditional knowledge. In the label of the sculpture *Mother and Child Preparing a Fish* (2000) by Jimmy Inaruli Arnamissak (1946-2003), exhibited at the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ) in *Ilippunga*, *I Have Learned*, curator Heather Igloliorte explains the use of a tool emblematic of life in the Arctic: "A kneeling mother, carrying her child in her hood, uses her *ulu*, the traditional women's knife, to clean and prepare a fish." Elsewhere, Igloliorte evokes the history of modes of transportation or the names of traditional garments. The exhibition texts emphasize the need to preserve these forms of knowledge—both within the artworks themselves and through the exhibition as a whole.

The colonial past and its damaging consequences are also addressed—a rarity in a fine arts exhibition. While not making these the core of the narrative and overshadowing the cultural teachings of the exhibit, Igloliorte references alcoholism, food and housing insecurity, the missionary bans on traditional spirituality, and the residential school system—all of which have left deep scars on Inuit communities and artists. Yet she highlights the unique resilience of the Inuit, which is especially evident in their art: "[Inuit people] strive to maintain *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* and ensure its relevance in daily life, and their artistic practices are very much alive." In doing so, she offers a new way of framing colonial violence, one rooted in Inuit experience.

Redefining the Value of Artworks

The MNBAQ exhibition as a whole is structured around the principles of *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*, the Inuit system of values and epistemology, which is referenced throughout exhibition texts. This recontextualization—and the use of specifically Inuit concepts, using the Inuktitut terminology—marks a major shift in how artworks are valued compared to traditional exhibitions. Rather than a so-called "ethnic authenticity," the artist's ability to archive and transmit gestures and knowledge, and the artwork's capacity to teach its viewer, are prioritized.

This emphasis on cultural transmission is precisely what defines an Indigenous museum within an Indigenous community, according to Lauréat Moreau, coordinator of the Shaputuan Museum (Tangay & Kaine, 2018). It is especially important given the intergenerational breaks caused by the residential school system. Implemented by the federal government from the early 19th century to 1996, this system led to a loss of cultural collective memory—defined as cultural genocide by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015.

In this new value system—where transmission is valued over contemplation—traditional art world hierarchies are called into question. Recontextualizing the artworks challenges conventional museum categories, which are often ill-suited to Inuit and Indigenous art. The binary between fine art and crafts, between the historical and the contemporary, dissolves when viewed through Inuit ontological frameworks. The very definition of art—and of Inuit art in particular—is transformed.

The inaugural exhibition at Qaumajuq (Winnipeg), *INUA*, broke new ground in 2021 by multiplying artistic media: painting, textile murals, clothing, ceramics, large-scale installation... The all-Inuit curatorial team, made up of asinnajaq, Heather Igloliorte, Kablusiak and Krista Ulujuk Zawadski, has buried the dominant, even exclusive, place given to sculpture in the 1950s, joined by printmaking in the 1960s, in the western museums.

As early as 1997, when July Papatsie and Ojibway Barry Ace curated *Transitions: Contemporary Canadian Indian and Inuit Art*, they included sculptures deemed inauthentic: "It contredicts the common perception that Inuit art is simply arctic animals and scenes from the past," Papatsie stated—calling out "artificially imposed limits" (Mitchell, 1998, p.3). For example, he supported artist Michael Massie, whose teapots were heavily criticized in the 1990s by Inuit art collectors for their "non-Indigenous" appearance. Papatsie and Barry Ace's stance was all the more significant because the exhibition was a traveling one, from France to Japan via New Zealand: It introduced these representative yet lesser-known forms of contemporary Inuit art to international audiences. Moreover, the insistence of both curators on presenting First Nations artworks alongside Inuit works already reflected a pan-Indigenous perspective, which is today determinant in decolonial exhibitions.

At the heart of this paradigm shift is a reversal of the target audience. Inuit curators increasingly seek to address Inuit viewers first and foremost—many of whom face challenges in accessing exhibitions, especially those living in the Canadian North. This shift in perspective influences the entire exhibition and is part of the indigenization of the museum, which now caters to a new audience. Heather Igloliorte has stated that she never wants an Inuk to enter one of her exhibitions and feel that it was not meant for them (Etournay-Lemay, 2023). Tellingly, labels in exhibitions curated by Inuit are often written in the first person, such as these in the *Ilippunga, I Have Learned* exhibit.

Koomatuk Curley video on one of the eight exhibition digital media stations, 2016, installation view, Ilippunga: I Have Learned, Brousseau Inuit Art Collection. © Daniel Drouin, MNBAQ

Still, Igloliorte draws a distinction between exhibitions meant to travel to the North and those aimed primarily at southern Québec audiences. The MNBAQ's location in the provincial capital is seen as an opportunity to reshape how southern viewers perceive contemporary Inuit art and to encourage their deeper engagement. *Ilippunga, I Have Learned* includes numerous detailed exhibition texts and a strong focus on audiovisual material that provides context and features leading Inuit voices. Beatrice Deer (1985-), multidisciplinary artist, speaks in depth of *katajjaq*, or throat singing, its pratice and its history. Koomuatuk Curley (1984-), also an artist, gives insight about his family heritage in making art and about cultural transmission in general. Piita Irniq (1947-), politician, activist and respected elder, explains the important place of art in Nunavut, but also the survival of oral tradition and legends. These interviews reflect the vibrancy of Inuit art and culture more broadly.

Questioning the Museum

Indigenizing cultural institutions means rethinking them as a whole—from the display cases to the entire professional hierarchy. Despite the symbolic weight of museums as colonial structures, exhibitions remain a key medium through which Indigenous communities assert rhetorical and symbolic sovereignty. Seen as tools of self-determination, exhibitions carry political significance. As Ooleepeeka Eegeesiak notes, "[Art] also is a way to politicize and organize around our interests on an international scale through embedded ideas, building relationships, sharing resources and skills, advocating for our continued existence, and asserting our rights to land, water, and resources" (IAQ, 2024).

The process of indigenization requires a radical interrogation of the structure, the functioning, and the history of the museum itself. Jessica Kotierk, who has led the Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum in Iqaluit since 2019, undertook this arduous task. In February 2023, the museum issued a statement on its Facebook page and its Website acknowledging the impact of colonialism:

> "Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum harmed Inuit by participating in the separation of their belongings and cultural practices in service to the Museum's goals of preservation and education. We recognise that we were part of the erasure of histories of genocide against Inuit by not naming it when exhibiting belongings, we collected and hold today. We recognise that we contributed to structures of racism. We recognise that, in many cases, our organization has acquired the belongings of Inuit in ways that were legal but not just or equitable. And we recognise that we rarely included Inuit voices and perspectives in decisions made about, and the presentation of, their belongings" (Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum, 2023).

The museum occupies a former Hudson's Bay Company building, a key actor in Arctic colonization. At the same time, the museum released a new strategic plan inspired by *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit,* aiming to implement its principles throughout daily operations. For example, budgeting decisions, salaries, and the price offered to artists for their works, will be revised based on the pillar of *inuuqatigiitsiarniq* (respect for others and care for relationships). The Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum illustrates the importance of acknowledging colonial histories before being able to adopt Indigenous epistemologies.

Inuit curators are also establishing new working methodologies that contribute to institutional indigenization. The principle of co-creation, for instance, enables the inclusion of multiple voices, moving beyond tokenistic consultation. Mutual support is another key element—especially in the form of mentorship, which has been elevated to the status of a decolonial method (Nagam et al., 2020). Mentorship helps overcome systemic exclusion in the museum sector still largely dominated by Euro-Canadian professionals. Indeed, academic training remains a challenge, as it is often a prerequisite for museum work, despite the geographical or economical barriers to access faced by many Inuit. Initiatives like *Inuit Futures in Arts Leadership: The Pilimmaksarniq / Pijariuqsarniq Project,* led by Heather Igloliorte—among others—, aim to provide professional opportunities for young Inuit through mentorship.

Still, the status of Indigenous professionals in museums deserves to be questioned. Many are employed on temporary contracts or for specific projects. The role of a guest curator, for instance, does not carry the same responsibilities as that of a permanent curator, particularly in terms of daily care for the collections. The risk of tokenism is also significant—especially when Indigenous staff are few in number. Many Inuit report feeling used as symbolic figures or hired only to meet diversity quotas (Igloliorte, 2021). Others are burdened with the expectation of validating the institution's discourse on Indigenous peoples as a whole, even those outside their own culture. For these reasons, training all museum staff on these issues appears to be an essential step towards the indigenization of our cultural institutions.

The control of the public discourse is a crucial dimension of museum indigenization—whether expressed through the artworks, the curatorial approach, or institutional policy. All levels are implicated. The choice to use the term *indigenization*, rather than *decolonization*, in this article, is deliberate: it underscores the pervasive influence of Western perspectives and seeks to shift the focus. Indigenizing the museum means sharing both physical and symbolic space. It calls for rethinking museological methodologies, emphasizing listening and mutual learning. Far from being relevant solely to Canadian museums or benefiting only minorities, these approaches open new and inspiring pathways for cultural institutions around the world.

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The Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum in Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada, takes place in a former Hudson's Bay Company warehouse.
© David Stanley

BOOK REVIEW

Olivier Maheo (dir.) *Les minorités au musée. Réflexions franco-américaines.* Paris, La Documentation française, collection « Musées Mondes », 2024.

OLIVIER MAHEO*

At a critical time when the Trump government is attacking American museum institutions, including the Smithsonian institution, this book tackles what are undoubtedly burning questions about the place of minorities in museums, from a comparative perspective between North America and France.

Ethnoracial minorities remain under-represented in French exhibitions and museums, both in terms of the topics exhibited and the curators, especially when compared with the situation in North America. Across the Atlantic, a significant number of exhibitions over the past few decades focused on subjects such as slavery, segregation, the history of migrations and of ethnoracial minorities as well as their artistic production.

The term “minority” has different connotations in French and English. While in the USA it describes an obvious reality that is also reflected in the law, in France “*minorités*” carries a heavy political weight. Moreover, many social science researchers are critical of it for its essentializing impact. Even though, we chose to use “minorités”, rather than “communautés”, to emphasize the marginalization of certain groups, confined to the margins of history, excluded or, at best, kept at a distance from the majority narrative. Belonging to a minority – be it ethnoracial, gender, national, religious – implies a discriminatory or excluding mode of participation in the national community. Minorities are perceived and defined by the majority group as minor, according to two principles that are not mutually exclusive: a numerical criterion, which distinguishes different religious, ethnic or cultural traits, and a status related criterion which characterizes what is held to be minor, referred to the memory of the vanquished, the absence of history. Their heritage has long been ignored, like that of African-Americans and many other minority groups, or presented as colonial domination. Museums, seen as sites of collective memory and historical continuity, can, in the words of Pierre Bourdieu, “embody and implement structures of

‘symbolic violence’” in the service of the construction of a homogeneous national whole.

However, so-called “civilization Museums” or “society museums" have long been engaged in an in-depth review of their missions, reflecting on their audiences, their staff and their discourse. More than ever, minorities are directing their demands to museums, institutions where they hope to be considered and revalued. Museologists most often approach these issues from the point of view of museum history or heritage policies. Historians for their part approach these issues from the point of view of the history of the museum as an institution. These analyses, whether museological or historical, have in common a focus on the museums themselves, analyzing their collections, exhibitions and “inclusive” policies. In this book, we propose to move the focus: we assume the minority point of view as our starting point, in order to understand what is at stake in the desire to be represented in the most prestigious institutions, or even in the desire to “make one’s own museum”, as evidenced by the development of community museums, dedicated to the

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history and culture of a group. We are thus interested in heritage mobilizations from the perspective of minority groups, while examining the way in which museum institutions respond to demands for recognition.

The desire to be represented, to secure a place in museums collections and their exhibitions, has never been so strong. And this even though, as we mentioned earlier, some believe that museums are incapable of responding adequately to their demands. In 2013, the philosopher Achille Mbembe stated that it was undesirable for the enslaved to have his story told in museums, because, as institutions they are inextricably linked to Western society: "The history of slavery has no place in museums, except as a small footnote". Following Mbembe's plea for an anti-museum, we propose to abandon the majority viewpoint, expressed in terms of domination and assignment, to turn the perspective upside down. Positioning ourselves from the point of view of minority experience, we consider the minority in its capacity to act, in its relations with museums and heritage sites in North America and France.

While it is more topical than ever to question the ways in which the museum can be decolonized, we should also question the meaning of this enthusiasm for museums. It tells us something about the way in which societies respond to their tensions and resolve their crises. Greek tragedy offered a form of social catharsis; today, museums seem to be playing their part.

The twenty-one contributions in this book explore these issues in three national contexts –Canada, the United States and France – all of which differ both in terms of museum traditions and their relationship to minorities. This project is the result of two workshops in Paris, plus an international conference in 2022. The first part looks at the mobilization of various North American minorities in favor of their heritage. The second one, "Self-representations", extends this analysis by describing the different ways in which minorities are represented in North American community museums, or culturally-specific museums. The third part, "The making of museum discourse", offers contributions from the point of view of professionals, who give us an insight into the different stages of museum work, whether it concerns collections or the existing devices they analyze. A fourth section, entitled "Co-production and dialogue", focuses on the pluralization of knowledge in the museum, and examines various co-creation practices. Finally, the conclusion by Yves Bergeron and Bruno Brulon Soares, analyzes how the myth of the "discovery of America" represented an obstacle on the road to museum decolonization.

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The processes of heritagisation of migration

In the book *Musées d'immigration: nouvelles muséographies, anciens paradigmes* (L'Harmattan, 2024), Andréa Cristina Delaplace analyses the different processes of heritagisation of migration history that have resulted in the creation of migration museums. The latter are the products of memorial choices but also omissions and oversights that occur according to the actors in charge of creating and enhancing this heritage. The analysis of these heritagisation processes thus reveals the incongruities and political lobbies present in any procedure for the recognition of a historical site.

In the United States as in Brazil, the process of heritagisation of migration heritage is strongly linked to the idea of "place of memory" (Pierre Nora's concept of *lieu de mémoire*). The choice to promote sites that served as an official reception point and control of migration is not made in an obvious way. These "places of memory", today acclaimed and recognized as inseparable from the history of immigration, were abandoned for a long time. Forgetting is thus the other side of memory.

As a result, the process of heritage designation of Ellis Island and the *Hospedaria do Imigrante* reveals the conflicts, ruptures and memorial negotiations inherent in any heritage construction. The desire of the government, national for the first and regional for the second, to create a place dedicated to the history of migration occurs at key moments when the need to affirm a national and regional identity is paramount. As a result, the museums created in these historical sites are strongly anchored in this memorial recognition of the buildings as material remains of migration history.

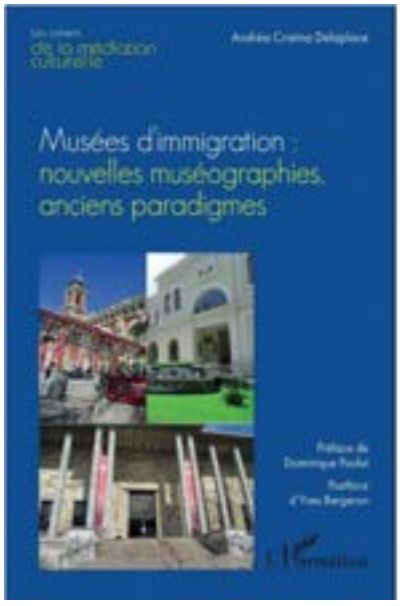
In France, the context is unique since the *Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration* is located in a building with a strong memorial charge, that of colonization, but which is not directly linked to the memorial objectives of the institution that is to highlight the history of migration in France.

As a result, a lack of contextualization of the building in the museum discourse is felt. The process of heritagisation of migration history in France is not done around a symbolic place of memory as in the United States and Brazil. In other words, the creation of (im)migration museums in New York and in São Paulo is a consequence of the heritage designation of places directly linked to the history of (im)migration in these countries, even if it is only part of their history, while in Paris, the (im)migration museum is located in building that has a much heavier memorial background. The Palais de la Porte Dorée is strongly linked to the colonial history of France since it was built to house the Museum of Colonies (Musée des Colonies) and to celebrate the benefits of French colonization and the wealth of the French colonies. By extension, the celebration of the contributions of (im)migration to French culture (the main objective and mission of the museum) is undermined by the historical burden of the Palais de la Porte Dorée.

View of the book at the Musée du Louvre bookshop. © Manon Aubin

Two book presentations, in the form of two successive roundtables

(French version) Le mercredi 5 mars, de 16h à 20h, deux présentations d'ouvrages, organisées sous forme de tables rondes successives, se sont tenues à la Galerie Colbert (2, rue Vivienne – Paris 2e). Ces rencontres avaient pour objectif d'interroger la muséologie contemporaine à travers le prisme de la diversité culturelle.



16h-18h : **Andréa Cristina Delaplace**, ***Musées d'immigration : nouvelles muséographies, anciens paradigmes*.** Paris, l'Harmattan, « Les cahiers de la médiation culturelle », 2024.

Participant·e·s à la table ronde : **Andréa Delaplace ; Yves Bergeron,** Professeur de muséologie, UQAM, Université du Québec à Montréal ; **Dominique Poulo**t, Professeur émérite, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne ; **Laurier Turgeon,** Professeur, Université Laval, Québec.

18h-20h : **Olivier Maheo** (ed.), ***Les minorités au musée. Réflexions franco-américaines***. Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, collection « Des Amériques », 2024.

Participant·e·s à la table ronde : **Olivier Maheo**, aux côtés de plusieurs contributrices et contributeurs ; **Melaine Harnay** ; **Vanessa Ferey** ; **Julia Etournay-Lemay**.

(English version) On Wednesday, March 5, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., two book presentations, organized in the form of successive round tables, were held at the Galerie Colbert (2, rue Vivienne – Paris 2nd). The aim of these meetings was to question contemporary museology through the prism of cultural diversity.

4 pm-6 pm: **Andréa Cristina Delaplace**, ***Immigration Museums: New Museographies, Old Paradigms***. Paris, L'Harmattan, "Les cahiers de la médiation culturelle," 2024.

Roundtable participants: **Andréa Delaplace**; **Yves Bergeron**, Professor of Museology, UQAM, University of Quebec in Montreal; **Dominique Poulot**, Professor Emeritus, University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne; **Laurier Turgeon**, Professor, Université Laval, Quebec City.

6 pm-8 pm: **Olivier Maheo** (ed.), ***Minorities in Museums. Franco-American Reflections***. Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, "Des Amériques" collection, 2024.

Roundtable participants: **Olivier Maheo**, alongside several contributors; **Melaine Harnay**; **Vanessa Ferey**; and J**ulia Etournay-Lemay.**

Photos taken during the conference. © Miranda Nichols

Foreigners Everywhere: Adriano Pedrosa and the 60th International Art Exhibition

MARCELA COSTA CABAI*

The 60th International Art Exhibition, Venice Art Biennale, titled *Stranieri Ovunque – Foreigners Everywhere,* took place from April 20 to November 24 in 2024. It was curated by Adriano Pedrosa, a Brazilian and the first Latin American to curate a Biennale. As the title suggests, the main theme of this exhibition was the concept of being a foreigner, explored through a broad perspective: a stranger in various ways.

Claire Fontaine, an Italian-British collective founded in 2004, inspired the title of the Biennale with their work which of the same name - a series of neon sculptures in different colors displaying the words *Foreigners Everywhere* in multiple languages. This expression was originally derived from the name of a collective in Torino, Italy, that fought against racism and xenophobia during the 2000s.

Since 2014, Adriano Pedrosa has been the artistic director of the Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand (MASP), where he has curated exhibitions addressing themes also present in the Biennale, such as migration, sexuality, gender, Afro diasporas, feminism, colonization, and Indigenous histories.

For him, it was important not only to bring these themes to the Biennale but also to shine a spotlight on the Global South, including Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America. He aimed to provide opportunities for many lesser-known artists from minority groups to showcase their work at one of the most important international art exhibitions. Additionally, it represented a form of justice for those who have been, and continue to be, exploited by Western countries, as well as for people struggling for acceptance and the chance to make their voices heard in the world.

In some of Pedrosa's interviews, he spoke about the challenges he faces as a Latin American traveler and his self-identity as a queer individual. He added that everyone, in some way, grapples with the feeling of being a foreigner deep down. The idea of being a foreigner is

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Adriano Pedrosa is a Brazilian curator. He is the artistic director of the São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP) and curated the 2024 Venice Biennale. © La Biennale di Venezia

Claire Fontaine, "Foreigners Everywhere" (Stranieri Ovunque), 2004 and Yinka Shonibare, "Refugee Astronaut VIII, 2024", exhibition view. Courtesy: La Biennale di Venezia. © Marco Zorzanello

not just about coming from another country; it also means being a stranger, deviating from the norm, and embracing individuality.

Another important aspect of this Biennale, and one that reflects the essence of Pedrosa's work, is the diversity of narratives and viewpoints offered by the artists and subjects. From a pluralistic perspective, the exhibition appeared more interested in presenting various journeys and processes rather than adhering to a coherent, linear path toward a singular conclusion.

In fact, we could say the Biennale 2024 was a perfect fit for a city like Venice: a place of contrasts, surrounded by water, grappling with overtourism – a significant issue for its local population - and where the environment seems to resist and rebel to survive in the Anthropocene. Furthermore, for those who may not know, Venice was historically a refuge from Roman cities and a crucial hub for international trade in the Mediterranean. To put it simply: foreigners everywhere.

Venice is like a hybrid body, where water and land are constantly interacting, striving to find balance. There is one Venice for those who live in the city and another for those who simply visit it. The question we can reflect on is: which narratives are being told, and which are being listened to?

As someone who studies in Venice, I find it fascinating to observe the complex network of dynamics that unfold within the city. On one hand, Venice functions as a museum city, designed for tourists; on the other, it is a city for those struggling to survive amidst gentrification, overcrowding, and an overpriced housing market.

Moreover, Venice is not shaped solely by and for humans—it also supports a delicate and sensitive ecosystem. This reality calls for a post-humanist perspective to challenge all forms of colonization and discrimination. It urges us to pay closer attention to the spaces between 'us' and 'others.'

In Venice, in some sense, everyone is a foreigner, and everyone is a stranger. Or perhaps this rhetoric could apply to everyone, everywhere. So, let's embrace being strangers.

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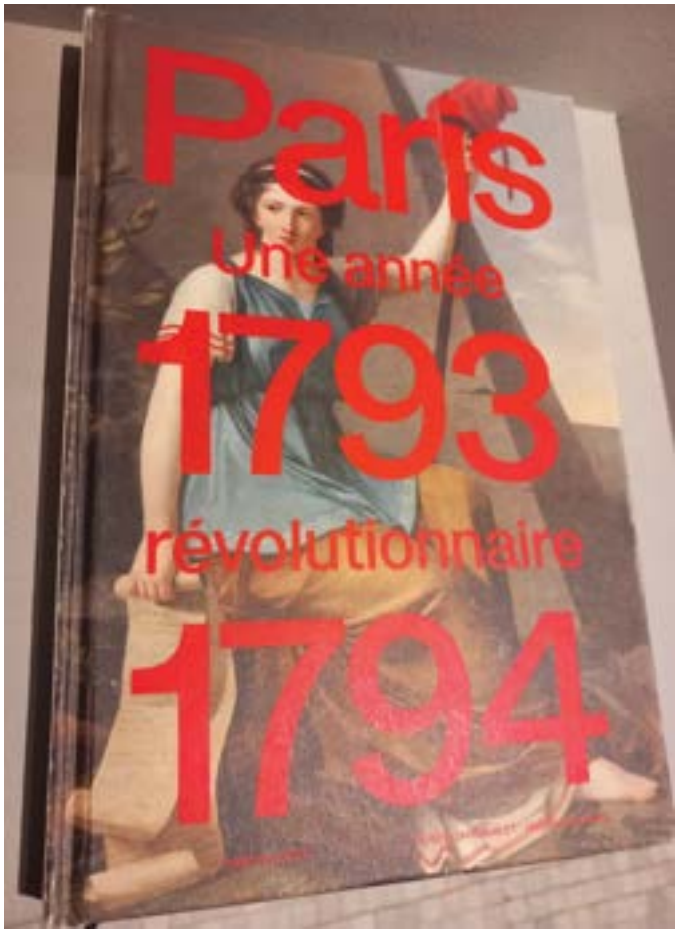
EXHIBITION REVIEW

1793-1794 - Une année révolutionnaire: a review on a temporary exhibition at the Musée Carnavalet with a focus on museum mediation and accessibility

ANDRÉA DELAPLACE*



Catalogue of the exhibition available at Paris Musées website. © Andrea Delaplace

For the first time in its history the Musée Carnavalet created an exhibition about a single year of the Revolution that was undoubtedly one of the more complex of this very troubled period in French history. *1793-1794: Une année révolutionnaire* ran from October 16, 2024 to February 16, 2025.

Since it reopened after extensive renovations in 2021, the Carnavalet Museum - History of Paris has presented a new permanent exhibition with an extended chronological framework, from prehistory to the present day[1] but although the museum is best known for its extensive revolutionary collection, this is the first temporary exhibition on the subject. The exhibition focused on one year of the French Revolution, Year II of the Republican calendar, September 22, 1793 to September 21, 1794, a very decisive year.

Known in French as *La Terreur* (The Terror), this 'bloody year' was marked by the execution of Marie Antoinette[2] (who died by the guillotine on October 16, 1793). The exhibition included a fragment of a belt that she was said to have worn during her first appearance in front of the Revolutionary Tribunal.

But the exhibition focused on the daily life of Parisians between 1793 and 1794. The central question of the exhibition was: how did Parisians experience the Revolution? The main objective of the exhibition was to present a particular year of the French Revolution from a new perspective: that of Parisians, since the Paris

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[1] In 2021, I published an article dedicated to the reopening of the Musée Carnavalet - Histoire de Paris with an interview with the museum's director Valérie Guillaume. Delaplace, Andrea. "Musée Carnavalet and Pavillon De l'Arsenal History of Paris from Two Different Points of View." *CAMOC Review* No 3 - ISSN 2520-2472, 2021.

[2] Louis XVI was executed on January 21st, 1793. The queen's trial before the Revolutionary Tribunal opened on October 14th and two days later, she was convicted of high treason and executed by guillotine at the age of 37. Posterity has made her a global icon, both glamorous and tragic.

Mortuary mask of Marat. © Andrea Delaplace

Thévenin's allegorical on scene at the Convention. © Andrea Delaplace

Commune introduced new developments in the daily lives of its inhabitants. From street theatre to the opening of the Louvre Museum which had previously been a royal palace, and the creation of architecture and art competitions under this revolutionary regime, cultural life found itself in tension with heritage and with vandalism.

From 1789 onwards, a rejection of the feudal order and of the nobility's domination took many shapes and transformed the face of Paris. Art and buildings were removed, destroyed and demolished during uprisings or under legal fiat and through organised efforts. During *La Terreur*, vandals attacked symbols of royalty and religion. For example, the exhibition displayed the head of one of the 28 statues of kings that once decorated the western façade of Notre-Dame. They had been removed, then mutilated by Parisians. Few knew then that these kings were not French kings, but kings of Judah, Jesus Christ's supposed ancestors. The heads were recovered by Jean-Baptiste Lakanal, brother of the scholar and deputy Joseph Lakanal, and buried in the garden of his mansion before being rediscovered in 1977. The famous gouaches of Jean-Baptiste Lesueur showing everyday scenes and characters of these revolutionary times, a highlight of the permanent collection, were also displayed.

The exhibition also showed the importance of women in the French Revolution, for example, as displayed in the documents from Olympe de Gouges[3] trial by the Revolutionary Tribunal. These documents highlight the procedures of the Revolutionary Tribunal. In response to questioning by Judge Jean Ardouin, Mme. de Gouges confessed that she wanted to pass her "three ballot boxes or the salvation of the nation" (*Les trois urnes ou le salut de la patrie*) poster to the President of the National Convention. On the poster, she suggested that the citizens should be able to choose their regime freely. This was enough for Antoine Fouquier-Tinville to demand that she be sentenced to death and she was executed by the regime in 1793. Another important woman revolutionary, Marie-Anne Charlotte de Corday d'Armont, known simply as Charlotte Corday, assassinated revolutionary and Jacobin leader Jean-Paul Marat on July 13, 1793. Corday was executed four days later for his assassination and her portrait is shown in the exhibition along with documents that talk about her arrest for murder.

Another focus of the exhibition included the fact that the French Republic abolished slavery in the colonies on February 4, 1794. Thévenin's allegorical scene at the Convention was presented in the exhibition as a representation of this crucial decision for the black population living in the French colonies at the time.

I am highlighting these themes in the exhibition because during my exchange with some of the curators, these topics were pointed out as ways of including a more contemporary perspective too by bridging "gender and decolonial" themes when analysing this particular period of the French Revolution.

The museum also used a sustainable approach when preparing this temporary exhibition by largely using works and objects from its own collection and from regional museums in France. The objective of Paris Musées[4] is to create a more sustainable approach to exhibitions making in all parisian museums by reusing furniture, display

[3] Olympe de Gouges was a French playwright and political activist. She is best known for her *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen* and other writings on women's rights and abolitionism.

[4] Paris Musées is a public administrative institution that has incorporated the fourteen museums belonging to the city of Paris. It is responsible for staff management, collection monitoring and production of exhibitions, events and publishing.

The famous painting The "Death of Marat" by Jacques-Louis David. ©Andrea Delaplace

A fragment of Marie-Antoinette's belt. © Andrea Delaplace.

materials and limiting the need for objects and paintings coming from distant museums. In that way the carbon footprint of producing exhibitions is considerably reduced following the institution goals and missions[5]. One pertinent example was the famous David painting[6] *The Death of Marat*. The original is in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts in Brussels but there is a copy of the painting in Lyon. The painting exhibited at Carnavalet was the copy, thus reducing the carbon print of the exhibition.

The Musée Carnavalet has a permanent collection app, but not specific apps for temporary exhibitions. The museum prioritizes paper guide booklets and guided tours[7] for temporary exhibitions over apps due to budget constraints and low app download rates. The museum also aimed to create a shared experience for all visitors, rather than separate spaces for children in this temporary exhibition. Short comic strips for each section of the temporary exhibition were enjoyed by both adults and children.

One of the most interesting interpretation tools used in the exhibition was a series of fictional characters created to illustrate the exhibition's themes. Each part of the exhibition presented the story of Parisians during the Terror. This playful interpretive tool attracted the attention of school groups as well as the general public. As mentioned later in this review, the museum is investing in the creation of different interpretive tools to create a more insightful and inclusive visit of both the permanent and temporary exhibitions. The illustrated displays such as the ones created by comic books illustrators Croisel and Locard bring a new perspective to the main narrative of the exhibition as if creating a visual narrative that completes the historical scientific discourse.

Museum Mediation and Accessibility: focusing on the Musée Carnavalet for young audiences

In February 2025, I interviewed the head of public programmes at Carnavalet, Noémie Giard, about methods employed by the museum to make it accessible to a wider audience, including children, adolescents, people with disabilities, and international visitors.
Here are some of the main topics discussed when talking about strategies of cultural mediation:

- Interpretation strategies: Different approaches to interpretation including illustrated guides, audio guides, apps, tactile tools, simplified texts, and art therapy workshops.

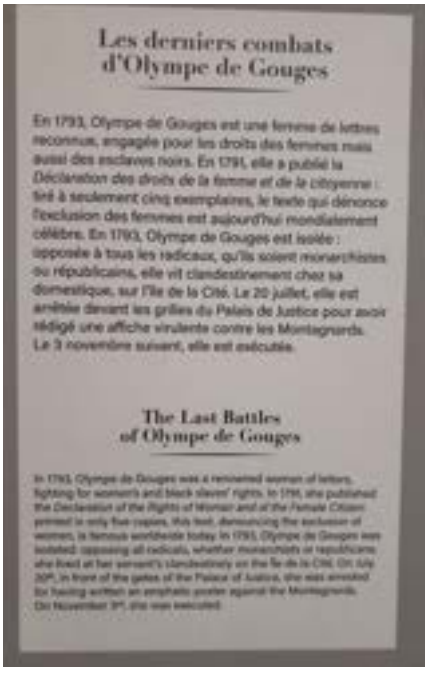
- Children in museums: The museum emphasises

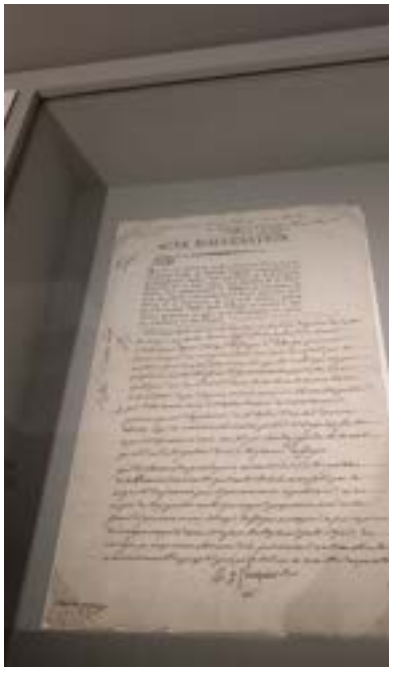
[5] In 2023, the French newspaper *Le Monde* published an interesting article on how French museums are reducing their carbon print: https://www.lemonde.fr/en/culture/article/2023/08/12/french-museums-aim-to-go-green_6090184_30.html

[6] The most famous painter in Paris, Jacques-Louis David, immortalised Marat in his iconic painting *The Death of Marat*. David and Marat were part of the Paris Commune leadership anchored in the Cordeliers section, from where the Revolution is said to have started in 1789 because those who stormed the Bastille lived there. Both David and Marat were on the Commune's Committee of General Security during the beginnings of what would become known as the Reign of Terror.

[7] Guided tours were available for school groups and people with disabilities upon reservation. All the museum's guides and security guards are trained to have a basic knowledge of sign language (Langue des Signes Française - LSF).

The famous gouaches of Jean-Baptiste Lesueur showing everyday scenes and characters of these revolutionary times.
© Andrea Delaplace





Wall text presenting the trial of Olympe de Gouges and the accusation act against Olympe de Gouges.
© Andrea Delaplace

The head of one of the 28 statues of kings that once decorated the western façade of Notre-Dame.
© Andrea Delaplace

Puppets used in street theaters in Paris dating from the 18th century. © Andrea Delaplace

View of the exhibition. © Andrea Delaplace

making museums welcoming and engaging for children, addressing their specific needs and preferences, and fostering autonomy in their museum experience. We discussed the importance of displaying artworks at a child's height (1.20m) and child-focused posters with informative content.

- Universal accessibility: The concept of creating a museum experience that can be enjoyed by everyone, regardless of age, background, or ability, was central to the discussion.

- The role of museums in well-being: An exploration of the potential for museums to contribute to mental health and well-being, while offering a space of refuge, comfort, and social connection is very important.

When the museum reopened with a new permanent exhibition, the education department worked closely with the collections departments and the director of the museum to bring new ideas and ways to create interpretive tools that provide a more inclusive and experiential visit. The main goal is to implement universal accessibility features, including tactile tools, simplified texts, and audio descriptions (the museum offers a free app that can be downloaded by visitors and includes extra features to guide the visitors through its permanent collections).

Our discussions focused on different mediation strategies around the effectiveness and usage rates of audio guides, and apps versus printed materials. One of the main objectives was to create a balance between child-focused content in the temporary exhibition written material and on the app and to make information accessible to all audiences.

We also discussed the increasing role of museums in addressing societal issues like mental health and well-being. Examples like the programmes developed at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal are important in bringing themes like care and empathy into the museum directives. As Nathalie Bondil, former director of the MMFA, points out: "A museum can be a vector of social progress, because it produces a sense of well-being. Art does good: neurobiologists and biology researchers have observed that beauty is a physiological need, linked to sexuality and the need for reproduction. Aesthetic emotion produces neural impacts; it is therefore linked to health and well-being. (...) We address the sensitive side of beings, not just the intellectual side."[8]

Noémie Giard said that mental health and care are at the heart of interpretation projects for the near future. They

View of the exhibition. © Andrea Delaplace

are also working on designing and implementing off-site interpretation (at hospitals, prisons, etc.).

Here are some of the more recent innovative education and interpretation projects developed by Carnavalet:

1. Illustrated guides: The use of illustrated guides in temporary exhibitions, such as the one on the French Revolution (1793-1794) with illustrations by Croisel and Locard.
2. Children's booklet for Children's Rights Day: A partnership with the City of Paris resulted in a booklet linking children's rights to museum exhibits.
3. Bulles d'Art: a collaboration with Paris hospitals to bring museum experiences to patients' bedsides.
4. Street Paris: a joint project with the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris at Fresnes Penitentiary, using Parisian history and art to engage inmates.
5. Citizen dialogue with young adults: a two-year initiative to gather input from young adults (18-26) on the future of museums.

In conclusion, we can say that a key turning point at Carnavalet is the ongoing evolution of museum interpretation towards greater inclusivity, accessibility, and a focus on visitor well-being. The museum is actively seeking ways to become a more welcoming and relevant space for diverse audiences.

[8] Excerpts taken from an interview with Nathalie Bondill in July 2017: https://www.beauxarts.com/grand-format/nathalie-bondil-le-musee-doit-produire-du-mieux-etre-ensemble/ (consulted online on 15/04/2025).

The exhibition *1793-1794: Une année révolutionnaire* was a huge success[9] and a good example of mediation tools that draw in the attention of visitors from all ages to a more accessible content. If the exhibition was an analysis of the period known as *La Terreur* by specialists in the French Revolution (the scientific committee of this exhibition was composed by historians and curators specialised in the subject), the larger public (including tourists from different countries) could better understand the historical analysis and reflexions thanks to the mediation booklet (distributed at the entrance of the exhibition), the illustrated guides such as the drawings and fictional characters created by Croisel and Locard and the guided tours and onsite mediation and surveillance staff. It attracted nearly 30,000 people during its four-month running and will be presented in the summer and fall 2025 at the Musée révolutionnaire de Vizille.[10]

View from the gardens of the Musée Carnavalet.
© Andrea Delaplace

View of the exhibition. © Andrea Delaplace

Educational booklet with activities for children and families.
© Andrea Delaplace

[9] This exhibition was one of the most successful temporary exhibitions of Carnavalet since its reopening in 2021. This shows that the museum is investing in bringing on topics that could be seen as *déjà vu* in a new light that attracts an important number of visitors to the museum.

[10] For more information please check the museum's website: https://musees.isere.fr/musee/domaine-de-vizille-musee-de-la-revolution-francaise

EXHIBITION REVIEW

Exposition Migrations: a human odyssey at the Musée de l'Homme, Paris.

ANDRÉA DELAPLACE*

Words related to Migration. © Andréa Delaplace

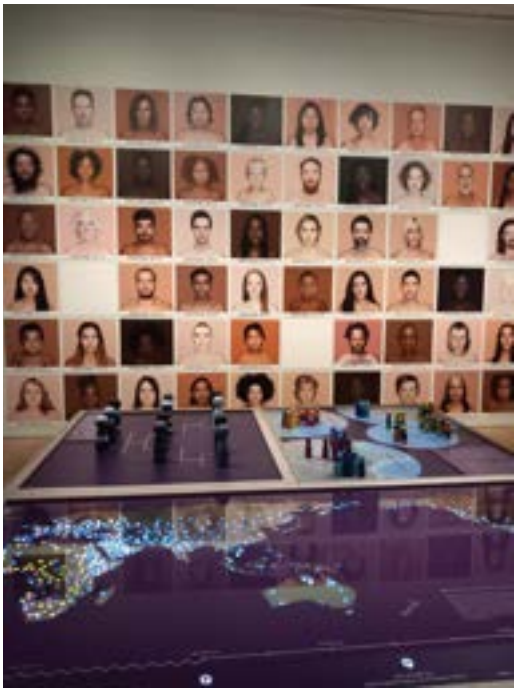
The Musée de l'Homme is presenting an exhibition called *Migrations, une odyssée humaine* (Migrations, a Human Odyssey). From November 27, 2024 to June 8, 2025 - on human migrations that highlights the human nature of this phenomenon, which has been part of human history since prehistory. In a period where immigration has become an instrument of political groups that want to induce fear and political upheaval, this exhibition is a breath of fresh air.

The exhibition Migrations, a Human Odyssey offers a moving immersion into the history and reality of migration around the world. Through a variety of media—photographs, videos, drawings, and personal objects—the Musée de l'Homme seeks to deconstruct stereotypes, shed light on the multiple causes of migration (work, conflict, the environment, etc.), and demonstrate its effects on identity, culture, and society. The exhibition, enriched by numerous personal accounts, highlights the perspectives of migrants and their own lives.

This exhibition invites us on a sensitive and enlightening journey through population movements. Using a variety of media—photographs, videos, drawings, and personal objects—it deconstructs preconceived notions and encourages new thinking about migration, its causes (work, war, climate, etc.), and its effects. The exhibition also addresses the question of identity: how migrants perceive themselves, and how they are perceived by others.

The importance of words and terms when discussing immigration is presented at the very beginning of the exhibition. Foreigner, immigrant, migrant, refugees, exiles, and expats are terms that all refer to immigration from different perspectives and rights. While the word foreigner[1] brings negative connotations to some (eg. exclusion), words like expats highlight an immigration that is often desired and displayed.

[1] Foreigner is a legal term that refers to nationality, which links an individual to a State. A foreigner is someone who does not have the nationality of the country in which they find themselves. In broader terms, the word evokes issues relating to othereness and cultural differences. Immigration law is more or less restrictive when it comes to a foreigner's access to the territory, work, health and education - it varies depending on the country.



Artwork by artist Angélica Dass - Humanae 2012. © Andréa Delaplace

Display dedicated to refugees. (left); What does it mean to be a foreigner. (right) © Andréa Delaplace

Display showing contemporary routes of migration. (left); View of the exhibition. (right) © Andréa Delaplace

Subsequently, we are confronted with xenophobic discourses that put forward far-right theories such as the “great replacement” (le grand remplacement in French) or other concepts linked to xenophobia present in societies that experience significant migratory flows. The exhibition clearly shows how these concepts and theories are instrumentalized for political purposes to create a feeling of insecurity and fear in the different layers of society. The exhibition shows that ultimately, immigration figures have not exploded in recent years (maybe mobility became easier in certain ways but there is not a “wave of migration” that seems to be threatening Western societies) and that the majority of people around the globe actually live in their country of origin.

As the exhibition says at the beginning: “ Human beings have been travelling, migrating and exploring since the dawn of humankind. But international migration - the voluntary or forced movement of people from one country to another - is rarely considered a normal social fact. Very often, “migration” does not simply mean leaving one’s own country for another, and the “strange stranger” both fascinates and inspires fear, part welcomed, part rejected.

While the profiles of people who migrate differ from one era to the next, all the clichés are invariably repeated. Even today migration is often associated with the idea of threat and invasion, and is still perceived as being uncontrollable and unpredictable. And yet it is only an enduring reality that has been repeated throughout history, but also a demographic and economic resource. Far from the often cited risk of “submersion” through immigration, the number of people living outside their country of birth is relatively low: merely 4% of the world’s population.”[2]

[2] Extract from the museum’s display shown at the beginning of the exhibition.

In its final section, the exhibition highlights the profound impact of migration on human history: genetic mixing, exchanges of plants and animals, and the intermingling of social practices. These movements have shaped our world today, and their traces can be found all around us, in our languages, our foods, our cultures, and even in our genes.

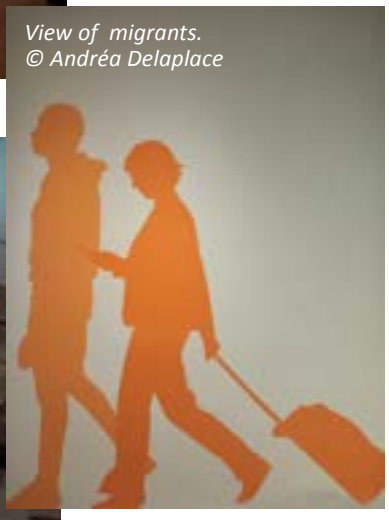
Having worked on the different processes of creating museum and heritage on immigration in three countries (France, Brazil and the United States), I find that this exhibition is more necessary than ever to highlight the importance of the migratory phenomenon in the history of humanity and that rather than demonizing immigration as a phenomenon that harms the proper functioning of our contemporary societies, see the richness of exchanges between cultures resulting from migratory phenomena. A very beautiful exhibition, well documented and clear, which must be seen at a time when, unfortunately, hate speech towards migrants (and other groups considered as minorities) is increasing around the world.

View of the display dedicated to the concept of foreigner. © Andréa Delaplace

View of the exhibition. © Andréa Delaplace

View fom the entrance of exhibition. © Andréa Delaplace

View from the section dedicated to xenophobia .© Andréa Delaplace



View of migrants.
© Andréa Delaplace

View of display dedicated to expatriation. © Andréa Delaplace

Inspiring reflections on community, participation and living heritage. Impression of the *Collecting with(in) the city* conference.

LEEN BEYERS*

On 9 October I travelled from my hometown Antwerp (Belgium - Flanders) to Amsterdam by train for the ICOM COMCOL - CAMOC *Collecting With(in) the City* conference, which I had helped organizing as board member of ICOM COMCOL. It felt for me as a 'home game', because in Flanders, the northern and Dutch speaking region of Belgium, we collaborate a lot with museums in the Netherlands. Nonetheless, the conference offered a lot of inspiration and looking back now, I must admit that I didn't expect to have learnt so much!

It was a great idea to organize the 2024 COMCOL conference again with CAMOC, in order to revisit what collecting in and with the city means today, thirteen years after the first collaboration between COMCOL and CAMOC in 2011 – when they were the two youngest ICOM committees- for the Berlin conference on *Participative Strategies.* The idea itself fully came from the Amsterdam organizers of the conference: Imagine IC, where COMCOL chair Danielle Kuijten is director, and the Amsterdam Museum, where Annemarie de Wildt recently retired as curator. *Imagine IC*, a heritage organization based in Amsterdam Southeast, has been active almost 25 years in documenting current social relations through participatory heritage work. The *Amsterdam Museum* has been collecting the city in various ways since its founding in 1926, but in the last three decades the focus has shifted more and more to the contemporary city. In 2020 they began the program 'Collecting the City', based on co-creation with communities.

As co-organizer and participant of the conference, it was very inspiring to develop the call for papers together with the CAMOC colleagues, but also to meet them in person and to learn more about their practices of contemporary collecting at the conference. The emphasis in city museums is very much on current society since about the 1970s. Within ICOM COMCOL members work in all kinds of museums and they find in ICOM COMCOL support for participative, contemporary collecting strategies which are not necessarily accepted in their own museum, since especially in ethnological museums, art museums and national history museums "the present" remains quite absent in collections and exhibitions. This is probably why I felt that the contemporary collecting topic at this conference was not just one of the topics, but a general shared experience. As such, I was very impressed by the longstanding practices of contemporary collecting of the London Transport Museum. The presentation was from Zeynep Kussan and Ellie Miles, and they are radically oriented towards collecting people's present and past experiences with public transport.

While preparing the "call for papers and practices" we quickly agreed on key issues to address with regard to collecting today. One such issue was intangible heritage. "What can museums capture beyond the objects? The sounds, the smells, the rhythms?", is a sentence I really like. For ICOM COMCOL this was very much a follow-up on the 2023 conference *Living Collections, Living Communities*, where intangible heritage was a central topic. At the conference we had three "intangible" sessions: the "tangible meets intangible" and "folk perspectives" sessions and the interactive workshop "senses of home". But also in the "sharing the power of interpretation" session, intangible heritage was discussed, for instance in the presentation of the *Vivid Ethnicity* project of Patoo Cuspiritick from Thailand, which reconnects – literally by touring with a bus – museum objects with living communities. "Folk" is a bit of a weird, old fashioned term in Europe, but in the United States folk is similar to living culture, as folk expert Michael Knoll, curator at the MiamiHistory Museum, convincingly demonstrated in his inspiring presentation.

"Power and (in)equalities" was a second key issue and the general heading we chose in the CFP was to tackle both violent heritage such as colonial heritage or war heritage and collaborations with less visible and powerful groups in the city. At the conference several sessions addressed power inequalities and ambitions to collaborate, care and co-curate. For instance, ICOM COMCOL board member Brandie Macdonald organized a powerful talk with three other American indigenous curators in the session "Indigenous Practices". Panelist Denise Bright Dove Ashton-Dunkley co-curated the *Manahahtaanung or New Amsterdam. The Indigenous Story behind New York*

*Leen Beyers, board member ICOM COMCOL and member organizing committee

exhibition in the Amsterdam Museum, which we could visit during the conference. Both in specific sessions and in the two keynotes the social ambitions of museums to overcome power inequalities through participative strategies were revisited in a very relevant way.

What have we learned from about 30 years of participation theories and practices in the museum field? Where do we stand now? How can museum workers create safe spaces for collaboration and dialogue in a society that's more and more polarized? Keynote speaker Zandra Yeaman, Curator of Discomfort at the Hunterian, the museum of the University of Glasgow, addressed the building of both social and cultural capital through anti-racist and intersectional practices within museums. This is a challenge for all of us, but it will be absolutely challenging in the context of a university museum, I think. Leontine Meijer-Van Mensch, who recently changed jobs from director of Ethnological Collections, State of Saxony: Leipzig, Dresden, Herrnhut to director of the Museum Rotterdam interestingly addressed the different frameworks of different types of museums. While ethnological museums traditionally focus on distinction and diversity between people and often keep violent heritage created as proof of distinction, the local focus of city museums might have a stronger shared focus. Nevertheless, she argued, for all museums the concept of community should be questioned. In times of fragmentation we need to offer spaces for dialogue between people who do not perceive themselves as a homogenous community. She referred to the "communities of implication" concept of Erica Lehrer, which highlights how the networks surrounding a heritage object are much wider than the supposed cultural or ethnic community and that it is socially and culturally very relevant for museums to collaborate with these implicated stakeholders, because it increases social ties and multivocality. On 12 October I could participate in the Emotion Networking dialogue workshop of the *Unfolding Urban Tapestries program at Imagine IC*, which sort of put this concept of "communities of implication" into practice.

In other words, the *Collecting With(in) the City* conference offered a lot of food for thought and action, not just thanks to the prepared CFP, but most of all thanks to the diversity of the speakers. With COMCOL we decided to invest in more travel grants, since Amsterdam is an expensive and European destination. Seven grant receivers for COMCOL and two from CAMOC attended the conference, coming from Australia, Egypt, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Morocco, Somalia, Taiwan and Thailand. We published the *conference impressions of the COMCOL grant receivers* in the meantime.

Patoo Cuspiritick, speaking in her session. © Unknown photographer

Panorama Amsterdam. © Amsterdam Museum

Travel Grant Report

MANAR MAZHAR*

During the 'City Identities' session. © Manar Mazhar. During presentation with my moderator: © Françoise Bolechowski

Hello, I am Manar from Egypt. I was delighted to be one of this year's young members grantees to attend the annual CAMOC-COMCOL Amsterdam Conference, held between 9-11 October at Imagine IC and Pakhuis de Zwijger. It is my pleasure to write about my unmatched experience and take the time to remember all the marvelous memories I created during my short yet amazing stay in Amsterdam. It is also a good opportunity to shed light on the power of attending conferences in person. Networking was indispensable to me; through those fruitful conversations, I could communicate with experts and museum professionals from across the globe.

My experience began on the 9th of November at Imagine IC, where we all came together to have breakfast, say hello, and introduce ourselves during the official conference kick-off by Danielle Kuijten and Annemarie de Wildt. After that, we had a city tour with Dennis Elzinga to different museums and cultural institutions in the Amsterdam Bijlmer Area. I benefited from our visit to the Black Archives, OSCAM, and CBK Zuidoost during the city tour. We went to the Amsterdam Museum, where we met the rest of the conference participants and were given a guided tour of different exhibitions. My tour was about the amazing Lenape — the original inhabitants of New York City from the exhibition 'Manahahtáanung or New Amsterdam? The Indigenous Story Behind New York'. Meanwhile, I quickly went for a TV interview with Robertjan de Boer about Cairo and the conference topic.

On day 2, I would like to extend my admiration for the organization and hospitality, the choice of Pakhuis de Zwijger with its Grote Zaal, and the keynote speeches. I was fascinated by the 'Co-Creation Conference Card', where we wrote down our insights/perspectives or questions in every Break-out Session.

In the first keynote speech by Zandra Yeaman, I learned more about Inclusive Curation and Co-production and how they are essential practices in museums. Among her quotes: "We should actively listen, not just listen." She also highlighted the amazing 'The Feminist Killjoy Handbook'.

I attended Breakout Session 1.2 'Interactive Session' and learned more about different cities' experiences in creating a digital dialogue with people (Chengdu Interactive City Walk – Graz Museum's Digital Collecting Toolkit – Kroppedal Museum City from Above Project – The Mobile App of Edo-Tokyo Museum 'Edu Haku').

I took time to gain more insights about our colleagues and presenters through the poster presentations. The Bookstore of Kuo Yi Mei in Taipei by LAI, Ying-Ying was a perfect case study representing the living heritage of the bookstore, where they encouraged people and developed future readers through their project 'One Free Book of Your Choice'.

In Breakout Session 2.3 'Powerful communities? Practices of co-curating', I benefited from the case of the Museum of Science and Technology in Belgrade towards preserving the industrial heritage of Serbia. The speaker, Ada Vlajić, quoted: "We used to make things, now we tell stories."

Audience during the exceptional keynote speech by Zandra Yeaman. © Françoise Bolechowski

*Manar Mazhar Manar is a Learning Specialist at the GEM Children's Museum. She works for ICOM Egypt as Social Media Manager. In 2021, she obtained her Masters double degree in Museum Studies from Egypt and Germany.

The next one was the Museum of the History of Barcelona, where citizens can build and explain their own narratives. Daniel Alcubierre, the speaker, highlighted the social impact of collaboration. After that, it was STAM - Ghent City Museum's turn and Neslihan Dogan said: "It's a long journey going from what we wanted to exhibit to what we knew we have to exhibit," highlighting the Turkish-Ghent heritage project. The last one was different; Andrea Delaplace spoke about two city museums with two different collections telling the History of Montréal. She quoted: "Giving Voices to the Community."

On day 3, the second keynote speech by Léontine Meijer-van Mensch, Director of the Museum Rotterdam, said it all when she quoted about City Museums: "Not talking the talk, but walking the walk."

Furthermore, it was time for my presentation. I was honored to share the stage of Grote Zaal with my session co-speaker Kamil Stasiak from the Museum of Krakow and our amazing moderator Bart Rutten, artistic director at Centraal Museum Utrecht. I decided to speak to the world about my city, Cairo, without reading a script to engage and interact more with the attendees. I was thrilled to witness the baby steps of my dream project 'A city museum in my city'. The feedback and discussions were informative and allowed me to dive deep into my perspective on creating a city museum and community engagement practices.

Finally, we gathered for the CAMOC annual meeting to speak to each other about the following: An overview of the committee's practices – The ICOM 2025 General

Assembly in Dubai – Changing the short name of CAMOC and suggestions – Topics to focus on and more.

In conclusion, I am grateful to everyone who contributed to making this experience incomparable and unique. Furthermore, I extend my recognition to Mr. Glenn Perkins for our fruitful conversations and his ultimate support.

Reflecting on the Lenape Exhibition tour at the Amsterdam Museum. © Manar Mazhar

Annemarie de Wildt and I while brainstorming for new, more accessible names for the International Committees. © Françoise Bolechowski

Scenes from the Breakout Sessions. © Manar Mazhar

Irene Ranaldi introduces Rome's "Ottavo Colle Association"

IRENE RANALDI*

As an urban sociologist I continue to be inspired by the teachings of Professor Franco Ferrarotti, a trailblazer and who, in 1960, earned Italy's first tenured position as professor in sociology. A great expert of the US and its city outskirts, Prof. Ferrarotti transmitted his great passion to me, which I later consolidated into my studies on gentrification for my PhD which I pursued in Rome and in New York. Ten years ago, I drew from these experiences to create a non-profit organisation Ottavo Colle, based in Rome, to offer holistic readings and interpretations of city 'outskirts', not only in Rome but also in Naples (with regular visits to Scampia), and in the ancient Etruscan areas of Viterbo (Civita di Bagnoregio, etc.).

According to traditional tourist narratives, Rome only has seven hills, all within the historic and archeological city… parts of the city which effectively have very few inhabitants (100,000). Our association, which engages in training and urban education and not merely 'guided tours', aims to give a voice to the 'eighth hill', namely everything that lies outside this conventional narrative: we therefore explore – according to the teachings of Jane Jacobs and her approach of 'love of sidewalks in order to train the eye upon the city' – historic Roman neighbourhoods (Trullo, Pietralata, Primavalle, etc.) as well as more recently established ones (Corviale, Tor Bella Monaca, etc.). We organise walks that bring to the forefront women and men who have been protagonists of Italian culture in the context of the neighbourhoods where they lived or worked: Elsa Morante and Gabriella Ferri in Testaccio, Maria Montessori in San Lorenzo, Gianni Rodari in the Trullo, Pier Paolo Pasolini in Rebibbia and other neighbourhoods, Italo Calvino at the Pantheon, etc..

But we also tackle issues such as the presence of LGBTQIA+ in cities, or the tragic map of femicides as witnessed in strategically placed red park benches. Or the marvellous itinerary (and ideal, as it is non existent in spite of our various attempts throughout the years to establish a dialogue with official institutions), meaning the "eco-museum of Roman industrial archeology" which could have its starting point at the landscape visible from the top of Mount Testaccio (also ignored and abandoned by institutions and often left closed). It covers all the landmarks associated with the first industrial revolution: the Gazometro, the Mira Lanza factory, the railroads, bridges, General Market, etc.

[*] Irene Ranaldi, President of the "Ottavo Colle".

OTTAVO COLLE

Associazione di Promozione Sociale

Ottavo Colle is a pioneer association, instrumental in returning to being "tourists in one's own city", with a view to achieving awareness and active citizenship which has nothing to do with tourism as originally understood and everything with promoting and enhancing the less known and considered urban landscape.

The upcoming tours to be done by the Ottavo Colle Association:

For further information:
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Online Roundtable for Spring-Summer CAMOC Review Release Coming 24 June

To mark the release of the *CAMOC Review* Spring–Summer 2025 Issue, we will be hosting a brief roundtable discussion exploring key themes from this edition. These include **innovative exhibition design in city museums, sustainability practices, community engagement, educational initiatives for younger audiences, and decolonisation perspectives**, among others.

Discussion Framework for the online roundtable – Key Questions and Themes

Here below, please find six main questions that interconnect all the articles featured in the *Review*. These questions capture its core themes and are intended to guide a rich and thoughtful discussion on June 24th.
In an era of increasing polarization, misinformation, and global challenges such as climate change and migration, **citizenship education** plays a vital role in helping individuals:

- Understand democratic institutions and their responsibilities within them
- Recognize and respect diversity and human rights
- Develop media literacy and critical thinking
- Engage in civic life and community decision-making
- Feel empowered to act for social and environmental justice

Ultimately, it fosters informed, empathetic, and active citizens, capable of contributing to inclusive, resilient, and democratic societies.

Guiding Questions

1. **Why does citizenship education matter in today's world?**
   How can it help individuals understand their rights and responsibilities within a democratic society?
2. **How do city museums incorporate oral histories and community-donated artifacts to foster a more participatory and multivocal approach to heritage?**
   What roles do storytelling, community involvement, and non-traditional collecting practices play in reshaping museum work?
3. **What strategies are institutions like the London Museum using to include diverse perspectives in their narratives?**
   How does institutional transformation contribute to greater inclusivity?
4. **How did participatory practice take shape at 14 Henrietta Street, and what insights emerged from working closely with former tenants?**
   What are the lessons of co-creation and engagement with lived experience?
5. **What museum education programs for young audiences have proven most impactful?**
   How are institutions adapting to engage new generations meaningfully?
6. **Why are citizenship and climate education essential today, and what role can museums play in fostering democratic participation and critical thinking?**
   How do these efforts help address broader issues of accessibility, inclusion, and civic empowerment?

Together, these questions invite us to reflect on the evolving role of museums and cultural institutions in shaping engaged, informed, and participatory societies.

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