

CITY MUSEUMS AS CENTRES OF CIVIC DIALOGUE?

City museums as centres of civic dialogue?

Proceedings of the Fourth Conference of the International
Association of City Museums, Amsterdam, 3-5 November 2005


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Amsterdam Historical Museum
Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 359
PO Box 3302, 1001 AC Amsterdam
T +31(0)205231822
F +31(0)206207789

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Editor

Renée Kistemaker

Editorial committee

Mila Ernst and Annemarie de Wildt

Project assistance

Eefje van der Weijden

Reports on the discussions

Emilie Broekhuysen, Eva Geene, Li Hoekstra and Dineke Stam

English editing and Dutch-English translation

Jean Vaughan and Kate Williams

French-English translation

Vic Joseph

Typesetting, Design & Production

Edita-KNAW, publishing department of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences.

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Preface and acknowledgements

The Amsterdam Historical Museum hosted the Fourth Conference of the International Association of City Museums from 3-5 November 2005. The conference was held in the Trippenhuis, the home of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences in the mediaeval heart of Amsterdam. During excursions, the more than 160 participants also had the opportunity to see parts of the city dating from the last part of the 20th century. Of particular interest was the visit to Imagine Identity and Culture, a new multicultural institute for the representation of identity and cultures in Southeast Amsterdam. And it was of course possible to visit the Amsterdam Historical Museum and the Willet-Holthuysen Museum. On the last day of the conference there were visits to the city museums in Rotterdam and The Hague.

The modern city was the focal point of the conference. Two keynote speakers from the University of Amsterdam and the University of Southern California described the huge physical and social changes cities underwent in the 20th century, as well as paying attention to the images of cities and the creation of these images. Participants could then discuss and analyse the relationship between city museums and the modern city, within the framework of three themes. How do museums record history and how do they present it? To what extent are they the platforms for or instruments of certain urban and social change? Do museums contribute to creating the image of a city? These and many other questions were dealt with during the parallel working groups which were held for each of the three themes. Each theme opened and closed with a short plenary session.

The conference participants were predominantly from city museums. Other participants included specialists from several universities, tourist offices, housing corporations, developers, funding organizations and students. In total twenty-six countries, mainly in Western and Eastern Europe, Africa, and North America, were represented.

During the conference five introductory plenary lectures were presented and twenty-three shorter speeches. The articles in these proceedings are the culmination of all the presentations given during the conference. Moreover, the discussions of all the working groups are included. This publication not only gives an excellent impression of the conference itself but also of the questions and issues that concern and interest international city museums. One of the objectives of the conference was to learn from each other's experiences. I hope that this publication will contribute to this.

An editorial board comprising Mila Ernst, head of the educational service of the Amsterdam Historical Museum, and Annemarie de Wildt, a curator at the museum, was formed to prepare this publication. Renée Kistemaker, senior consultant research and development and former head of museum affairs at the Amsterdam Historical Museum, was editor of the proceedings. Eefje van der Weijden supported the editor as project assistant. Kate Williams and Jean Vaughan edited the English texts. Vic Joseph translated the article by Rachid Bouzidi from French into English. The publishing house of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, Edita, was responsible for the production of the book. Ellen Bouma of Edita was the graphic designer. I would like to thank them all for their hard work over the last few months.

A publication like this cannot be realized without sufficient funding. We have received subsidies from the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Archaeology and History (ICMAH) and from the International Association of

Museums of History (IAMH) specially for the conference reporting and part of the cost of the English editing of the contributions. My warm thanks to the president of ICMAH, Marie-Paule Jungblut, and the acting president of IAMH, Jean-Marc Léry, for this financial support. I would also like to thank the VSB Fund for their contribution to financing the English editing and the Zuidas project organization for their financial contribution to realizing this book.

Pauline Kruseman
Director
Amsterdam Historical Museum

Welcome speech

Pauline Kruseman
Director Amsterdam Historical Museum

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A warm welcome to the Fourth Conference of the International Association of City Museums. Our museum has been involved in this organisation from the very beginning. During the founding meeting in London back in 1993, Max Hebditch aptly pointed out that the museum organising the conference benefits enormously from its results: 'You learn so much from it and can raise issues and questions with colleagues.' Here at the Amsterdam Historical Museum we have already learnt a lot!

In 1999 and 2000 extensive changes were made to our permanent exhibition on the history of Amsterdam. These changes were inspired by several objectives, such as attracting a wider audience (families with children, youngsters, and a culturally more diverse public), the expansion of the rooms on the recent history of the city, stimulating interactivity during visits to the museum and working with other sorts of collections: material and immaterial. At the moment we are revamping the entrance area and the first room of the museum. There is also a plan to make changes to the rooms about the earlier history of the city on the basis of the same objectives mentioned above. More than ever, we really want the museum to be for *all* Amsterdammers. The principles of the concept of *social inclusion*, particularly popular in the Anglo Saxon countries, form the basis of all our exhibition programmes and educational work.

The AHM is not only active within the four walls of the museum. There are many other activities and regular contact with various kindred organisations in the city. Other heritage partners are particularly important such as the City Archives, the Historic Buildings & Archaeology Service and the University, which are all responsible for parts of Amsterdam's heritage. This of course also applies to the Stedelijk Museum, which houses the municipal modern art collections, and the Rijksmuseum, which since 1885 has had a considerable part of Amsterdam's older art collections on long-term loan. There are also close connections with other cultural institutions in Amsterdam and numerous municipal services and companies. The Amsterdam Historical Museum is thus not only physically in the middle of the city but figuratively too!

I would now like to say something about the organisation of the conference. Several members of the international working group have been of great assistance in developing the conference concept and in many other ways. In particular, I would like to mention Marie-Paule Jungblut, curator of the Historical Museum of Luxembourg and the president of the last city museum conference in Luxembourg in 2000. Michiel Wagenaar of the University of Amsterdam and Paul van de Laar of the Rotterdam Historical Museum have given very useful advice on the content of the conference.

The heaviest workload fell of course on the Amsterdam Historical Museum itself. There were two working parties, one on the content of the conference and one on its organisation. Mila Ernst, head of the educational service, and curator Annemarie de

Wildt have both made an important contribution to the composition of the conference programme, in particular the working group sessions. The conference organisation was in the hands of a second working party comprising Vanessa Vroon of the museum's secretariat and Eefje van de Weijden, a freelance project assistant.

The congress centre of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, in the Trippenhuis, has provided excellent support on practical matters. The Academy's publishing house, Edita, has assisted us with the production of the programme, the abstracts and other useful papers that you will find in your conference package. Designer Jeroen de Vries is responsible for the lay-out. Kate Williams and Jean Vaughan have edited the English texts.

Renée Kistemaker, senior consultant for research and development at the AHM, is ultimately responsible for both the content and organisation of the conference.

The conference was made possible by the financial support of several funds and organisations. I would like to thank the Mondrian Foundation, the Eastern Europe Fund of the Prince Bernhard Cultural Foundation, the VSB Fund and the HGIS visitor fund for their generous support. Moreover, we are grateful for the financial support of the Municipality of Amsterdam, *I Amsterdam*, *The Zuidas* Project Organisation, *Het Oosten* Housing Corporation and the NH Barbizon Hotel Amsterdam.

I wish us all a very fruitful and enjoyable conference.





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1. The freely accessible Civic Guards' Gallery of the Amsterdam Historical Museum. Part of the large collection of group portraits of the Amsterdam civic guards is displayed here.
2. Cycling through historic and contemporary Amsterdam. Ring the bell to change the image.
3. Dam Square is the subject of one of the rooms of the permanent exhibition. It is the centre of Amsterdam but also a national square. With the help of a film programme, visitors can look at events on Dam Square from the last hundred years.

Photographs: Diederik Ingel, Dennis Hogers and Rob Versluys, Amsterdam Historical Museum

Introduction to the conference

Renée Kistemaker

Senior Consultant Research and Development, Amsterdam Historical Museum

Recently I read an interesting book review in a Dutch newspaper. It was on the newly published *Metropolitan World Atlas*, written by a Dutch urban planner, Arjen van Susteren. He compares 101 cities all over the world, like Los Angeles, Detroit, Rio de Janeiro and Beijing. Of these, 89 could be defined as a 'metropolis'. According to Van Susteren, one of the characteristics of a metropolis is that global contacts and relations are more important than local ones. You will be surprised to learn that you are right now in the middle of one of these metropolises: it's called the *Randstad* and is made up of cities you know, namely Rotterdam, The Hague, Leiden, Utrecht and, of course, Amsterdam. One of the remarkable differences to other metropolises is, however, that a city map of the Randstad does not exist. Yes, in a spatial-economic way the Randstad is a reality, but not in a political, cultural or mental way. Will there ever be a museum of Randstad city?

This is just a Dutch example of a well-known, world-wide phenomenon. Simon Stephens writes in his recent article *City Limits* in *Museums Journal*, October 2005, that the growth of cities is probably 'the most significant global development of the past 100 years'. It seems that within two years, half the world's population will live in a city. How will city museums handle this? Are we prepared?

I am delighted to welcome you to the Fourth Conference of the International Association of City Museums. Without going into too much detail I first would like to present you a very brief summary of the background of this type of conference. I am sure not all of you are familiar with this. In 1993 the director of the Museum of London, Max Hebditch, took the initiative to organise a symposium with the title *Reflecting Cities*. The idea was to offer city museums a high-level forum for professional discussion and co-operation. At the end of a very fruitful symposium, the participants decided to found an informal association for professionals working in city museums, which should also be open to those working in related institutions or organisations. For this purpose it was decided to organise a symposium every two years. In 1995 the Barcelona History Museum succeeded in bringing together a large group of city museums again, covering several important themes such as *Museums and Historic Centres* and *The Urban Change and Heritage Conservation*. At the end of this conference, the participants expressed the wish to continue the forum for discussion and to strengthen the links between city museums in the future. Decisions were taken to give some structure to the organisation of the association. An international working group of six people was set up to advise the future president on the next symposium and on other more general issues related to the association. Another resolution was to maintain a close relationship with the ICMAH (International ICOM Committee for Museums and Collections of Archaeology and History) and also the International Association of Museums of History, an organisation associated with ICOM. The Forum wanted to remain a strictly informal organisation.

Unfortunately it was not possible to organise the next meeting until 2000. This time the host was the Historical Museum of the City of Luxembourg. The symposium brought together not only city museums; it was also the symposium of the ICMAH and the International Association of History Museums. Now we are here together for the fourth symposium. Again there is a close link with the ICMAH, especially the city museums workgroup, and the International Association of Museums of History. Moreover, and this is new, I am especially happy to announce several board members of a new ICOM committee, CAMOC (the Committee for the Collections and Activities of Museums of the City) are here at the conference. This committee was founded during the ICOM conference in the autumn of 2004 in Seoul.

City museums as centres of civic dialogue

As we all know, it is not easy to answer the question, What is a city museum? Some automatically think that it is synonymous with 'historical museum', and indeed, this is often the case. However, the exciting thing about city museums is that they can be very multifarious, including art collections, archaeological and historical objects and sometimes objects related to natural history. It is, therefore, necessary to be somewhat more precise. I would like to use here a description of Steven Thielemans, presented during a workshop attended by four city museums in Ghent in 2000: a city museum is a museum **about** and **in** the city. It is **connected** with both the strategy of the city and with its citizens. Of course more can be said about this, but right now I would like to leave it at that.

Let's move now from the word 'museum' to the word 'city', a very important part of the generic name of our type of museum, because this is of course what we are all about. I mentioned it already at the beginning of this talk. Cities everywhere in the world are becoming more and more important in our societies. In recent decades they have often been growing increasingly faster in terms of both space and population. There is high immigration and sometimes also emigration. Due to complicated factors such as globalisation, fast transportation and modern methods of communication, cities also rapidly change economically and culturally. There is a great deal of literature on the city, written by a wide range of professionals like sociologists, economists, urban planners, architects and specialists in the field of cultural activities. The city is clearly a 'hot' spot.

How do city museums react to these changing cities? Are they capable and willing to 'work with all our city partners to ensure that museums and inhabitants are involved in a series of dialogues and joint initiatives', like David Fleming wrote in 1996? All of this is the central topic of our conference today and tomorrow.

First we will start with two keynote speeches by Michiel Wagenaar and Vanessa Schwartz. Neither of them works in a museum, but they have had strong connections with museums or have a vivid interest in what city museums do. They will each elaborate on different aspects of the dynamic city already mentioned. This will be followed by three themes, which will enable us to reflect together on the part our museums play in our changing cities. The first theme is *Shaping the city*. By collecting objects of interest, and organising exhibitions and educational activities, the museum 'writes' parts of the history of the city. Are we conscious we are doing this? Do we see this as a serious task? What importance do we attach to recent history? How interdisciplinary is our approach? I think, especially in this theme, that a lot can be gained from collaborating more with urban historians and ethnographers. The second theme is *Activating the city*. Do city

museums consciously want to play an active part in the city? Several city museums have developed an outreach strategy to involve the city's inhabitants in the museum. In line with this strategy, some museums take on an active role in the city, or in some parts of it, to improve for example the quality of life. What alliances are made (e.g. with housing corporations, social organisations, businesses, municipalities)? Some museums consciously present themselves as forums for discussions and art performances, and as a dynamic part of the city. To what extent do we consider ourselves to be a gateway to the city? The last theme is *Representing the city*. This theme is closely related to three different conferences held last year in Los Angeles, Vienna and Athens. None of these three conferences were organised by city museums by the way. This third theme is about the following. Every city evokes images. Inhabitants have their own individual mental picture of the city and tourists are often bombarded with specific images carefully chosen by tourist services. There are pleasant, socially acceptable images and representations, but also those which refer to the darker and less pleasant sides of the city. How do city museums handle these images and representations? Is it possible to make a general analysis of how these images are picked and do city museums play a part in this?

The programme

Over the years the ties between several members of the International Association of City Museums have grown; some museums have undertaken projects together, others have exchanged exhibitions. The need to share knowledge and for discussion is still very much alive.

We have therefore tried to present a rich and diverse programme. Following suggestions made during previous conferences, we have chosen to alternate plenary sessions and sessions in parallel workshops. This means you will not be able to hear every single talk. On the other hand we hope that the exchange of information and opinions will be more intense this way.

One of the success factors of every conference is the opportunity to socialise. We hope that the programme will offer enough opportunities for you to meet new people whilst renewing old contacts and friendships.

Word of welcome by Ms Hannah Belliot, Culture Alderman of the City of Amsterdam¹

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the city of Amsterdam, I am delighted to welcome you here. I have heard that your conference started yesterday, in the Trippenhuys, right in the mediaeval centre of our city. But cities are of course larger than their historic centres. I know this is one of the subjects which was stressed in some of the lectures yesterday and today.

This evening you have been invited to have dinner in the relatively new multicultural centre Imagine Identity and Culture. It is right in the heart of a district built during the 1960s, Southeast Amsterdam. This is one of the most lively and dynamic parts of the city, with 82,000 people of 130 different nationalities. One third of the population is younger than 20.

Being international and acting in an international way are characteristics of Amsterdam that we are very proud of. Amsterdam as a city has special ties in many different fields with a large number of cities all over the world, such as Budapest, Riga, Managua, Accra and Colombo. Over 170 nationalities live in the city, and several of our economic and cultural activities extend far beyond the municipal or national boundaries.

Amsterdam is not just a very international place, it's also a city that is constantly changing, especially during the last ten to fifteen years. You must have noticed the enormous excavations in the city centre for the construction of a new metro line, and you have heard during the conference about the Zuidas project, to name just a couple of large-scale enterprises in urban planning. Moreover, some of our most important cultural institutions are being restored and renovated, such as the Rijksmuseum and the Stedelijk Museum. Two thirds of our 750,000 inhabitants have changed in the last ten years as a result of both emigration and immigration. All this means that Amsterdam is in a phase of transition like, of course, many other cities in the world.

The subject of your conference is especially appealing to me. I will tell you very briefly why. In 2003 my department published a long-term cultural vision of the city in the year 2015. The introduction of this document states that culture is a key element in the city: it facilitates contact, mutual respect and understanding between people of different cultural and social backgrounds. It can contribute to moulding a new, dynamic, flourishing, intercultural city where all the inhabitants feel at home. A city, also, which tourists like to visit and where people from all over the world like to work. We emphasise three main topics in this document on the future of the city: 1 City identity and identification with the city, 2 Culture as an essential part of and as an instrument for education, and 3 Culture as a sub-sector of the city's economy. To achieve certain goals in all three of these topics, we chose five spearheads. I will name just one – *Shareholdership*. What do we mean by this? To a large extent a city functions best when the inhabitants feel responsible for the public domain, when they look upon themselves in a way as *owners*. This means that in this vision, the inhabitants are committed to what happens on the street and in the neighbourhoods where they live, and that they

¹ Owing to personal circumstances Ms Hannah Belliot was unable to give her welcome speech at the conference, but it is included in these proceedings.

want to take an active part in this. We have the good fortune that the number of inhabitants who participate in the many different cultural facilities here in Amsterdam such as cinemas, museums, theatres and so on, is remarkably high in comparison to other cities in the Netherlands. However, this predominantly happens within people's own, familiar social or cultural group. We want to heighten the feeling of being a shareholder by stimulating intercultural exchange and encouraging people to cross borders.

It is clear that cultural heritage in our museums, archives and public spaces can play an important part in this. In my opinion city museums have a special role here. The outreach project of the Amsterdam Historical Museum in a neighbourhood in the East of Amsterdam is a good example. Although it is not strictly speaking a city museum, I would also like to mention here the work of Liane van der Linden and her colleagues at Imagine IC.

I wish you all a fruitful continuation of your conference.

Key notes

The urban mosaic

Townscapes and residential patterns in the Western world

Michiel Wagenaar
University of Amsterdam

Introduction

This essay is about people and places; about social topography and the built-up environment of the city; about how cities work like sorting machines in filtering the local populace to different locations. The system does not disperse residents at random over the urban domain. Income, status and ethnicity play a crucial role in explaining how someone finds their place in this urban mosaic.

However, that place will change over the years and will also be determined by the dominant political and economic system. I will argue that when the pre-modern urban order collapsed under the twin forces of industrialization and rapid urbanization, two models of land use emerged that have continued to play an important role right up to the present, despite important changes after World War II.

The pre-modern urban order

Until the middle of the 19th century, the dominant residential pattern was that of the pedestrian city. Generally, people had to live within walking distance of their jobs. Transport was only available for a handful of privileged citizens. This alone caused high building densities and compact cities, even more pronounced if the city in question was confined by its old city walls. Since master and servant both lived within close proximity in those days, urban areas were more socially mixed than they would ever be in later years. Thus in Amsterdam, for example, the houses with impressive facades along the canals were the domain of the well-off. Just around the corner, the radial streets running off from them housed the middle classes, whilst back streets, mews and courts were the habitat of the working-class manual labourer. The houses behind the ornate facades along the canals and those in the streets behind them were homes to specific layers of society, whereas if the area is viewed in its entirety there was a broad social mix.

This situation was common in all European cities. Parks, broad streets or squares were an invitation to contractors to build more prestigious housing for the upper classes, whereas back streets and courts were the realm of coachmen and servants. From Bloomsbury in London to the Marais in Paris this was the usual residential pattern.

From the 1850s onwards the huge numbers of people moving to cities put the pre-modern order under increasing pressure and there was a great deal of overcrowding in cheaper housing areas. The transition from small craft shops to industrial plants – without suitable provision of sanitary amenities (sewage, clean drinking water, garbage collection) – led to a rapid degeneration in the quality of residential buildings in areas

where housing and business premises were to be found side by side. The pre-modern infrastructure was equally incapable of handling the increased volume of traffic, resulting in crippling congestion.

In the Western world two strategies evolved to solve this 'urban crisis' resulting in residential homogeneity or segregation on an unprecedented scale. However, the two spatial *patterns* they engendered were almost complete opposites. Despite recent modifications, the two models of topography and morphology that originated in the 19th century are still in existence today. The roots of the first model were embedded in unrestrained free enterprise, a subject to which we shall now turn.

The laissez-faire response: Manchester

Few cities in the 19th century attracted as many visitors as Manchester; its rapid progress shocked people to the core. The first steam-driven cotton mills appeared around 1800, while the 1830s saw Manchester's take-off on its way to becoming the epitome of an industrial city. Between 1800 and 1830 its population trebled in size, from 75,000 to 182,000 inhabitants. It was this combination of ruthless free-market industrialization, and the almost total absence of local government involvement in housing and urban planning, that produced a city hitherto unknown in the Western world. It was seen as a laboratory of modernity. Despite the fact that Manchester's rough-and-ready approach was unique, many visitors were convinced that it showed how city life would be in the future.

Few travellers have drawn as vivid a picture of Manchester as did Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859), who visited Manchester in 1835. 'Look up all around this place and you will see the huge palaces of industry. You will hear the noise of furnaces, the whistle of steam. These vast structures keep air and light out of the human habitations which they dominate; they envelope them in perpetual fog; here is the slave, there the master; there is the wealth of some, here the poverty of most; there a society has not yet learned to give. Here the weakness of the individual seems even more feeble and helpless than in the middle of a wilderness. A sort of black smoke covers the city. The sun seen through it is a disc without rays. Under this half-daylight 300,000 human beings are ceaselessly at work. *A thousand noises disturb this dark, damp labyrinth...*'¹

Manchester was like a black hole, sucking in labour and capital. Steam-powered manufacturing industries clustered close to one another, tied by an ever-growing division of labour and specialization. The proletarian work force, as well as skilled mechanics and the mill owners, were housed at walking distance from these satanic mills. The quality of urban life degenerated at a shocking pace. The River Irwell turned into an industrial sewer, changing colour every few steps as cotton dyers spilled their excess waste into the river. Manchester was covered by a thick fog, produced by the massive burning of coal. Working class slums, with their oozing cesspools, turned into hotbeds of disease.

Until 1840, there was no possible escape for the Manchester worker, not even for the well-off. This all changed when the railway came. Few inventions had as powerful an impact on Britain's social geography. It enabled the upper classes, first of all industrial entrepreneurs, to trade their houses in squalid, overcrowded central Manchester for villas in the suburbs at a considerable distance from the city. Soon their middle class fellow citizens followed. What they found in the suburbs were private, zoned-off estates where industry was strictly banned, as were pubs, dance-halls and warehouses.

¹ Tocqueville, Alexis de (1835), *Journies to England and Ireland*, London 1958.

These, for the first time in history, were *single class residential areas*. The high cost of a railroad ticket and the infrequent service effectively excluded labour, which was to be bound to a location close to industry for a long time to come.²

This spatial segregation, the geographical expression of a class-ridden society, alarmed contemporaries. Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881), the conservative politician and novelist, voiced the fear of many upper-class Britons that a divided society would eventually lead to the collapse of Britain. In *Sybill* (1845), significantly subtitled *Two Nations*, he painted a grim image of the complete isolation of the two remaining classes in future society. 'Two nations; between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts and feelings as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets; who are formed by a different breeding, are fed by a different food, are ordered by different manners, and are not governed by the same laws... THE RICH AND THE POOR'.³

Such fears proved exaggerated. Contrary to Disraeli's dark prophecy, the second half of the 19th century saw the spectacular rise of the middle classes. A growing army of mechanics, clerks, accountants, school teachers, largely recruited from the labouring classes, illustrated the increasing scope for upward mobility in capitalist society. In due time, they too would leave to find an alternative to the smoke-belching, polluted industrial city. In the 1860s this escape was facilitated by progressive members of Parliament who demanded that railway companies introduce working men's trains. Lower fares, and a train timetable adapted to suit the opening and closing times of business and industry, in combination with low land prices in the urban periphery stimulated contractors to build terraced housing for the skilled worker and for the lower-middle-class white-collar worker. The effect of their exodus was to leave the unskilled worker behind in increasing isolation. These were often immigrants, casual labourers, many of Irish descent. Their low rates of pay and irregular working hours, often including night shifts, meant they couldn't afford public transport to the suburbs and the train timetables didn't cater for their long working hours.

Meanwhile, the centre of Manchester transformed into a Central Business District. As face to face contacts dominated virtually all communication, this dictated a tight clustering of banks, trading firms and insurance companies at walking distance from one another, forcing out land users with less financial power. Railway and tramway companies fought for a terminal at the central hub, daily pouring out an army of commuters. As the importance of a central location further increased, department stores, hotels and leisure and entertainment outlets exercised even more pressure on the core area.

It is not surprising that traffic congestion paralysed the pre-modern central infrastructure because all local government attempts to remedy it with new arterial roads were thwarted by the appallingly high prices of local land. Even minor improvements took years to complete, and the cost was astronomical.

The socio-spatial trends Manchester showed so clearly would in due time become common in cities with a *laissez-faire* policy. A city like Amsterdam, where the manufacturing industry certainly was not as dominant as in Manchester, also had to deal with the transition from craft workshops to industrial premises, and there too the

2 See on suburbanization of Manchester: Fishman, Robert, *Bourgeois Utopias. The Rise and Fall of Suburbia*, New York 1987, pp. 73- 101.

3 Disraeli quoted in Daiches, D., & J. Flower, *Literary Landscapes of the British Isles. A Narrative Atlas*, Harmondsworth UK 1981, p. 193.

process seriously undermined the quality of life in the residential neighbourhoods. However, just as in Great Britain, they lacked the necessary legal and financial backing to intervene.

After 1918, both Britain and the Netherlands came to rely on the concept of the welfare state as a way out of urban chaos and misery. Significantly, in both countries reformist Housing Acts were the first steps on the road to increasing State intervention. Slum clearance and public housing became key instruments in improving sanitation, as we shall see later on. In both countries, however, the market sector continued to play a leading role in the provision of suburban housing.

Chicago

The welfare state approach was not an option for the USA. After the First World War it took over as the world's leading laissez-faire nation. The dominant spatial trends outlined above further crystallized in Chicago, the New Manchester of the 20th century. A second transport revolution, brought about by the private automobile, reshaped the residential landscape. Engine- power greatly expanded Chicago's urban area to include the outlying region from which people could commute into the city's central business district on a daily basis. The socio-spatial trends which we saw at work in Manchester were reproduced there on a vast scale, and with far greater dynamics (fig. 1).

Chicago was the first city in history to become the object of systematic social scientific research. Based on census tract analysis, in the 1920s urban sociologists Ernest Burgess and Robert Park developed the following model, that essentially summarizes the land use dynamics of laissez- faire capitalism. Its value was proved when tested in other cities under similar regimes, not only in the United States, but in Canada and Australia as well. (fig. 2)

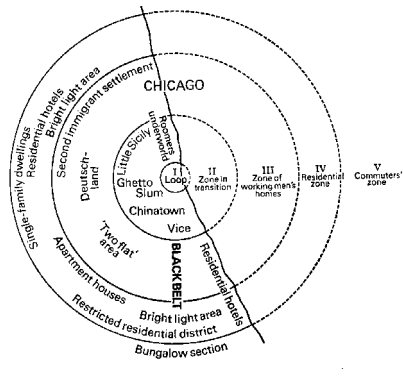
The model reads as follows. The further removed from the Central Business District (the CBD), the lower the land prices, the larger the plot size, the more recent the building date and the higher the resident's income. The key to this paradox, whereby the wealthiest urbanites occupy the cheapest land, lies in their superior command over transport facilities.

This paradox is mirrored by the Zone in Transition, where the poorest live in overcrowded tenements while land prices are the second highest next to the Central Business District. Local landlords, speculating on the expansion of the office district, avoid any maintenance of their property since they expect a lucrative buy-out by a commercial developer.⁴

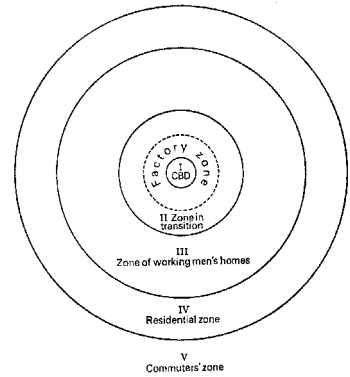
After 1945, the private car replaced commuter trains and trams. It offered far more transport flexibility, thus opening opportunities for sophisticated, selective suburban development. As a result, the 'commuter zone' as the model calls it, exploded. Increasingly, traditional CBD firms opted out for a suburban or ex- urban location as well. Today, downtown has become almost irrelevant for residents of the outer fringes, not only as employees, but as consumers as well. Shopping malls, leisure and entertainment no longer require a visit to the metropolitan core.

What 20th century America demonstrates, then, is the almost complete absence of public intervention in its exploding cities. The escape from urban misery was seen as a private, individual affair. Market forces organized the means of escape in the form of trains, trams and cars. Private developers exploited the opportunities of increased mo-

⁴ See on the Chicago School's land-use model and further research on residential topography Timms, Duncan, *The Urban Mosaic. Towards A Theory Of Residential Differentiation*, Cambridge UK 1975.



1. Chicago's land use in the 1920's, with popular names of the various residential districts



2. The 'abstract' model based on Chicago's census tract analysis, later tested elsewhere



3. Major inventions in Paris as planned by Haussmann

bility by creating a suburban hinterland which around the 1950s was within the reach of virtually all classes, offering terraced housing for the less well-off, semi-detached for the middle classes and detached villas and bungalows for the wealthy. Only the very poor were left behind, although many would in due time climb the social ladder and move to the suburbs as well. Thus, ideally, upward social mobility matches greater geographical mobility.

The 'Strong State' response

In continental Europe, countries with an established 'strong state' tradition responded in the opposite way. They opted for massive intervention in the older urban fabric with its totally inadequate road system, its overcrowding and lack of amenities. Paris led the way, where from 1853 to 1870 baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann, Prefect of the Seine, vigorously attacked traffic congestion by cutting new arteries through the dense urban fabric. Often, the new boulevards were carefully planned to destroy as many slums as possible, thus serving the aim of social cleansing. (fig. 3)

And finally, the new boulevards were an important instrument for the embellishment of the city. By using the legal tool of *expropriation par zone*, Haussmann not only demolished properties that were needed for the new arteries, but for its flanks as well. Thus, his architects could dictate building heights, materials and designs for the new façades, resulting in a uniform style that helped to redefine Paris – turning it into Europe’s most monumental, neo-classicist townscape. In some cases boulevards were carefully projected to provide vistas of new, impressive buildings that were realised under his rule. It was for that reason alone that the Prefect decided to pull down good quality housing and level the Butte des Moulins thus creating an uninterrupted panorama of Ganier’s new *Opéra*, one of the most overwhelming testimonies of Second Empire opulence. (fig. 4)

At the same time, Haussmann’s interventions greatly improved the residential comfort of central Paris. Part of the *grands travaux* had been the construction of aqueducts and canals that transported clean drinking water to Paris from unpolluted sources hundreds of kilometres to the east of the city. The large-scale introduction of street lighting, in the form of gas lanterns, gave Paris the title of *ville lumière*. Huge sewers transported deposits to far away places downstream of the River Seine. And finally, Haussmann pushed factories, slaughterhouses and railway depots to the periphery- to the *banlieue*, well beyond city limits. In 1860 these were vastly extended after the Ville de Paris annexed the so-called *petite banlieue*. Roughly speaking this is the area that is covered today by the 11th to the 20th *arrondissements*- inside the former fortifications- today’s *boulevard périphérique*. (fig. 5) Thus he not only solved the pollution problem of Central Paris, but he also got rid of the city’s *classes labourieuses et dangereuses*, who had to follow their employers to the periphery if they were to remain at walking distance from their work. The millions of newcomers seeking a better life around the French capital were forced to do the same.

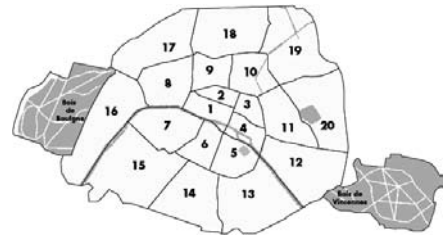
The results were impressive. Central Paris became the exclusive habitat of elite residents, prestigious public institutions and main branches of leading firms. Residential comfort had greatly improved. The monumental townscape, dominated by uniformity of style, symmetry and axiality attracted numerous visitors. They were no longer confronted with marginal slum-dwellers, rag-pickers and beggars because these had been removed and relocated to the *banlieue*; to *La Sibérie Parisienne*, where no tourist ever set foot. The *banlieusards* built their own *bidonvilles* along unsurfaced dirt roads, without any of the amenities that made life in central Paris so attractive. Thus, clearing neighbourhoods of unwanted residents, embellishing the houses and better sanitation were closely connected facets of the grand plan.

Around 1870 the main part of the *grands travaux* was completed. Paris improved more thoroughly in 17 years than London did in 50. To be sure, neither Haussmann nor his successors succeeded in removing all the unhealthy dwellings, not even within the first 10 *arrondissements*, where the *îlots insalubres* were hidden behind the prestigious facades of the new arteries. Substantial areas outside the core would keep their low-rise, artisan appearance which were not to change until quite recently.

But foreign visitors hardly noticed these contrasts. They were enchanted by the urban beauty that this elegant New Paris offered them. It had become the ultimate *Capitale du Plaisir*, combining a monumental townscape with an abundant display of bourgeois opulence that convincingly demonstrated the superiority of the French



4. Clearing of the Avenue de l' Opéra



5. Map of Paris with its 20 arrondissements

capital over its continental competitors.⁵ However, as Britons and Dutchmen remarked, both the size and speed of the *grands travaux* would have been unthinkable without the financial and legal backing of the authoritarian and centralist state of the Second Empire.

Such a system was a prerequisite for success for all those who wished to emulate Paris in their own capital – a desire particularly strong in the 19th century in the many *new states* of Europe. Thus, from Budapest in Hungary to Belgrade in Serbia and Rome in unified Italy, Haussmann's strategy was emulated, with comparable morphological and topographic results, offering an almost diametrical contrast with the *laissez-faire* model discussed above. Thus, the 'strong state' model came to dominate major parts of Southern and Central Europe.

The post-war period

After 1945, most European cities had to cope with serious war damage. In fact even in areas that had not suffered from warfare, such as the Iberian Peninsula, Sweden and Switzerland, authorities were facing a huge demand for housing. The post-war baby boom, which hit the devastated cities of Germany, Eastern Europe and Russia particularly hard, demanded an energetic response all over Europe. This came in the form of a massive wave of pre-fabricated, modernist public housing estates, often realised as

⁵ An authoritative survey of Haussmann's interventions is given by Pinon, Pierre, *Atlas du Paris Haussmannien: la ville en héritage du Second Empire à nos jours*, Paris 2003.

high-rise, upper-deck access flats. Most were built on the urban fringes, but in places where there had been serious war damage they were also taking the place of the old city centres.

Although Eastern Europe and Russia were repairing war damage under Communist rule, the similarities in housing strategies with Western European countries, which virtually all became welfare states after 1945, are remarkable. Huge satellite towns, with few employment opportunities, consumer amenities, schools, hospitals and transport, provided the standard European solution to the overwhelming housing need of the 1950s. They, in due time, would become the problem areas of the late 20th century.⁶

However dramatic the regime change in Eastern Europe or the coming of the welfare state in the West, the two topographical and morphological models presented earlier were surprisingly resilient. Thus, in Budapest for example, the 'Haussmannized' monumental inner city, once the exclusive domain of bourgeois and aristocratic residents, was to become the favoured habitat of the Communist *nomenklatura*. Its working-class fringes were vastly expanded with the building of proletarian pre-fab housing estates. The same happened in capitalist Italy, where in Rome the traditional 'strong state' model was reinforced by the almost unlimited and chaotic building wave at the city's edge, housing the less well-off that flocked to the nation's capital. And, in nowhere less than in the 'Mother of All Capitals', Paris, did the 'strong-state' model see itself reproduced on such a vast scale. (fig. 6)

Here the *banlieue* for quite some time continued to look like one giant *bidonville*, giving Paris the appearance of a Third World capital. In 1972, the government started its attack on these slums, replacing them with massive high-rise public housing estates, the *grands ensembles*. But despite better housing quality, the *banlieue* remained the least desirable residential area. If we jump over this high-rise belt we arrive in the middle class *villes nouvelles*. Here single family houses dominate, despite critics who found this 'too American' and preferred apartments that were 'truly French' instead.

In the United Kingdom the twin challenge of repairing war damage and coping with demographic growth met with a response that generally speaking further underlined the 'laissez-faire' model we discussed earlier. Thus, giant public housing estates appeared in East London, an area that had suffered severely from German bombing raids. Traditionally it had been part of the 'horseshoe of poverty' that surrounded the urban core, broken only by the well-off western axis of Chelsea and Belgravia. The transformation of the 'horseshoe' into a high-rise public-housing townscape was, however, by no means the result of *Blitzkrieg* damage only. After the ruins were cleared, and the first estates went up, urban renewal took over. Welfare-state planners increasingly saw Victorian terraces as incompatible with modern housing standards.

Planning by clearance became the dominant renewal strategy for the 1950s and 1960s, despite the fact that it was clear from the start that the tower blocks replacing the older housing stock provided insufficient capacity to re-house all their former residents. The problem was made even more pressing by the thousands of newcomers flocking to the capital who also needed homes.

The solution came in the form of the satellite 'New Towns' of the 1960s and 1970s – Harlow, Hemel Hempstead and Milton Keynes. Built quite a distance away from the capital, with a dominant emphasis on public housing provision, they truly represented a breach with the laissez-faire model. Whereas in the past peripheral suburbs had tra-

⁶ For an overview of post-1945 reconstruction, see Judt, Tony, *Postwar. A History of Europe since 1945*, London 2005, pp. 384 ff.



6. Bidonvilles in the banlieue and the advance of high-rise housing estates

ditionally been the exclusive domain of the upper classes, they were now being turned into huge working-class enclaves for an imported population.

London's example inspired planners all over North-Western Europe. From Stockholm to Amsterdam, neither of which experienced any (substantial) war damage, satellite towns were designed as an answer to urban renewal displacement.

Back to the city?

In the 1970s, the course of urban renewal changed from clearance to the improvement of structurally sound building stock. In few countries were the results as impressive as in the Netherlands. The 19th century 'zone in transition' was transformed into decent neighbourhoods with up-to-date apartments. Although rents were kept low by strict control and subsidies, most lower middle-class families did not return to their renovated home after the work had been completed. The majority left for the new satellite towns around the big cities, where they finally saw their dream come true: a single family house in a row of terraced houses, with a modest garden and abundant parking space.

In Amsterdam, just as in Berlin and Copenhagen, they traded places with young singles, most of them students flocking to local universities. Many of them decided to stay there after graduation. These cities have a job market increasingly dominated by cultural and creative industries and by financial services. Universities and polytechnics also provide employment opportunities. At the same time women's emancipation, and the delaying of raising a family, facilitates living in small apartments. The invasion of the young, bright and talented in the former 'zone in transition' is, however, by no means a unique welfare state phenomenon. In market-dominated societies like the US and the UK the same has happened. There the process was coined *gentrification*, a term that

became common in Continental Europe as well. That local politicians welcomed gentrification will not come as a surprise. Cities like New York, London and Amsterdam had a difficult time in the 1970s. The invasion of the young creative class was seen as a gift from heaven, the more so since gentrification proved more than a hype-it was there to stay. Media coverage of gentrification was, and is, substantial. The conversion of former warehouses, craft shops and even offices into trendy lofts in once run-down districts drew the attention of life-style magazines and television programmes everywhere. The urban renaissance, so it seems, rules supreme.

Nevertheless we should not close our eyes to the selective nature and the limited scope of gentrification. Only a few cities are lucky enough to attract the young and talented and to keep them there for a substantial period of time. Alas, there are more cities like Detroit than New York, more like Liverpool than London and more like Clermont-Ferrand than Paris.

Divided cities

Even these 'lucky' cities are facing major problems. Their giant post-war public housing estates provide shelter for a largely immigrant population that hardly benefits at all from the opportunities of the creative cultural and knowledge-based city. That division is further enhanced by the ongoing process of suburbanization. Whether we are dealing with state-funded satellite towns around Paris and Amsterdam or with privately funded suburban estates in the US or UK, the results are similar. The flight to the suburbs continues to this very day, draining the cities of their middle class families. Remarkably, the process continues even around cities that have made a major effort to implement urban renewal. In Amsterdam, for example, real slums hardly exist anymore. And yet suburbia continues to attract evermore middle class families. Increasingly, city life is seen as incompatible with raising children. The big city, particularly in the US, is often associated with crime, vice and drugs. It has become a landscape of fear.

These 'lucky' cities have thus become *divided* cities. Divided to the extent that on the one hand we have the talented young upcoming gentrifiers, settled in central neighbourhoods next to the older, arrivé *bourgeois-bohèmes* who invaded these areas in the 1970s and are now more or less affluent urbanites, who would rather be dead than to move to middle-class havens in the suburbs. What upcoming gentrifiers and their older, settled colleagues share is that they are predominantly white, have a high level of education, a cultural outlook and a cosmopolitan orientation. On the other hand there are the less well-off, the immigrant urban population that hardly benefits from the opportunities of the information age. Their isolation is one of increasing ethnic segregation.

Both groups, the talented 'creative class' and the 'truly disadvantaged' thus live in separate worlds. Paris, for example, has become the almost exclusive habitat of highly educated, well-paid, white '*cadres*' who now make up more than 55 percent of the urban workforce. Just outside the *boulevard périphérique* one lands on a different planet. The *banlieue Parisienne* is dominated by the culture of poverty, a shadow economy in which unemployment benefits, crime and drug-trafficking have become the main sources of income.

The recent outbreaks of urban violence again focused public opinion on these minimum choice neighbourhoods. But what was perhaps more telling was the wave of hysteria that spread when 'plans' were revealed in which young *banlieusards* were organizing a march on Paris, the wealthy white enclave. Thousands of extra police

were mobilized to defend the capital. In the end, nothing came of it. To bridge the gap between these two worlds is a major challenge, not only in France but also in cities that up till now have escaped the fate of urban violence. Perhaps it can be bridged by a shared feeling of pride of place; by the sort of attachment to a place that will unite such diverse cultures. And, perhaps, city museums could help bridge that gap, by presenting the carriers of memory that serve as common denominators of a shared urban experience. What carriers, what images, what townscape or even soundscape will strike that key is a matter of research, in which anthropologists, urban historians and town planners should join forces.

Urban icons¹

Vanessa R. Schwartz and Philip J. Ethington
University of Southern California



1. Screen capture of the website interface

Welcome to Icon City (fig. 1) – a multi-media expression of an on-going research project about ‘Urban Icons’ that we have been working on. As users navigate their way around Icon City the argument we are about to make will be laid out as a web experience. Although the web and the museum are two very different spaces, they are each ideal environments in which to examine the notion of urban icons, which is a fundamental category of object in the broader field of what we would call ‘urban visual history.’ As this field of inquiry develops, scholars must come to terms with the on-going opportunities that spaces that visualize narrative present us for advancing and communicating research whose central framework is the visual itself. ‘Urban icons’, we would suggest, provide an ideal rubric for possible city museum exhibitions.

Now is the time for such an examination and for such exhibitions as we are in a critical stage in the evolution of interdisciplinary scholarship on urban culture, visual culture, and the study of spatial organization and conceptualization, across the human sciences. Urban studies have in recent years been profoundly transformed by the linguistic turn and the rise of semiotics, resulting in a new tendency to ‘read’ cities as ‘texts.’ Visual culture has emerged as a major field of investigation, but as yet, his-

1 Vanessa R. Schwartz delivered the talk upon which this essay is based in Amsterdam in November 2005. The project is co-directed with Phil Ethington and much of what appears below is part of a special issue of *Urban History* 32:1 (May 2006) (Cambridge University Press) and its multi-media companion that can be accessed through Cambridge Journals Online: http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/history/urbanicons/urban_icons_companion/index.htm. We wish to thank Cambridge for permission to re-print and the authors in the special issue as well as those who participated in a conference at USC on Urban Icons for their contributions to this project

torians have been challenged to show how amorphous concepts such as viewing and visuality are anchored to the material world, the subject of much inquiry in the human sciences.

Urban History

The field of 'Urban History' has firm roots in economic and social history: the historical study of cities began with the consideration of social processes such as class formation, immigration, revolution, and industrialization. In this literature, the city operates primarily as a setting, or laboratory for the study of these processes. Grafted sometimes uncomfortably onto this foundation is a cultural historical approach, now several decades old, which figures the city symbolically and decodes meaning in its buildings, spaces, population, usually within the national frame. This cultural-historical approach was widely practiced by scholar-critics such as Lewis Mumford, Jane Jacobs, Kevin Lynch, and Richard Sennett, who explored the relationship between the city's built form and its intangible cultural life.² That stream of scholarship forcefully entered the historical profession with the publication of Carl Schorske's landmark *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (1980). Schorske, drawing heavily on art and architectural history, showed how the cultural meanings of a city's form could be linked to the larger, national narratives of historical development, especially those of political culture. Schorske also drew on the growing history of urban planning, which traced the intentions and visions of those responsible for self-conscious and deliberate urban development.³

While the aesthetic dimension of the urban environment has been central to the cultural tradition and to the planning tradition in urban history, only recently have scholars begun to examine that which is precisely *visual* in urban culture, society, and political life. Recognition of visual culture as a field of urban experience arose from many quarters: from Kevin Lynch's focus on cognitive mapping in urban planning; from the rise of cultural geography⁴; from cinema studies; and from a broadening of the fields of art and architectural history to include the vernacular and the popular.⁵ The idea of a 'cultural' or 'symbolic' landscape, developed most keenly by such geographers as Yi-Fu Tuan and Denis Cosgrove, demanded greater consideration of the connection

2 See Sennett, Richard, *The Fall of Public Man*, New York 1976; Mumford, Lewis, *The Culture of Cities*, New York 1938; Lynch, Kevin, *The Image of the City*, Cambridge, 1960; and Jacobs, Jane *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, New York 1961.

3 See Pinkney, David H., *Napoleon III and the Rebuilding of Paris*, Princeton, N.J 1958. Collins, George R. and Crasemann Collins, Christiane, *Camillo Sitte and the Birth of Modern City Planning*, New York Columbia University Studies in Art History and Archeology, No. 3, (1965). Dyos, H.J., Cannadine, David and Reeder, David A. (eds.) *Exploring the Urban Past: Essays in Urban History*, Cambridge, UK, and New York 1982.

4 Rowntree, Lester B. and Conkey, Margaret W., 'Symbolism and the Cultural Landscape,' *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 70:4 (Dec. 1980) 459-474.

5 See Lynch, *The Image of the City*. Bruno, Giuliana, *Streetwalking on a Ruined Map: Cultural Theory and the City Films of Elvira Notari*, Princeton, N.J. 1993; Venturi, Robert, Scott Brown, Denise and Izenour, Steven, *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form*, Cambridge, Mass: 1977; Friedberg, Anne, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern*, Berkeley 1993; and Henkin, David M., *City Reading: Written Words and Public Spaces in Antebellum New York*, New York 1998.

between the material and the symbolic domains.⁶ In the earlier phases of urban history (the economic/social and the cultural) a building or public square was analyzed according to the architect's or planner's relationship to the intellectual, aesthetic, and national context. The questions of original intent or purpose were of paramount importance. Questions of impact were certainly raised, but the overarching goal was to explain how cities have taken the forms and functions that they have, how those forms and functions operate within national and economic systems, and also within distinct epochs such as the Renaissance, Victorian or Post-war eras.

Post-war eras

Having already accounted for the myriad built forms (concentric, grid, radial, etc), having counted the multitudes of urbanites, having assessed their origins, possessions, and social conditions, having charted the rise and fall of social movements, it is time to ask new questions. The project of studying 'urban icons' attempts to isolate a critical, *visual* element in the construction of urban experience and identities, and also in the construction of extra-urban developments (nations, ideologies, economies, empires, global culture).

To help illuminate the usefulness of the concept of 'urban icons' we held an international conference in order to determine whether the category can be used as a conceptual grid for studying the intersection of visual culture and urban history. The conference began with a series of questions:

What entities, persons (living or allegorical), spaces and structures have represented particular cities, or city life as such?

How and in what ways have the problem of urban icons and iconicity changed over time? What is the relative 'iconicity' of specific cities? (Are some cities, such as Rome and Jerusalem more readily reduced to their iconic monuments – the Colloseum, the Dome of the Rock – than other cities?)

Can cities be imagined at all without iconic reductionism, or is the importance of urban icons a product of the modern era, characterized by mass mediated visual culture in which semiotic communication is central to the urban condition?

What place do icons occupy in the history of cities and how we know them? What roles have they played in the history of a particular city? Is their greatest function to interject cities into a global urban narrative?

It was our desire to consider urban iconicity in the ancient, early modern, and modern eras, and to consider examples from Asia, Europe and the Americas. We sought to draw the research from different kinds of cities as well: capitals, imperial metropolises, colonial cities, political centres, and cultural beacons.

Urban icons

That research has helped define the object better and allowed us to make some first definitions. If the study of 'urban icons' is to be considered viable as a sustained research program, we must first clarify, with relative precision, the very concept of an 'icon.' Although the term is ubiquitous in contemporary culture, as in the common reference to someone who has achieved 'iconic status,' we insist that to be analytically meaning-

⁶ See Tuan, Yi-Fu, *Place and Space: The Perspective of Experience*, Minneapolis 1977; Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1974; Cosgrove, Denis, *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design, and Use of Past Environments*, Cambridge, UK, and New York 1988.

ful, 'icon' must denote a particular kind of *pictorial representation*. The Greek *eikon* simply means picture; image in the broadest sense. The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives us 'An image, figure, or representation; a portrait; a picture; a picture, 'cut', or illustration in a book...' ⁷ Most definitions distinguish 'icons' from 'symbols' by the criterion that icons 'in some way resemble what they stand for,' ⁸ whereas symbols, including the letters and words on this page, bear an arbitrary relationship to their referent. Any mark or shape can become a 'symbol,' by 'standing for' any idea or thing, but icons symbolize in a special way. In our account, all icons are symbols, but not all symbols are icons. Iconization thus stands apart from symbolization.

Icons were originally defined as those memorial images of deceased persons made by early Christians – akin to Egyptian mummy portraits – that were later embraced by early Christians and by the Eastern Orthodox Church as cult images. These pictures were imagined as authentic copies of the 'original images' of Christ, the Virgin Mary, the saints or biblical scenes rather than as objects created by human hands. These devotional images were made on small and portable wooden panels. The early practice of using icons in Christian worship raised concern about the proscription of the worship of idols in the monotheistic tradition. The term 'icon' thus developed a connotation of being an object of uncritical devotion. Icons also connected vision to touch by virtue of the ancient theory of vision in which a visual ray is thought to stream from the eye of the viewer to touch its object. The form of the object then moves back along the visual ray to imprint itself on the memory of the viewer. The viewer in this model is active and connected to the object. The worshipper expects to be touched by the object of vision as its image moves back along the visual ray to impress itself on the soul through memory. ⁹

While the long history of the icon in Christian devotional practice holds important clues to the application we seek to refine for the study of urban history, its more recent use in the philosophy of symbol systems may be more helpful to that end. After Charles Peirce developed his philosophy of signs in the nineteenth century, 'icon' became a meaningful semiotic term, denoting an emblem or symbol whose form is implicated in its meaning. Peirce famously distinguished between 'icons' 'symbols' and 'indexes' as the three principal forms of signs. 'It has been found,' Peirce writes, 'that there are three kinds of signs which are all indispensable in all reasoning; the first is the diagrammatic sign or *icon*, which exhibits a similarity or analogy to the subject of discourse.' ¹⁰ Peircian semiotics holds that 'symbols' are arbitrarily related to their referent, while 'indexical' signs bear the actual impress of their referent, as does a footprint. In contemporary computer design, the Peircian definition of 'icon' is most faithfully sustained: an envelope denotes mail; a folder denotes a place to store files, and so on.

Departing from Peirce, we can also say that urban icons are born as visual objects, but they do not necessarily, or even usually, envelop their meaning in their form. For instance, the Eiffel Tower represents Paris, Frenchness, modernity, but none of these concepts look like the shape of the tower. In agreement with Peircian semiotic terms, however, this is still an iconic 'sign' because it is a representational shape rather than an arbitrary symbol – rather like the pictographic form of Chinese characters. While the

7 'icon, n.' *Oxford English Dictionary Online* <<http://dictionary.oed.com>> (10 May 2005).

8 Quoted in 'icon, n.' *Oxford English Dictionary Online* <<http://dictionary.oed.com>> (10 May 2005).

9 See Belting, Hans, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, Chicago 1994.

10 Saunders Peirce, Charles, *Collected Papers* (1931) I. III. III 195. Quoted in 'icon, n.' *Oxford English Dictionary Online* <<http://dictionary.oed.com>> (10 May 2005).

signifier is an iron tower of unique shape and specific historical origin, the signified is not the tower itself, but all that the Eiffel Tower has come to represent as part of a global landscape. The Hollywood Sign is an even more complicated case: a typographical 'sign,' it is also a monumental structure, so its specific, undulating configuration on Mount Lee above Los Angeles is the actual form reproduced. The Hollywood Sign (as icon) is a *picture* of the word 'HOLLYWOOD' that sits on the slope of Mt. Lee. The iconic sign and the lexical one are mutually influential, however. Saying or writing 'Hollywood' reproduces and circulates meaning that was also or was previously produced and circulated via the visual configuration of the 50-foot tall letter-sculptures on the slopes of Mt. Lee.

Urban icons, then, are signs born when symbols become images but are not thereafter limited to their incarnation as images. They originate in specific places – *cities* – and convey meanings that are not only urban but also national, global, religious, ideological, personal, political, commercial, emotional, and in all ways historical, *as mediated by the urban context*. While as a subclass of symbols they are also (with signs in general) unstable carriers of multiple, perspectival, ideological, and often contradictory meanings, they can also achieve some measure of universal, cross-cultural meaning.

Urban icons, according to Jérôme Monnet, are images of symbols that circulate through material supports such as books, postcards, and billboards. In his definition, icons are an image of a symbol in a sort of second-order symbolization. An urban symbol, for Monnet, is a material object such as Mexico City's Angel monument, or the Torre Latinamerica skyscraper, or even the ubiquitous Volkswagen Beetle 'Vocho' ('Bug') taxicabs of that city. They symbolize the Mexican nation, modernity, or democracy, but each symbol needs to be iconized in order to 'diffuse its meaning and to structure a collective representation of place.'

Definitions

Why icons? Urban icons may have proliferated as a solution to the challenge of the immensity of urban knowledge. Icons condense and reduce. They transform the chaos of the experience of the city into knowledge and meaning through representational practices. The concept of an urban icon helps to forge links between the concrete spatiality of the city and the metaphoric spatiality of 'imaginary landscapes'; between the material and the ideal; between the shapes on the ground and the shapes in the mind.

To summarize *ALL ICONS*:

- Are graphic simplifications and condensations of meaning. They distil a range of ideas into a single representation and act metonymically as a substitute for a multifaceted whole.
- Circulate across semiotic forms and across media.
- Are both singular and repeated.
- Function as visual clichés, despite variation.

URBAN ICONS:

- Approximate the status of an ultimate or summary representation of a particular city.
- Embed the materiality of experience but also de-territorialize it through the mobility of the circulation of images.
- Are 'visually noisy' attention-grabbers, addressed to a distracted viewer.

- Carry the stamp of place and time, usually that of the icon's origin but often of its re-casting in later historical moments.
- Depend in part on size and location because these features contribute centrally to the quality of legibility.

On the web, we have created floating urban icons that embody these definitions. When you catch one and click on it, you get a postcard of an urban icon. Another click and the user gets the back of a postcard with an identification and in the address place, a link to the icon as it is mentioned in one of the essays that are part of the 'Urban Icons' project.

But icons are not timeless, even if they seem to float. Does this system of representation emerge at a certain moment in history? Put otherwise, have there always been urban icons or is there an 'iconic' moment of world history, one that is inseparable from the rise of global trade and the explosion of printed visual culture during the Renaissance, the later advent of photography, and the formation of a transnational global urbanized world? The Eiffel Tower, we would suggest, is actually the original and defining urban icon, a hypothesis that would ground urban icons in the modern era. The rise and spread of urban icons may result from developments as large as capitalism, as urbanization itself, and/or changes in technologies of representation. But smaller developments may also prove instrumental: those as specific as tourism (and its postcards) and advertising (and its logos). The image, in such an account, is the gold of modernity's symbolic field, the city its privileged spatial expression.

Life cycles of urban icons

If urban icons emerged in the modern era, they also raise the question of the life-cycle of specific urban objects and spaces. In an essay on Shanghai, 'A Big Ben with Chinese Characteristics: The Customs House in Old and New Shanghai', Jeffrey Wasserstrom asks whether an icon is born an icon or becomes one over time? The Customs House in Shanghai was both born an icon because of customs houses that came before and especially meaningful as an icon of Shanghai in the years that followed its construction. Then, as his article demonstrates, the Customs House and 'Big Ching' came to work differently after the 1949 Revolution and again after Pudong's rise across the river from it very recently.

Joachim Schlör's study of the Berlin Wall, 'It Has to Go Away but at the Same Time it Has to be Kept:' – The Berlin Wall and the Making of an Urban Icons' foregrounds this process of change at the generational scale of time, but also raises new questions about urban icons in the late twentieth century. The Wall became an icon, he argues, only when it ceased to exist. For its almost thirty years of life, people living near it turned away from it. It was, however, immediately appropriated as a 'symbol' by forces on either side of the culture of division that it signified: a political division that became embedded in city spaces. If the Brandenburg Gate is an urban icon of the monumental type, the Berlin Wall seems to fall into some other category. It had neither architectural nor visual ambitions, but gained them secondarily.

The essays also suggest that once an icon, not always an icon. Sometimes they become outdated and overshadowed; sometimes their meanings and uses are transformed; sometime they take on new vitality through the filter of nostalgia. Icons seem to emerge in a blaze of novelty but often endure as they embed a sense of their historicity. Wasserstrom suggests that we might juxtapose icons that represent time with

those that represent space or at least question whether there are temporal urban icons, spatial urban icons or whether they always represent a spatio-temporal conjuncture. In his example, the Customs House today serves as a representation of 'Old Shanghai' which became fixed as the Shanghai of the 1930's. Does St Peter's freeze Rome in the Papal Renaissance; St Paul's Cathedral freeze London in the 17th century? How does the prominence of the Eiffel Tower, associated with the Belle Epoque, arrest Paris in a look that makes it permanently associated with the start of the last century? The place, Paris then becomes represented as the time, 1900. Or, for example, did the freeway become the icon of Los Angeles as Edward Dimendberg argues was suggested by Reyner Banham's *The Architecture of Four Ecologies* because, at the moment in the 1960s-70s, when important new analyses of the city began to emerge, the freeways were still novel?¹¹ In what ways do icons encode notions of novelty and the present? When urban icons get worn out, do they just fade away? They almost always seem to stand as powerful emblems of what was novel and is now archaic. And sometimes, as with the Eiffel Tower, which can now even be found in Las Vegas, they endure with an incredibly powerful half-life. Tracking the 'careers' of particular icons over time will tell us as much about 'icons' as a mechanism of representation in a certain historical moment as it will about the place represented.

Tourism created a flood of representations of place in a summary and telegraphic fashion.¹² Over the course of the touristic twentieth century, advertising has also established powerful conventions of commercial visual and verbal story-telling in which icons have become one of the key visual tools in the construction of branding. The icon transmits narrative information about the city as well as signifying the city in general. Icons help in the 'branding' of cities.¹³

Seeing and touching

But urban icons also tell us about the history of 'urban viewing'. Whether native or foreign, urban icons imply an aerial perspective in two ways: they seem connected to aerial views (such as the bird's eye or the panorama) but they also seem to have literally 'left the ground.' Unlike a monument, which is firmly rooted in its physical place, urban icons telegraph meaning about place in a way that is not at all dependent on being literally coincident with or physically located at the time in the place it denotes. In fact, the test of an urban icon may be in its deracination and global circulation as an image.

Because urban icons circulate as images, one might argue that they are dematerialized. Yet our sense is that the power of icons resides in the fact that they embed within themselves something of the materiality of urban experience. It was remarked upon during the course of the conference that many of the icons began their lives as objects that could be touched, climbed into, through or onto. This tactile relationship is part of the traditional Christian notion of icons in the first place – why one might think of icons as the 'corpus mysticum' of a secular society.

11 Dimendberg, Edward, 'The Kinetic Icons: Reyner Banham on Los Angeles as Mobile Metropolis,' in *Urban History*, special issue on 'Urban Icons.' See Banham, Reyner, *Los Angeles. The Architecture of Four Ecologies*, London 1971.

12 See Gerry and Chris Phil Kearns, eds., *Selling Places: The City as Cultural Capital, Past and Present*, New York 1993; Ringer, Greg ed., *Destinations: Cultural Landscapes of Tourism*, London and New York 1998; Löfgren, Orvar, *On Holiday: A History of Vacationing*, Berkeley 1999.

13 See Twitchell, James, *Branded Nation*, New York 2004.

Shaping the city

By collecting objects of interest and organizing exhibitions and educational activities, the museum records parts of the history of the city. There is of course not one history of the city; many stories shed light on the city's history. The history of the city is dynamic; it is changing continuously.

Questions

- In what way does the work of city museums relate to written histories of cities, in particular to the 'official' histories? Are we aware that we play a role in recording history? How complete do we want to be?
- What objects do we collect and how? Many museums occupy themselves with oral-history projects, recording memories and stories. What choices are made, which media are used, whose memories? How important is immaterial heritage?
- Are we concerned with the history of the entire city, or do we actually limit ourselves more to the historic centre? Do we emphasize the history of centuries ago or modern times?
- What is the relationship of city museums with other heritage institutions and services, such as archives, historic buildings and services, archaeological services etc.? Do we co-operate? How are our tasks demarcated?
- How do we choose the themes of our exhibitions and decide what to collect? Do we listen to others, to the non-museum world (target groups, the municipality ...)?

The District Six Museum in Cape Town, South Africa

Valmont Layne

Director District Six Museum

Some historical background

The city of Cape Town is South Africa's oldest city, with its colonial origins stretching back to the middle of the seventeenth century. The area known as District Six was originally an area covered in vineyards worked by slaves. With emancipation in the nineteenth century, freed slaves started to settle in this area on the outskirts of the colonial town.

By the late nineteenth century, Cape Town was a vibrant cosmopolitan town with a growing mercantile economy, fuelled by the discovery of diamonds and gold. District Six¹ was in many respects the beating heart of this town, a neighbourhood with an astonishingly varied community: descendents of slaves from India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mozambique, West Africa, as well as Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe and Caribbean sailors. This mix sowed the seeds of a unique urban culture.

In 1966, the South African government made a declaration which was to have a devastating effect on the city of Cape Town. District Six, the vibrantly cosmopolitan inner-city neighbourhood of 70,000 people was to be pulled down, its residents forced to leave and a new exclusive white suburb was to be built in its place. Over the next decade, the shape of Cape Town was transformed as District Six, and more than 40 other communities, were declared condemned areas and the residents were forcibly removed and taken to the outskirts of the city, away from the designated white suburb. In the process, it created a city divided along racial, religious and class lines. The projected redevelopment of District Six into a modern new suburb for an exclusively white population failed to materialize. What remained was a desolate wasteland flattened by bulldozers. The area's destruction has now become part of national history, symbolising one of the worst ravages of apartheid.

Urban-renewal projects were common all over the world in the 1960s, often inspired by modernisation and the influence of superstar architects such as Le Corbusier. What made this South African renewal project unique was that it was part of a systematic ethnic and racial reorganisation of an entire country – a policy known as the Group Areas Act, an Act that was to affect four million people between 1955 and the end of the 1980s.

How did the District Six Museum come about?

The foundation of the District Six Museum was driven by an urban social movement aimed at helping people to return to their land, and to defend the site from political and commercial interests. A conference in 1988, dubbed the 'Hands Off District Six Conference', resolved to found a museum in order to allow the story of what happened

¹ The area was named the Sixth Municipal District of Cape Town in 1867, hence the name.



1. Museum interior

there to be told, and to prepare for democratic government in South Africa. One year later the District Six Museum Foundation was set up.

What is noteworthy here is that the founders of the museum recognised the transformative potential of the museum as an institution. They recognised that museums, even though concerned with conservation and public display, also had a role to play in shaping attitudes towards citizenship, and hence in shaping cities. It is no accident that the manifesto of the permanent exhibition in the District Six Museum declares that: 'In remembering, we do not want to recreate District Six, but to work with its memory.... So that we can build a city in which all of us can live, not as races, but as people'.

Two elements of this declaration are important. First, that the museum intends to work with the Memory of District Six, not to recreate it. This implies that, while an agenda of restitution lies behind the museum's founding vision, that restitution will not necessarily always take a material or tangible form.

The second important element here is the intention to contribute to the building of a city based not on race, but on a common understanding of humanity. The implication here is that the museum wishes to align itself with the reshaping of this South-African city, not naively believing that racial identities do not exist, but working on the understanding that by mobilising the museum, it can build a deeper public understanding of how racial legacies work in the city, and in so doing, build the basis for a non-racial future.

The museum as a driving force for democratic access to the past

For the District Six Museum, rewriting the history of the city means reconceptualising history, not only as a narrative of the past, but as a narrative of our relationship to many pasts, including contested pasts. We want to validate these pasts, to create democratic access to the past. In this task, we recognise that different sources of knowledge about the past are also important. For many people, the past is not available through written archives, or it is only available indirectly. What are the strategies for facilitating more democratic access to the past?

Firstly, we acknowledge non-traditional sources of knowledge and formulation and acknowledge the validity of experiential and remembered embodiments of knowledge and history. Secondly, we have to acknowledge and engage with established epistemologies of the past produced largely by academics. The museum positions itself between these two forms of knowledge. Hence we have to create a reflexive reality, for instance, we engage reflexively with visual culture, oral history and other source materials in which the past is carried forward into the present.

Another way in which we do this in the museum can be seen in a map which illustrates our desire to find new ways of producing knowledge about the past. This map was created so that former residents could ritualistically and symbolically re-inscribe their place in history. People actually get down on their hands and knees and write their names, make corrections, and acknowledge their neighbours. (fig. 1)

Moreover, the map has become a field-site where people are commemorated in unexpected ways. Sometimes this act is tinged with sorrow, sometimes with joy. The museum area operates as a multidisciplinary framework in which recent memory is mobilised for the restitution of the past both socially and culturally. The museum is both a cultural centre for the community, and a museum in the conventional sense, with a collection of artefacts, photographs, documents and audiovisual recordings.

Memorials inside and outside the museum

Although the museum is housed in an old church, it has always had a profound relationship with the barren landscape of District Six. Memorials have appeared spontaneously in this area. A cairn has been erected on the site of what was once the main street. In fact, it is through these monuments that a memorial-site was created as there have been acts of commemoration on the site for decades. What is different now is that the site is likely to be declared a National Heritage Site. The future placement of memorials will be regulated through legislation and by an official conservation-management plan.

The museum is shifting its focus in order to be formally involved in the site. The challenge now is to work with an established and embryonic form of active commemoration activities and history-making, and to transfer these to a form of commitment to the site. A further challenge is to turn the area into a sort of open-air museum space, even though the site is at the same time being redeveloped as a new neighbourhood. Finally, the challenge is to mobilise the language of heritage alongside the language of urban redevelopment, and to do so in a way which champions the creation of a mixed area both in economic and in cultural terms. We are asking a lot, but a lot is at stake.

The case of Prestwich Place, in another part of the city centre, presents a related example of this mode of contemporary civic commitment to shaping the city while respecting the past. Not too long ago, a large field containing the remains of slaves was discovered in the city-centre on the building-site of a new lifestyle centre in a fashionable part of town. These were the remains of slaves, many of whom would have lived in District Six. The museum supported a campaign to have a public discussion about the future of the site and the remains, in the face of pressure from the developer to complete the project. (fig. 2) In this case, the developer won the right to continue the project, but the case has led to animated discussions about the role of the past in shap-



2. Procession in which the remains of slaves are being relocated

ing the future of the city. Another aspect of the Prestwich case concerned the right of scientists, archeologists in particular, to study the remains. This right was vigorously opposed by community groups and remains a bone of contention even today.

Reshaping the city also entails the right to influence what is commemorated in the city and the right to influence how knowledge is mobilised to support this memory. The Prestwich case is perhaps too lengthy to detail here, except to say that it was a watershed-moment in the emerging field of heritage in South Africa.

Work for the District Six Museum in coming years

The museum is faced with the prospect of keeping a number of considerations in perspective. Firstly, District Six is to be redeveloped as an urban housing project to re-house more than 10,000 former residents, most of whom live in economically depressed areas where new social and cultural problems have arisen, such as crime, gangsterism, racial and religious tension. We anticipate that many of these problems will be brought back by its former inhabitants when they return. Secondly, District Six is to be declared a National Heritage Site. Since our focus is on intangible elements of that heritage, we are challenged to develop access to knowledge about the past in ways which are within reach of this audience, but which also assist in building civic values as well as providing new opportunities to reshape the community.

As the process of land restitution gets underway, it is important that a public dialogue about the future of District Six should be launched too. The museum is well-situated to help facilitate this dialogue. This process of restitution is being watched across the country, since there are hundreds of other communities whose residents share the aspiration to return to their land, and to make a new start, both in a physical and cultural sense...

The District Six Museum is also unusual in that the story it tells is not yet finished. It allows us the opportunity to continue to create change in the city, and to mobilise historical records in the service of a civic dialogue. In one sense, we hope that it will be a never-ending story, but that our museum work will always remain on the cutting-edge of civic engagement.

Museums in the city: a multi-centred approach to policy and civic dialogue in Antwerp

Steven Thielemans

General Director Museums, Libraries and Heritage of the City of Antwerp

Peter De Wilde

Head of the Department of Culture, Province of Antwerp

Introduction

Antwerp is the largest city in Flanders, apart from Brussels. The territory of the City of Antwerp boasts an exceptionally important cultural heritage and Antwerp's museums intend to play a pioneering role in the following years in terms of caring for this heritage and making it accessible to the public.

The city has two important groups of museums, those belonging to the city (9) and those belonging to the province of Antwerp (4). The other four important museums are managed by different organizations – two of them belong to the Flemish Community (the Royal Museum of Fine Arts and the Museum of Contemporary Art), one to the Municipal Centres for Health Care and Social Welfare (Maagdenhuis), and one to a bank (Rockoxhuis). Owing to this organizational structure, the situation in Antwerp is more complex than in other Flemish cities where most of the museums belong to the municipality or are private initiatives.¹ In those cities, however, the number of museums is a lot smaller.

In the past there was some consultation between the municipal, provincial and Flemish institutions, but not with entirely satisfactory results due to the rather odd make-up of the parties involved: two groups of museums (municipal and provincial) and two institutions. Groups of institutions and individual institutions have different priorities and interests, and this influences their positions and involvement enormously. What's more, the other two important institutions in the city (Rockoxhuis & Maagdenhuis) were not involved in this consultation process.

The two groups of museums have recently started a far reaching project of collaboration and the museums in Antwerp are currently undergoing an ambitious programme of re-profiling, renewal and redevelopment. This ambitious programme and project intend to rethink the story of the city as it is told by the different museums in the city. All these museums touch aspects of the history and art of the city. The crucial question is: how can we align Antwerp's current identity with its past heritage preserved in its museums? An important new player in the future will be the Museum on the River, which plans to open its doors in 2008. What role will this new city museum play in a city already rich in museums?

¹ Most Flemish provinces administer next to no museums, but the Province of Antwerp is an exception. Moreover, its four main museums are within the city's boundaries. The Flemish Community, responsible for cultural policy as a whole in Flanders, has few institutions of its own. (Apart from the two in Antwerp, there is only a castle near Brussels.)

Tandem and engine

In the last three years, new boards of directors have been appointed to the Museums of the City of Antwerp, the Museums of the Province of Antwerp and the Museum of Contemporary Art. This has facilitated a new vision on institutional collaboration between the Antwerp Museums and their content. This vision also extends to their role in the heritage field in general.

At the beginning of March 2004, the Province of Antwerp and the City of Antwerp signed a declaration regarding cooperation between the two groups of museums in the city, namely the Museums of the City of Antwerp and the Museums of the Province of Antwerp. They have much in common as regards their promotional approach, their responsibilities as museums and their collections in particular. The Province of Antwerp and the City of Antwerp collectively allow their museums to assume a double responsibility: they work closely together as a 'tandem', whilst functioning as an 'engine' in stimulating wider cooperation, both with regard to other museums in the city and other heritage organizations and institutions in the province². Examples include collaboration on the monumental churches in the city and contemporary visual arts.

As mentioned, the cooperation between these two groups of museums will involve rethinking the story of the city as told by the different museums in the city. This is of major importance because of the position the new city museum, the Museum on the River, will occupy. A crucial question is how to align the city's current identity with its heritage as preserved in its museums, both old and new.

The Museums of the City of Antwerp and the Museums of the Province of Antwerp are part of organizations with a wider responsibility vis-à-vis heritage; these are 'Museums, Conservation Libraries and Heritage' (City of Antwerp)³, and 'Department of Culture' (Province of Antwerp)⁴. This larger organizational structure makes an ambitious approach with a broader view on heritage (for instance mobility of collections) more realistic for the new Museum on the River project.

Vision and profiles

The shared vision of the Museums of the City of Antwerp and the Museums of the Province of Antwerp involves ensuring that the best possible care is given to their collections and that these collections are made accessible to a large and diverse public. As a political statement, the Province of Antwerp and the City of Antwerp regard the realization of this vision as an essential part of both their social and customer-friendly approach, which should serve to strengthen their identity and their image. The Antwerp Museums have complementary profiles, though together they show considerable coherence and, in terms of their collections, some overlap.

² Together they employ approximately 500 people, preserve almost a million objects (excluding archives and books) and attract approximately one million visitors a year (2004). Their total operating budget amounts to 10 million euros (2004), excluding staff and investments in buildings.

³ The municipal authority is also responsible for the City Library (one of the most important conservation libraries in Flanders), the Rubenianum (the documentation centre about Rubens and his contemporaries), and the House of Literature (not only a museum, but more importantly Flanders' literary archive), as well as the Heritage Unit.

⁴ The provincial authority, on the other hand, administers not only 4 museums and a heritage service, which includes monuments, archaeology and movable heritage, but also institutions such as the Castle d'Ursel, the Architecture Archives, the Library Centre based in a historical castle site and, last but not least, the 'Bob & Bobette Children's Museum', which is more of an art education centre.

The group of 13 municipal and provincial museums comprises several 'historic buildings', i.e. Mayer van den Bergh Museum (collector)⁵, Plantijn-Moretus Museum (entrepreneur)⁶ that has been recognized as a world heritage site, and Rubens' House (artist). To these three, we can add Castle d'Ursel, a heritage centre of the Province of Antwerp, where a prestigious 18th-century collection from a redundant municipal museum is going to be exhibited, and the Vrieselhof Library centre also in a castle. Three more castles, administrated by the Province, complete the list. Each of the other museums focuses on a specific art form and/or aspects of creative industries: fashion, photography, diamonds and jewellery, literature, music and ethnic art. This is a fairly unique situation on the Flemish museum scene. Two other museums (folklore and maritime) will be joined together in the brand new city museum, the Museum on the River.

Most of the museums referred to, have been – or are being – modernized and/or promoted with a more clearly defined image. The reception areas in the three historic buildings have been modernized and all the signing and other physical aids have been adapted and streamlined. Both the new Fashion Museum and the new Diamond Museum opened in 2002. The Photo Museum and the House of Literature followed in 2004. That same year, the Mayer van den Bergh Museum acquired an additional area for temporary exhibitions. The Middelheim Open-Air Museum of Sculpture has expanded quite considerably over the last few years and has acquired monumental sculptures by, for example, Dan Graham. In 2006 the Vleeshuis (or Meat Hall) will reopen. It will no longer house a rather strange variety of collections, but will feature a museum of music with a clearly defined image. And then of course there is the Museum on the River.

One of the advantages of the cooperation between city and province is that they can learn from each other's strengths. The Museums of the Province of Antwerp had a head start in terms of public image, while the Museums of the City of Antwerp had the upper hand regarding organization, more specifically in the implementation of a coordinated policy vis-à-vis their collections and customer services for all the museums together.

MAS – The new museum on the river

An important new player in the city will be the Museum on the River, a 50 million euro project which is scheduled for 2008. Architect Willem-Jan Neutelings has designed a new building, nearly 50 metres high, located between the city and the harbour. The building can be compared to a pile of museum boxes surrounded by galleries and escalators with views of the city, the harbour and the province. The Museum on the River will tell the story of the city in all its depth and diversity on one location in Antwerp for the very first time. It will refer the visitor to other museums which in turn clarify and explore a more specific aspect of the city's story.

What will be the new museum's place and role? What relationship will it have with the many existing museums and other heritage institutions? How will the new and the existing museums balance between grand narratives and 'little histories'? All these

5 Fritz Mayer van den Bergh (1858-1901). His mother had this museum built in the style of the 16th century for his collection of Dutch art from the 14th – 16th century.

6 This museum is housed in the former Plantijn-Moretus printing house, which the family sold with its entire contents to the city of Antwerp in 1876. The printing house and living accommodation was opened to the public in 1877. The printer and publisher Christoffel Plantijn founded the Plantijn-Moretus printing house in 1555.

questions are important but not very easy to answer. The new museum will be a team player, and a most active one. It will bring three museum collections together – we will close two museums – but in addition it will show objects from other collections in the city, from museums and other heritage institutions, as well as conservation libraries and archives. The decision to close down a museum is never easy. In this case, however, the closure of the museum of folklore and the maritime museum has museological reasons, in particular with regard to the content (i.e. the need to integrate these two collections that are closely related to the story of the city into one coherent, complex museological context).

More than the existing museums, the Museum on the River will address a wide range of different target groups; most of the other museums in Antwerp are specifically aimed at one or more target groups that closely match their collection and policy. Our vision of the museum, its ambition and collections are such that it will be able to address most of our important target groups: children, youth, senior citizens, community groups from other ethnic backgrounds and tourists.

The Museum on the River will not only be an instrument to strengthen the ties between the museums in general and the inhabitants of the different parts of the city; it will also be actively involved in bridging the gap between grand narratives on the academic level and the ‘little histories’ in the memories of the inhabitants of the city. These ‘little histories’ may be used as a starting point for specific displays in the museum, possibly as an illustration or even as a focal point. The new museum will rely more than other museums on a large diversity of sources and collections (for example, oral history) and try to reflect the perception of Antwerp’s inhabitants of their city.

Conclusion

To conclude we would briefly like to stress some principles which are important in building cooperation between different government levels in general and museums (in Antwerp) more specifically. We have personal experience of these ourselves. This experience at a cultural policy level and a museum management level might also be useful for other projects.

- Act in accordance with the general policy options of your sponsors – your politicians, or try to make an impact on the content of those policy options; pay attention to differences between government levels and institutions, and clarify their profiles;
- By following principle 1, gain the freedom to elaborate these general options that politicians at various levels have officially agreed; act in a way that intensifies (‘tandem’) and broadens (‘engine’) initial collaboration;
- Existing and new museums develop their relationship with the city’s inhabitants by (a) clarifying their profiles (collection mobility) and renewal, (b) mutual references and (c) a balance between grand narratives and ‘little histories’;
- By paying balanced attention to the different aspects of working with heritage (acquisition, preservation, research and the public), museums are able to play an exceedingly active role in stimulating collaboration within the field of heritage;
- It pays to act swiftly, but with style; in doing so, you can lead the discussion.

Capital City – changing the story

Cathy Ross

Head of later department Museum of London

This paper discusses a new development in the Museum of London, a major project entitled *Capital City*. **This is a tremendously exciting project for us. It will see the re-display of the entire grand floor of the Museum, creating a new suite of galleries telling the story of modern London, from the Great Fire in 1666 to the present day. If everything goes according to plan we hope to start building the new galleries in 2007 and complete them in 2009.**

The development has three aims. Firstly, we want to complete the story of London. At the moment the Museum's permanent galleries cover London's history only up to 1914. Although we deal with the recent past through temporary exhibitions, we urgently need to tell the story of recent and present-day London in our permanent galleries. The second aim is to bring a new generation of 'learning exhibits' into our galleries. At the moment we offer visitors a relatively traditional museum experience, dominated by objects displayed in cases. **'Learning' takes place in separate classrooms. The new Capital City galleries will bring learning activities and exhibits together so that both share the same spaces.** Our third aim is to tell new stories about London. We see the new galleries as not just a new museum version of an old history, but as a completely new public history for London, different in scope and focus from the view of the past that we have presented before.

This paper focuses on this last aim. *Capital City* has prompted much critical reflection within the museum over the past 18 months and I'd like to share some of my worries about the prospect of telling a new story about a city's **past. How can we ensure** our visitors receive our new story as legitimate, something they recognize as matching their own understanding of their city's **past? How can we deliver a story that balances** the good and bad aspects of London's past in a way that stimulates but does not disturb, provokes but does not alienate?

New stories

Our new story will emphasize two strong themes about our capital city. Firstly, London's global nature: we want to look at London as a city looking outwards rather than inwards. This will not just be a story about events within the city walls. It will take a global framework and explore the way the city has spread its tentacles around the world. Thus our story will be as much about Britain and its imperial history as London and its city history.

Our second theme is culture. Our new galleries will tell the basic urban story – **the city's physical and functional growth, its buildings, transport networks and institutions.** But, more importantly, we also want to emphasise intangible things – the city as a place of ideas, values and beliefs. We want to explore such things as:

- 'Citizenship': what defines insiders and outsiders in a city; how has the State's relationship with the individual changed over time?

- Values: what are the common values that bind citizens together and how have these changed over time?
- Identity: **how does the city see itself; what are its myths and beliefs about itself?**

We want to paint a picture of a capital city, that is not just a mechanistic machine for living but a place that expresses ideologies and values, myths and beliefs. This will be a capital city created by Britain's **imperial past, its Protestant past and our nation's** deep addiction to free-market capitalism.

As I'm sure you will appreciate, this will produce a history told very much from the point of view of the 21st century, a history consciously shaped by the events and concerns of the present day. In London, as in all cities, the concerns of the present day are deep and sometimes troubling ones: what sort of society do we in fact live in; what are the common values that define being British; what degree of conformity to these values can and should society expect of individuals and groups; how much dissent can we tolerate? Many of these debates are underpinned by a new sense of shifting values as globalization and multiculturalism are endlessly discussed, questioned, criticised, re-affirmed and re-discussed. We are consciously trying to join this debate through *Capital City*, shaping our story to bring out resonances between past and present. One of the new gallery's key aims is to ask questions about the past in such a way that will have legitimacy and meaning for audiences today.

Isn't it a good thing that museums can play their part in contemporary debates of this sort? Yes, of course it is a good thing and I have no doubts at all that we have chosen the right approach for our re-presentation of London's past. It is, indeed, a very exciting approach for us, moving us forward from our 'old story' of London which was essentially conceived in the mind-set of the 1970s, when the museum opened. However, although I am pleased at the path we have chosen, I also have some more cautious reflections on the journey before us.

Legitimacy

My first concern is the degree to which our new story will be received by our visitors as legitimate. Will they recognize our authority to tell the city story if what we have to say about their city is, in their view, unrecognizable or 'politically correct' – a term of abuse in England. If they come to the museum expecting a story about Victorian London, the Second World War and the 1951 Festival of Britain (fig. 1), will they be bewildered, indeed angry, to find a story about London's role in the slave trade, the British Empire and racism in the 1950s (fig. 2). If visitors come expecting a familiar story about their own ancestors – say, poor families in the 19th-century East End, will they be upset to find a story about somebody else's ancestors – say, poor families in 1920s India.

My second concern is that we run the risk of disappointing our visitors by offering them less of the things they expect museums to provide: less of the cosy, nostalgic 'how Granny used to live' displays that we all know are popular. Space will be limited in the new galleries and we will have to make some hard decisions about the balance between 'easy' and 'difficult' exhibits. We will also have to decide which subjects and events will drive our narrative. A good example of this dilemma is the degree of importance we will place on the Second World War. The War, and in particular the London Blitz, is usually seen as a major milestone in London's history, a massive point of reference and reflection. But in our new story, the bigger milestone is arguably the mass migrations from former Empire countries that followed the War. In this new narrative it is the loss of the Empire, rather than the winning of the War which forms the massive point of



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1. Placard advertising the Festival of Britain, 1951
2. Caribbean family in Trafalgar Square, oil painting by Harold Dearden, 1950s

change in London's story. But could we get away with down-playing the Blitz in favour of post-war migration? All this is matter for much debate and discussion.

Penance

Legitimacy and disappointing expectations are two of my worries. A third is that we are going to give our visitors too much of a hard time. After all, if we are dealing seriously with values, we can't avoid looking at hard truths about the gap between the rhetoric of British values – the tolerance and fair play that we take pride in – and the reality of the British experience. We would lose another sort of legitimacy if we delivered a tourist board vision of London as a place of happy, smiling people. But how far can we explore the less admirable aspects of our past without making the museum into a place of collective penance? There are many calls these days for present-day society to apologise for the injustices of the past. If we acknowledge the hypocracies and injustices in our past, will we only create a grim and joyless city story? Will our museum be little more than a place where the present apologises for slavery, for imperialism, for capitalism, the class system and a host of other past behaviours which caused hardship and suffering?

One way, of course, of dealing with hard truths is to present them through people, delivering the messages of cause and effect through personal stories. Presenting history through eye-witnesses is an enormously helpful strategy for museums. It disguises the institutional voice and authenticates the stories we tell – history through witnesses somehow seems more 'real'. It is a particularly helpful mode for 'difficult' matters, since these often go hand in hand with compelling personal stories of struggle and inner strength. In an age which can accept emotions and feelings more readily than analysis and evidence, we would be foolish not to make the most of the many opportunities that a city history offers for stories of struggle, hardship and the triumph of the human spirit.

Capital City will be packed full of personal stories of suffering and redemption. However we must, I feel, resist the temptation to abdicate our own responsibilities as historians and we must strive to balance these stories with a more analytical account of the past. We are not creating a museum of individual therapy any more than we are creating a museum of collective penance. We must reclaim the perhaps slightly old fashioned role for the museum as the place which delivers an authoritative public history – but do so in a way which has legitimacy for today's audiences.

Responsibilities

All of my concerns feed into a growing self-consciousness of our responsibilities. Creating a new public history which focuses on changing values, beliefs and ideas generates serious responsibilities which we must think through. As agents of civic improvement we have a responsibility to say this is generally a good society: that, on the whole, London may not be a Jerusalem but it is a **good Babylon rather than a bad Babylon**. At the same time we also have a responsibility to acknowledge the imperfections of our good Babylon. And we must do this in a way that does not aggravate or confirm the views of those who believe that this city is a very bad Babylon indeed.

Perhaps the most thought-provoking area in this regard is the current debate about multiculturalism. How do we portray the demographic change of the last half of the 20th century in a way that acknowledges the massive cultural disturbances that have taken place but which accentuates the positive aspects of change? What will we say about the clash between new and old value systems? We aim of course to create some

sort of calm basis for reflection but at some point we will have to say that we believe this is a better value for our city than that. This responsibility is something we can't pass to others to decide on our behalf.

Strategies

Tackling these matters will of course need careful thought and strategies. I'd like to end by mentioning the strategies we are employing to address some of the concerns I've outlined. It almost goes without saying that the most important strategy is to involve other voices and views in the choices we are making. Although the responsibility for what we say ultimately rests with us, our choices must be informed ones. *Capital City* is in its early days but it already has its networks, both formal and informal, of people who will help us make the best choices for the story we want to tell.

Our second strategy is not to forget the old stories. The presentation in our new galleries may take visitors to aspects of London's past that they may not have considered before, but we want them to have the old stories easily to hand. We will do this by putting the old stories in new technology: that is, we will include in the galleries lots of resources through which people can find out more traditional things about the city. Those who want to find out about the basic urban story, the growth of the city and its transport systems, its buildings and institutions will find it easily available on computers, either in the galleries or our planned 'information zone' – part micro-gallery and part Internet coffee shop.

The third strategy is to make full use of the work of artists and writers in our exploration of the past. Artists offer the imagery and metaphor that all good stories need and these will be particularly useful when it comes to dealing with some of the more difficult subjects. Our final strategy is to not take ourselves too seriously. We must give deep thought to our new galleries but at the end of the day we must wear our deliberations lightly and create spaces that visitors will enjoy and take pleasure in.

When the London Museum opened in 1912 it saw its purpose as civic education. Confronting society with its past was one of its explicit aims. Early directors talk about the museum reflecting society back to itself and instilling in its visitors a sense of London patriotism. In the years since 1910, this broad scope hasn't **changed all that** much, although the nuances and vocabulary have. Today, we talk about 'inspiring a passion for London' rather than generating London patriotism. At the beginning of the 21st century London is almost unrecognisable from the London of 50 years ago. It has new sights, a new demography and a new economy. It feels more like a young city than an old one. It needs new stories about its past to help make sense of itself and this is something that we will try to provide through *Capital City*. However, our enthusiasm for creating these new stories must be tempered by a sense of exactly how museums function as a place of civic dialogue. Whether telling new or old stories, we have to talk in a language that our visitors understand and to tell stories with rather than to them.

Discussion

*Chair: Pauline Kruseman
Director Amsterdam Historical Museum*

A lively debate followed the presentations. The first point to be raised was the degree to which museums should be delivering stories that suit the political bodies that fund them. Are museums in danger of becoming vehicles for political propaganda? The general conclusion was that museums must welcome a dialogue with politicians, particularly where the politicians fund the city museum. A museum could not be a true place of civic dialogue if it opened up a dialogue with individual citizens yet excluded any dialogue with the democratically elected bodies which represent them. At the same time, the museum must take care to present itself as an independent voice, because part of the museum's legitimacy in the eyes of the public is as a semi-neutral place, devoted to long term learning rather than short term political aims. Overall, it was felt that museums should not shy away from voicing views that happen to coincide with current political aims, for example promoting the idea of multiculturalism as intrinsic to a city.

Delegates also discussed the idea of collections mobility, as outlined in the Antwerp example. It was felt that city museums should become much more pro-active about the possibilities of transferring collections between institutions. Thinking in a city-wide way, as is happening in Antwerp at the moment, about where collections might be most usefully shown opened up new areas of collaboration which would benefit the institutions involved as well as the public. The need for collections mobility between museums in separate institutional and funding structures was raised as a particular problem, one which needed strong political commitment as well as the agreement of curators within the institutions. The problem of curators feeling over-protective to their collections was also mentioned.

The debate about whether museums should aim their presentations at tourists or local people was raised. For museums in large cities it was easy to say that museums should make presentations primarily for local people and that the tourists will come automatically – if the presentations are of high-quality. The Museum of London is visited by approximately 70% local visitors and 30% tourists. It is not so easy for smaller museums who are under pressure from their funding bodies to attract tourists, and who have to balance this against the needs of their local communities.

Several other points emerged in the discussion. Evaluation and consultation was raised as an essential element for museums. Shouldn't museums be asking people what stories they want told about their city rather than imposing the stories the museum wanted, new or old. How do we really know what visitors want? How can we sustain the links that we make with communities when we consult them? It was agreed that all of these things need thought and balance. The museum has a responsibility to provide a narrative framework but within that, collaboration and evaluation is essential. Sustaining collaborations often fails because of lack of resources and this is something that museums need to address.

Finally, it was agreed that we need to make use of a wider range of artists in our presentations and the design of our galleries. We should look at video and film makers, writers, poets, musicians and performers as well as painters. All have the potential to enrich our galleries. Using contemporary artists to make temporary interventions in existing displays was also felt to be a good strategy.

Conclusions

- City museums should be in permanent dialogue with the public and those who fund them.
- If we make museums for the local citizens will the tourists come in anyway?
- Specific attention should be paid to collections mobility between museums in separate institutional and funding structures.
- Museums should make use of a wider pallet of artists in designing new galleries and in presenting stories.

Helsinki City Museum – documenting suburban life in Helsinki

Tiina Merisalo

Director of the City Museum Helsinki

The background

The founding of the Board of Ancient Monuments in 1906 by the Helsinki City Council marked the beginning of municipal museum's work in the city. Helsinki had gone through a period of rapid growth as a result of industrialisation. Low wooden houses had given way to new metropolitan-style multi-storey houses. The mission given to the Board was to document the disappearing city so they hired a photographer, Signe Brander, whose job it was to provide photographic documentation of the city. Today the more than 900 photos she took at the time form the valuable core of the museum's picture collections. Signe Brander's photos cover the city and its outskirts. Her documentation trips by horse-carriage started at the city's borders – where the old toll-gates were still in place – and where the dwellings of the poorer inhabitants of the city were to be found. (fig. 1) The members of the Board were interested in pictorial documentation and, although they decided to accept donated materials, they did not actively collect objects or archive material.

The City Museum was finally founded in 1911, heralding the start of an active collection policy. For the first four decades the museum's guiding mission was to document the cultural and economic development of Helsinki in its early and 'later' periods. The earlier, 18th century objects stored in the City Hall, that had belonged to the city's militia, were transferred to the museum collections. During the early years the donations came from upper-class and middle class families thus representing the life of bourgeoisie, civil servants, craftsmen and other prosperous people, but they also included memorabilia of the city's political life in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The geographical area covered by the collections was mainly the central city area and the actual city centre.

The museum started to extend its collection in the 1950s in two ways. They first started to collect products of industrial Helsinki and objects in everyday use e.g. people's working clothes were collected. The second change was to enlarge the geographical area of the city documented. Photographs were taken of the newly annexed districts (1946) and new suburbs, the manor houses belonging to country estates bordering on the city, the villa culture on the nearby group of islands and the drastically changing face of the city in the 1960s. Buildings that had been nominated for demolition were photographed too. Everyday history from the 1970s onwards was focused on too, including documentation dealing with children's lives and youth culture and a collection of artefacts that included cosmetics and food packaging, plastic objects and other memorabilia.



1. Signe Brander's excursions

Urban studies in the 1970s

Between 1970 and 1974 the City Museum carried out three urban ethnographic surveys and documented these with the aid of the Helsinki University's Institute of Ethnology. Urban life was documented in three Helsinki districts: the area known as Pasila, and two streets called Vaasankatu and Museokatu. Pasila had been a working-class suburb full of wooden buildings which was demolished to make way for a new residential and office area. Vaasankatu is a street in Kallio, a working-class district cut off from the centre, and the more prosperous southern part of the city by a bridge, symbolically called the 'Long Bridge'. Museokatu is a street in Töölö, a middle-class district in the western part of central Helsinki. In Museokatu, 120 homes or flats and 120 workplaces were photographed and drawn and its inhabitants and workforce interviewed. The same method was followed in Vaasankatu's 112 homes and 45 workplaces. In Pasila the field study included 130 homes and 63 workplaces. These field surveys are part of the research material used in the academic studies, and are still available for further use. In 1985 the museum published two articles in its yearbook: one on the Pasila material and one on the living rooms in Vaasankatu.¹ In 1997 an interdisciplinary project group made a publication called *Kotikaduilla* (In the Streets of our Hometown), based on the survey material.² The publication outlines the impact of the industrial era and advent of

1 Hakkarainen, Helena: *Pasila – työväen esikaupunki* (Pasila – A Worker's Suburb), Narinkka 1985 (Helsinki City Museum's Yearbook 1985), Helsinki 1986.

Rantapusks, Elina: *Olohuone Vaasankadun kodeissa 1970 – luvulla* (Living Room in the Homes of Vaasankatu Street in the 1970s), Narinkka 1985 (Helsinki City Museum's Yearbook 1985), Helsinki 1986.

2 Koskijoki, Maria (ed.): *Kotikaduilla – kaupunkilaiselämää 1970 – luvun Helsingissä* (In the Streets of our Hometown – City Life in Helsinki of the 1970s), Helsinki 1997.

the welfare state from the perspective of the everyday life of the city's inhabitants. Now, thirty years later, the material gives a clear depiction of the fierce, dynamic transformation of the city, with its social, economic and environmental repercussions.

Shaping the city by preserving its heritage

One of Helsinki City Museum's basic tasks is the preservation of the built-up environment that give the city its concrete shape, in other words the preservation of its architecture and cultural environment. Unlike many European countries, whose national heritage is guarded by separate institutions, in Finnish society it is the larger municipal museums that have extensive responsibilities for the preservation of local buildings, whilst the State Office and the National Board of Antiquities oversee buildings of national interest. The City Museum is responsible for the entire city area, including making inventories of the buildings in the different districts, and consulting experts on preservation and city planning. In spite of the work done in the late 20th century, and that done in the last few years, there are still blank areas in the wider city map which reveal that inventories and listings have been concentrating on the central areas for which there is most interest. We manage to do an inventory of approximately one district a year. Last year the museum produced inventories on everyday buildings like kiosks and shopping centres. In keeping with our mission, we think it is important to provide information about the past and its 'building materials' as this is a part of the local population's identity and it promotes their well-being .

Reviewing the collecting policies

At the beginning of the new millennium we felt the need to review and redefine our collection and documentation policies. Although in the course of its 100 years of existence the museum had tried to document not just the life and environment of the city centre but also that typical of the outskirts of the city, and later the annexed areas, we still felt it was slightly contradictory that the core, and most popular part of our collections, best represents the life of the bourgeoisie and the middle class in areas close to the city centre in the 19th and 20th century. Whose image of the past is the museum reflecting and shaping? Whose city are we representing? What are the collectively shared features or identities of our city?

By looking at the history of the museum we were able to identify the main themes and guidelines followed in the past, and we were also able to analyse how much the interests of the individual museum directors and curators have affected the collections. This has made it easier to identify the gaps in documentation. It seems that even though our collections are wide and comprehensive, they only range from the late 19th century to 1960s. There is a lack of older material. The picture collections show us more of the public side of the city, whereas the objects are more representative of the private history of the city. The darker side of the city is less visible. It looks like the first four decades of collection work were strongly affected by the Board's guidelines which emphasized collecting objects and finding documentation on the *cultural and economical development* of Helsinki. Only material which supported this development was collected and anything clashing with that goal was left out. The objects mainly relate the history of women, they tell us about the lives of the middle-classes and upper-classes in the 19th and early 20th centuries in areas in the centre of town. The collection is lacking in ordinary, everyday objects, especially everyday worker's clothing and textiles that used to belong to men. There is less material about specific families and the detached

houses of the post-war period, less material about the homeless and lodgers, less material about the suburbs in the latter part of the 20th century, thus a great number of the city's inhabitants have not been included in its history.

While carrying out this study we were able to search for features which on the one hand distinguish Helsinki from other cities, and on the other shared features which link the city to other cities in Finland and elsewhere. One of our challenges is to reach the individual experiences and stories which are connected with the historical (cultural, social, geographical) features of Helsinki. As a result of this self-assessment, and because resources are limited, we have tried each year to focus on certain projects and areas in keeping with our collection strategies.

Life in Myllypuro

Myllypuro is a typical 1960s suburb, which has a very varied stock of buildings with a very wide-ranging social structure. At the same time, Myllypuro as it is today represents a structure that is already on the decline as work is about to start on an extensive project to redevelop it.

Myllypuro (fig. 2) is a suburban area, built largely in the 1960s, based on a detailed plan approved in 1962. The district celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2005. It is dominated by high-rise blocks of flats although in places there are some clumps of detached houses. Housing construction in the district continued into the 1970s and 1980s. The district has more rented accommodation and more council housing than normally



2. Aerial photo of Myllypuro



3. Myllypuro shopping centre

found in Helsinki. Its diverse building stock gives Myllypuro a socio-economic structure ranging from the affluent owners of detached houses in the western and eastern parts to residents struggling to eke out an existence in more difficult circumstances elsewhere in the district. In the middle of the first decade of the 21st century Myllypuro is facing major changes. Helsinki plans to develop the area and to raise its profile as a versatile residential area, improving amenities and increasing the number of jobs. There are plans for a new local centre to be built on the old shopping-centre site that dates back to 1964 (fig. 3), as well as plans for infill development and a big new local park.

This year, 2005, Helsinki City Museum launched a sequel to the 1970s projects by starting the 'Life in Myllypuro' project, an urban ethnological study of suburban life.³ The project aims to describe the lifecycle of the suburb of Myllypuro from the first generation of residents to the present day and to document the suburban cultural environment in its early 21st century guise. The project is part of City Museum's collection strategy, aimed at systematically documenting contemporary culture, of which the central focus is suburban life between 2005 and 2007. The City Museum has managed to procure some EU/Urban II subsidies for the project for the period 2005-2006.

³ This is more open than the 70s approach. The people interviewed can express their views more in their own words. Furthermore, questions have been added about the surroundings and the suburban social environment, which ask them to express how they experience it, how they make use of it and the like.

Suburbs are not separate from the city, but an inherent part of Helsinki's distinct urban culture. The social practices and material surroundings stratified in the suburbs represent contemporary cultural history. Making this history visible contributes to increasing residents' commitment to their environment. Outlining the temporal depth of suburban culture is part of culturally sustainable urban development and is of significance to the well-being of residents. In keeping with this it has been explained to the residents and other city-dwellers that the suburbs have built up a history, or many histories, since the 1950s. Furthermore it has been explained that the area existed before the process of suburbanisation and that remnants of this earlier period can still be found in the form of old houses, street names and the like. The City Museum's documentation project realises the project's social revitalisation and sustainable development aims by profiling everyday life in the district. A network of organisations and people who are active in the neighbourhood is indispensable in this project. Completely new sections of the population are being reached. The hope is that our expertise with the help of the end-product (exhibition, publication and website) will contribute to boosting the local community's self-confidence and appreciation of the district. This project aims to give shape to the city council's strategic aims.

Project aims and approach

The museological aim of the project is to add selectively to the City Museum's collections, and to increase their materials on suburban living. The project now started will generate material with a content comparable to that of the earlier, 1970s material. However, the material in the 1970s was collected using a quantitative documentation method whereas today we are using a qualitative approach.

Several documentation methods will be employed to ensure diversity. The aim is to achieve an extensive description of Myllypuro, so that there is a record of the different suburban generations and social groups in the Museum's collections. The Museum would also like to reach immigrants. With this aim in mind contact has been made with Russian and Somali communities in the area. One of the interviewers is specialised in interviewing Russians. The aim is to have at least a some of the exhibition texts translated into the relevant languages.

The collections will record:

- 60-80 interviews accompanied by documentation of the housing (photographs).
- Photographic documentation of housing and the surrounding area, c. 750-1000 photos.
- 20-50 objects and parts of buildings.
- Other oral tradition material, work by schoolchildren, etc.

The Museum does not have the resources to collect extensive qualitative material. This is why some of the interviews will be done as a preliminary study in cooperation with a field course in ethnology at the Institute for Cultural Research/Ethnology of Helsinki University. Two or three project workers will be hired to go into the material in greater depth. In addition to interviewing, these workers will transcribe the interview material and help catalogue and store the material collected. A photographer will be hired for the project to work together with the Museum's Picture Collection and Cultural Environment units to document the homes of the people interviewed, the building stock and the cultural landscape of Myllypuro. The aim is to add high-quality documentation material to the core of the Museum's photograph collection which, in terms of cultural history, is unique. The photographic material will span a period of two years in order to provide photos of the district in all seasons.



4. *Shell suit*

Object Collection

The aim is to record and document everyday objects from the suburb's inception to the present day. The method and approach used is basically ethnographic and social. The study will be carried out as carefully and considerately as possible. Although the interviewees will not accept donations, a form will be distributed to interviewees so that they can notify us if they would like to make a donation. The objects offered will be assessed once the interview stage has been completed.⁴

Objects will be recorded primarily by photographing them, efforts will be made to take photos of entire walls in the houses that are to be documented. Additionally, smaller details – such as a table and chairs, a television, entertainment electronics, a three-piece suite or a bathroom – can of course be documented in each home. The Museum's collections is still lacking in everyday 1970s and 1980s suburban objects such as duvet covers and shell-suits. (fig. 4)

Picture Collection and Archives

The Picture Collection will record indoor and outdoor spaces in Myllypuro. The project will photograph the homes where interviews have been carried out. The suburban environment forges a link between the built-up and the undeveloped environment. Photography of the district will seek to highlight the user's perspective by documenting the district in terms of how people experience the place and the space. In other words, photographs will be taken primarily of places of importance to residents, children, young people, the elderly and also of the cultural environment rather than just concentrating on architecture. Furthermore, the Picture Collection will be enhanced by scanning residents' own photographs, especially those of Myllypuro in the first decades of its existence.

⁴ We have already acquired items like a shell-suit from the 1970s, one that was actually worn in real life. Even though they were designed for outdoor activities and jogging the cheap shell-suits were soon used in various settings as everyday casual clothing. They have also become symbolic: ordinary people in the suburbs were sometimes called 'the shell-suit people'.

Cultural environment

There is already a building inventory for Myllypuro, so there is no need for another. Instead, the project's cultural environment unit will focus on the relationship between architecture and living practices. Floor plans will be used to study the kinds of living practices produced by the introduction of uniform floor spaces in the homes. An entire group of dwellings round a central staircase will be sketched and photographed to record differences and similarities.

Publication of material

The material will be used for research and exhibition purposes and archived as part of the Helsinki City Museum's collections. The material is to be recorded along with the donator's name. However, if the donator so wishes, personal information can be removed from the records. The user of the material is responsible for ensuring that the material is not used in a manner that could offend or injure the people interviewed or their families. If necessary, the author will comply with the requirement to maintain confidentiality so that it is not possible to identify the person interviewed.

The same ethical principles apply to the use of interview material as to the use of pictorial material. It will be recorded in the City Museum's collections, where, after 25 years, it will be made freely available to the public in accordance with the Museum's general recording principles, which means, for example, the photos can be used by commercial publishers. However, if the person interviewed consents, the photographs may be made available earlier so that they can be used in the City Museum's exhibitions, online exhibitions and publications.

End-products

The documented and digitalised objects and photographs, as well as the transcripts of the interviews, will be added to the Museum's collections. The results of the project will be shown to the residents of Myllypuro in an exhibition to be held at a suitable location in the district. It will be a travelling exhibition, which will be able to tour other parts of eastern Helsinki, and which can be used in schools for teaching purposes. The exhibition will include an exhibition publication and educational activities developed by the museum suitable for use in local schools.

The results will be made available to the city's entire population through an online exhibition on the City Museum's website. There will be a final written report on the project to measure the extent to which it has achieved its aims. Scientific studies of the material will continue to take place in correlation with ethnological studies.

Helsinki City Museum is committed to dynamic interaction with the city's inhabitants. The documentation project will be carried out in association with Lähiö-asema (community centre) and the Myllypuro Society, whose members are already working in the district, and with Myllypuro lower and upper comprehensive school. These contacts are important to achieve scientific coverage and to make sure the results reach a wider public. The aim of this project is consistent with the museum's new vision for the future: *Helsinki City Museum is ... a museum of, and for, the entire city.*

Making history

Zuidas: the long-term development of an ambitiously planned city district¹

Hans Denijs
Zuidas, Municipality of Amsterdam

Zuidas (literally southern axis) is an area in the southern part of Amsterdam that is growing at a very fast rate. In total, the Zuidas covers 2.5 million cubic metres. Due to its scale, the Zuidas can be compared to other top locations in Europe like La Défense in Paris or the Docklands district in London. The scale of the Zuidas is five times that of the Potsdamerplatz area in Berlin. The Zuidas is rapidly developing into a new 21st century city centre, that will be a sort of modern twin to the beautiful historic centre of Amsterdam. The Zuidas is situated at a unique junction between the historic city centre and Schiphol Airport. When finished, which is expected to be in 25 years time, the Zuidas will be a complete and lively urban area.

People living there will be in the middle of a dense urban setting. The final number of modern homes is forecast as being 10,000, ranging from the very expensive at one end of the scale to social housing projects (15% of the total) for the less well-off at the other. But the Zuidas is also in the process of becoming a central business² district serving the European community, providing high-quality office buildings only a few minutes away from Schiphol Airport, one of Europe's main airports. As the area has been designed to attract headquarters of international firms and their main advisory services, the number of jobs created by this project could rise to as many as 60,000.

There will be room for all kinds of schools and the existing university and hospital will have the opportunity to expand and blend in with the new development. In the heart of the Zuidas there will be a new large-scale railway station with an underground railway service, trains run by the national railway system and a high-speed rail-link connecting the area to the European capitals. The area around the railway station Amsterdam Zuid (South Amsterdam) is an excellent location for all kinds of amenities like shops, restaurants and entertainment facilities. In terms of cultural provision the development of a music theatre is already underway and there are a number of proposals for modern art and design museums .

The Zuidas is no longer at the planning stage. Up to now about 500,000 square metres have been built and another 500,000 are in the pipeline.

If our projected plans are to be realized though we will have to tackle enormous problems. In terms of infrastructure this means that we will have to accommodate the existing ring-road and railway-lines in an underground system running underneath the development area and continuing for a long stretch (a few kilometres) underground.

1 On 7 January 1998 the Masterplan Zuidas project was approved by the Amsterdam municipal council. See also www.zuidas.nl

2 The district will provide 1000,000 m² of high-tech. office buildings



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1. Amsterdam Zuidas, Your Captain Aerial Photography

2. ING House , (architects Meyer and van Schooten), photo Doriann Kransberg, Municipal Archives, Amsterdam

3. Training Institute Zorg en Welzijn (architect Dekkers), photo Doriann Kransberg, Municipal Archives, Amsterdam

4. ABN AMRO – Cobb (Pei Cobb Freed & Partners in association with Architecten Cie)

That will be an extremely expensive undertaking, running to a budget of some 2,5 billion euros, but it is the only way of providing the necessary facilities and at the same time creating a new, lively urban area with high-quality amenities with a lot of people on the streets.

We like to compare the Zuidas to other top-class developments in Europe, namely: La Défense in Paris, The London Docklands, Potsdamer Platz in Berlin, or Bankenviertel in Frankfurt. In terms of marketing we think that Zuidas has a few unique selling points:

- The Zuidas is in the middle of the urban area of Amsterdam, unlike many of its competitors
- The Zuidas is a few minutes away from Schiphol Airport
- We offer high-quality office space in architecturally state-of-the-art buildings
- The Zuidas is accessible by both car and public transport
- The area has a good supply of different types of housing
- There are schools and a university in the area
- And the city of Amsterdam is only five minutes away.

By developing the Zuidas area in the way that we are doing now, the city of Amsterdam will change. We are building for high-density and mixed-use, based on new higher standards. Once the high-rise buildings in the Zuidas area appear, the skyline of Amsterdam will change. The hub of public transport will be shifted from central station in the historic city centre to the new railway station in the Zuidas area. That will definitely bring a new balance to activities in the city of Amsterdam. There will be cultural activities in the Zuidas area too, so there will be more of a dual focus : the Zuidas will be a sort of twin to the historical centre of Amsterdam.

In the past city museums have been accustomed to working retrospectively, collecting objects or works of art from the city's past, including its recent past. The Zuidas project group envisages working the other way around – by documenting the new city district as it is being constructed- thus building up an active and ongoing historic collection during the actual building work. We have already been thinking about this for a few years. During the early years we made quite a few jokes about the collection. If we were given presents that we, as members of staff, were not allowed to accept, or there were objects that were used somewhere, for instance in the building process of Zuidas or during events and parties, we had a standard joke: can someone take it to the Zuidas Museum please (of course the museum didn't exist). As time went on we compiled a large collection of the most wide-ranging objects.

Up to now, we have only managed to keep the usual archives that contain documents relating to the building work. However, we really would like to do more in order to build up a historic collection in cooperation with the Amsterdam Historical Museum. There is a great deal of scope as we already have a huge collection of pictures, scale- models and objects, brochures and leaflets. Still, it might be a good idea to have some videos made or maintain a weblog, or organise events. We don't know if there is a proper way to document the growth of a new city district in a city like Amsterdam? We don't have all the answers but we would like to cooperate. The museum specialists are the professionals and we would be grateful for their advice. I hope we can discuss this with the museum staff as it will at least spare you the effort of excavation works five hundred years from now.

Discussion

Chair: Rosmarie Beier-de Haan, curator German Historical Museum, Berlin

After the two presentations the questions for the discussion are:

What is the 'road' to the city museum?

What do we need and what can we use. With whom can we cooperate?

Remarks/input in the discussion:

Both projects raise the interesting question of how to document change. By what methods could interesting material be collected:

- photographs
- objects
- working together with universities
- collecting interviews with locals/inhabitants. Opinions on the projects, discussions about them. Positive and negative.

What does the Zuidas project add to the city of Amsterdam? Will there be a connection between the old and the new 'city'? There have been contacts between the Amsterdam Historical Museum and Amsterdam city council about the project.

Several participants felt that photos of the project are not sufficient. It seems better to start a discussion about the project itself and talk to the people in the city.

Do not use random pictures/material but make use of artistic professions. For instance, professional photographers or story tellers.

During the building process at Potsdamer Platz in Berlin temporary exhibitions on the spot were used. Show the people what is going on during the building process.

Collect different strategies e.g. building strategies, opinions of residents.

Document people's thoughts on why they think the Zuidas is necessary.

Look at what the ordinary lives of local inhabitants are like.

What is wanted for the city museum is not only pictures but also other impressions of reality: e.g. smell, sound, stories.

Objects as such are valuable but collection has to be planned. It must not be random like in London's Millennium exhibition, where Londoners were asked to bring an object they thought representative of the change of the century. This was not a success.

Objects should reflect the type of collection in the museum.

Conclusions

- City museums at the beginning of the 21st century have a strong role in documenting the change of a city. That means they have to do something now.
- City museums have to reflect and redefine the role of objects. How do we collect and for what purpose? What kind of criteria do we have and do we want? Objects are still very needed, but we have to show their context clearly. This means we have to plan new strategies for shaping collections.
- Various methods should be used to show a city's past, present and future. How can we preserve biographies as well as e.g. emotions, 'smell', stories?

- We are not the only ones to collect the city's past and present and we do not have to be the only ones. We can (and should) cooperate with other professionals, e.g. city planners. Thus we should pay more attention to getting involved with other institutions and organizations ('networking').

Permanent and temporary exhibitions, the many faces of Warsaw's past

The reception of historical exhibitions by contemporary visitors

Joanna Bojarska

Director

Barbara Moszczyńska

Head of the history department Historical Museum of Warsaw

The main role of a city's historical museum is to inform people about the city's past. There is only one past but its story can be told in many ways, using an almost limitless number of themes. Museums work with images; the way they display history is somewhat similar to the way comic strips tell a story. An exhibition combining images and written source-materials with three-dimensional objects and texts (and sometimes music or voices) could, in the final analysis, have a much stronger impact on the public than the traditional approach which is reading all about it in a book. The way we have chosen to deal with the past can shape the visitor's perception of history, and thus influence their present and future attitudes. However, we are conscious of the fact that the impact of our work on the general memory of our local population is strictly limited because they don't all visit our museum. If we want to make an impact we will have to devise successful promotion campaigns and choose themes that will interest our visitors at a given moment in time. Warsaw's permanent population numbers some two million, of which two hundred thousand visit the museum each year, so it is obvious that we do not reach the vast majority of the city's inhabitants.

All museums, especially historical ones, work within a specific sphere of influence governed by the officially approved, prevailing ideology, which is difficult, if not impossible, to ignore. This has been the case in Warsaw. (fig. 1) Not only were selected themes prohibited, as for instance the battle that took place in 1920 and the person to whom Poland owes its independence, Józef Piłsudski¹, but the texts also had to be based on Marxist accounts of history. As time has passed the demand for political correctness has become less pressing and the exhibition contents have been enriched with items that were once forbidden. However, even today the Museums' curators wonder about the limits of their independence when presenting the past, especially when they have to deal with politically or socially sensitive problems.

The official historical storyline² has provided general background material in the preparatory stages leading up to the staging of exhibitions, but somehow museums are not passive receivers of officially approved opinions. By using the original visual, writ-

1 Battle of Warsaw, 12-15 August, 1920 to stop Soviet army invading Poland, led by Field Marshall Józef Piłsudski (1867-1935). Piłsudski was an activist fighting for independence, as well as becoming leader of the 2nd Polish Republic 1918-1935.

2 Detailed, and generally accepted by historians, in conformity with the present state of knowledge.

ten and oral sources the museum can focus on topics that have escaped the attention of those writing cities' official histories. In this way museums can provide a direct link to these testimonies. This method snatches people, or specific problems, away from the past. Any exhibition can act as a catalyst to stimulate scholars to do further research. It is remarkable that a permanent exhibition on Warsaw's past titled 'Seven Centuries of Warsaw's Past' preceded a written version of its history and had a great influence on it.

The Historical Museum of Warsaw

The decision to restore the History Museum of Warsaw and to allocate to it the northern side of the Old Market Square, with a total eleven houses, was taken back in 1948. Its forerunner, the Museum of Old Warsaw founded in 1936, occupied only three of these houses and was a branch of the National Museum in Warsaw. The Old Town was destroyed by Germans but the ground floors and most of the façades of these houses have survived. What have also been preserved are the only three remaining wooden-beamed ceilings with original painted decoration (16th and 17th century). The rebuilding of the new museum proceeded with the idea of creating a separate space for the museum. Many original architectural divisions were preserved, all of them on the ground floor, and all eleven houses have been interconnected.

The new Museum acquired an independent status. Later on, it developed its own five branches, located in separate premises: The Museum of Wola (western district of Warsaw), The Museum of Struggle and Martyrdom in Palmiry (a cemetery for the victims of Nazis executions from 1939-41), The Printing Museum, The Study Centre 'Korczakianum'³ and The Pharmacy Museum. The Museum of the Warsaw Uprising, initially founded as a branch of the Historical Museum of Warsaw, was transformed into an independent institution in 2003, the year when the decision was taken to adopt the disused tram power-station building in the Wola district for this purpose.

In displaying the themes of the past a historical museum can choose between two types of exhibitions. The permanent exhibition has to be the more official version of the past, whereas the temporary exhibitions provide the scope for the curator to present his own research, preferences and point of view. Especially attractive for The Warsaw History Museum's visitors are themes related to Warsaw's architecture, whilst post-war architects' rebuilding strategies still provoke heated discussions.

Permanent exhibitions

In presenting the life of the city in all its aspects the newly founded Historical Museum of Warsaw has become not just a city museum focusing on local events but, as the capital's Museum, it also deals with the main moments of Polish history. The Museum's name should not, however, mislead the visitor into making false assumptions about its contents, as the curators have made specific decisions about what will and will not be shown. Its name, Museum of the capital city of Warsaw, could suggest that the permanent exhibition relates the history of the entire city, but in fact, it concentrates more on historic centres, although it does not entirely neglect all the other Warsaw districts, evoking them in the moments when something important has taken place there. And, as mentioned earlier, Warsaw Museum has a special branch dedicated to one of Warsaw's districts, Wola. It is therefore only natural that a person wanting to find out about the history of this particular area of Warsaw should go there. Also, the Museum

³ This institution is dedicated to Janusz Korczak (1878-1942), real name Henryk Goldszmit, doctor, writer and director of a Jewish orphanage, gassed in Treblinka.



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1. Exterior of the Historical Museum of Warsaw in 2005

2. Fragment of 1918-1939 section at the Historical Museum of Warsaw

gives a more complete account of the indigenous Polish population than of the minority groups, although they are not excluded from the narrative. To give you a concrete example, the permanent exhibition touches on the role of the Jewish population living in Warsaw but does not pretend to do so in an exhaustive way.

The Museum has adopted quite a clear system of linking certain historical periods to particular stories. The ground floor provides the opportunity to observe Warsaw's rise from a little town founded by the Masovian dukes (c. 1300) to the capital of the Polish Kingdom. The first floor has displays of 17th-18th century Warsaw, with special emphasis on the enlightenment period during the rule of king Stanisław Poniatowski⁴ and it ends with the Kościuszko Uprising in 1794⁵ and the loss of Polish independence in 1795. The second floor features the period of successive struggle to achieve independence up to the prewar years when, in 1918, Warsaw became the capital of the Second Polish Republic. (fig. 2) The top floor, the third floor, is dedicated to the World War II period, the struggle against the Nazis, the destruction and rebuilding of Warsaw, up to the victory of Solidarność and the appointment of Lech Wałęsa as President of Poland in 1990.

Design and illustrations and texts

The arrangement of the earliest exhibition area was based on the initial stipulation that it should provide an opportunity to present a body of knowledge about Warsaw by means of texts, illustrated materials and diagrams alongside the exhibits. This approach was necessary in view of the small number of original objects in the collection. When the museum started off the collection was almost non-existent. In 1950 the museum's inventory numbered only 169 items. The Museum's curators had not only to find original items and get the owner's to agree to permanent loans (or replace missing items with copies), but they also had to do extensive archaeological research and consult the archives to fill in the gaps on the history of Warsaw. As time went by, some illustrations plates and diagrams have disappeared, making way for original exhibits. The Museum's collection has grown, it now amounts to some 300,000 items, and the decision was taken to display as many of them as possible.

Since the very beginnings, the Museum has collaborated with outstanding architects and artists, who have shaped the permanent exhibition. The recreated interiors are shown chronologically ranging from 17th workshops and a reception room, to an 18th century room, to early 19th century and art deco salons, ending in an early 20th-century dining room and a kitchen annex. This approach gives the visitor the opportunity of experiencing the changes in atmosphere in these interiors as time has passed by. Especially successful was the design of pre-war Warsaw – which is on permanent exhibition – the background consists of enlarged photographs of the streets and inhabitants taken during that period which creates the illusion of actually being in the city.

It is obvious that the Museum exhibits have to be accompanied by captions. The authors of successive versions of the permanent exhibition decided that although captions should accompany original exhibits they should not play too dominant a role, and in some recreated interiors they have deliberately been reduced to a minimum. This may reduce the amount of information, but it preserves the original beauty of some of the

4 Stanisław Poniatowski (1732-1798), last king of independent Poland (1764-1795).

5 General Tadeusz Kościuszko (1746-1817), Polish hero and hero of United States War of independence. The uprising took place from March 24 to November 16, 1794, it was under his command until he was taken prisoner by the Russians at the Battle of Maciejowice on October 10.

Museum's open spaces, and also allows its visitors to focus on original exhibits rather than on additional comments.

Temporary exhibitions

Temporary exhibitions are especially useful in attracting new visitors. During the past two years, the Historical Museum of Warsaw and all its branches have opened new temporary exhibitions nearly every two weeks either in the museum's main premises at the Old Town Square, or at other branches of the museum, sometimes even at other locations in Warsaw. The Historical Museum tends to **organise temporary exhibitions** devoted to all aspects of Warsaw's history but the choice of themes is naturally directed by Warsaw interests or national anniversaries. Because of the 60th anniversary of Warsaw Rising (1944), many of last two years exhibitions were devoted to it or World War II period. **Among the problems which have remained topical and controversial** over the years are the strategies taken by architects rebuilding Warsaw.

This year, 2005, the 25th anniversary of Solidarność movement, was a natural stimulus for exhibitions on this theme. The Warsaw Museum tends to follow the Warsaw population's preoccupations. When the mourning ceremonies for John Paul II were taking place, and exhibition titled *Warsaw Says Farewell to the Pope* was organized in the Museum's entrance hall.

Temporary exhibitions and their design

The Museum's curators are aware that the impact of exhibitions depends not only on their historical content or theme, but also on their design. One very attractive and rather unusual exhibition of photographs taken in August 1944 was displayed on the outer walls of the houses that form the main Museum in the Old Town. The inner structure of the Museum can restrict the scope of artistic expression as our museum of rebuilt houses does not provide big open spaces. The creator of the exhibition titled *Varsovians, the inhabitants of two cities* (fig. 3) chose to stage his exhibition in the spacious interiors of the Palace of Culture in Warsaw, which celebrated the 50th anniversary of its opening in July 2005. Using enlarged photographs (attached to specially designed labyrinth-like structures and complementary pieces of literary texts about Warsaw) he managed to recreate the atmosphere of the town before the disaster of World War II destruction, and also presented the image this city acquired in the sixties. The exhibition highlighted the strength of the impact of war-time destruction and post-war decisions on Warsaw and its citizens in such a way that the city's residents who visited the exhibition came to a new understanding of the impact of these events.

Social role of the Historical Museum of Warsaw

The aim of the Historical Museum of Warsaw is to be a lively institution, attracting people from different social backgrounds, with varying degrees of historical knowledge and diverse artistic tastes. It should also be Warsaw's visiting card for tourists coming from other parts of Poland or from abroad. It shapes the perception of Warsaw's past and influences the historical identity of Polish citizens. Contact with the public is not restricted to exhibitions alone, the staff's activities extend to contact with the press, radio and TV, where very often the Museum's curators are asked to give their opinions on proposed changes to Warsaw's architectural heritage or alternately are revealing information about Warsaw or Polish history. TV journalists frequently use the Museum's rooms to illustrate educational films on the subject of Polish history.

3. Varsovians – inhabitants of two cities, a temporary exposition displayed in July-August 2005



In addition to these activities the museum organizes a great number of activities and events. The Museum runs a history lesson scheme for groups of school children and every year at least two competitions are organized. This is in addition to permanent or temporary exhibitions arranged for the young people of Warsaw, pupils at grammar and comprehensive schools. Young pupils can express the feelings aroused by their visit to the Museum in an artistic way under the skilled guidance of a young artist, a graduate of the Warsaw School of Fine Art. During the summer holidays, primary-school children meet at performances and theatre workshops organized specially for them in the Museum courtyard. Furthermore, The Warsaw Guild of Guides regularly uses the Museum's halls to teach people about Warsaw's past and has invited Museum's curators to join the Warsaw Guide Examination Board to test the competence of the prospective Warsaw guides.

The Museum is also a venue for conferences, and a place where books edited with the Museum's support are promoted. It also attracts tourists to its concerts organized on summer evenings in the Museum courtyard (Lapidarium).

Future opportunities and competition

At the time of its opening, in 1955, the Museum had the privilege of being the only history museum in Warsaw. It was here that documentary films on Warsaw's World War II experiences were projected. Even today the documentary commissioned by the Warsaw Historical Museum dealing with the city's history in the period between 1939 and 1955 is almost mandatory for tourists visiting Warsaw. However, from this time onwards new museums have appeared in Warsaw, and many are attracted by Warsaw themes, so the Museum faces stiff competition.

The Museum's management will also be obliged to tackle a number of different building projects. The Museum's houses, which were hastily rebuilt right after the war, are now in need of serious overall repair and renovation. The extent to which they can be renovated and the starting date will of course depend on the Museum's ability to find the necessary funds. Among others changes, the architects are planning to introduce lifts which will make the Museum accessible for the disabled and those who cannot manage the stairs. The Museum urgently needs new depots for the growing number of exhibits as existing storage space is no longer sufficient. Furthermore there

is an absolute requirement to improve safety measures which, at the moment, are not up to modern standards.

All these architectural changes will also lead to a general rethink about permanent exhibitions, which must be changed in both content and design if they are to live up to contemporary visitors' expectations. As we do not want to become the Cinderella of the Warsaw museums, we would like to introduce new media to our exhibitions. Although widely used in recently designed museums, and in the Warsaw Uprising Museum opened in 2004, they are virtually absent in our Museum.

The Museum of Warsaw has reached a crucial stage in its development. Decisions taken in the coming months will determine the Museum's future appearance both inside and out.

City museum and city archives: who should collect what?

Alice van Diepen

Head of Acquisitions, Amsterdam City Archives

Introduction

The Amsterdam City Archives and the Amsterdam Historical Museum tacitly agreed years ago that all paper documents should be passed on to the archives and all three-dimensional objects and paintings to the museum. This arrangement works well, for example, if someone rings me to offer a painting on canvas or a medal to the archives. Conversely, we are often approached by people who have been advised by the museum staff to contact us about depositing old photos, certificates or other records. This type of agreement between heritage institutions is not unusual. But does it really suffice when it comes to compiling the contemporary biography of a city? Four examples of contemporary developments and events illustrate some of the difficulties and the intense need for close co-operation between heritage organisations on collection building and acquisitions. (see fig. 1-4)

- Gay Pride, an annual event in Amsterdam. Should we collect information on this? Who should collect what?
- November 2nd 2004, the murder of the Amsterdam film maker and columnist, Theo van Gogh, by a Muslim fundamentalist. People spontaneously placed flowers and drawings on the spot where he died, wrote messages expressing their feelings. Who should collect what?
- The former harbour area in the eastern part of the city, an area that has changed enormously in recent years. For a long time the City Archives have been involved in a project documenting the area in film and photo. Is there a museum component as well?
- Sikhs praying in their new temple in Amsterdam two weeks ago. The collections of both the city museum and the city archives have a lot of material relating to the city's religious life and church history. With regard to the past, I assume we are more or less complementary, but how do we ensure that this is also the case for new religious developments in the city.

I will come back to these examples later.

The text of the conference invitation describing the topic of this session, 'shaping the city', included a possible question about the relationship between the city museums and other heritage institutions. I have experienced this fascinating subject from two different angles: from the perspective of a curator of a city museum in Zaandam, where I worked some years ago, and currently from the perspective of head of acquisitions at the Amsterdam City Archives.



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1. Gay pride, 6th August 2005 , photo Martin Alberts, City Archives Amsterdam
2. Spontaneous street monument after the murder of film maker and journalist Theo van Gogh, Amsterdam, 2nd November 2004, photo Martin Alberts, City Archives Amsterdam
3. Aerial photo of the eastern harbour area in Amsterdam 2004, photo Freek de Vos, City Archives Amsterdam
4. Opening Guru Nanak Gurudware (Sikh) temple in Amsterdam, 23rd October 2005, photo Martin Alberts, City Archives Amsterdam

The following questions form the basis of my presentation:

- Can we assume that the archives, as well as the museums, have a role to play in compiling the biography of a city?
- If so, is the story they tell about the city different from that related by the museums; do they complement each other or are they competing with each other?
- What do we stand to gain from joining forces in the area of compiling contemporary collections?

Stuffy image?

Before I try to answer these questions I will outline the actual situation regarding Dutch archives. Over the last few years, Dutch archives have been trying to shed their stuffy image. They are taking a more active part in educational activities, putting serious thought into how to reach the general public and improve customer relations, and have been increasingly prominent on the Internet. Whereas archives used to be supply-driven, they are now focusing their attention on their users in response to the increasing demand for historical information. This means that they are starting to catch up with the museums in the race between the cultural institutions to lay claim to consumers' free time. There is no longer any doubt that for both city museums and archives this focus on the consumer is (or should be) a guiding principle in exploring and embarking on new forms of cooperation. This is, in fact, already happening on a large scale, with varying degrees of success. It means that the closer alignment between museums and archives has more to do with appealing to the public than actually compiling collections. In this article, I argue strongly in favour of extending this budding alignment between museums and archives to contemporary policy on collection building.

Compiling collections in archives

Let me return to the first question: Do archives really play a part in compiling the biography of a city? In other words, is collection building really a task for the archives? First and foremost, the archives have a statutory duty to record the government's actions for public inspection. However, as time passes, this government information tends to become less relevant to citizens in search of justice and evidence, and becomes more important in terms of its cultural-historical value. From the cultural-historical perspective, government archives and collections are only *one* part of the urban spectrum. The other part is formed by the private archives and collections preserved to supplement the government archives. The Amsterdam City Archives, for example, has had the explicit task of implementing this double collection practice since the nineteenth century, gathering all kinds of miscellaneous documents relating to the history of the city alongside the more traditional archival documents. Photos, postcards, maps, pamphlets, prints, drawings, film and sound recordings... a huge variety of document types. In addition to this, a revolutionary new type of document has recently appeared; information in digital form. So archives do collect material, and in doing this, they try to balance the public and the private sectors as two parts of one single entity: the city (or region or village). I must admit, some archives are better at this than others. Although the smaller archives have to focus their energy on fulfilling their statutory obligations, it remains a fact that all archives are actively pursuing this two-pronged approach to some extent.

Passive recipients or active compilers?

To satisfy public curiosity regarding the history of the city fifty years from now, the archives must concentrate on actively compiling contemporary collections. In view of the present abundance of information, selection would seem to be a keyword. Strangely enough, archives do not generally pay a great deal of attention to the policy side of collecting. They tend to view themselves as the passive recipients of material that is offered to them (by social organisations, companies, trading bodies or private individuals) rather than as organisations capable of actively determining what they wish to acquire. Yet from the archives' point of view, there is ample reason to change course. For example, the municipal archives are being offered more and more sizeable archives and collections, whereas material from certain sectors, such as sports and youth culture, is under-represented. This kind of material requires an entirely different approach if it is to be secured as an essential part of the social-cultural spectrum. The improved accessibility of archives and collections via archive websites has led to a steady increase in the number of potential donors of photos and other types of documents, putting 'customer relations' into a new light in terms of acquisitions. New digital documents, such as websites and databases, require new solutions and other considerations when it comes to acquisition, and large groups of new Dutch citizens also expect to see *their* history reflected in the archives. Each and every one of these developments has an impact on collection policy. However, they do not only affect the archives; they also have an influence on the city museums.

Archives and museums, telling different stories?

The second question was: Is the story that the archives tell about the city different from the story related by the museums, or do they complement each other? In all honesty, museums and archives tell very much the same story. Our story accompanying a drawing of the 'Nieuwe Kerk' (New Church) on Dam Square is the same as the story the AHM tells about a painting of this same church. Our story about the murder of Theo van Gogh written to accompany the papers he left is exactly the same as the story the AHM tells about his teddy bear. Museums are traditionally better at telling stories or writing captions, if you prefer. However, the archives have learned from this trick and discovered that taking their collections out of the repositories on a regular basis and writing appropriate description or stories seems to have a similar positive effect. Quite rightly! I said that the stories were very much the same. Generally speaking, I think that archives and museums tend to complement each other extremely well with regard to the history of a city, in both the sort of information they provide and the type of documents. Finally, I would like to point out that the real strength of archives is the personal aspect; everyone can find their personal history in an archive – the history of their house, their street or their family. You could call this the other story of the city.

Relations between archives and museums in other cities

If it is true that archives and museums are telling the same stories, it would only seem logical that we should search for areas of cooperation that might increase their value; the third and final question. The challenge when it comes to compiling contemporary collections is to select material from the enormous supply of documents and objects, so that the choice will embellish the city's biography. A choice with which the public can identify or in which they can actively participate. This kind of collection policy crosses

the boundaries between the heritage institutions. Digital technology and the Internet are eroding these boundaries anyway, so perhaps it is time we stopped desperately trying to hang on to them. I have always been in favour of looking beyond the boundaries and at how other institutions manage their affairs. In preparation for the conference, during the last few months I have asked various colleagues about how they put the partnership between archives and museums into practice.

There is a minimum amount of cooperation in London. The Metropolitan Archive of London gives priority to the larger archives of the government and private organisations with collections relating to Central London. There is no cooperation with the Museum of London with regard to the content of the archives and collections, but perhaps the obvious difference in emphasis makes this less relevant. An interesting development is taking place in Bruges, where the history of the city is exhibited at seven different locations. Museums, archives and historic buildings are acting as equal partners. There are no structural agreements at policy level, but this partnership in the area of presentation bodes well for other forms of cooperation. They certainly appear to be pushing back the boundaries.

Nearer to home, our colleagues in Rotterdam are not doing too badly either. There is regular consultation between the municipal museums and the municipal archives, not only on collection policy but also on issues requiring closer cooperation. The Rotterdam City Archives and Rotterdam Avanço Association, a Cape Verdean organisation, are currently conducting a project on the Cape Verdean community in Rotterdam. The experience gained from this project will provide guidelines for devising collection policies targeted at the ethnic-minority heritage for both the Rotterdam collection and the Dutch collection in general. Furthermore, the Rotterdam Historical Museum has taken this issue further by giving serious attention to various models on collection building. During an expert meeting last February, specialists indicated that the best way forward was one involving the active participation of the population in contemporary collection building. The resultant material and immaterial heritage will be incorporated into the collections of the Rotterdam Historical Museum, the World Museum in Rotterdam or the Rotterdam City Archives. The progress of such an initiative should be followed and possibly adapted to suit individual urban environments.

Conclusions

My answer to the third question, what do we stand to gain from joining forces in the area of compiling contemporary collections, is as follows. I am convinced that we should at least consult with each other about what should currently be preserved as heritage. I suggest museums and archives start working together by launching a pilot project to define new guidelines for collection policy in the cities, disregarding institutional boundaries, but paying heed to the future generations of users of cultural heritage and its enthusiasts.

Discussion

Chair: Sandra de Vries

Director Municipal Museum of Alkmaar

When shaping the biography of the city, a constant dialogue between the population and heritage institutions is necessary. Archives, museums and other heritage institutions all have to play a role in this dialogue.

In Warsaw, for instance, the political pressure was so great that the museum displays had to be in line with communist politics. Since the political changes, the museum has focused on producing appropriate temporary exhibitions. These have offered better opportunities for debate, but the permanent exhibition is so vast that it is difficult to change. Meanwhile, contemporary politicians are building new institutions reflecting their thinking and specific interests. **During the discussion it was evident that this also applies to the Athens city museum. Heritage institutions must shift from a collection-oriented perspective to one that increasingly focuses on the audience.**

Collection policies, especially on contemporary history, demand cooperation between museums, archives, the historic buildings council and libraries. In Amsterdam the museum and archives agreed 'who collects what' a long time ago. Digital media can offer a joint gateway to the collections of all these separate institutions. The Cape Verdean migrant communities project in Rotterdam is a good example that could serve as a pilot for 'joint collection policies of heritage institutions in dialogue with communities'. How to form ideas about collecting contemporary objects, papers and intangible heritage is one of the questions such a pilot should address.

In Bruges (Belgium) the museum is spread over 7 different locations in the city in different institutions, but that is not important for visitors. The same is true of Reykjavik, where the museum of photography and a public library shared the same building. Visitors regarded it as one institution but in fact they were two separate organizations with very different professional staff. One workshop participant is an architect who has been working on a joint museum and archive building in Porto (Portugal). His experience is that the two institutions differ greatly and fight all the time. In Bristol the director of the Museums and Archives is developing a new museum for the city, which will offer a gateway to the history of Bristol, also to the archives. Personal histories are very important.

It is time to cross the boundaries between heritage institutions. The heritage institutions of a city should formulate their collection policy together, especially on archives, documentation, photos and objects with regard to contemporary history. They don't need to be in the same building but they do need to be linked via the Internet. Digitalization is a perfect tool for this sort of cooperation.

The city museum and its environment: the contribution of archaeological collections

Rachid Bouzidi

Archaeologist and curator of the archaeological site of Volubilis, Morocco

Introduction

Conveying an understanding of history and cultures through the medium of the museum depends on the nature and quality of the objects exhibited and on the information provided about them. But that understanding will lack horizons if it is limited solely to the collection and its immediate significance. The era when a museum was virtually a cemetery for artefacts, an uninviting, inaccessible place detached from the dynamic of society, has been largely surpassed by new concepts in the professional museum world. The museum's mission and activities become intelligible only when it is understood as an institution that fully engages with its environment. The cultural, social and urban background is an important field of study, which must be addressed in order to give the museum a cultural significance, to assign the collections a place in space and time, and to enable museum professionals to develop a systematic and well-structured documentation. We are all occupied, at a local, national and international scale, with devising new methods of interpreting and presenting collections, with the aim of attracting the attention and interest of a wide audience and revealing to them the messages of our human heritage in an homogeneous light, either directly or by means of virtual presentations. The principle challenge facing us today is to formulate an adequate response to a world marked by profound change and to adapt museums to the pressures of globalization, with all its imperatives and opportunities. In this situation, how can the city museum document and describe its environment? And what approaches can we develop towards presenting and interpreting this environment? I will attempt to formulate some elements of a response by considering the potential contribution of archaeological collections.

The role of city museums

In a confused and incessantly growing world, the collections held by museums and art galleries help us to identify and define each culture within the totality. Museums are a channel of expression for societies and communities, something we must defend if we are to be capable of understanding our heritage which constitutes an increasingly important vector within the socioeconomic dynamic. Yet, the role of the city museum is more complex and open to dispute than that of other types of museum, for it is dedicated to an urban space that encompasses various facets of heritage, different communities, social hierarchy and numerous problems to whose resolution it must contribute if it is to become a true forum of civic dialogue. The concept of the city museum is becoming more sharply defined in some European countries, where it is regarded as a space for reflection on the identity and specific character of the city, and as a cultural institution which fosters the study, protection and preservation of a material and im-

material heritage that has usually been marked by a wide variety of intercultural influences. One of the most striking modern examples of such an influence is that of the immigrant cultures, which, since the Second World War, have progressively established themselves as an integral part of European urban history. That phenomenon has gradually acquired considerable significance within the European city's cultural and social mosaic. Immigrants and their descendants have spent much of their lives in the city, often cherishing their own traditions and customs and preserving their original heritage. These cultures must hence find a proper place in the picture of the city that the museum pieces together, as an horizontal history taking in the extended cultural environment.

Archaeological collections in city museums

The significance of an archaeological collection in a city museum depends on various parametres, among them the antiquity of the city, its historical evolution, the diversity of its archaeological sites and policies regarding the protection and preservation of all forms of heritage. An archaeological object is not solely a work of art or an everyday implement, but is a source of historical evidence. It is loaded with messages that tell of its functions and its cultural relevance, and with artistic representations that carry a significance in their own right. Our historical knowledge has advanced considerably, but it is often derived from written and oral sources, which supplement the data furnished by an archaeological collection. Such collections are considered more convincing as documents because they inform us in a direct, certain way about the creativity of the artisans who made the objects and about the environment in which they made them. When exhibited in a well-structured way, such a collection may help inform and actuate a constructive dialogue – on the one hand between visitor and object, and on the other hand among visitors of different cultural or religious backgrounds.

The evidence of artefacts

Historians, generally, accord the city a mythical origin, in which its foundation is attributed to the deeds of a hero or to some other legendary occurrence, and which has been handed down in a traditional historiography, in mythology or perhaps through ancient traditions. An archaeological object rarely confirms legendary data, however, but it may present real information about the city's earliest history. Artefacts from different periods help us to retrace urban development in time and space by defining different layers of human occupation and the modes of settlement of the inhabitants. These objects may also yield exact evidence of the inhabitants' art and its history, about commercial and intercultural exchanges, and thus about human contacts and cross-fertilization between different cultures. As an example, a painted ceramic vase made at the ancient pottery of Kouass, near Tangier in Morocco, and dating from the oldest level of the excavation (currently fixed at the 5th century BC), informs us about trading relations that existed between this region and the Eastern Mediterranean (fig.1). It bears some characters in an Amazigh (Berber) script which are local creations and indicate influences from the Punic world, thereby confirming that these two cultures were exposed to one another in this part of Mauretania (ancient designation of Morocco). These brief observations are intended to indicate the role museums can fill in analysing and describing the city's history along broad lines from its earliest existence to the modern era, clarifying the course of ethnic and cultural intermingling that have influenced it and enriched its history. Without pretending to offer a factual history of the city, the museum can



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1. Kouass, painted ceramic vase
2. Walila, Islamic coin

present itself as a space where relics of the past may help the visiting public visualize its common history and may prompt debates on the need to create a joint future for that same urban entity.

Archaeological collections convey other messages, too, messages that evoke the interplay of different cultures and religions. The excavations at the site of Volubilis¹ have, for example, revealed several traces of islamic occupation, such as public baths, islamic tombs and coins struck at Walila, the Arabic (originally Berber) name given to Volubilis (fig. 2). This city was the original capital of the Idrissid dynasty, which ruled the first islamic kingdom of Morocco. On the same site, archaeologists have found palaeo-christian remains such as necropolises, several funerary inscriptions dating from between 599 and 655 AD, and objects in ceramics and bronze such as a palaeo-christian censer decorated with a Greek cross. The christian necropolises, situated near the triumphal arch, bear witness to a substantial christianization of the population of the city. Volubilis has also yielded traces of a jewish presence, such as a bronze seven-branched candlestick, and three inscriptions, one in Latin, another in Greek and the last in Hebrew. One of these inscriptions mentions the daughter of a Rabbi Jehuda, another refers to a *protopolite*, one of the fathers of the synagogue, named Kaikilianos. So, Volubilis was first occupied by a pagan population and then by a succession of jewish, christian and islamic communities. These archaeological traces denote certain characteristics of the culture of these communities, and remind us that all heritage, regardless of the place it was produced or the community responsible for producing it, is a common human heritage which must be safeguarded rigorously and respected with a tolerance which transcends the flimsy religious and cultural frontiers, since we are all responsible for preserving this heritage for future generations.

Preventive archaeology

Each antiquity has generally been unearthed at a definite place and time within the framework of an archeological dig. The city museum's presentation of this category of information to visitors helps them to form an idea, firstly, of how archaeologists and researchers have explored the city and contributed to the writing of its history, and sec-

¹ Volubilis was one of the great and important cities in the Kingdom of Mauretania in the 3rd century BC. This kingdom comprised roughly the present Western Algeria and Northern Morocco. Volubilis was also the capital in the early islamic period when Idris I, the founder of the islamic Kingdom of Morocco, became the Imam of the city in 789 AD. Volubilis was severely damaged in an earthquake in 1755 AD. The city has now been placed on the Unesco World Heritage List as a nonetheless exceptionally well-preserved instance of a large Roman colonial city on the fringes of the Empire.

only, about the distribution of various excavations in space and time. The museum is the place where the public may make acquaintance with the city's archaeological riches, the history of its excavations and the map of archaeological deposits. The museum acts as an essential intermediary in the protection and preservation of the archaeological sites, since it is a means of raising public awareness and offers documentary material for the various participants in the preservation of heritage.

Most specialists ignore one function of the city museum with an archaeological content, a function which goes unmentioned because it is little known and poorly developed; namely, the museum's contribution to pedestrian surveying and to preventive archaeology. In presenting documentary matter and archaeological objects of various kinds and provenances, it supplies the necessary elements for a systematic information resource which could provide the basis for much pedestrian surveying, which is a method of inventoring and scientific management of archaeological heritage both above and below ground. So, the museum is called upon to develop a database and a distribution map of historic buildings and archaeological sites at which the exhibited archaeological artefacts were found. This will give an idea of the city's archaeological potential, and it helps the public and people engaged in heritage activities to localize the most vulnerable spots, in particular those where there is a good chance of discovering ancient remains and perhaps treasures. Pedestrian surveying is a method used in preventive archaeology, which is becoming one of the disciplines of archaeological science, and which is becoming extremely important in modern cities built over ancient or medieval habitation strata. In effect, the preparation of a detailed distribution map of the finds, labelled with the corresponding historical periods, allows people to locate the constituents of the museum collection with regard to their urban and historical environment. The distribution map should give rise to a city archaeological map is derived from it. This archaeological map is a tool of heritage custodianship and a source of systematic information for preventive archaeology, which depends on a diagnostic approach involving assessing the archaeological potential of an area, detecting potential sites and characterizing them with a forecast of what they may yield. Diagnosing this potential is sometimes aided by the historical toponymy of city streets, districts, intact or demolished historic buildings and localities. Numerous sites have been discovered in Morocco thanks to traditional toponymy, as is illustrated by the Roman settlement of Ad Mercuri which was identified in a locality that the local population call 'Juimaà'². Ad Mercuri is a Latin designation meaning 'near the Temple of Mercury', and since this site was in fact merely a station on the Roman road in Mauretania Tingitana, the temple must surely have been a small one, which probably explains the use of the term 'Juimaà'.

The information obtained from the city museum generally motivates the planning of rescue excavations and of preventive operations and interventions, within an urban context which is often under pressure from contemporary construction projects. The city archaeological map and the distribution map of archaeological finds are representations of databases of suspected deposits which are still underground or those that are already known and excavated, and thus give the public a more or less realistic picture of the city's archaeological riches. The museum consequently becomes an active participant, like others such as the official archaeological services, in preventive archaeology and in formulating policies towards safeguarding heritage and towards development of

² Juimaà is a term from the Moroccan Arabic dialect meaning 'little mosque'.

the city and its environs. The museum thus becomes another accepted organ of control with regard to construction or clearance projects, as well as a forum – and surely the only one – where citizens may discuss matters of this kind with professionals in the field, state their opinions on the nature and course of urban development projects, and perhaps take an effective standpoint in the event of heritage destruction. In future, the museum is thus expected to become a more influential participant in preventive urban archaeology, which urban planners will increasingly accept as normal practice and integrate into their procedures and their budgets. The outcome will be a truly integrated strategy for protecting heritage from urban redevelopment. The city museum, whose spirit is nourished by the treasures of the past which it possesses, is not only required to position itself as a principal actor in the civic dialogue, but also to develop and target the materials of urban-scale archaeological exploration that are at its disposal, so that if need be it can reopen the ‘War Against the Demolishers!’ which Victor Hugo launched in the first half of the nineteenth century³.

Conclusion

The primary mission of the city museum with an archaeological collection is to open up and enrich a cultural dialogue; it must invite an appreciation of human creativity from an artistic viewpoint, while at the same time presenting this creativity against the broader background of civilizations and cultures. Even if this type of museum is widely thought of as a mirror of the city, this does not mean it has already deployed all the available means and techniques for creating a picture capable of reflecting the principle contours of the city’s life and dynamic. Developing the notion of the city museum in this direction (effectively expanding the scope of the city’s memory) would have the effect of enlarging its field of research towards questions of public interest and guiding the civic dialogue towards a philosophy of openness and tolerance. So the museum would become not merely a space where the public can obtain information and knowledge, but rather a forum that furnishes its visitors with the possibility of helping shape policies towards documentation, knowledge, acquisitions and collections, as well as taking part in the main cultural discourses. This would boost the public’s loyalty to the museum and their involvement in the safeguarding of heritage, both mobile and immobile, both material and immaterial. It is also essential to further develop the museum’s role as a place of education, if we aspire to writing the history of the city with a new slant that fosters the cultural dialogue on common issues, with a view to better understanding the present and imagining the future.

³ Victor Hugo, *Guerre aux démolisseurs!*, 1825 and 1832. In two pamphlets, Hugo pleaded for the preservation of medieval architectural heritage that was being destroyed to make way for urban redevelopment.

The role of archaeological research and archaeological collections in the making of the Bruggemuseum

Hubert De Witte

Curator Bruggemuseum, Bruges

Introduction

The new city museum of Bruges, the *Bruggemuseum*, will not be housed in one single building, but will be spread over seven different locations. Six of these are in the centre, the seventh on the edge of the city. What are these locations, what themes and ideas form the basis of the new museum structure and when will the refurbishing be finished?

Town Hall: Parts of the ground floor and the first floor with its marvellous Gothic Hall are open to the public. (fig. 1) The Town Hall has been the seat of the City Council since the 14th century. The theme in this location is 'Citizen and Council'. It was refurbished in 2005. On the ground floor, this included a new desk and an exhibition wall with film facilities, touch-screen equipment and displays on the architectural elements of the building. It opened to the public on 23 December 2005.

Liberty of Bruges: The seat of the Council of the Liberty of Bruges (a large area of countryside around the city). The 'Renaissance room' of this building is part of the Bruggemuseum. This building also houses the City Archives. 'Justice and Memory' is the theme of the refurbishment here. The restoration of the Charles V chimney, in combination with the installation of climate control in the Renaissance room, will determine when the room will be refurbished (probably in 2006 or 2007).

The *Belfry* tower dating from the 13th – 15th century: This is a symbol of the freedom of the medieval city. The theme for this location will be 'Identity and Communication'. Work will probably commence in 2008.

Gruuthuse Museum: A former 15th-century 'palace' of the Lords of Gruuthuse, an important noble family. In the 17th century it became a charity institution and it will be home to the theme 'Wealth and Poverty'. It will be refurbished after the roofs and façades have been renewed and an important exhibition titled 'Faith and Fortune. Ornament and Devotion in Medieval Flanders' has taken place, so probably at the end of 2007 or the beginning of 2008.

Church of Our Lady: One of the most important parish churches of Bruges will be used to evoke the idea 'Religion and Community Spirit – the Role of the Church in Bruges History', most probably in 2009.

Archaeological Museum: This museum is housed in the former eye clinic of St Jan's hospital. The building is Neo-Gothic with a façade from the 16th century. In 2004 part of the Archaeological Museum was redesigned as the first location of the *Bruggemuseum*. (fig. 2) Daily Life (and Death), Housing and Crafts will be the central themes at this location, which will be finished during the first half of 2006.



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1. Bruggemuseum – Town Hall: new display with building material, paintings, flat screen and touch screen application
2. Bruggemuseum – Archaeology: visitors enjoying the new displays

Ghent Gate: One of the four existing medieval town gates, this city gate is part of the medieval defence system of the town. The 'City Boundary' is the idea inspiring the refurbishment of this location. The opening is planned for the end of 2006 or the beginning of 2007.

In this way, a new city museum will be created. It will tell the history of the city in seven different historical locations, which will house Bruges' existing heritage collections. The archaeological collections will play an important role in this whole process. The symbolic value of the authentic historical sites has helped determine the thematic – chronological approach. The target date for completion of the entire project is 2010.

Archaeology and museums in Bruges: a brief history

Broadly speaking, the city of Bruges has two kinds of archaeological collections. The first was collected by the Archaeological Society of Bruges (*Société Archéologique de Bruges*), which was founded in the mid-19th century. This club of long-standing friends set out to trace and collect artefacts concerning the history of Bruges and the region. No distinction was made between art-historical objects and purely historical objects. They built up an immense collection that included reasonably important archaeological objects, both qualitatively and quantitatively. In 1905 the Gruuthuse museum opened with an exhibition of this collection. The Gruuthuse museum can in some ways be considered to be the 'city museum of Bruges' at that time, as the collection policy was mainly historical. In the 1950s the collections of the Archaeological Society were handed over to the city. This diverse collection was split up at the beginning of the 1970s. Most of the paintings were moved to the Groeningemuseum (museum of fine arts), and the prints and drawings to a separate cabinet in the building which housed the museum administration. The Gruuthuse museum was redesigned as a museum for applied arts. The archaeology collection moved into a separate building, in front of the Gruuthuse museum.

The Department for Town Archaeology (SAD) of Bruges, founded in 1977, excavated the second and largest group of objects. From the beginning, this Department was part of the group of Municipal Museums of Bruges (14 in all). The archaeologist in charge was also given responsibility (as assistant curator) for the archaeological collections in the Gruuthuse museum. From 1987, objects from both archaeological collections were exhibited in a new Archaeological Museum. In 2001, the new museum management asked the head of the Department for Town Archaeology and the Archaeological Museum to make a feasibility study for a Bruges city museum. The study was presented in 2002 and it was approved by the museum management, as well as the city council¹. The first phase of the Bruggemuseum was the refurbishment of the Archaeological Museum in 2004. Aimed in particular at young people, it takes visitors on an interactive archaeological journey through the history of Bruges.

¹ Hubert De Witte, *Het Bruggemuseum. Een stadsmuseum op verschillende historische locaties. Missie, doelstellingen en stappenplan voor de uitbouw van dit 'meerlocatiemuseum'*. [The Bruggemuseum. A city museum on different historical locations. Mission, objectives and planning for the development of this 'multi-location museum'] Thesis submitted for the Culture Management diploma, Faculty Applied Economic Sciences, University Faculties Saint Ignatius Antwerp, for the academic year 2001-2002, 198 pp. + appendices

Archaeology as an essential key to the city's history

Twenty-five years of intense archaeological research in Bruges has resulted in a huge collection of archaeological finds and data. Excavations in the city centre have provided evidence on certain theories, for example the topographical evolution of the town, and new information on periods that we previously knew little about. The question now is, how should we inform the general public of these results? In isolation in the Archaeological Museum and specialised publications, or in the broader perspective of the new *Bruggemuseum*?

In Bruges we believe the answer lies in a balanced mixture of the two. The Archaeological Museum of the city is of course the obvious place to explain how archaeological information has shed new light on the city's history. With the help of audiovisual presentations, photos, models and objects, the museum shows the importance of knowledge gained from archaeological excavations. Within the thematic – chronological approach mentioned above, each of the seven locations will be refurbished on the basis of one or more 'ideas' or themes. Daily Life (and Death), Housing and Crafts are the themes for the Archaeology Museum. Archaeology as a discipline will be explained in parallel to the chronological development of these themes.

In addition I am convinced that the results (objects and information) of the archaeological research in and around the city may not be restricted to that one museum location (Archaeological Museum). Depending on the themes developed in the other museum locations, both archaeological objects and information obtained from excavations must be integrated into the new museum displays, as we demonstrate below. Can we neglect archaeological information when, for example, displaying the topographical evolution of the town?

In the *Bruggemuseum*'s most important location, Gruuthuse, the refurbishment will be based on the theme 'Wealth and Poverty', reflecting the two main functions of the building over the centuries. The current Gruuthuse collections on display, which focus on applied arts, are suitable for illustrating 'wealth' in the city of Bruges as they already are the result of a selection. Indeed, most of the time objects of the highest quality obtain museum status. But the museum repository contains much more... Archaeological objects will certainly help to illustrate 'poverty', because this kind of selection did not take place at all. After all, a cesspit does not lie... During excavation everything is registered and collected, which sheds light on both rich and poor by studying the waste they produced. Both the old and the new archaeological collections will provide material for the displays. A private collection of more than 500 archaeological objects – mainly collected with a metal detector in and around Bruges – was acquired in 2003 with a view to including the objects in the new displays.

Another example is the Church of Our Lady, where excavations took place in 1977. Many of the finds are in the current display and will be included in the new concept. Historic building material, partly collected during excavations, will be displayed in the Ghent Gate, illustrating the building of the Gate itself, and the role of natural stone in shaping the city. Other archaeological finds, like ceramics from different parts of Europe, will be displayed as an illustration of the Gate's function – a way through which people, goods and ideas entered or left the city.

Archaeology and archaeological collections will therefore be an important element of the permanent exhibition and collection of the *Bruggemuseum* at four of the locations at least. But archaeology also plays a much more important role than this. The Town Archaeology Department, with all its activities, results and collections, is an in-

tegral part of the *Bruggemuseum*. During excavations the public are invited to visit the sites regularly. This is an ideal way to increase public support for archaeology and in a broader perspective promote the study of the city's history. Archaeological results can play a role in how historical sites and buildings are used. Incorporating archaeological remains like foundations into new buildings is an example. Indirectly this leads to public discussions which the *Bruggemuseum* can and will play a role in.

Temporary exhibitions at the *Bruggemuseum* will present archaeological objects and results. Archaeological finds can be the beginning of even major cultural historical projects. From 22 September 2006 to 4 February 2007 Gruuthuse will hold an exhibition titled *Faith and Fortune. Ornament and Devotion in Medieval Flanders*. The exhibition features pilgrim badges and profane, even erotic badges, that tell a story, illustrated with a huge diversity of exhibits, including jewellery, sculpture, paintings on panels and illuminated manuscripts.

Challenges and questions

- How do we balance history, art history, archaeological collections and other museum collections? Do we concentrate archaeological objects and results of archaeological research in one location, with references to the other museum locations?
- In what way can we link the museum displays and stories with the city (historical buildings, topography, street names, and archaeological remains)?
- Can any city museum be complete without archaeology being strongly represented?

Discussion

Chair: Marie-Paule Jungblut

Curator Historical Museum of the City of Luxembourg

In a city museum, a curator decides how history will be seen by the visitor. Is that what a curator should want? Both Rachid Bouzidi en Hubert De Witte agree that there are choices to be made by curators, but at the same time museums must try to be as objective as possible. Someone remarked that history is always subjective and that connecting history with the present is a gateway to becoming interested in history. Making the public interested in history depends on the object used. It doesn't have to be archaeological. It is possible to tell different stories about a site with different objects. Every object has more than one story and it is the curator's task to choose which story is to be told about that specific site. In Volubilis, for example, the site was occupied by different communities through the ages. As a curator you try to make an exhibition with the objects that tell the history of Volubilis. The museum is not located on the archaeological site itself but in the nearest city. In this way the visitor can make the connection between the history of the site and the story that is told. Separating the museum from the archaeological site helps visitors to create their own context. Both places can be visited and the separation of the two stimulates reflection on both of them.

You should not ask the question (brought up in the lecture by Hubert de Witte) 'Can we neglect archaeological information when displaying subjects like the topographical evolution of the town?' because archaeology is an integral part of history. Not very many objects were found in Volubilis, so the question was asked during the discussion whether too few stories are told about the objects and periods. This depends on the perspective you look at the subject from. In Morocco it is very important to be as objective as possible, as Moroccans are very sensible. Members of the different communities who have lived in Volubilis down the centuries still live in the city today. Through a Christian text, you focus on that particular community, through Muslim objects you concentrate on Muslims and so on. Objects from different cultures are displayed separately from each other in the museum but there is also a room for interpretation where objects from different cultures are presented together.

In Bruges the process was different. Many partners were included during the brainstorming period on the concept and content of the *Bruggemuseum*. Since this reorganisation of the museums in Bruges, some discussion is definitely taking place. No more 'island thinking' for the different locations/museums. At the seven different locations, not only archaeological objects are on display but also documents, painting, coins, furniture, applied arts, tapestries etc. Archaeology in Bruges is just one contribution to the whole story. Museums are obliged to respect history and show this in the museum.

The general opinion is that the two museums cannot be compared. In Morocco only a part of a period was Christian or Jewish and it is impossible to show the way of life with these few objects. Although the archaeological site is not small, it is not big enough to provide sufficient material to represent the way of life. The museum in Morocco is more of a site museum and Bruges is a city museum with seven different

locations. How do you communicate to the public? Uniting and presenting seven locations as one is difficult. It really is using the whole city as a museum.

Do we want to influence the way visitors perceive the history of the city? Important remark: we cannot afford to tell history exclusively from our own point of view.

Different ways must be used to tell history and to reach as many people as possible.

A museum is part of the civic dialogue; museums have a large audience to respond to especially when history is not taught sufficiently at school. In telling the story of the city as objectively as possible, we are not doing something new. What is new is the way museums today are responding to the needs of the public. Museums should not make an exhibition without first listening to the public.

Excavation sites can, owing to their popularity, lead visitors via objects to the museum itself. But in responding to the wider audience and tourists, museums should not forget about the original inhabitants of the city and the local population. This local audience is sometimes critical and difficult to please because of their preoccupation with the subject, namely their own city. They might only want to hear positive stories and learn about the 'Hollywood caricatures' of their cities. How should museums cope with this? Participants shared the opinion that museums should try to tell the 'true' story and not perpetuate the caricatures of the city.

Are there taboos connected to archaeology? The main one is looking for objects from only one period during an excavation. This is still happening and sometimes means many objects are lost if they are not 'big and important objects of big and important communities such as the Roman or Greeks'. Another task of archaeological city museums and city museums is to guide excavations in the right direction.

Conclusions

Can museums help shape the city?

- Yes they can, in part. Especially museums with archaeological collections and which do excavations themselves. They can stimulate public discussion about the city's past.
- A serious legal basis is important so that they do not only have to do rescue excavations but also preventive excavations.
- There is no way of approaching history objectively. By saying this, we do not discover a new style of presentation. But what is new is that museums now have to take public expectations into account; in the past they mostly 'presented' what they owned or found out. Visitors may have cliché ideas about the history of their city. Curators can play with these stereotypes and present other aspects of history.
- Museums can use archaeological collections at the same level as other types of collections to tell the history of the city.
- Museums should not only provide information but they also have a social role to play.
- Museums have to choose to be archaeological museums and present what comes out of the ground, or to be a regular city history museum in which archaeology is part of the larger historical collections.

Activating the city

Do city museums consciously want to play an active part in the city? Several city museums have developed an *outreach strategy* to involve inhabitants of the city in the museum. In line with this strategy some museums take on an active role in the city, or in some parts of it, to improve the quality of life for example. Some museums are active outside their buildings, organizing small exhibitions in neighbourhoods or by loaning objects to airports, banks, department stores etc. Why are they doing this, what are their objectives? What alliances are developing (e.g. with housing corporations, social organizations, businesses and municipalities)? Some museums deliberately present themselves as forums for discussions, art performances and as a dynamic part of the city.

Questions

- In what way do museums seek contact with the city and its inhabitants? What alliances are being forged? Does the museum want to contribute to wider social objectives?
- To what extent do exhibitions function as a platform for discussion? In what way do museums involve groups or individuals in the compilation of exhibitions (or websites and educational programmes)?
- Do city museums play a part in what is nowadays called the 'creative' city, for example by co-operating with institutions for higher education, as a platform for artists or by commissioning assignments?
- In what way do city museums actively influence the heritage strategy of a city?

The economic significance of participation by city museums

F.Ph. Bijdendijk

General director of housing corporation Het Oosten, Amsterdam

Housing Corporation Het Oosten is a private institution with a social objective. An organisation that provides homes for people – mainly people who have trouble in finding what they need on the free market – at least under their own steam. It operates in Amsterdam where it manages some 16,000 homes. These are mainly less expensive flats in the 300 to 500 euro per month price-range. Moreover, Het Oosten owns around 2,000 units such as shops, business premises and garages. On top of this Het Oosten builds some 800 units every year.

What is the link between homes, buildings and museums? What is the significance (if any) of a city museum in the quality of one's home and quality of the neighbourhoods in which we live? These museums are of importance – considerable importance – for my job. Although this job mainly focuses on the present and the future, I shall try to illustrate where history comes in. Every year Het Oosten invests around € 150 million in the city of Amsterdam. Between 75% and 80% of this goes to construction. Between 20% and 25% is devoted to maintenance, management and maintaining the quality of life in the neighbourhoods. Our goal is to provide people with security and pleasure in life in their homes, in the long term. This being the case, it is crucial for us to invest in long-term quality.

What are the real long-term quality aspects of buildings, neighbourhoods and cities? My conviction is that there are two: accommodation capacity and the 'precious factor'.

Accommodation capacity

Most of our residential areas were built after Second World War, in a period when both Eastern and Western Europe thought in centralist terms. (fig. 1-4) National governments took the lead here. This produced the post-war residential areas: uniform in design, mono-functional and uniform in price. Around 15 or 20 years ago we woke up to the fact that we were thinking along the wrong lines: people's needs are not uniform and their requirements are becoming increasingly harder to predict. The solution is not to keep on trying to think for other people. People should be given the chance – the best possible chance – to keep on adapting their housing and homes to their needs and purses. That is possible if buildings, neighbourhoods and cities have accommodation potential: the potential to fulfil a whole range of variable functions.

Apart from individual needs, which are expressed in the need for accommodation, we are also dealing with collective interests. The long-term interests of society as a whole shouldn't be adversely affected by the short-term interests of the individual. To deal with this, when we are designing a built-up area we have to think for a moment in terms of time-spans, structures with varying life-spans. The greater the collective interest the greater the desired lifespan and at the same time the more important it is to make in-depth investments. An example. The canal structure of Amsterdam is 350

years old. But we can easily estimate its final lifespan at between 500 and 1000 years. Within this structure there are buildings, canal-side mansions. Their average lifespan will be much lower, let's say 150 to 200 years. Within these buildings the world changes even faster; because the heart of Amsterdam has been a place of work and residence for 350 years. For all this time, behind those rich facades, the function of the canal-side buildings has been changing. Once a residence, now a place of work. Today, we can easily set the average lifespan of the interior of one of these buildings at between 15 and 20 years.



1. *IJburg floating museum*
2. *Oosterpark neighbourhood, previous history*
3. *Oosterpark neighbourhood, redevelopment*
4. *Oosterpark, temporary museum*

‘The precious factor’

Alongside the growing call for changeability there is also a growing need for emotional involvement with the environment. The way cities were broken up in the 1960s is now unthinkable. And in the wake of the Brundtland conference our sense of responsibility for the environment in which we live has greatly increased our appreciation of historic sites and old cities.¹ For example, at the wish of its oldest surviving citizens, Warsaw, 85% of which was destroyed during the war, has been restored to its former glory. This sort of example speaks volumes. And it is this intrinsic characteristic at the heart of buildings, neighbourhoods and cities, that I call the precious factor.

Accordingly, accommodation potential and ‘the precious factor’ are sustainable qualities in which we as a housing corporation can invest. This is economically sound in that these qualities are compatible with real human needs. However, the trick is to do this without losing sight of the precious factor. The trick is to find these frameworks and give them a permanent form. The frameworks lie locked in our past, rooted in what exists today!

In my view this is a massive field of operation for city museums involving tracing, recording and making these precious frameworks transferable. *Loci genius*, the spirit of the place, best describes this phenomenon, as does collective memory. This goes beyond the physical characteristics of the spot to include the events that unfolded there. To capture and share these with future generations is worthwhile. In my opinion city museums should follow the social and spatial developments in cities or neighbourhoods. They should make coalitions with organisations like housing corporations and make a contribution in terms of realizing their potential when it comes to residents identifying with their neighbourhoods and integrating with one another; in short, they should participate in development projects. In this way they can contribute to that sustainable quality that I have called the precious factor. As I have demonstrated, investing in this is economically sound. That being the case, the museum’s contribution must also be potentially profitable.

¹ United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The name refers to Dr. Go Harlem Brundtland, in the eighties chairman of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED)

Towards a city museum as a centre of civic dialogue

Jouetta van der Ploeg

Director of the Zoetermeer City Museum

Kees de Groot

Lecturer on Practical Theology, University of Tilburg

Introduction

Zoetermeer, a medium-sized city near The Hague, has grown tremendously over the past four decades. Although the residents of Zoetermeer may boast a history that can be traced back to the eleventh century, the city as we know it today was created over a very short period of time. The old village of Zoetermeer was officially designated a 'New Town' in 1962 to allow it to grow and thus reduce The Hague's housing shortage. This decision had far-reaching consequences: in a mere 40 years the village of Zoetermeer has 'exploded' into a medium-sized town. It should be remembered that the process of growth most towns experience is more gradual. Zoetermeer is to be found at number one hundred on Elsevier magazine's list of Dutch municipalities (June 19th 2004), however it is not a run-of-the-mill area. The municipality scores extremely poorly in terms of a lack of countryside for recreation, historic housing, large houses, shops and registered crime. It does do extremely well in terms of the vitality of its economy, facilities, road safety, accessibility by train, parking and public gardens. Zoetermeer is rather affluent and has a large percentage (15%) of foreign nationals. New Towns are inhabited by people from a wide variety of backgrounds all mixed in together; Zoetermeer is a place without a past for the majority of its inhabitants, each with their own history which often a previous life in another country.¹

In the 1990s *Zoetermeer* became synonymous with the idea of 'a city where nothing happens at all'. The city has a reputation for being staggeringly boring. A city of post-modern architecture without city life. A city without roots. A city without a face, due to the fact that so many historic buildings and farmhouses were pulled down to make room for housing projects and concrete buildings.

The Zoetermeer City Museum

The museum is located at the heart of the old village which is still standing. It is located in a monumental mansion, built in 1872. As has been said before, Zoetermeer became the overflow area that housed The Hague's burgeoning population. It grew very quickly in a short period of time so the different architectural styles to be found in the different districts of Zoetermeer are very evident. Interior-design styles also change over a pe-

¹ Life in the suburb can easily be compared to white-class 'suburban bliss'. This has become a cliché from which there is no escape. But there is more to it than that. Everybody is a newcomer in suburban residential areas and in New Towns like Zoetermeer. There is also an exciting mix of widely varying cultures and subcultures emerging in the new cities. See also: Hamers, David, *Tijd voor Suburbia. De Amerikaanse buitenwijk in wetenschap en literatuur*. [Time for Suburbia. The American outskirts in research and literature](*Thesis Maastricht*), Amsterdam 2003.



1



2

1. *Jaswant Jagbandhan, 18 years old and the youngest participant in the project 'ZoeterMeer between Heaven and Earth'*
2. *Mohamed Chharya, muslim, 57 years old and leader of the Moroccan Community in Zoetermeer*

riod of 7 to 10 years, this is why, in addition to historical exhibits, the Zoetermeer City Museum focuses on collecting and presenting post-war objects used in interiors. So the story of the town is told by displaying common utensils for everyday use in and around the house, and in presentations about current social issues highlighting stories and experiences related by Zoetermeer's inhabitants. One of the key elements in our museum policy that we intend to pursue in the years to come is the idea that the museum is a living, and lively, Zoetermeer home, with the ambition of acting as a platform from which discussions can be launched.

In this article we shall focus on two cases which resulted in the temporary transformation of the Zoetermeer City Museum into a Centre of Civic Dialogue. One is our project promoting inter-religious dialogue; the other highlights the controversy surrounding graffiti-art.²

New policy

The museum decided on this new course of action after witnessing the success of the project 'ZoeterMeer between Heaven and Earth; soul and conscience of a modern New Town' (September 9th, 2004 – January 2nd, 2005) The core of the project was an exhibition in the City Museum which focused on a group of residents from various cultural and religious backgrounds. These people were interviewed by a journalist from a local newspaper (*Haagsche Courant*) and photographed with an object that was sacred to them (fig. 1 and 2). Pictures and quotes from the interviewees were suspended from artificial trees inside the exhibition area, trees representing the world's religions. Their personal objects were displayed and the room was filled with sacred sounds. Visitors were invited to write their comments and their own personal stories on a wall reminiscent of the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. After the opening event, a series of activities followed: 'A Cycle Tour of the World in your own Home Town' visiting various places of worship, 'Foreign Food' (having a meal in an ethnic environment), weekly lectures and meetings between people of different religions, two projects for religious education (one at primary and one at secondary-school level), and a grand finale celebration in the City Hall.

² Parts of this article has been presented earlier by Kees de Groot at the 28th Conference of the International Society of Religion in Zagreb, Croatia, in a paper entitled: *'For Love of Faith. Patterns of religious engagement in a New Town'*, July 2005.

How did the project deal with religion with respect to urban cohabitation during the tumultuous political-religious climate of autumn 2004 in the Netherlands? ³ The findings of the project, i.e. the exhibition and the surrounding activities suggest that dealing with religious engagement as a personal matter (that is focusing on a person's individual religious beliefs rather than religion in its institutionalized form) in a secular setting like a museum may foster religion's potential power to promote social cohesion. This made the museum staff realize that a museum can indeed play an important part if it moves beyond the boundaries of its usual field of operation. The museum was therefore motivated to redefine its mission to stress the necessity of an interactive approach involving residents from all sections of society.

Introduction to the project Zoetermeer between Heaven and Earth

What and who do our city-dwellers believe in? That was the question posed by the staff of the Zoetermeer City Museum. An intriguing question, partly because highlighting modern topics is a fairly recent development in Dutch museums, but also because Dutch public institutions used to side-step religious matters.⁴ During the seventies Dutch public culture transformed quite rapidly from religious to secular. The religious climate is changing, however. Since the end of the second millennium, religion has made a come-back in the public domain and is no longer regarded as the exclusive territory of religious institutions and movements. Religion is now increasingly being recognised by secular public institutions, for instance museums, as an aspect of urban cohabitation.

As urbanisation increases, urban nuisances like acts of vandalism, trouble-making and loitering on street corners are also on the increase among the young. Zoetermeer is no exception. Concerned about the social cohesion in their urbanizing suburb, the municipality of Zoetermeer subsidized a research project run by the University of Amsterdam to investigate the supposedly problematic situation. According to the researchers, there were no severe social problems to worry about.⁵ It wasn't just the absence of a any sense of urgency about making improvements that was striking in this final report, it was also the total absence of interest in the role played by religion. It was not mentioned as a possible source of disruption, nor as a potential for cohesion. This was remarkable if considered in the light of growing tension between communities in multicultural Dutch society. The religiously motivated attacks on New York's Twin Towers (9/11/2001) meant these communities were increasingly being defined along religious lines. At the reception held to celebrate New Year 2002, the mayor of Amsterdam, Job Cohen, addressed this 're-introduction of religion' into Dutch society. He suggested involving religious, in particular Islamic, communities in his mission to 'keep the citizens of Amsterdam together as one community'. Job Cohen's pragmatic

³ The filmmaker Theo van Gogh, known for his provocative remarks about, amongst other things, Muslims, was murdered by a militant Muslim on November the 2nd, 2004

⁴ Groot de, Kees, 'For love of faith, patterns of religious engagement in Zoetermeer' in: *Zoetermeer tussen Hemel en Aarde, ziel en geweten van een moderne groeistad*, Zoetermeer 2004, p. 11.

⁵ Yet the studies advised investing in projects 'to strengthen ties between inhabitants'. In an article the Amsterdam urban sociologists pinpointed the lack of social cohesion as the tragedy of suburban residents. 'Suburban people', they claimed, 'are simply more sensitive to situations, like crime, street noise, pollution, vandalism, that interfere with their idea of peace and quiet'. See: Ginkel van, Rob; Deben, Leon en Lupi, Tineke, 'Suburbane dromen. Dealen en praktijken van het leven in Zoetermeer' [Suburban dreams. Deals and practices of life in Zoetermeer] in: *Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift* 49 nr. 3 (2002) p. 275.

approach flew in the face of the growing conviction that the Islamic religion was an obstacle to the integration of immigrants from Turkey and Morocco.

However, Job Cohen's view did appeal to the museum staff. The initial idea was that the religious diversity of Zoetermeer would appeal to the curiosity of the public. What if the exhibition were to provide an opportunity for people to take a look in one another's homes. To have a look at an aspect of people's lives considered to be private like one's faith? Inspired by Job Cohen, the museum was not only strongly motivated to present religion in Zoetermeer as an interesting theme, but also to encourage people from various cultures and religions to meet and to get to know each other. Soon, another partner wanted to join in, a rector from the local Dutch Reformed Church. He proposed making use of the secular space of the museum to organize inter-religious meetings, something he had been wanting to organize for a long time. The museum, the rector and the *Haagsche Courant* planned a six-month programme centred around the exhibition.

Zoetermeer City Museum started off optimistically. We were expecting people to enjoy setting up an exhibition with other believers. The museum was proven right. Although it was difficult to find them, believers from all backgrounds agreed to cooperate in the project. An article in the local newspaper, *Haagsche Courant* (28th of February 2004), launching the project, invited a Muslim, a Hindu and a 'spiritual' individual to be speakers. Seven people, practicing believers or people with very outspoken views, responded to the appeal. Apparently, an appeal in a newspaper was not enough to convince other, somewhat less high-profile believers, to join the project by telling their story. Therefore, letters went out to religious groups and welfare organisations inviting them to publicize the project amongst their followers. Fourteen people responded, mainly from the Bahá'í community and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints which led to these societies being over-represented. The majority of the people the interviewer spoke to had become involved in the project by chance: they were relatives of friends, people he met in Zoetermeer. Many of them stressed the fact that they were not representative of their belief, were not religious or that they had tried several beliefs.⁶

The project and the social-political context

The opening of the exhibition (September the 9th 2004) took place when tension was running high in the Netherlands. The media was full of stories about street crime being committed by Moroccan youths and people were frightened of Islamic terrorism too. The Dutch-Somali member of parliament Ayaan Hirsi Ali was still in hiding because of the death threats she had received. However, she did still appear on television to support her film-script *Submission* (29 August 2004), a cinematographic statement speaking out against the oppression of women in the name of Islam.⁷ At the same time the media reported a number of anti-Semitic incidents. The speaker who opened our exhibition was the prominent rabbi, Awraham Soeterdorp, an advocate of inter-religious dialogues. His enthusiasm for the project and his message that no religion could claim

⁶ While the study method brought together a colourful group of Zoetermeer residents (53), it did not reflect the composition of the local population. The age of the Zoetermeer residents who were interviewed ranged from eighteen to seventy-seven. The average age was forty-eight. There were equal numbers of male and female participants, and almost as many Zoetermeer respondents of Dutch origin (30). The share of Zoetermeer residents of foreign origin represented in the exhibition was therefore three times as high as the overall Zoetermeer population.

⁷ The filmmaker Theo van Gogh who had assisted in the making of *Submission* received similar threats and was murdered in November, only a couple of months after the release of the film.

to have exclusive rights to the road leading to God, fell on fertile soil.

The museum was crowded with enthusiastic visitors from all sections of society. A lot of them accompanying the 53 interviewees. Besides the activities for adults organized around the exhibition, several educational programmes were initiated too. Schools from all over the region participated in these educational programmes, not just those in Zoetermeer. The exhibition received an extraordinary amount of attention from the national media. The Zoetermeer project underpinned the assumption that religion was fashionable again, and provided a fascinating intimate glimpse of the religious plurality present in Dutch society. More than 3000 people visited the small museum over a period of three months, and every week 50 people took part in the inter-religious meeting on Wednesday evening. The first six sessions had the character of popular education about the world religions and holism, the second series focused on discussions about issues like health, education and personal relations. These meetings were monitored by a selection of nine interviewees (taken from the 53 people interviewed in Zoetermeer). The 'rule' at these meetings was to regard religious viewpoints as personal convictions and, as such, not to condemn them.

Then, on 2 November 2004, the assassination of the filmmaker Theo van Gogh by a militant Muslim, the second politically motivated murder in the recent history of the Netherlands, shocked the nation.⁸ The following day, an inter-religious meeting on education had been scheduled in the Zoetermeer City Museum. Before the programme started, one of the 53 interviewees, Mohamed Chhayra, read out a statement in the name of the Moroccan community in Zoetermeer expressing their horror at the murder and their fear, as Muslims, of being held responsible.

The first youth meeting, as part of the activity programme and inter-religious meetings took place the day after. Again, the discussion was dominated by the recent murder. A police car drove up and down the road in front of the museum, since the murder had been followed by a series of attacks on Islamic schools, mosques and churches. The thirty youngsters (again from all sections of society, who had been asked to participate by local youth and church organizations) entered into open-hearted discussions and planned their next meeting at which they formed a group known as the Illuminati.

At the closing event the following month an intercultural party took place in the City Hall, where the mayor of Zoetermeer praised the project, and the rector of the Dutch Reformed Church and the monitoring group kicked off a new project entitled 'Believing in Zoetermeer'. This project is carrying on the inter-religious dialogue in the City Museum and is now preparing a 'peace mission' to Morocco in autumn 2006, in order 'to learn from the Moroccan tradition of religious tolerance'.

Impulse for a new policy

Against a background of growing interest in religion in the public domain and a national debate on the integration of immigrants, the Zoetermeer City Museum has initiated an exhibition and a project to stimulate the interaction between believers and non-believers from various backgrounds. The Zoetermeer project may be characterized as a stimulus to promote social cohesion, using religion as a cultural resource. Although the museum, has always wanted to bring people together and to stimulate debate, our staff was quite surprised to discover that by defining religion as a personal matter in a 'secular' public space, filled with various religions, people of different faiths were encour-

⁸ The first political assassination took place in 2003 when an outspoken politician was murdered by a militant environmentalist of Dutch origin.

aged to get to know each other, including their religious persuasions.

With this project, the museum has succeeded in reaching target groups that would not normally be at ease on entering a museum and has managed to forge links between them and the museum, the spin-off being that some groups, including the muslim women's work-group Hafsa, now use the museum as their 'community centre'. The museum staff also felt that the project was highly stimulating. This open exchange of ideas and our conviction of its relevance to present-day society, has led us to commit ourselves to organizing a project involving various groups of Zoetermeer residents at least once every year. We are confident that in making this commitment we will be contributing towards better social relations in our community – and contributing towards bonding activities that will forge links between different social groups. As we see it, a museum of the future must meet the challenge of changing modern society by constantly reconsidering its role. The public's interest quickly changes from one theme to the next and we think the museum's response should be to offer a choice of programmes. Such programmes must be aimed at both residents and visitors.

Exhibition A Piece4Peace

A recent example of the City Museum's new policy is the exhibition *A Piece4Peace*. In cooperation with JongerenBelang Zoetermeer (a group of youngsters who promote the rights of young people in the city) and some young graffiti artists, the museum organized an exhibition about graffiti art for the exhibition *A Piece 4 Peace*. This exhibition was accompanied by happenings and afternoons spent lounging with hip-hop music, as well as performances by disc-jockeys, skaters, break-dancers and graffiti artists (fig. 3).



3. *Youngsters at work*

A Piece 4 Peace presented elements of lively, underground youth culture to be found in present-day Zoetermeer. This exhibition inspired JongerenBelang Zoetermeer to submit a proposal for a graffiti-wall in Zoetermeer where artists could go to work without breaking the law. The realization of the project moved a step forward at the beginning of June, when an ample majority of the town council instructed the alderman responsible for youth affairs to draw up a plan. The museum is satisfied that their support for this type of project has led to a lively discussion in the Zoetermeer community about a current social issue and, moreover and offered the youth a platform, a platform they were sadly lacking. As a result of the exhibition one graffiti artist decided to apply to the Academy of Applied Arts to broaden his horizons. He was accepted. So, at one level museums can function as stimulators of social processes, but on a more individual and personal level a museum can contribute to a single contributor's self-respect, confidence and creativity. All in all this exhibition has been very rewarding.

‘Cultural diversity in the middle of Berlin’

Rita Klages

Neighbourhood Museum Association, Berlin

The project ‘Cultural diversity in the middle of Berlin’ was initiated in 2002 by the Arts Council of Central Berlin¹ in cooperation with the *Heimatmuseum Wedding* (Berlin Regional Museum at Wedding (part of the same borough) and the *Nachbarschaftsmuseum e.V.* (Neighbourhood Museum Association, Berlin) The project lasted about 7 months.

The aim of the project was to create a base for the development of intercultural work in the borough. The idea was to look into what intercultural work could contribute to bringing about a public dialogue between people with varying cultural backgrounds. Secondly the project was aimed at promoting good relations between the residents of the Berzik (borough) and the various cultural institutions in this part of Berlin. This ambition applied in particular to the Berlin Regional Museum at Wedding. The main objective was that the project would be developed with the residents and that it would not be imposed ‘from above’. The project was aimed at making a contribution to the following subjects:

- Opening up new territories to promote cohesion and cooperation in Wedding.
- Promoting a stronger feeling of personal identity, and at the same time encouraging residents to adopt a more understanding attitude towards other cultures.
- Stimulating participation in social events.
- Preventing social segregation.

The project partners

The Berlin Regional Museum at Wedding² wants to reflect, communicate and exhibit in its collections the history, or rather the different histories, to be found in the district, as well as focusing on the backgrounds of the ‘old’ population and the ‘newcomers’. It would like to act as a forum for public discussions about current issues, the different historical roots of its residents and questions relevant to the future of the city. About 30 % of the population in Wedding was not born in Berlin, nor in Germany, most of their parents or grandparents came here as so-called ‘guest-workers’ or refugees, and their presence has had a part to play in creating the image of this district and its history. The Neighbourhood Museum Association, founded in 1991, operates in the tradition

1 Since 1 January 2001 Berlin has been divided up into 12 ‘Bezirke’ (boroughs). Each ‘Bezirk’ has its own Board of government and its own mayor. The former ‘Bezirke’ Wedding and Tiergarten, have been joined up with the former Berlin Mitte to form a new ‘Bezirk’ Berlin Mitte with more than 320.000 residents. The former ‘Bezirk’ Wedding is a borough with a high percentage of unemployed people, particularly immigrants are without work. In migrant circles in Berlin Wedding is considered to be a problem area.

2 The museum was founded in 1989. It is housed in a former school building. After a reorganization in November 2004, the museum was given the name *Mitte Museum am Gesundbrunnen*. It is still using the same building.

of the 'New Museology'.³ It promotes and initiates projects which deal with historical questions and contemporary problems and which involve cooperation between museums and the local population. The Neighbourhood Museum Association's role in this project was to develop the overall concept and set up lines of cooperation between the Berlin Regional Museum at Wedding and various professional education institutes, the local youth, and migrant business community in Wedding.

The concept

The Neighbourhood Museum Association worked together with the director of the Berlin Regional Museum at Wedding to draft a concept proposal using as their departure point the current living conditions of the residents with their own specific cultural and social circumstances. In doing so they had to bear in mind how it could be applied in practice in the future. This is why the project has centred on studying concrete ideas which were then realized by business people in Wedding from various cultural backgrounds. This varied from new products, new forms of commercialisation or self-organization. The residents who thus in different ways had built up a new way of earning their living in Wedding would be introduced to young people who had only just started to make career choices.

The idea was to integrate the social and cultural competences of the participants in this project. In this way promoting a process of *cultural learning*, considered a life-long process, that is injected with new quality through interaction with different cultures (and different genders, generations, religions and social-backgrounds). The knowledge gained about others makes people more sensitive towards other cultures, as well as confronting them with their own culture and a common culture. The leading questions were: What can young people from different cultural backgrounds learn from migrants who have now become business people and how can this be used to improve their own future prospects? How can they use this bi-national knowledge and the network, they just have joined, or are about to create, as a form of empowerment?

The project is to be rounded off with a public joint-presentation. The results of the project are to be added to the museum's documentation.

The initial stages

First an inventory was made of the institutions, associations, training institutes, projects and initiatives in Berlin Mitte, especially in the Wedding area, which in their work were, in principle, intercultural-minded. We looked into whether they would possibly be interested in joining in the project, and which networks they belonged to. The new partners who joined in did so on condition that they were in agreement with the project and that they were prepared to work with the Berlin Regional Museum at Wedding and with the young people. Prospective new participants were interviewed in the run-up to the project.

³ According to *New Museology*, the 'new' museum is defined by its socially relevant objectives and basic principles. Its work as an educational institution is directed toward making a specific population aware of its identity, strengthening that identity, and instilling confidence in a population's potential for development. The *New Museology* is a school of thought on museology-practice that dates back to the 1970s and 80s. See also Rita Klages, *Heimat durch Nachbarschaft, Das Museum öffnet sich zum Stadtteil*, in *Ein Haus in Europa, Stadtkultur im Museum*, eds Udo Göszwald/Rita Klages. Band II 1996/97 pp.147-160, p. 147. Here there is a reference to a publication by the Belgian museum educationalist Jean Capart. As early as 1922 he argued in favour of museum's being more communicative and open to the public.

On this basis an agreement was made with two professional training schools. One was the SOS Children's Village in Berlin, involving in particular this centre's project *Freiwilliges Soziales Trainingsjahr*⁴ (Voluntary Social Training Year). In addition to this joint-venture agreements were entered into with various local business people, local authorities, migrant organisations and 'borough management teams'.

The business people agreed to work with the museum as well as with the young people; some of the young people were offered the opportunity of a practical traineeship after the project. They were predominantly young, from all lines of trade, and some had academic qualifications. The business people were asked by the team about their special know-how, methods of self-organisation, selling-strategies, products and networks, cultural contexts and special concerns. The question then posed was: How could this knowledge be put to good use for the following generations and for young people looking for new jobs? Ways of supporting young people were also discussed.

The partners were pledged to providing personnel for the project, to opening their institutes and businesses to them, to working towards a joint-end-product and to a joint-presentation of the results.

The realization of the project

Four working parties of young adults were formed, these were participants from two professional training schools. They were first taught interviewing techniques which they then applied straight away in studies of their own community, some by interviewing members of their own family. They were taught to become more sensitive to cultural diversity and the wealth of opportunity it offers. These lessons included professional background knowledge, learning to look at oneself and at other people, learning about culture, traditions and relations between the genders .

Then a questionnaire was drawn up for use when interviewing the business people and the participants were given a basic grounding in what conditions needed to be met before opening a new business. One group of participants interviewed the business people. The group members came from varying sectors ranging over a number of products like a Döner Kebab producer, shops selling herbs, spices, handicrafts and brides products; and a number of services, as there was an owner of an African restaurant, who combines cultural events with good meals; a business woman providing an inter-cultural and intergenerational care-service for the elderly and the handicapped; a group of young men from different cultural backgrounds who organize Rap-dance sessions, and the owner of a laundry. In interviewing them the participants tried to find out:

- what specific element in their cultural background supported their original idea and its realization;
- how and with whom did they develop their business strategies;
- how did they avoid the pitfalls?

The interviews provided the young adults with the opportunity to reflect on their own professional conduct in a cultural and social context and to become more aware of their own skills. The business people answered questions about their past life and their professional career. Their 'philosophy' reflected their background in terms of culture-specific know-how, basic economic skills and new marketing strategies.

⁴ The SOS Children's Village in Berlin has been in existence for six years. The Voluntary Social Training Year project is directed in particular at young people who have dropped out of school.



1. Opening of the exhibition: SOS Children's village in the building Berlin. Photograph Wojak



2. Talk show held during the opening of the exhibition. Photograph Wojak

Practical results

One group was responsible for documenting the interviews for the exhibition, using video-recordings and objects to complement the texts. Another group was responsible for organizing the public opening of the exhibition, which involved a talk-show with some of the business people as guests. (fig. 1-2) One group organised its own company, empowered by the interviews with the business people (a bicycle repair workshop), they started selling their first products at the opening of the exhibition.⁵

The exhibition in the presentation area of SOS Kinderdorp gave information about the business people and their products, a presentation about the whole project and the consequences for the participants. Local authority officials, along with representatives

⁵ The strategies they learned from the interviews: avoid financial risks, use your resources and skills, and 'don't bite off more than you can chew'.

from the economic sector, professional training sector, adult education, the arts council and some of the business people participated in the opening of the exhibition. The exhibition could be seen for two weeks after the opening. The documentation from the interviews and the biographical information on the business people has been added to the archives of the Regional Museum Redding. The objects donated by the business people have also been included in the museum's collection.

Cultural work can and should contribute to reflection

The lack of communication in present-day society, changes on a global level as well as in local communities, and too little knowledge about each other means that it is difficult to know what the knowledge-base and mental attitude of youngsters is likely to be. This must be taken into account when developing a didactic programme.

The positive learning experience for the participants from the educational institutions was emphasized in the evaluations. Learning within one's social surroundings was associated with the widening of one's horizons. The experience of migration was felt to be positive: 'I am not rejected because of it, it is more that I can use it in outlining strategies. Within my social environment I can position myself positively and I feel that I am accepted.' People's own social surroundings and areas of competence were experienced positively through cultural programmes because they were linked to the learning context and could be associated with a professional concept. The coming together of knowledge about one's own country and the general knowledge embedded within the context of personal experience and education played a central role.

The young people came into contact with the workings of the market. They could identify their own interests, skills and concerns and learned how to get support for them. Due to the public presentation of their project they also came into contact with local people and local authorities, who had a responsibility towards them as well. They showed more interest in their own family history, for they saw a relation between this and their living conditions in Berlin.

The business people were highly motivated, and were also keen on partnering up with the museum in the future, and in collecting details of their life-stories as business professionals and their special expertise. By showing such commitment they demonstrated that they wanted to become a part of the social memory of the city.

The project was successful in bringing people of different cultural origins from the Central Berlin area into a productive relationship with themselves and with various social layers. Using their cultural and social competencies, their personal experience and educational background as a basis, they played their part as active urban residents, who have contributed and who will continue to contribute to their own history and present-day culture. Cultural diversity was applied to their own lives and was experienced as a boon. The museum obtained reference points for the intercultural orientation of its work and was able to gain the status of being a competent contact institution.

New ways and networks were found, to make 'cultural diversity' part of a public dialogue and to promote productive relations between people, local institutions and the museum. This form of cooperation between professional training schools, local people and the local business community led to new links being forged. This was a new way of collecting and communicating the different histories and competences in an intercultural setting, with 'Berliners' as the central focus, as they form part of the city's history and future. The first steps have been taken to incorporate these experiences into a more far-reaching international project.

Discussion

Chair: Marie-Paul Jungblut

Curator Historical Museum of the City of Luxembourg

A very interesting discussion arose about the primary task of a museum: is the type of museum work presented in both case studies really what a museum should be doing? What are the role and function of museums? Should museums take a leading role or just be one of the partners.

Some remarks from the discussion:

The museum is a public space, where the cultural heritage of all inhabitants is cherished. It is a very useful place for inter-religious dialogue because it is not associated with one religion, but is civic.

Some participants called the activities that Rita Klages talked about 'social work', implying that this is not what the museum should be doing. What if people come with real problems, like lack of housing, or papers, how can we help them? A response to this remark was that empowerment through culture is not the same as social work. It is a form of strengthening and education of citizens. Collecting the cultural heritage of citizens of all sorts (genders, ethnicities, social backgrounds etc) is part of the museum's job. Creative partnerships with several organizations in the city can make this work. If the museum is going to be a place of dialogue then it has to be a place where people meet.

This does have consequences for the skills of the museum staff. **This kind of work** demands new skills, so does the museum have staff with the right qualifications? What training do you give your teams? **Be sure to work with partners from outside the institutions.**

It also has consequences for the Performance Indicators. Traditionally these are visitor numbers, the number of items bought, number of publications, press coverage etc. What were the results in Zoetermeer? Very good press coverage as well as continuing cooperation with the local newspaper. More than 3000 visitors (in this very small museum) and, above all, an audience that now feels connected with the museum. The Muslim women have regular meetings on Sundays and many of Zoetermeer's residents now also regard the museum as their community centre. The interfaith groups still exist.

It also means that museums should take citizens seriously by buying objects from them, just as the museum does from artists.

There was no consensus about many topics, but one conclusion was shared: we are capable of activating the city. The aim of all this is to lower the threshold that museums still have. In other words, it is time to give every citizen **ACCESS** to these places.

In the plenary discussion afterwards, a nice snappy sentence came up that summarizes the two presentations of this workshop: the visitor can become the curator.

Towards new target groups

Refugees and businessmen in Copenhagen

Joergen Selmer
Director of the Museum of Copenhagen

A new mission statement

The Museum of Copenhagen is owned by the Municipality of Copenhagen and run on the basis of 4-year contracts between the museum and the municipality. For the latter it is very important that all the activities are seen from the point of view of the residents. Old cultural institutions like libraries, archives and museums do not have the right to exist just because they have always been there, have great collections and are useful for professional research work. All our activities and everything included in our budget must be accounted for from the point of view of how useful it will be for the residents. To illustrate: if we want a sum of money to digitalise our collection of pictures, the work must be done in such a way so that everyone will be inspired to use the new database, not just the professionals – and that is not a bad thing. If, in addition to this, the digitalisation process takes into account special needs, like easy access for children or immigrants, then it scores even higher. This approach has opened the eyes of the museum staff. Only 50.000 of the 1,5 million citizens of Copenhagen go to the city museum every year. The politicians are not complaining about this number, but the museum has greater ambitions. We want to reach more people, and our experience has shown us that even when we organize new exhibitions we cannot increase the numbers of visitors.

For many years we, like many other city museums, have been successful in reaching school children and cultured middle-aged residents, but we would like a broader range of the public to use our services, and this means we want them to do more than just visit the museum building itself. This broader focus is aimed at fulfilling our new mission statement formulated in 2005 which states: 'The Museum of Copenhagen must participate in the strengthening of the individual citizen's and groups of citizen's sense of identity – and thus enhance the development of a feeling of 'belonging together' in the city.' What this means more specifically is found in the mission statement in the contract, which says that we must:

- Use the museum for the integration of newcomers to the city: That includes everyone from refugees from non-Western countries to newly-employed clerks at the town hall.
- Develop the museum through partnerships with commercial companies and develop a museum service for these commercial companies parallel to our school services.
- Move the museum's story-telling from the museum building out into the streets. Take it where the people are.
- Make our collections, research work and story-telling accessible on the Internet in cooperation with other museums and with the city's libraries and archives.

New projects and contacts

Many of our activities in the last 5 years have fit in very well with our new vision statement, and this has inspired us to formulate the statement the way it reads now. But we still have a long way to go. I will mention some of the concrete activities moving in this direction: We are now telling the history of the city from a multicultural point of view by means of special guided-tours and audio-guides to our permanent galleries. Although the exhibitions are not created from that point of view, we have superimposed this additional angle in the guided-tours to make them relevant to people with a non-European background. It means, for instance, that when dealing with that part of the exhibition that relates the life and political influence of the Copenhagen aristocracy in the 18th century, the audio-guide focuses on the fact that most of the items in the showcases are of foreign origin. Also that highly skilled craftsmen were brought to Copenhagen to create a magnificent city and beautiful interiors and that the highest status symbol among the aristocracy was a black servant. We also tell them that a portrait of the absolute monarch was on show everywhere, like it is in totalitarian states today and that the tradition of punishing people in public has many parallels around the world to day, and so on.

However, this approach to telling the multicultural story of Copenhagen proved to be problematic: we were using a much too academic approach and thus only reaching very few individuals, and not the ones that really needed to understand their new country. The teachers in the language schools for immigrants simply did not use the audio-guide.

We dealt with this by building three living-rooms in contemporary Copenhagen-style, decorated for celebrations: Christmas, Chanukah and Ramadan. The rooms were arranged by the museum staff with the help of a Muslim and a Jewish family. Children from multicultural schools come with their classes to see these displays and to talk about the content in simple language. It was a great success. In 2005 our educational department, together with The Workers Museum and The National Museum, developed programmes dealing with our democratic institutions and the welfare-state in a historic perspective and at the moment, in collaboration with 5 other museums and The Royal Theatre, we are developing close ties with the voluntary organizations that welcome foreign refugees when they arrive in Denmark. We have just published two small guide books to be used by the voluntary workers who visit our museum with refugees that cannot read. They point out specific objects and pictures that you can use to start a conversation about important issues in Danish history stretching back over the last 100 years, e.g. women's liberation, child welfare, democratic institutions, the role of the family etc. By discussing these issues at the museum, and many others, the refugees learn about some of the fundamental things in our society and it helps them to learn the language.

We find that the museums have an extremely important role to play in the integration of newcomers in our society, where cultural differences can make both local citizens and the newcomers feel more and more insecure. The tone in the debate in Denmark is becoming harder and harder, especially in the suburbs of Copenhagen, where in some areas the immigrants constitute the majority.

But we are also reaching out for new target groups in quite different directions. Private foundations supporting cultural life, and sponsorships, are well-known in Denmark, but there is no strong tradition of cooperation between museums and private companies. In collaboration with the museums in Copenhagen and the Confederation



1. Temporary archaeological exhibition in the open air on a central square in Copenhagen

of Danish Industries and the regional cultural administration we are now trying the change this. We are working on creating an Internet portal similar to the one that already exists for the service we provide for schools. Here, from summer 2006, it will be possible for commercial companies to get an overview of the services that museums can provide. This ranges from the possibility of hiring researchers to writing a company's history; to ordering a complete historic dinner in original historic surroundings; or to arranging a guided-tour for Chinese business partners at short notice etc.

Reaching new target-groups outside the museum walls is not new. For decades we have arranged guided walking-tours and bus-tours as well as guided-tours to archaeological excavations. But these activities have now been extended to include the setting-up of ad hoc 'installations' in the streets where historical research is going on, which are then left there for a few months. They may be connected to city planning or the preservation of historic buildings and city landscapes. Last autumn we put up an installation on one of the main city squares. It informed people about developments on this spot from the Viking age to the present day, illustrated by a reconstruction of the archaeological layers to be found here, and reconstruction drawings showing the square's architecture through the centuries. (fig. 1)

This summer footsteps printed on the pavement of central Copenhagen put in place by 'Golden Days in Copenhagen' showed the favourite routes of our fairytale writer Hans Christian Andersen and, on the buildings he visited along the way, we put up explanatory signs and referred people to 60 individual mobile telephone numbers providing more information about the actual spot they were standing.

On the Internet we cooperate with the Museum Council of Copenhagen and the Golden Days in Copenhagen festival secretariat. The City Museum is very keen to give both organizations new Internet access to the museum, which will be updated every day at: www.mik.dk. In cooperation with the city library and the city archives we are making our knowledge and collections accessible on the Internet through the portal: www.absalon.nu. This will be up and running in summer 2006. It has been named after the bishop that founded Copenhagen in the 12th century.

Some conclusions

I could illustrate our policy further, but I would prefer to conclude by sharing with you some of the problems you can expect to encounter when embarking upon this new system of reaching out to attract new target groups: There are numerous ideas, but never the funds to match. It means that we are jumping from project to project, trying this and that for a few months as a 'pilot project', that subsequently receives no permanent development grant.

To overcome this problem we have to cooperate with many partners; other museums, organisations, private funds, the municipality and the ministry of culture. This is not a bad development, but it takes a lot of time – so it necessitates working at the weekend and in the evening. The projects that I mentioned above will survive if funded in this way, but for the future we need to convince our politicians that changing and developing the cultural profile and museum profile of our city requires more long-term investment and long-term cooperation networks like our Golden Days Festival, (www.goldendays.dk). We are now trying to change it into a permanent secretariat for historic events to promote cooperation between the museums and organize different cultural activities in Copenhagen.

Finally, we also need to convince our own staff and our Board, that the success of the City Museum depends on all this kind of activity mentioned above; that institutional borders in the Internet age are no longer as important as they were in the past, and that the number of visitors walking through our front door is no longer the correct way to gauge the success of our activities nor our relevance to society. I think that this is the way things are moving, it will take time, but in future both residents and the museum staff will be far more aware of our history and there will be more contact between researchers and local people.

East Amsterdam, an outreach project

Mila Ernst

Head of Educational Department, Amsterdam Historical Museum

Introduction

The Amsterdam Historical Museum has a long tradition with regard to reaching new target groups. The Education Department regularly works, for example, with immigrants who are learning the Dutch language, has a variety of school programmes for children from the age of 4 to 18 years, and also provides information for ‘well-educated, somewhat older museum’ visitors and tourists.

From October 2003 to February 2004 the Amsterdam Historical Museum presented an exhibition called ‘East: an Amsterdam neighbourhood’. One of the most important objectives of the exhibition was to reach new target groups. It was very successful. I worked on this project with Lotte Bekker, a temporary member of the museum staff who had studied at the School for Social Work. It was the first time that the museum had worked on a project with someone from this background. Her contribution to developing certain educational elements of the exhibition was very important.

East: an Amsterdam neighbourhood (10 October 2003 – 29 February 2004)

The diversity of lifestyles in East Amsterdam was the reason why the Amsterdam Historical Museum chose this area for its first neighbourhood exhibition. Another reason was the fact that East Amsterdam was not an obvious choice – it’s not a very trendy neighbourhood to live in, nor is it well known to tourists like the old Jordaan area in the centre of the city. Moreover, the museum was keen to promote itself as a museum for the whole city. In organizing this exhibition the museum was also aiming to give a new boost to various policy areas, such as the target group policy mentioned above, educational policy, marketing & public relations policy, and current policy on collection building.

The East Amsterdam / Watergraafsmeer district

First a few facts and figures about the district which I shall refer to as ‘East Amsterdam’ or just ‘East’. The district consists of two main areas, East and Watergraafsmeer. It has a population of 60,000 people, which is about eight percent of the total population of the city. Thirty-six percent of the district’s residents come from an ethnic minority group, the largest groups being Turkish, Surinamese and Moroccan. Unemployment in East is relatively high. Housing varies greatly with the historic part of East Amsterdam comprising small, old houses built in the late 19th century. This is where most of the people from ethnic minority groups live. Another part of the area was mainly built between 1920 and 1940. The houses are larger and the population is older and mostly of Dutch origin. The social background of East’s residents is very diverse. It is a neighbourhood where only a few of the museum’s regular visitors live and where the museum is relatively unknown.

The most important question in this exhibition project was: as a major public institution in the heart of the city, what role can the museum play at neighbourhood level? How do you operate as a museum in such an area? The museum's educational department seized the opportunity presented by the exhibition to experiment with new ways of reaching different target groups. We did not only want to reach new groups but also establish a relationship and bond with them, a relationship which would not end with the exhibition. With this in mind, the museum developed a whole range of outreach activities in the form of sub-projects, which took place before the exhibition opened. This paper describes how we tackled these sub-projects and what the results were.

Participation: mission impossible?

Since it was the explicit objective of the museum to reach new target groups, the educational department started developing a plan to involve local residents in the exhibition more than two years before it actually opened – long before the curator started to draw up an exhibition concept. Our earlier experience with outreach and participation projects was invaluable in this. We received special funding for the new plans, making it possible to put our ideas into practice. Our most important aim was to increase the *participation* of East Amsterdam's residents and to involve them in the process of making the exhibition. We tried to achieve this by:

- setting up an effective network in the neighbourhood
- developing relations based on equality
- working in a question-oriented way.

This may sound like a normal way of going about things, but in our experience it is a very unorthodox method for museums. By consciously choosing this way of working, our plans were by definition not clear cut and predetermined when we started talks with our partners in East Amsterdam. There were two reasons for this: we felt that you first have to get to know one another better – if you are to develop plans together, and secondly our partner must benefit as much from the final results as we would. In this way we thought it would be possible to ascertain what the interests of the various potential partners in East were and how the objectives of the museum and the participants in East could best be translated into practical results. These of course had to be satisfactory for all the parties involved. It was a risky way of working, as our plans remained vague for quite a long time. Moreover, having deliberately chosen to cooperate on an equal basis, the museum did not have complete control over the final result. For us, as museum workers, it proved to be very scary. But with hindsight we have really learnt that this way of working together – truly working *together* – leads to far greater participation between the partners and hence to far greater success.

Different projects

We started several projects, which all had two characteristics in common. Firstly, a large part of the preparation and implementation of all the projects took place on location in the neighbourhood (fig. 1-3), followed by activities in the museum itself. This made us far more accessible to local people! Secondly, all the projects were set up in cooperation with welfare and community organizations, a very uncommon way for museums to work in the Netherlands. We collaborated, for example, with various immigrant organizations.



1



2



3

1. *The Stories Chair of the Memories of East project on location, with a local public figure*
2. *Volunteers with the Alderman for Culture at the opening of the 'Amsterdam's East End' exhibition (photo: Hogers, Ingel and Versluis – AHM)*
3. *Experienced volunteers teaching Moroccan women from East Amsterdam*

One of the projects was the Amsterdam Historical street museum. In cooperation with the *De Rode Loper*, a culture and art festival in East, 125 shopkeepers were asked if they would like to be involved in a 'street museum'. Museum staff showed them historical photos of the neighbourhood. They could each choose one photo which was then enlarged and displayed in their shop window with an explanation of why they had chosen that particular photo. This exhibition was held on location for three weeks during the *Rode Loper* festival. By using local shop windows we were hoping to make the museum visible to the people living in the neighbourhood. The impact was enormous and many residents learnt about the museum thanks to this street event.

Another project, mainly aimed at involving immigrant groups, was a very informal workshop organized by the museum about the significance of objects – a sort of 'learning from objects' for beginners. Fourteen selected groups attended this workshop including, Turkish and Moroccan women. The groups were asked to take objects that had a special significance for them when they went to the exhibition in the museum. These were displayed in the *Memory Square* at the exhibition. As the exhibition went on the showcases containing these objects (with an explanation by the owner) became fuller and fuller.

Memories of East Amsterdam, a prize winning project¹

Another very successful project we started was on storytelling. It resulted in the 'Memories of East Amsterdam' website (www.geheugenvanoost.nl, in Dutch only). People like telling their stories to the museum; it creates a feeling of involvement. Certainly for a neighbourhood exhibition it was important that the stories of the residents themselves were included. Every inhabitant of East Amsterdam has a story, no matter whether they are young or old, from the Netherlands or elsewhere. Even someone who has only lived there for one single day has a story to tell which contributes to a varied picture of the neighbourhood. We launched this project ten months before the exhibition opened. Ordinary residents from the district recorded their own personal histories and memories of their neighbourhood and in doing so became our ambassadors in their own network and in the East area. The idea was that our ambassadors would be able to come into contact with residents whom we could not easily reach and help spread information on the coming exhibition. The project was developed with *Neighbourhood Online*, an organization that gives computer courses to local residents in East. The following joint objectives were formulated: improving social cohesion and accessibility, increasing skills and helping people to become better acquainted with art and culture, as well as the history of Amsterdam. As the museum did not first prepare a detailed plan but developed the project with *Neighbourhood Online*, the joint objectives came about quite naturally. We still work together as *equal* partners today, even though we are relatively a much larger organization.

To implement the project we looked for volunteers who would like to collect the stories of East Amsterdam. Given our position as a city museum, these volunteers had to mirror the social and cultural diversity of the East area. To achieve this we tried to become involved in all kinds of networks in East – we attended coffee mornings for mothers at primary schools, went to organizations for the homeless, visited immigrant organizations, community centres and so on. We managed to form a fairly representative group of volunteers from different backgrounds. At a certain point we realized

¹ The project was nominated the best Dutch digital 'trapveld' project in 2003. Trapveld projects are projects in neighbourhood centres where people can learn about computers and computer programs.

there were hardly any young people in the group and therefore contacted a secondary school where we were able to recruit and train 25 pupils to be story collectors. Thanks to the stories they collected the younger generation is also represented on the site.

Two hundred stories

Ten months before the exhibition opened we started training the first group of volunteers. The first day we had 32 volunteers who, as our ambassadors, had already collected about 200 stories and illustrations. It was important that the volunteers decided which stories and pictures were interesting to collect. The museum did not interfere with this. It really is history as seen through the eyes of local residents. The stories cover the period from 1930 to the present day. They are about all kinds of themes like everyday irritations, feeling homesick for the countryside or a faraway place, playing on the street, Koran lessons, first communion, memories of shops in the past, World War II, going out for the evening, the arrival of immigrants or the stories of immigrants themselves. The stories are easy to identify with and that made the memories project one of the most successful parts of the exhibition.

Memory Square

The *Memories of East* website went online on 25 June 2003. At the exhibition itself, which opened to the public on 10 October 2003, members of the public could visit the website on *Memory Square* and add their own stories. Volunteers were available to assist anybody needing help every Wednesday and Sunday afternoon during the exhibition. Hence the concept of ambassadors could also be used in another way once the exhibition had opened. They were at the exhibition to inform visitors about the website and also invited them to tell their stories. They acted as hosts and ‘walking encyclopaedias’ for the entire exhibition and were in fact a living link between the museum and their local neighbourhood.

Results

The exhibition featuring East Amsterdam is now over but the *Geheugenvanoost* (Memories of East) website is still available – some of the story tellers just cannot stop. At the request of many local residents, the project was prolonged after the exhibition finished. Last year new volunteers joined the project. A couple of experienced volunteers set up new groups and gave training sessions themselves for Turkish and Moroccan women, helping them to overcome language problems when writing for the website. This enhanced the feeling of solidarity between the various communities and taught them to deal with different cultures.

The site has developed a life of its own and has become a virtual community for East Amsterdam residents. One of the volunteers said last year: ‘It’s like an oil slick, spreading out unchecked’. To date we have trained 95 volunteers and there are now about 640 stories on the site! In September last year the site was registering 333 hits a day, even more than during the exhibition.

Mission possible?

The aim of all the projects described here was to stimulate participation and involve local residents in the process of making an exhibition. Looking back we can conclude that we have been successful in this. The exhibition was well visited and a lot of people from East Amsterdam came to the museum, many for the first time. Moreover, we have

found a new approach to reaching new target groups. Our network still exists, almost two years after the exhibition finished. There is a lot of contact between social workers, volunteers, participants from different projects and the museum. It has taken a lot of time to establish this network but it has given us new roots in the city! This would not have been possible without additional funding and the contribution of additional temporary staff.

During the summer of 2005 we made an evaluation of the memories website. Our volunteers who had worked on the project said that they feel more involved in their own neighbourhood and more empowered, that they had learned new skills and met new people. The interaction between residents with different lifestyles was considered to be most valuable. Our volunteers used words like 'multicultural', 'modern', 'open' and 'friendly' to describe the museum in the evaluation.

We will continue working like this, also on other exhibitions. Our East experiment has given us new guidelines for the future.

Discussion

Chair: Sandra de Vries

Director Municipal Museum of Alkmaar

Sandra: we have been listening to two very lively and inspiring presentations about outreach projects and I advise anyone who is planning to start or is already in the middle of this kind of project to contact Joergen Selmer, the director of the Museum of Copenhagen and Mila Ernst, head of the Educational Department of the Amsterdam Historical Museum. They can give you a lot of information. The aim of both projects was to reach new target groups – in addition to the existing ones – such as immigrants but also the traditional inhabitants of the suburbs.

Some points from the case study presented by Joergen Selmer

- Focus on other people/groups than the traditional ones, for instance, refugees/immigrants, or work with them in the museum. An exhibition about Christmas and the celebrations of different ethnic groups was very successful. It was an interesting exhibition for schoolchildren to visit.
- The museum focuses on projects, not on permanent exhibitions. These are too expensive.
- Internet/website is being used in cooperation with other museums. Choosing an activity or interest automatically attracts the visitor to the right museum.
- There are contacts with the local business community and industries, in particular a partnership agreement with an energy company.
- Activities were developed on the streets for Hans Christian Andersen year. Footmarks on the street and signs (photographs) on buildings tell a story / give an explanation.
- Archaeological sites in cooperation with the municipality: history on the spot.

Conclusion: discrepancy is felt between the work and attitude in and outside the museum.

Discussion/questions: What happens to the collection when the company ceases to exist? Answer: they agreed that the collection should go to the museum. The cost of setting up the Internet site was financed by a private fund.

Some points from the case study presented by Mila Ernst

The original motivation for this project was to try a different method: to include people who never come to the museum. Different life styles and cultural diversity are the reason why this particular neighbourhood was chosen. The method of working was to get in touch with many different people. Contacts with social workers were crucial in this. People were asked: what objects are important to you when creating a 'collection' for a museum. As a consequence many local residents in East Amsterdam participated. Story telling, photographs, things from the past but also contemporary objects/stories.

Banners with the name of the Amsterdam Historical Museum were hung in the streets. All of a sudden the name of the museum meant something to residents. The final result was activities in and on the streets of East Amsterdam and residents participating in the museum itself by volunteering to tell visitors about the exhibition.

Conclusion

- After a while the project runs itself.
- The residents were very happy with the project and actively involved. Integration of different local groups.
- But in the long run it was hard to maintain support from within the museum owing to insufficient money.

Discussion/questions

Were most of the objects collected preserved? A: yes. What was the effect of this project on the museum as a whole? A: the museum has acquired new target groups. There was an impact on the educational department i.e. young people now know more about what the museum does. Was it difficult to get people involved? A: yes. It was very time consuming. Trainees from the school for Social Work were involved in the project.

General conclusions

The working group concluded that to succeed, you need:

- The Internet: to involve other museums and to inform people about the activities that are being organised.
- Partnerships (very important): Amsterdam evolved partnerships with social workers, for instance, and Copenhagen evolved partnership arrangements with industry.

Both museums literally went out of their buildings and onto the streets. The Amsterdam Historical Museum hung up banners with the name of the museum in the streets. Copenhagen put huge signs (photographs) on buildings and footmarks on the street to link several issues in their outside exhibition (including a very interesting archaeological display).

Both presentations led to some recommendations/conclusions:

1. You sometimes have to go through a process of trial and error, before your project succeeds. Don't be afraid of that.
2. Be aware of the fact that this kind of outreach project is very time consuming and money consuming.

It is also important to realise that this type of outreach process doesn't stop; it is ongoing, even after an exhibition has finished. This kind of project demands a change of mentality not only outside the museum, but also inside.

What kind of museum for the city of Beirut?

Carla Mardini

Museumist Association Museum of the Memories of Beirut¹

Introduction

The Lebanese civil war devastated Beirut and its suburbs. It lasted from 1975 to 1990. Thousands of people died and as many were injured. The war left the city in ruins, with badly damaged buildings and abandoned streets. Once the war ended the reconstruction process started. Since then, the Lebanese have ignored the recent past, mainly for political reasons, but also because they want to forget the atrocities that took place during the civil war, preferring to erase a very 'dark period' in Beirut's history from their memories.

Nowadays, there is a great need for Lebanese people to become reconciled with their past, to get to know their city. In fact, they have to 'reconcile with history', for by refusing to look back, they ignore the city's modern history. They must have to become more open to communication beyond the traditional boundaries of the different communities. The general attitude, however, seems to be to forget and to move on. But although some memories may be painful, being reminded of the past is not a pointless exercise, as some may think, but essential. The recall process, i.e. remembering, provides an opportunity for memories to be shared and common interests explored, thus strengthening people's sense of identity and belonging.

Some people are convinced that it is impossible to create a modern history museum in Beirut because of the complexity of its history and the delicate nature of so many of the subjects involved. It is clear that in a society composed of different powerful communities, presenting historical events in a set framework labelled 'The Truth is like this' would be impossible. So, what kind of city museum concept might be suitable for Beirut? How can a museum on the modern city's history encourage a dialogue between these communities, approach the delicate civil war period and play a role in presenting relevant issues in the daily life of the city? What role can the museum play in shaping a projection of the city's future?

War and reconstruction

There is no doubt that Beirut's history is both rich and complex. Modern Beirut started expanding into an important trading centre in the region in the 19th century. It became the capital of Mount Lebanon in the 1920s under the French mandate and was very prosperous between 1940 and 1970. During these 30 glorious years, Beirut was a liberal Arab city, offering all kind of entertainment and competing with the biggest European capitals. It was a meeting point for intellectuals, international artists and businessmen, and was the most appealing city in the Middle East for all Arabs. Beirut nowadays is considered to be a modern, Arab, westernized city that is full of contrasts.

¹ Email contact: carla.mardini@bmm-museum.org

The war in Lebanon began in 1975 for many reasons: regional conflicts, the Israeli occupation of the Arab territories in 1967, the PLO Palestinian fighters' implementation² on Lebanese ground, local politics, and social and economic tensions. Gradually, Beirut's central district became an open battlefield and the city got divided into East and West by the Green Line of demarcation. Self-sufficient sub-centres developed in different parts of the city, preventing civic interaction throughout Beirut. Around 150,000 people died, 100,000 were injured, and massive civic destruction occurred, without achieving anything. Officially the war ended in 1990. The bombing stopped, life in the city started to return to normal but actually the war was still present for several reasons. First of all, the national 'Taef agreement' aiming at national reconciliation only led to reconciliation between warlords. The latter allowed the promulgation of an Amnesty Law in 1991 that totally ignored the victims. They actually 'auto-amnestied' themselves without acknowledging their responsibility for the crimes they had committed. They continued governing and doing their business. Secondly, peace was achieved through the intervention of the Syrian forces. Lebanon was since then under the Syrians' tutelage and was run by a pro-Syrian government under the influence of the very powerful Syrian-Lebanese secret services. They suppressed freedom of speech and took advantage of the country's resources. The Lebanese-Syrian system was corrupt and it lasted for 15 years.

In the post-war period the Lebanese people preferred the state of amnesia. The war became a taboo subject in public, in order to avoid painful memories and generating aggressive discussions. What counted was to live for the present, to survive the economic crisis and try to build the future.

This state of amnesia was also reflected in Beirut's reconstruction's master plan, designed by Dar Al-Handasah³ in 1991. It seemed more like an urban *tabula rasa* in the heart of Beirut, preserving only some isolated parts of the city as well as the public buildings and the religious monuments. The idea behind this ambitious plan was to give a modern image to the city. At least this is how Rafik Hariri, the prime minister who supported the project financially, imagined it, with a world trade centre, an artificial island and a wide avenue longer than the Champs Elysées in Paris! With a view to realizing this project, a demolition campaign started in 1993. Later, a heated discussion arose between entitled beneficiary, powerful businessmen, architects and intellectuals on several issues including the heritage, public space, the *tabula rasa* principle, the cost of the project and the expropriation of owners. As a result of this discussion, Solidere, the real estate company for the Development and Reconstruction of Beirut Central District, made changes to the project so that more of the architectural and archaeological heritage would be preserved and giving more consideration to public space. Instead of preserving only 120 buildings as initially planned, Solidere saved 300 buildings and 35 per cent of developed land in the original city centre.

Half of Solidere's shares were given to all those who owned or leased property in the old centre in return for foregoing control of individual plots. The other shares were sold on the market. This social problem does of course exist elsewhere. Peter Davey⁴

2 In 1971, the Palestine Liberation Organization moved its base of operations to Lebanon.

3 Founded in 1956, Dar Al-Handasah Shair and Partners is a leading international consultancy specializing in architecture, engineering, planning and economics.

4 Davey, Peter. 'Potsdamer Platz – design and construction of town square in Berlin, Germany'. *Architectural Review, The*, Jan, 1999. http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m3575/is_1223_205/ai_54067552/pg_2



1. Star Square at the end of the civil war.
 Photograph: Ayman Traoui



2. Star Square after reconstruction.
 Photograph: Ayman Traoui

commented on the Potsdamer Platz in Berlin: ‘the housing will be available only to the fairly prosperous. Physically, the way in which the land has been sold has meant that it is impossible to achieve the dense lively texture of the old Potsdamer Platz, generated by numerous contiguous individual holdings and uses.’ (fig. 1 and 2)

It is clear that the Beirut Central District neither looks nor functions like it did before the war. How did the citizens experience this metamorphosis and what is done to link Beirut’s past with its present? People who used to know the centre, like the writer Hanan El Cheikh, described the reconstructed city centre as being ‘on the moon’. She sadly realizes that she lost her visual landmarks. Of course, people started gradually getting used to the new centre. It is the largest pedestrian area in Beirut where children can play, and parents shop in luxurious boutiques, and eat and drink in the new cafés and restaurants. Hopefully, the centre of Beirut will also develop a new soul.

Solidere is creating a Heritage Trail for pedestrians that will connect all the main archaeological sites, places of historic interest, monuments and heritage buildings that are an important part of Beirut’s history and located in the old historic centre and Conservation Area of Beirut. The trail will be marked by brass plates set in the pavement for visitors to follow. Along the trail, visitors will find three different kinds of Heritage Panels: General Panels for information on the urban sector, Site Panels for information on historical sites and Monument Panels for information on heritage buildings. This initiative will provide valuable information on the heritage sites in the central district, but if only pleasant stories are told in front of newly renovated monuments, won’t it be a conspiracy with amnesia?

Memories of Martyrs' Square and the role of art

At the end of the civil war in 1990, Robert Saliba⁵ carried out an interesting survey. He asked about eighty people, who were divided into age groups, to draw mental maps of Beirut city centre. The results show that the youngest interviewees (in the under 25 age group), who had not had much interaction with the city before the outbreak of the civil war in 1975, have an image of the city based on information provided by the media and their parent's accounts. 'Their mental maps of the city centre emerged as an empty space with two markers: the Place des Martyrs and al-Masarif Street (Banks' Street).' Interviewees over 45 years of age gave the most detailed mental maps. The youngest and the oldest age groups both supported the reconstruction of a new central district but for different reasons. It is clear from this that there is a void between these two generations. To create continuity, the heritage professionals can preserve the history of the centre along with its social history, by passing on memories from one generation to another, especially as not much has been saved physically and the city's features are changing.

Martyrs' Square used to be the heart of the city's public transport system, an extremely crowded open-air 'station' for buses and taxis. It was destroyed twice, first by the war and then during the reconstruction project. During the war it became a no-man's land, an empty space where no one dared to walk for fear of being killed by a sniper. When reconstructing Beirut, Solidere demolished everything on one side of the square to make it open to the sea. To fill the gap, Nada Sehnaoui⁶, a Lebanese artist who works on memory through art, created a public installation in 2003 called '*Fractions of Memory*'. (fig. 3) It aimed to **link** generations through memories and was located on what used to be Martyrs' Square in downtown Beirut. Through advertisements in the press and on the Internet, she circulated the following appeal for people to participate in the making of the installation: 'Do you have memories of daily life in downtown Beirut before the 1975 war? If you wish to share these memories with other people, please write about them on one or more pages of white paper, in the language of your choice, handwritten or typed, signed or anonymous, and send your contribution to the following address...' The installation consisted of 360 paper structures made from a total of 20 tons of newspaper. Many of these structures displayed what people had written in response to the appeal. Other structures remained blank – missing texts – representing lost memories.

It is clear that there is a need for an institution such as a museum to promote the city's modern history in a creative way and make it accessible and attractive to the public. It is this institution's duty to prove that history can create bonds, a sense of belonging, and give valuable information to visitors.

Towards a Beirut City History Museum

Unfortunately, we do not have city history museums in Lebanon. In Beirut we do have several archeological museums such as the Beirut National Museum, the American University Museum and the St Joseph University Museum.

As part of the master's course in museology at the Reinwardt Academy in Amsterdam, the academy organized a visit to the Amsterdam Historical Museum in 2002. I

5 Saliba, Robert. 'Deconstruction Beirut's reconstruction: 1990-2000. Coming to Terms with the Colonial Heritage'. An essay based on a public lecture presented at Darat al-Funun, Amman on April 19, 2000. <http://www.csbe.org/saliba/essay1.htm>

6 Nada Sehnaoui attended the conference and participated in the discussion after the lecture.



3. *'Fractions of Memory', installation by Nada Sehnaoui on Martyrs' Square, Beirut*

found it fascinating to learn about the city's development, monuments, events, people's lives and occupations, to visit the museum and have fun, to be engaged in interaction. It was the first time I'd visited a city history museum. While I was learning about Amsterdam in the museum, I found myself asking what I knew about Beirut's history. I belong to the generation born in 1975, who didn't know Beirut before the war; I realized that I totally ignore how Beirut developed into a city. Even its contemporary history is fragmented in my mind. At school we only learned Lebanon's history until 1943, the year of independence. Shortly after the Amsterdam Historical Museum visit, I decided to work out what kind of city history museum might suit Beirut. Two years later, in June 2004, I wrote my thesis: *'Beirut Memories Museum: a theoretical proposal for a modern history museum in Beirut'*.

It did not seem likely to me to talk about the Beirut Memories Museum (BMM) proposal in Lebanon because of the political situation back then. Unfortunately, a dramatic event had to happen to provoke change: the assassination of the Prime Minister, Rafik Hariri (1944-2005), on February 14th 2005 in the heart of Beirut. Thousands of Lebanese gathered in the Martyrs' Square on the day of his funeral.

On March 14th, one month after Hariri's assassination, one million people from all over Lebanon (a quarter of the total population) from all communities were united on Martyrs' Square, to claim national unity – Syrians out – accountability – the truth. And with the help of international pressure, the Syrians left. A new era had started. Although I was in Paris at that time, I was driven by the same enthusiasm. After a couple of months of discussions about the idea of the BMM with a group of French and Lebanese, the 'Musée des Mémoires de Beyrouth' Association was founded in July 9th 2005⁷. The aim of the association is to promote and realize the Beirut Memories

⁷ The Association's registration reference number '1560' appeared in the official French Republic journal of Paris N28, July 9 2005. The association's founders are: Omar Kanaan (Dr of Philosophy), Carla Mardini (Museologist), Jihan Safar (Dr of Economic-Demography) and Gil de Bizemont (Architect and Graphic Designer).

Museum project and support civic engagement, reconciliation and solidarity through knowledge of the past, present and future of Beirut's city and citizens.

The Beirut Memories Museum Concept

What kind of city museum concept might be suitable for Beirut? I believe that there is no place for a 'classical type' of city history museum in Beirut, in which a dominant group imposes its ideology or promotes a myth or an identity, like all national museums used to be conceived in the past. The eradication of diversity and pluralism to create a homogenous society in Lebanon will only strengthen the divisions. There are 17 institutionalized confessional communities⁸ that deal with civic issues and are politically involved in the government. However, a community is not necessarily homogenous. The confessional communities also include a variety of immigrants from Palestine, Armenia and Syria who have become part of the Lebanese 'social mosaic'. For this reason the museum must find an approach that takes into consideration the complexity of Beirut's history and its social diversity.

The museum will cover the history of Beirut from 1830⁹ to the present day presenting '**The city**' and '**The people**' through different themes around Beirut's modernity. The concept of the museum is based on the following ideas and principles:

A democratic institution, open to all people and involving them

- The BMM will strive to be accessible to all citizens from all backgrounds and generations.
- The museum will provide visitors with different interpretations of history through memories and testimonies of Lebanese and non-Lebanese, providing a richness and diversity of points of view.
- It will take people's expectations of such a museum into consideration and will try to understand their way of communicating and their interests (for example through public research studies).
- People will be invited to participate actively in developing the museum's activities and not merely interact with the museum. (For instance, there will be an ideas laboratory in which visitors can participate – choosing exhibition themes, activities involving university students in research and creating exhibits etc.)

Present the city's history through people's stories

- The BMM deals with many memories. It represents the city in an objective, historical framework that supports people's memories and stories. In this way the BMM will offer visitors the chance of capturing the essence of the history of the city and discover interesting details through testimonies, previously untold stories, personal stories and experiences.
- The purpose is to bring the history closer to citizens. These testimonies hold emotional values as well, that might help the identification process and speak more to the visitors.

⁸ Of the 19 communities that exist, only 17 are institutionalized. The two communities that are not yet established are the Ismaelite and the non-sectarian communities.

⁹ 1830 is the date when Beirut begun to flourish because of the activity of her port and the creation at that time of steam engines for boats.

Use exhibition techniques to keep the visitor active and productive

- The BMM is not an object-focused museum. The objects are merely there to illustrate people's stories.
- The BMM wants to use techniques that will trigger visitors' curiosity, and prompt questions and doubts. Visitors will be invited to give their opinions, be creative and express themselves.

The social role of the museum

Encourage Civic Dialogue

- The BMM wants to develop communication between the city's different communities as a means of dissipating tension between them, encouraging them to get to know each other and share the same experience.
- Communities should be able to discover what they have in common as well as to learn to appreciate their differences. This might lead to the creation of a 'Libanity'¹⁰ that goes beyond political and religious affiliation.

Link generations

- The BMM will be 'a living memory'. It will constantly refresh old memories and record new ones from the present with the aim of connecting generations and creating a continuous city memory.

Provide civic education

- The Museum will be a tool to vehicle social behaviour values through civic and peace culture education programs that guide visitors to be better citizens and respect each others diversities.

Facilitate civic engagement and encourage initiatives

- The museum will have a Forum Hall – an area for conferences, debates and seminars on subjects relating to Beirut. **The museum will be a meeting point for active citizens who would like to make a change in cooperating with others who also strive to create a modern and successful city, regardless of political or confessional convictions.**

Freedom of speech

- The museum has to make itself known and respected as a hallmark of 'freedom of speech'. It is the museum's duty to tackle delicate and controversial issues.

The civil war presentation in the museum

The civil war is the most sensitive issue and I would therefore like to describe how the museum will approach it. The intention of the civil war presentation is not to judge the warlords or analyze the causalities of war; its ultimate objective is to show the effect of war on the city and its citizens' lives. It is essential to talk about war on a lower level, from the perspective of daily life, and to focus more on the consequences of war and what can we learn from it. Curators will aim to present the facts and not try to ignore the sensitive and unpleasant issues of the past. If this approach is not respected, it will lead to a conspiracy with amnesia to misguide the visitor.

¹⁰ A Lebanese identity.

Knowing that, Lebanese generally prefer the state of amnesia when it comes to remembering the civil war and realizing the importance of evoking the horrors of war as a lesson for post-war generation. Hence, the museum is most likely to deal with the war issue with the help of 'exemplary memory'¹¹ and providing peace culture. The 'exemplary memory' encourages the dynamic of exchange and encounter. It is about 're-negotiating' the tragedies, the pain and the old wounds through a respectful dialogue, the mutual will to listen to others and an empathic comprehension so that everyone is heard and the suffering of all is acknowledged.

The BMM will present the facts on the civil war and will give people from different backgrounds and nationalities an equal opportunity to give their point of view. Testimonies of people who were affected by the war atrocities will be presented. The museum will also show how the Lebanese survived this period, how they adapted to the situation, their hopes, their atypical experiences and absurd moments of happiness. The museum will also dedicate a room to Peace in which the visitor will learn about his duties as an individual to protect peace through his individual daily life civic behaviour.

Conclusion

Many changes have occurred in Beirut; the city is searching for stability as well as developing an image and a role in the region. It needs a dynamic institution that absorbs its history's complexity, respects its citizens' diversity and guides the city's changes. The Beirut Memories Museum will therefore be more than just a museum on the modern history of Beirut and its citizens; it will be an institution that serves society through history. The BMM believes that it is only by educating future generations and by providing reliable information that it can hope to provoke change. The museum project is still in the very early stages of development and for the time being, the Association is promoting the BMM to attract interest in Lebanon.

Meanwhile, the valuable testimonies of people who have witnessed events in Beirut since the 1920s must be recorded. It is essential to start interviewing these people and compiling an invaluable oral history collection, which includes detailed information on daily life in the city. A museological discourse in the form of a round table of Lebanese intellectuals and professionals in this field must also be organized.

I would like to end by paying tribute to Samir Kassir (1960-2005), a Lebanese journalist, historian and professor of political science at St Joseph University in Beirut. He was killed on June 2nd 2005, when an explosive was put under his car seat. He wrote in his book dedicated to Beirut's history¹² 'Beyrouth est plurielle...plurielle n'est point indéfinissable' – Beirut is plural ...Plural is by no means indefinable.

11 Dubois, Christophe. *La survie libanaise ou l'expérience de la différence : un nécessaire élan vers l'harmonie multiconfessionnelle*. Brussels : PIE Lang, 2002. p.90-93

12 Kassir, Samir. *Histoire de Beyrouth*. Ed. Fayard, 2003.

The museum of Gadagne, a museum with many partners

Simone Blazy

Director Museum Gadagne, Lyon

Gadagne Museum is the historical museum of the city of Lyon, housed in an impressive Renaissance building in the old city centre. The museum opened its doors to the public in 1921. In 1950 the international puppet museum became part of the Gadagne Museum too. A major project for the restoration of the buildings and the restructuring of the museum was launched in 1998. One of its aims is to broaden the scope of the historical museum so that it can meet new urban challenges head on.

An important aspect of our new museological policy is to make the museum more user-friendly and more attractive to a wider audience. We intend to go about this in several different ways. There will be new services like workshop-spaces, a small theatre, a café and a shop across the road. We also want to provide the visitor with information on the urban and social context of the history of the city by means of an audiovisual sound show, offering visitors an introduction to the museum. This introduction will involve walking around outside as well as inside so for this reason we are working with engineers to make an audio-guide that can be listened to in the museum as well as on the street. This 'inside-outside' approach is part of our designated strategy that will be expressed in many different ways. For this case study I want to focus on some of the projects and activities that have originated from the museum's 25 partners in the city. These partnerships are of special interest at the moment because the museum is closed for renovation. It is for us an important way to stimulate interest in heritage and in the history of Lyons and also to help citizens to take an active approach towards collecting and presenting their own history.

Webzine Visaville (www.visaville.net)

As the relation between the history shown inside the museum and the heritage one can find outside it is one of the cornerstones of our museum's strategy, we organise all kinds of tours of the city. These tours may also be virtual. An interesting example of this type of tour can be found on the Visaville website. (fig. 1) The central theme of Visaville is the discovery of our urban heritage, including the in-pit of children in the 9-13-year-old age-group. In 2000 a partnership was started between the Gadagne Museum and the society In-phase, which is specialised in audio-visual projects. Research was carried out together with the children on several theme's connected with the urban heritage of the city. When they have finished they communicate what they have learned in Visaville, a three-monthly webzine especially for children. This year, for Internet day, they created a virtual game which guided Internet visitors all over the town. 2000 people (children on their own or children with their class or family) joined in during the first week. Prizes were given during a party organised at the social centre



1. Homepage of the webzine VISAville

of Monplaisir. In projects like this the Gadagne Museum with its museum collections functions as an information centre. It also organises the workshops and cultural activities the children need for their research.

The musical heritage of La Guillotière

A second example of how Gadagne Museum works on its urban heritage in partnership with others is by way of a notebook on the different squares in the district of La Guillotière. It was here that the immigrants used to arrive in the past, and it still is a very multicultural setting. During a specially organised music day fourteen groups of musicians played music in these squares from musical scores which had been collected by the Centre des Musiques Traditionnelles (Traditional Music Centre). The notebook also explained the origins of the different types of music which entered Lyon when immigrants from different regions of the world arrived. In this case, I think the museum has succeeded in making the inhabitants of La Guillotière more aware of their past and of their cultural and material heritage. The music day was also the occasion when all eleven associations (Comité des Habitants du Quartier Moncey; Awal; Capoeira Senzala; Contresens; Coup de Pouce Relais; Defkalyon; Espace Culturel Mésopotamie; Les Inattendus; Noao; Les Chinois d’Outremer and Choros) in this area worked together. Holding the event at this location was quite a challenge because people living there are not very willing to mix and find it difficult to work together on a joint project. Actually the music day was a success so the museum and its partners were extremely proud of what they had achieved.

This joint project should be viewed in a broader context, as last year the museum and several other cultural institutions signed an agreement of intent on cultural co-operation with the city council. This targets particular areas of the city with difficult economic and social problems. The guiding principle behind the agreement is to take care

of the varied needs of the city inhabitants no matter where they come from, and to offer help to those who need it. It aims at creating a new dialogue between different actors in the city. In the text of the agreement Gadagne Museum is described as a reference facility for providing information on Lyons' history, a museum which can play a central and connecting role in the history and heritage of Lyons. It is also seen as a key to the identity of the town, a scientific research centre and a place connecting associations and organisations spread all over the city working on heritage and identity. The museum is expected to provide the methodology and resources to help people to retrieve memories and to tell their life stories, as well as producing special documents and taking specific action to emphasise the shared history common to all. The museum will be working on this joint project over the next five years.

Discussion

Chair: Rosmarie Beier-de Haan¹
Curator German Historical Museum

Question: The following question was asked with regard to the impressive artistic work on memory created by the young Lebanese artist Nada Sehnaoui: in this country where history doesn't exist in schools and in public discussion, can one say that art turned into an alternative for history in museums? Is it possible that art can do more for society than museums?

Answer: Mrs. Sehnaoui stated that museums are also necessary but that art can sometimes break through a country's amnesia. The artwork was made to unite and to break open the discussion. It was an opportunity for everybody to tell their stories of the past. Museums can do this as well.

Question: In a country where people prefer not to look back and politics neglect the past, how do you negotiate the tension between wanting to create (a city history museum) and wanting to forget (the past)? What strategies do you use?

Answer: Carla Mardini answered this question by stating that it is like a riot about what people want. The confrontation between politics and public will be there, but the reaction of the public can not be neglected any longer.

Question: In the museum a lot of attention will be paid to peoples' memories. Are history and memory not too hard to reconcile?

Answer: It will be a museum of the history of Beirut and the war is part of it, but not the only topic. Much space will thus be devoted to other history as well. But memories are what the public wants and needs now. Maybe later a more traditional form of history will work for the people in Beirut but not yet.

Question: What is the role of the visitor?

Answer: The visitor in the museum can be seen as the historian or even as the curator. Because of their role in reconciling other people's memories they must decide for themselves what kind of history they get out of the stories and memories. The visitor is trying to understand and make an analysis of what history he wants for himself. In Lebanon many communities live together. You must not want to tell the Shiite history, the Soenit history and so on; you must tell the citizens' history.

Question: The chair states that it is important for the curator to make a self definition. What is your standpoint, what are your aims and what are your differences with others. The question to be asked here is: can museums really create a forum? How can a museum make choices in a complicated situation?

¹ Owing to personal circumstances Ms Simone Blazy was unable to give her paper at the conference but it is included in these proceedings

Answer: We assume nowadays that there is civic space in museums but you can not take that for granted. The first step must be to create a museum. The museum in Beirut will make exhibitions but at the same time wants to prompt discourse. One of the main reasons is that Beirut and Lebanon are not as museum oriented as cities in Western Europe are. People in Beirut do not visit classical museums.

Question: Will you take into consideration people who left Lebanon years ago and can look back on it?

Answer: Especially people who left Lebanon can reflect on their homeland.

Question: How are you going to organise the quantity of space available for everyone? Must all groups be given the same amount of space?

Answer: This is a really problematic aspect. This must stem from what the people themselves want to contribute and input. If you know how they want to participate you can sort that out. Most important is that the opportunity is there!

The way to make the Lebanese people react will be by openness and boldness. In this way participation is possible. If a variety of people participate that is a good thing. Pluralism does not mean fragmentation; it is richness and diversity.

Creating a museum is Carla Mardini's way to open up history. The fact that Lebanon does not have a history of creating museums does not mean that the public rejects museums and their creation. Lebanese people are curious. Museums will be criticised but that will be helpful.

The museum is not a neutral space. It is itself an ideological space. The curator brings opinions and is an actor in the play. A museum is made for understanding, maybe even preventing some things happening again but judging is not their job. In saying this one must not forget that curators, in a way, always judge – by choosing what is presented in a museum and what will be kept unseen. But in the case of Beirut the curator will not leave out the darker parts of the past but present the full history.

Conclusions

- Museums are changing. Museums must be seen as part of the civic space and accordingly this must be open to public dialogue. The curator's role must change as well. The relationship between curator and visitor sometimes has to be redefined because the visitor can become the curator and the museum can become a forum where discussions take place. Pluralism (in representing different voices and opinions) does not mean fragmentation. It can mean richness instead.
- The general assumption that a museum just has to offer solutions to the public is a misconception, as a museum offers space, can make mistakes and learn from them. Openness and boldness will be the way to prompt reactions from the public. Participation must be possible.
- Curators and other museum professionals always make judgements and they must be aware of that. They make decisions, have a standpoint and make this part of the transparency of the museum. Self reflection and clear standpoints are essential for this transparency.

Addis Ababa Museum¹ as a centre of public discussion

Estifanos Admasu Jenberie

Head of Tourism Promotion, Addis Ababa Tourism Commission

The purpose of this article is to discuss some of the activities of the Addis Ababa Museum (fig. 1 and 2) aimed at creating a dynamic environment in which the city's residents can come together and discuss their history and daily life. The museum has already successfully made contact with various organizations, associations and other interested parties. In a country where there are recurrent economic, political and social problems, museums are responsible for creating a dynamic atmosphere to address these issues with a view to creating a better way of life. This paper also includes background information to give readers insight into the museum's collections and structure. Lastly, some problems are identified and possible solutions suggested.

Ethiopia

Firstly, I will give a brief description of the country of Ethiopia and of the city of Addis Ababa in particular. Ethiopia is located in the horn of Africa bordered by Sudan on the west, Somalia and Djibouti on the east, Eritrea on the north and Kenya on the south. The country covers an area of approximately 1.14 million square kilometres/444,000 square miles with a population of 77.4 million, growing at the rate of 2.4% per annum. The topography of the country features rugged mountains, flat-topped mountains, deep river canyons, rolling plains and lowlands. Ethiopia's great rift valley, which divides the country in two, is home to diverse fauna and flora, and has mountains, lakes, deserts and savannahs.

Ethiopia is 15 degrees north of the equator. Owing to the moderating influence of high altitude, it enjoys a pleasant temperate climate, with the average temperature rarely exceeding 20°C (68°F). In most of the highlands, rainfall occurs in two distinct seasons, the 'small rain' during February and March and the 'big rain' from June to September.

Ethiopia is one of the oldest nations in the world with an ancient culture and deep-rooted values. Visitors can appreciate centuries-old churches hewn from rock and the colourful ceremonies of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Islam also has strong roots in the country that go back many centuries. The population comprises about seventy-eight ethnic groups with their own customs, crafts, housing, and unique languages. There are eighty-three languages in total, with 200 dialects.

Addis Ababa

Addis Ababa was founded in 1886. Three years later the city became the capital of Ethiopia. The city has grown rapidly since World War II. Nowadays it is the political and commercial heart of the country with an estimated population of almost five mil-

¹ The museum was accountable to the Mayor of the city until 1993. From 1994 until the beginning of 2005, it was part of the Culture and Sport Bureau of the Addis Ababa City Administration. Currently, the museum reports to the Addis Ababa Tourism Commission.



1. Building of the Addis Ababa Museum
2. Exhibits of the Addis Ababa Museum

lion. Addis Ababa literally means new flower in Amharic, the official language of the country. Situated on the central plateau at an altitude of 2,400 metres, Addis Ababa is remarkable for its cultural and ethnic diversity and contrasts. The population of Addis Ababa is drawn from every corner of the country and foreigners residing in Ethiopia add to the diversity. Addis Ababa is also a city of contrasts architecturally. Modern buildings and wide boulevards are interspersed with historical churches and houses, palaces, monuments and museums.

The headquarters of international organizations, including the Africa Union (AU) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), are located in Addis Ababa. It is a major centre of diplomacy in Africa with more than seventy embassies and consular representatives. Connections to and from the city are good. It is linked to all the regional centres by a network of roads and is Ethiopia's major point of entry and departure by air. Telephone, telex, fax, Internet, and airmail services connect Addis Ababa with every part of the world. The city has excellent hotel facilities ranging from the luxurious Sheraton to a good number of mid-priced and budget accommodations.

Museums in Addis Ababa

More than eight museums are found in Addis Ababa, specializing in different aspects of the country's rich heritage. They are owned by the government, the Orthodox Church or privately. Objects of historical significance are kept in the museums of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, as the church is considered to be a safe place to preserve valuable items. Many of the exhibits represent the ecclesiastical wealth of the church and the collections include donations from Emperors and royal families, as well as the bodies of Emperor Menelik II², Empress Taitu and Empress Zewditu.

The concept of a museum was initially introduced in Ethiopia in 1944 when an exhibition of ceremonial costumes, donated by the royal family, and other objects was opened to the public for the first time.³ I will briefly describe three of the museums in Addis Ababa before I give more detailed information on the Addis Ababa Museum itself.

The National Museum of Ethiopia. In 1952 the Institute of Archaeology was established with the aim of promoting historical and archaeological research. Some of the archaeological finds were exhibited in 1955, and hence the archaeological museum was founded. In 1966 a National Museum was established to protect, preserve and exhibit antiquities. Nowadays this museum has different sections, such as the Palaeontological and Pre-historic section where a replica of Lucy, the 3.2 million-year-old hominids skeleton is displayed, the Historical Archaeology section, the Art Section where works of Ethiopian artists are displayed, and the Ethnographic Section with traditional and ceremonial costumes and jewellery representing the diverse cultures and numerous ethnic groups.

The Zoological Natural History Museum is dedicated to the rich Ethiopian wild life much of which is endemic. It was established by the Biology Department of Addis Ababa University in 1955 and houses 1100 species of animals.

² Menelik II (1844-1913) was Emperor of Ethiopia from 1889-1913. He was the founder of Addis Ababa in 1886 and made it the capital of his empire.

³ This was an initiative of French archaeologists. They collected 206 objects for the exhibition, which was held in the National Archive in Addis Ababa.

The Ethiopian Postal Museum has a collection of Ethiopian stamps dating from the early 1890s to the present day.

Addis Ababa Museum

The museum was once the residence of Ras Biru Wolde Gebriel, Minister of War in the time of Emperor Menelik II. He was one of the war leaders and went into exile with Emperor Haile Selassie during the Italian occupation from 1936 to 1941. This magnificent building is located on a hill with a commanding view of the city. Dating back to the 1920s, its dimensions and decorations make it one of the most fascinating old buildings of Addis Ababa. Its architectural beauty is attributed to Indian engineers.

The building is constructed of stone and mud. Several rooms have cloth ceilings. Rooms upstairs were used as bedrooms and the ground floor functioned as a hall and courtroom. After the death of Ras Biru, his daughters continued living in the house until 1971. During the DERG regime (1974-1991), the house was confiscated and used as a government office. In 1986, the Addis Ababa City Administration formed a committee to organize the centenary-anniversary celebrations of the founding of the city. The committee commissioned the establishment of a museum dedicated to the historical development of the city. It was also to include a department on the future plans for the city. The location of Ras Biru's house and its spacious facilities, which could accommodate the city's historical artifacts, made it an excellent choice as home to the museum. Exhibits were purchased and donated by individuals and institutions. The museum opened its doors to the public in 1986.

The Addis Ababa museum currently focuses on the historical, political, economical, social and architectural development of the city since it was founded in 1886. It was established with the following objectives:

- display the historical and cultural heritage to the public,
- record the historical, political, economic and social development of the city,
- support research by providing historical material and sources,
- study the cultural and historical heritage of the city in cooperation with research institutions.

Tour of the museum

Finfine Hall (the founding of the city)

Photographs showing the first settlements and other historical events and items related to the origin and development of Addis Ababa; pictures and costumes of Emperor Menelik and his wife Empress Taitu, the founders of the city.

Edget Hall (development of Addis Ababa)

Photographs of pioneer musicians, the first railway engine, the first hotel, the first telephone equipment and all the Ethiopian currencies, from the early days of salt bars to the present-day; photographs of the city's twenty-eight mayors, starting from 1892; gifts from regional governments on the occasion of the Addis Ababa centenary celebrations.

Adwa Hall

Adwa is the place where the Ethiopian army defeated the Italian colonial power in 1896. The Emperor fought a successful campaign and returned triumphantly to celebrate the victory in Addis Ababa. Weapons used during the battle, traditional military uniforms and costumes are exhibited in this hall.

Handicrafts Hall

A wide range of handicrafts including pottery, weaving, basketry, embroidery, and knitting.

Modern Art Hall

Major works of art, mainly sculptures and paintings, by contemporary Ethiopian artists.

Future Vision

Drawings, designs and models depicting the future vision of the capital city.

Art Gallery

Traditional handicrafts and souvenirs are for sale.

The cafeteria serves food and drinks. Visitors can enjoy a panoramic view of the city.

Major activities of the museum

Addis Ababa Museum provides information about the city to both local and foreign visitors. It is dedicated to informing people about the city's history and helping them to appreciate the process of civilization. Objects of historical, aesthetic and cultural importance are carefully exhibited with a view to educating the general public. Displays of plans and designs by the city administration give visitors a glimpse into Addis Ababa's future. With its cultural, historical and artistic treasures, the museum serves as a source of knowledge and understanding for researchers, scholars and specialists.

One of the missions of the museum is to inspire students to learn and to invite people of all ages, interests and backgrounds to share their experiences. With a view to attracting more visitors, the museum produces promotional materials for educational institutions and other organizations. The media, both public and private, give coverage to the museum with a view to publicizing its events and activities to the general public.

Much needs to be done to supplement the museum collections. The original exhibits acquired when the museum was founded are displayed for at least 20 years. Efforts are now in progress to develop the collections. There are plans for a room dedicated to the history of athletics to promote interest in the museum and it is actively cooperating with the athletics federation. The largest open-air market in Africa is located in Addis Ababa. It attracts people from a diversity of ethnic groups and cultures. The museum has acquired photos of historical significance from the Ethiopian Press Agency, which has exceptional collections.

Temporary exhibitions are also given space in the museum with a view to attracting a wider audience. The subjects of these exhibitions are related to the museum's objectives. Clean and Green Addis Ababa Society has an annual exhibition program aimed at promoting solutions to the poor sanitary conditions in the city. The photographic collection of Alfred Ilg, a Swiss technical advisor to Emperor Menelik who contributed greatly to the development of the city, is temporarily on display. UNICEF is also organizing a temporary art exhibition for one month entitled 'Youth Vision'. Addis Ababa Museum is therefore working on several projects that will contribute to producing a varied and multifarious exhibition and attract more visitors.

We believe volunteers are a great asset to the museum. At the moment the museum is establishing a Society of Addis Ababa Museum Friends. Ambassadors' wives, professionals in the museum sector and other volunteers, from both Ethiopia and abroad, with an interest in museums or the ability to coordinate funding and professionals will hopefully join the Society. The constitution of the Society has been drafted and submitted to the relevant government body for endorsement.

As one of its first activities, the Society is working on an exhibition titled *Addis Ababa-from Camp to Capital of Africa*. The exhibition tells the history of Addis Ababa through the medium of its historical buildings. Apart from depicting the economic, social and political history of Addis Ababa, visitors are given an opportunity to look into the future of the city. Children's drawings of their vision of the city in the future will be exhibited; mayors, past and present, and other popular figures will talk about what they would like Addis Ababa to become in the future. This is one way of making residents of Addis Ababa involved and concerned about their city.

The other major activity is the twinning of Addis Ababa Museum with the Museum of London. This could facilitate the acquisition of technical, material and other support from a modern, well-organized museum. Ad hoc committee members have been selected from the Addis Ababa Museum to realize the twinning project.

Some problems in the museum

The following are some of the problems identified that need support from funding organizations and volunteers.

- The museum is administered by one department of Addis Ababa Tourism Commission. It does not have its own budget and administration. This has a negative impact on the number of qualified staff and the museum's endeavors to play an active role in social change.
- To improve the quality of the museum it is essential to work on the professionalism of the staff. At the moment the museum staff has little or no professional training.
- Many activities and areas require funding:
 - restoration and modification of the building
 - audiovisual equipment and lighting
 - conference facilities and meeting rooms
 - expansion of the museum to provide temporary exhibition facilities
 - improvement to display techniques
 - publications
 - acquisition of objects/materials to enrich the museum collections
 - coordination of artists and other specialists to improve the building, the museum compound and display materials.

Possible solutions

If the museum is to make an important contribution to life in the city, it must be re-structured and allocated its own budget and administration under the close supervision of the municipal authorities. The museum will then be in a position to raise people's awareness of their role in the city's development.

Other solutions which could help the museum to achieve its goals include: sourcing funding from financial organizations, embassies, private companies and NGOs; establishing working relationships with museums in developed countries and museum associations; organizing volunteers to help provide material, professional and financial assistance to the museum; expanding and developing the Society of Addis Ababa Museum Friends; working with the media to publicize the museum and involve the community in activities; organizing forums where residents can discuss daily life in the city; short-term training programs to improve staff skills. Finally, ICMAH can consider the Addis Ababa Museum to be a suitable centre for experimenting with the role of city museums in a situation where economic and political problems prevail.

Museums as History Workshops

A case study from Skövde City Museum, Sweden

Curry Heimann

Director Skövde City Museum Sweden

Many Swedish museums have in recent years experienced a period of reconsidering their goals and the methods they use. Much has been due to fluctuating economic conditions but also a change in the expectations of the public. This paper is about a small city museum in Sweden, that during the last couple of years has been forced to rethink the whole purpose of the museum, everything that has been done, why and for whom. This process of change has resulted in a project named 'Skövde City Museum – a history workshop' and my paper will focus on this.

The museum structure in Sweden

Before discussing the 'history workshop' project, I will make some brief comments on the museum structure in Sweden. Museums are in general organized in a kind of museum hierarchy. Swedish museums, and I am now referring to official statistics from 2003 on 198 museums, can be divided into four groups. Museums with a nationwide remit in a special subject are often labelled 'central museums', all mainly government funded. This first category comprises 24 museums, for example the National Art Museum, the Museum of Natural History and the National Museum of History. Most of these are quite large institutions located in or near the capital city, Stockholm. A second group of 25 museums are called 'regional museums'. The county boundaries usually determine their working area. They normally have a very broad task mainly comprising cultural history and art. These museums are partly financed by the government but the main part of the funding is by the local county administration. The third and largest group of museums is made up of 70 small and medium-sized museums funded by local municipalities or communities. A fourth group consists of a mixture of different kinds of museums, including private and specialized museums.

How financial subsidies from the public sector are granted to the different categories of museums in Sweden varies greatly. In 2003 the 24 central museums shared more than 800 million Swedish kronor, whereas the 70 local museums received less than half of this sum. These figures tell us something about how Swedish cultural policy reinforces the regional imbalance in Sweden, where most of the institutions and financial and personnel resources are located in the vicinity of the capital. In 2003 there were 198 Swedish museums in the official statistics; 54 of them were located in Stockholm.

The huge variation makes it clear to me that we must specifically state the type of museum and its financial resources when we discuss the role of museums in contemporary society. This imbalance is reinforced by the fact that Sweden's population is spread out over a vast geographical area. Urbanization as a process of migration occurred later in Sweden than in most other western European countries. After the

Second World War it accelerated but Sweden still has only a few urban centres with more than 500,000 inhabitants.

In the late 1960s this particular situation did prompt the institution of 'Riksutställningar' (Swedish Travelling Exhibitions). The objective was to take exhibitions from Stockholm to the rest of the country. The ideological basis of this policy is deeply rooted in the movement of the Swedish Social-Democratic Party, which has been in favour of large-scale national solutions since the 1930s. A key idea in this ideology is to give equal opportunities to all people regardless of where they live, as well as a strong belief in national institutions and the role of cultural institutions as 'senders' in a communication process, which in many ways was only one directional. However, somewhat conversely, the ideology of the Social Democratic Party also includes a belief in local popular movements, which is how the party itself is organized. Different views on how society should be organized have created tensions and since the 1970s resulted in a public debate on the relations between local communities and the central power in Stockholm. This has also led to an on-going debate on the relations between central, regional and local public authorities in Sweden, a debate that has had great implications for the cultural sector in general and to museums in particular. Today there is still a strong belief in a centralized museum model with the implication that the cultural policy of the state has no responsibility for issues concerning local institutions.

Short history of the City Museum of Skövde

The City Museum of Skövde belongs to the category of local museums, which are almost completely subsidized by the local municipality. Skövde is located in the inland part of western Sweden, about 150 kilometres from Göteborg, the second largest city in the country. The city is a regional centre in a rural region characterized by farming and small towns. (fig. 1) It has a population of 50,000 and since the early 20th century has been dominated by military regiments and industrial plants. During the last 40 years the city of Skövde, like Sweden in general, has changed a great deal. The population has now increased from 10, 848 in 1932 to over 50,000 mainly due to migration from other parts of Sweden as well as from abroad. Today 15% originate from foreign countries, many from the former Yugoslavia and the Middle East region. Volvo is currently the largest employer with three factories making car and lorry engines, with a total of 5,000 employees. The establishment of a university college during the last decade has given the city a more lively, youthful atmosphere than before. The social and cultural life in Skövde has thus become more varied and mixed in many different ways in recent years.

The city museum was founded in 1924 by the local history association and in 1952 was made an official city museum administered by the city council. For more than 50 years it was a very traditional local museum on the history of the city and its folklore, located in the former 18th-century town hall. (fig. 2) Exhibitions were very traditional and the limited exhibition space (350 square metres) has made it impossible to display more than a very limited number of objects. Most of the objects collected were stored in other parts of the city and never put on display. The collection grew rapidly consisting of a wide variety of objects, both archaeological and historical, as well as paintings and photographs etc. The displays focused on various handicrafts and local history from before the industrial revolution in the late 19th century, and seldom changed. The displays were generally very simple and many people thought they were rather boring. This was one of the reasons why visitor numbers and support in general for the museum were



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1. Map showing the location of Skövde, Sweden.
2. The old Town Hall where the City Museum formerly was situated.

diminishing. Only a few people were interested in the museum. Visitors were mostly elderly and predominantly members of the local history association.

The museum was in many ways of course similar to numerous other small local museums in Sweden. It has always been a small museum with just a few members of staff with university degrees. During the 1960s there were only one or two staff members, often with a low level of education. The number of visitors was always between 7,000 and 10,000 a year, mostly local citizens of Swedish birth.

A new museum in the storage building

From the late 1960s there was growing dissatisfaction with the state of the museum. The local history association and others made proposals to enlarge the old building and to make it accessible to disabled people. But political support was lacking despite the founding of a society of museum friends in 1981 to support the proposal. In 2001 the city experienced an economic crisis that had severe consequences. The city museum was one of many institutions that had to economize drastically. The number of employees, at the time five, had to be cut and to reduce the rent, the cultural committee of the city decided to close the old museum building. All of the museum's work had to be concentrated in the storage building where all of the 40,000 objects were moved to in 1995. This building is located on a former industrial site on the outskirts of the town. When the museum moved out of the old building the director also left. We had to re-establish and reshape the entire museum; exhibitions, offices and archives were from then on all located in the former storage building.

This totally new situation necessitated discussions on the purpose of the museum. We had to start questioning what we were doing, why and for whom. These discussions resulted in 2004 in the project we called 'The museum as a history workshop'. A cultural foundation funded the development of the project in 2004-2006.

'The museum as a history workshop' – a project

The starting point for the project was an analysis of the role of the museum in contemporary local society. Both the museum staff and the board of the local history association found that the museum had failed to adjust to a changing society. As already mentioned new groups had moved to Skövde, both from other parts of Sweden and from abroad, including quite a few refugees. The whole identity of the city had changed by the end of the 20th century but the museum still only reflected what could be called the middle-class or bourgeoisie of the 19th century. The old museum building, the former city hall, was in itself a symbol of the old city life.

Moving out of the city centre to a former industrial building in a district that was becoming a popular shopping area gave us the idea of redesigning the museum on a commercially inspired model. This model made the exposition of the objects the main focus. Our financial resources were still very limited and we had to convert the storage building into a public space with no additional subsidies from the city council. It was only thanks to private funding that it was possible.

The history workshop has five major goals:

1. open up the collections and make them accessible to more people
2. allow visitors (school classes, study groups etc) to use the collections in their own projects
3. take a more active interest in starting dialogues with local people
4. hold more museum activities and exhibitions outside the museum building
5. make the museum reflect contemporary society rather than being a place of nostalgia.

None of these goals have been fully achieved yet. We consider them to be our strategy for the future, even though the first goal will be achieved soon and we are making progress on others.

Parts of the new museum opened in April 2005. (fig. 3) In the first phase, two exhibition halls and a new reception area with a cloakroom etc. opened. The major display is inspired by the old system but the objects are now more visible to visitors. After the



3. *Exhibition in the new Skövde City Museum*

opening we invited organizations, non-profit associations, schools and companies to the museum to start a dialogue and encourage new ways of using the museum collections. The groups invited were not picked on a representative basis or in a systematic way. Instead we made use of the opportunities open to us. Many times we have used temporary exhibitions as a way of creating interest in the museum. In one example we invited college students to collaborate with us on a design exhibition; their ideas were invaluable. We made contact with people working at the Volvo factory in another example, when we held an exhibition on the story of a single Volvo car from the 1960s. The aim of the exhibition was to show the role of cars in Swedish society and how people use cars as a way of expressing their own personal lifestyle. To this day we go out into

the community, attending various meetings of local organizations or special seminars, to discuss with people how the museum can be a platform for contact between different ethnic groups. More than 10 percent of the population in Skövde was born in another country. These people and their history are seldom seen in ordinary museum work. At the moment we have established good contacts with the local Muslim organization which has resulted in a minor exhibition at the museum.

We have put particular effort into reaching different groups of disabled people. The new museum is much more accessible. We also have a group of mental-health patients working in the museum which gives us a special opportunity to make the museum a meaningful place to them as well.

Our collections are our main resource. We are trying to make the best possible use of the new situation, converting a former storage building into a public space. Just walking around thousands of objects makes people interested in material culture as well as the lives of the people behind the objects. Showing people the 40,000 objects, the archives with 100,000 pictures and other documents is a good start to discussing how we can use these resources. During guided tours, the museum staff always try to develop this kind of dialogue. As a small museum with a staff of 8-10 people, we must find new ways of attracting ordinary citizens. We must have the courage to reorganize the collections and make objects more easily accessible to the public. This can be done in many ways, including using computers and audiovisual aids or in the design of exhibitions. Valuable or very delicate objects have to be protected but others can be used in a more active way by both the museum staff and the public. For example, we should let people touch and use the many industrially made objects from the 20th century, most of which are unlikely to be damaged.

During the last year the museum building has undergone renovations to suit its new purpose. At the time of writing this work is still in progress. Over the next couple of years three different rooms will be created from the 1800 square metres we have at our disposal. The first room, room A, will focus on the history of the city and also function as an introduction to the city and the museum. Room B will be used for temporary exhibitions and other activities. The third room (room C) is at the moment being rebuilt and will hopefully be finished during the coming year. This will house the archives as well as the majority of museum items and they will all be displayed in an accessible way to the public. The newly reorganized museum will facilitate more flexible and active use of the museum collections.

So, what have we achieved so far? The history workshop project means changing the role of the museum staff from being eager to teach what we consider to be essential knowledge in the museum, to one of a cooperative listening partner, working differently with different groups in society. This also means not trying to control everything and accepting that some objects will be lost or damaged. We must also accept that we sometimes will fail when we cooperate with groups who are not used to museums. Many people in the Skövde area have no experience in how to use museums. This is very often due to lack of education and the fact that few pupils make school visits to museums. This is in sharp contrast to the situation in the major cities of Sweden. By making the necessary changes in the local museum we will hopefully be an active partner in stimulating closer cooperation between schools and the museum. During the last year we have also started cooperative projects with homes for elderly people as well as with different organizations and companies.

Conclusions

In my article I have given some examples of how we have tried to follow our new principles. If we seriously want to make the city museum a centre of civic dialogue we must, in my opinion, invite people to create histories and comments on contemporary society by using the museum's collections and archives on their own premises. This must of course happen in such a way that secures the most valuable and historically unique objects for future generations. This judgement must be made by professional museum staff and nobody else. I am convinced that a reflexive dialogue with institutions like museums can empower people to make changes in their daily lives. First of all, however, we need to let them into our institutions and open up these institutions.

My aim in presenting this case study has been to discuss some of the problems, considerations and working methods we have encountered in trying to reshape a small rather sleepy museum. In recent years we have tried to create a museum that is open and flexible that can be used as a 'history workshop' tool. By questioning much of what has been done in the past at the museum (as well as our own working methods), we are looking for new ways of cooperating with people (individuals and organizations alike) outside our institution. I believe that we must redefine the role of the museum curator. We must put more effort into being a partner that listens and much less into trying to educate our audience. Like a librarian helping you to find the right literature, we can as museum workers be active partners in helping people make their own history out of the jungle of artefacts, pictures and various written sources found in the museum.

Discussion

Chair: Darryl McIntyre

Group Director of Public Programmes, Museum of London

Museums world-wide are undergoing enormous changes as they embark on major new development schemes, reposition themselves to respond better to the needs of the audiences and communities they serve, undertake pro-active civic engagement or in the case of some small city museums confront the prospect of closure because of financial issues or declining visitor numbers. One of the biggest challenges facing museums is that their collections and programmes must be part of a window for the contemporary world and deal with complex issues such as migration, cultural diversity and the dynamics of cities.

Museums can also play an important role in relation to regional development where historical collections and their contextual information can contribute to contemporary arts and cultural development. This is the case with the museum in Skövde, Sweden. Within the next four years the museum will move into a different historical building with a capital commitment for redevelopment. The museum will be much more integrated with regional tourism. The Skövde Museum and staff have risen to these challenges by examining the role of museums as cultural communicators. It is important to be actively involved with documenting, interpreting and communicating the communities' histories as a partnership. It is interesting that working together with different local communities within the museum is also a dialogue.

Regeneration, renewal and changing urban demographics also present new opportunities for museums. The geographical and demographic changes in Bristol have been challenging for the organization of their city museum. They have responded by now working directly out of communities and joining with cultural facilities to progress this. In the near future Rotterdam will be a city where 60 percent of the population will be non-Dutch. The city's museums must respond to this new dynamic. How will they present the city and its changing population in the future and how will they tell the histories of the previous generations as well as the present day. Rotterdam has adopted the use of a mobile curator. They tell the stories of the people in combination with the local community and they present this to the new audiences. They try to encourage visits by the local communities to museums through educational programmes and heritage programmes.

The Museum of London operates in a similar way. In the case of recent refugees, the Museum has embarked on a project with four community-based museums to explore cultural maintenance - what particular refugee communities value and maintain and pass on to their children. They believe that communities can play a positive role in museums and try to work together. The staff needs training in cross-cultural developments to work with the communities. It is important to work on sustaining these relationships in order to build on their trust and to be able to make the cultural translation. All the participants agree on this and they believe it takes ten years to build and nurture these community partnerships.

As a museum you need to make choices and you need to focus on certain target groups. Museums cannot establish strong, creative partnerships with every community (however defined) in a city. Sometimes you have to be poor to invent something and to see what you have. In Bruges there are 15 museums, and each museum has its own community focus.

We have a responsibility for museums to be pro-active in civic engagement and to be audience focused and responsive. In Liverpool they make use of active community partnerships. This does present changes and to maintain the involvement of the community is a challenge. It is about testing and finding the right balance. You need to question how people want to use certain spaces; for dialogue, to learn, to relax.

The issues confronting the Addis Ababa city museum present an alternative case study. The 'baggage' that western museums carry intellectually can be a burden. Museums should take a step back sometimes and define what they are and for whom they are there.

Conclusions

- Museums are rethinking their role of who they are, and how they can enroll communities.
- Museums are often forced to do so because they are in crisis.
- Moving away from traditional ways, museums become more audience focused. So we have to understand who our audiences are.
- Museums need to rethink how to engage new audiences and how to use collections.
- Museums engage with people across the city and facilities to cooperate with the community.
- Cities are changing demographically as are national populations. It takes years to build up relations with the culturally diverse communities.
- The role of the museum curators and staff is changing in response to public engagement.

Representing the city

Every city evokes images. Inhabitants all have their own mental picture of the city. Tourist services often bombard tourists with specific, carefully chosen images. Tourists have seen the city on television and read books. Some images of the city are pleasant and socially acceptable, but other images refer to the darker, less pleasant aspects of the city. Cities also use images when competing with other cities for tourists, as well as for new businesses and economic activities etc. of new inhabitants. Is it possible to make a general analysis of how these images are chosen and of the role city museums play in this?

Questions

- Tourist boards choose specific images of the city for their promotional activities. Is there any contact with city museums, do the museums participate in this? What similarities and differences are there between the images tourist boards choose and those manifested in city museums?
- Is it possible or desirable for city museums to aim to make an active contribution to dismantling specific stereotypes that the museum considers to be undesirable or incorrect? Can they try to contribute to forming new stereotypes?
- In some cities a so-called 'heritage centre' informs tourists about the city. What should be the relationship between city museums and this type of activity?

The City – A Wondrous Place?

David Fleming

Director National Museums Liverpool

Introduction

Ten years ago I wrote the following with a degree of optimism:

‘Museums and urban history have, until relatively recently, not mixed at all well. There may be many things museums have failed to achieve in their various societies, but their failure to enlighten people about the nature of urban communities, historic or contemporary, has been of heroic proportions. Analysis of those communities has rarely been better than superficial, as curators world-wide, prisoners of their own cultural origins, have either simply shown little interest to start with, or have allowed themselves to be overwhelmed by the sheer scale of towns and cities, especially in the industrial and post-industrial eras.

A natural, albeit safe and conservative, preoccupation with object-based material culture, but at the expense of dangerous people-based historical themes, has fomented this narrow approach. In particular, it has tended to exclude all but a minority of towns-people from museum interpretation, producing exhibitions and programmes where the technology, design and aesthetics of largely unrepresentative objects has clear primacy over social history, and where there has been too little attention paid to the realities of urban culture. The rise and rise of local, social and, ultimately, urban history has, though, begun to have a profound effect on museums, and one has a distinct feeling that city museums are finally about to come into their own.’¹

In this article I shall focus in on how city history museums represent cities and try to see whether, 10 years later, we are making the progress I thought I sensed back in 1995. Since that time the role of museums in urban regeneration has become more prominent, and their role in helping promote cities as tourist destinations has grown. In some ways this promotional value does not sit easily alongside the need for museums to portray cities in all their diversity and complexity, and so we may find city history museums being pulled in different directions. This can be a serious matter if funding bodies, or even ordinary citizens, decide that they want a museum which generates a positive image of a city rather than one which dwells upon the more unpalatable aspects of a city’s history.

I shall begin by casting my mind back to the 1970s, when I was a postgraduate urban history student, first becoming aware of the shortcomings of city museums. Urban history was then still a relatively obscure academic discipline. My only experience of city museums up until that point was limited. Leeds City Museum in my hometown contained many things, but was not at all concerned with the city itself, except incidentally – I remember a giant spider which had been found in Leeds market. That such a monster might be found in Leeds was about all I learned about the city. It is certainly

¹ Fleming, David, ‘Making City Histories’ in Gaynor Kavanagh (ed), *Making Histories in Museums*, Leicester 1996.

all I remember. Leeds also boasted Abbey House Museum, which contained a reconstructed old street of shops and some toys, none of which looked like anything I had ever seen. Nothing in the museum evoked the hard, gritty life which I was familiar with in this Northern industrial city, and instead it created an image of Leeds that was polite and nostalgic. Because I was studying and researching urban history, this struck me not only as unsatisfactory, but as a positively outrageous neglect of the realities of urban life.

Early in my museum career, in 1983-5, I worked in Leeds Museums, scene of my childhood museum visits. Abbey House Museum had changed not one bit in 20 years and still had the same old shops and toys. Leeds City Museum had moved building, but it still had nothing in it about Leeds. A new museum had appeared though: Armley Mills Industrial Museum actually had the makings of a true urban history museum in that, while it concentrated on industry and technology, there were glimpses of the real people who worked in the Leeds textile factories.

By this time in the UK, social history was becoming a respectable new discipline in museums. New thinking from younger people, from more diverse backgrounds, and with a broader academic training, meant that museum attitudes towards history began to shift. Social and urban history began to rise up the agenda as academically qualified social and urban historians began to rise in the museum profession. And so we saw new approaches to city history. Instead of being satisfied with eclectic displays of memorabilia, purporting to represent the history of cities, such as I had seen in Abbey House Museum as a child and as a young adult, curators began to delve deeper, to use sources other than unrepresentative collections to get at the **people** who are at the core of all social history museums. They moved away from just exhibiting **objects**, and began telling **stories**. Thus, true urban history arrived in museums, and the city history museum began its climb from obscurity.

A people-based approach

My own efforts in this field began in the mid-1980s in the city of Hull, where our team created The Old Grammar School museum in a 16th century schoolhouse. Originally envisaged by others as a museum of education, this project delivered a people's history of Hull in three dimensions. It was during this project that I realised how exceedingly difficult it is to create effective historical exhibitions about cities. Once our ambitions soar any higher than displaying objects in either a chronological or thematic sequence, we enter a cosmos of complexity, where no story is easily told, where no theme runs straight and true, and where existing museum collections prove to be at best inadequate, and at worst, downright misleading. This is, of course, because we face a basically impossible task – that of capturing the essence, the soul of a city, and representing in a virtual, artificial way, the city in all its contradictions and contrast, as it shifts and reshapes over the centuries, peopled by thousands, perhaps millions. I know now, even if I did not know it then, that actually city history museums can create only **impressions**. In this they are like poetry or paintings. They are simulations, and we should revel in the freedom that gives us, instead of torturing ourselves because we cannot tell the whole story in all its detail, full of certainties.

In Hull, we created what I believe to be a pioneering and influential city history museum, albeit one which did not exist for very long. It was story-based, it avoided predictable chronology, it placed great emphasis on temporary exhibitions rather than

permanent displays.² Most of all, in a traditionally working class city it put working class history centre stage. This was unknown previously in Hull, and the new museum quickly built up large, enthusiastic audiences. Local people seemed to appreciate that the museum reflected the muscular nature of their city, where everyone until recent times had connections with the sea, and where the sea claimed lives and ruined families on a regular basis.

We had had few thoughts of the potential political impact of creating a city history museum in Hull. Although we had seen the absurdity of our museum service barely acknowledging the tough, tattooed urban undertow which gave the city its character, we had responded, I would say, in a fairly naïve way. We did not think to ask whether anyone else living in the city might agree with us. Certainly, we did not engage to a great degree with the socialist politicians who governed the city. They were aware of the project, of course, because they had to approve the funding, but what they were probably expecting was another soft-centred addition to Hull's fine group of museums, which would give the city's tourism aspirations another boost. What they did not expect was a more pugnacious animal, one with an attitude, which immediately connected with Hull's own population. The message was quickly received once the museum was open, and I remember the glee of the Leader of the City Council, Patrick Doyle, when he realised what we had delivered for the city.

The museum, stopped in its tracks a few years later by a new management regime, should be seen as part of a development in the UK which was sustained more successfully elsewhere, that of the application of social history, people-based approaches to city museums.

A new image for Newcastle

My next attempt at bringing into being a city history museum was in Newcastle upon Tyne. There, in the early 1990s, our team took the uninspiring and unpopular Museum of Science and Engineering, created within it an urban history gallery, and re-launched the museum as the Discovery Museum. Unlike in Hull we used a chronological approach to our interpretation of the city, because we didn't have enough money to tell all the stories we wanted, and so we decided that the first phase of our work should be concerned with the 20th century up to the present day, for maximum impact on the public. Our intention, which we were able to follow through later, was to dig deeper into Newcastle's earlier history in adjoining spaces. To this day I remain torn between a chronological approach, which finds favour with many visitors, and thematic approaches, which I believe allow us to be more creative, and which also gives the museum greater flexibility.

In contrast to our approach in Hull, we lobbied hard for political support for our new city history museum from the start. We gave the project a brand name 'Great City, Great History', so as to appeal to local pride. We organised a petition, the first name on which was that of Councillor Barney Rice, Chairman of the museum's parent committee and an influential city councillor. We launched our campaign with a temporary exhibition about Newcastle's history, called *Time Tunnel*, the first time the museum service had ever seriously attempted to look back into the past further than the industrial period. Newcastle, famous for its shipbuilding, heavy engineering and coal trading, had actually been a major medieval trading port, but this was barely known in the city, let alone by outsiders. We actually set out to challenge the image of the city as a dour and

² Frostick, Elisabeth, 'Worth a Hull Lot More', *Museums Journal*, 91 nr. 2 (1991).

grimy product of the industrial age, and to kindle an appreciation of Newcastle's origins as a Roman bridging point across the River Tyne, and to explain the mystery of the city's very fine medieval walls. As in Hull, the politicians warmed to the project, with its dual capacity to provide an important educational resource, and to challenge the city's image as no more than a great industrial city in decline.

Also in contrast to our approach in Hull, in Newcastle we set out to engage local people in the project from the outset. To a degree, this was achieved through consultation over the displays we aimed to create. However, this was never going to reach out to the new audiences we wanted. Much more fertile ground with regard to new audiences was found in the creation of the *People's Gallery*, a community-based exhibition facility in which our intention was to explore contemporary Newcastle through the eyes and experiences of its inhabitants. An example of the many People's Gallery projects was *Newcastle is My City*, a collaboration between the Discovery Museum and Newcastle City Council's Adoption and Fostering Agency, wherein children in care and at risk of exclusion from school created photographic records of their lives, which were used to make a CD presentation in the People's Gallery. In my view the People's Gallery in Newcastle remains the UK's most important initiative in city history museum development in the past 20 years.

I want to make some further observations on these two city history museum projects. Both were undertaken under the auspices of sizeable museum services, and so they were relatively blessed with staff and other resources – an advantage not always enjoyed by colleagues working elsewhere. Both were developed in a municipal, local authority context and both were responsible ultimately to elected local politicians. Both cities, Hull and Newcastle, had early 20th century populations of around 300,000, so they are sizeable, and complex urban entities, but these are not global supercities or national capitals. I believe this means that it is feasible to create city museums which can enable visitors to understand the dynamics and meaning of these cities – a task which becomes harder for bigger urban entities. Both cities declined during the 20th century and have struggled to find new roles in a post-industrial world. Both are hoping for a new, sustainable prosperity partly based upon their attractiveness to overseas tourists. Neither has, by any stretch of the imagination, had a positive image in the eyes of British people; both are tough, blue collar, working class. In Newcastle (less so in Hull because of the short lifespan of the Old Grammar School) the Discovery Museum has led local people to reassess their city, especially in terms of recognising that it had a long history before the industrial period. It has also played a major part in creating a new image of Newcastle as a culturally rich city.

In neither city was there political pressure to tone down, or tidy up and, shall we say, 'gentrify' the museum version of history, though in both cities I was subjected to mild political intervention in other projects. I certainly think that there are always political elements, and others, whose job it is to promote cities to tourists and investors, who will react negatively to portrayals of the city which they might consider to be unhelpful. Remember the Hull and Newcastle museums were new ventures. In many ways both projects took people by surprise. They did not know what to expect, and they probably didn't expect much. After all, British museums have traditionally avoided controversy and sought 'neutrality', and because of this they often excite no more than political indifference. I think that politicians are only just waking up to just how powerful an agent of communication a city museum can be.

In a similar vein, neither museum, prior to its opening, excited much public opinion one way or the other. Only when they were in business and teeming with visitors was there a public reaction, and in neither case was there anything especially negative. Nobody took either museum to task for offering an honest appraisal of the city, with some unflattering observations. We should be encouraged by this in our efforts to present truthful representations of our cities, even though this may not find complete favour with those who, for economic reasons, would prefer to see a polite and sanitised version of the city's history and identity.

The Museum of Liverpool

I will now turn to the city of Liverpool. Most regional cities are not widely famous for anything in particular, but Liverpool is especially famous for two things. Liverpool FC are currently, for the fifth time, football champions of Europe, and in some parts of the world, such as China, the words 'Liverpool' and 'football' are synonymous. In other parts of the world, such as the USA, Liverpool means only one thing – the Beatles. Even now, almost 40 years after the Beatles broke up, they remain the most celebrated of all pop groups, and the most famous of all 20th century cultural icons. As an American colleague, whose father was one of the Woodstock generation, said to me recently, the Beatles 'changed the world's cultural conversation, and the change was permanent'. This is both a blessing, and a curse. Many Liverpudlians are tired of their city being assessed as no more than where the Beatles came from, a feeling fuelled by the fact that the Beatles left the city to find fame and fortune, never to return. John Lennon always claimed that while he was born in Liverpool, he grew up in Hamburg, and, of course, he died a New Yorker.

In the UK, Liverpool has an extremely strong image, albeit a complex one. Probably no city is associated with so many stereotypes: criminals, car thieves, drug dealers, gangsters on the one hand; comedians, entertainers, sassy, sentimental, cheeky, chirpy and chip-loving on the other. These stereotypes have been fed by situation comedies, such as *The Liver Birds* or *Bread*, stand-up comedians such as Harry Enfield, the movie *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* and, it has to be said, by Liverpudlians, or Scousers, themselves. For the boys, think Wayne Rooney, enfant terrible of the England football team; for the girls, think Atomic Kitten, brassy, blonde, feisty pop stars. Moreover, the city especially has a reputation in the UK as down at heel and unemployed. Opposing football fans will sing at Liverpool, Everton or Tranmere Rovers games 'Feed the Scousers' to the tune of Band Aid's 'Do They Know It's Christmas?', or instead of the famous Liverpool anthem 'You'll Never Walk Alone', they will sing 'You'll Never Work Again'. The national daily newspaper *The Guardian* wrote of 'grinding, comfortless poverty – some of Western Europe's worst' (Oct 20, 2004). Liverpool has had a very bad time, and unemployment has reached crippling levels, and though the city is fast regenerating, it will take a long time for this image of poverty to fade.

However, this last image has grown only recently, over the past three or four generations. Before that, Liverpool was prosperous and successful. A hundred to a hundred and fifty years ago it was one of the richest cities in the world, a great port, gateway for millions of Europeans to the New World, the world market place for cotton and grain. But when the fall came it was far and fast. The city fell on terrible times, and the Liverpool of the Beatles was poverty-stricken. Novelist Beryl Bainbridge once said that someone had 'murdered' Liverpool, and got away with it. So, we have a beautiful city, with 7 miles of granite docks and acres of the finest Georgian, Victorian and

Edwardian housing, some of the world's most gorgeous civic and commercial buildings – so important architecturally that a major part of the city centre is a World Heritage Site – museums and art galleries so important that prime minister Margaret Thatcher nationalised them. In 2008, the city will be, deservedly, the European Capital of Culture. Now fewer than 500,000 people live in a city built for 1 million, so desperate were Liverpudlians to seek employment and stability elsewhere after the Second World War. The roller coaster story of the city, from obscurity, to global trading hegemony, to abject poverty, through to 21st century renaissance, throws up huge challenges for our proposed new city history museum, tied up as that story is with the powerful, changing imagery of the city.

Liverpudlians, of course, have their own views about their city and themselves, and inevitably they are wide-ranging, various and often contradictory. Memories of imperial greatness are just about gone, but there is still great pride in being a Scouser. It is one of a handful of British cities – Glasgow and Newcastle also come to mind – where there is such a strong sense of belonging in its natives. It is often said, and it's probably true, that the Liverpudlian character has been defined by Celtic, and especially Irish influence. This has caused the local accent or dialect to develop into one instantly recognisable to any Briton. It is also true that Liverpool has never looked inwards to England, it has always looked outwards to Ireland, to the USA, to the Far East. It is the least English of all English cities in character and outlook. And some would say it is a racist and prejudiced city.

City history museums as human rights museums

In representing Liverpool in a new museum which we hope will open in 2010, we have a host of challenges. (fig. 1 and 2) We have great complexity, enormous changes and transformations over time; vivid contrasts, with extremes of wealth and poverty; essential contradictions; engagement and alienation; collective psychologies and psychological fragmentation.

Moreover, in creating our city history museum we enter a highly charged political dimension, and find ourselves confronted by vested interests which push and pull us in all directions. We find that everyone has an opinion, everyone has a motive. City history is democratic history, owned by everyone, and everyone will have a say. It is not like other museum disciplines, which, to a greater or lesser degree, do not feel the full force of democratic involvement, because they are further removed from people's lives. In throwing open our doors and windows we have to face up to the consequences. We are no longer the sole, expert arbiters and owners of our museums, we share them, and in sharing we create something powerful and wonderful.

Yet we have to find ways of explaining, revealing, representing. One approach which seems to me to offer rich perspectives is to acknowledge that city history museums are also **human rights museums**. Cities have in many respects been so bad for, and to their citizens – or, at least, large proportions of them – and inequality and exploitation have been so oppressive, that maybe our city history museum should be characterised primarily as an analysis of struggle: class struggle, racial struggle, religious struggle, gender struggle. Perhaps debates about urban multiculturalism, diversity and community, so central to city history, are actually aspects of wider human rights debates, and the 'empowerment' of minorities through cultural activity is possibly **the** prime function of the city history museum. Perhaps all players in the city's history should be seen in this perspective. Or is all this too abstract for a museum whose audience is so broad that we



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1. 3xN Mersey view. The Danish architects 3xNielsen won the international competition for the Museum of Liverpool in January 2005. Courtesy of 3XN
2. Museum of Liverpool from the outside. Courtesy of 3XN

should be more straightforward about identifying different communities and basing our history around those? Or should we revert to the tried and tested approach of analysing themes such as politics, education, industry, leisure? Or perhaps the museum should aspire only to acting as a gateway to other means of understanding the city, such as its buildings and topography?

We are exploring all these possibilities in the new Museum of Liverpool, a hundredmillion euro project by the River Mersey. There are, of course, many more questions and challenges. Liverpool, for example, at the peak of its prosperity, was a great global phenomenon. Its role as gateway to the British Empire, and as the great exporter of Britain's stupendous industrial output, means that Liverpool's history only makes sense if we explore big national and international themes. There can be nothing introverted about Liverpool's history museum. How on earth do we interpret the story of the British Empire, and the story of the Industrial Revolution, as well as that of the city itself?

Furthermore, this is a national museum, not a municipal one. Our project need not find itself encumbered by local politics, but surely there is a risk that it becomes severed from local democratic processes? We have to beware that local communities do not become cut off or alienated, that the civic dialogue is not inhibited.

A practical factor which is so important that it actually becomes a philosophical one is the degree to which the museum will be able to reprogramme, to vary its exhibitions

and introduce new stories. Cities are too complex, too difficult and too changeable for their museums to create essentially permanent displays, with modest scope for temporary exhibitions. The Museum of Liverpool will have up to 60% of its display area devoted to changing exhibitions, and a high proportion of the collections exhibited will change every year. This is because we must endeavour to involve people, to introduce new perspectives, to be responsive, as much as we can, and the traditional approach to display simply does not allow this. Flexibility has to be an absolute core component of representing the city effectively, and of allowing substantive involvement by as many communities and individuals as possible.

Objects, of course, must be supplemented by other means of storytelling, so as to counter the inability of objects to represent the city in its glorious complexity, and to enable a host of levels of access to the stories we intend to explore. Only variety creates the broadest appeal. This is not to say that we undervalue objects, or their role, and we must continue our energetic historical and contemporary collecting so as to widen the range of material we have available to use.

I do not claim that any of these approaches are entirely new, or unique. It is the blending of them, on a sizeable scale, with due weight accorded to Liverpool's national and international context, with a modern and realistic attitude towards the limitations of object collections, and with our advantage of being able to design and build a completely customised new museum, that makes this project special.

The title of this paper is *The City – A Wondrous Place?* This is actually a modest pun, with several layers of meaning. It is taken from the title of a pop song by Billy Fury, Britain's first rock-and-roll star, born in Liverpool, and is a reference to the extraordinary creativity of the city. It is a reference to the city itself, this beautiful jewel among the world's port cities. It is a reference to what we hope will be an extraordinary city history museum. But it is also a question. Are cities wondrous places? In many ways, of course they're not. They can be truly dreadful places. Liverpool ships used to carry human cargo across the Atlantic Ocean, in the greatest forced migration of people in history. A few weeks ago, a young black man, Anthony Walker, was murdered in a racial attack in Liverpool, and the city's name, stained once more, reverberated around the world.

We are, as I believed ten years ago, making progress. What city history museums must do is keep their nerve, be radical, politically aware, imaginative and extrovert, and then they can build on the progress made in recent years. In representing the city in its full glory, and its full horror, without losing our integrity and our faith in what we are doing, and why we are doing it, I believe we can reach heights of achievement and public relevance in city history museums that other museums can only dream of.

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Old Vienna. The city that never was

An exhibition to discuss the identity of a city

Wolfgang Kos
Director Museums of the City of Vienna

What is the social mission of a modern city museum? Surely it is not restricted to merely conveying material evidence of urban life, important as that is; it must also encompass the history of myths and debates, mentalities, images and clichés. After all, no city's history is homogenous; each is the sum total of a variety of memories, interests and enduring images.

The Wien Museum (Vienna Museum) located on Karlsplatz, which was known until 2003 as the Historical Museum of the City of Vienna, is in the middle of a process of change. It is committed to depicting a wide range of historical perspectives. The exhibition *Alt-Wien – Die Stadt, die niemals war/Old Vienna – The city that never was* (November 2004 – March 2005, fig. 1 and 2) – was for many reasons a key project in the development of a new profile. Firstly, it was not held in the Vienna Museum but nearby in the Künstlerhaus building¹, known for legendary exhibitions like *Traum und Wirklichkeit* about Vienna around 1900, which was staged in 1985. Covering around 1100 square metres, *Alt-Wien* was much larger than the usual exhibitions in the Vienna Museum's main building. Attendance (57,000 visitors) was also much higher. *Alt-Wien* was of strategic importance in putting the museum back on the map. Although it had a long tradition of excellence, the museum had lost some momentum in recent years.

Alt-Wien was an attempt to attune to current urban themes. We hoped to stimulate debates about the future of Vienna, a city which still lives very much in and on its past, by presenting the long history of nostalgia that influenced Vienna's identity for more than 100 years. It still shapes the image of the city today and is the basis of Vienna's success as a tourist magnet. We therefore felt compelled to tell the history of Vienna's tourism. The ever young myth of 'old Vienna' has been through many revivals. But the allegedly idyllic and harmonious 'good old days' – as best exemplified by the Biedermeier period – were in themselves a fiction created by retrospective projections and nostalgia. The subtitle of the exhibition, *The city that never was*, emphasizes this.

Why and how did Vienna, this beautiful old city, become a world metropolis of nostalgia? Does the past still wield power over the future? Questions like these were the starting point for the exhibition. This meant that *Alt-Wien* corresponded with the fierce debates of the last decade. What seemed to be a debate about high-rise buildings near the city centre – which became a world heritage site in 2003 – was in fact not limited to the cityscape, but was a far deeper conflict. To what extent does cultural heritage demand a restrictive approach to the historical city? Is Vienna's city centre in danger of

¹ Since 1868 the Wiener Künstlerhaus, just over the road from the Wien Museum, has been home to the oldest society of artists in Austria and the society's exhibition centre. For many decades the building has been used for exhibitions. Currently the future of the Künstlerhaus is uncertain.

becoming a museum itself, a kind of theme park? Is there space for the new?

The role of the Wien Museum was to point out that these questions were not new at all. All the current arguments have a long history. The notion of ‘old Vienna’ has always had a somewhat wistful ring to it, but it was also a battle cry – loaded with emotion and opposing the increasing pace of the modern world. The exhibition charted 200 years of Viennese history, marking the contrast between ‘old’ and ‘new’ and relating the age-old conflicts between ‘wreckers’ and ‘conservationists’. In the early 20th century writers and intellectuals warned Vienna of the dangers of ‘Americanisation’ – unlike the ‘young’ Berlin, which proudly wore the badge, ‘Europe’s Chicago’. Vienna, on the contrary, was compared to Venice, a time capsule of past glory. Vienna’s role, many public figures argued at the time, was to be a slow, comfortable and homogenous city forever, the epitome of traditional values. It should keep its ‘soul’. There were of course opponents, like the architect Otto Wagner and industrialists. They expressed the fear that Vienna would be left behind. The satirist Karl Kraus commented: ‘I have some devastating news for the aesthetes: Old Vienna was once new.’

Paradoxically, around 1900 Vienna was also a vibrant, fast-growing, innovative city



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Fragments of the exhibition Alt Wien

with a modern infrastructure. Spaciousness, regularity and elegance were to replace overcrowded, unhealthy conditions. The Ringstrasse became the symbol of a 'new Vienna', synonymous with a fundamentally transformed city. The deepest longing for a 'faded Vienna' coincided with periods of intensive construction work in the city (for example, in the late 19th century when many buildings in the old city were demolished). There were constant 'funerals' between 1870 and 1914, as one much-loved building after another was torn down. The aim of property owners and the authorities was to 'sanitize' and 'regulate' the city. Critics spoke of 'improvement vandalism'. Writers and painters hunted down the treasure that was about to be lost and meticulously documented the destruction. Scarcely a house was demolished without first being recorded for posterity. The Wien Museum has thousands of such paintings and watercolours and hundreds of them were shown in the *Alt-Wien* exhibition to illustrate the prolific production of images of farewell. Fear and rage turned into sentimentality.

The Biedermeier period, the allegedly idyllic and harmonious years, had in fact not been quiet at all. It was then, around 1840, that the expression 'old Vienna' was coined. We called this section of the exhibition 'Rapid old times'. It seems there was always a gap between real progress and the state of mind, between hard facts and emotional needs. Hence the scope of a city museum inevitably includes the history of stereotypes, perceptions, popular culture and sentimental moods. The mythological dimension of a city is also present in artefacts, which we normally categorize as kitsch.

The idea of nostalgia is to freeze the past, and the museum is an institution responsible for this process. The demolition of the city walls sparked an interest in collecting defunct remains of the urban past. Anything under threat was to be documented and stored in a collective civic memory. Remains of the old city gates – like a stone eagle – were at first moved to repositories, then to the Vienna Municipal Museum (founded in 1887). Some of these 'witnesses of the past' had not been displayed for 100 years. The *Alt-Wien* exhibition was an opportunity to reflect on the role of the museum and to display objects that had lain hidden and forgotten for ages. We not only displayed them, we also tried to explain why they had been preserved all those years ago. They are relics of change.

A central hall was devoted to Franz Schubert, honouring him not only as a composer, but primarily as a popular figure personifying the good old times. Around 1900 Schubert's life was popularised in successful books like 'Schwammerl', meaning 'little mushroom' (Schubert's nickname), musical plays and movies in 1900. There were even busts of Schubert made of soap. The poor Lichtental district where Schubert grew up became the setting for idyllic fantasies. The same happened with the so-called 'Vienna types', a popular name for washer women, lavender sellers and street traders. Reality became fiction. The 'types' were portrayed in prints, photographs or porcelain figures and were seen as the quintessence of Vienna. They stood for obduracy against the enticements of progress. Even after the 'types' had almost disappeared they were still suitable as ambassadors of Old Viennese 'Gemütlichkeit'. These examples may indicate that the *Alt-Wien* exhibition did deal with media history and the promulgation of images. Most of the nostalgic images moved from the field of art media to the world of postcards, souvenirs, popular music and tourist advertisements. The exhibition tried to show how arguments and slogans, stereotypes and clichés have been repeated over the years like the refrain of a song.

National Museum of Archaeology of the City and the Lagoon, Venice

Work in progress for a museum featuring a living city

Luigi Fozzati

Nucleo Archeologia Umida e Subacquea Italia Centro Alto Adriatico

Federica Varosio

Scuola di Studi Avanzati in Venezia

Representing the city is a hard task for city museums, especially when dealing with a contemporary city and its multifaceted society. More and more museums tend to tell the story of their city not only by objects, but in particular through images. As far as this visual approach is concerned, it is easier to implement it when starting new projects as this provides the opportunity of creating new collections and new displays, without the burden of older museological attitudes and collections, and without being hampered by inherited decisions. How can we provide visitors with images that are as real as possible? What will our role and our contribution be to everyday city life?

In Venice the first steps are being taken to create a new museum, dedicated to the presentation of the city's history through archaeology. The new museum, a project coordinated by the Archaeological Board of Venice, will be called the National Museum of Archaeology of the City and the Lagoon, and is scheduled to open by 2010. The aim is to use a new approach: to create a museum different from the other traditional civic museums now in operation in Italy, to make it more up-to-date and comprehensive, and to ensure it will appeal to the city's residents not just to tourists. In doing so, this new museum is aiming at making a contribution towards presenting a more realistic image of the city of Venice, in an attempt 'to educate' the visitors, not only about its history, but also about its unique environmental characteristics, the daily life of its inhabitants and its cultural and professional activities. The hope is that if the visitor's are better informed about the city's fragility, they will respond by being more respectful towards it.

A new museum on the Lazzaretto Vecchio

The location for the new National Museum of Archaeology of the City and the Lagoon is the Lazzaretto Vecchio island, in the south part of the Venetian Lagoon, near the Lido. (fig. 1) As the name suggests, the island was previously used as an isolation hospital where plague victims could convalesce. This was the first lazaretto to open in Europe: in 1423 the city council established this hospital for that specific purpose of isolating and treating this epidemic disease and to accommodate sailors and goods coming from Mediterranean ports. The latter had to undergo a period of quarantine on the island before being allowed onto the main Venetian island in order to ensure they were healthy and would not spread infectious diseases, those who were already infected had to remain in the hospital, those who weren't were allowed to get on with their business. This role ended at the beginning of 19th century, and now all the buildings that



1. *The Lazzaretto Vecchio Island, in the south part of the Lagoon, near the Lido. The future National Museum of Archaeology of the City and the Lagoon will be housed inside this old hospital*

formed part of the ancient hospital are about to become the home of the new museum of the city and the lagoon. At the moment, in fact, the entire island is caught up in the renovation works, as the buildings are being restored and new facilities installed. This work will be finished by 2007.

The new museum on the Lazzaretto Vecchio will be linked with the Lido island by a drawbridge. From here a platform outside the external boundary-wall will lead to the main entrance of the museum, where the museum route will start, moving through the building's different wings, presenting an exhibition that will be both chronological and thematic; at the end of their tour visitors will be able to use many other facilities including a restaurant, a bookshop and a library.

At the same time archaeological investigations are taking place in the open areas of the island, where burial layers or sequences have been discovered – these are deposits of bodies in layers which tally with the waves of plague infection. This enables us to date the period in which the people died, often to the exact year and provides an insight into the site's previous history. Some of these archaeological areas will be presented *in situ* as visitors follow the museum route.

As mentioned above, the galleries' main focus will be on archaeology, both urban and underwater. For the last fifteen years there has been a sort of archaeological renaissance in Venice as the department of public works has been obliged to allow archaeological research to take place before any new building can start. The Archaeological Board of Venice has carried out more than 580 excavations, 450 of which were done in

submersed conditions. All the findings and data coming from these excavations, dating from prehistory to the early 20th century, have never been exhibited before and will form the main content of the museum collection. Besides this, some works of art from civic collections will be used to create a historical context.

The new museum will not only display objects and findings, it will also become a museum of ideas, providing visitors with an opportunity to get to know the city from a different angle, one far-removed from the common idea of Venice as a mere open-air museum, full of churches and monuments. **The assumption that images and stereotypes influence how people perceive the city, fits extremely well in the Venetian situation.** However, Venice is really very different from the city promoted by the tourist industry, is not only St Marco Square, the pigeons, the gondolas or the glass. Venice is a unique ecosystem, an archaeological site, a university centre and an industrial development centre for north-east Italy, to mention just a few of its many faces. **But first and foremost Venice is a living city that uses a medieval urban and architectural structure to run its everyday affairs. The new museum will play an important role in presenting this view of Venice and furthermore it will offer its inhabitants the opportunity to re-appropriate their city.**

The Venetian Lagoon, an age-old ecosystem and an open-air museum

To exemplify this approach, we can look at the projected Lagoon Gallery, the first area to be reached by following the new museum's prescribed route. The Gallery is meant to give the visitors an idea of their location and to start them on their walk through time, one that will take them back to the early years of human habitation in the Venetian area. The visualization of the lagoon will be created by graphic pictures mounted on panels, satellite photographs, geological samples and artefacts, and will show it to be a place which, since medieval times, has had as a complex urban system, spread over a number of islands; a single entity with water running through in which different islands are devoted to different uses and functions but in which all cooperate in the life of the city of Venice. The water is not considered to be an obstacle or a divisive element instead it has its own role to play in the organisation of this complex urban system. Moreover, some current photos and images will illustrate its composition, its nature and its extreme fragility.

The lagoon ecosystem does, in fact, suffer from mass tourism; most of the tourists that arrive in Venice are really amused to see ferryboats instead of buses, like to take romantic gondola trips in the canals, or think it is fun to walk barefoot in St Marco square during high-water, but nearly nobody knows how the present-day territorial and urban system was formed. This tourist's stereotype vision of Venice distorts the real relationship between the water and the life of the city and has a negative influence on its preservation; the problem of high water, for instance, is not a fun-experience, it is a huge problem that requires impressive public water management to prevent the islands from sinking into the sand.

So, in order to present a more effective image of the lagoon's ecosystem, the museum route will not end on Lazzaretto Vecchio island. This city museum will be a starting point for the visit of a wider museum landscape that includes other sites and other islands, offering a more in-depth, less traditional tour of the lagoon. Actually reaching the Lazzaretto Vecchio will be the first part of the museum experience, as it will provide the first contact with the water and the lagoon's ecosystem; after the Lazzaretto Vecchio the visit will continue with visits to other sites in the museum complex like the Lazzaretto

Nuovo, along different routes, some of which will be thematic, through the lagoon. In this way the National Museum of Archaeology of the City and the Lagoon will become a multi-location museum. At the moment, beside the Lazzaretto Vecchio, another island which was previously part of the medieval hospital system of Venice, the Lazzaretto Nuovo, is taking part in this project.

The Lazzaretto Nuovo was founded in 1456 as a quarantine hospital, to support Lazzaretto Vecchio, which was already overcrowded, and to prevent the plague reaching the main island and spreading to other locations in the lagoon.

The main buildings of the Lazzaretto Nuovo will house:

- a thematic section dedicated to the anthropology of the Venetian population and to the history of medicine, a fitting topic as an old hospital building is a very apt place to look at the history of medicine and the anthropology of the inhabitants especially after the hundreds of bodies discovered during archaeological excavations;
- the archaeological depot and archives, which are already being rearranged in order to provide more of a service to students, scholars, researcher and the like;
- the educational department of the museum, with room for workshops and didactic activities;
- some temporary exhibitions, even before the official opening of the museum.

A museum for a living city

The new Museum of Archaeology of the City and the Lagoon, in its new locations, would like to play an active role in keeping Venice a living, authentic and, most important of all, habitable city. To do this, it has to remedy the distorted view of the city propagated by the tourist industry by providing information for the visitors to make them more aware of the city's problems and by encouraging them to adopt a more responsible attitude towards them. Actually, the massive influx of tourists poses a serious problem for the residents as such hordes of people are not compatible with the smooth running of the city's daily life. If we stop to consider for just a moment, Venice now has 60.000 inhabitants who have to cope with 25 million tourists a year, the real question is: who is Venice really for? Almost everything produced or sold in Venice is aimed primarily at tourists, as the greater part of its economy is based on them (fig. 2 and 3). All the same, some measures will have to be developed to ensure the city remains habitable, the residents should be seen as the main resource and they should also be the main beneficiaries. The new museum wishes to provide an experience that is relevant for its inhabitants, not only attractive for its tourists, giving the Venetian people the opportunity to recover their sense of belonging.

Some surveys will be carried out to find out what image of the city is shared by both inhabitants and tourists and what people expect to find in a city museum featuring Venice. Another survey will analyse the composition of the present-day Venetian population in order to mount an exhibition that will be really relevant to them.

In the museum galleries visitors will be offered a new approach to understanding the city of Venice, past and present, by archaeological remains, objects, historic data and images. In particular, a visual presentation of the city as it is today will strengthen the comparison between the past and the present, between the way its inhabitants view it and the way it is shown to the tourists, stimulating critical observation.

We cannot give visitors one, monumental and 'authentic' image of the city, nor can we change tourist trends, but by stimulating them to look at this wonderful city in a different way we hope it will be shown more respect, and that people will become more

interested in its unique setting. ‘The recapture of a thoughtful glance’ will be the philosophy behind this project, one that is deeply-rooted in the lagoon landscape; an appropriate new model for tourist access to Venice and its surroundings, that will restore the natural cultural balance between the city and the water. The National Museum of Archaeology of the City and the Lagoon will be a museum for a living city.



2

3



2. The massive numbers of tourist frequenting the site presents serious problems for the smooth running of the residents’ daily lives: how authentic is this picture? How relevant is it for Venetian people?

3. Few traditions like the daily grocery boat near Campo San Barnaba still continue; the boat acts as a daily meeting point for residents. One of the museum’s tasks is to recognize and present to its visitors these immaterial inherited traditions and keep them alive

Discussion

Chair: Pauline Kruseman

Director Amsterdam Historical Museum

Motto: 'Only variety creates the broadest appeal' (quote from the introduction by David Fleming)

Both presentations prompted lengthy discussion on the names of our museums. In Vienna, for example, the directors deliberately decided in 2003 to leave 'Historical' out of the name of the museum. The new city museum in Venice is called the Museum of Archaeology of the City and the Lagoon. The working group discussed this long name in detail. There was concern that it might give the wrong impression to the public about the mission of the museum. The name Museum de Lazaretto might be a better option. Moreover, there were doubts whether the story of the history of the lagoon and the city of Venice can be told with a predominantly archaeological collection. Everyone was shocked to hear that Venice has 60 thousand inhabitants and 25 million tourists yearly. The new museum wants to give both groups another image of the lagoon. Why has Venice become such an open air museum? This might be an interesting question to raise in the museum itself. Venice's fragility, both ecologically and from the perspective of conserving historic buildings and monuments, will be an important theme in the new museum.

It is exceptionally important to discuss conflict in the museum. Presenting conflicting visions of subjects in exhibitions by adding contrasting elements and, for example, different colours or other forms, is a cheap, easy way to make the old permanent exhibits, which so many museums have, more dynamic. Some taboos or conflicts from long ago still exist. The museum might be an excellent place to discuss these. The Vienna Museum, for instance, has to cope with the problem of how an important but controversial late nineteenth-century politician and mayor of Vienna, Karl Lueger (1844-1910), should be presented. Although a modernist, he was strongly anti-Semitic. The Vienna Museum prefers to approach anti-Semitism from many different perspectives. Museums are excellent places to show the different layers of history and how the interpretation of subjects and the context in which they are dealt with are so closely linked with time. This is true, for instance, of the present-day image of Viennese Jews who are now mostly perceived as writers, intellectuals, artists, famous people in coffeehouses and psychiatrists etc. Other Jews hardly come into the picture. It was suggested in the working group that anti-Semitism should be denounced; a multi-perspective approach would as it were 'gloss over' this phenomenon.

Generally speaking it has to be assumed that the public can judge for themselves. But they may not always 'get the message' that a museum wants to give. This was, for example, the case during the *Alt-Wien (Old Vienna)* exhibition, which showed the resistance to modernity. Visitors mainly appeared to enjoy the nostalgic artefacts. The nostalgic image of Vienna, which the museum particularly wanted to revise, was just too strong. The public takes home what they want.

The last topic discussed was multi-location city museums. These museums have a hard time presenting a coherent image. On the other hand, they do reflect the fact that a city's cultural heritage is fragmented. From this point of view, a museum can use this to its advantage.

History's role in revitalizing the City of Hartford

David M. Kahn

*Executive Director of the Connecticut Historical Society
Hartford, Connecticut*

The Old State House: Hartford's most important historic building

This paper is about a 750- square-meter exhibition that my institution, The Connecticut Historical Society, will introduce to the public in June 2006. The exhibition will not be located in our main building, which is surrounded by trees in a residential section of Hartford. Instead, the exhibition will be located in an underground gallery attached to an important historic structure that we operate, the Old State House, which is situated in the centre of downtown Hartford.¹ (fig. 1) The Old State House was built in 1796 on what was by then already a historic site, home since 1636 to the Connecticut Colony's earliest religious and government structures. An earlier state house stood on the site from 1735 until the current building replaced it. Our state legislature eventually left the Old State House for a newer building in 1878. But even today the Old State House and its site continue to be of great symbolic importance for the people of Hartford and the State of Connecticut.

Public perceptions of Hartford

The exhibition that we are developing for the Old State House will be about Hartford's history, but also more broadly it will be about the importance of history in all of our lives. To begin with, I would like to share with you some quotes from interviews we conducted in June 2005 with members of the public in conjunction with our exhibition planning-process. The research consisted of individual interviews with people who were recruited by a professional research firm. All of the interviewees were 'museum-goers' who had visited at least one museum in the previous 12 months. Some were from Hartford, some from other parts of the state. The primary purpose of the research was to test proposed label-copy for our exhibition. But we also asked the interviewees what they thought about Hartford as a place to visit and whether they might actually come to the Old State House once the new exhibition opens in 2006. Here are some of the answers we received:

- '...I've always thought (Hartford) kind of run down and not a place I'd like to visit.'
- 'It is boring. There are not enough activities to do. It is dangerous. It is dirty. Should I keep going?'
- 'Hartford is dirty, unsafe, and parking is difficult.'
- 'Hartford is a boring city...and coming to Hartford is really kind of disappointing...It just seems like it's so desolate....'
- 'Hartford is dead.'

¹ The Old State House was the official home of the government of the State of Connecticut. The governor had offices there as did the state's House of Representatives and Senate. The state courts also met there.



1. *The Old State House, completed in 1796*

– ‘There is not enough there...to bring a lot of people into a part of the city like where the Old State House is.’

About half of our interviewees made remarks about Hartford similar to the ones listed above. In short, their perception of Hartford was extremely unflattering. Why is that?

Hartford’s prosperous years

That’s a complex question, but here is a brief answer. In the 19th and early 20th centuries Hartford was one of the richest cities in America. Its wealth was built on trade and manufacturing. Guns were produced there, as were sewing machines, bicycles, typewriters, and eventually airplane engines. Possibly some of you may have heard of Colt revolvers, Underwood typewriters, or Pratt & Whitney airplane engines, all of which were manufactured in Hartford. Hartford’s surplus wealth was invested in the insurance industry and the city became the home of so many insurance companies that it was known as the Insurance Capital of America.

Hartford continued to prosper into the period immediately following World War II. Its population peaked at 170,000 in 1950. Then things began to change – not for the better.

Economic decline

Following World War II the federal government financed vast highway- construction projects and provided cheap mortgages that encouraged the development of new residential housing in the suburbs. As a result, an increasing number of middle-class

residents began moving out of America's cities. Before long a vast population shift was underway as middle class people abandoned the City of Hartford. Over a period of a few decades 90,000 middle-class white people flowed out of the city and 50,000 poor Latino and Black people flowed in. Businesses also relocated to the suburbs, so that by 1975 there were virtually no manufacturing enterprises remaining in Hartford. Downtown stores also began to close in the 1960s and 1970s; suburban shopping malls had lured all their customers away. By 1992 the last of downtown Hartford's department stores, G. Fox, closed its doors. The store's main sign is now in the Connecticut Historical Society's collection.

Minorities become the majority

Today, over 80% of Hartford's 121,000 people are either Latino or Black. Although some people still think of Hartford as the Insurance Capital of America, the city is at least as well known for its poverty and failing schools. Approximately 96% of the children in the city's public schools are members of minority groups, and what we call the 'drop out' rate is 29%; almost one in three students fail to finish high school.

Downtown Hartford, where the Old State House stands, largely empties out after 17:00 when the city's thousands of office workers get into their cars and drive home to the suburbs. Even during the day there are relatively few people on the streets since there are very few stores to visit and people prefer to drive from place to place rather than walk – even when short distances are involved.

This description of Hartford applies equally to countless other mid-sized American cities that have undergone radical transformation since the end of World War II – largely as a result of misguided policies on the part of the federal government.

So, this explains many of our interviewees' negative feelings about downtown Hartford that I listed earlier. Many white people and even more affluent people of color avoid Hartford, preferring to shop and socialize in the suburbs. Also, fear of, or antipathy towards, lower-income Latinos and Blacks serves to keep them away.

Efforts to revitalize the city

As a historical organization, it is probably not our job to try to combat people's perceptions that Hartford is dirty, or that it is dangerous, or that it is hard to find parking, or that there isn't much to do. That job is too big for us to handle. Indeed a new organization has been created called the Hartford Image Project which is developing marketing strategies designed to change people's perceptions of the city.²

In addition to the Hartford Image Project, government and business leaders are working to revitalize downtown in other ways. A new convention centre and hotel just opened this year. (fig. 2) A number of older office-buildings have been converted into residential apartments, a 40-story residential tower is under construction, and efforts are being made to bring stores back downtown again.

Given this complex social situation, what can my museum do, what can any historical organization do, to promote the revitalization of downtown Hartford? Does history have a role to play here?

We, of course, like to think that the answer is 'yes.'

² The Hartford Image Project is a non-profit marketing organization that was created in 2000 with the help of the local chamber of commerce and other organizations. Its goal is to 'communicate the economic renaissance now underway in Hartford, and to celebrate the city's vibrancy and to promote its assets.



2. Downtown Hartford showing a newly built convention centre, lower left

The Connecticut Historical Society Museum and the Old State House

First of all, the Connecticut Historical Society Museum only assumed responsibility for operating the Old State House in 2003. Prior to that, the Old State House was run by a separate non-profit organization that was in danger of going bankrupt. Bankruptcy could have led to the Old State House having to close its doors to the public. That would have been a public relations disaster for the city – a disaster which was avoided when the Connecticut Historical Society Museum intervened.

Now that we *have* assumed responsibility for the Old State House, we are working to introduce new visitor experiences that are intended to draw more people to the site, and to downtown Hartford. In addition to the 750- square-meter exhibition I mentioned at the beginning, we are also developing an activity centre for school groups, an audio-tour of the historic portions of the building – and a new gift shop.

How to represent the city?

The new 750-square-meter exhibition about Hartford will be the centrepiece of the new visitor experience at the Old State House. Given Hartford's complex history, how are we going to tell the city's story? How will we 'represent the city,' which is the subject of this session?

We have struggled with the problem of representing Hartford, well aware of the need to balance the positive and negative aspects of the city's story. Obviously, this is an issue that all history-museum professionals have to confront whenever they attempt to develop an exhibition. In our case, we knew that we couldn't portray the city in an entirely positive light because that would ignore the harsh realities of Hartford's recent history. However, to dwell too much on the negative aspects of Hartford's story would only feed people's existing, negative perceptions.

Americans' attitudes towards history

In thinking about the exhibition, we also kept in mind that Americans – I don't know whether things are different in Europe – but Americans have an ambiguous relationship with history. Many Americans will actually tell you that they hate history – *which means they hate history as it was taught to them in school.*

So we had a number of interrelated challenges. We knew we needed to present a balanced view of Hartford and we also knew that many Americans find history boring. So we needed to find a way to make history interesting if we were to engage visitors in the story of Hartford and get people excited about coming to the city.

In 2003 we undertook a research project designed to help us understand what, precisely, it is about history that visitors *do* find interesting. Without going into too much detail, what we concluded was that people (Americans anyway!) seem to be most interested in history not as an abstract record of names and dates (the kind of history that is taught in American schools) – but as a tool that can help each individual gain a better understanding of the contemporary world and the relationship between the past and the present.

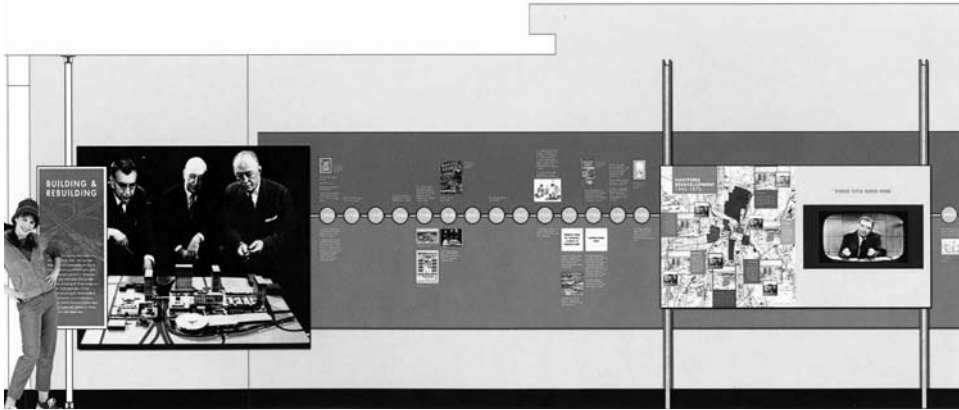
Exhibition strategy

Based on this research, we have adopted a strategy for our new exhibition that involves demonstrating to visitors the countless ways in which: 1) our built environment; 2) the everyday artifacts we make use of in our lives; and 3) the way we spend our work, leisure, and volunteer time are all profoundly influenced by the past and the generations of people who have come before us. The history of Hartford, of course, is the case study we will use to demonstrate these ideas – in order to make it intriguing for our visitors. Current data indicates that about 50% of the Old State House's visitors are from the immediate region while the other 50% come from elsewhere in the United States as well as from other countries.³

Our exhibition will, we hope, help visitors to the city gain a better understanding of today's Hartford as the end-product of centuries of evolution and change. For example, a large-scale map-activity for families will encourage visitors to use models of buildings from the 17th-century to the present to recreate the city as it appeared at different points in time. In doing so they will learn how later construction often, but not always, replaces earlier buildings and other man-made structures. Although no 17th-century buildings, and only a handful of 18th century buildings remain in the city centre, visitors will undoubtedly be surprised to learn that the city's original 17th-century street grid survives to this day, as do many of the early street names.

Another section of the exhibition will be devoted to the vast transformations Hartford underwent from the 1950s through the 1970s when whole neighborhoods were torn down and replaced with the highways and skyscrapers that dominate much of downtown Hartford today. We hope that this area of the exhibition will help visitors gain a better understanding as to why the city looks the way it does today. (fig. 3) Given that Hartford is, and always has been, a multicultural city, throughout the exhibition we will incorporate the stories of Indians, Blacks, Latinos, and other groups. Our hope is that visitors will learn to appreciate the contributions that many different people have made to the development of Hartford over the centuries. Throughout the exhibition visitors will be reminded that just as the City of Hartford has been shaped by the past,

³ Marketing initiatives for the Old State House will focus on attracting a) people in the 35 – 54 age-range with and without children at home as well as b) heritage tourists, who tend to be older.



3. Artist's rendering of a portion of the forthcoming *Old State House* exhibition that explore the post World War II redevelopment of Hartford

individuals are shaped by the past too; visitors will, therefore, be encouraged to think about how the past has influenced their own lives and those of their family members.

A partial solution to the city's identity crisis?

In conclusion, given the fact that the City of Hartford was drained of people, businesses, stores, and even character in the post World War II period, it would not be unreasonable to state that the city today is in the middle of an identity crisis. It's torn between – on the one hand – memories of its glorious past when it was rich and home to luminaries like Mark Twain and – on the other hand – a troubled present in which many of its citizens live in poverty. Its modern image has led to suburbanites being either afraid or unwilling to visit downtown Hartford. A more promising future is envisioned – but it's not clear how soon that future will be realized, nor who will profit from it.

Perhaps the greatest contribution our forthcoming exhibition can make in terms of representing Hartford is to remind the public that the city does have a rich heritage that can be drawn on to help promote civic pride. If successful, perhaps our exhibition will help to improve the city's image – and help bring an end to decades of despondency.

Finally, one other major objective for the exhibition and other visitor experiences we are creating is that we obviously want people to enjoy them. We want them to have fun and to think of the city not as a frightening place, but as a place where they feel welcome and one to which they want to return. If we accomplish this, visitors are bound to tell others about their experiences. As word circulates from person to person that the city really isn't so bad after all, perhaps the more negative images people have about Hartford will begin to dissipate and revitalization will follow.

A museum director must be a ballet dancer

Diana Wind

Director Schiedam Municipal Museum

During the last century Schiedam had problems dealing with its past as a jenever (gin) city and as a city which failed to build a strong economy. The nickname for Schiedam is 'Black Nazareth', due to the many jenever and maltwine distilleries which operated in the city centre until the end of the 19th century. Schiedam's jenever industry dates from the 18th century. The flourishing local glass industry was closely linked to jenever; some distilleries even had their own glass factory for producing bottles.

The centre of the city has a typical Dutch canal plan and monumental buildings from the 16th, 17th and 18th century. A large number of former distilleries and five grain mills remind us of Schiedam's past as a producer of jenever. Nowadays the people of Schiedam are starting to be proud of their beautiful hometown, and the city council wants to invest in marketing the city to attract tourists. 'Jenever, CoBrA and Glass' are going to be promoted as unique selling points.¹ Events, cultural as well as popular, will be organised to attract people who are not enthusiasts of the arts and only reluctantly visit buildings and exhibitions reflecting Schiedam's rich history.

The Stedelijk Museum Schiedam is well known for its CoBrA collection² and, locally, the historical collection. (fig. 1-3) The city council considers the museum to be a major attraction for tourists with its modern art collection and historical exhibitions.

At the moment the museum building is being restored and will reopen on April 8th 2006. It will be an experience museum for modern and contemporary Dutch art. It will open with an exciting exhibition for a wide audience on 'Picasso, Klee, Mirò in Dutch art 1948 – 1954'. Exhibitions based on the historical collection and/or the history of Schiedam will be held at various locations in the city.

The idea of an historical museum has not yet been accepted because of the high costs involved in opening another new museum in the city. Historical exhibitions will, however, be held in the heart of the city, where all tourists start their visit to Schiedam -first by visiting the current exhibition and then the city. Nevertheless there is a continuing need for a meeting place for the people of Schiedam, where they can relax and enjoy themselves and where we can help them to think more positively about their hometown. Investments in the Stedelijk Museum Schiedam have been quite high for the city council and at the moment it is a bridge too far to invest in an historical museum. Although the city is willing to finance promotional activities, this does not mean that it is prepared to open a museum about the identity of Schiedam in addition to the existing Jenever Museum.

1 The Distillery Museum is housed in one of the old jenever distilleries. Schiedam is also home to the Dutch Museum for Glass and Glass Technology.

2 CoBrA is a group of artists dating from the 1940s. The name is derived from the three capital cities of the countries where the founding members came from: Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam. Appel, Constant, Corneille and Eugene Brands were some of the Dutch artists involved.

During the preparations for the reopening of the museum building, we have found a lot of collaboration between shopkeepers, the city council and entrepreneurs. For the first time in history everyone is working together! This means that Schiedam is going to succeed in attracting more tourists and it is a manifestation of the city's growing self-confidence.



1



2



3

1. Anton Rooskens, *Dance macabre*, 1949. Oil on canvas, Schiedam Municipal Museum Collection
2. Constant, *Scorched earth*, 1951. Oil on canvas, Schiedam Municipal Museum Collection
3. Karel Appel, *Primaeval beast*, 1951. Oil on canvas, Schiedam Municipal Museum Collection

Discussion

Chair: Darryl McIntyre

Group Director of Public Programmes, Museum of London

The discussion focused on issues relating to merging tourism and cultural development, building an image of the city, and defining the role museums can play in promoting cities and reaching new tourist audiences.

One of the more complex issues revolves around the role of the museum in relation to tourism and the city council, which often funds community-based museums and is one of their key stakeholders. Often this can create confusion about where the exact responsibilities lie. This issue emerged during the discussion on the Hartford case study, which appeared to suggest that the Hartford Museum does not view promoting itself to tourists as a high priority. It was suggested that this museum might consider using a tourist information centre for this, as has been the case in Zutphen in the Netherlands.

In some cases the merging of tourism and culture within municipal organizational structures, as was the case in 2004 in Reykjavik, reduces the 'silo' approach. This means that organizations function less insularly and can achieve more by co-operation. It provides opportunities for more focused strategic thinking in the field of cultural tourism and on the composition of cultural tourism programmes that benefit both the tourism and heritage sectors. One of the aims of the Reykjavik city council is to promote itself as a cultural city. The effort made by both the council and staff of the museum to develop and implement programmes about culture and tourism brought both sectors closer together. In such an approach, museums are an important factor in measuring the success of the council's cultural and economic policy and roles.

The city is a place that is constantly changing, and it is this story that the museums are particularly well placed to capture and communicate. The museum informs people why and how the city is what it does today and encourages people to think about the city's evolution and future direction.

The museum in Schiedam plans to achieve better results in the next five to ten years. Parts of their collection belong to the city council and are also on display in other museums in Schiedam. Schiedam Museum is planning new exhibitions that can be displayed in the other museums. They want to create spaces where everyone would like to be. They also plan to develop a partnership involving Delft University and young artists. This is part of a city marketing project called, 'Did you know?', which focuses on the past and the present and all the things the city is proud of.

The discussion considered how museums respond to new audiences from other countries. There is increasing emphasis on attaining a broad and diverse audience. With regard to tourists, it is important to recognize that many know very little about the country's history and cultures.

In Estonia, the projected audience profile of the new city museum in the capital Tallinn is approximately 70% tourists and 30% local residents. Before planning and developing their exhibition programme, the museum asked the public (with the help

of questionnaires) what they would like to see in future exhibitions. They believe all museums, especially small museums, must research their audience if they want to succeed and attract large numbers of visitors. Hartford Museum also undertook audience research, and concluded that they first actually had to get people interested in history before they could tell the story of Hartford. Other museums have also encountered this problem. Visitors want to enjoy a range of experiences during their visit and are interested in stories that they can relate to personally.

The Hartford audience research also explored how people spend their leisure time. No one appeared to be interested in history. Then they posed the question differently: 'Are you interested in how your grandparents lived?' and the response was huge. Recognition is very important as people have to be able to relate to the subject matter.

In Schiedam the outcome of the findings with focus groups was not satisfactory. People told the museum what they would like to see but when the exhibitions opened, visitor numbers were still low. The reaction of the focus groups was that the museum should itself decide what exhibitions to make.

The general impression of participants was that people from outside the local region have a more positive feeling about the cities and are more interested than the local residents. This raised the question as to whether museums should focus more on what local residents want. For the small museums it was suggested that they should specialize and do what they excel at. If museums do this they can place themselves in a unique marketing position because what they offer is special: 'Be different!'. For instance, the city museum of Delft can specialize in 'Delft blue' and a specific historical period. This makes their promotional task easier. The advice of the discussion group was to try to be strong in one area and not try to do everything.

Contemporary Dutch art is the core business in Schiedam. The museum wants to be a place which the people of Schiedam can identify with. They see the museum as having two purposes: firstly, to help people be more positive about their city and, secondly, to promote the city and to present the history of the city. Schiedam considers there is a market for tourists in the future because it is part of Rotterdam. Rotterdam has developed a tourist industry in the last 10 to 15 years and Schiedam wants to be linked to this industry. Tour operators also promote this idea, and the new metro line will make Schiedam more easily accessible.

Participants asked whether the Schiedam Museum had considered working with other institutes to promote the city of Schiedam. The museum's view was that this is only useful when people are proud of their city. This is changing slowly. The CoBrA exhibition prompted some changes; it attracted many people who were impressed by the city.

Conclusions

- The wider public perception of a city often differs from local perception.
- Museums are working in a competitive market.
- Not all cities are equal. It is easier for bigger cities to generate and sustain a large tourist industry; for smaller cities it is harder to attract tourists.
- Global changes question the role of culture.
- Museums must participate in decision-making on funding to attract visitors and focus on their particular niche.
- The focus must be on attracting the public.
- It is hard work!

Red lights in the museum

Annemarie de Wildt

Curator Amsterdam Historical Museum

Window-shopping is a favourite pastime of the average tourist. In no other city in the world can one window-shop for sex as openly as in Amsterdam. The Amsterdam Red-Light District presents a powerful combination of sex and history. The area combines centuries-old picturesque houses with 21st-century brazen sexual images and objects. Few tourists can resist the temptation of looking round the area. The way in which the city of Amsterdam has dealt with its prostitutes, brothel-keepers and pimps was the *Leitmotiv* running through the exhibition *Love for Sale, 400 years of Prostitution in Amsterdam*, which the Amsterdam Historical Museum mounted in 2002.

Repression and tolerance

From the 17th century onwards Amsterdam has had a reputation for tolerance towards paid sex. The city of Amsterdam has moved from tolerance to repression and back again several times: after the shift from Catholicism to Protestantism in 1578, prostitution was forbidden by the new city authorities. Despite this official policy, prostitutes still solicited their male clients and bawdy-houses continued to exist. There were just too many women hungry for food and too many men hungry for sex. Sailors were an important groups of customers for the Amsterdam brothels, especially in the autumn when the ships returned from the East Indies. Around the year 1650 some 4000 to 5000 ships with an average crew of ten men made the return voyage annually.

Bernard Mandeville (1670-1733), a Dutch medical doctor, who lived in London, wrote around 1700 about the arrival of the sailors who had seen none but their own sex for many months: ‘...how is it to be suppos’d that honest Women should walk the Streets unmolested, if there were no Harlots to be had at reasonable Prices? For which reason the Wise Rulers of that well-order’d City (Amsterdam) always tolerate an uncertain number of Houses, in which Women are hired as publickly as Horses at a Levrery-Stable?’

During the 17th and 18th century prostitution was severely repressed from time to time. In her thesis, ‘Het Amsterdams Hoerdom’ (Amsterdam Whore Life)¹ Lotte van de Pol analysed the 8099 court hearings against prostitutes, clients and brothel-keepers held in Amsterdam between 1650 and 1750. Most offenders got off with a warning or fine, others were put in jail or expelled from the city.

Starting with the French occupation of the Netherlands in 1809, prostitution was officially approved, and in some cities even regulated by the local authorities. However, protests condemning prostitution organized by Christians and Feminists in the last decades of the 19th century resulted in Amsterdam in a police ordinance that forbade to provide accommodation for indecent assault. In 1911 this became a national law. Liberal morals were curbed by a moralist state.

¹ Pol van de, Lotte, *Het Amsterdams Hoerdom. Prostitutie in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw in Amsterdam*, Amsterdam 1996.

During the 20th century prostitutes and brothel owners were involved in a business that was illegal, but nevertheless to some extent tolerated, especially from the 1960's onwards. Prostitution politics during the last decades of the 20th century are a good example of the famous Dutch *gedogen* or tolerance policy that can also be witnessed in the way Dutch society deals with drugs.

The 1911 ban on exploiting brothels and engaging in street prostitution was lifted in 2000 for the entire country after decades of political debate. Prostitutes and owners of businesses had entered into a new relationship with the local authorities who in turn were burdened with a new role: supervision of the way that particular areas of business was conducted. After the liberalisation of prostitution in the year 2000, brothel owners had to go to the city hall to obtain a permit, and if they had a bad track-record they were given a little sermon by one of the officials on responsible business-practices: like maintaining good levels of hygiene and taking measures to ensure safe sex.

Police-inspectors go around the brothels to check the women's papers and the owners of the rooms are fined if the girls don't have the right documents. If they find underage girls sitting in the windows the room is immediately boarded up.

Thought-provoking – provocative?

Even though prostitution is one of the icons of Amsterdam, the average Amsterdammer knows little about its background and history. There are now, and have been in the past, various, often conflicting images of prostitution, for instance the discussion as to whether prostitutes are victims or independent sex-workers. The museum hoped the visitors would discard some of their prejudices. We wanted to be thought-provoking rather than provocative, but making an exhibition on prostitution was inevitably a provocative act. We have never had so much press attention as we received then. The exhibition was aimed both at a local audience and foreign tourists.

Research for the exhibition involved talks with, amongst others, prostitutes from various sectors of the profession (window-prostitution, call-girls, sex clubs and street prostitution), clients, women involved in the prostitutes' trade union the Red Thread, the Prostitution Information Centre and the Mr. de Graaf Foundation (no longer in existence), police-officers, health-officers, local politicians and civil servants, artists, and brothel owners.

It seemed inevitable that the Amsterdam Historical Museum would have to make an exhibition about prostitution at some time or another. It's an important subject from a social, economic, art historical, and gender point of view. However, it was not an easy subject to tackle. We had long discussions about the way we would represent the subject and the museological choices that had to be made. *What questions were to be raised? Which angle was to be chosen? How were ethical questions to be dealt with? How explicit could a respectable museum actually be?* The museum didn't want to take a moral stance on prostitution but hoped the exhibition would encourage visitors to discuss the subject.

Images of prostitution

An exhibition consists of images: paintings, sculptures, video's and photographs. Prostitutes usually object to having their photos taken and have stickers on their windows bearing the text: 'No photography'. Prostitution is now a legal business, but most women still don't want their friends and family to know how they earn their living. We worked as much as we could with photographers that entered into relationships



1. SM exhibit with attributes of SM Mistress. Collection of Dutch Police Museum, Apeldoorn

with their clients. In the world of prostitution these relationships often involve money changing hands. Photographer Marian van Veen cooperates with her models, who are also her neighbours in the Red-Light Area, and shares the copyright earnings with them.

Not all of the photographs in the exhibition escaped controversy. Arnold Karskens made a number of impressive photographs of addicted prostitutes in the 1980's. He also paid them for their cooperation and they allowed him into their life. 20 years later, we had no idea where these women were. Some had died, others had moved on.

We weren't able to contact the women whose abject existence was the subject of the photos, but we agreed beforehand that we would remove a picture immediately if someone objected to its being shown. Three women did object and two of them took legal action. I had a long talk with the woman who decided not to prosecute. A few years before the exhibition she had announced on local television that she wanted to stop using heroine for good, and that she was going to stop working on the street-prostitution zone and take up her old profession as a forklift truck-driver again. She had quit prostitution but was out of work. Family members had seen her in the exhibition and assumed she had started working as a prostitute again. I offered to go and tell them that this was old footage, but she declined the offer. I also told her how impressed I was with the proud way in which she talked about her situation on television. Nevertheless, I went away sad, because I knew that words, and the bunch of flowers I had brought her, were of very little help. Prostitution will never be a ordinary profession, however legal it may now have become.

Nudity and SM

The exhibition team also had some hefty discussions about how explicit the exhibition should be?

In the 1930's a brothel in the rather chic Leidsestraat masqueraded as a massage parlour. The present residents found very explicit photographs that probably were used to stimulate the customers. We showed some pictures of girls on their own or touching each other, but we also had one displaying intercourse.

One room in the exhibition was hidden from view by a curtain. The walls consisted of painted wall-panels displaying some rather crude pictures, some of them with SM scenes. They had been confiscated by the police in the 1930's, just like the paraphernalia used by a pre-war SM-dominatrix. All these objects were on loan from the Dutch Police museum, which had never displayed them until then. (fig. 1)

Inside out, life seen from the prostitute's angle

Typical tourist-guide images show the outside of the Amsterdam Red-Light District. We gaze through the window and see the prostitute, often bathed in red light, standing or sitting at the window. In the exhibition we also wanted to offer views and voices from the inside looking out, seen from the prostitute's angle.

After lengthy discussions, we decided on a photograph of Parisian Leen in her window as the image for the exhibition poster. (fig. 2) The photo was taken in the late 1960s by Amsterdam photographer Cor Jaring. He must certainly have worked with her consent, because we can see a shot of Leen taken from the back exchanging glances with a male passer-by. Parisian Leen didn't come from Paris. Apart from a couple of Surinamese women, most prostitutes in the Red-Light District in those days were Dutch. Leen had been on holiday to Paris, quite a trip back then, but one a good prostitute could easily afford. Leen was one of the famous prostitutes in the heydays of the *Walletjes*, as the Red-Light District is called in Dutch, before the neon signs appeared and the drug-barons took over.

Marieken Verheyen's installation *How Much?* from 1989 was one of the most powerful works in the exhibition. It combines both the perspective of the men visiting the prostitutes and the women who sell their bodies. Marieken filmed men walking past a prostitute and recorded their voices. These images were projected life-size onto a large screen. Behind the screen stood a typical prostitute's high stool for the exhibition visitors to sit on. As they sat there watching, a procession of potential 'punters' passed them by, looking straight into their faces and asking: 'Hoeveel? How much?'

This was the experience most visitors remembered most vividly from the exhibition and also, according to our educational staff, the one some of them felt quiet uncomfortable about.

The showcase dedicated to former prostitute Metje Blaak represented two different sides to prostitution. Metje has written a few books, including a '*How to ...*' book for prostitutes, called the *Trukendoos (Box of Tricks)* (1998). She worked as a prostitute in Amsterdam and other cities in the 1980's and 1990's. Her working capital was a set of costumes. She would perform any role her customers desired. Some of her working clothes, a corset, a nurse's uniform and a hand-made whip are now in the Amsterdam Historical Museum's collection (fig. 3).

Metje has given up prostitution and now works as a photographer. Her customers these days are women, 'honest women' in the words of Mandeville. They come to have their pictures taken in Metjes 'whores' clothes', as she calls them. Metjes' current



2. Poster for the exhibition *Love for Sale*

clients like to play with the clothes and codes of prostitution, and Metje takes pictures of them in seductive poses, often as a present for their husbands. In the exhibition we showed Metje in her old and new professions.

It was more difficult to portray the life of 17th-century and 18th-century prostitutes. Genre paintings portray many harlots and brothel-keeping madams, but none gives a realistic picture of the trade. The words of the women taken to court in the 17th and 18th century have come to us through the clerks of the courts. They speak about poverty, weird customers, being abandoned by the fathers of their children. Actors and actresses spoke the texts which visitors could listen to on the headphones.



3. *Metje Blaak in her working clothes, pin-up*

Secret spaces

Prostitution involves walking into secret spaces. According to recent, but not very precise, statistics, between 25 and 40% of Dutch men has used the services of a prostitute. Far fewer women are familiar with brothels from the inside.

One of the tasks of Lies Ros, the designer of the exhibition, was to create some secret places, places visitors actually had to walk into. The photo of Cor Jaring was used to model a small intimate room, like the one Leen and her colleagues used in the 1960s. Visitors could sit on the bed inside (always a single bed, then and now) and watch an interview with Henriette, who started work in the late 1940's. Visitors sat on the bed

and listened to her stories about her customers, safety, relations with her colleagues and experiences with the Amsterdam police. The reconstruction of the waiting room of the famous 19th-century brothel Maison Weinthal was more abstract. There are no pictures of the interior in existence today, only a description in the novel, *Kamertjeszonde*, by Herman Heijermans. A copy of this book lay on a sofa in a small private room with some nude 19th-century portraits originating from a Men's Club on the walls. The outside of the cabinet was covered with enlargements of 19th-century police documents with the names and dates and places of birth of the girls who worked in Maison Weinthal. Many foreign girls worked in Amsterdam as prostitutes around 1900. They came mostly from France and Belgium.

Right next to the brothel we exhibited the painting made in 1897 by Marie Heijermans, sister of the novelist Herman. *Victim of Misery*, Marie called her painting, showing the prostitute not as a fallen woman without morals, like many people in the 19th century portrayed prostitution, but as a young girl forced to sell herself because she needed the money. (fig. 4)



4. Marie Heijermans, *Victim of Misery*, 1897.
Collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

Window prostitution is now subject to legal regulations, as are brothels and Men's Clubs. However, street prostitution is forbidden in Amsterdam. Women walking the streets, often heroine-addicts, have been driven out of the centre of the city. The street-walkers zone at Theemsweg, in an industrial area, was opened in 1996. It was built by the city of Amsterdam in order to confine street-prostitution to one area. It was also done to provide a safer environment, and decrease the risk of disease by distributing free condoms. Customers could come by car, drive round a circular road to pick up a woman, and take her in the car to one of the steel cubicles. Amsterdam wasn't the first Dutch city with a street-prostitutes' zone, but did have the novelty of a special place for men arriving by bike.

This secret place was reconstructed in the exhibition too. We actually borrowed a steel cubicle from the zone and visitors could walk into the cubicle to listen to stories told by women who had worked on the Theemsweg. The zone was closed in October 2003. It wasn't a haven for addicted women it was supposed to have been – it was too far away from the dealers – and many women working on the zone proved to be victims of human-trafficking. It was criticized by brothel-owners too who accused the municipality of unfair competition in supporting the zone. In the collective memory of the Amsterdammers the zone will continue to be connected with alderman Rob Oudkerk who had to resign in spring 2004 when it became known that he had visited the zone several times. Discussions in the press and among city officials focused on whether or not heroin-addicted girls, and women who were victims of human-trafficking, worked there. As it was highly likely that they did, the zone had to be closed.

The reactions

The opening of the exhibition was a very lively event with politicians, brothel-owners, prostitutes, policemen and art-collectors rubbing shoulders. *Love for Sale* generated a lot of publicity. Ex-prostitute Metje Blake appeared on television a number of times in connection with the exhibition, talking about her wardrobe and about the prostitutes' trade union De Rode Draad (The Red Thread), which she is involved in.

On the whole we got very few comments from visitors about explicit images. Our educational department observed that some felt as if they were too close for comfort at times, especially in Henriette's room. We suspected this beforehand and didn't mind. It's understandable that people should feel uncomfortable about the subject. We heard from people they had talked about what they had seen and heard at length.

Some, especially the tourists from abroad, expressed amazement at the fact that an exhibition like this could be held in an official city museum. Many people wrote they had gained more insight into the subject and quite a number of Dutch and foreign prostitutes, often preferring to be called sex-workers, visited the museum and wrote in the reaction book that they were pleased to see a realistic picture of their work.

Liverpool: European capital of...the transatlantic slave trade

David Fleming

Director National Museums Liverpool

Liverpool and the transatlantic slave trade

This paper focuses on how a museum might represent the difficult subject of the transatlantic slave trade in an honest and intelligent fashion.

First, some background on Liverpool and the transatlantic slave trade. Between about 1500 and 1870, millions of Africans were captured, enslaved and transported across the Atlantic Ocean by Europeans. The motivation for this traffic was that the European powers needed labour to work in their American colonies. It was in the middle of the 17th century that the English became regular participants in the trade in African people. By the end of the century the English were the largest traffickers in slaves in the western world, shipping on average some 6-8,000 enslaved Africans a year to the Americas. This figure grew to 30-45,000 per year after 1750. In England alone almost 11,000 ships were fitted out for the slave trade between 1698 and 1807. In the early days the English slave trade was dominated by merchants in London and Bristol. However, they were soon overtaken by Liverpool.

During the 18th century over 5000 slave ships departed from Liverpool and, by 1800, three quarters of all English ships involved in the slave trade were fitted out in this port. After 1780 Liverpool was the largest slave-trading port in the Atlantic world. While slaving was not the city's only trade, it was the corner stone of its economy and the foundation of its wealth. (fig. 1)

Until 1994, when the Liverpool Merseyside Maritime Museum opened a gallery dedicated to the history of the transatlantic slave trade, Liverpool's role in the slave trade had scarcely been acknowledged. Before this date the Maritime Museum, opened in 1987, had covered the history of the port, but had merely treated the slave trade in the same way as any other form of trade. Moreover, this display, in the words of its curators, had been put together hurriedly and inadequately. A report by Lord Gifford into race relations in Liverpool in 1989 explicitly criticised the gallery, as its approach could easily have been interpreted as a denial of Liverpool's role in the slave trade, rather than a fitting acknowledgement.

In 1990 the Maritime Museum was approached by the English business tycoon Peter Moores, head of the Peter Moores Foundation, a man who had made his fortune through the football pools and the retail trade. Moores proposed that the museum should develop a display specifically about the slave trade and wrote in 1994: 'During forty years of work and travel in Europe and America, it became increasingly clear to me that slavery was a taboo subject, both to white and black people. Forty years ago, most Europeans had managed to suppress any acknowledgement of their connection with the slave trade. It was something in the past. In the Unites States, where it was impossible to ignore the results of the slave trade, there was segregation, later bussing and



1. Dock Traffic Office.
Courtesy of the National
Museums Liverpool

recently something like integration, but never any mention of how black people came to be in America in the first place. We can come to terms with our past only by accepting it, and in order to be able to accept it we need knowledge of what actually happened. We need to make sense of our history. It seemed to me that the taboo should be exorcised'.¹

Moore provided the money to develop a 400- square-metre gallery, and the museum staff set about putting together the scheme. There were a number of key steps which the museum had to take in attempting to create an authoritative account of the slave trade. An advisory committee was set up which included black people from Liverpool, Britain and overseas. The role of the committee was to advise and guide the project team. Scholars who had expert knowledge of the slave trade were invited to a seminar, at which the view was expressed that it was impractical and impolitic to develop a slavery gallery at the Maritime Museum. Nevertheless, some of these scholars acted as guest curators and advised on both the storyline and texts in the displays.

A public launch of the project was organised which aroused a great deal of suspicion and hostility. Why was the museum doing this? What were Peter Moore's motives? What were local black people going to be getting out of the project in terms of work or jobs? Was the museum making a profit out of the project? The composition of both the advisory committee and guest-curators group was criticised. The suspicion was rooted in the museum's poor record in addressing black issues. Why was it suddenly undertaking a project so central to the history of black people?

Organisational considerations and dilemmas

The project team attempted to address these concerns in a number of ways. They adopted a mission statement, which read, 'The aim of the gallery is to increase public understanding of the experience of Black People in Britain and the Modern World through the examination of the Atlantic slave trade and the African Diaspora'. They took steps to explain how the gallery would be developed and how others could play a role in that process. Both the advisory committee and the guest-curators group welcomed new

¹ Moore, Peter in: Tibbles, Anthony (ed.), *Transatlantic Slavery*, National Museums Liverpool 2005, p. 11.



2. *Slave breaking chains*. Courtesy of the National Museums Liverpool

members, to counter the objection that not enough women nor Africans were involved. All along the line people were consulted – over methods of approach and interpretation and over the name of the gallery. There were focus groups, questionnaires and newsletters. Contacts were made with other museums and with groups from the black community to locate objects and illustrative material. (fig. 2) Events were organised in the museum and outside, such as a workshop on Women in Slavery, and a poetry reading on South Africa's National Day. A major performance on the day prior to the gallery opening included a procession and a memorial event dedicated to all those who suffered as a result of the slave trade.

Of course, the crucial element was the storyline. What was to be the approach? Should this be seen from a European or African point of view? White or black? Is African the same as black? One of the members of the advisory committee and a guest curator wrote:

'To most white people, slavery and colonialism are just a part of a distant memory of nothing in particular. For whites, slavery did not last particularly long, its benefits accrued only to a tiny proportion of white people and the evils of slavery are overshadowed by the role played by British abolitionists. In any case, the rise of Western nations, Britain and the United States in particular, as the industrial supremos of the world, is explicable to them simply in terms of English innate genius. Poverty and penury in Africa, and racial inequality in the West, is explained in terms of black inability, incompetence or laziness.

To black people, though, slavery and colonialism reiterate themselves in our everyday lives, and evoke poignant and immediate memories of suffering, brutalisation and terror. For black people, Western nations achieved their industrial growth and economic prosperity on the backs of blacks, abolished slavery primarily for economic reasons, have discriminated against black people ever since, and are unrepentant about any of it. African underdevelopment and racial inequality in the West is understood primarily in terms of racism and racial hostility of whites'.²

² Small, Steven in: *ibid*, p. 120.

A big danger was that it was easy to become preoccupied with the mechanisms of the slave trade – the ships, the methods of trading, the numbers, the economics – and thus to dehumanise a very great human tragedy. Indeed the initial title of the gallery – the *Atlantic Slave Trade Gallery* – was criticised and changed for this very reason to *Against Human Dignity*. This is a story about people, not trade. The gallery displays, similarly, do not begin on-board a slave ship, but in Africa, with personal witness. It was seen as important that museum visitors get to know something of Africa and its people, to appreciate that Africans may have been enslaved, but first and foremost they were people, not slaves. Moreover, wherever possible, African images of Africans, not European images, were used in the gallery.

There are many ways in which bias can creep in if the curators are not on their guard. For instance, almost all the display material connected with the abolition of slavery and the slave trade relates to European humanitarian and moral campaigns, whereas in fact the enslaved Africans themselves played a major part through their revolts, uprisings and other actions: this must be reflected in the displays.

The gallery text, of course, provoked massive debate, and writing the final text was a difficult business. Not only did a long and complex story need to be reduced to a few thousand words, but there were fundamental considerations of language, approach and attitude. Even the use of a word such as ‘slave’ is controversial. The word carries a dehumanising message and its use can itself provoke vehement opposition.

The role of the *Against Human Dignity* Gallery

The making of Liverpool’s transatlantic slavery gallery is an object lesson in a number of ways. It is, in a city whose past wealth was in part created by its participation in the most invidious of all forms of trade, not so much a reminder, as a revelation. No young person growing up in modern Liverpool has any real knowledge of the slave trade. No English schoolchildren are well-versed in the reasons for transatlantic slavery, nor in its workings or consequences. We are at risk not of forgetting, but of never even really knowing about the brutalisation of Africa. We see its legacy in modern Africa, in the Caribbean, in the USA, in South America, but we do not know enough about it to understand its causes and effects.

If we do not learn about the slave trade, we cannot grasp how the kidnapping, murder, rape and violation, on a massive, inhuman scale, has left its mark on the modern world and in the minds of black people. Five hundred years of exploitation, with the full sanction of European states and church authorities, has left African nations with the legacy of the worst economic conditions anywhere on the planet, even today, more than 150 years after slavery’s abolition. The millions now starving in Africa can trace their plight to slavery and colonialism. Instability continues to plague states established within political boundaries imposed by Europeans on tribal, linguistic and natural boundaries.

Modern Western governments, not 18th-century ones, have established or propped up military dictatorships, usually in a covert fashion, always motivated by their own advantage. Underdeveloped economies in South America and the Caribbean can trace the origins of their current predicament back to the slavery era. In the United States and across Europe the descendants of Africans continue to fight for respect and equality of opportunity, and against racial hostility. No one could ever doubt that slavery has been fundamental in shaping the modern world, and will continue to influence our development in future.

It is because of Liverpool's role in the slave trade that National Museums Liverpool (NML) bears the responsibility of ensuring the story is one which is told, and never forgotten in the city. But we also believe that we must work with people, with institutions, which see the story from other perspectives, and we intend to develop stronger links around the theme of the transatlantic slave triangle. We must explore the issues arising from our shared history together, in an international forum.

In Liverpool, we continue to relate the story through our Transatlantic Slavery Gallery, an installation which is now twelve years old. We run Slavery Trails around the city, to see where the slave ships were built and repaired, to see the hundreds of clues in the architecture, the sculpture and the street names. We run a sustained programme of public and learning activities, including drama workshops, demonstrations, handling collection sessions, lectures and exhibitions; we advise other museums. We intend to set up an international Transatlantic Slavery Triangle network of museums. We are working with colleagues in London, Bristol and Hull to develop learning resources for schools through the *Understanding Slavery* project. Every year, in partnership with Liverpool City Council, we organize Slavery Remembrance Day events around the 23 August. This is the date when, on the island of San Domingo (now Haiti and the Dominican Republic) an uprising of enslaved Africans began, a revolt which was crucial in the fight against slavery, and the date chosen by UNESCO as a reminder that enslaved Africans were the main agents of their own liberation.

Our activities around Slavery Remembrance Day have expanded, and we are involved in campaigns to achieve proper acknowledgement and recognition of the slave trade. Liverpool City Council, which a few years ago made a formal civic apology for the city's role in the slave trade, recently passed a motion adopting 23 August as a civic occasion and calling on the UK Government to initiate a National Slavery Memorial Day, commending NML for our work in this area. This is no small matter, because the UK Government's official position on the slave trade has been that, while it was 'barbaric and uncivilised', and 'shameful', nevertheless it 'belongs in the past', and Government outraged campaigners at the *2001 World Conference Against Racism* by claiming that slavery was not a crime against humanity because it was legal at the time. Despite the fact that 2004 was UNESCO's *International Year to Commemorate the Struggle Against Slavery and its Abolition*, and bicentenary of the founding of the independent Haitian republic, it took the UK Government until October 14 to initiate a House of Commons debate on the 'Struggle Against Slavery'. During this landmark debate, Fiona MacTaggart, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department, said: 'Slavery is a crime against humanity. Slavery and the slave trade were, and are, appalling tragedies in the history of humanity.'

An international museum dealing with the history of slavery

Meanwhile, National Museums Liverpool is proposing to found an International Slavery Museum in 2007. The key messages of this institution will be that transatlantic slavery:

- created a permanent injustice
- changed the history of Africa, Europe and the Americas
- was brutal and dehumanising
- was resisted by the enslaved people at every opportunity
- led to racism and racial hatred

- requires a shared understanding, and a shared commitment to combat its consequences.

The objectives of the museum are to:

- Inform and help visitors understand the history of transatlantic slavery and the wider issues of freedom and injustice involved.
- Challenge preconceptions, prejudice and ignorance and encourage visitors to regard transatlantic slavery and its consequences as a shared history with shared responsibility for addressing its legacy in the modern world.
- Interpret, in an open and honest manner, Liverpool's role in the transatlantic slave trade and its impact on the economic and cultural growth of the city.
- Generate and capture a response from the visitor which will allow the Museum to create a uniquely personal experience.

This new institution will replace and expand upon the *Against Human Dignity* gallery, and will have a much stronger emphasis on contemporary issues arising out of the slave trade. We have learned from the issues which arose when the existing gallery was created and we shall **endeavour not to repeat mistakes, though we believe that the credibility of our museum service has already been greatly enhanced through our consultative approach in this sensitive area of activity.**

It seems to me important that Liverpool's work in commemorating slavery should not merely instruct modern Liverpoolians about, or chastise them for the practice of their ancestors, for I do not believe that modern Liverpoolians should feel any guilt. I do believe that they carry a weight of responsibility to ensure that the slave trade is not allowed to fade out of sight, and the gallery must perform a much more important function in alerting us to the inhumanity of our species. We must cultivate a 'culture of memory', of collective memory, of a distant age beyond living memory, which must never be forgotten. We must understand why the world is as it is in Liverpool, Africa, and in all countries inhabited by people of African descent. This is, of course, a value common to all history museums, and it is why they are such key cultural institutions.

Not everyone agrees with this. Here are some quotations from letters sent to newspapers in Liverpool about our proposals: 'The TUC's call for a Day of Remembrance of the slave trade again brought out the politically correct, self-appointed interpreters of Liverpool's historical connection with slave trading. As usual, they were afforded publicity for incorrect claims and emotive fantasy, despite the most recent revelations that this was a joint venture between Africans and Europeans. We were once more treated to the views of the usual 'rent-a-conscience' crowd, ever ready to disparage Liverpool's past as a great trading city. Even at its height, the 'African Trade' – as it was known – accounted for less than 10% of Liverpool's overall trade. It is time it was acknowledged that the originators of the slave trade and its main facilitators were African...The main buyers were Arabs, and today the trade persists; not in Liverpool, but in Africa, and those involved are still Arab traders and Africans'.³

'Is the proposed Transatlantic Slavery Centre...overkill? The Museum already has an extensive Slavery Gallery in its basement, so why does this section have to be expanded further? While the debate on slavery and its historic significance for Liverpool is a subject that should not be shied from, isn't this latest development by National Museums Liverpool getting out of proportion?'

³ Letter, *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 30 2004, p. 12.

‘Having been down-trodden itself by so many over the last 30 years, the curators of Liverpool’s heritage seem determined to add to our poor self-esteem’.⁴ Such letters appear regularly, reflecting views that the image and reputation of Liverpool will suffer if the subject of the slave trade is aired too visibly. Happily, the newspaper which publishes these letters takes a different view:

‘Confronting our shameful past’ ‘Slavery always leaves behind a shameful blot wherever it was practiced – and Liverpool, which grew rich on this barbaric trade, is no exception. So it is praiseworthy that the city, far from sweeping this inconvenient fact under the carpet, is to be the location for the country’s biggest museum dedicated to the slave trade...slavery and its ramifications are not some distant historical subject, but are still of vital importance today’.⁵

National Museums Liverpool’s position is relatively straightforward. We intend to proceed with this project, because of its educational power. We believe the new museum will demonstrate that Liverpool is a grown up city with a mature view of itself and its history. We believe that the museum will make a positive contribution to interracial harmony, understanding and respect. The museum will not simply portray Africans as victims, and will consider all aspects of the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade, including the extraordinary survival and transmission of African cultures into the modern, western world.

In terms of funding we have successfully approached some public sources, and are devising a private and corporate sector fundraising strategy, including targeting US sources. The museum is due to open in its first phase on August 23 2007, in the year in which the UK celebrates the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade, and in which Liverpool celebrates its 800th anniversary.

Reading

Anthony Tibbles (ed.), *Transatlantic Slavery*, National Museums Liverpool (2005).
Captive Passage, Smithsonian Institution Press (2002).

⁴ Letter, *ibid*, October 10 2005, p. 12.

⁵ Editorial, *ibid*, October 6 2005, p. 12.

Discussion

Chair: Sandra de Vries

Director Municipal Museum of Alkmaar

Short summary of the presentation on the case study in Amsterdam

Information for the exhibition was gathered from sex workers, prostitutes and literature. When the exhibition was first proposed to the directors of the Amsterdam Historical Museum, they reacted enthusiastically. Later newspapers and other media paid a great deal of attention to the exhibition. There was one negative reaction – that the art in the exhibition was not hung properly! The curator received support from the health authorities, police and organizations of sex workers. Even on a subject like this, school projects proved to be a good way of informing children. Special programmes for secondary schools and municipal services in other cities were set up to discuss the topic. Annemarie de Wildt, the curator, was satisfied with the discussions provoked by the exhibition. It encouraged people to think about the subject. The main purpose was not to change attitudes towards prostitution but to encourage discussion.

The exhibition was partly funded by the Department of Social Affairs for Women's Rights, which wanted the exhibition to be mainly positive about prostitutes; presenting them as proud working women would bring another side of their story to light. The exhibition makers wanted to show both the positive and the negative sides. They sometimes used almost nostalgic and romantic images, but also presented the harsh aspects of the profession.

Short summary of the presentation on the case study in Liverpool

Presenting the history of the slave trade creates an opportunity to address the origins of racism. It also makes it possible to focus on the rich cultural heritage that was the result of this dreadful trade. By mainly condemning slavery, and thereby stressing just one specific point of view, you neglect other important issues. By looking at other facets of slavery, you can give a voice to other perspectives. Isn't creating a museum also a matter of listening to various dialogues going on in the city, or should you keep your distance from them? David Fleming pointed out the importance of critical dialogue. A gallery in the new Liverpool Museum for Transatlantic Slavery will be devoted to the history of the slave trade and there will be an educational centre for events, discussions etc. Central government will be responsible for raising the funds.

The working group discussed at length the creation of the museum itself (which is understandably complicated). What worries Fleming is the racial undertone of the opponents to the museum. There are even people who don't want the new museum to open at all. They say they don't want to be pushed into feel guilty. How to cope with the aspect of guilt? Fleming stresses that the new museum is not intended to become a museum about guilt. It will tell the history of slave trading in Liverpool. The main aim is to explain what happened. Letting people feel guilty is not the issue; feeling responsible for what human beings are doing or not doing to one another is. Slavery must be

put on the agenda. How can we continue as a civilised society with the slave trade in our past? The history of the slave trade is not defined by what happened in Liverpool. It is an international topic requiring an international audience. Although the international status of the subject is clear, connecting with other countries is difficult. Africa, for example, shows little interest in the issue of slavery. Rachid Bouzidi from Morocco offered to make contacts and help find funding.

Is there only one way to present the history of the slave trade in a museum? No, more than one model is possible. The museum must explore these models to reach larger audiences. It is difficult to live up to the expectations of the public on such a delicate subject. Too little attention paid to a specific aspect can be perceived as neglecting that part of history.

Conclusions

Both case studies are on controversial subjects and both are subject to taboo. One is more or less accepted because an official institution paid attention to it in the form of an exhibition (the one in the Amsterdam Historical Museum) and the other is subject to prejudice and criticism.

The Amsterdam Historical Museum tried to approach their theme from different angles, without being judgemental. It also tried to create dialogues with all the groups involved, including the public.

Liverpool is trying to get the injustice and pain caused by the slave trade in the city out into the open. David Fleming wants to relate the subject to the history of Liverpool, but it is obvious that not all Liverpoolians share his view – local newspapers have published some very critical and irritated letters in which the writers state that they don't want to feel guilty about slavery. This is not always easy to deal with.

Judging by these reactions, the process of making the museum a place of dialogue and debate is itself becoming a subject of discussion. This makes the whole process very complicated.

One can wonder if it is the issue of slavery or the issue of injustice – for some people obviously threatening – that causes the criticism.

We didn't come to any general conclusions, except that the subject of slavery is a very important issue and that it is more than a local issue. It is an international topic, not just a national or local one, making it an important theme for other museums in the world.

Made in Bruges. A modern city threatened by its romanticized tourist image

Jorijn Neyrinck and Ellen Vandenbulcke

Tapis plein, a project centre for a contemporary approach to heritage, Bruges

Background

Every single day Bruges is overrun by tourists who think they are in an open-air museum, a city that dozed off right after the Dark Ages and was kissed back to life by 19th century tourism. The clichés attributed to the city by early visitors are hard to eradicate because of the immense impact of mass tourism. The metaphors used in early 19th century travel literature like ‘Bruges: Venice of the North’ and ‘Brugge die Schone’ (Bruges, the beautiful) have become so ingrained that they are to be found in abundance in just about any text, article or brochure about the city.

The huge number of excursionists (‘I went to Bruges once’) who have flooded the city since the 1950s contrast sharply with the allegedly quiet, deserted village they are coming to see. Each day hundreds of thousands of people wanting to visit the city in three hours, tour the beaten track, walking from one highlight to another along the ‘golden tourist triangle’. Simultaneously a true exodus of young, active people is underway; they are leaving the city because of the poor economic prospects for highly skilled professionals and the lack of industry. The quiet, romantic image of the city doesn’t help to convince a young and dynamic generation to stay.

At the beginning of the 21st century Bruges is still facing the threat of becoming nothing more than a national heritage site, an empty museological scene, instead of a vibrant modern city reinventing itself with every new generation.

Remedy

With this exodus in mind, ‘Tapis plein vzw’ (a dynamic project group involved in developing experimental public heritage projects, founded in 2004 by four young inhabitants of Bruges) took the initiative to question the typical way in which the city is portrayed. To that end we started up a varied and comprehensive project: a public inquiry into viable, durable tourism and how a historical city centre can best cope with all the tourists. This rather abstract general principle has been the starting point of a series of very concrete and entertaining projects.

- In 2004 a bus toured the city and stopped at thirty different locations, looking for stories, information, desirable images, interviews and opinions on the subject.
- In 2005 this resulted in a compact historical exhibition on city tourism and concepts of the tourist in a playful format titled ‘B-tours – A travel agency on Bruges’. The exhibition was installed on shop-premises at the very heart of the city.
- The general public was asked to create a new and modern souvenir for Bruges in a contest called ‘b-cup’.
- There was an exhibition and a tour of shop-windows with creative views on the subject (realized in cooperation with several schools, youngsters, shopkeepers, cultural partners and others living in Bruges).

- An alternative new book on Bruges was published and new postcards were produced.

In short: we left the usual, fixed museological locations and went into the city, meeting people in their own neighbourhoods, in shops, squares, markets and at a number of events. In this way the public became actively involved in shaping a new and modern city.

Tapis plein's point of view

We should realize that the image of our city was created, historically speaking, from economical, political and other factors of interest. So shouldn't a historical city museum interpret, refine, broaden and maybe even adjust this image?

'Tapis plein vzw' (as an independent organisation) and the 'Bruggemuseum' have taken the first faltering steps and will work together in the future to develop new initiatives. Not an obvious choice for a historic city museum whose key focus is on historical presentation and objectivity. It should be seen as a rather courageous act if we remember that urban history is being written every day, with every move that is made and every action that is taken. A provocative subject for debate.



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1. and 2. b-tours travel shop: a historical exhibition about tourism in the form of a travel agent's
3. b-tours city project: playful display-window featuring Bruges and the creation of a city's image
4. b-tours travel shop: look through the viewmasters for a picture of the city in several different periods
5. b-tours: Bruges' image in the travel-guides in several different periods

Another view of St Petersburg

Julia Demidenko

Deputy-director The State Museum of the History of St Petersburg

The St Petersburg presented in tourist brochures

Picture books and promotion material present a traditional, immediately recognizable image of St Petersburg – showing this splendid imperial capital with its palaces, cathedrals and river-banks, and grandiose architectural ensembles. Peter the Great founded his city, later to become the country's capital, in 1703, with a view to it becoming a *Paradise on Earth*. Its monumental splendour was mainly realized in the first half of the 19th century when St Petersburg liked to be called, pretentiously, 'the capital of Europe'. The idea of a unified Europe was one of the main themes of the Congress held in Vienna in 1814-1815 after which the construction works on St Petersburg greatly intensified.¹ At the same time numerous poets and artists contributed to the creation of this image of the capital, in a beautifully expressed way. All these efforts have contributed to the recognition, in 1990, of the historical centre of St Petersburg as being worthy of inclusion on the UNESCO's List of World Heritage Sites. The tourist industry of contemporary St Petersburg exploits the city's 18th and 19th century image. In doing so they highlight three main St Petersburg 'brands: the Hermitage, the Mariinsky Opera and Ballet and the architectural ensembles.

St Petersburg's architectural heritage is also being put to good use by the leading museums. The majority of them are located in outstanding architectural monuments: the State Hermitage Museum occupies a complex of buildings including the famous Winter Palace of the tsars and the General Staff buildings situated around Palace Square built in the 1920s. The State Russian Museum is housed in various palaces, including the Michael Palace that once belonged to Grand Duke Mikhail Pavlovich, the Marble Palace commissioned to be built by Count Orlov in the third quarter of the 18th century, the St Michael Castle, the last residence of emperor Paul I, and the famous Stroganoff palace. The offices and the main exhibitions of the State Museum of the History of St Petersburg are in the Peter and Paul Fortress, the city's earliest architectural landmark and the centre of its urban development. Here the museification embraces primarily the 18th century monuments: St Peter's Gate, a sort of triumphal arch from 1708 and one of the fortress' entrance gates. The Saint Peter and Paul Cathedral from the first half of the 18th century (burial place for Russian emperors), and a few other historical buildings. The Peter and Paul fortress is one of St Petersburg's greatest tourists attractions. Since the year 1999 visitors have been able to enjoy a wonderful view over the river Neva from a boardwalk built along part of the southern fortress wall from which they have a panoramic view of the central embankments of the river Neva aquatorium when taking a special tour alongside the roofs of the curtain-walls.

In addition to its official splendour the city had a gloomy side. This is the less widely

¹ The Vienna Congress was held after the fall of Napoleon in 1814/1815, it was convened by the victors Prussia, Russia and England, its aim was to reorganize the political balance in Europe.

known Petersburg of Dostoyevsky (similar to the London of Dickens), a city of dismal living quarters, 'pit-like' courtyards and typical back-street neighbourhoods. At present this part of the city greatly interests contemporary photographers, in a hurry to capture this image before it disappears. The 'St Petersburg as Dostoyevsky knew it' is gradually being swept away as the city centre is being rebuilt and new buildings are arising to replace the old.

In Soviet times another stereotype was in use, that of 'Leningrad, city of three revolutions'² with the obligatory 'Aurora' cruiser³ and monuments to Lenin. This stereotype is no longer valid, the majority of our primary-school children do not even know who Lenin was.

How can St Petersburg best be portrayed?

What is the best way for the Museum of the History of St Petersburg to portray such a wealth of history and such dominant stereotype images, what is the St Petersburg's leitmotiv? What themes could be chosen for the museum of a city which for two centuries was the capital of the gigantic Russian Empire? Where do we draw the line between the history of the city and the history of the country and its cultural heritage? All political decisions were taken in St Petersburg, the majority of scientific discoveries were directed from St Petersburg, great Russian literature referred to St Petersburg and Russian progressive ideas were born or tried out here.

We had to take all this into consideration when we were preparing our new exhibition *The History of Saint Petersburg, 1830-1917*, which was opened in the year of our tercentenary in 2003 and replaced the previous exhibition, a presentation of the official Soviet line on Russian revolutionary movements-aimed at indoctrinating.

Our problem was complicated by the fact that we are not the only museum with a historical collection. Today the city has over 200 museums containing items on the history of St Petersburg's theatre, music and visual arts, as well as on scientists, military history, and so on. Furthermore the city is surrounded by a number of spectacular art and cultural-history museums like Peterhof, Tsarskoje Selo and Pavlovsk. They are housed in 18th and 19th century palaces and park complexes and display the Imperial Court in all its splendour. Across the Neva, opposite the Museum of the History of St Petersburg, is the Hermitage which displays not only art treasures but has a collection on Russian history and culture. Moreover there is the Museum of Russian Political History which deals with the Russian state and the revolutions near our Fortress.

In addition to all this, our museum has its own tragic history. The idea for this type of museum was born in the early 20th century, and was partly realized at different periods in our turbulent political history. In the 1930s what was left of the museum was practically destroyed and its most precious objects were distributed among other museums in Moscow and Leningrad. When the museum was reestablished in the 1950s it began to compile its collection anew. At present our assortment consists mainly of circa 30.000 urban household objects, and of architectural projects: plans, drawings and details of architectural décors.

² The revolutions of 1905 and of February and October 1917.

³ The cruiser Aurora functioned in 1917 as the main training ship of the Baltic Fleet in St Petersburg. The Aurora has become extremely famous because from this ship during the night of 25-26 October 1917 a blank shot was fired at the Winter Palace, giving the signal to rebellious workers, soldiers and sailors of the city to storm the palace. Nowadays the Aurora is a floating museum.

A history of everyday life in Saint Petersburg

In creating the new permanent exhibition on the history of St Petersburg - running from the second half of the 19th century up to the 1917 revolution - we wanted to show aspects of the life of Petersburg, which one cannot see in other museums. In so doing we chose a thematic rather than a chronological approach. Furthermore, we decided that the city's history should be related from the viewpoint of the city's inhabitants. Our decision to choose this point of view was not an arbitrary one.. The main historical event of the 2nd half of the 19th century in Russia was the liberation of serfs in 1861 and other reforms brought about by the Emperor Alexander II⁴. These reforms had a great influence on urban life, turning the beautifully decorated St Petersburg into a European megalopolis.

Each of the exhibition rooms has a different theme dedicated to a particular aspect of the city's life, like for instance: Petersburg as a representative imperial capital, and the reforms of Alexander II (didactic material in the form of video... and chronological tables). Other sections show the city as the financial centre of the Empire, the commercial St Petersburg and St Petersburg's fashion trade, including the city's transport. In addition to this there are themes like housing in St Petersburg (rented apartment-houses as a new type of dwelling, the telephone service and directory and the postal services); the municipal economy (water-supply and sewerage system, domestic services, municipal lightning, and so on). (fig. 1 and 2)

The choice of objects has been largely determined by the items available in our museum, mostly items used by St Petersburg's middle-classes. For instance, the multicultural composition of St Petersburg's population is presented for example by way of cooking practices in St Petersburg, which has taken in the traditions of the different national cuisines: Russian, French, German, Finish and Jewish. Visitors can see the kitchen utensils of the period and various menu cards for national festive meals.

A separate room is dedicated to the phenomenon of St Petersburg's art nouveau which is considered to be not just an artistic style but rather a style of life. Such new phenomena from the second half of the 19th century like photography and cinematography are also given separate treatment. Visitors can see examples of the technical appliances of the period and watch a cinematographic programme from the pre-1917-revolution era, including political newsreels, reports on Paris fashion and much more.

Thus we have replaced the history of the revolutionary movement with the history of everyday life, and the propaganda of state ideology with the values of private life and individual interests. In this connection the final part of our series of presentations on pre-revolutionary life gave us particular trouble. In the end we decided simply to show the faces of the 'last St Petersburgers' (we mean in name, since the city was renamed in 1914 and 1924)⁵ – including photographic portraits of those who perished during World War I because the beginning of WWI is the end of the entire period in the history of Russia and the end of our exhibition.

We think it is very important to help visitors, especially the young ones, realize that many of the things surrounding us are history and are connected to 'History with a capital H'. We also organized a special exhibition for children titled *The Street of Time*. Here a child can peep into each of the houses and see not only how the St

4 The liberal-minded Alexander II (1818-1881) tsar of Russia from 1855 to 1881, killed in an attack bringing his reign to an end.

5 In 1914 the city was given the name Petrograd. From 1924 to 1991 St Petersburg was called Leningrad.



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1. 'St Petersburg – the financial centre'. The picture from the exhibition: *The history of Saint Petersburg, 1830-1917*

2. The commercial St Petersburg'. The picture from the exhibition: *The history of Saint Petersburg, 1830-1917*

3. The street of time – the special exhibition for children

Petersburgers lived and worked in the 18th and 19th centuries but also see a quite modern room 'from grandmother's day' where everyday objects present the entire history of the 20th century. (fig. 3) This exhibition begins with a figure modelled on the founder of our city Peter I and ends with objects bearing the logo of our football team 'Zenith', popular throughout the entire country.

Changes to stereotype images

One of the missions of our museum is to change what in our view are false stereotypes and to broaden the way our city is perceived. This mission is not only put into practice by our exhibitions, our publishing department plays its part too. Our press publishes guidebooks, postcards and posters, and also produces a series of booklets devoted to themes which we could not fully present in our exhibitions: 'Marriage in St Petersburg', 'Fires in St Petersburg', 'Floods in St Petersburg', 'Lighting in St Petersburg' and much more. In this way they are an important addition to our exhibitions.

Since the image of 'Old St Petersburg' was formed mainly on the basis of a prolific amount of literature, we hope that our publishing activity will help to enrich the picture today. For instance, our latest publishing project consists of two picture books. The first appeared in 2003 and shows 'Images of Petersburg', the second was ready in 2005 and is called 'Images of Leningrad'. The first one gives a traditional presentation of military parades, glittering balls and architectural monuments, whereas the second focuses on interesting topics in our recent history.

Moreover our publications and temporary exhibitions are also dedicated to some little known pages of the city's history, such as traditions in celebrating Christmas in St Petersburg, or the history of the planning and construction of the underground railway in our city. In general, even in historical exhibitions, we try to touch upon the type of theme and topic which focuses on our present-day problems. Many projects were realized in co-operation with other institutions, such as the Institute of Urbanism and the Pro-Arte Institute of Modern Art. Our architectural exhibitions, one of our specialities, attract professionals and are often followed by some sort of round table discussion.

In 2006 we will be opening a new branch – the Museum of St Petersburg Avant-Garde, thus introducing a completely new notion into Russian art history – 'Petersburg avant-garde'. The appearance of the avant-garde movement in Russia from 1900-1910 and its further development in our city had certain distinguishing features. In particular, three famous schools of Russian avant-garde painting were formed here: the school of Malevich, the school of Filonov⁶ and the school of Matushin⁷. The memorial house dedicated to the Matushin school will show all the achievements of these artistic, literary, musical and theatrical projects.

We understand that the way tourists and of local citizens see our city differs. Tourists prefer to see the 'splendour of St Petersburg' whereas our locals are quite ready, perhaps even eager, to see 'a different city'. The new permanent exhibition has been on show now for two years and judging from its reception and the visitors' continued interest we must be giving people what they want.

6 Pavel Filonov (Moskou 1883-St Petersburg 1943)

7 Mikhail Matushin (Nizhny Novgorod 1861 – Leningrad 1934)

Discussion

*Chair: Lodewijk Wagenaar
Curator Amsterdam Historical Museum*

The presentation of the two case studies illustrated the problems experienced in two well-known 'touristy' cities, namely Bruges and St. Petersburg, particularly in their historical museums. The presenters of the case studies described the problem that visitors already have an image of these cities based on an age-old set of ideas and icons. How can these stereotype images be revised so that they are more in line with real life in these cities? The activities developed in Bruges and St. Petersburg to find a solution to this are linked to questions like: what places of interest should we bring to the attention of visitors, other than those that fit into the 'age-old' image recommended by tourist organizations and books? Another question was: what is interesting to the inhabitants of the city itself and how can we present a more realistic image of life in the past and present for those who actually live there. Both case studies discussed and actually used outreach activities to get inhabitants interested in contributing ideas and objects concerning 'their city life'.

Discussion

In both cities tourists feel distant from the local population. The question is whether a city museum should make an effort to change this. A Rotterdam Historical Museum curator mentioned during the discussion that this museum is using marketing as an instrument to bring about change. Educational programmes have been developed around the theme of shopping to coincide with an exhibition. These programmes aim to attract people to the museum who do not readily visit it.

City museums also have a tendency to be rather conservative and only to collect/present historical material on better known themes and parts of the city. Several participants strongly urged museums to play a more active role. A need is felt, for example, to include other, less well-known themes and areas of the city. Besides cooperating with residents, the Rotterdam Historical Museum is also working with the city council. Cycle tours and walking routes on a specific theme have been organized to introduce visitors to other, less well-known parts of the city. Antwerp organizes alternative tours to other parts of the city and on themes such as diamonds and fashion. In this way both tourists and local visitors can gain a very different impression of the city.

Conclusions:

- City icons should remain of interest to visitors.
- City museums can work with inhabitants and city councils to find new, less well-known places of interest, stories and objects. Go out and get in contact with them.
- Tourist organizations should be stimulated to pay attention to more than just the well-known parts of the city and attractions. Work together on developing tours on themes, such as crafts, modern architecture and people.

Epilogue

The subject of the Fourth Conference of the International Association of City Museums was *City Museums as Centres of Civic Dialogue*. The huge spatial, demographic, social and economic changes that many cities, even smaller ones, have undergone in recent decades were the starting point for this. The increasing importance that city authorities and tourist offices attach to images of the city was also a stimulus to choosing this subject. Concepts like identity and a feeling for the city crop up again and again in public discourse and demand further attention. To what extent are city museums able and willing to react to these developments? Are they open to many people's need to participate in numerous facets of society, their desire to ask questions and not merely be presented with instant answers? Are city museums open to the necessity of discussing various truths and creating room for more than one answer?

The subject of this international conference was evidently of real interest to many city museums. The articles and summaries of the discussions in this book make it clear that city museums are willing and able to approach and deal with this subject in enormously ways. It is no easy task to distil the major points and main lines of argument from so many contributions by participants from 26 countries, without generalising somewhat, but I do think it is possible to identify a few main ideas.

Generally speaking it can be said that museums in different cities, mainly in Western Europe and the United States, have developed from a supply-oriented approach to a question-oriented approach in recent decades. A lot of energy is put into seeking new target groups, and into outreach work and public surveys. When choosing subjects for exhibitions, museum staff work in a question-oriented way as far as possible. Museums must be as accessible and welcoming as possible. The authority of the curator, so often taken for granted, is being questioned. The comment, 'The visitor can become the curator', during the paper on the plans for a city museum in Beirut is indicative of this.

In other city museums, like Warsaw and St Petersburg, the emphasis is more on a reorientation of the picture of the past, which until recently was the 'official' version of history. Exhibitions and educational products are a means of prompting discussion by the public in the museum. There are also city museums, such as the one in District Six in Cape Town, which endeavour to refind chapters of history that have been suppressed or concealed. For these museums, working with memories and stories from the public is crucial, both in and outside the museum. Collection building, exhibitions and educational projects go hand in hand in this.

In this epilogue it is useful to reflect on the diversity of papers given at the conference and to pay attention to the opinions raised during the discussions. A brief overview per theme follows of the main points raised.

Theme 1: Shaping the city

1. In a period when many museums agree that they must primarily be audience oriented and not collection oriented, what is the responsibility of the curator for recording the history of the city? The curator/museum must in any case take an independent stance as the public expects the museum to provide reliable information. The curator must provide the narrative framework for the story of the city. An important

part of the content of the story may be the result of working with groups and organisations in the city. This cooperation can take on many forms. Ultimately a joint evaluation of the results should follow.

2. How independent can city museums be in relation to the government? Clearly the answer to this will vary from country to country. It naturally makes a big difference whether the museum is financed, either completely or predominantly, by the municipal government. In principle everyone agrees that museums must be as independent as possible in their stance and approach: they are devoted to long-term learning, not short-term political aims. In some countries, however, political pressure is so great that the situation is very different indeed. It is sometimes easier in these situations to present a particular vision of history in a temporary exhibition rather than in the permanent display. Sometimes, however, political programmes and the vision on museum policy do concur, like the necessity for an intercultural approach to history and cross-cultural dialogue. It is certainly advisable for city museums to enter into dialogue with the politicians of their city. Museums who actively seek contact with all kinds of groups in the city should not exclude politicians.
3. Museums must also record and present the recent changes in the city. Contemporary collecting is therefore essential. Cooperation with all kinds of parties is necessary: groups of immigrants and children, the business community, housing corporations, developers and all those other groups who play a role in changing in the city. In addition a different form of cooperation is required between the various heritage sectors, such as museums, archives, libraries and historic organisations. Digital media, like websites, can provide an excellent joint gateway for this purpose. Contemporary collecting demands a critical revision of the role of the object. What is the relationship between the object and the documentation of the context? What is the relationship between the material and immaterial forms of heritage? Some argue strongly that contemporary collecting must conform with the existing profile of the museum regarding its older collections. Ethnography is an important discipline in contemporary collection building and there should possibly be more collaboration with experts in this field.
4. The history of the city told by more than one museum. Participants shared the view that the history of the city is not only found within the walls of the museum. In several cities intensive cooperation between a considerable number of the museums represented at the conference and between museums and other heritage institutions has developed in recent years. The idea is to tell the 'story' of the city in more than one place. It is important for the different museums to profile themselves. Agreements on making collections more mobile at the level of the city can play an important role here. In practice this approach is not always straight forward as the cultural differences between the heritage sectors can be considerable. It takes time to be able to work cross culturally.
5. The role of artists in temporary and permanent exhibitions ought to be greater in the future. These could be visual artists but also story tellers. More than anyone, they are able to put emotions in the spotlight or introduce controversial subjects.

Theme 2: Activating the city

1. According to some, the city museum can and must function as a sort of workplace. Seen in this light the museum is a place where memories can be recaptured and recorded either individually or in groups. Museum staff lead this process, give support, and record the memories. This view of the museum means that memories of all kinds can be brought together. The discussions that may result can in turn prompt new memories or a new story about the past. The museum as a workplace, is by its very nature, dynamic. Relating memories and working together on the story of history can sometimes have a healing effect and contribute to recording parts of history that have been suppressed. By functioning as a workplace, the museum can provide a bridge between the usual academic visions of history and personal memories and stories.
2. There was a lot of discussion on outreach work and city museums. Contact can be made with new groups of people who do not go to museums through this type of work. These are mostly groups living in economically and socially deprived areas of the city. Cooperation with organisations, associations and people from these neighbourhoods is essential. It is crucial to set up and implement such projects together and not to present a ready-made plan. A museum does not usually have all the necessary expertise. This costs a lot of time and money. Above all, patience is essential: you must be prepared to work towards your ultimate goal through a process of trial and error. The museum staff do not usually have sufficient training in outreach work to be able to do this properly. Training museum staff, for example in the field of cross cultural skills, or employing experts temporarily is then necessary. But how far should you go with this sort of work? Where is the dividing line with real social work? This is an important discussion point.
3. Several city museums try to activate interest in the urban heritage and the city's history outside the museum building. In cooperation with partners like tourist organisations, schools, archaeological associations etc, city museums are extending their area of work. Historical tours of the city, small neighbourhood exhibitions and treasure hunts stimulate the interest of local residents and tourists. Interactive websites can add an extra dimension to this.
4. In a number of cases city museums also function as a discussion forum. The reputation of museums as places where authenticity is considered to be extremely important could be exploited more in this sort of activity.
5. There are city museums, for example in African countries, where the city museum and the phenomenon of the classical museum are not very well known. It is important for such museums to seek active partnerships with stakeholders to their foster their interest in the museum. Pilot projects can activate the interest of stakeholders and other target groups in their own history and urban heritage.

Theme 3: Representing the city

1. How do museums divide their attention between the local and regional population and tourists in their work? All city museums are directed at the local population but also hope to attract tourists. City museums in large cities can achieve this more easily than those in smaller ones. What does the city government want? Tourism and culture are sometimes in the same portfolio at municipal level. This can be to the advantage of the museum's plans because policy is in the hands of one department. Sometimes the local authority forces the city museum to choose for the tourist in the economic interests of the city. City museums try to follow their own policy and make this plain to the local authority.
2. People from outside the city often have a more positive image of the city than the local population. Some city museums make a conscious decision to try to change inhabitants' negative image of the city, for example, by temporary exhibitions and educational activities. This is done in consultation with the city council and others. In addition, information on less well-known parts of the city and historical topics must be made available to tourists. This can rectify the one-sided, cliché image that tourists often have of the city. Working with tourist services on, for example, developing historical tours is one means of doing this. City 'icons' as described by Vanessa Schwartz and Philip Ethington in these proceedings should not be refuted or camouflaged. The city museum can make good use of them.
3. As well as positive images of the city, there are also negative images and negative subjects that are more or less taboo. There are various approaches to dealing with such subjects. You can choose to approach the issue from different perspectives, carefully considering all aspects, and let the viewer form his or her own opinion. Another approach is to set aside the taboo and explicitly state your own opinion as a museum, as the Amsterdam Historical Museum did in the exhibition on prostitution in Amsterdam.
4. What risks do city museums take when they present controversial or consciously suppressed subjects from the past? Every city museum that takes, or is able to take, an independent stance can choose to do this. Reactions may be strong, varying from letters from regular museum visitors to public discussion. To what extent is there a danger that the museum will estrange its own public? Is that a bad thing and is it possible that the museum will attract completely new groups of visitors? The article on how Liverpool Museum chose to deal with the subject of the former transatlantic slave trade in the city sheds light on these issues.

What should we pay attention to in the coming years? I would like to name (in random order) a few areas of interest. The classical division of roles between curators, educators and the public relations department is no longer sacrosanct. It appears that the task of the curator is moving from being an expert in the field of collection building and presentation to the role of facilitator or mediator in projects employing educational staff and sometimes PR staff on an equal basis in the project team. What is new is the role the visitor can play in this team, albeit at some distance. Several articles in this book report on experiences with this approach, including the one on the *East Amsterdam* project of the Amsterdam Historical Museum. It seems to me that this process is still in the early stages and that in the coming years we must consciously seek to define further the different professional responsibilities.

A second area needing attention is the forging of partnerships and development of networks. As several of the conference papers and reports clearly show, the possibilities are enormous. What choices do we make when trying to reach new target groups, what partnerships are of strategic importance politically, what partnerships are unavoidable given the new developments in collection building and heritage management?. One thing does appear to be certain - city museums can no longer operate alone; partnerships and networks are essential. Every city museum must follow a conscious strategy in this respect, whereby it will often be difficult to withstand the political pressure that is always present to a greater or lesser degree.

Expanding the expertise of the museum is a third issue requiring attention. Staff will need more training in the field of intercultural skills and insight as well as in fostering a cross-disciplinary attitude towards other heritage services such as archives, historic buildings and archaeology. Fields like ethnography, sociology and social work should possibly be more strongly represented in city museums. Policy must pay special attention to the middle and higher levels of staff; they must be more representative of the population composition.

A fourth area requiring attention concerns the acquisition and presentation of the newest history of the city on the one hand and that of centuries ago on the other. Can or should contemporary collecting fit in with the existing framework of older collections. What should be done when the newest, often historical documentary collections differ radically from the older, for example, art collections? How can we make earlier history more interesting to as a wide a public as possible, who have little or no prior knowledge on this part of the city's history?

Finally, city museums should make more use of the opportunity to interchange the expertise they all have. In this period of rapid connections, both physical and virtual, the opportunities are there for the taking. This can also contribute to city museums adopting a more international approach on themes like immigration and emigration, the slave trade, racism etc. There are plans to research the possibilities for creating a virtual platform.

The conference clearly showed how much we can learn from each other. The network of the International Association of City Museums offers, as everyone knows, superb opportunities for this. Perhaps the city museums workgroup of ICMAH can in the future play a special role by setting up interdisciplinary pilot projects to investigate the more theoretical and practical issues that are of importance in the city-museums world. A condition would have to be that the results are transferable. During the conference it was clear that museums often have theoretical ideas on, for example, policy with regard to the public or collections, but owing to a shortage of time and money, as well as a lack of museological expertise, cannot put these ideas into practice. Recently the new ICOM committee for city museums, the Committee for the Collections and Activities of Museums of the City (CAMOC) has been formed. CAMOC will certainly make a valuable contribution in the future to the contacts between international city museums and all those involved in this field.

Renée Kistemaker

About the authors

Frank Bijdendijk is the president of a large housing association called *Het Oosten*. He is a private non-profit manager and a developer of housing, workspaces and commercial premises. The mission of *Het Oosten* is to secure good, affordable housing for a large sector of the urban population in attractive and mixed communities. Currently *Het Oosten* manages 17,759 properties: 15,198 housing units, 1,279 parking places and 1,282 commercial premises. These units are located across the city of Amsterdam and Diemen. *Het Oosten* is a member of several development partnerships. Frank Bijdendijk has about 240 co-workers.

Simone Blazy studied history at the Paris X-Nanterre University where she obtained a master's degree directed by Robert Mandrou. Since 1994 she has been the director of the Gadagne Museum, which is the history museum of Lyons, and the International Museum of Puppetry. Before that, she was the director of several institutions like the Archives of the City of Dunkirk, the Bar-le-Duc Museum and the Hazebrouck Museum. She has published on scientific and cultural projects on the restoration and restructuring of museums, on the museum collections she has managed and on town history museums. In addition she is a member of the Haut Conseil des Musées de France.

Joanna Bojarska-Syrek is an art historian and museologist. She graduated at the Catholic University in Lublin. For 28 years she has been connected with interior museums in Poland. She is a co-founder of the first interior museum – the 'Księży Młyn' residence in Łódź, which was awarded the 'Europa Nostra 1991' medal. During the period 1995-2000 she was deputy-director of the Museum Castle in Łańcut. From 2000 to 2002 she coordinated a state programme on historical parks and gardens. Since 2004 she has been the director of the Historical Museum of Warsaw. In addition, she is a university lecturer in acting at the State High School of Film, Television and Theatre in Łódź.

Rachid Bouzidi (1968) has been a curator-archaeologist in the Morocco Ministry of Culture and at the archaeological site of Volubilis in Meknès, Morocco, since 2002. The same year he finished his PhD in classical archaeology at the National Institute of Archaeological Sciences and Heritage in Rabat. Between 1994 and 2003 he curated several exhibitions with Moroccan themes, in both Morocco and other countries.

Julia Demidenko is an art historian. She is a member of the Art Critics and Art Historian Association (AIS) and of the Union of Artists of St Petersburg. Since 2002 she has been director of research at the State Museum of the History of St Petersburg and since 2001 an editor of the annual almanac for the printing arts, *Imprint*.

Hans Denijs (Amsterdam, 1946) graduated as an economist at the University of Amsterdam. Throughout his career his work has predominately been in the field of urban planning and development, housing and urban renewal, and the building trade. An exception was his term as director of the Department of Social Services and Social Security of the City of Amsterdam. For many years Hans Denijs was employed by the city of Amsterdam. One position he held was project manager of large-scale urban renewal projects. He later became a director of the Department of Public Works. When

he left the service of the City of Amsterdam, he started his own consultancy firm. In addition to other assignments, Hans is currently involved in the development of the Zuidas area in Amsterdam.

Hubert De Witte has been head curator of the Bruggemuseum since 2003 and is also responsible for the Town Archaeology Department. The Bruggemuseum is the collective name for seven major historical sites, each with an impressive building and collection. Between 2004 and 2010 they will all be refurbished and rearranged to tell Bruges' history from a different perspective and with a different theme. In this way, the Bruggemuseum aims to become the city's history museum par excellence. Before De Witte became a curator at the Bruggemuseum, he was a town archaeologist and a curator at the Archaeological Museum and the 'Historical Museums' group.

Alice van Diepen is a historian. She worked for 11 years in the museum sector as a regional museum adviser, curator, project manager and interim director of the Zaans Museum in North Holland. Since December 2000 she has worked at the City Archives of Amsterdam as head of the Department of Acquisitions and Inspection. In this function she started developing an acquisition policy in which cooperation with other Amsterdam heritage institutions is an integral part. She also has started an active policy towards migrants' heritage.

Philip J. Ethington is an historian and associate professor of history at the Department of History of the University of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles. Since 1995 he has also been director of the Information System for the Los Angeles Project of USC and since 1996 director of the Digital Archive Integration of the libraries of the same university. He is an interdisciplinary urban historian, with a particular interest in the visual and quantitative representation of urban change over time. Currently he is focusing his studies on racial segregation and the rebuilt spatial environment of Los Angeles from 1921-2001. He spends time exploring the advanced research and interpretive applications of digital technology in the humanities and the social sciences

Mila Ernst (1967) studied history at the University of Amsterdam. During her studies she worked as a museum teacher. After graduating Mila worked as an assistant curator at both the Zaans Museum in North Holland and the Amsterdam Historical Museum. She has been head of the educational department of the Amsterdam Historical Museum since 2000.

David Fleming has been director of National Museums Liverpool (NML) since 2001, having previously been director of Tyne & Wear Museums for 11 years. Before that he worked in museums in York, Leeds and Hull. NML is made up of 8 museums in all. Fleming is the only national museum director in the UK who made his reputation in the local government museum sector. He is noted for his pioneering work in making museums popular with diverse audiences, and broadening the social spectrum of visitors. He is a great believer in free access. Other particular areas of expertise include museums and urban regeneration, and museum management. He lectures worldwide on these subjects.

Kees de Groot (1966) studied sociology and theology. In 1995 he received a PhD from Leiden University for his dissertation on the common ground between psychotherapy and religion, and the historical relationship between these two in the Netherlands. He has worked for the Tilburg Faculty of Theology since 2002 as a lecturer in practical theology. Recent publications in English are on Catholic responses to the religious market and the concept of the 'liquid church'.

Curry Peter Heimann (1956) has been the director of the City Museum in Skövde (Sweden) since 2003. From 1998-2002 he was an assistant researcher at the Department of Archaeology, Göteborg University. In 2004 he was awarded his PhD. He has worked in several local and regional museums in west Sweden since the early 1980s. His main interests are landscape archaeology and exhibitions. Currently his main task is to revitalize the City Museum of Skövde.

Barbara Hensel-Moszczyńska is an archaeologist and museologist. She graduated from Warsaw University. Between 1978 and 1988 she was a university teacher at the Institute of Archaeology of Warsaw University and then an archaeologist at the Institute of Archaeology of the Polish Academy of Science. Between 1994 and 1998 she worked at the Department of Education at the Historical Museum of Warsaw. Since 1998 she has been head of the Warsaw History Department at the same Museum. She has curated a number of exhibitions about the history of Warsaw from the 17th to the 19th century.

Estifanos Admasu Jenberie (Ethiopia, 1967) is head of the Tourism Promotion Department in the Addis Ababa Tourism Commission. In this function, he undertakes promotional and public relations activities, participates in expositions and prepares publications. In addition, he coordinates expositions, symposiums, exhibitions, seminars, trainings, and visits to historical sites. He studied Art at the Addis Ababa University from 1981 to 1985.

David M. Kahn has worked in the history museum field for over 25 years. Appointed executive director of the Connecticut Historical Society (CHS) in 1996, he was charged with creating a new vision for the seventh oldest historical society in the U.S. In September 2003 the CHS Museum acquired Connecticut's Old State House, which was built in 1796. New interactive exhibitions and other visitor experiences are being developed for the site and will debut in May 2006. Prior to joining the CHS Museum, Kahn served as Executive director of The Brooklyn Historical Society. Mr Kahn was vice president of the New York State Association of Museums from 1992–1995.

Rita Klages specializes in working with the oral history method in the life-context of people, the museum and the community, and in cultural diversity. She has been a museum educator since 1985, when she started at the Regional Museum of Neukölln in Berlin. Since 1991 she has been a managing director of the Neighbourhood Museum. Klages' main goal for the Neighbourhood Museum is to foster a dynamic relationship between museums, different ethnic groups and their communities. For this purpose she promotes and initiates projects which deal with historical questions and contemporary problems. These projects are conceived as interdisciplinary, inter-institutional and intercultural in the tradition of the 'New Museology'. In addition, in 2005 she was the initiator of the 'Network Interculture' at the *Bundesakademie für kulturelle Bildung* in

Wolfenbüttel, Germany. She also participates in several European projects.

Wolfgang Kos (1949) has been the director of the Wien Museum (formerly known as the History Museum of Vienna) since 2003. Before that he was a journalist and radio producer at ORF (Austrian Public Service Radio and Television) and a lecturer at the University of Vienna (history and visuals). He is also a member of the City of Vienna jury for public art projects.

Valmont Edward Layne (1966) has been the director of the District Six Museum, Cape Town, South Africa since 2003. In 2004 he became a member of the International Executive Committee for the Coalition of Historic Site Museum Conscience for which he wrote a paper on the community museum at the South African Museums Association Conference. In 1995 he completed his MA in economic history after having finished his BA in English language and literature and BA in African studies in 1987 and 1989. Between 1998 and 2002 he attended several international conferences. He became a board member of the Centre for Popular Memory and of the Indigenous Music Project.

Carla Mardini (1975) is the founder and vice president of the Association Musée des Mémoires de Beyrouth, which is developing a new museum concept. She was awarded a scholarship by the NUFFIC (The Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education) to follow the international master's course in museology at the Reinwardt Academy in Amsterdam. She graduated in 2004. Her main interest lies in the presentation and education of history in museums. She has worked as an assistant to the activities programme officer at ICOM in Paris and also participated in developing an education programme at the Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires in Paris.

Tiina Merisalo (1961) has been the director of the Helsinki City Museum since 2003. She worked at the same museum in several positions from 1995 to 2003. In 1991 she was awarded her MA in art history, Finnish history and ethnology. She has published several articles on architectural heritage and the cultural landscape. Since 2005 she has been a board member of the Finnish Museums Association and since 2004 a member of the Board of Representatives. She is also a member of ICOM and ICOMOS.

Jorijn Neyrinck (1978) studied philosophy at the Free University of Brussels and comparative culture sciences at the Municipal University of Ghent, which she accomplished successfully in 2001 (highest distinction). She was a member of the professional programme team during Bruges Cultural Capital of Europe 2002, where she was responsible for the section on youth, education and heritage. As a volunteer, she has been intensively involved in the organization of the World Film Festival Cinema Novo and the Heritage Youngsters in Bruges. Jorijn has always been very active in culture and youth policy, participating in several committees for subsidy and policy reflection in Flanders. Working with like-minded people, she started a young, experimental Organization for Public Heritage Projects, called 'Tapis plein', in 2004. Since then 'Tapis plein' has realized a broad range of innovative initiatives on immaterial heritage and local cultures.

Jouetta L.H. van der Ploeg (1962) studied at the Reinwardt Academy of Museology in Leiden and then received an MA in 1997 from Leiden University for her thesis on the iconography and iconology of the Samaritan Woman in Early Christian Art. She has worked for the Zoetermeer City Museum since 1991. There are plans for the museum to move to larger purpose-built premises, which will offer more scope for implementing its policy.

Cathy Ross is the head of the Later London History Department at the Museum of London. This curatorial department deals with the history of London from 1700 to the present day and looks after the collections of paintings, costume, social and working history, photographs and oral history. She has a particular interest in 20th century and contemporary matters. Her main current project is the *Capital City* development, where she is overseeing the curatorial content of the new modern London galleries. Previously, she worked in museums in Yorkshire and Newcastle upon Tyne, where she also completed a PhD on the history of the glass industry.

Vanessa R. Schwartz is a historian of modern visual culture at the University of Southern California, where she holds her main appointment in history. She is associated with the departments of French and Italian, art history, and critical studies in the School of Cinema-Television. Her research and writing in the past decade has examined the popular realism associated with panoramas, wax works and film as they emerged in the crucible of the urban culture of late 19th-century Paris. Her book, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in fin-de-siècle Paris* (California, 1998) and her co-edited volume *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life* (California, 1995) are the publications associated with this research. She writes about visual history as well as the history of visual culture. Her co-edited volume, *The Nineteenth Century Visual Culture Reader* was published by Routledge in Fall 2004. She is co-editing a special issue of *Urban History* called 'Urban Icons' with Phil Ethington that includes a multi-media introduction as well as a piece on the Eiffel Tower and Disneyland. She is currently finishing a book called '*It's So French: Nationality and Internationalism in French and American Cinema, 1945-1968.*'

Joergen Selmer (1951) has been the director of the Museum of Copenhagen since 1992. In 1982 he was awarded his MA degree in European ethnology at the University of Copenhagen. Between 1982 and 1992 he was head of four small museums in Jutland. Whilst director of the Museum of Copenhagen, he has been chair of the Museum Council of Copenhagen, and vice-chair of the Golden Days in Copenhagen and the museumportal www.mik.dk. He is also a member of the International Committee for the Collections and Activities of Museums of Cities (CAMOC), ICOM. His special interests as a museum director are the cooperation between museums and other cultural institutions in Copenhagen, all kinds of 'story telling' on the streets and throughout the city, the use of city history in the integration process of minorities, the connection between scientific work and our exhibitions, school-service, and cooperation with private enterprises.

Steven Thielemans (1971) is a general manager of Museums, Conservation Libraries and Heritage in Antwerp (Belgium). He trained as a classical archaeologist at the University of Ghent (Belgium) and studied cultural management at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. In the past he worked at the University of Ghent, for the museums of Ghent and in the Heritage Unit Ghent.

Ellen Vandenbulcke (1978) studied history of art, specializing in architecture and heritage at the Free University of Brussels. She completed her studies with an academic teacher's training course at the same university, specializing in art education for children and youngsters. As a freelance guide she has participated in several art projects. For Bruges Cultural Capital of Europe 2002 she assisted in the development of an interactive self-guided tour of Bruges for children, organized art workshops and guided tours of the main exhibition. She now works for RASA, an association for contemporary art education for children in the form of interactive exhibitions. As a volunteer she has been intensively involved in the organization of Heritage Youngsters in Bruges. In 2004 she started a young, experimental Organization for Public Heritage Projects, called 'Tapis plein', in cooperation with like-minded people. Tapis plein has realized a broad range of innovative initiatives on immaterial heritage and local cultures.

Federica Varosio is an archaeologist. She studied conservation of cultural heritage at the University of Genoa. Now in her last year as a PhD student at SSAV (Scuola di Studi Avanzati in Venezia – School of Advanced Studies in Venice), University of Venice, she is working on a thesis titled *From urban archaeology to city museums: a present-day resource for the future of ancient towns*. It is organized as a catalogue of European city museums and presents plans for new Italian museums based on in a wider vision of managing urban cultural heritage. She also works as a specialist for the Archaeological Board of the Venetian Region on the new National Museum of Archaeology of the City and the Lagoon of Venice project, and is producing a feasibility study for the organization of the archaeological repository and archives of the museum. Moreover, she is responsible for the presentation of the project to the public.

Michiel Wagenaar (1948) studied history and sociology at the University of Amsterdam where he is a university lecturer at the Department of Geography and Planning. His PhD thesis focused on Amsterdam's economic recovery, and the transformation of its core and urban expansion during the period 1870-1914. His current research focuses on the contrasting careers of European capitals. More recently he has explored the field of housing design and residential domain as carriers of distinction.

Peter de Wilde (Temse, 1969) is head of the Department of Culture of the Province of Antwerp, Belgium. Since 2000 he has been a full time researcher for the 'Memoria in de Middeleeuwen' (*Memoria in the Middle Ages*) project. De Wilde studied Roman language and literature at the University of Antwerp. He has published several articles and books on subjects related to medieval history.

Annemarie de Wildt (1956) has been a curator at the Amsterdam Historical Museum since 1994. She has curated various exhibitions including: *Amsterdam during the Hunger Winter and Liberation, Love for Sale – 400 years of prostitution*, and *City Animals*, as well as exhibitions on the history of pregnancy & childbirth, games & toys, and cityscapes.

Her most recent exhibition was *Sailors' Tattoos*. She was responsible for the renewal of the rooms on the 19th and 20th-century history of the city in the permanent exhibition of the museum. She introduced the concept of the biographical collection and presentation.

Annemarie graduated as a historian at the Free University of Amsterdam in 1983 and has also worked as a television producer, translator, and conference organizer and for the Dutch Anti-Apartheid Movement. She is currently a board member of the Resistance Museum in Amsterdam.

Diana Wind (Petersborough, Canada, 1957) has been the director of the Stedelijk Museum Schiedam since 1995. She studied art history (modern and contemporary), management and marketing.

List of participants

- Alkema, Joke, Curator / Head of education, Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem / Historisch museum Arnhem, The Netherlands, joke.alkema@arnhem.nl
- Ankersmit, Ernst, Head of personnel department, Amsterdams Historisch Museum, The Netherlands, ernstankersmit@ahm.amsterdam.nl
- Arakcheev, Boris, Director, The State Museum of the History of St Petersburg, Russia, mail@spbmuseum.ru
- Assuncao, Paula, Student, Reinwardt Academie, The Netherlands, Paula_assuncao@hotmail.com
- Baalen, Marco van, Curator, Haags Historisch Museum, The Netherlands, vanbaalen@haagshistorischmuseum.nl
- Balandraud, Odette, Dept. du Tourisme, Université Lumière Lyon2, France, odette.balandraud@univ.lyon2.fr
- Barnes, Donna, Professor of education, Hofstra University, United States of America, bardona@att.net
- Beier-de Haan, Rosmarie, Head of collections, Deutsches Historisches Museum, Germany, beier@dhm.de
- Bekker, Lotte, Free lance staff member projects, Amsterdams Historisch Museum, The Netherlands, l.bekker@chello.nl
- Bell, Wim de, Curator 20th century, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, The Netherlands, w.de.bell@rijksmuseum.nl
- Benediktsson, Gudbrandur, Head of public programmes, Reykjavik City Museum, Iceland, gudbrandur.benediktsson@reykjavik.is
- Bergvelt, Ellinoor, Associate professor, Universiteit van Amsterdam, The Netherlands, e.s.bergvelt@uva.nl
- Beukenhorst, Willemien, Staff member education, Amsterdams Historisch Museum, The Netherlands, willemienbeukenhorst@ahm.amsterdam.nl
- Bijdendijk, Frank, Director, Woningbouwvereniging Het Oosten, The Netherlands, i.bergfeld@hetoosten.nl
- Blazy, Simone, Curator, Musée Gadagne, France, simone.blazy@mairie-lyon.fr
- Bojarska, Joanna, Director, Historical Museum of Warsaw, Poland, sekretariat@mhw.pl
- Bokjovic, Sladjana, Senior curator, Historical Museum of Serbia, Serbia and Montenegro, imus@yubc.net
- Börger, Jacques, Head dept. of Communication and Marketing, Historisch Museum Rotterdam, The Netherlands, j.borger@hmr.rotterdam.nl
- Bosch, Joke, Head Dept. of pr&marketing, Amsterdams Historisch Museum, The Netherlands, jokebosch@ahm.amsterdam.nl
- Boucetta, Zakia, Staff member education, Amsterdams Historisch Museum, The Netherlands, zakiaboucetta@ahm.amsterdam.nl
- Bouzidi, Rachid, Archaeologist, curator, Conservation du site archéologique de Volubilis, Morocco, bouzidi3@yahoo.fr
- Brindley, Kate, Director of Museums, Galleries and Archives, Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery, Great-Britain, kate.brindley@bristol-city.gov.uk
- Bruin, Renger de, Curator, Centraal Museum Utrecht, The Netherlands, rbruin@centraalmuseum.nl

Bryan, Julia, Content developer, National Museums Liverpool, Great-Britain,
Coachhouse@burnham4.freereserve.co.uk

Calogirou, Claire, Anthropologist, Musée Nat. des Arts et Traditions Populaires,
France, claire.calogirou@culture.gouv.fr

Casteleyn, Lothar, Curator, Bruggemuseum Archeologie, Belgium,
lothar.casteleyn@brugge.be

Chlodnicki, Marek, Director, Poznan Archeological Museum, Poland,
mchlod@man.poznan.pl

Conida, Ageliki-Anna, Staff member education, Museum of the City of Athens, Greece,
mveathen@otenet.gr

Defoort, Hendrik, Co-ordinator heritage strategy, Gent Cultuurstad, Belgium,
Hendrik.Defoort@Gent.be

Dekker, Annemarie den, Curator, Amsterdams Historisch Museum, The Netherlands,
annemarienedekker@ahm.amsterdam.nl

Demidenko, Julia, Deputy-director, The State Museum of the History of St Petersburg,
Russia, jdemidenko@mail.ru

Denijs, Hans, Senior advisor strategic communication Zuidas, Zuidasorganisation, The
Netherlands, denijsbv@worldonline.nl

Diepen, Alice van, Head of acquisitions, Gemeentearchief Amsterdam,
The Netherlands, avandiepen@gaa.nl

Dijk, Gundy van, Staff member education, Tropenmuseum, The Netherlands,
g.v.dijk@kit.nl

Dijk, Marjonne van, Curator, Stadsmuseum Zoetermeer, The Netherlands,
info@stadsmuseumzoetermeer.nl

Dokmanovic, Marina, Architect, exhibition maker, Serbia and Montenegro,
marinadokmanovic@isp.b92.net

Dugdale, Janet, Head of urban history, National Museums Liverpool, Great-Britain,
janetdugdale@talk21.com

Emerson, Anne, President, The Boston Museum Project, United States of America,
emerson@bostonmuseum.org

Eppel, Peter, Curator, Wien Museum, Austria, peter.eppel@wienmuseum.at

Ernst, Mila, Head of education dept., Amsterdams Historisch Museum,
The Netherlands, milaernst@ahm.amsterdam.nl

Fleming, David, Director, Liverpool Museums, Great-Britain,
david.fleming@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

Geene, Eva, Student, Amsterdams Historisch Museum, The Netherlands,
evageene@ahm.amsterdam.nl

Groote, Jaap de, Designer, The Netherlands, kdgroote@conceptsfa.nl

Gunnarsdottir, Gudný Gerdur, Director, Reykjavik City Museum, Iceland,
gudny.gerdur.gunnarsdottir@reykjavik.is

Hadzi Djokic, Silvana, Ministry of Culture, Historical Museum of Serbia, Serbia and
Montenegro

Harju, Jari, Curator, Helsinki City Museum, Finland, jari.harju@hel.fi

Hebditch, Max, Consultant Curator, Great Britain, max@hebditch.org

Heimann, Curry Peter, Director, Skövde City Museum, Sweden,
curry.heimann@skovde.se

Helbergen, Willemijn, Assistant curator, Haags Historisch Museum, The Netherlands,
helbergen@haagshistorischmuseum.nl

Hendrikx, Ruud, Director, Stedelijk Museum Zutphen, The Netherlands,
 r.hendrikx@zutphen.nl

Hensel-Moszcynska, Barbara, Chief history department, Historical Museum of
 Warsaw, Poland, sekretariat@mhw.pl

Hinz, Hans-Martin, Curator, Deutsches Historisches Museum, Germany,
 hinz@dhm.de

Hoekstra, Li, Student, Amsterdams Historisch Museum, The Netherlands,
 lihoekstra@ahm.amsterdam.nl

Hovers, Jan, Head of Presentations, Amsterdams Historisch Museum,
 The Netherlands, janhovers@ahm.amsterdam.nl

Jacobs, Michèle, freelance journalist, Muse, magazine for art and museums (Canada),
 The Netherlands, jacobsmichele@hotmail.com

Jacobs, Peter, Head dept. buildings and facilities, Amsterdams Historisch Museum,
 The Netherlands, peterjacobs@ahm.amsterdam.nl

Jakobi, Elo, Head public relations, Tallinn City Museum, Estonia,
 elo.jakobi@linnamuuseum.ee

Jansen, Elvire, Staff member education, Amsterdams Historisch Museum,
 The Netherlands, elvirejansen@ahm.amsterdam.nl

Jenberie Admasu, Estifanos, Head Tourism promotion department, Addis Ababa City
 Museum, Ethiopia, aa_tc@ethionet.et / tiruyie@netscape.net

Jeurissen, Lian, Curator, Stedelijk Museum Zutphen, The Netherlands,
 l.jeurissen@zutphen.nl

Johansson, Per Magnus, Museum teacher, Dunkers Kulturhaus, Sweden, permagnus.
 johansson@helsingborg.se

Jones, Ian, Secretary CAMOC, CAMOC, Great-Britain, cja.arts@virgin.net

Jong, Heleen de, Project leader communication dept., Historisch Museum Rotterdam,
 The Netherlands, h.dejong@hmr.rotterdam.nl

Jong, Margriet de, Senior manager intern. relations, Nederlandse Museumvereniging,
 The Netherlands, mdejong@museumvereniging.nl

Jongh, Marieke de, Head conservation dept., Stedelijk Museum Zutphen,
 The Netherlands, m.dejongh@zutphen.nl

Jungblut, Marie Paule, Curator, president ICMAH/IAMH, Musée d'Histoire de la Ville
 de Luxembourg, Luxembourg, m.jungblut@musee-hist.lu

Kahn, David M., Executive director, The Connecticut Historical Society Museum,
 United States of America, david_kahn@chs.org

Kieft, Anneke van de, Staff member Education, Amsterdams Historisch Museum,
 The Netherlands, annekevanderkieft@ahm.amsterdam.nl

Kistemaker, Renée, Senior consultant research and development, Amsterdams
 Historisch Museum, The Netherlands, reneekistemaker@ahm.amsterdam.nl

Klages, Rita, Director, Nachbarschaft's Museum e.V, The Netherlands,
 rita.klages@gmx.de

Klaversma, Nel, Curator, Amsterdams Historisch Museum, The Netherlands,
 nelklaversma@ahm.amsterdam.nl

Koekkoek, Lidewij de, Head monument and archaeology dept., Bureau
 Monumentenzorg en Archeologie, The Netherlands, lk.de.koekkoek@dordrecht.nl

Kos, Wolfgang, Director, Wien Museum, Austria, wolfgang.kos@wienmuseum.at

Kovacevic, Boris, Director, Belgrado City Museum, Serbia and Montenegro,
 museumbg@eunet.yu

Kreszner, Rob, Head of museum, Gorcums Museum, The Netherlands,
r.kreszner@gorinchem.nl

Kruseman, Pauline, Director, Amsterdams Historisch Museum, The Netherlands,
paulinekruseman@ahm.amsterdam.nl

Laar, Ellen van de, Head of financial department, Amsterdams Historisch Museum,
The Netherlands, ellenvandelaar@ahm.amsterdam.nl

Laar, Paul van de, Head of collections dept., Historisch Museum Rotterdam,
The Netherlands, p.vandelaar@hmr.rotterdam.nl

Lakerveld, Carry van, Director (former vice-director AHM), Culture and Context,
The Netherlands, carryvanlakerveld@cultureandcontext.nl

Land, Hiske, Museum advisor, Erfgoedhuis Utrecht, The Netherlands,
h.land@erfgoed-utrecht.nl

Langelaan, Margot, Director, Stadsmuseum IJsselstein, The Netherlands,
directie@stadsmuseum.nl

Laurent, Golay, Director, Musée Historique de Lausanne, Switzerland, laurent,
golay@lausanne.ch

Layne, Valmont, Director, District Six Museum, South-Africa, valmont@districtsix.
co.za

Léri, Jean-Marc, Director, Musée Carnavalet, France, jean-marc.leri@paris.fr

Linden, Liane van der, Director, Imagine Identity and Culture, The Netherlands,
info@imagineic.nl

Lokin, Danielle, Director, Gemeente Musea Delft, The Netherlands, dlokin@delft.nl

Mardini, Carla, Museologist, Association 'Musée des Mémoires de Beyrouth', France,
chez_carlam@email.it

Mazarakis-Ainian, Philipos, Curator, National Historical Museum Athens, Greece,
mveathen@otenet.gr

McCarthy, Jennifer, Head of museum of Liverpool life, Museum of Liverpool Life,
Great-Britain, Jen.mcCarthy@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

McIntyre, Darryl, Director of public programmes, Museum of London, Great Britain,
dmcintyre@museumoflondon.org.uk

Meijer, Max, Director, Gemeentemusea Arnhem, The Netherlands,
max.meijer@arnhem.nl

Meijers, Debora J., Associate professor, Universiteit van Amsterdam, The Netherlands,
d.j.meijers@uva.nl

Melis, Elise van, Curator, Historisch Museum Haarlemmermeer, The Netherlands,
historms@tref.nl / e.v.melis@hvl.demon.nl

Merisalo, Tiina, Director, Helsinki City Museum, Finland, tiina.merisalo@hel.fi

Middelkoop, Norbert, Curator, Amsterdams Historisch Museum, The Netherlands,
norbertmiddelkoop@ahm.amsterdam.nl

Moszczyńska, Barbara, Head of the History Department, Historical Museum of
Warsaw, sekretariat@mhw.pl

Munck, Bert de, Professor, University of Antwerp/Centre for Urban History, Belgium,
bert.demunck@ua.ac.be

Nauwelaerts, Mandy, Project manager, Museum aan de Stroom Hessenhuis, Belgium,
mandy.nauwelaerts@stad.antwerpen.be

Neyrinck, Jorijn, Tapis Plein Projecthuis voor alledaags erfgoed, Belgium,
info@tapisplein.be

Nicolau i Martí, Antoni, Director, Museum of History of the City of Barcelona, Spain,
 nsanz@mail.bcn.es

Ondaatje, Lizzy, Staff member pr&marketing, Amsterdams Historisch Museum,
 The Netherlands, lizzyondaatje@ahm.amsterdam.nl

Orosz, Eva-Maria, Curator, Wien Museum, Austria, eva-maria.orosz@wienmuseum.at

Peisa, Outi, Head of collections, Helsinki City museum, Finland, outi.peisa@hel.fi

Perryck, Jeanine, Staff member, Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, The Netherlands,
 jmp@cultuurfonds.nl

Piller, Gudrun, Vice-director, Historisches Museum Basel, Switzerland,
 gudrun.piller@bs.ch

Ploeg, Jouetta vd, Director, Stadsmuseum Zoetermeer, The Netherlands, info@stads-
 museumzoetermeer.nl

Reichwein, Gusta, Head of collections, Amsterdams Historisch Museum,
 The Netherlands, gustareichwein@ahm.amsterdam.nl

Reinewald, Chris, Journalist, Museumvisie, The Netherlands, Chris.r@freeler.nl

Renesse, Charles van, City marketing manager, Amsterdam Partners, The Netherlands,
 cvanrenesse@amsterdampartners.nl

Roda, Burkard von, Director, Historisches Museum Basel, Switzerland,
 burkard.vonroda@bs.ch

Roelofs, Pieter, Curator, Museum Het Valkhof, The Netherlands,
 p.roelofs@museumhetvalkhof.nl

Ross, Cathy, Head of later department, Museum of London, Great- Britain,
 cross@museumoflondon.org.uk

Schijndel, Marieke van, Policy advisor, Mondriaanstichting, The Netherlands,
 m.vanschijndel@mondriaanfoundation.nl

Schilder, Geerthe, Student, Amsterdams Historisch Museum, The Netherlands,
 geertheschilder@ahm.amsterdam.nl

Schledorn, Loet, Curator, Stadsgeschiedenis, The Netherlands, lschledorn@delft.nl

Schoor, Frank van de, Head of collections, Museum Het Valkhof, The Netherlands,
 f.vandeschoor@museumhetvalkhof.nl

Schwartz, Vanessa R., Associate Professor of History, French, Art History & Film,
 University of Southern California, United States of America, vschwart@usc.edu

Schwarz, Roland, Curator, Museen der Stadt Dresden, Germany, Roland.
 schwarz@museen-dresden.de

Seferovic, Nada, Curator, Belgrado City Museum, Serbia and Montenegro,
 museumbg@eunet.yu

Sehnaoui, Nada, Artist, Lebanon, Nada.s@cyberia.net.lb

Selmer, Joergen, Director, Copenhagen City Museum, Denmark, js.kbm@kff.kk.dk

Shumnaya, Tamara G., Director, State Central Museum of Contemporary History of
 Russia, Russia, sovrhistory@mtu-net.ru

Sijsma, Caroline, Manager Allianties, Woningbouwvereniging Het Oosten,
 The Netherlands, i.bergfeld@hetoosten.nl

Smagina, Irina, Vice-director, Moskow City Museum, Russia, migm@mail.ru

Snoeker, Lucie, Project manager strategy and organisational development, Amsterdams
 Historisch Museum, The Netherlands, luciesnoeker@ahm.amsterdam.nl

Spring, Ulrike, Curator, Wien Museum, Austria, ulrike.spring@wienmuseum.at

Stabel, Peter, Associate professor, Universiteit Antwerpen, Dept. Geschiedenis,
 Belgium, peter.stabel@ua.ac.be

Stam, Dineke, Historian, exhibitionmaker, The Netherlands, dineke.stam@planet.nl
 Storch, Ursula, Curator, Wien Museum, Austria, ursula.storch@wienmuseum.at
 Strake, Christiaan te, Curator, Stedelijk Museum Zutphen, The Netherlands,
 chr.testrake@zutphen.nl
 Straten, Odette, Co-ordinator education, Museum Het Valkhof, The Netherlands,
 o.straten@museumhetvalkhof.nl
 Tasso de Sousa, Nuno, Architect, Caso do Infante, Portugal, tasso@oninet.pt
 Termini-Fridrich, Isabel, Head dept. communication and education, Wien Museum,
 Austria, isabel.termini-fridrich@wienmuseum.at
 Terrier, France, Curator, Musée Yverdon et région, Switzerland,
 musee.yverdon@bluewin.ch
 Thielemans, Steven, General director, Musea, bewaarbibliotheek en erfgoed stad
 Antwerpen, Belgium, Steven.Thielemans@stad.Antwerpen.be
 Travagliani, Carlo, Director, Università degli studi Roma Tre, Italy,
 c.travaglini@uniroma3.it
 Tromp, Thijs, Staff member, Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, The Netherlands,
 tt@cultuurfonds.nl
 Tsoutsos, Maria-Rea A., Member of board of trustees, Museum of the City of Athens,
 Greece, mveathen@otenet.gr
 Ulzen, Patricia van, Associate professor, Fac. Historische en Kunstwetensch., Erasmus
 Universiteit, The Netherlands, vanulzen@fhk.eur.nl
 Vandenbulcke, Ellen, Staff member, Tapis Plein Projecthuis voor alledaags erfgoed,
 Belgium, info@tapisplein.nl
 Vanwesenbeeck, Cees, Director, Regionaal Historisch Centrum, The Netherlands,
 cvanwesenbeeck@delft.nl
 Varosio, Federica, Lecturer, Phd student, Museum of Archaeology of the City and the
 Lagoon, Venice, Italy, fedeverosio@yahoo.it
 Varrak, Maruta, Director, Talinn City Museum, Estonia, maruta.varrak@mail.ee
 Viana, Teresia, Directeur, Museu Nacional Soares dor Reis, Portugal,
 tpviana@gmail.com
 Visser, Antoinette, Director, Haags Historisch Museum/Museum Gevangenpoort,
 The Netherlands, info@haagshistorischmuseum.nl
 Vollenweider, Amanda, Projectco-ordinator, Amsterdams Historisch Museum,
 The Netherlands, amandavollenweider@ahm.amsterdam.nl
 Vries, Sandra de, Director, Stedelijk Museum Alkmaar, The Netherlands,
 sdevries@alkmaar.nl
 Vroon, Vanessa, project secretary, Amsterdams Historisch Museum, The Netherlands,
 vanessavroon@ahm.amsterdam.nl
 Wagenaar, Lodewijk, Curator, Amsterdams Historisch Museum, The Netherlands,
 lodewijkwagenaar@ahm.amsterdam.nl
 Wagenaar, Michiel, Associate professor, Universiteit van Amsterdam, The Netherlands,
 m.f.wagenaar@uva.nl
 Walberg, Ferry, Project manager, Vernieuwing Het Prinsenhof, The Netherlands,
 fwalberg@delft.nl
 Weerdt, Christine de, Co-ordinator heritage and communication, Gent Cultuurstad,
 Belgium, Christine.Deweerd@Gent.be
 Wehman, Natasja, Staff member public relations, Stedelijk Museum Zutphen,
 The Netherlands, n.wehman@delft.nl

Weijden, Eefje van der, Project assistant, Amsterdams Historisch Museum,
The Netherlands, eefjevanderweijden@ahm.amsterdam.nl

White, Mary, Director, Shrewsbury Museum & Art gallery, Great-Britain, mary.
white@shrewsbury.gov.uk

Wilde, Peter de, Head of culture dept., Provincie Antwerpen, Departement Cultuur,
Belgium, peter.dewilde@admin.provant.be

Wildt, Annemarie de, Curator, Amsterdams Historisch Museum, The Netherlands,
annemariedewildt@ahm.amsterdam.nl

Wind, Diana, Director, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, The Netherlands,
diana.wind@stedelijkmuseumschiedam.nl

Winkler, Susanne, Curator, Wien Museum, Austria,
susanne.winkler@wienmuseum.at

Witte, Hubert de, Curator, Bruggemuseum Archeologie, Belgium,
hubert.de.witte@brugge.be

Zbucnea, Alexandra, Phd student, lecturer, Fac. of Communication, Nat. School of Pol.
and Adm. studies, Roemenia, azbucnea@yahoo.com

Zijlmans, Jori, Curator, Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal, The Netherlands,
jzijlmans@lakenhal.nl

Web sites of participating organisations

Key note

http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/history/urbanicons/urban_icons_companion/index.htm.

Introductions

www.districtsix.co.za

www.hetoosten.nl

www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

Shaping the city

www.museumantwerpen.be

www.hel2.fi/kaumuseo

www.zuidas.nl

www.mhw.pl

www.gemeentearchief.amsterdam.nl

www.texicorient.com/morocco/volubilis.htm

www.brugge.be/Internet/en/musea/bruggemuseum/index.htm

Activating the city

www.stadsmuseumzoetermeer.nl

www.mik.dk

www.goldendays.dk

www.ahm.amsterdam.nl

www.museegadagne.com

www.visaville.net

www.hetgeheugenvanoost.nl

Representing the city

www.wienmuseum.at

www.stedelijkmuseumschiedam.nl

www.tapisplein.be

www.ahm.nl

www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/martime

www.chs.org

