Museum International

The performing arts

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Apropos of performing arts collections

Oskar Pausch

Unlike traditional museums, with a succession of neatly organized exhibits, the purpose of theatrical collections and museums is first of all to put dramatic events across to visitors, i.e. processes which, by their very essence, can no longer be evoked. It is as though 'a connoisseur of wine were to be shown the labels' (Winrich Meiszies).

This transient nature of the performing arts, which is also discussed in some of the articles that follow, has promoted a phenomenon that we call 'vanity' in the theatre. It is an attempt to compensate their fugitive character by using permanent instruments. Examples include the literary tradition of actors' memoirs and the cult of 'votive' objects. Then again – and surely more so than in any other area of culture – we owe our collections to theatre devotees and to the documentary zeal of persons who have had professional ties with the subject. The Museum of the German Theatre in Munich was founded by the actress Clara Ziegler (1844–1909); the collection of Hugo Thimig, Director of the Vienna Burgtheater (1854–1944), was the starting point for the foundation of the Austrian Museum of the Theatre; while Magyar Szinházi Intézet in Budapest is closely bound up with the work of Gizi Blaha (1894–1957). The famous Moscow Bahrushin Museum was established by the rich aristocrat and theatre-lover Alexei A. Bahrushin (1865–1929), who, at the express wish of Lenin, was allowed to remain director of the museum, the achievement of his lifetime, even after the Russian Revolution.

For obvious psychological reasons, the performing arts have a penchant for personalization, with a distinct 'hall of fame' tendency. Enough proposals have been made for memorials to mimes and stars of the operetta to fill entire Olympic villages. Significantly, this personality cult became a marketable commodity long ago. In

Photo by courtesy of the Austrian Museum of the Theatre

Curtain design by Heinrich Füger featuring Orpheus and Eurydice, for the Old Burgtheater, Vienna, c. 1786.

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Vienna, back in the 1830s, sugar confectionary effigies of the famous dancer Fanny Eissler were on sale. Another good example is a New York advertising poster for Singer sewing machines dating from the 1880s on which the stars of the Metropolitan Opera, Amalie Materna (1844–1918), Christine Nilsson (1843–1921) and Adelina Patti (1843–1919), were depicted.

Nor should we overlook the often highly successful efforts of stage artists to survive through works of art. They have, as it were, pinned their own destiny to the independent existence of the artefact – hence the great tradition of actors' portraits. However, immortality has not been sought solely for human beings through artefacts. In the eighteenth century, attempts were already being made to give theatre buildings a sacred character by incorporating art works and to ensure their lasting survival, for example by building galleries of honour as in the old Vienna Burgtheater, or hanging exceptionally precious curtains on the very scene of the fleeting events, that is, at the back of the proscenium.

The same attempt at perpetuation is also to be found in the primary sources of the theatre. Max Reinhardt, the famous Austrian actor, director and impresario, began systematically to recruit prominent artists, such as Edvard Munch, Max Slevogt, Emil Orlik and Oskar Laske, to design his stage sets. He did so in the hope that these exceptional sets would stand out from routine workshop products, and through a wish to ensure the survival of theatrical events, if only indirectly.

However loudly people may complain of the fleeting nature of the performing arts, the professional collector does therefore have a greater possibility than in other branches of making selective use of existing collections. The theatrical exhibition organizer has an added opportunity. Artistically free presentations – regardless of their often dubious documentary character – have a high emotional value because of their inherent aesthetic qualities or the personality of the collector that underlies them. To a greater extent than in any text, this often enables the modern viewer to capture something of the atmosphere of the theatrical art of bygone days.

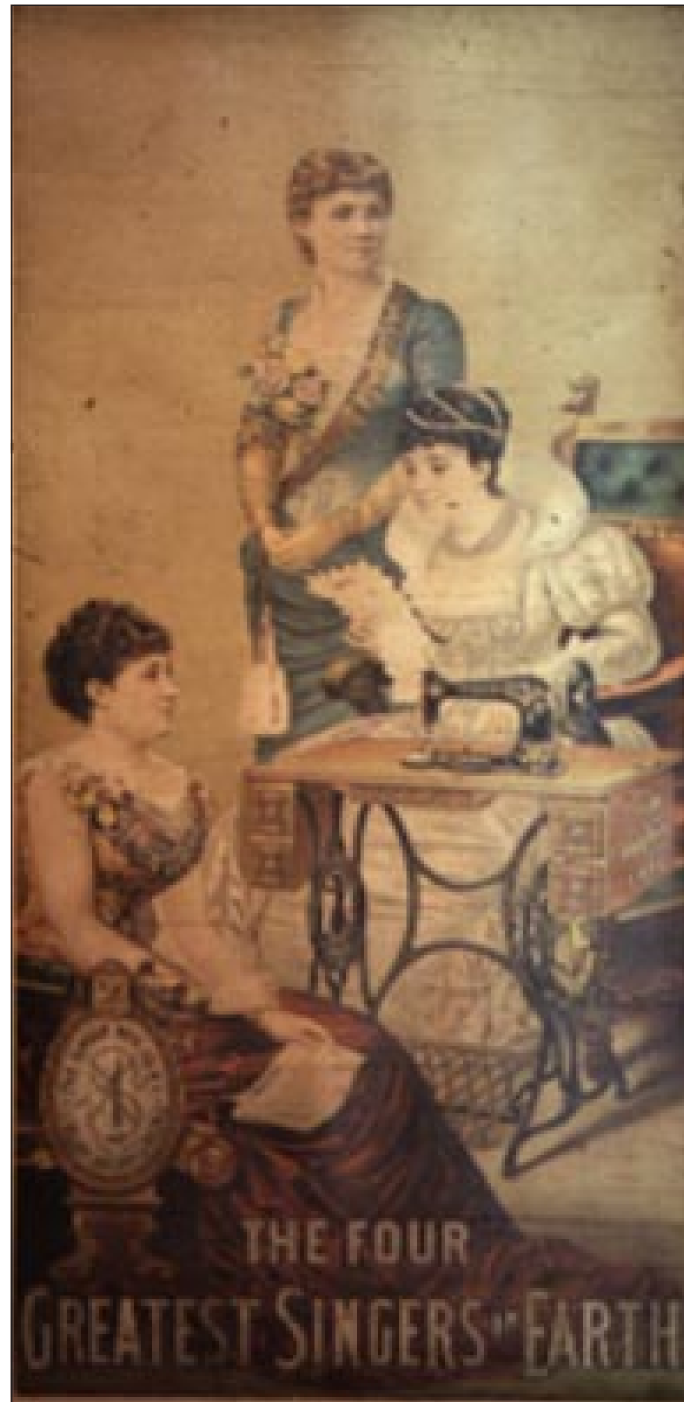

Photo by courtesy of the Austrian Museum of the Theatre

Advertising poster for Singer sewing machines featuring stars of the Metropolitan Opera, New York, year unknown.

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An ambivalent trend can be perceived in relation to theatrical museums and documentation centres today. Eurocentrism has tended to increase in recent years, no doubt as a consequence of economic circumstances, which are obliging even the rich countries of the world to draw in their horns. Clearly, the need for performing-art museums or collections has not always been brought home to the political consciousness. The 1990s have seen some new establishments or organizations, the most spectacular no doubt being the transfer in 1991 of the Austrian Museum of the Theatre to the famous Lobkowitz Palace in Vienna.

On the other hand, prestigious institutions, such as the Dumont-Lindemann Archives of Düsseldorf, have been, and still are, threatened, especially by the prevailing general economic situation. Ruth Freydank's article about the situation in Berlin is revealing here. With dwindling public support, fund-raising has often become a magic word. But how far may the sponsor's influence be allowed to affect museum policy? How far may services that do not find a sponsor (libraries, information services, etc.) be cut back or charged for when they are funded by the taxpayer? 'A Pauper's Guide to Riches' was chosen, with good reason, as a theme of the twenty-first World Congress of the International Society of Libraries and Museums of Performing Arts (SIBMAS) in Helsinki in 1996. Discussion also centred on use of the electronic media for documentation purposes.

Earlier attempts to establish centralized international data files of stage performances failed because of their cumbersome nature. Today, the problem has become one of compatibility between the individual data banks.

SIBMAS, the international expert organization affiliated to ICOM, was founded in 1954 and counts most theatrical museums and archives among its members. Its specific goal is to promote research and to facilitate the international exchange of contacts and information about performing arts collections. Professional congresses are held every two years and express opinions on such burning practical issues as copyright or the use of video. The proceedings are generally published one year later (*Documentation of Performing Arts in a Changing Society*, Lisbon 1993; *Collecting and Recording the Performing Arts, Why and How?*, Antwerp 1995). To join, contact Georg Geldner, SIBMAS Membership Secretary and Treasurer, c/o Österreichisches Theater Museum, Lobkowitzplatz 2, A-1010 Wien, Austria, Tel. 43-1-512 8800*32. ■

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The theatre museum: a place for vanished experience

Lisbet Grandjean

Situated in the historic Court Theatre of Christiansborg Palace, Copenhagen's Theatre Museum draws on its unusual location to tell the story of Danish theatre. However, the very relevance of site to subject has raised provocative questions as to what a theatre museum is and how it should face the future. The author has been director of the Theatre Museum since 1982 and vice-president of the International Society of Libraries and Museums of Performing Arts (SIBMAS) since 1994.

When one stops to think about it, a museum for the performer's art is an absurdity. For what a theatre museum is actually seeking to document – the stage performance, the artistic expression dependent on the artists' interaction among themselves and their dialogue with their audience – disappears every evening when the curtain falls. What remains is only the 'stuff' used by the theatre to create the performance: the author's words, the composer's music, the choreographer's sketches, the costumes, decorations, props, programmes, posters, photographs, videos. And of course the performers. All this material can be put together in a museum to produce some kind of documentation, with the sole exception of the artists themselves. In other words, a theatre museum cannot give succeeding generations the experience that has been conveyed to an audience. What we can exhibit are the preconditions for that experience, and through them follow clearly discernible lines from the theatre of the past to that of the present and draw parallels. In other words, with the help of secondary material a theatre museum can try to awaken memories in those who saw a performance, or it can try to create images in the minds of those who did not. This is what a museum dedicated to the art of the theatre can do and has done for many years. The question remains of how this has been achieved, to which there is probably more than one answer.

On the face of it there has been optimal potential for the Theatre Museum in Copenhagen (created in 1912), because since 1922 it has been situated in a theatre, moreover a beautiful old court theatre standing as it was after a thorough renovation in 1842 (the original Court Theatre was built in 1767). And yet such a locality has occasionally provided headaches for those mounting exhibitions in the museum, because it has been very difficult to produce any real coherence in the material on show.

The Theatre Museum in Copenhagen, which is the only one covering the whole country, aims to present the history of the Danish theatre from the early eighteenth century to the present day. As Denmark is a small country – some 5 million inhabitants dispersed over about 44,000 km^2 – it has been possible to create an extensive collection of material on the country's theatrical history. So the museum has abundant opportunity to provide comprehensive accounts of theatre performances from both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This is done either by special exhibitions or lecture courses. Most of this material, together with that from the early twentieth century, has been given to the museum, though in more recent years it has been supplemented by purchases. As for contemporary theatre history, the museum makes a conscious attempt to collect all possible material. However, although the number of theatres in Denmark is manageable, the material for which archive space has to be created scarcely merits the same epithet.

A sense of the theatre

Irrespective of the huge amount of material, there are enormous difficulties in bringing the products – that is to say the performances – of these theatres to life. So in the museum's permanent exhibition we have chosen to give our visitors a sense of what is needed to create a performance. And to this end, a conscious decision was made to exploit the advantages of being housed in a theatre. We have tried, in so far as possible, to put our exhibits in the places in which they would normally be found in a theatre. Let us take a few examples.

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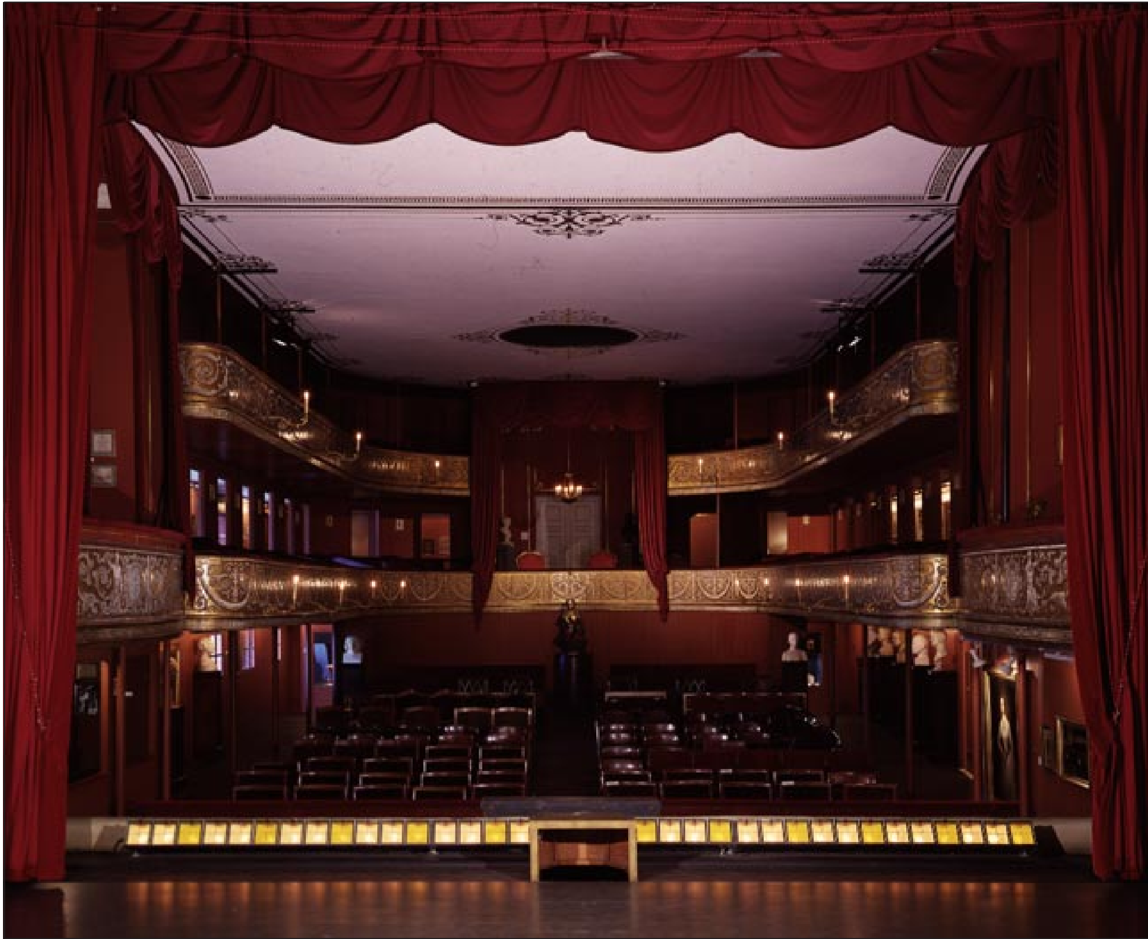

The auditorium of the Court Theatre at Christiansborg Castle.

In dressing rooms in theatres all over the country, artists of all kinds have over many years transformed themselves from the ordinary beings we meet in the street into a Hamlet, a princess in the shape of a swan, or a Falstaff. For such a transformation the artist's fundamental requisites are costumes, make-up and wigs. And so the museum has used the original dressing rooms in the Court Theatre to exhibit just these effects. Here we can see changing exhibitions of costumes and costume designs from the eighteenth century to the present day. We find many kinds of make-up, make-up boxes, false noses, beards and wigs used by artists at any conceivable time. The material on show is often supplemented with sequences of photographs of artists building up masks, of their own sketches of masks or their self-portraits in specific roles.

When it comes to illustrating scenic art, we have chosen to place the sketches and paintings for the scenery, along with the scenic artist's implements, within the stage area of the Court Theatre. For, of course, it is on the stage that this kind of material is used. Here it is located side by side with an exhibition of stage machinery, old-fashioned lighting and lighting equipment as well as modern spotlights.

But the scene painter and the costume designer as we knew them in the theatre of a previous age no longer exist. They have been replaced by the set designer who, with plastic models to work on, with lighting, curtains, platforms, electronic and audiovisual effects, creates spaces in which decoration and costumes harmonize with each other. The interplay between these many factors is something a museum cannot possibly re-create. We have therefore chosen to take an entirely different path by inviting young set designers to exhibit a limited number of model sets and costume sketches in alternating set-design exhibitions. Set designers are given two to three months to show what they and the museum consider characteristic of their individual talents. In this way we have sought to interest present-day theatregoers in modern set design. At the same time it is our hope that we shall be able to save the rather flimsy models which so often suffer an unkind fate in theatre paintshops.

It is obvious that not all the premises of a theatre performance can be contained

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within the definition according to which the museum has worked. But it has been possible to develop the idea so that it can be used to narrate the history of the theatre. Thus, in a few preserved stall boxes the museum has been able to present the various forms of the proscenium-arch theatre. And it has been natural to use the orchestra pit to narrate the history of the orchestra by means of an exhibition of instruments, music stands and paintings of conductors and musicians. Finally, the Court Theatre auditorium, where spectators sit during performances, has been used to show paintings and busts of artists as private individuals.

Spotlighting the present

But as a museum for art forms that are very much alive, it is no use being content with bland permanent retrospective displays supplemented with short alternating exhibitions of stage settings. It is necessary in some way to relate to the art that is practised today. In the Theatre Museum in Copenhagen we have chosen to take two paths – special exhibitions and performances.

The museum's aim is to mount each year one major exhibition related to the experience of the theatre today. ➧

An eighteenth-century dressing-room with original furniture and paintings and costumes of the period.

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In the summer of 1996, the year in which Copenhagen was designated the European City of Culture, the museum chose *Dance in Denmark* as its subject, partly because dance with its body language transcends national boundaries, partly because we had a story to tell about the modern dance groups who since 1970 have evolved from a several-hundred-year-old traditional dance environment.

Dance is about the movement of the body, about demanding daily work at a barre, in front of a mirror, wearing special dress. And so we in the museum decided to turn several rooms in the Court Theatre into a kind of training room. We fixed up a barre and some large mirrors. We put on an exhibition of ballet shoes from various ages, and clothed dummies in rehearsal dress from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In addition, by means of paintings and photographs, visitors to the museum were confronted with the dancer at rehearsal. In the exhibition as a whole we gave a graphic demonstration of more than 200 years of dance on the basis of a host of drawings and photographs of dancers on stage.

And yet, something was missing, something essential – movement. This had to be created, and although it was indeed being produced by means of small demonstrations, it was not enough. So we turned to ballet performances on video, both modern and classical, and showed them each day. In Denmark we are fortunate enough to have a filmed sequence of dancers from the Royal Danish Ballet in excerpts from a 1910 ballet. In this way the museum was able to bring visitors as close as possible to a past performance.

Another way of expanding the traditional idea of a museum was to mount performances for visitors on the stage of the Court Theatre. Located in the south wing of Christiansborg Palace, it appears today very much as it was when it was renovated in 1842. The refurbishment at that time was undertaken because of the wish of King Christian VIII to indulge his passion for opera, especially Italian opera.

For more than ten years, the King, Queen, Court and citizens of Copenhagen could delight in the great operas of the day, sung by visiting Italian singers. Some of the operas from this repertoire, for instance *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Cosi Fan Tutte*, as well as other performances such as Handel's *Rodelinda*, Edmond de Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* and comedies by Ludvig Holberg, have been put on in the Court Theatre within the last fifteen years. Linked to these, the museum has arranged lectures on such topics as the theatrical history behind the operas, the presence of the Italians in Copenhagen, and stage machinery from the last century. The same has been done with performances of the operettas that were brought from Paris to Copenhagen in 1826, localized there and then performed as Danish vaudevilles on the stage of the Court Theatre and elsewhere.

It should be pointed out that little of the old machinery is left in the Court Theatre, so in the case of the older repertoire it has not been possible to put on performances in an original environment as, for instance, happens at the Drottningholm Palace Theatre near Stockholm. Nevertheless, by linking performance and lectures in this way the theatre intends to stimulate visitors' understanding and interest of the theatre and its history.

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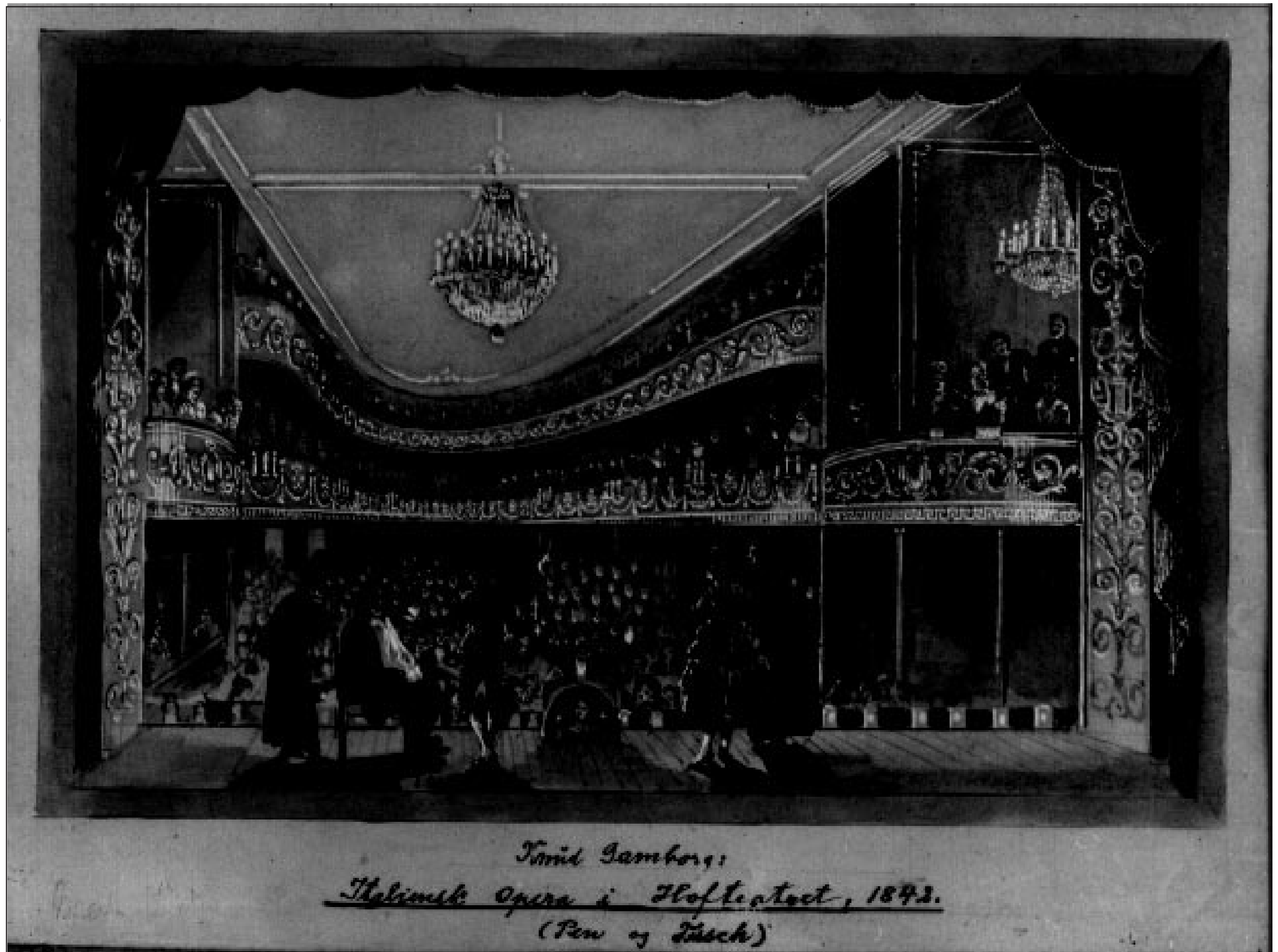

The Court Theatre during a performance of Rossini's The Barber of Seville. *Drawing by Knud Gamborg, 1842.*

What is the future for theatre museums?

For a theatre museum to be able to trace theatre history, create exhibitions and be at the disposal of researchers, it needs a constant supply of documentary material. When the pattern is properly composed, even the more insignificant aspects of the many facets of a performance can create a vivid sense of the whole. In addition to costumes, make-up, wigs, scenery and costume sketches, texts and props, there are prompt books, stage directions and stage mechanics' notes, posters, programmes, tickets and collections of letters. All these help document not only a performance, but also the theatre in which a performance was staged.

But times change. The documentalists of today do not have the same potential as in the past, for in recent years a price has been put on some of the material. Thus today, scenery and costume drawings are coveted objects which are sold at art auctions for high prices in order to alleviate the hard-pressed finances of theatres. In other words, museums now have to raise money to buy what they used to receive as gifts. Programmes these days contain very little information beyond a list of actors and a few photographs, with the rest of the space being taken up by large advertisements intended to cover their cost. Theatre tickets all come from the same printer and no longer have a character of their own. Letters are things of the past – we use the telephone. The machinery in today's theatre is run by computer, and disks are not exactly exciting as exhibition objects.

This is to say that theatre museums must review their collecting policies and their conceptions of exhibitions. Unfortunately, we still behave as though nothing had changed since the turn of the century, despite the fact that new institutions are emerging around us: science centres, media centres and ecology centres which provide visitors with totally different experiences from ours. Art exhibitions and major cultural displays are put together in such a way as to show highlights from an

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The rehearsal room at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen. Painting by Paul Fischer, 1889.

epoch rather than a course of development. In many museums the visitor can make use of interactive screens or be entertained by videos. Is this the way theatre museums must go?

The question must be discussed if we are not to end up being considered historical, antiquated institutions. And perhaps this is the right moment. For in recognizing that we are not able to exhibit the actor's, the singer's or the dancer's artistic work – as the painter can exhibit a canvas, an author his words and a craftsman his pots, glasses or furniture – we should grasp modern inventions and with their help, along with the material in the museums, fashion magnetic fields that bring us as close to the artistic creation as it is possible to come. This is a change that will take time, for it demands financial resources and new thinking on the 'product' museums will devise through their efforts.

However, it is my firm opinion that we have never been closer to giving a sense of artistic expression than we are today. Just imagine if we had had an Edmund Kean, a Sarah Bernhardt, a Caruso or a Taglioni on video! ■

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The Swiss Theatre Collection: the challenge of four languages and cultures

Martin Dreier

The only institution of its kind in Switzerland, the Swiss Theatre Collection (STC), comprising a museum, library and archive department, has the task of recording all aspects of the Swiss theatre. The diversity of socio-cultural conditions in Switzerland is similarly reflected in the different structures of its theatres, making this a challenging task which is often difficult to fulfil. The author received his Ph.D. from the University of Vienna with a thesis entitled 'Theatre and Technique. An Analysis of their Interrelation in the Light of Cultural Phenomenology'. In 1972 he was named resident playwright at the Municipal Theatre of Bern and in 1976, playwright in chief at the Schlosstheater Celle (Germany). He has been director of the STC since 1979 and was appointed professor honoris causa *in 1993 by the Cantonal Council of Bern.*

Switzerland, situated at the heart of western European, possesses a complex linguistic and cultural structure. The German-speaking area, in the north-east of the country bordering on Germany and Austria, is home to 74 per cent of the population. Various German-based dialects are spoken which differ greatly from High German and often vary considerably between themselves. In the region closest to France, French is spoken (approximately 20 per cent of the population) and in the area that borders on Italy, to the south of the Alps, Italian is the language spoken. In eastern Switzerland, Romansh is spoken by a minority (1 per cent). Founded in 1848, Switzerland was a loosely-linked confederation of states and today consists of twenty-six cantons, all of which are self-governing, particularly in the field of cultural promotion and education.

A structure of this kind is both advantageous and disadvantageous, particularly in relation to the study of the country's cultural history. In addition, the domestic situation within the confederation is sometimes greatly strained by the differing political outlooks on either side of the language divide. For example, a series of referendums showed that the French-speaking cantons were strongly in favour of joining the European Union while the German-speaking majority voted against. Throughout Switzerland, pro-European artists and intellectuals, among others, are committed to counteracting these centrifugal forces, in particular by encouraging exchanges and promoting joint projects to bridge the cultural and linguistic divides. This is also happening within the theatre.

Swiss theatre has developed in several directions, according to its various linguistic and cultural traditions. It has been influenced by the different cultures of its neighbours, while also experiencing a certain tension between regional identity and a wider, international presence. The origins of Swiss German theatre, like those of German theatre, date back to the religious mystery plays of the Middle Ages, followed by a rich tradition of carnival, humanist and morality plays. At the time of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, all theatrical performances were forbidden by local authorities and not only in German-speaking Switzerland. It was only thanks to the proliferation of troupes of travelling actors (in the second half of the eighteenth century) and the Golden Age of patriotic plays known as *Festspiele* (in the nineteenth century) that theatrical traditions were revived. Modern Swiss theatre is derived from two different sources: on the one hand, from amateur dramatics, with a strong emphasis on dialect, and, on the other, from the professional theatre, performed in High German.

In the eighteenth century, a theatrical tradition prevailed among the aristocracy of the French-speaking regions, but it did not last. In the late nineteenth century, the tradition of *Festspiele* first emerged, with the active participation of the local population, and is still in existence (the Fête des Vignerons in Vevey, for example). The twentieth century has seen a revival of the professional theatre, with independent touring companies and theatres and opera houses where seasonal repertoires are given, resident companies having experienced difficulties in finding a permanent home in the larger cities. However, the Théâtre Municipal de Lausanne, which opened in 1871, gave a limited season, followed in the spring by a kind of *Revue locale*. With the help of a small theatre and ballet company, Jacques Béranger, director of the theatre, which had been renovated in 1932, was able to present an interesting programme of plays, reviews and opera, until the outbreak of the

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Second World War in 1939. Subsequently, for economic reasons, the Théâtre Municipal became a theatre without a resident company, a fate which also befell the Grand Théâtre de Genève, which had opened in 1879. Between 1939 and 1945, touring companies performed varied programmes in Geneva and Lausanne. After the war, Galas Karsenty, with guest performances by visiting French companies (mostly from Paris), were preeminent throughout the western regions of Switzerland.

In Italian Switzerland (the Tessin and several valleys in the Grisons), the seventeenth century saw the birth of performances staged on the occasion of the Lugano Autumn Fair, as well as the *Sacra rappresentazione*, which has been held in Mendrisio ever since. In the late nineteenth century, the Teatro Apollo in Lugano featured regular seasons. Otherwise, the theatre in this part of the country was limited to performances by visiting companies from neighbouring Italy and German-speaking Switzerland. There has been a resident theatre in Italian Switzerland only since the war ended in 1945, and major independent productions by unaffiliated companies are a recent development. Although there is no professional resident theatre in the Romansh-speaking region of Switzerland, there is considerable activity in amateur dramatics throughout the many valleys, where five different dialects of a minority language are spoken.

The difficulties of diversity

It is clear then that despite several recent initiatives, there is no genuinely national theatre in Switzerland. The Society of Swiss Theatre (SST) (known in German as the Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Theaterkultur (SGTK), and in French as the Société Suisse du Théâtre (SST)), was founded in 1927, with the purpose not only of promoting the theatre *per se,* but also of establishing a collection of theatrical memorabilia and archives and of creating a chair of theatre studies at a Swiss University; it was, however, some time before these objectives were realized. The Swiss Theatre Collection (STC), in the custody of the National Library of Switzerland in Bern, was made available to the public only in 1944. It had been assembled as early as 1927, having benefited from gifts donated by different museums and associations. The highly successful exhibition, *Volk und Theater* (People and Theatre), the brainchild of Karl Gotthilf Kachler, which was shown in many towns throughout Switzerland between 1942 and 1943, did much to make the collection known to a wider public. The chair of theatre studies was not established until 1992 at the University of Bern. Two factors played an important role in the realization of these projects – the interest aroused by the Swiss model of multiculturalism, and the determination to promote cultural exchanges and further interregional understanding.

In the years between 1943 and 1977, the limited resources of the STC allowed for only a part-time post of curator. It was only in 1978, when the collection became a foundation with the participation, then as now, of the Swiss Confederation, the canton and city of Bern, that it became possible to create a full-time post of curator and to employ a librarian working 80 per cent of her time. In the meantime, a research assistant has also been employed, bringing the STC's total employment figure to 2.6.

Despite this limited staff, important acquisitions have been made over the years; the STC totals 35,000 volumes (scripts, works on the theatre, programmes and reviews), 400,000 press cuttings, 10,000 photographs

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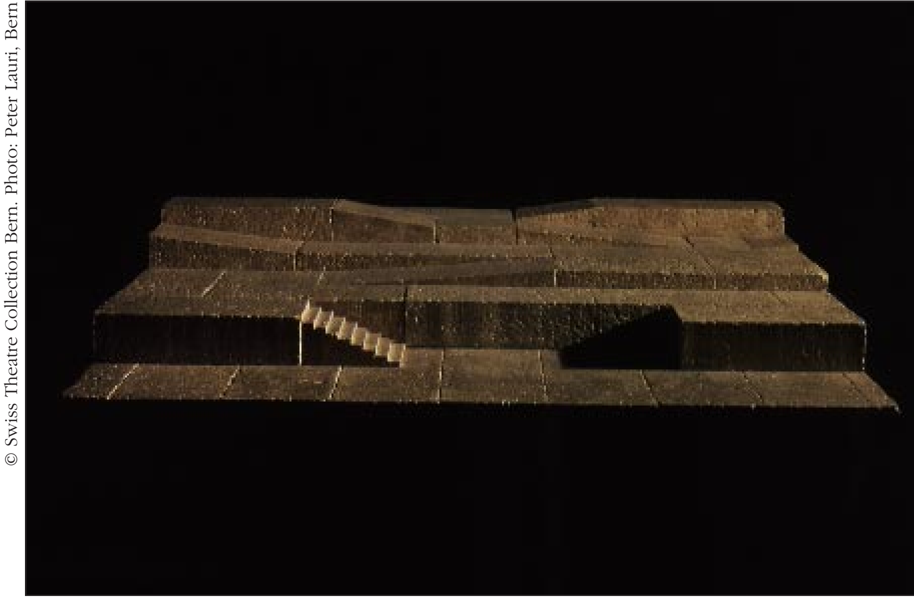

Model based on a rediscovered sketch by Adolph Appia (1862–1928) for Orpheus and Eurydice*, an opera by Christoph Willibald Gluck.*

and slides, 200 posters, 1,000 data cards, 5,000 sketches of costumes and design, 180 masks, 60 models, 200 hand and string puppets and a video library with more than 4,200 titles (recordings of performances and documentaries).

As well as expanding the collection, the need for improvement and development has been of prime concern. With the granting of foundation status in 1978 and in view of the possible creation of a chair of theatre studies, the STC undertook a large-scale reorganization. The library was entirely refurbished to make it more user-friendly. Improvements have been made to allow greater access to the extensive collection of press cuttings, photographs and other publications by theatre companies and their administrators. When it came to the recataloguing of sources, emphasis was given to one guiding principle. Material relating to theatre administration was filed on the basis of geographical data (region, place, specific theatres, in chronological order), whereas documents concerned with individual actors and personalities were classified in alphabetical order of theatrical production and technical speciality, on the basis of systematic criteria similar to those applied in the library.

For fuller details on individual performances, a catalogue of all the different stage productions was compiled under the author's name (dramatists, composers), with reference to specific details of the production. This traditional card-index system has been gradually replaced by a modern database of theatre repertoires. The process of reorganization is not yet complete; the number of theatres whose repertoires must be included continues to grow, as does the retrospective time-scale of the repertoires concerned. Since September 1993, the STC has classified its new acquisitions electronically, using methods similar to those employed by the Institute of Theatre Studies, within the SIBIL network of Swiss German libraries.

Since 1987, with the aim of fulfilling its role as a museum, the STC has presented a permanent exhibition entitled *The Theatre:*

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An exhibit stand for the section entitled The Baroque and the Classical *is a large-scale model of a theatre and wings. By turning a handle, the visitor is able to reproduce six lateral scenery changes, each with its own explanatory note.*

Times Present and Past, which covers various aspects of contemporary theatre, particularly as practised in Switzerland, placing it in the context of the history of European theatre. The exhibition is presented at three different levels: the first is intended for the casual visitor who may prefer merely to view the exhibits and pictures with the help of easy-to-read captions; the second, designed for visitors who are more interested in the history of the theatre and its development, offers more detailed descriptive panels intended as a leitmotif of the exhibition; the third level is for visitors who require more specific information on particular subjects. They may consult the appropriate texts, presented as an integral part of the displays, which appear only if manipulated in a certain way, reminiscent of modern theatre technology.

Limited resources, unlimited aims

Unlike Belgium, for example, where Flemish- and French-speaking cultures are endowed with their own individual centres of theatre documentation, more frugal Switzerland has only one to its name, which, as explained above, is under-resourced. Nevertheless, despite its limited structure, much is expected of the STC in terms of its intercultural role. Its origins and location are undeniably and perfectly legitimately Swiss German. In a similar vein, the Swiss Cinémathèque in Lausanne, whose function is to preserve and catalogue all aspects of the Swiss cinema, is situated in French-speaking Switzerland and functions in response to the prevailing socio-cultural climate. Consequently, most of the staff are local and the catalogues and files are all in French. More recently, however, with an increasing awareness of their responsibility towards the other cultural and linguistic regions of Switzerland, both these institutions have extended the scope of their action accordingly.

The Swiss Theatre Collection owes its international reputation above all to the famous Genevese dramatist, Adolphe Appia (1862–1928), whose literary estate it largely inherited, including more than

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100 sketches of his theatre designs, the manuscripts of his highly influential theoretical writings as well as some of his correspondence with important personalities from the world of the theatre. This wealth of information gives rise to repeated requests for loans on the part of French-speaking regions, and these are, of course, favourably received. Other important literary estates from which the STC has benefited contribute to the development of intercultural exchange. They include the archives of the Théâtre du Jorat at Mézières, near Lausanne, which has greatly influenced the theatrical life of French-speaking Switzerland throughout the twentieth century, as well as many of the stage designs sketched by Eric Poncy who did most of his work at the Grand Théâtre in Geneva. The collection also benefited from the literary estates of Vincent-Vincent (also known as Emmanuel Vincent) and of François Simon. Initially, the items in the STC collections originated from German-speaking Switzerland but, over the years, the scope has widened to include all regions of the country, especially following the establishment of the foundation with its increased staff.

When new items are required for the library, great care is taken to include works and secondary literature from all over Switzerland. A similar approach is taken

The Ocean Mask for Aeschylus's Prometheus Bound*, Roman Theatre, Avenches, 1946, designed by the Swiss painter Hans Erni.*

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with regard to documentation (including press cuttings, publications and photographs), although in this field structural difficulties do exist; whereas the larger theatres in German-speaking Switzerland usually have access to the services of a well-staffed public-relations office, theatres in the other regions must often make do with greatly reduced resources, obliging them to concentrate exclusively on the production side. As a result, the STC receives material from German-speaking Switzerland more or less automatically, while in the case of the other regions it is acquired only through the channels of personal contacts on the part of its staff. These represent definite limitations imposed by the lack of human resources.

Similarly, as far as its own development is concerned, the STC has made a concerted effort to take account of all the different regions of Switzerland. Admittedly, material is still catalogued and filed in German, but individual titles are given in their original language, as are place-names. Likewise, directories, initially based on German-speaking regions, now increasingly include major theatres all over Switzerland.

The permanent exhibition, mentioned earlier, was designed from a German-speaking viewpoint by the author of this article, himself a graduate in theatre studies from the University of Vienna. Because of the volume of written material, the exhibition is presented in German only. However, for French-speaking visitors, an explanatory audio-cassette is available, which they can follow on a portable cassette-player as they view the exhibits. In 1993 a guidebook to the exhibition was published in German, and a French edition is under way. Problems of translation have arisen, of course, providing a clear demonstration of the main obstacles to intercultural exchange. In terms of the history of the theatre for instance, the 'classical' period in the French theatre is different from that of the German theatre: for German speakers, it means the era of Goethe and Schiller (the latter half of the eighteenth century) whereas in a French context, it designates the seventeenth century with the works of Racine and Corneille.

Despite its limited human resources and internal and external difficulties, the administrators of the STC will persist in their efforts to fulfil their intercultural mission to the best of their ability. ■

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Unfinished business: the theatre collections of Berlin

Ruth Freydank

Berlin's attempts to create an integrated, comprehensive theatre museum have been dogged by politics, war, destruction, fragmentation and the complexities of unifying a once divided city. Ruth Freydank of the Märkische Museum tells the story of a multiplicity of collections in search of a museum.

'Berlin, city of the theatre, has no museum of the theatre.' These words from the early years of the twentieth century are just as topical as it draws to a close. The lapse of time and the unremitting quality of the statement underline the nature of the dilemma. A city that can justifiably pride itself on being one of Europe's cultural centres has completely ignored its vocation in a vital area of culture. And this despite the attempts of a few people, from time to time, to take the lead and make some efforts in the right direction.

The Theatrical History Society was actually founded in Berlin in 1902. The history of the theatre was a very new academic discipline, on the verge of becoming an independent subject at the universities. Its proponents recognized the need for a specialized museum, with the scholarly expertise needed to put collections together and have a strong impact on the public. One of the new society's main tasks was therefore to create a central Museum of the Theatre in Berlin.

In 1910, the Society, together with the Exhibition Hall Company, held its first theatrical exhibition in the newly built Zoological Garden Halls. This first major public event led to intensified efforts to create a permanent German Museum of the Theatre.

The really important material in regard to theatrical history revealed by the exhibition necessarily lent strength to the organizers' project. The Berlin museums possessed a wide variety of artistically significant works relevant to the history of the theatre. The city also had specific collections of theatre history items in both private and public ownership. The best known of these was, and still is, that of the actor, author and historian, Louis Schneider (1805–78), thought to be 'in scope and content . . . the most important old private collection of theatrical history to be established outside Vienna'.[1] In 1864, at the request of the General Stewardship of the Royal Players in Berlin, Emperor Wilhelm I had acquired the collection for 5,000 thalers, but the lack of suitable premises forced the Stewardship to entrust it to the Royal Library.

Schneider had assembled a wide range of items during his active years as a member of the Royal Players between 1820 and 1848, and on his many journeys abroad. Numerous artists had also made gifts to the collection. In 1836 Schneider acquired some important pieces from the estate of the drama critic Christian August Bertram. In 1843 he received an artistic bequest from Bartolomeo Verona, who had been the scenic designer of the Berlin Royal Stages. This included a rich stock of Italian Renaissance and Baroque architectural drawings and the stage designs of the early Berlin theatre painters up to the days of Giuseppe Galli-Bibiena. In all, the collection comprised 14,000 sheets, 1,200 rare books, manuscripts, photographs and theatre handbills, with an estimated value of 250,000 marks even in 1931.

Meanwhile, private enthusiasts had put together other collections of theatrical material, which had been available in profusion since the start of the theatrical boom in 1869, the year when general freedom to pursue trades was introduced in Germany. Artists themselves collected. They included the actor, Friedrich Haase, whose collection was very relevant to the situation in Berlin and was acquired by the Theatrical History Society. The estate of the drama critic Gotthilf Weisstein was another appropriate collection.

Not only the Theatrical History Society, but the Lessing Museum Society, founded in 1908, advocated the creation of a theatrical museum in Berlin. Some citizens had

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commemorated Lessing, a prominent eighteenth-century dramatist and critic, by setting up a small museum in his last Berlin apartment at No. 10 Königsgraben, where he had completed two of his most famous plays, *Minna von Barnhelm* and *Laocoon*. In 1920, under the headline 'Berlin Theatre Museum Planned', the German stage journal *Deutsche Bühne* reported that the two societies had agreed to merge, though the merger might well fail for want of suitable premises.

A museum created

Whereas patrons in other cities such as Munich, Kiel and Cologne for instance, came forward to provide funds for a theatrical museum, at first nothing happened in Berlin. Only the General German Theatrical Exhibition of 1927 in Magdeburg injected some movement into the static situation. The inventories of the Berlin State Theatres, displayed at Magdeburg, together with Schneider's collection, were to be the foundation of the Theatre Museum, which was acknowledged as long overdue. Oskar Fischel, the leading Berlin art historian, submitted to the Prussian Finance Ministry plans including financial arrangements and requests for suitable premises for the venture. The ministry declined because conversion work on the Unter den Linden Opera House was such a heavy burden on the budget that it could not make resources available. Therefore, the General Stewardship of the State Theatres intervened to support the long-planned project. It made available the attic floor of a side wing of the Stewardship building, where the library was also accommodated. The most basic resources were used to convert for an exhibition this 'low attic section, with rooms full of stable lads' clothing, hay and chopped straw',[2] as a contemporary observer wrote. It opened as a museum on 21 May 1929. The prevailing conditions permitted work only on a limited scale, but all those involved agreed that this was a major step forward. The Association of Friends of the State Theatre Museum was founded in 1931, and its members donated items of considerable theatrical interest and artistic merit to the museum. The General Stewardship handed over its historical documents and the collections relating to other stages, such as the Königsstadt and Belle Alliance Theatres, which broadened the holdings.

Nevertheless, the museum and its initiators still thought of themselves as 'in an initial phase of development'. As the collections grew, the central task was still the arrangement of a 'necessary further extension'. When the Nazis seized power in 1933, one of their first acts was to close the Lessing Museum, which was supported by many Jewish citizens. Its precious collections were sold to museums, libraries and private buyers.

Notwithstanding, a fresh opportunity opened up for the Museum of the Theatre. This assumed serious proportions when the General Stewardship laid claim to the museum premises in 1936 and persuaded the responsible ministries to make twelve large rooms available on the ground floor of the old central building of the city castle, and to pay the costs of the necessary renovation and equipment. The museum opened in 1937. After thirty-five years, the notion of a theatre museum in spacious premises was actually taking shape. At long last, it was possible to try out hard-won knowledge in a real museum environment and to acquire new experience. But what was to be done with the Schneider collection? After lengthy negotiations with the Ministry of Science, Art and Popular Education on the one hand, and the General Stewardship and State Library on the other, a compromise was chosen. The visual material was handed over to the museum, while the rest stayed in the State Library.

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A 1929 photo of one of the exhibition rooms of the Theatre Museum when it was housed in the building of the General Stewardship of the State Theatres. A portrait of the singer Lili Lehmann by Antonie Volkmar is surrounded by busts of fellow singers. The whereabouts of these works is at present unknown.

The promising new start therefore already contained the seeds of fragmentation. Conflicting interests led to the dispersal of Schneider's collection, which had been the core of the theatrical museum proper. This loss was not compensated by new acquisitions, such as that of the Wallner Theatrical Collection in 1941, and of other important pieces from theatres and private owners, which had long since extended the holdings beyond the confines of Berlin. The war brought fresh destruction.

The Theatrical Museum, along with the Handicrafts Museum also located in the castle, seems to have been one of the few collections to remain open to the public until 1940. The transfer and dispersion of its collections began then, and have continued to the present day.

A museum forgotten

In the spring of 1945, Berlin was a city of rubble. Not one of its many cultural buildings, especially in the centre, had survived the hail of bombs dropped in the closing years of the war. When the noise of conflict ceased, the true scale of the destruction became clear. Theatres and museums had suffered severe losses. However, only a few days after the end of the fighting, the first helpers appeared in the ruins and tried to restore a semblance of order to the chaos. But the balance sheet was catastrophic: most of the buildings on Museum Island, the Unter den Linden Opera House, the Municipal Opera House, the Kroll Opera House, the Philharmonic Building, the Metropolitan Theatre and the Playhouse – in all fifteen theatres – had been totally destroyed, and the castle had suffered severe damage.

Improvised efforts were made to restore cultural activity in the form of plays, concerts and exhibitions, and people tried to rescue the art treasures stored in cellars and bunkers. But nobody claimed actual responsibility for the holdings of the Theatrical Museum. The items recovered were either shared out between different institutions or left where the force of adverse circumstances had placed them. Many of the collections passed into the State Opera archive. Under the heading 'Archive of the German State Opera', the 1974 *Yearbook of*

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A watercolour sketch of the decor by Gerst and Wolff for Rossini's opera The Siege of Corinth, *presented at the Unter den Linden Opera House in January 1830. Part of the Schneider collection, it was donated in 1936 to the soon-to-be-opened Theatre Museum in the city castle.*

Libraries, Archives and Information Centres of the German Democratic Republic listed 280,000 items which included parts of the collections of the Museum of the former Prussian State Theatre, the Schneider collection, the stage-design collection (Verona, Galli-Bibiena, Gerst and so on) from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, 700 items; the portrait collection, 6,560 items; the newspaper-cuttings collection, 10,450 items; the poster collection, 1,600 items; theatre yearbooks, 370 items; stage works from the former Prussian State Theatre (Opera and Playhouse), 3,500 items; the Wallner Theatre, 2,500 items; collection of autograph manuscripts, bequests. However, two years later the information from the same institution read as follows: 'Special items: in the archive: collection of theatre handbills and programmes (280,000 pieces), part-holdings of the Museum of the Former Prussian State Theatre, Schneider collection, collection of stage designs, portrait and poster collection'. Slowly but surely, the fact that these were the holdings of a once separate museum was being forgotten.

Germany had lost the war. The resulting situation and the subsequent division of the country and its capital in 1949 had far-reaching consequences for Berlin, which would affect its development significantly over subsequent decades. Until 1949, all postwar efforts had been directed towards organizing public life, the economy, science and culture, on the basis of an overall concept for the city. For example, in July 1945, Walter Unruh, a Berlin industrialist, theatre enthusiast and collector, offered the city a theatrical collection. Its historical importance resided not only in its scope and value but in the character and content of the items, which directly supplemented and continued the collections of the museum of the Prussian State Theatres. The items that he had brought together over decades included a library of 8,000 volumes, 10,000 theatre handbills, more than 1,000 illustrations, autographs, photographs, bequests by individual artists, theatre records and an extensive collection of newspaper cuttings. He asked for his collection to be displayed in a Museum of the Theatre.

After the division of the city there were three universities, two academies, two state museums and two municipal museums. All these laid claim to the collections that they had found on their respective territories, and thereafter continued their collecting activities according to their own particular policies. As circumstances would have it, the Unruh collection was situated in the Western sector, where it was entrusted on loan to the Free University in 1954.

None of the political forces ruling the divided city could ensure that the treasures in their charge were used for their intended purpose, namely, exhibition in a museum open to the public. Once again, a few individuals acknowledged that the collecting of materials specially related to the history of the theatre was a significant task of cultural history and scholarship. In the early 1960s, a Berlin museum was planned as a political and cultural-historical counterbalance in the west to the old Märkische Museum situated in the eastern part of the city. The creation of a collection of theatrical history was part of this new museum con-

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cept. In 1965, the Märkische Museum established a specialized department of Berlin Theatre History to which the collections of literary and musical history were attached. Today, this museum is the only one to feature a permanent exhibition on the theatrical history of Berlin. Unfortunately, lack of space confines it to the period between 1740 and 1933. With the acquisition of the Documenta Artistica, one of the most important private collections of international circus, variety and cabaret history also passed into public ownership.

The archives created after the war in the two Berlin art academies also contained collections dealing with the theatre. The initial aim was to include the bequests and donations of former academy members, but these archives became the resting place for orphaned collections, not least because of the lack of a specialized museum. In the meantime, these institutes have themselves pursued a wide-ranging collecting activity. In the former West Berlin, specialists concentrated on artists forced to emigrate during the Nazi period, while the Eastern academy stressed the presentation and documentation of the East German theatre. After reunification in 1990, these collections were united under a single roof in the Archive Foundation of the Academy of Arts. They now represent a huge potential for the creation of theatrical history collections. Nevertheless, their present organization makes them accessible to a wider public only on a limited scale, although in the past both institutes have mounted internationally acclaimed public exhibitions.

A museum in the making?

Despite the losses caused by the war, it is now evident that Berlin possesses theatrical history collections which, however widely dispersed between different institutions, share a common content and time-scale that can stand comparison with the great European theatrical collections. Moreover, it became clear after reunification that the scholarly concepts adhered to in the east and west had not differed so very much, in spite of ideological disagreements, and that the similarity of content of the theatrical history collections was particularly striking. Reunification was thus a unique opportunity to focus attention on these cultural treasures and to take appropriate action. Instead, no bold measures were taken. The curators in charge of the collections were mainly concerned to hold on to their possessions but the politicians decided on action. Their decision in 1993 was, however, guided by budgetary policy and consisted in leaving matters exactly as they stood. Even that did not prevent the collections of the former Museum of the Prussian National Theatres, and with them the Schneider collection, from further fragmentation. While the stage and costume designs and all the other visual exhibits with artistic content, and the photographic collection of the Berlin City Museum (including the Märkische Museum and Berlin Museum) were taken over, the Land archive received the text, costume, rehearsal and performance books, set designs, posters and notes, together with the archives handed down from other theatres and the collection of theatre handbills. The former library of the Archives was to be incorporated into the State Opera library. Such admonitory voices as that of August Everding, President of the German Centre of the International Theatre Institute, went unheeded.

In January 1994, a group of experts, dramatists, journalists and friends of the theatre set up the Association of Friends and Promoters of a Theatre Museum. The occasion for their decision was self-evident. As the *Tagesspiegel* said:

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This 1839 portrait of the ballerina Marie Taglioni as La Sylphide *was exhibited in the Theatre Museum of the city castle. Measuring 180 x 133 cm, it was too large to be transferred during the war and has since disappeared.*

© Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

For years the organizers of the Berlin theatres have talked of the need to bring together in a single collection all the treasures of the many-faceted Berlin theatrical world, which are still present in the city, in order to prevent further losses and ensure that the documents and objects are properly safeguarded. The closure of the State Theatres in the east, the safeguarding of their working documents, and the transfer of the major archive of the State Opera Houses (also in the East) have all raised the question of the proper location for a collection of this kind.[3]

Thus, the old question still remains to be answered: what is the purpose of a Museum of the Theatre? In fact, the answer already came in 1975 from Friedrich Luft, one of the foremost drama critics of the postwar years in Berlin. Assuming that practical experience had long since eradicated any real argument about the purpose of theatrical museums, he describes it as one of those 'obvious non-questions'. But, he went on to say:

> precisely such 'non-questions' often elicit the most meaningful answers . . . The theatre itself is anti-museum. Of all the arts, theatre is that with the most rapid response, the most immediate feedback. The state of mind, preferences, virtues and vices of an age can easily be recognized by the plays which are put on and how they are performed. But that is impossible unless we have mementos and perceptible traces of a particular theatrical epoch ready to hand. Accordingly, our need for a Museum of the Theatre in this city is truly pressing.[4]

The present situation makes that demand as topical as ever. ■

Notes

1. Rolf Badenhausen, 'Die Theatersammlung Louis Schneider', *Mitteilungen für die Mitglieder der Vereinigung von Freunden des Staatstheatermuseums*, Vol. 6, No. 15, September 1937, p. 5.

2. Kurt Karl Eberlein, 'Das Museum der Staatlichen Theater in Berlin', *Das Nationaltheater* (Berlin), Vol. 2, No. 4, 1929, p. 302.

3. *Der Tagesspiegel*, 2 January 1994.

4. Friedrich Luft in *Berlinische Notizen 1975*, pp. 3-6.

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Capturing performance at London's Theatre Museum

Margaret Benton

How to 'transport people out of the ordinary and into a journey of the imagination' is, in Margaret Benton's view, the fundamental question facing theatre museums today. The solutions adopted by the Theatre Museum – the National Museum of the Performing Arts, in London, are thus well worth looking at. The author has been director of the museum since 1990. She was previously deputy director of the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford (1985–90), after ten years as a producer/director for BBC Television, and is the former president of the International Association of Libraries and Museums of the Performing Arts (SIBMAS).

Live performance exists only in the present, a momentary and unrepeatable communication between performer and spectator. Are performing arts museums then not a contradiction in terms, an attempt to preserve the unpreservable, to record the unrecordable? Certainly the shards of performance that make up our collections – the costumes, the programmes, the designs, the reviews – can only ever provide a very partial record of the live event. Other museums have to grapple with the problem of documenting and interpreting the ephemeral, but the material vestiges of events rooted in common life-experiences have the nostalgic appeal of 'how we used to live' – of past Utopias. Theatre aims to transport people out of the ordinary and into a journey of the imagination. Edmund Kean's sword, his death mask or an engraving may fascinate an enthusiast of nineteenth-century British drama, but how

Photo by courtesy of the Theatre Museum, V&A

Various programmes, photos and tickets for theatrical performances.

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can such relics convey the magnetic presence of an actor who once held London audiences in thrall?

How best to record and interpret the dynamic art of performance are problems that few, if any, performing arts museums have successfully resolved. This is mainly due, I believe, to a failure to understand fully the unique nature and educational potential of the subject area, and thereby to attract adequate funding. I know of no performing arts museum that has resources remotely comparable to national collections devoted to, say, archaeology or fine or decorative arts. In Britain, the Theatre Museum holds the national collection of performing arts documentation. Yet this exceptional collection, celebrating what is widely regarded as the world's richest theatrical heritage, receives an annual budget of just £1.3 million to provide a comprehensive national museum and archive service. Compare this with government funding for other art forms in the United Kingdom in 1995: £16.9 million for the British Film Institute, £18.7 million for the National Gallery and a total of £30.6 million for our parent body, the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A).

The struggle to exist

How the British Theatre Museum became part of the V&A, the national museum of decorative arts, is due less to a natural marriage of similar collections than to personal persistence, that of the formidable Gabrielle Enthoven, whose obsessive passion for the theatre led her to spend her life and fortune documenting the London stage. In 1924, after struggling for years to find a secure home for her life's work, she finally persuaded the V&A to take her vast collection of playbills, programmes and cuttings, which she continued to fund and update until her death in 1950.

The 1970s saw a major expansion of the collection and a growing demand for the creation of a national theatre museum funded by the government. The acquisition of a further three major collections led to the creation, in 1974, of the Theatre Museum as a separate V&A department and a museum in its own right. Finally in 1987, after thirteen years of struggle and setbacks, the Theatre Museum opened in its own specially converted premises in Covent Garden.

The location in the heart of London's theatreland was perfect, but the tiny building with its cramped gallery spaces was not. Lack of funding led to a less than perfectly conceived conversion, with conventional museum displays consisting of static objects corralled into small glass cubicles. While of great charm and interest to theatre connoisseurs, it lacked both the vitality of a live performance and the popular, interactive displays to be found in most new museums. Visitors flood in for major events such as our free Shakespeare week, with the country's finest performers strutting their stuff in the museum, but, in the main, audiences for this small, fee-paying museum had not reached expectations.

In the 1990s, a major review of the museum's role and activities led to a radical change in direction and a sharp focusing of priorities. Since objects are the core of any museum, our first task was to reassess our holdings and produce a clear collecting plan. The collection spanned most of the performing arts and contained the widest imaginable range of intriguing and seductive objects, from literally millions of photographs, posters and programmes, to exotic costumes and 40-foot backcloths designed by Picasso and Gontcharova, models by Gordon Craig, swords, ceramics, tickets and tokens – even theatre boxes

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rescued from the bulldozers, complete with gilded plaster elephants and half-clad ladies. It had all the strengths and weaknesses of a collection of collections. The priority was to create an overall logic that would enable the museum to develop the collection into more than the sum of its parts, to ensure that it remained an important and relevant resource for current users and a valuable legacy for future generations.

The museum exists to provide the national record of performance and its processes. To fulfil this brief and to reflect the changing world outside, it was clear that we had to step outside comfortable, curatorial tramlines. Did our collection fully represent the diversity of performance in the United Kingdom's multicultural society? Did it cover physical theatre, live art and other, new forms of theatre favoured by young audiences? Were there not new and better ways to document our subject?

Rigorous self-analysis has given a clarity to our work and is opening up new avenues. Our existing collections already comprise a unique resource and we shall continue to acquire traditional documentation, such as programmes and reviews. We shall continue to provide a context for performance by documenting the craft and processes of theatre with photographs, prompt books, archives, costumes and designs. But, although all this documentary evidence tells us a great deal about the business of theatre and the way productions are received, it reveals surprisingly little about what is the central concern – the performance itself. We have a bold vision of a future that consists of capturing the actual performance, a shift from documenting merely reactions to performance to trying to capture what was reacted to.

The National Video Archive of Stage Performance

Nothing can ever wholly capture the experience of being present at a live performance but film, and its cheaper and more versatile successor, videotape, does provide the best, most detailed and currently available method of documenting what would otherwise disappear altogether. Only film and video can show how performers move through time and space and interact with the audience. Our priority, therefore, had to be to exploit these and other developing technologies to provide the final and most important piece of the jigsaw puzzle that tells the story of a performance.

Recording live performance is a complex and expensive business, which explains our delay in establishing the National Video Archive of Stage Performance at the Museum. The major breakthrough came in 1992 when we achieved a unique agreement with the Federation of Entertainment Unions to record performances without paying artists' fees (which would have made the whole enterprise impossibly expensive). The next hurdle has been to find the money for the recordings. In November 1993 a major grant enabled us to carry out the first phase of the archive's planned development – a series of trial recordings.

An archival recording differs in intention, and usually in practice, from cinema and television coverage of live performance, the main aim of the latter being to produce public entertainment. The purpose of an archival recording is to convey as faithful and as a detailed a record as possible of the original stage performance for the practical use of the theatre industry, vocational training, academic research, schools and colleges. It should aim to be an eyewitness to the event taking place in the presence of a live audience, ideally from the point of

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Photo by courtesy of the Theatre Museum, V&A

Model of Barry Kay's set design for Act I of Kenneth Macmillian's ballet Anastasia*, premiered by the Royal Ballet in 1971.*

view of a single spectator in the theatre, and should cover all the action. Cameras should be as unobtrusive as possible. There should be no change to the original stage lighting or setting, nor should the audience be disturbed in any way.

Recording moving performers in low light levels from fixed camera and microphone positions and with a live audience presents technical difficulties even for experienced television directors using broadcast equipment. Our priority was to determine the best technical means of making archival recordings in order to do justice to the performances. The importance of using professional camera crews, equipment and recording formats soon became apparent, though this does have considerable cost implications. Funding remains a major handicap and we have a long way to go to reach the size of New York's Theatre on Film and Tape archive. We have nevertheless produced fifty recordings and are gratified to see how they have already been of considerable benefit to the theatre profession.

For a museum to thrive, it must be relevant and useful. As a consequence of producers seeing our videos of productions, funding has been raised for foreign tours and even for films, while one company had its government grant renewed on the strength of our recording of an important production. With its new video archive, the museum ceases to be for the theatre profession just a quaint repository for theatrical memories, but becomes a valuable adjunct to its work. Thus, by ensuring the public support of extremely articulate and high-profile theatrical figures, the museum also helps secure its own future.

Another practical benefit of the National Video Archive of Stage Performance (argu-

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ably its greatest) lies in its capacity to revolutionize the work of those who teach drama, dance, music and theatre crafts, and those who carry out research into these art-forms. In piloting the use of the archive in education workshops and displays, we have been much encouraged by the enthusiastic response of teachers and students. By supplying reliable, visual material of actual performances to refer to and analyse, the recordings provide unexpected insights and a deeper understanding of the art of theatre. If our primary task is to provide the best possible record of live performance, it is in interpreting our collections to further the development of the performing arts and to create a new audience for live theatre that we make best use of that record.

Our educational role is central to our existence. The performing arts cover literature (drama), music, dance, art and design, social history, subjects taught at every level of education from primary school to postgraduate study. As we are discovering, the museum has the potential to act as a unique informal learning centre for schools and colleges, and, with the right displays, to attract a large audience from all fields of education. The question is how this potential can be best exploited.

Breathing life into the collections

One of the new seductions is to digitize the collections. This would transform access, but, with the current state of technology, it cannot as yet substitute for the genuine object or the live performance. Dynamic and imaginative displays are the most effective way for a museum to fulfil its educational role for a wide audience. Our priority then is to develop the galleries into a living experience of the performing arts, where texts, scores, choreography are brought to life and put in context through an innovative mix of genuine artefacts, theatrical displays, video recordings, workshops and live performances. We must also exploit links with surrounding performance venues for backstage and theatreland guided tours, and, of course, the best in contemporary theatre.

Despite the cramped galleries and lack of money, we have already begun to replace our traditional displays with special exhibitions based on sound educational values and exploiting a variety of display techniques. Of particular appeal is *The Wind in the Willows – From Page to Stage*, an exhibition that demonstrates the processes in the Royal National Theatre's staging of a

Performer making up for Andrew Lloyd Webber's Cats*, New London Theatre, 1990.*

Photo by Graham Brandon. Courtesy of the Theatre Museum, V&A

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popular children's story. Here a combination of well-known fictional characters, models, photographs, video, clear graphics and interactive displays are supported by complementary workshops on costume, make-up and lighting and performance to provide an in-depth understanding of stagecraft.

Live interpretation is vital to any performing arts museum, but its implementation requires care. Experiments with evening theatre were discontinued, not only on the grounds of cost but because it added nothing to the daytime museum visit. Actors in role in the galleries, as used by a growing number of museums, also presented problems, not least that of quality control. It is not always easy to represent the best of British theatre with young and inexperienced performers, which is what most museums can usually afford. The museum has therefore opted for animator-guides who take gallery tours and run demonstrations and participatory workshops in our studio theatre. These activities enhance the existing displays by involving visitors in the processes of stagecraft and providing the human dimension that is central to all performance. While still being developed, they are transforming the museum experience. They introduce visitors to the dynamics and processes of live performance far more effectively than sophisticated technology, and certainly cost no more.

Animator-guides cannot obscure, however, the urgent need to replace our congested, low-ceilinged galleries with a new, far more spacious building. We are not seeking the obvious solution – the redundant theatre – despite the successful examples of the delightful Drottningholm theatre/museum in Sweden or re-created heritage in the form of the new Shakespeare's Globe theatre on London's South Bank. Such buildings tend to fix the

Photo by Anthony Crickmay. Courtesy of the Theatre Museum, V&A

Lauren Potter and Jonathan Lunn, London Contemporary Dance Theatre, 1985.

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Photo by Graham Brandon. Courtesy of the Theatre Museum, V&A

Students using recordings by the National Video Archive of Stage Performance at the Theatre Museum.

presentation of theatre to a specific time and space and, as national museum of the performing arts, we need to encompass all periods and all forms of performance – from street performers and circus tent, to experimental theatre and grand opera. Our goal, therefore, is a vast, totally flexible air-conditioned black box, fully equipped with the latest stage lighting and other technology, to allow us to show visitors treasures from the collections and to take them on a voyage of the imagination, by involving them as genuine participants in the processes that conjure up the magic of theatre.

We have the images and we have the vision, but to realize that vision when the museum has only enough money to open its doors and provide a basic public service, is proving a long and arduous struggle. The difficulties are multiplied when our parent museum is faced with major funding cuts and even essential curatorial work is threatened. However, with growing support from the theatrical profession, and our increasingly successful attempts at self-help, we are taking modest but significant steps forward. Our team of gallery animators, funded by evening hire of the museum for receptions, are attracting more visitors and increasing our admissions revenue. Funding for our video archive, exhibitions and a new building is being raised from external sources by our development manager and a development committee made up of influential theatre professionals and business people.

The National Performing Arts Museum of our dreams is still many years away, but we have the blueprint, we have built the right foundations, and, we believe, we have the determination and the initiative to make it happen. ■

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Performing arts museums and collections in India

Shovana Narayan

In India, the performing arts are inseparable from the country's ancient religious and cultural traditions. They are thus reflected in a large number of collections not necessarily created to focus on the performing arts as such, but rather to display the tangible evidence of a history unparalleled in variety and richness. Shovana Narayan is an award-winning Kathak dance virtuoso who has captivated audiences at home and abroad. She has published extensive research in the field of dancing and is visiting lecturer at the Theatre Wissenschaft of the University of Vienna.

Indian civilization, rich in philosophical, religious and artistic content, did not have a tradition of preserving antiquities. In its more than 5,000 years of known history, tradition was handed down orally and visually from generation to generation, and it was this process that ensured cultural continuity in the form of social attitudes, beliefs, principles and conventions of behaviour, including the performing arts. The scientific concept of museology and the institution of museums and the study of anthropology came with the British and helped India to recognize and preserve its vast wealth of objects of antiquity.

The collections in most Indian museums focus mainly on archaeology, architecture and sculpture. However, all three are themselves rich in imagery of the performing arts. This is not surprising as Indian culture has always given great importance to music and dance, and sculpture has provided the basic source for tracing the history of the country's various classical dance forms.

Hinduisim perceives God in a number of ways. The various manifestations and incarnations of God may be represented as artists, and the performing arts thus became the subject of temple and cave architecture, friezes and sculpture. Rituals too, enjoyed a prominent position in both pre- and post-Aryans periods, lending themselves to imagery and iconography. Hence, song and dance became an inherent part of these rituals in rural, urban and tribal areas, during the harvesting season, for example, or for marriage and birth ceremonies, or worship of the Lord for spiritual attainment.

In some rural and tribal areas, a direct relationship exists between the performing arts and the symbols drawn on the ground or painted on the walls of mud houses. They may evoke certain musical sounds and are sometimes accompanied by depictions of dance movements. In urban centres, accepted canons of excellence crept into simple folk music and dance, gradually culminating in the classical forms which exhibit the formal beauty and emotional control typical of the area.

Even though the performing arts are a common theme in architecture, archaeology and sculpture, the study of their direct relationship to museology has been limited. One must bear in mind that as the traditional arts developed and were nurtured in specific regions whose political boundaries were constantly changing, the study of such arts would have to consider an identifiable 'cultural region' rather than current political boundaries. In addition, as some of our traditional arts are directly related to day-to-day life and associated rituals, many performing-arts collections could also be classified as 'craft'. For example, among musical instruments, the *ghatam* is an earthenware pot struck with the fingers while its open mouth is placed against the stomach to regulate the flow of air and hence the tonal sound; when used as a household utility item, it is no more than an earthenware pitcher for storing water. Thus, the *ghatam* falls within the categories both of 'performing arts' and 'craft'. Similarly, the *chimta* is used by folk and tribal artists to provide a musical rhythmic beat, but within the house, it consists simply of a pair of large pincers or tongs. Finally, it is difficult to classify any dress, mask, instrument or craft as 'old' or 'contemporary', as modifications are part of a continuous process.

Nevertheless, traditional performing-arts collections can be classified into such distinct categories as musical instruments, puppets, masks and headgear, ornaments, costumes, theatre props including curtain and make-up, artefacts and

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documentation. Most of India's 490 registered museums have an assortment of collections relating to all these aspects, and only a limited effort has been made to create museums or galleries devoted solely to this field. In this respect, the predominant names that come to the fore are the Sangeet Natak Academy, with a rich collection of well over 1,300 objects covering all aspects of the performing arts, the National Museum, the Indira Gandhi National Centre of Arts, the National Centre of Performing Arts, the Crafts Museum, the Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum, the Mysore Folklore Museum, the City Palace at Jaipur, the Museum of Man at Madhya Pradesh, the Jagdish and Kamala Mittal Museum, the Indian Museum of Calcutta and the Srinivas Malliah Memorial Museum, all of which boast rich collections of puppets or masks, ornaments and musical instruments.

Photo by courtesy of the author

Bow-shaped veena*, a traditional Indian musical instrument.*

Of particular interest are those institutionalized collections that keep the performing arts alive through performances and productions. Although they might be considered as contemporary theatre, they none the less form part of traditional art forms, and most of the theatre craft museums with their attached workshops have done yeoman service not only in maintaining the link with ancient classical Sanskrit theatre but also in providing inspiration and lending novelty and originality to the current theatrical scene.

The following collections of performing arts artefacts and materials are to be found in a host of museums throughout the country.

Musical instruments

Through the ages a vast array of musical instruments has developed, giving an insight into the material culture of various groups of people. The Natyashastra, a treatise on theatrics written sometime between the second century B.C. and the second century A.D, has classified these instruments into four categories: (a) *tata vadya*, or chordophones, namely stringed instruments; (b) *sushira vadya*, or aerophones, namely wind instruments; (c) *avanaddha vadya*, or membranophones, namely percussion instruments; and (d) *ghana vadya*, or idiophones, namely solid instruments which do not require tuning. These are all clearly noticeable in the various cave and wall frescos, and on the sculptures and friezes of temples and ruins. Such collections are found in most museums as they form part of the archaeological finds. Particularly noteworthy are the National Museum and the Sangeet Natak Academy Museum in Delhi.

In the National Museum, the gallery of musical instruments was set up in 1962. The Sharan Rani Backliwal gallery is of particular interest to art lovers. Donated by

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an eminent musician, Sharan Rani, in 1980, it embraces a broad range of old Indian musical instruments from various parts of the country, including folk and tribal instruments. Most date from between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries while a few pieces are from the fifteenth, sixteenth and twentieth centuries. Some of the instruments had belonged to well-known musicians or musicologists as well as to some of the princely states. Also to be seen in this collection is a rare right-sided conch with clockwise spiral as well as an example of Edison's phonograph, a music box and a mechanical bird, all dating from the nineteenth century.

The Sangeet Natak Academy Museum has a vast collection of over 500 instruments of all types, belonging to the folk, tribal and classical art traditions spanning many centuries. Some of the rare instruments in this museum include the *khangling* from Ladakh, which is an aerophone made from the human bone of a virgin, and the *tuila*, a single string plucked instrument with no fret, capable of creating one and a half octaves of sound with intricate manipulations. The *khangling*, now usually made of wood, is used exclusively in monasteries as well as in related ritualistic ceremonies. This museum also boasts of a whole range of *sarangi*, a bow instrument, and a large variety of drums of all shapes and sizes, ranging from the micro (3.8 cm), called a *budubudukai*, to the macro, which is about 120 cm in diameter and is called a *dhumsa*, a variety of kettledrum.

A study of the stringed instruments indicates how the use of hair for strings gave way to 'gut', cotton or Chinese silk strings, which, in turn, were replaced by metal, especially after the British established their hegemony over India. Among the wind instruments, the use of bamboo, wood, animal horn or clay still remains, although in some urban adaptations metal has slowly crept in. Similarly, in a number of percussion instruments, which are in constant use in classical and semi-classical music and

Photo by courtesy of the author

The ghatam, *an earthenware pot struck with the fingers while its open mouth is placed against the stomach to regulate the flow of air and hence the tonal sound.*

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dance, earth and clay have given way to wood. Notable in this area is the *mridanga* percussion instrument, whose name is derived from the Sanskrit word *mrid* meaning 'earth'. In the *oordhawaka* variety, the *tabla* from the Indo-Gangetic belt, consisting of a pair of vertical drums, was earlier made of clay and wood with the tuning made possible with the help of rings. It was only in the 1960s that the left piece of the *tabla*, called the *bayan*, came to be made of metal.

Interestingly, a study of this collection of instruments shows how rhythm was provided by early humans as an extension of the body, with dried fruits, berries or shells tied to the waist to produce rhythm with movement. Along with sticks, clappers and dried fruit rattles, these are still in vogue in some of the rural areas and a large tract of the tribal areas. Similarly, early humans dug a pit in the ground over which an animal hide was stretched so that the flapping of the tail of a cow or buffalo evoked a rhythmic beat.

Puppets, masks and headgear

For thousands of years, puppets held sway as an integral part of any festivity or celebration, the themes of puppet theatres being based on epics and legends. Almost all kinds of puppets, namely the glove, string, rod, shadow and even leather varieties, are found in India, each with its own distinctive regional identity.

Masks appear extensively in traditional theatre as well as in tribal rituals. Originally used to ward off evil spirits or frighten away wild animals, they soon became an art form in themselves, involving music and dance. In theatre, the various mythical characters are often depicted with masks. In fact, in the tribal region of southern Bihar, the word 'Chhau', derived from the Sanskrit word *chhaya* or 'shadow', does not only mean 'mask' but also signifies the Chhau dances of Kharaswan and Seraikela which are performed with masks. In addition, there are the 'muppets', a combination of the mask and the puppet with a man or men inside who dance to the accompanying music and rhythmic beats. This practice is still prevalent in the north-eastern states as well as in other tribal and rural areas.

Headgear, in addition to its protective function, also came to be accepted as a social symbol. For artists, the headgear, along with the mask and make-up, is instrumental in successfully portraying a character. Headgear can be broadly divided into three major categories: the crowns or *keeratas* or *mukuts*, the turbans (realistic or styled) and the stylized representation of matted hair and women's coiffures.

Costumes, ornaments, textiles and props

The costumes and ornaments of folk and tribal artists are no different from the ceremonial wear of the people of their region. They are thus to be found in most traditional museums, especially those dealing with anthropology, which touch upon the theme of daily life, including habits of dress. The theatres of old used improvised curtains held centre stage by stagehands; their textiles, colour and design also indicate the subtle and various influences to which they have been subjected over time. The Calico Museum of Textiles at Ahmedabad was set up in 1949 and has a remarkable collection of historic textiles re-creating the splendour of the Mughal courts, as well as the dress of different parts of the country.

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Photo by courtesy of the author

Puppet representing Ravana, a character in the legendary epic of Rama and Sita, from the region of Karnataka.

Traditionally, the use of architectural structures in Indian theatre has been rather limited as temple courtyards with their ornately carved pillars served as fascinating backdrops, eschewing the need for further embellishment. Traditional theatre decor was not naturalistic but symbolic, and there was always stylization through motifs which helped the audience to visualize the scene. At best, some stray stage properties such as the king's throne or the royal bed may have been used. In classical dance traditions a solo dancer performs for the entire evening, and the language of the body and hand gestures, facial

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expressions and rhythmic and musical accompaniment complete the entire emotional process, requiring no external factors for the aesthetic experience other than the stage, musical instruments and costume.

Notwithstanding, the knowledge of stage setting existed, as is evident from the descriptions found in the dramatic treatise, the Natyashastra, which laid down that theatre props should be light in weight and devised from such materials as beeswax, lacquer, thin sheets of copper, light wood, coloured mirror pieces, *bilba* paste, cloth, bamboo strips and clay. However, they were in limited use in the past and came into prominence only in the last century when some attempts were made at realistic representations of situations. Thus, collections of props are primarily held by the organizations producing and presenting dance-dramas and the theatres requiring their use, such as the Sriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra, the National School of Drama Repertory, the Srinivas Malliah Memorial Museum, all in Delhi, the Indian National Theatre of Damu Jhaveri and Mansukh Joshi, the Marathi theatre collections of P. L. Deshpande, the Little Ballet Group of Shanti Bardan, various theatre groups of Parsi theatre in Maharashtra as well as the local theatres of southern India, to name but a few. Mention must also be made of the reproduction of a traditional Sanskrit theatre based on the description given in the Natyashastra which has recently been constructed within the precincts of the National School of Drama.

According to official classification, twenty-three types of museum exist in India, very few of which are devoted solely to the performing arts. However, there is an increasing awareness of the need to have such specialized collections and museums not only in the traditional areas of performing arts but also to highlight related areas such as fine arts, photography, posters, slides, audio and video recordings, philately and literature which are either directly concerned with or inspired by the performing arts. For example, the Postal Department has periodically brought out a series of stamps on dance forms, masks and noted singers. There are many instances of painters and photographers whose works are a clear reflection of the direct influence of the performing arts and artists.

Interest in documenting and encouraging the growth and setting up of such museums and collections is growing rather slowly. Thus, the efforts of the Sangeet Natak Academy, the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, the National School of Drama and the National Centre for Performing Arts are all the more exemplary in that they have undertaken the task of documenting, cataloguing and microfilming various material available on performing arts.

With the exception of those institutions displaying vision and foresight set up by the government, most of the collections relating to the performing arts and crafts have been largely due to the magnificent obsession of a few individuals who wished to capture the past and preserve the Indian heritage with all the richness and diversity of a bygone era. ■

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The art museum in partnership with schools

Bjarne Sode Funch

Art education is slowly but surely making its way into the school curriculum in a number of countries, posing new challenges to the role of the art museum in the community. However, the changing school-museum partnership is not without problems, and fresh approaches will have to be devised to make it work effectively. The author is a psychology graduate of the University of Copenhagen and has worked as a research psychologist with projects at the University Art Museum in Berkeley, California, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and is currently carrying out a study on art education at the Esbjerg Museum of Art in Denmark.

There is a long tradition of art museums collaborating with schools to introduce children to visual art. Their services to schools have steadily increased and today the art museum-school partnership has reached the point where a museum visit is no longer considered as an excursion for the sake of amusement but is recognized as an integral component of art education. Class visits to museums are now mandatory in the United Kingdom, and the art education curriculum in many schools throughout the Western world has been expanded from the traditional creative activities of drawing and painting to include subjects such as art analysis and criticism, art history, and aesthetics. This new trend in art education increases the significance of class visits to the art museum because it is generally the only place where children encounter original works of art.

This conception of art education was introduced into public schools in Denmark through a 1991 government regulation. Originally named *formning* (creative activities), the subject is now called *billedkunst* (pictorial art), although the curriculum includes activities with all kinds of art and not only pictorial art. In order to comply with the new situation, the Esbjerg Museum of Art initiated a study to define how it could better accommodate the needs of schools within the local area. The results of this study, based mainly on questionnaires and interviews with schoolteachers, point towards some fundamental problems of art education that cannot be solved by art museums alone, but call for a general revaluation of the subject.

Studies have already been carried out in the area of art museums' relationships to schools, among them a survey by Denise L. Stone in the United States in which she points out a number of obstacles that schoolteachers encounter when utilizing art-museum resources.[1] A lack of class time is one of the major problems evoked, but access to art museums is also impeded by problems of transportation, lack of field-trip funds and administrative support, and teaching schedules. The majority of the 524 schoolteachers who answered Stone's questionnaire felt they needed more information about art museum resources and more assistance from museum educators.

Interviews with art teachers from elementary schools in the vicinity of the Esbjerg Museum of Art showed that Danish art teachers experience the same obstacles as their colleagues in the United States. Problems obviously vary from school to school, but time, funds, transportation, scheduling and lack of administrative support were typically cited as reasons for not visiting the art museum more often. Teachers who regularly attended workshops at the art museum in order to become familiar with the museum's permanent collection and temporary exhibitions had no communication problems with the art museum, but expressed a need for instructional materials and museum facilities, such as a room for discussions and creative activities.

One approach to improving the art museum-school relationship would be to influence school authorities to supply the necessary conditions and resources. However, interviews with art teachers in Denmark indicate that art education is burdened by pedagogical problems that are far more serious than the logistical ones. Additional resources will be to little avail in introducing children to art so long as the subject lacks well-founded educational objectives and the didactic means to pursue them.

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© Len Cross, Dulwich Picture Gallery

In its programme of artistic education, the Dulwich Picture Gallery in London uses a variety of communication techniques, including actors playing the part of artists who explain their paintings, techniques and life to visiting schoolchildren from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

An 'anti-art attitude'

The status of art in society and the way it is perceived by different groups is too complex to broach in this article. However, mentioning a few examples of how art is regarded may shed some light on the major problems of art education in schools. The phenomenon of an 'anti-art attitude' exerts a devastating effect on children's relationship with visual art. I use this term to mean a predisposition towards an emotional, cognitive, and behavioural reaction in disfavour of fine art, in other words, a dislike of art which may vary from aggressive rejection to simple disregard. The aversion is usually accompanied by opinions that art is demoralizing, trash, or 'something a child could do'. In less extreme cases, art is rejected because it is found incomprehensible and uninteresting. This attitude is unfortunately widespread, and also flourishes among school administrators and teachers, though they will rarely openly admit it.

Art is accorded a very low status within the school curriculum throughout the Western world. The subject is given little time in the lesson plan and some age groups may not study it at all. Furthermore, it is often taught under poor conditions by teachers without any specialization. The art teachers interviewed in Esbjerg told how colleagues without any knowledge or interest in art taught the subject in order to fill out their schedule. The interviews also revealed that art in many schools suffers from insufficient facilities and resources. In a few cases there was even a scarcity of materials such as good paper and paint. One teacher related that the use of materials had to be carefully monitored, otherwise nothing would remain at the end of the school year. School administrators usually explained that such scarcity was due to a strained school budget, but as one teacher put it, 'When a class goes to swimming lessons there is no problem with transportation, but when we want to go to an art museum the school budget can't bear it.'

Even in cases where sufficient facilities and resources exist and lessons are taught by esteemed art specialists, art is usually isolated within the school system. The subject is seldom taken seriously by teachers of other subjects, who generally feel that art is only a leisure activity without future value. Art teachers may be acknowledged for their skill and engagement, but they are rarely consulted or given responsibilities outside their own area. As one of the teachers said, 'We are looked down on by

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Children in a Paris nursery school select their favourite art reproduction from the school's 'Artothèque' for discussion with their teacher; works may be borrowed and taken home for the weekend.

our own colleagues, but they will never say it openly.' It is no wonder that children are affected by this covert but pervasive anti-art attitude, which may affect their reaction to art for life. Parents are usually no help, for even if they appreciate art themselves, they usually do not attach much importance to art education because they cannot see how it benefits their children's future.

The new trend of including art criticism, art history, and aesthetics in art education is a first step towards giving art a higher status within the school system. Art education in a society where perception of visual expression is deemed crucial will gradually gain respect when it is based on academic disciplines such as art history and philosophy.

The present state of art education in schools poses a serious challenge to art museums. In what subjects and to what extent are museums able to provide the necessary education to schoolteachers, and how may children be better served? Given the prevalence of an anti-art attitude, museums must go beyond the prevailing myths by providing an educational service based on the highest level of knowledge. Only such high standards will ensure that children are introduced to art in a way that makes it relevant to their lives. In an attempt to research this area, a pilot programme has been initiated at the Esbjerg Museum of Art: a class of ten-year-olds meets at the museum one school day a week to be taught art in an interdisciplinary curriculum.

Motivation: the need for clarity and purpose

A prevalent notion among the general population is that museums are boring. The American writer Norman Mailer was once asked if he ever visited art museums during his childhood. He answered, 'Yeah, but the way kids do in high school. You know, grudgingly, bored. My back ached and I got tired and I wanted to get out of there. Museums were just very tough to take.'[2] Art museums are no doubt foreign and perplexing to many people, especially children, and this is a major reason why they are considered boring. The American psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has demonstrated that an activity, in order to be intrinsically rewarding, must have clear goals, give unambiguous feedback, and provide a challenge that matches the person's skills. Hence, as most school visits to the art museum have a goal that is no more specific than viewing a temporary exhibition or a part of the permanent collection, it is easy to see why they fail. Such an approach might be appropriate for the experienced museum visitor, but it is far too vague to make a visit rewarding for a group of children who may be stepping into an art museum for the first time. They will not know what to look for and therefore will not be able to get relevant feedback. The entire situation is perfect for reinforcing an anti-art attitude.

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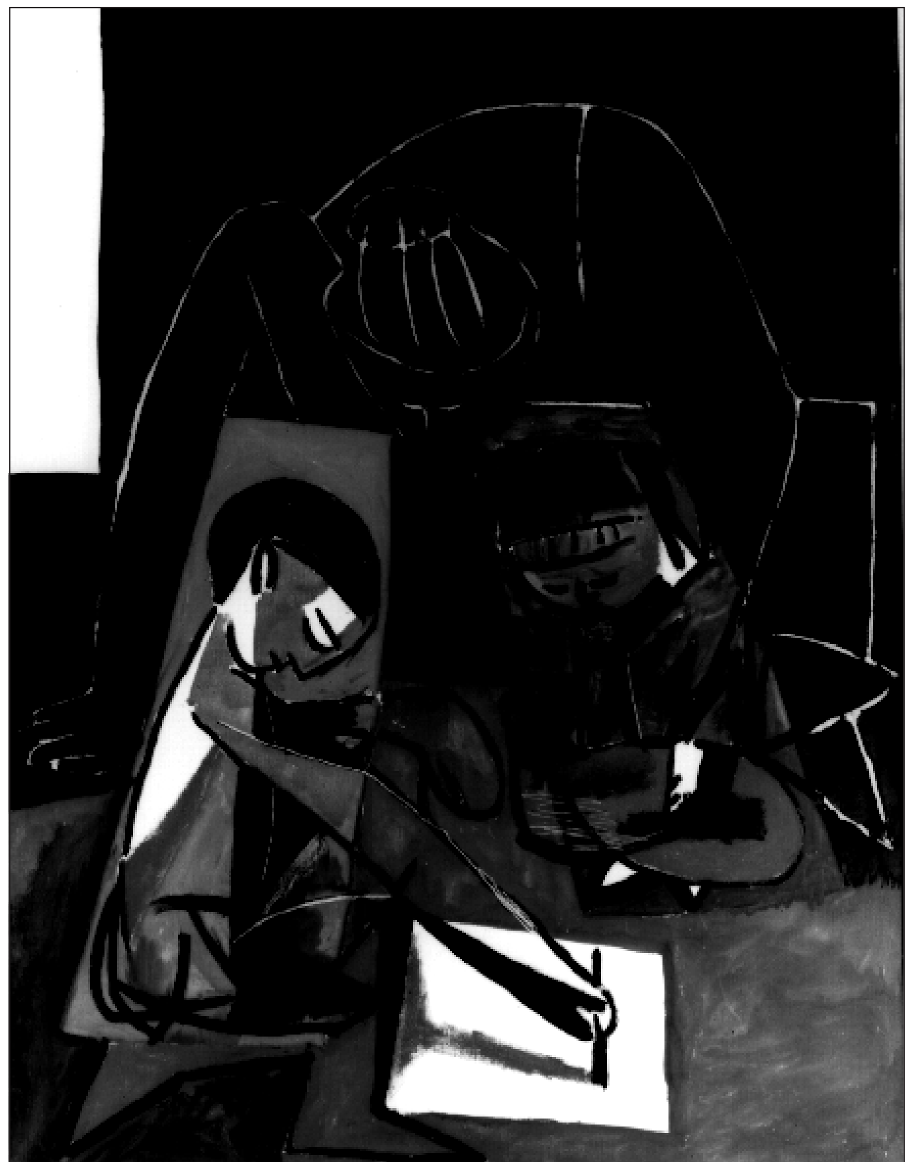
The problem of motivation can be handled only by focusing the visit. This is basically a question of making the appreciation of an original work of art personally engaging for the individual child, but it is also a question of integrating the museum visit into the lesson plan and preparing children for the visit.

What is the most important function of the art museum in connection with art education in schools? Interviews at the Esbjerg Museum of Art showed that art teachers emphasize different aspects of the museum visit. Some want to make the children familiar and comfortable with art museums and strive to make the visit exciting and enjoyable. Others point to the inspiration of seeing the work of professional artists and meeting museum educators who are specialists in visual art. Very few art teachers refer to the significance of the artworks themselves, and when asked about the importance of art to children, the answers are as varied as the teachers themselves and often reflect a general confusion as to what art education is actually about. Some teachers focus on technical issues, claiming that children learn how to make pictures by looking at art. They often suggest that the museum should have artists on hand to demonstrate their techniques. Others use the artworks to make children aware of how pictures build on the formal elements of line, colour, shape, and so forth, emphasizing the importance of workshop facilities where the children can be creative and try out what they have seen in the galleries. Iconographical analysis is another approach preferred by some art teachers, who often want museum educators to take the responsibility for introducing their class to the collections. Few art teachers recognize the importance of looking at art in an experiential way, either because they do not know how to approach this aspect of art appreciation or because they believe that analysis eventually leads children to look at art more directly and personally.

Art museum educators are often far too eager to impose their own curatorial and art historical interests on their audience. Authenticity, style, symbols and references to historical facts surely attract general interest, but they are subjects that do not ▶

A very personal vision of art in the family: Claude Dessinant *(Claude Drawing), oil on canvas by Pablo Picasso, 1954.*



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belong to a child's first introduction to visual art. Art appreciation is a question of looking at and experiencing works of art from the standpoint of the viewer. The fact that this is very different from the art of interpreting and intellectually understanding art is not a new observation. Alfred Lichtwark, a German art historian and one of the most influential museum educators of the nineteenth century, was well aware that the exercises he proposed for looking at art did not ensure a genuine art experience. For the same reason, he warned against teaching art history in schools because the original works of art would not be present. Sir Kenneth Clark, the British art historian and educator, puts it in the following way, 'Often it has seemed as if the educative virtue of works of art consisted in knowing *about* them, not in experiencing them directly. This is surely an error, a sort of decadence in which the means has become the end.'[3]

It takes about half an hour to listen to Mendelssohn's violin concerto, two hours to read *Snow Country* by Yasunari Kawabata, but how long does it take to look at Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*? The typical museum visitor only spends a few seconds viewing a picture, but strolling through an exhibition is obviously not the way to look at art in an experiential way. Experiencing a work of art is not just a question of seeing and understanding what a picture shows, and feeling the emotions incited: it is first and foremost a question of becoming engaged in an existential theme that is significant in the life of the viewer. This intimate relationship between art and human existence is fundamental to art appreciation and should be the main focus of art education. Providing the conditions where children can look at specific artwork uninterrupted for a longer period of time is a fundamental point of departure for all art education. Adapting the idea of the 'one-picture gallery'[4] is one possible approach to this demand. Furthermore, the primary introduction should take the psychological effects of a work of art into consideration in order to bring the audience in touch with the work as something personally enriching.

Critics have often claimed that the art museum-school partnership is in a parlous state and that the problems could be solved by intensifying co-operation and infusing more resources. However, the study at the Esbjerg Museum of Art points towards problems that are far more serious. Today, the most urgent matter in improving the relationship is to define what art education is actually about in order to strengthen its theoretical basis and make teaching more focused. ■

Notes

1. Denise L. Stone, 'Elementary Art Specialists' Utilization of the Art Museum: A Survey', *Visual Arts Research*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 1992, pp. 72–81.

2. Pete Hamill, 'Kindred Spirits: Mailer and Picasso' (interview with Norman Mailer), *ARTNews*, Vol. 94, No. 9, p. 210.

3. Kenneth Clark, 'The Ideal Museum,' *ARTNews*, Vol. 52, No. 9, pp. 83–4.

4. 'The One-Picture Gallery' (an interview with Valery Petrovich Sazonov, director of the Savitsky Regional Picture Gallery and the One-Picture Gallery in Penza), *Museum* Vol. 38, 1986, pp. 237–40.

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A new type of museum network in France: the Franche-Comté Museums of Local Cultur e and Techniques

Philippe Mairot

An innovative approach to presenting local economic and social history characterizes a network of museums in a highly industrialized region of eastern France. The author has been director of the Franche-Comté Museums of Local Culture and Techniques since 1988 and is a lecturer in museum studies at the University of Franche-Comté. He is president of the Fédération Nationale des Ecomusées et des Musées de Société (National Federation of Eco-museums and Museums of Social History).

The Franche-Comté Museums of Local Culture and Techniques is a local network of museums that together present and explain to their 220,000 annual visitors how raw materials and landscapes were worked and transformed in the Franche-Comté region of eastern France. They tell the story of coal-mining and of the production of glass, cast iron, salt, pottery and cherry brandy; they describe the techniques of wood-turning, steel products, injection-moulding of plastic and the manufacture of scythes and sprucewood boxes. The craftsmen's workshops, the industrial buildings – conserved and restored where they stand – the landscapes, films and collections on show all bear witness to the history of these local techniques and cultures and deepen our understanding of the region. In this article I shall briefly describe the aims and recent development of this small-scale, youthful and original museum still in the making.

Exploring the industrial and ethnological heritage

This centrally managed network of museums was established in 1978 at the initiative of the public authorities (both national and regional) and not, as is often the case, in response to a local request, and seeks to present the economic history and ethnological heritage of the Franche-Comté region, especially its unique forms of industrialization. Its purpose is neither to celebrate the final triumph of industry and scientific progress nor to create a hypothetical re-creation of traditional techniques, but rather to draw attention to significant processes and sites that illustrate the ceaseless efforts to adapt to changing circumstances demonstrated by the industry in the region.

The activities of the museum network include organizing and publishing research in history, ethnology and technology which can serve to promote and fund ongoing restoration work, as well as various exhibitions, films and other events. Buildings are not regarded merely as architectural specimens, nor is the value of the collections limited to their aesthetic interest or even their place in the history of techniques. The aim is to arouse curiosity, linking one site to another as in the chapters of a book. We want to lend a voice to the objects and buildings, to let them speak about each other in a new language that draws a new and richer meaning from their relationship. They are arranged so as to bear witness to the lives of men and women in successive social communities at particular moments in their development. This we regard as essential if technical museums are to play their full role as museums of human life and society, casting light on the continuing relationship between a local community, its past and its traditional techniques, and in so doing to make a critical contribution to its development.

Whoever wishes to explore the technical culture of ancient sites embedded in the inextricable technical, symbolic and economic history of a social group is quite naturally led to enter into contact with firms active today. Why limit ourselves to paddle wheels and products of long ago when we want to weigh up and explain the cultural dimension of an enterprise and to understand the techniques and the work of human beings as a culture in itself and as an integral part of our general culture? To us, it seems impossible to understand and fully assimilate present-day techniques without linking them to the conditions of their birth and early history.

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That is why we have recently turned our attention to working industrial sites that contribute something extra to our understanding of industrial history. We have signed agreements with various firms who will carry out ethnological research on the transmission of technical know-how. This research is subsequently published, as well as presented in the form of films and exhibitions on the firm's premises, which are opened to the public at the firm's own expense. In recent years four working plants have opened their doors to researchers and visitors in this way.

A network of sites

The network includes a variety of industrial sites and workshops. Fougerolles, with its landscape of cherry trees, has specialized in the distillation of kirsch liquor since the seventeenth century and boasts an eco-museum run by local inhabitants. The pottery works at Salins, which employ 180 persons, is the last representative of an important activity long established in the region. The 270 employees at the glass works at Passavant la Rochère carry on an activity dating back to the fifteenth century. It includes a workshop for glass blown in the traditional manner, which is opened to the public, and an automated sector.

The ironworks at Syam are of exceptional interest; still in operation, they have remained virtually unchanged since 1813. Their principal machine is a cylindrical rolling mill installed in 1903. The workers' houses and the neo-Palladian villa with its park, a copy of the Rotunda at Vicenza, complete this remarkable site. Syam allows us to question the

The waterwheel of the salt-water pumping system in the salt mines at Salins.

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The pottery works at Salins; the filter presses.

notion of technical backwardness: while the modern-minded might be tempted to consider such a rolling mill obsolete and fit only for the museum, the economic success of the firm proves how well such a machine justifies its place in the market. Syam also enables us to understand how a local skill was passed on to a Moroccan community established in 1970. A site like this prevents us from going astray in superficial interpretations, whether indulging in nostalgia for a happy past gone forever, in local chauvinism, in hymns to progress or in the temptation to speak of techniques without reference to the economic, social and symbolic conditions of their existence.

In each of these firms an ethnologist worked for between six months and two years. At the last three sites the research resulted in an exhibition on the firm's premises, a film, a publication, photographs. The displays seek to present the history and life of the firm and the technical skills, values and traditions to be found there.

One of the major advantages of this operation is that besides making industrialists interested in their own heritage, it attracts people who do not usually visit museums. The visitor – who may well be one of those 70 per cent of the French population who never set foot in a museum – enters the shops run by the firm with the idea of finding a bargain and encounters ancient objects and the history of the site and of the people who work there, whose techniques are displayed alongside those of a Bambara potter, a Shaman or a Dogon smith.

At the House of Toys up in the mountains at Moirans, a part of the Jura area characterized by the twin activities of woodturning and cottage industry, the project was started by industrial toymakers (who produce 50 per cent of French toys) rather than by cultural circles. The initial aim was economic: to promote the brand image of French toys. This concern linked up with our own when the toy museum was established. The museum displays the traditional ways of making toys and attempts to describe the technical and social changes that are transforming this sector from a wood-based industry to one based on plastic. It then presents toys as cultural artefacts that express values, ideals and attitudes and mould the behaviour of growing boys and girls.

The following firms have joined the initial network of heritage buildings: the edge-tool factory at Nans-sous-Sainte-Anne, manufacturer of scythes and cutting tools until 1969; the saltworks at Salins, a key site of European industrial archaeology that has been exploited for centuries; the

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Workers of the edge-tool factory at Nans-sous-Sainte-Anne in 1905.

forge-cum-museum at Etueffont, a rural smithy; the pit-head frame and mining museum at Ronchamp, the last remains of a mining industry that lasted from the eighteenth century to 1958; and the museum of bushel-making at Bois d'Amont, which presents the manufacture of boxes made of spruce.

As the visitors move from site to site, a great story unfolds about the work and social conditions from the Middle Ages to the present day, with the long periods of continuity and sudden breaks with the past that characterize Franche-Comté, the dialogue of cultures with their setting and with neighbouring populations, and the circulation of skills, people and capital. Now other industries want to join our network, and they will constitute its next step forward.

In their relations among themselves and with 'outsiders', in the technical, social and symbolic solutions they adopt, these men and women of Franche-Comté are responding in their way to the questions that a community has to resolve in order to ensure its continued existence. It is therefore both possible and useful to compare such local practices with others derived from ethnology or history and, in so doing, to create a profitable dialogue between the particular and the universal, between the known and the unknown, which opens the way to an understanding of other cultures. This comparative approach, in which the science of ethnology is rooted, also possesses an undeniable educational value.

Each of the sites raises questions about the present. The models, the skilled hands at work and the audiovisual displays make it possible, for example, to link up the Nans turbine or the successive salt-water pumping systems at Salins to relations between sciences, techniques and societies, to the necessary conditions for innovation, to current progress in such techniques and to the scientific laws that explain them and make them easier to understand.

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Creation and interpretation

The museums in the network often involve artists in their work, such as photographers, writers, graphic artists and designers. Scientific discourse is but one of several modes of knowledge, and we are convinced that museums can benefit by contrasting different approaches and ways of looking at things, for the greater enrichment of their public and a better understanding – one that is not focused solely on the past – of these sites and objects. Although the objects may be regarded primarily as documents promoting knowledge, they may also be manipulated to produce aesthetic and emotional experiences quite removed from their original purpose.

Because they make it possible to record gestures and speech, audiovisual methods are given considerable importance in our research and our attempts to reconstruct cultural history. Films allow us to publicize, on the spot or through broadcast or cable television, the results of our research in a visual form aimed at a wide audience to back up the exhibitions and scientific publications. We make a special effort to show them to tourists, to people in hotels and holiday centres, and to schoolchildren. They form a series of some thirty films entitled 'People of These Parts'.

As already mentioned, the overwhelming majority of French people never visit a museum: this is the challenge we have to face. Even though our purpose is clearly to conserve, study and protect our heritage, we also have a social responsibility to attract more of the general public and enable them to discover this heritage in our charge.

A museum is incomplete without its visitors. The heritage loses some of its meaning if it is not in the public eye, if it is not the symbolic property of each individual. An important part of our activity is thus aimed at the general public and at winning a more central place in the life of the community.

The objects of a collection are like plays or musical scores: if they are not performed they slumber in the archives, awaiting perusal by specialists. A director or performer will stage or play them if he has something to tell us about them. The object/artefact itself is timeless; intangible, it will return to the archives from which it has been momentarily torn. In contrast, our work of interpretation is tied to a particular time, a particular period, whose doubts, beliefs, fears and certainties it shares and expresses. If we are to believe someone like Nicolas Harnoncourt, the renowned orchestral conductor, present-day interpretations of ancient music are not authentic reconstructions of the original; on the contrary, what is required is to make them living music for today. And that is precisely our ambition for these technical objects and buildings handed down from the past. ■

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Radio-frequency identification: a promising museum tool

Victoria E. Roeser

Radio-frequency identification involves a reading apparatus emitting a low frequency magnetic field and a passive receptor called a transponder. This new technology is already proving its worth in industry and, more recently, in a pilot effort to deter motorcycle thieves and trace stolen vehicles. Its potential applications for museums are described by Victoria E. Roeser, a marketing executive with the firm Electronic Identification Devices Ltd.

Collections management is an important priority for most museums, involving significant investment in both time and money. Choosing the most suitable system depends upon a number of factors: not only must it be cost-effective, it must also address the tasks of identifying, authenticating, inventorying, and securing works of art.

Many museums currently use laser-disk technology to inventory their collections. This involves transferring slides of photographed art on to a laser disk. It can be a slow, costly process, especially if and when the museum adds to its collections after a disk has been made.

Another system involves using a video camera connected to a host computer. It automatically stores the information on a disk, thereby eliminating the requirement of transferring data from one medium to another. Although it is obviously beneficial to have pictorial documentation of artwork, this method is not capable of authenticating art when it is moved from country to country, museum to museum or room to room. When thieves steal a work of art, a video or slide image can only aid authorities in their search if the object has not been altered. It would not be helpful, for example, if a canvas were removed from its original frame and placed into another to disguise it.

Also, if a museum lends artwork and an authentic-looking replica is put in its place, a curator may not immediately know the difference. By the same token, if a never-displayed item deep in the recesses of a storage room is stolen, the museum may not be aware until much too late. The use of video-imaging to document what a museum owns and where it is located does not present a comprehensive solution to the issues of duplication and theft. Therefore, the only option a museum has is to purchase additional equipment for security purposes.

Museums employ conventional alarm systems to protect against theft and vandalism. The drawback to these systems is the time and money involved in maintaining them, and their unreliability in case of power surges or power failures. Guards may also be employed to circulate through the rooms day and night to make sure that nothing has been stolen or damaged; however, there is no time-efficient, internal accountability system currently in use to verify their movements. Video cameras may be used for monitoring purposes, but viewing the videotapes the next day is a non-productive use of time.

Controlling access to secured storerooms is another challenge for collections management. Museums commonly use video cameras for identification and/or magnetic-stripe cards that an employee must swipe in order to unlock a door. The drawback of video cameras is their potential for malfunction and the ease with which someone can tamper with them. Using a magnetic-stripe card to gain access to a room is not always convenient; for example, employees carrying artwork or other items must set them down before entering the room, instead of just walking through.

Even in the computer age, cataloguing and inventorying works of art and their respective histories is an arduous task. No available software can remedy the problem of human error in data entry: from summer interns to the most experienced curator, anyone can misread an accession number, and the subsequent entries would create a domino effect of erroneous information. The most viable solution to expedite the inventory process and ensure the accuracy

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of cataloguing would be to store the accession number in a source that does not require data entry.

A final problem concerns the purchase of cultural property. The burden of proof is most often on the buyer, who must prove that diligence has been exercised to ensure that the object was not stolen. A potential stumbling-block inherent in this procedure is that different kinds of artwork may demand different degrees of diligence. There will always be one question that the purchaser did not ask because he or she 'did not know better'. The spectre of endless lawsuits looms. If there were a permanent method of proving ownership, a legitimate purchaser could determine the status of a work of art before buying it. This would hold true even if thieves had slightly altered the appearance of the work.

A multipurpose system

Radio-frequency identification (RF/ID), in the form of ID tags and hand-held or stationary readers, addresses the issues of cataloguing, inventory, authentication, identification, access control and theft in one complete system. These tags, also known as transponders, come in many shapes and sizes to suit a variety of applications, but they all perform the same function.

With respect to identifying artwork, the principle behind the system is a small, passive transponder glued to every canvas. The result would resemble a tiny bump behind the canvas that an opaque substance such as paint could camouflage. The industrial strength of the epoxy glue that binds the transponder to the canvas would render it impossible to remove without damaging the canvas itself and defeating the purpose of the theft – to sell an intact work of art.

With respect to statuettes, a tiny hole can be drilled at the base for the tag and then sealed with putty. The transponder is impossible to destroy, and can be read spherically from any direction through most materials – cloth, wood, plaster, even concrete – except some metals. Since it contains no battery, the transponder enjoys an unlimited life-span. It is discreet, impenetrable to moisture and not subject to forgery or duplication because it is programmed with a unique, tamper-proof code. When the battery-operated hand-held reader passes over the transponder, the transponder becomes activated and transmits the code back to the reader, which stores it in memory with a time and date stamp. Recorded data can then be downloaded to a PC or work station; directives can also be uploaded from a database to the reader.

Thus, the RF/ID hardware can work in conjunction with a museum's existing computer system. The unique, preprogrammed code contained in the transponder could effectively replace the manually transcribed accession number, thus eliminating the possibility of human error when cataloguing or inventorying.

With respect to identifying artwork, the principle behind the system is a small, passive transponder glued to every canvas.

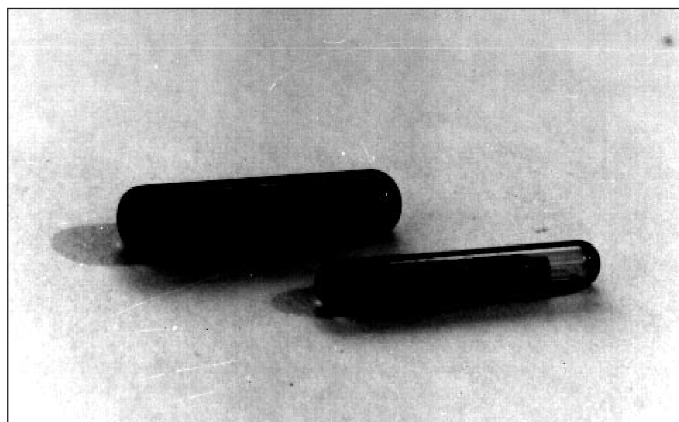

Photo by courtesy of the author

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To resolve issues of illicit trade, a system similar to the United States recording statutes in real property law would put bona fide purchasers on notice of stolen property. The International Art Loss Registry can install an international database for the owners of all artwork with attached transponders. Those who wish to protect their ownership in the event of theft can have their property registered. Thereafter, to make sure that good title passes before purchase, all potential sellers and buyers of art would conduct a proper 'title-search' consisting of scanning the work with a reader and comparing the number scanned with the numbers registered in the international data base. The registry could then fax a confirmation of ownership to the buyer and seller. Subsequent owners could then update the database as many times as the work is sold.

This method may possibly eradicate the subjective problem of whether a purchaser diligently asked the right questions before buying a piece of art. A potential buyer who is notified that the work was stolen may not be classified as making a bona fide transaction or a legitimate purchase. This obligation to confirm the source of ownership provides 'instant knowledge' which could assist policy-makers who are trying to settle the issue of the statute of limitations on all stolen art claims.

RF/ID technology can also identify a person who has entered a particular room and the time of entrance. This assures strict monitoring of restricted access areas as well as individual accountability. A stationary reader with the capacity for storing thousands of valid access numbers in its database can activate locks on storerooms where art objects are kept. Each museum employee would be equipped with a credit-card-sized identification card with a reading range of up to a few metres. External visitors such as art-historians and scholars who are allowed inside restricted areas may be equipped with extra 'guest' cards. To gain access to a room, they must pass the card within reading range of the reader, which will store the date, time and identity of the individual who entered. If a person leaves the restricted area with art that has a non-ID-400 transponder attached to it, the reader will recognize the unauthorized code and sound an alarm, alerting others that artwork is leaving the premises.

Similarly, stationary readers could also be positioned at all museum entrances and exits for double insurance. They could be preprogramed to accept employee identification codes, as in restricted-access rooms, but to reject any other type of code and sound an alarm if one passes through. Thus, if either a visitor or an employee leaves the museum with a work of art that has a miniature transponder attached to it, the thief would be immediately apprehended.

To ensure authentication of items on tour to a number of museums, artwork bearing a transponder can be scanned before and after each stop to verify that the correct, authentic pieces are being routed. The owner museum could request confirmation of the transponder code numbers, along with time and date stamps, whenever it wished.

For additional security, the passive transponder system can check whether guards are in fact circulating along the appointed routes. A transponder the size of a button can be embedded within the walls in the display rooms and covered with either paint or plaster. At night, when the museum guards make their rounds, they can 'scan' the walls at the appropriate spots with a hand-held reader. After the scan-

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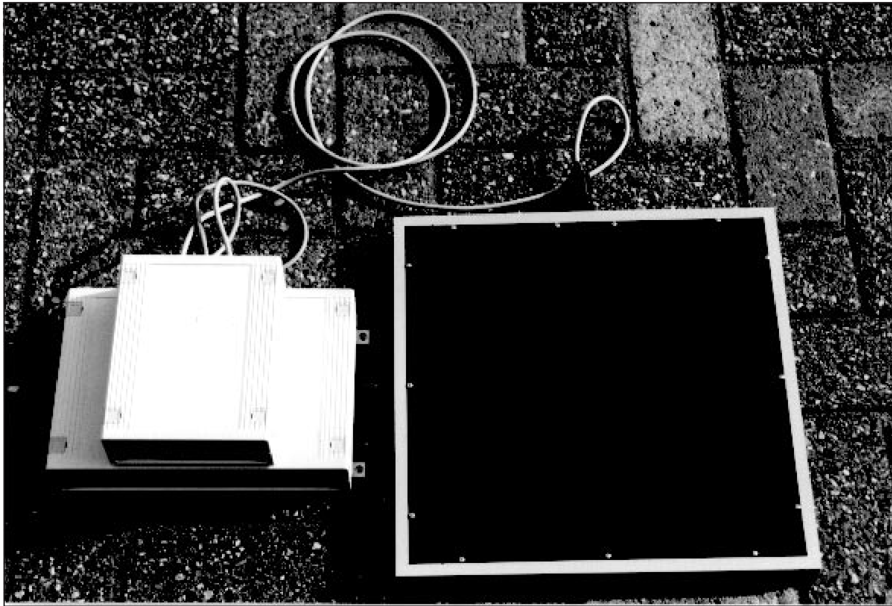

A stationary reader with the capacity for storing thousands of valid access numbers in its database can activate locks or storerooms where art objects are kept.

ning is complete, the guards return the readers in the morning and all the information is down-loaded, showing the code and the time and date of the scan. Naturally, if there are any inordinate time-gaps between reads, the museum will know that a guard did not check a certain room at a certain time. This 'wall-check' method of security is a very cost-effective, time-saving way for a museum to monitor its security guards.

A museum can also implement a passive transponder 'alarm system', to replace traditional alarm systems for high-value objects. It is merely necessary to attach a transponder to the bottom of the artwork and embed a stationary reader with an alarm into the floor. The system runs continuously as long as the transponder is in range. If an item is removed from the reading area, the reader will sense the loss of the transponder and sound the alarm. This procedure involves no maintenance, and no personnel is needed to monitor the site twenty-four hours a day.

Museum curators and collections managers will have to decide whether the time has come to attach a permanent form of identity to artwork in order to protect it. Many will uphold the view that the appearance of artwork should never be altered, even for security purposes, however, in light of the international problem of theft and the inefficient methods of security currently in place, museums might wish to evaluate this cutting-edge technology. ■

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'Play it again, Sam': r eflections on a new museology

Marjorie M. Halpin

The 'new museology' may not be so new, after all, but it is nevertheless changing the thinking of museums worldwide, and has made striking inroads in the approaches adopted by many North American institutions. The author is curator of Ethnology at the Museum of Anthropology and associate professor in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of British Columbia, where she teaches courses in museology and about Canada's aboriginal inhabitants of the North Pacific coast. She is currently honorary consultant to Canada's Cultural Property Review Board, on which she served as member for six years, and is the author of several publications.

On 17 September 1773, the following notice appeared in some English newspapers, signed by Sir Ashton Lever:

> This is to inform the Publick that being tired out with the insolence of the common People, who I have hitherto indulged with a sight of my museum [at Alkrington], I am now come to the resolution of refusing admittance to the lower classes except they come provided with a ticket from some Gentlemen or Lady of my acquaintance. And I hereby authorize every friend of mine to give a ticket to any orderly Man to bring in eleven Persons, besides himself whose behaviour he must be answerable for, according to the directions he himself will receive before they are admitted. They will not be admitted during the time of Gentlemen and Ladies being in the Museum.[1]

More than a century later in New York, anthropologist Franz Boas wrote that

> the value of the museum for popular entertainment must not be underrated, particularly in a large city, where every opportunity that is given to the people to employ their leisure time in healthy and stimulating surroundings should be developed, where every attraction that counteracts the influence of the saloon and of the race-track is of great social importance.[2]

By Boas's time, of course, museums were enjoying the patronage of the modern nation state, in partnership with the social élite. Hence the shift to a rhetoric of museum visiting as culturally uplifting and in the public interest.

The democratization of museums continued throughout the present century, and is still expanding, notably in collaboration between museums and local communities and First Nations (as aboriginal communities in Canada are called) that are now resulting in exhibitions. What is not continuing is the patronage of the state. Now that governments in the West are withdrawing financial support from museums, it occurs to me to question why they supported us in the first place.

I am influenced by the work of anthropologist Richard Handler and art historian Carol Duncan on the role museums play in maintaining the cultural hegemony of the élite. Duncan explains the current contestations over museum representations as follows:

> To control a museum means precisely to control the representation of a community and its highest values and truths. It is also the power to define the relative standing of individuals within that community. Those who are best prepared to perform its ritual – those who are most able to respond to its various cues – are also those whose identities (social, sexual, racial, etc.) the museum ritual most fully confirms. It is precisely for this reason that museums and museum practices can become objects of fierce struggle and impassioned debate. What we see and do not see in art museums – and on what terms and by whose authority we do or do not see it – is closely linked to larger questions about who constitutes the community and who defines its identity.[3]

My title, 'Play It Again, Sam', which has come to be associated with the unforgettable theme song of the film classic, *Casablanca*, is borrowed from cultural theoretician Homi Bhabha, who calls the song 'perhaps the Western world's most celebrated demand for repetition . . . an invocation to similitude, a return to eternal verities:[4]

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> You must remember this,
> a kiss is still a kiss,
> a sigh is but a sigh.
> The fundamental things apply
> as time goes by.

It is in the interest of the state, itself the representation of representations, that meanings be 'fixed' and eternal, deriving from an authentic and idealized past.

How do we 'entify' the state and stabilize meaning in the contemporary museum? The first and most obvious way is that we inscribe an institutional voice on the walls. Science or history or archaeology speaks. Not as they speak to the initiated – in footnoted, contested and intertextual ways – but authoritatively, unambiguously, anonymously.

Less obviously, we also 'entify' the state by eliminating the distasteful, the ugly, the diseased, the disturbing objects that reveal cultural loss and brutalization. Our narrative is at once authoritative and romantic. Museums exhibit aboriginal peoples, for example, as noble and homogeneous carriers of cultures of great beauty, at harmony with their surroundings. (Paradoxically, this works to the advantage of First Nations, who are adopting an ideology of nationhood in their struggle for land and self government.) Still less obviously, we 'entify' the state by banishing hybridity, poetry, ambiguity, irony, complexity, dissent. Our narratives, by and large, are realist and boring. Fortunately, I think, the Western state is now too much in debt and too unstable to want to speak, and some of us are already choosing new partners and finding new messages, informed by what is being called the 'new museology'.

Engaging the community

There are several new museologies. In places in Quebec and in Europe, the new museology museumizes the community, throughout which its functions are dispersed. In the Netherlands, Peter van Mensch, a lecturer in theoretical museology at the Reinwardt Academy, in his comment on the Internet, defined a 'critical museology' in which exhibition design emphasizes authorship, replacing the former anonymous institutional voice. In this approach, he writes, 'uncertainty and ambiguity should play a role.' In the United Kingdom, Peter Vergo defines the new museology as a 'state of widespread dissatisfaction with the "old" museology, both within and outside the museum profession', and writes that 'what is wrong with the "old" museology is that it is too much about museum *methods*, and too little about the purposes of museums'.[5]

Concern with museum methods was appropriate during the years of state support, and while we were developing as a profession, which is now accomplished. In the absence of our previous function of stabilizing the values of the nation state, what are we to do? My concern is with how we engage the new and rapidly changing urban communities within which most of our buildings are situated. My primary reason is practical and simple: we have to increase admissions to pay the bills.

And, as Vergo argues, that means looking carefully at what we are doing, especially, I think, at the centuries-old assumptions that people visit museums in order to commune silently with objects on display, and that our professional function is to care for and present such objects. Anthropologist Richard Handler recently defined museums as social arenas. 'It is not at all clear,' he writes, 'that the viewing of objects is the

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main activity that takes place in museums.' If a Martian anthropologist were to drop into one of our museums, he continues, the Martian would see 'administrative meetings, study and research, conservation activities, maintenance work, parties and celebration, eating and drinking, buying and selling, coming and going – many people doing many things.' He also contends that, however altruistic our mission statements, it is 'commonplace of the literature on cultural hegemony' that museums 'function to bolster the authority of élites'.[6] Carol Duncan refers to this as 'the space between what museums say they do and what they do without saying'.

To stimulate discussion, I shall refer to the work of John Cotton Dana, the founder of the Newark Museum in the United States ('a museum of museum experiments'), whom Duncan calls a 'museum maverick' and 'the greatest master of anti-aesthetic, anti-ritual, pro-educational polemic'. He was also defining a new museum movement (the word 'museology' was not yet coined) in the early years of this century. In 1917 he wrote a book entitled *The New Museum*, in which he estimated that there were only some fifty museums in the United States that could be called 'live museums' (out of a total of some 600 institutions by then using that name), by which he meant museums 'supposed to produce beneficial effects on their respective communities'.[7] The purposes of the New Museum movement that he espoused were community entertainment and 'visual instruction', or as we might say today, visual literacy. Moreover, he advocated 'branch institutes', such as 'storerooms on business streets' as 'veritable teaching centers'; the lending to 'individuals, groups and societies, for any proper use and for any reasonable time, any of the museum's objects, whenever it is clear that the things thus lent will be of more service to the community than when they are resting, relatively unseen and unused, in the museum's headquarters'; and the display of objects 'which are products of the community's activities in field, factory and

Photo by courtesy of the author

Ron Hamilton and his relatives sang, drummed and danced in the Great Hall of the Museum of Anthropology at the opening of the exhibition We Sing to the Universe *in October 1994.*

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workshops'. The new museums he advocated would be 'museums properly so-called – homes and work-shops of the Muses.' Museums of 'the old kind', he contended, 'are not truly museums at all. They are "collections".'

Dana's New Museum would exhibit the community itself, 'with, of course, suggestions to old and young as to specific things they can do to make the town a better place in which to live and do business'. The New Museum idea, he writes, is 'the idea of a definitely useful museum'. As such, its 'purposes and methods change daily, as do all other community enterprises in these days. Therefore, do not try to develop a museum after a plan. Learn what aid the community needs: fit the museum idea to those needs.' He cautions us to beware of "experts" in the museum field', and to remember, always, 'that the very essence of the public service of a public institution is the public's knowledge of the service that institutions can give; therefore advertise, advertise, and then advertise again. Advertising is the very life-blood of all the education a museum can give.'

The exhibition as process rather than product

Most museum professionals are trained in both the categories of professional museology and some university discipline. We regard it as our responsibility to teach the visiting public some version, suitably popularized, of academic discourse, whether history, ethnology, archaeology, art history, or natural science. Let us think for a moment about the kind of exhibit we might create if it were not necessary for us to speak for a discipline. I am not advocating that we forget what we know, but that we use it for genuine museum purposes, not for disciplinary ones. Would we be perhaps more playful, personal, ironic, challenging, interesting?

Let me give a recent example of what happened when I departed from the now quarter-century old tradition of exhibiting First Nations art on the Pacific coast of Canada in terms of quite well-established ethnological and art-market categories. In 1995 a former student and I exhibited the poems and drawings of a First Nations (Nuu-chah-nulth) historian, dancer, singer, speaker, carver, etc. (he does not use the word 'artist' when referring to himself), Ron Hamilton. We managed to find sixty-four of the images that he draws incessantly, on napkins, place-mats, envelopes – any scrap of paper. A few he keeps, most he gives away, some are merely left behind in restaurants. The works are not made or edited for others and, indeed, it is stretching the matter to call even the poems 'composed', for we presented them just as he wrote them for himself in his journal. None of this work had ever been sold or even offered to the market (I dare say they have market value now, although he talks about giving those he owns away in a potlatch).

Because we are a museum, we had to frame these pieces of paper – as described, pieces of paper bags, restaurant doilies and place-mats, anything to hand. We also put on the wall Hamilton's narratives about the circumstances and stories that lay behind the poems and drawings – political meetings, the naming of his new son, an encounter with a cousin, sexual abuse in his childhood, his mother's can of bacon grease kept near the stove, myths of the Nuu-chah-nulth cosmos. Two students and I transcribed these stories and sent them back to him for editing and corrections.

The exhibition was so successful that the editor of the University of British Columbia Press invited us to turn it into a book, and

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I want to make it into a CD-ROM so as to include Hamilton's taped voice and parts of the hour of video we made at the opening of the exhibit, at which twenty-four members of his family sang and danced, and friends and relatives spoke about what he means to their lives. We also have dozens of pages of visitor comments responding to Hamilton's request for dialogue and commending his honesty, political candour, and cultural knowledge.

Including the opening feast and celebration, the exhibition cost only a few thousand dollars, will live on in a book and perhaps a CD-ROM, and marked the most eloquent and moving introduction to Nuu-chah-nulth culture that I have seen anywhere. Its strength lies in its collaborative nature: instead of presenting the standard 'curated' museum introduction to Nuu-chah-nulth culture – borrowing pieces from the world's great collections and doing the ethno-historical and ethnological research such an exhibition would require – the artist and I, along with other museum staff, engaged in a process to allow Hamilton's drawings and words to speak for themselves and the man. As a result, his intensely personal experience was (and continues to be) shared by museum staff and visitors alike. It is unlikely that the state would have funded such an exhibition in the first place, but perhaps we are better off free of the constraints such funding would impose.

In conclusion, the new or critical museology about which I am speaking might be a useful museology in service to a community, instead of the state and the élite. A museology practised by named, committed and creative professionals who know that people other than themselves are also cultural experts. A museology without a five-year plan, one that continuously examines its community and responds to what it sees and hears. A museology that, now in its maturity, can challenge, play with, and separate itself from the always serious academic voice.

A final word from Handler: 'The purpose of a museum is to survive.' Whether or not museums ought to survive is a question that our constituencies will, in the long or short run, answer for us. ■

Notes

1. Alma Wittlin, *Museums: In Search of a Usable Future*, p. 76. Cambridge, Mass, MIT Press, 1970.

2. Franz Boas, 'Some Principles of Museum Administration', *Science*, 14 June 1907, pp. 921–2.

3. Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*, pp. 8–9. London/New York, Routledge, 1995.

4. Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 182. London/New York, Routledge, 1994.

5. Peter Vergo, 'Introduction', in P. Vergo (ed.), *The New Museology*, p. 3. London, Reakton Books, 1989.

6. Richard Handler, 'An Anthropological Definition of the Museum and Its Purpose', *Museum Anthropology*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 1993, pp. 33–4.

7. J. C. Dana, *The New Museum*, Part I, pp. 9–39. Woodstock, Vt., Elm Tree Press, 1917.

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Forum

Kenneth Hudson, Director of the European Museum of the Year Award and author of fifty-three books on museums, social and industrial history and social linguistics, continues to set out the major issues confronting museums today. We welcome reactions from our readers on the topics presented as well as suggestions for future themes.

Kenneth Hudson's viewpoint on the hijacking of the word 'art'

On a recent visit to Umeå, in the north of Sweden, I visited a new museum which forms part of the University and talked to its modest, inspiring director, Göran Carlsson. Before I went, I was told that I should be going to an art museum, but I was misinformed. The museum is, in fact, called the Bildmuseet (The Museum of Pictures) and I felt that I had come out of darkness and into the light. Here, at last, was a museum created by an honest man, who hated pretentiousness, hypocrisy and snobbery, and was prepared to state publicly that he had set up not an art museum but a Museum of Pictures, a place where all kinds of good pictures, from oil paintings to posters and catalogue covers, were presented together and as cultural equals in a crusade to stimulate visual awareness and imagination. As Göran Carlsson told me, 'that is what art is supposed to be about'.

His words released me from a nightmare world inhabited and controlled by powerful people with a vested interest in what they had chosen to call 'art'. They have included the organized international 'mafia' of art historians, art-dealers, cultural snobs, the people who earn a dishonest living as art critics and, Heaven forgive them, the Directors of Art Museums, initialled with capital letters. These persons, the true enemies of the people, constitute the 'art world', which has become so influential, so arrogant and so humourless during the past fifty years, and here they were, reduced to a human scale and with all the air let out of them, by a decent, honest man on the Arctic circle, far from London, Paris, New York and the other major centres of intellectual corruption.

I am convinced that we shall not be able to unlock the enormous public potential of what artists of all kinds produce until we stop using the word 'Art' with a capital letter and call a halt to the gross misuse of a good, useful word which has confused our thinking and our judgements for so many years. Few people seem to realize how great the degree of brainwashing has been. It is natural and inevitable that the meaning of words should be modified and extended in the course of time; languages wither and die if this fails to happen. But there is a profound difference between change and abuse, between widening and specialization of meaning and the hijacking of the word 'art' by an unreasonably powerful section of the museum and cultural establishment.

In English, the basic meaning of 'art' was, for many generations, a skill, craft, business or profession, learnt by long practice and used as a way of earning a living. The greater the skill, the better one's living and, in general, the higher one's reputation in the community. During the eighteenth century the term 'fine arts' began to be used to designate specialized skills in which the mind and the imagination were heavily involved. Those who practised them were not necessarily superior to architects, cabinet-makers, blacksmiths or gardeners, but society needed fewer of them and they were comparatively rare.

As the eighteenth century passed into the nineteenth, rather more prominence began to be given to what had hitherto

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been a subsidiary definition of 'art' as being a pursuit or occupation in which skill was directed towards the production of objects that were widely felt to be beautiful. By Victorian times the word 'art' was increasingly used to mean works of art considered collectively, and at that point the rot began to set in. From then on, it was permissible, and indeed praiseworthy, to be interested in something thought of as 'art' as a whole. After that, it was a quick and easy step to equate 'art' with the visual arts, especially painting and sculpture. By 1900 it was very nearly true that a man had to have a paintbrush or a chisel in his hand in order to qualify as an artist. By the mid-twentieth century a new category of person had been invented: the 'art-lover'. Translated, this usually means people who go to exhibitions of paintings, but is sometimes extended to include those with well-lined pockets who buy pictures for investment or to hang in their homes and offices. The specific association of 'art' with paintings is nearly always present these days. Those with a taste for beautiful furniture, fine carpets or well laid-out gardens may be experts or connoisseurs, but they cannot be art-lovers.

The narrowing of the meaning of 'art' has become a conspiracy in which the co-plotters are the picture trade, the auction houses, certain art-historians with big names, the exhibition centres which find it convenient and profitable to describe themselves as art museums and, of course, the media, which always welcome a short, fashionable word that is not felt to need explanation or definition. The exhibition-going public is, almost inevitably, a willing ally in the conspiracy. To have been to a block-busting Cezanne or Vermeer exhibition is to be in fashion, to have a new chatter-subject. These exhibitions, vital to the prosperity and self-esteem of the art business, are essentially social occasions, which have little or nothing to do with the understanding or appreciation of paintings. From an aesthetic point of view, a collection of good reproductions, a set of slides or a CD-ROM contributes more to the average person's awareness, sensitivity and knowledge than an expensive, crowded and exhausting visit to the latest 'must' exhibition.

The Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Nîmes should regard their names as badges of guilt and shame, and, as evidence of social responsibility, find honest alternatives with all possible speed.

Mikhail B. Gnedovsky, Senior Researcher at the Centre of Museum Planning and Design, Russian Institute for Cultural Research, Moscow, comments.

Kenneth Hudson's provocative statement describes the realm of the fine arts museums as a dead end of civilization. His critique is aimed at the history of art and all the social machinery (of which the fine-arts museums are only a part) set into motion by its concepts.

Evidently, art history is not art itself, in the same way as natural history is not the same as nature. And similarly, ethnology does not convey an inherent outlook of an indigenous culture. What we are dealing with is a type of academic museum. Its main concern is to force concepts elaborated by an academic community into the community of laymen ready to play the game.

What is wrong with academic museums? I believe one of their main faults is that they show art (or culture, or nature) objectively, that is, in a detached manner. From a grammatical point of view, they speak of their subject-matter in the third person. It is 'those pictures', 'those animals', 'those aborigines', and never 'us', or 'you'. That is why they stimulate not 'awareness and imagination' but symbolic and intellectual possessiveness towards the objects put on display. Here, there is no

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need for empathy or compassion: those are totally excluded from the experience. 'I had it' – rather than 'I was it' or 'I was there' – would be the most appropriate slogan for visiting a fashionable museum show. No wonder there is too much money (or, for that matter, vanity) put into this business, which fact makes Kenneth Hudson go to the extremes of his irony.

The alternative seems to be obvious. It is possible to imagine (and sometimes even to visit) museums that speak in the first person on behalf of artists or craftsmen or just any person or community that seeks the inherent values of a display. There should be a profound difference in attitude between the art museums and the museums of artists, as well as between ethnological and ethnic museums. I also think that a zoo or a botanical garden is, basically, an attempt to make nature speak for itself. And when there is the 'I am' message then the 'you are' response on the part of the visitor is inevitable. Thus, the second person enters the scene.

Does that mean that we have to eliminate all the academic museums to give way to a new generation of museums that speak languages and display values of various living communities? I do not think so. As with our natural language, we have to use all three persons to make our way in communication. So it is with museums that provide a language for intercultural communication: we have to develop all three persons. It is only a matter of useful balance.

Illicit traffic

Recent publications highlight growing international concern

UNESCO's efforts to combat the illicit import, export and transfer of ownership of cultural property have served to shed light on the issues involved and have contributed in no small measure to influencing museum collecting policies. A number of recent publications bear witness to the urgency of stimulating debate and reflection on this question.

Antiquities – Trade or Betrayed: Legal, Ethical and Conservation Issues, edited by Kathryn Walker Tubb. London, Archetype Publications in conjunction with the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation Archaeology Section, 1995.

The rights and wrongs of trading in antiquities are highly contentious, with proponents and opponents often deeply entrenched in starkly contrasting positions. This collection of papers thus reflects a wide-ranging and diverse set of opinions, from archaeologists and representatives of international organizations such as UNESCO and ICOM, to police inspectors, museum curators, international jurists, journalists, and dealers in antiquities. No consensus emerges that might clearly point to the solution to the problems which bedevil antiquities trading, for while no one advocates involvement with stolen works of art, antiquities that have been clandestinely excavated cannot easily be afforded such protection because of the difficulties in establishing not only that they have been stolen but from whom. The prospect of self-regulation in a free market is not reassuring for a general public and academic community increasingly cognizant of the destruction of the archaeological record and aware that the loss is irretrievable. That such a publication exists at all is due to the strong support of the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation Archaeology Section which organized a conference entitled 'Conservation and the Antiquities Trade' from which this book is largely derived.

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Illicit traffic in cultural property – Museums against pillage, edited by Harrie Leyten. Amsterdam, Royal Tropical Institute in collaboration with Musée National du Mali, Bamako, 1995.

This publication addresses museums in the Western world collecting objects which make up the cultural or archaeological heritage of developing countries. Compiled with support from the Netherlands museum community and with the assistance of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it points out that issues concerning the illicit traffic in cultural property are not restricted to international traders, art dealers, customs officers or police departments but touch the very core of a museum's responsibilities and reach beyond the conventional perception of the museum as the innocent keeper of cultural heritage. Until recently, museums in many Western countries were reluctant to collaborate with their counterparts in developing countries to curb illicit traffic or discuss the possible return of cultural or archaeological objects. However, times are changing and there is a growing awareness that only by joining forces can museums all over the world contribute to safeguarding a nation's cultural heritage for future generations. With descriptions of the state of the art with regard to illicit traffic in cultural property, the book draws on several disciplines to present a comprehensive picture of the problem and to provide background information and source documents for museum professionals. International legislation and UNESCO policies are discussed, as are the recently developed proposals for the harmonization of national legislations.

Protecting Cultural Objects Through International Documentation Standards – A Preliminary Survey, by Robin Thornes, Santa Monica, California, The Getty Art History Information Program, 1995.

By surveying and analysing current practice with regard to the various methods of recording data on stolen cultural goods, this fifty-two page brochure is the first step of a project to protect cultural objects by means of an international agreement on the minimum, or core, information necessary to identify them. Launched by the Council of Europe, the Getty Art History Information Program, the US Information Agency, ICOM and UNESCO, the project, entitled International Core Documentation Standards for the Protection of Cultural Objects, provides a forum for international organizations, policy-makers and other key constituents to shape this consensus into an internationally agreed-upon documentation standard. The present publication presents findings with regard to the use of information technology, visual documentation, condition information and the various categories of information. The next step will be to bring together those responsible for existing computerized databases on stolen cultural items at a technical meeting scheduled for November 1996 in Prague and convened by the Czech Ministry of Culture and UNESCO.

African Arts, Autumn 1995, Vol. 28, No. 4, 'Protecting Mali's Cultural Heritage'. Quarterly journal published by the University of California at Los Angeles.

This special issue considers the ramifications of the 1993 emergency import restrictions imposed by the United States on archaeological material from the region of the Niger River Valley in Mali. It provides a cross-section of considered opinion on such topics as the distinctions between legal and illegal antiquities, good and bad collectors, public and private property, scientific and unscientific excavations. It should be noted that this act was the first such American ban to concern an African country, and is also the first measure adopted by a so-called art importing country to attempt to restrict the traffic in stolen or illegally exported cultural objects from that part of the world. The American decision was a response to a request from the Government of Mali

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under the implementation of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transport of Ownership of Cultural Property.

International Criminal Police Review, No. 448/449, May–July 1994. Published by the ICPO-INTERPOL General Secretariat, Lyons (France).

This special issue describes the present state of illicit traffic in cultural goods from various points of view. It presents what R. E. Kendall, Secretary General of INTERPOL, describes as the tragic situation of those countries that do not possess the means to preserve their cultural heritage, highlights two successful preventive efforts, demonstrates both the preventive and repressive action of the police and calls attention to the work of international organizations involved in creating a common legal framework. The magazine is distributed to the police of 174 countries and is published in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.

Technology update

Most present-day innovations in museums are based on a museographic message. This consists of clearly defining the philosophy underlying an exhibition, or a new museum or museum space. The resulting product can be as simple as the exhibition of 'ninety-eight works by Henri Le Sidaner, chosen from the descriptive catalogue of the painter's life's work which was established by his great grandson'.[1] It can also be more abstract, as in the case of the exhibition entitled *A Panorama of Social Change*, which was based on 'linkages which can be used to demonstrate the relationship between the development of science and its social consequences'.[2] In the same way, it is the museographic message that constitutes the guiding principle for the scriptwriting of each CD-ROM that is a museum by-product. To succeed in this type of project, curators and scenographers should first of all acquire an understanding of the intricacies of multimedia writing for cultural purposes. The written multimedia scenario respects the specific characteristics of the virtual visit, and is therefore not intended to replace physical visits or actual contact with the original objects. What it does is to give visitors initial education about a specific type of heritage by means of user-friendly navigation. If successful, it awakens curiosity, stimulates reflection and, above all, helps to safeguard cultural identities and heritage. Such a success has been achieved, each in his or her own way, by the authors of the following CD-ROMs.

Virtual visit by imitation

A number of museums with sizeable collections have opted for scriptwriting based on mimicry. The visit recreates the setting and atmosphere of the museum being depicted. The very successful example of the *Musée du Louvre, Peinture Française* (Louvre Museum, French Paintings)[3] concerns a visit of the rooms where French painting is displayed. Concise and fitting comments on the principal artistic movements from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century are made by Jean-Pierre Cuzin, the Curator of Heritage who is in charge of the paintings section at the Louvre Museum. His appearance on the screen, generated by digital video, gives the user the impression of nearness experienced during an actual guided visit. After the introductory part, the user can visit each room in turn, moving the mouse about to simulate a virtual-reality visit generated by Quick Time VR software. Movement towards any one painting

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causes it slowly to fill the screen. Contact is thus established between the visitor and the work. If this is an object, the visitor can move around it, obtain different types of information, choose it for inclusion in his or her own catalogue or look at the other associated objects.

This choice of multimedia scriptwriting in which visitors in the CD-ROM can, as they do in museums, move as they like through the collections in a familiar environment, is suitable when the content on display does not represent all the collections kept by the institution. Even so, the user can only be given an idea of one of the world's greatest collections of French paintings. The visit may bear an intelligent resemblance to a physical visit to the Louvre, but cannot replace it.

Virtual visit by immersion

The CD-ROM *Moi, Paul Cézanne* (I, Paul Cézanne),[4] which is based on his monumental work, *The Bathers*, immerses the user in the regular haunts of the painter. The work is displayed in a railway station, landscape, bar, museum and the artist's studio, respectively. The sound track, which faithfully reflects the individual context, engulfs visitors in an intimate atmosphere in which their own intuitive desires are the sole guide. They can slip into each of the black-and-white images, on the lookout for interactive colour ingredients which reveal glimpses of the period or paintings by the artist. Navigational icons only appear if users target the mouse on a sensitive zone, giving them the choice of entering or continuing their exploration. This CD-ROM creates a world which is totally unlike that of a physical visit, allowing the latter to preserve the irreplaceable emotion communicated by the works themselves, and offering instead the no less uncommon meeting with their creator. Because of its original script, this CD-ROM, which was produced for the exhibition held between 30 September 1995 and 7 January 1996 at the Grand Palais in Paris, enjoyed great success both as a means of attracting visitors to the exhibition and as a complementary feature of their visit.

Virtual visit by substitution

When it is difficult to conserve cultural heritage by keeping it in a spatial enclosure, such a space can always be constructed virtually to create a fully fledged museum. Anthropology, for example, can be based on actions and gestures, on intangible phenomena, and finds an ideal medium in the CD-ROM whose combination of images, texts and sound enables the 'visualization' of a social structure or kinship system; in short, of abstract entities. A CD-ROM of this kind, entitled *Récit de voyage multimédia au pays de Papous d'Irian-Jaya* (The Story of a Multimedia Journey to the Land of the Papuans of Irian-Jaya),[5] has been created by the cyber-ethnologists of the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (School of Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences) in Paris. The CD-ROM serves as a virtual museum because the culture that it presents, that of the Papuans, is on the road to extinction. Background documentation is derived from existing archives and ad hoc documents made on the spot, which show salt routes, stone-cutting and trade between highlands and lowlands. This type of scriptwriting is especially well adapted to ethnological themes. Indeed, museum exhibitions on such topics increasingly employ animations which combine images, texts and sound to back up messages which are very often of an abstract nature.

Virtual visit by analogy

Lastly, a cultural CD-ROM can diffuse an identical message to that of a given exhibition, but with additional information that would be unsuitable in a museum exhibition and which enables different levels of interpretation. An example is the CD-ROM *Picasso*[6] which formed part of the retrospective exhibition held at the Grand Palais in

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Paris in autumn 1996. In this case, the purpose is to demonstrate that the master was both the first great modern painter as well as the last classical painter. Accordingly, 500 works by Picasso, from both museums and private collections throughout the world, are shown. This type of CD-ROM is defined more by the amount of works it contains than by its presentation of them.

The scriptwriting of a CD-ROM is similar to the scenography of a museum exhibition. One can complement the other, and the curator's choice must be based on this vision of complementarity between reality and virtuality.

Notes

1. Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain, Liège, Belgium, *Exposition internationale Le Sidaner*, 7 September to 17 November 1996.

2. Cité des Sciences de Paris – La Villette. *Fresque de l'innovation sociale.* 13 March to 1 September 1996. http://www.cite-sciences.fr.

3. *Musée du Louvre, Peinture Française.* ODA, RMN, Musée du Louvre, 1996. CD-ROM Mac-PC.

4. *Moi, Paul Cézanne*, Télérama/Index +/ RMN, 1996, CD-ROM Mac-PC.

5. *Récit de voyage au pays d'Irian-Jaya*, Globe-mémoires, 1996, CD-ROM Mac-PC.

6. *Picasso*, Grolier Interactive Europe, 1996, CD-ROM Mac-PC.

Report by Marine Olsson, technician at the National Centre for Study and Research in Advanced Technologies, Dijon, France, responsible for the feasibility study and the networking of computerized and photographic inventories of museum collections in the Burgundy region.

Professional news

Museum and exhibition fairs

MUTEC 97, the International Fair of Museums and Exhibition Techniques, will be held in Munich (Germany) from 17 to 20 June 1997. The first MUTECH, in 1995, featured 182 exhibitors from twelve countries and attracted more than 3,500 professional visitors from thirty countries, with a high percentage coming from central and eastern Europe and Russia. With displays of goods and services ranging from construction materials, lighting fixtures, exhibition and presentation techniques, library and archive infrastructures, to visitor services, storeroom management and communication equipment, MUTECH 97 aims to attract an even larger public professionally involved with museums, monuments, galleries, cultural centres and private collections.

For further information:
MUTECH 97
Messe München GmbH
Messegelände, D-80325 München (Germany)
Tel: (49 89) 51 07 0
Fax: (49 89) 51 07 675.

Museum Expressions, the trade fair for objects and products derived from museums and other cultural and artistic heritage institutions, will be held for the second time from 11 to 13 January 1997 at the Carrousel du Louvre in Paris. A veritable crossroads between museums and the world of distribution, marketing and commerce, Museum Expressions will also feature a series of professional seminars on such themes as multimedia publishing, licensing and new forms of distribution. The first Museum Expressions, held in 1996, attracted more than 3,000 buyers including

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museum curators, department stores, specialty boutiques, and design professionals from twenty-five countries.

For further information:
Museum Expressions
40, rue de l'Echiquier
75010 Paris (France)
Tel: (33.01) 44.83.98.81.

Museum management courses

New technologies and their impact in museums will be the focus of the 1997 Museum Management Program short course for museum administrators at the University of Colorado, in Boulder (United States) from 29 June to 3 July 1997. Fourteen presentations by seven leading museum figures will look at new and likely future technologies in such areas as planning, finances, personnel, collections, exhibits, education, research, marketing, fund-raising, membership, evaluation, libraries and archives. In addition, the mid-career programme will feature an overview of the current use of new technologies in museums, a forecast of museums of the future and the role of technology and suggestions on how museums can better prepare for the expanded use of technology in their operations. The programme is open to all museum directors, assistant directors, department heads and other senior administrators.

For further information:
Victor J. Danilov
Director, Museum Management Program
250 Bristlecone Way
Boulder, CO 80304 (United States)
Tel: (1-303) 473-9150
Fax: (1-303) 443-8486.

For the eighth year, the Deutsches Museum is offering a one-week course on the principles and methods of museum management, taught by the museum's senior staff. The 1997 course will be offered in English from 28 September to 3 October and in German from 22 to 27 June and from 23 to 28 November. Subjects covered include finance, architecture, exhibit design and production, collections, management, conservation, project management, writing and editing labels, publications and security.

For further information:
Hauptabr. Programme
Deutsches Museum
D-680538 München (Germany)
Tel: (49.89) 217-9294
Fax: (49.89) 217-9273.

New publications

Magyar Muzeumok (*Hungarian Museums*) is a quarterly illustrated review on current developments in the museum field in Hungary. Articles are accompanied by an English summary and cover such topics as permanent and temporary exhibitions, book and periodical reviews, professional training, conservation.

For further information:
Magyar Muzeumok
H-1476 Budapest 100
PF. 54 (Hungary).

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