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MUSEOLOGICAL REVIEW EXTRA

A Journal edited by Students of
the Department of Museum Studies

Special Issue 10
2003

University of Leicester

GRADUATE STUDIES

Museological Review, 10: 2003

Contents

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Editors:
Kostas Arvanitis
Anastasia Filippoupoliti

University *of* **Leicester**

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Preface

I am delighted to introduce this special edition of *Museological Review*, which brings together a collection of papers first presented at the Postgraduate Student Seminar 'Researching Museums' in Leicester on 27th November 2002. Around forty research students and tutors from a wide range of university departments and other academic institutions attended.

The range of papers included in this issue – as well as the diversity of views expressed during the seminar – indicates the ways in which the boundaries of museum studies research are being pushed and extended. Museum studies is an interdisciplinary field, which draws its research rigour from the disciplines from which it is composed, and this makes for a particularly lively research community. This research is principally situated at the interstices of sociology, various kinds of history, and anthropology. These drive research programmes aimed at deconstructing disciplinary activity within the museum together with studying the range of practices associated with the production and consumption of culture.

Over the last 15 years museum studies research has grown out from its tiny foothold and has metamorphosed from inward-looking investigations aimed at informing practice to studies, which have sought to use the museum, as a key cultural institution, to understand the external world, its practices and its values. Yet, many of these studies remain deeply informed by an awareness of the peculiar internal politics and practices of the museum that come from first hand experiences of museum work. With a growing literature, sociologists, anthropologists and historians from outside the sector have been drawn in to study the museum. Museum studies research is now a rich and vibrant field, which – as the papers here demonstrate – has international appeal and is attracting a new generation of researchers.

Finally, can I thank the two organisers of the seminar: Kostas Arvanitis and Anastasia Filippoupoliti, for organising and conducting the seminar so effectively and for the great effort of bringing these papers together in published form. I hope you enjoy them.

Simon Knell
Director, Department of Museum Studies
University of Leicester

Editorial

The idea of organising the 'Researching Museums' seminar was perceived in the 'Attic', the office of the research students in the Department of Museum Studies. The 'Attic' has been in its two years of existence an intellectual 'arena', where the museum concept is constantly renegotiated, decomposed and recomposed. In one of these rewarding meetings with fellow students we asked a simple question: 'Why not to bring in the Department research students from all over the UK, in order to discuss what it means to do research in museums?'

What started as a 'simple question' became a nine-month preparation, contacting universities in the UK, speaking to other research students, asking members of staff for advice in organisational issues, thinking about the focus and the themes of the seminar and so many other things that 'simple questions' can hide. The result though was more than rewarding.

We are very happy that twenty-six research students answered our call and attended the seminar. We are also glad that the seminar attracted academic staff and museum professionals. Perhaps, after all, the PhD research in museums is not just an academic particularity but also a potential active agent for museum practice. In that case, we can at least feed our inner desire that our research will be of some more practical value in the future and won't be forgotten in a dusty shelf of a university library.

The papers dealt with the museum experience, the representation of identities in museums, the development of exhibitions and audiences and the research methodologies. In turn, they stimulated very interesting discussions about the nature of the research in museums, the ever-changing concept of museums and the role of museum studies in reflecting, but also defining museum practice.

We thank very much the speakers that shared their passion with us. We thank very much, also, the chairpersons that accepted our invitation. Our thanks also go to the academic staff of our Department for encouraging this initiative. We are grateful to the Leicester Museums Service that supported the seminar. We cannot thank enough the head technician of the Department, Jim Roberts, for being there where technical problems emerged and for preparing the format of this publication. Last, but not least, we would like to thank all the people of the General Office, Bob Ahluwalia, Christine Cheesman, Barbara Lloyd and Elizabeth Rudge that helped with all the organizational and technical aspects of this event.

While looking forward to the next 'Researching Museums' seminar, we welcome you to this publication that accommodates most of the papers presented in the seminar and we hope you will enjoy them.

Kostas Arvanitis, Anastasia Filippoupoliti (editors)

Notes for Contributors

Aims

- To enable museum studies students and other interested parties to share and exchange museum information and knowledge.

- To provide an international medium for museums students and ex-students from around the world to keep in touch with a relevant centre of research.

- To bring to the attention of the practising and academic museum world, innovations and new thinking on museums and related matters.

Objectives

- To provide a platform in the form of a journal to be published per annum, for museums students, staff and others to present papers, reviews, opinions and news of a relevant nature from around the world.

- To widen up the constituency of the readership beyond the normal museological boundaries (e.g. to teachers, historians, artists, sociologists, environmentalists and others) in order to emphasise the importance of museums to society as a whole.

- To promote and advertise the research of contributors to as wide a public as possible via the journal and other means as the committee may from time to time decide.

Submission of manuscripts

The Editors welcome submissions of original material (articles, exhibition or book reviews etc.) being within the aims of the *Museological Review*. Articles can be of any length up to 5,000 words. Each contributor will receive one copy of the issue, but not a fee.

Four copies of the typescript will be required; three copies to the Editors and a copy for you to keep for your own reference. Make sure that all copies carry late additions or corrections. *It will not be possible for us to undertake or arrange for independent proof reading and the obligation for thorough checking is the responsibility of the authors' not the Editors.*

Contributions should be set as follows:

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Full name of the author

Main body of the paper

Numbered endnotes (if appropriate)

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Do not use footnotes.

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Connerton, P. (1989). *How Societies Remember.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Cook, B.F. (1991). 'The archaeologist and the Art Market: Policies and Practice.' *Antiquity* 65: 533.

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Articles should be addressed to the Editors, Museological Review, University of Leicester, Department of Museum Studies, 103/105 Princess Road East, Leicester LE1 7LG, UK. Telephone number: 0116- 2523963; Fax number: 0116-2523960.

Researching Museums
27th November 2002
Department of Museum Studies
University of Leicester
Programme

9.45 – 10.15: Registration (coffee & tea)

10.15: Opening

Session 1: 'In' and 'Out': Experiencing the museum
Chair: **Nadia Arbach**

10.30: Areti Galani: Computer supported social interaction between local and remote museum visitors

10.45: Susan Hazan: The Virtual Aura: The technologies of exhibition and the exhibition of technologies

11.00: Discussion

11.20: Break

Session 2: (Mis)Representing social identities in museums
Chair: **Viv Golding**

11.40: Esther Solomon: Constructing local identity through archaeological finds: the case of Knossos (Crete, Greece)

11.55: Nikki Clayton: Folk Devils in our Midst? Challenging the Modernist Museum Paradigm

12.10: Discussion

12.30: Lunch

Session 3: Developing museum audiences and exhibitions
Chair: **Richard Sandell**

14.00: Anders Hoeg Hansen: Exhibition development in natural history museums

14.15: Eliana Martinis: Audience development in academic collections: communicating 'higher' heritage

14.30: Discussion

14.50: Break

*Session 4: **Assessing research methodologies and museum strategies***
Chair: Katharine Edgar

15.00 Samihah Khalil: Institutional excellence: An assessment of museums performance and orientation

15.15: Emily Stokes-Rees: 'Access to a closed world': Methods for a multi-sited study of new museums

15.30: Discussion

15.50: Break

16.00: Plenary discussion: *Researching Museums. Ideas and issues emerged in the seminar*
Chair: **Prof. Eilean Hooper-Greenhill**

17:15 Closing

Mixed Reality Museum Visits: Using new technologies to support co-visiting for local and remote visitors

Areti Galani

A decade ago, Falk and Dierking (Falk & Dierking, 1992) in their definition of the interactive museum experience described three key elements that influence the way visitors experience museums: the physical context, the personal context and the social context. Social context in the interactive experience model covers the social interaction between the visitor and her/his immediate companions, as well as other visitors and museum staff during the visit. This paper is concerned with the social context of museum visits that span both on-site and off-site audiences as well as a range of both digital and more traditional media. In their subsequent contextual model of learning Falk and Dierking (Falk & Dierking, 2000) substituted social context with sociocultural context in order to more effectively reflect the learning process during a museum visit; the sociocultural context extends to issues of cultural background and culture-related learning which will not be discussed in this paper.

The importance of social context in a museum visit has been supported by both qualitative and quantitative studies: Petrelli (Petrelli, De Angeli, & Convertino, 1998) found out that only 5% of visitors in natural history museums in Italy visit alone; also, Falk and Dierking stated that in follow up communications with visitors, the participants could recall their companions more successfully than the exhibits they had seen during the visit. Studies of the social aspects of a museum visit often focus on the influence social context has on learning (Diamond, 1986; Falk & Dierking, 1992; McManus, 1987b) or on the behaviour of the visitors (Diamond, 1986); research on social interaction between visitors and how this shapes their museum experience is limited, for example (vom Lehn, 2002), and is the focus of this paper.

Previous research on social context focuses on visitors who visit the physical premises of a museum. Consequently, it is mainly applied to the design of museum experiences that take place in a physical museum. With the introduction of new network technologies such as the Internet, a new style of museum visitor has emerged, web visitors. The number of web visitors is increasingly becoming an important proportion of the overall museum audience and, in some cases, outstrips the number of visitors to the corresponding physical museums (Lord, 1999). Web visitors are mainly remote visitors to a museum – in few cases the same material is available both on the web site and the physical galleries, for example the book in the British Museum. Museums nowadays make an effort to cater for the information needs of their diverse web audiences by increasing their educational resources and the information about their collections on-line. The question that arises, however, is whether information accessibility and diversity comprises an interactive museum experience.

Alternatively, researchers and artists, apart from information delivery, have started to explore ways to support sociality during remote museum visits to enhance

museum experiences. They have also experimented with shared experiences between local and remote visitors. Co-visiting between new remote audiences, who visit museums via the web, and more traditional visitors to the physical premises of a museum has been supported by experimental technologies such as virtual environments, cameras, robots and remotely controlled interfaces. However, these projects often have as a starting point the technology and not the interactions that the technology supports or creates. They also address an audience who may or may not know each other, without taking into consideration the differences in the relationships and the interactions between members of the same group and visitors who may interact in the galleries by chance.

Set within the Equator collaboration (www.equator.ac.uk), our research in the City project is concerned with how sociality may be achieved across different media, and with the design and the implementation of these media. This is partly a response to the increasing number of remote visitors. It also reflects the technological advances that make communication and collaboration over different environments possible and effective. In this first stage, we focus on interactions between members of the same group who may wish to visit a museum together but are prevented by geographical distance or other barriers. In studying both traditional museums and new technologies, we aim to understand the activity of museum co-visiting and explore ways it may be supported for a diverse range of museum audiences with the use of new technologies, such as mixed reality systems[1].

This paper examines social context in museums in terms of co-visiting. It also considers its technological support. We initially discuss social conduct in museums. This part of the discussion focuses on social interactions that happen synchronously among people who visit a museum in a group. Key elements of their interaction will be presented drawing examples from observational studies carried out in two cultural institutions, The Lighthouse, Centre of Architecture and Design and the House for an Art Lover, both in Glasgow, UK. The second part of the paper investigates trends in current web museum visiting by using examples of web surveys and museum websites. The third part introduces the concept of mixed reality museum visiting experiences for both local and remote audiences using examples from art, robotics and our current work in the City project. We conclude by reflecting on how such technologies may change the character of the museum experience.

Understanding social interaction between visitors

Despite the fact that social interaction has been acknowledged as an important element of co-visiting, studies on how social interaction is expressed and supported, and the techniques that co-visitors use to manage a shared visit to a museum are limited. As vom Lehn (vom Lehn, 2002) pointed out, most of the studies that examine social elements of the visit aim at the evaluation of specific displays, or the learning outcome of such interactions (McManus, 1987a), rather than a wider understanding of the interactions that take place during the visit.

Understanding the techniques that visitors use to engage with the displays as well as with each other is, however, crucial for the design of meaningful museum experiences.

For that purpose two exploratory studies were carried out over the last year in two cultural institutions in Glasgow, The Lighthouse and the House of an Art Lover. The focus of the research was the social interactions of visitors that visited the two institutions. Approximately 60 visitors were observed in non-educational groups of two, three, four, five people and a few singletons. The methods used for the collection of data were informed by ethnography (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2000). The main method was unobtrusive visitor observation. Some visits were recorded on video. People's discussions were recorded wherever overheard. The goal of the studies was to explore the social interactions during the visit as well as around specific exhibits. Both studies were carried out in agreement with the institutions and with the knowledge of the gallery staff.

Visitor studies in the past have employed similar techniques, such as tracking of visitors, in order to evaluate specific displays or exhibitions (Gilbert & Priest, 1996). MacDonald (MacDonald, 2002) also used visitor tracking in the Food for Thought Exhibition in the Science Museum to study visitors and compare their meaning making processes to the one intended by the curators. Tracking of visitors has also been used in visitor studies under the auspices of space syntax research (Psarra & Grajewski, 2000; Psarra, Grajewski, & O'Neill, 2002). The space syntax approach, however, differs radically in goals and results from our approach since it focuses on the effect of architectural layout on people's use of space. In our study we focus on the social interaction among the members of the group and how it influences their engagement with the displays and each other, and vice versa. Furthermore, we are also interested in interactions that are evolved or repeated during the course of a visit instead of exclusively observing interaction around specific displays.

The observational studies resulted in a corpus of diverse material that offers insights into micro-interactions as well as macro-interactions between visitors in the galleries. Micro-interactions are localised events/exchanges between visitors in front of specific displays or in a given moment during the visit. Macro-interactions are styles of activity that occur throughout the course of one visit, or activity that is developed somehow gradually throughout the duration of the visit.

The analysis of the data considered interactions such as collaborative exploration/ use of displays, highlighting of artefacts and the management of the pace of the visit in order to identify key aspects of co-visiting. On this basis, co-visiting is defined as a highly collaborative activity during which visitors are almost constantly engaged with both the exhibition and with each other. Co-visitors experience their immediate social environment through direct and close interaction at some times, and peripheral awareness at other times.

Each co-visitor takes advantage of a dynamically changing set of resources. We identified visual cues, verbal communication, and shared content as essential

Areti Galani

resources for co-visiting. The first two sets of resources are generated during the visit while the shared content covers both the immediate content of the galleries as well as the knowledge visitors bring with them from past experiences. Only specific aspects of each of these behaviours are used at any given moment. For example the visual cues may be expressed as eye gaze or gestural behaviour. Furthermore, the effect of a gesture itself may differ in pointing and in managing the pace of the visit. Also body and head orientation have different roles in different situations. Therefore, any attempt to interpret these resources needs to take into account the setting of use, this being the spatial arrangements, the relationship of the participants, the affordances of specific displays and so forth.

For example, in Figures 1 and 2 both female visitors use pointing to highlight specific aspects of the display. In Figure 1, however, the gesture has an immediate recipient, the visitor's companion, and is important for the discussion and the exchange of information about the specific object, a Mackintosh lamp. On the other hand in Figure 2, the same pointing gesture acquires an almost rhetorical value since it facilitates the person's own engagement and understanding of the display; it also facilitates her companion's awareness of her and the display.

Plate 1   **Plate 2**

Visitors generate resources for their friends and also take advantage of the resources generated by their friends. On the basis of the use of the recourses during the course of a visit, three styles of interaction between co-visitors emerged (Galani & Chalmers, 2002). In the first, co-visitors are 'tightly connected', staying together during their visit, and interacting with the same display at the same time. In this style direct interaction such as discussion, highlighting of artefacts, even interpersonal body interactions are important for the management of the visit. In the second style, co-visitors are 'loosely connected': they remain close to each other but they interact with different displays or different aspects of the same display. Loosely connected visitors are constantly aware of their companion's movements and often adjust their interaction to loosely fit with their companions.

In the third style, co-visitors are 'independent navigators', following their own individual routes for the main part of the visit and meeting with each other only occasionally. In this style, co-visiting is very much dependent on people's awareness of each other's movements around the gallery. Visitors do not rigidly conform to a particular interaction style during a visit; instead, they employ techniques of all styles with a single style being usually the dominant one in any given group.

Visitors also continually negotiate their attention between their co-visitors and the exhibits. This is a balancing process: while exploring a gallery they generate cues for interaction with their friends, and while engaged in interaction with their friends, the artefacts still play an important role. To achieve this balance they combine both the resources generated by their friends and also resources available within the environment such as labels, leaflets, artefacts and so forth. They also use their previous experience. We observed that even in cases where the available media in the gallery are expected to inhibit interpersonal interaction (Martin, 2000), for example audio guides or touch screens, visitors actually used them as a resource for conversation and they often change their use of media in order to incorporate them in their shared experience.

In conclusion, museum co-visiting is a collaborative activity. Visitors are engaged with the displays, the gallery environment and their companions. They take advantage of resources generated by their companions, such as gestures and oral communication in order to inform their exploration of the displays; they generate similar resources themselves; they also take advantage of resources embedded on the displays, such as text, in order to communicate and collaborate with their friends during the visit. All resources are essential for a shared museum visit.

Web visiting

In contrast to the traditional museum visit, the current web museum experience is mainly a solitary experience. The web is treated as an information medium and not as a social medium. It is also used to facilitate the educational and marketing activities of the museum. Public relations and education were identified as the top aims of a museum web page in the survey contacted by the Japanese Museum Information in 1998 (Japanese museum information, 1998). It also serves as a vehicle for expanding access to museum collections. Current museum web pages offer an ever-increasing wealth of information about exhibitions, objects and collections; they often include searchable databases of objects, for example the Compass project in the British Museum (www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk), virtual tours which usually are sub-selections of objects on a specific theme, and sometimes virtual representations of the galleries where users can access the displays by moving around the space and selecting specific artefacts, for example the Wellcome Wing in the Science Museum (www.sciencemuseum.org.uk).

Current web sites establish communication between museum professionals and museum audiences, often supported by e-mail and newsletter services. It can also be argued that they expand the museum's social space by introducing

museum material into new social environments such as classrooms. In their majority, however, museum web sites offer asocial experiences. Important aspects of shared museum visiting, such as awareness of other visitors' engagement with the material as well as direct interaction with each other, we discussed in the previous section, are overlooked.

One may suggest that the role of the web site is to offer information about the collections because this is the reason visitors access it at the first place. According to several web visitor surveys (Japanese museum information, 1998; Kravchyna & Hastings, 2002; Thomas & Paterson, 1998) the most popular reason for visiting a museum web site is to find information about the collections, the exhibitions and the events. To assess these results we need to bear in mind the bias introduced by the survey questionnaire itself. In most cases the surveys were conducted with multiple answer questionnaires, which limit the replies of the participants. Additionally, the participant's experience itself was also based on the use of current museum web sites that mainly focus on delivery of information.

Furthermore, searching for information is not necessarily a solitary activity. Semper's (Semper, Wanner, Jackson, & Bazley, 2000) survey of the use of museum educational material revealed that 9% of the visitors were working with someone else during browsing. Additionally, Twidale et. al. (Twidale, Nichols, & Paice, 1997), in their study of the use of library terminals, noted that in most cases the task of finding information was based on immediate collaboration of members of the same group or opportunistic/occasional collaboration with people outside the group, such as library staff and other researchers. Awareness of people's choices of and engagement with the material as well as direct exchange of opinions with co-users are important aspects of the successful retrieval of information.

Moreover, we suggest looking at some other interesting findings that have been produced by the surveys. According to a survey carried out by the Science Museum web visitors mainly access the museum web sites during their free time (Thomas & Paterson, 1998), and usually from home (Semper et al., 2000). In addition to the collections, they are interested in virtual objects and creative dialogues (Japanese museum information, 1998), they expect on-line exhibitions, and they visit a museum web site because it's 'fun and interesting' (Reynolds, 1997). They also prepare for a future visit. Furthermore, there is some evidence that an attractive web site is more likely to attract web visitors to the physical museum (Thomas & Paterson, 1998) p.65 appendix II). Nevertheless, visiting a museum web site for big portion of web visitors is a leisure activity, which at the moment is very much a solitary activity. It also seems to be an activity that is not rigidly tied to a potential visit to the physical site but can be enjoyed separately. In this respect visiting a museum website may share similar intrinsic motivation with visiting the physical site of a museum. Whether it can satisfy the needs and the wants of remote visitors to the extent the museum caters for on-site visitors appears to be a growing concern.

Muller in a recent article in the Museums Journal (Muller, 2002) argues for a change in the way museums treat their websites and he wonders 'how can museum curate virtual spaces that engage online museum visitors, encouraging them to do more than browse, but also to learn about and experience their artefacts'.

One approach is the creation of virtual museum environments that additionally support social interaction. Examples include the Virtual Leonardo project in the Museum of Science and Technology in Milan, Italy (www.museoscienza.org) and the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, Netherlands (www.vangoghmuseum.nl). In both cases virtual reality technology has been combined with Internet Relay Chat (IRC) technology and on-line curation to produce virtual environments that turn 'the solitary activity of Web browsing into a social event that resembles a cultural outing with friends' (Mirapaul, 1999). In both cases web visitors in the museum may freely navigate around the three-dimensional space of the galleries, look at the objects on display and access detailed information about them. Additionally, they may take advantage of the unique on-line features of stepping into the three-dimensional world of a Van Gogh painting or operating one of Leonardo's machines which otherwise are out of public reach. The most important aspect of those environments is that visitors may actually see the virtual representations – 'avatars' – of their friends and other visitors, and also speak with them. In that respect two friends in remote places can virtually visit the Van Gogh museum together and enjoy a museum experience rather than limit their visit to information searching. According to Bandelli (Bandelli, 1999) such an environment can also enhance chance interaction between strangers in the museum space, which is an important aspect of the museum visit (vom Lehn, 2002).

Shared visits in virtual museum environments enrich the museum experience by introducing aspects of both physical and social context to the web visit. They preserve, however, the existing dichotomy between the digital visit and its traditional counterpart. Web visitors may take advantage of the advancing technology and interact in many different ways with the digital versions of museum artefacts – even see artefacts through other people's eyes (Paolini et al., 2000) – and therefore create different meanings of their interactions but their experience goes unnoticed by their fellow visitors in the physical premises. On the other hand, visitors in the physical premises of a museum may enjoy their engagement with the displays and their co-visitors, but their experience also goes unnoticed by remote users. Although a member of the museum audience may, in different moments in her life, experience both styles of museum visiting, i.e. as a local or remote visitor, the interrelation of her visits is not reflected in the current practice of museum experience design. Physical museum sites and their web sites are usually developed, function and evolve in isolation – unlike the experiences of their users.

Visiting in mixed reality

The integration of physical with digital, and vice versa, is not an entirely new concept for museums. Nowadays museums successfully enhance their galleries with both static and mobile digital media to offer additional information, recreate the context of artefacts and make available diverse material, such as video and audio recordings. In a few rare cases museums also attempt to enhance their web site experience with real time web cam views of the galleries (Museum of Contemporary History, Bonn, www.hdg.de). Museums utilise these technologies in order to enrich the available information about the collections. On the contrary, projects that investigate social interaction across the different media as well as explore the features and capabilities of new media are limited, and usually classified as art or purely technological research.

For example The Difference Engine #3 by Lynn Hershman (Hershman) in ZKM, Media Museum in Karlsruhe is an art installation that explores social awareness among local and remote museum visitors. It bridges the physical and digital by offering views of the virtual museum environment to local visitors and views of the physical environment to remote visitors. A chat channel is also used to support message exchanges among visitors. In this respect, this Difference Engine #3 offers local and remote visitors the opportunity to simultaneously interact with the same piece of 'digital sculpture', and also introduces and encourages social awareness and interaction beyond the physical walls of the museum. It also attempts to explore issues of museum memory by storing the avatars of the visitors in a virtual 'purgatory'.

On the other hand, a group of European funded projects have combined the concept of a shared museum tour with robotics in order to create a robot museum guide for both remote and local visitors. Rhino, Minerva and Lefkos have been the robot tour guides in several European and American museums, guiding local visitors around the exhibitions and at the same enhancing the experience of the web visitors by providing real time views of the galleries. Both audiences collaborate in the selection of the tour (Burgard et al., 1998). In that respect the two otherwise isolated audiences are treated as equally important in the shaping of a museum tour. Although awareness among on-site and on-line visitors has been achieved, direct interaction through the system was not supported. Furthermore, on-site visitors could become aware only of the tour preferences of their on-line co-visitors whereas on-line visitors may also watch their on-site counterparts through the eyes of the robot guide.

Furthermore, our research in City project explores both sociality across different media and novel combination of technologies to complement and enhance social interactions. Our motivation lies in the similarities of interactions afforded by a range of media, analogue or digital, traditional or modern, human- or machine-generated. As we have already discussed in this paper, both diverse media, such as authentic artefacts, analogue and digital interpretations of them and on-going visitor's interactions around them are resources for interaction and collaboration in the museum environment.

The City project has run an experimental museum experience in The Lighthouse in Glasgow. The experiments were based in the Mackintosh Interpretation Centre (hereinafter MackRoom), a gallery designated to the work and life of the architect and artist Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Three visitors, one local, in the MackRoom, and two remote, sitting in front of desktops in separate areas in the building, share a visit to the MackRoom. The technology used was a handheld device, Internet and VR enabled desktop computers, microphones, headphones and an ultrasonic positioning system installed in the gallery. The visitors could speak to each other, see each other's location on a map or a three-dimensional virtual environment, and also access comparable content about the displays. Thirty-four visitors in groups of three and a few couples used the City system for a visit to the MackRoom. Their experience was video- and audio-recorded, their interactions with the system were logged and their personal opinions were discussed in semi-structured interviews at the end of the visit.

The participants enjoyed the mixed reality visit to the MackRoom. The robustness of the prototype facilitated visitor's engagement with the gallery and their friends. The participants made use of the available shared resources: the audio channel, the map and the shared content as well as the more traditional resources available in the gallery, such as touch screens and displays.

More specifically, the representations of the visitors on the map and the three-dimensional environment were used to support people's awareness of their friends' location in the gallery. This was then combined with the shared content in order to inform people's assumptions of what their friends were doing or viewing. This observation was also enforced in the interviews with the participants. To our question about the use of the icons on the map, one visitor replied that she used them 'just to find…, see where they [her friends] were, what they were up to, what they were looking at'. She used the map as a resource for her engagement with the others as well as to understand her friend's engagement with the gallery space and the displays. These interactions are usually afforded by visual cues among the visitors in a museum.

In our experiments direct interaction between visitors was mainly based on verbal communication. In most cases participants talked constantly to their friends. They asked to find what their friends were doing and which part of the display they were looking at. They also discussed about objects, displays and concepts exhibited in the gallery. In that respect verbal communication compensated for the limited support of visual cues, particularly gestural behavior, usually available during a museum visit.

As one of the visitors pointed out:

'And then the voice worked so well, cause, you know, you well respond to the human voice… I felt like you [to her friend] were there and I adjusted very quickly to that.'

The combination of real time verbal communication and shared content was essential for people's engagement with the displays. In many instances the

members of the group were engaged in exploration of the displays by verbally highlighting aspects of the displays for their friends. [In the following excerpt A=3D visitor, D=web visitor, V=on-site visitor; brackets indicate overlapping, underlining indicates emphasis and * refers to figures].

A: Ah, here you are!
D: [Yeah]
A: [Hahahhaha], are there knives and forks at that thing?
D: Apparently
V: Yeah
D: Ah, that, that thing!
V: Yeah, that thing.
A: And a clock?
V: A cup?
D: A cup, oh yeah I can see the cup
V: Yeah, ok
…
V: [There is a china] cup there
A: [Hahahaha]ha
D: [Hahahaha]
V: In fact it's a willow-pattern [teacup] *3
D: [Oh, yeah]
V: used in Miss Cranston's tearooms
A: Oh, I can't see you!
V: Ok
D: That's because you've lent it! It says lent by David Mullane apparently.
V: What's that again? *4
D: Lent by David Mullane.
A: David Mullan?
D: Mullane. I don't know…
A: Maybe it's my uncle.
D: Hm, you never know!
V: He was rich.

Mixed Reality Museum Visits: Using new technologies   11
to support co-visiting for local and remote
visitors

Plate 3   Plate 4

In the above example the exploration of the display begins with people's agreement on what they see, and after that the on-site and web visitors volunteer information about the object which may be of interest for their companions such as the description of the decoration and information on who lent the object. The latter appears to be of significance for the on-site visitor who speculates that the lender could be his uncle. Their comments motivate each other to further explore the display as well as make meanings and associations that begin with the description of the object and extend to the personal life of one of the participants. In this example, verbal communication and shared content supports rich interaction around the display. Furthermore, the participants use all the media available in the environment, such as labels, the handheld, the map, the web content and each other in order to explore the artefacts in the collection; in that respect, they do not focus on the use of any particular tool or medium but on the 'task' (Chalmers, 2003) which in this case is the interpretation and appreciation of artefacts related to the Willow Tearooms.

The mixed reality museum visit that the City project has designed does not claim to be similar to an on-site museum visit or a substitute for it. Both the available media and resources and the use of them is somewhat different than the ones in the physical premises. The interactions between people present also subtle differences. For example the participants in the mixed reality experience used verbal communication to achieve deictic functions that are usually achieved by gestures in purely on-site visits. Furthermore, the different way of presenting the information to the different visitors supported a deeper and richer exploration of the available material for all members of the group, since the three of them had different perspectives, not without misunderstandings though (Brown et al., 2003).

Experiences and experiments of this kind, however, reveal that a divide between virtual and real (Thomas & Mintz, 1998) is neither clear nor useful in designing museum experiences. Lessons learnt from technological research, such as the primacy of the way a resource is used over the type of the resource, may inform the design of museum experiences that treat technology as an integrated tool for

interpretation rather than as the focus of attention. Additionally, mixed reality technologies that enhance social interaction and exchange between visitors may also enhance visitors' understanding and exploration of collections through personalised interpretation.

Conclusion

Co-visiting is an essential aspect of the museum visit. A visitor's social interaction with companion(s) and other members of the public directly influences the visitor's museum experience. In the light of new technologies that support remote access to museum settings, the social character of a museum visit can extend beyond a physical room or building, and can include computer-mediated interactions. Similarly, the experience of a digital visit to a museum can be enriched by better integration with the physical site.

This has also implications in the wider discussion about the nature of the museum experience and its audiences. The adoption of social web museum environments presumes that the museum web site and the museum web visitors are perceived as valid and influential elements of the overall museum experience and not as mere add-ons. Current museum practice emphasises respect to visitors' needs and wants, and the design of meaningful museum experiences that enhance people's lives. In this respect, technology that supports sociality challenges the assumed dichotomy between virtual and real by introducing media that support shared interactions and meaning making between on-site and off-site visitors, beyond the place, the time and the media of a single visit. The more this happens, the more the virtual will be a real and useful part of modern museum practice.

Notes

[1] Mixed reality systems are technologies that permit users to interact with physical and digital information in an integrated way. In mixed reality, users of a virtual space may see out to a physical environment, and people in the physical environment may see into the virtual space. Mixed realities thus enable people who are distributed across multiple physical and virtual spaces to communicate with one another.

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The virtual Aura: the technologies of exhibition and the exhibition of technologies

Susan Hazan

The museum is changing. Modifications to the ICOM Statutes adopted by the General Assembly in Barcelona on Friday 6th July 2001 now include

> Cultural centres and other entities that facilitate the preservation, continuation and management of tangible or intangible heritage resources (living heritage and digital creative activity [1].

On Monday, 10 September 2001 The ICANN Board unanimously adopted a resolution empowering the ICANN President to sign the agreement between ICANN and MuseDoma establishing dot-museum [2]. On October 17th, 2001 the Museum Domain Management Association (MuseDoma) signed a Sponsorship Agreement with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) for the creation of the top-level Internet domain dot-museum [3].

> The .museum top-level domain (TLD) is being created to provide verifiable means for recognizing domain names used by bona fide museums, their professional associations, and individual members of the museum profession. Special subdomains will be established for virtual museums and other aspects of museum activity conducted by agencies that do not operate physical museums [4].

The electronic phenomenon for museums is a relatively new reality, with implications both for concrete museums as well as their online electronic surrogates. Now museums can sign up and join the dot-museum online community (.museum) with their explicit professional affiliation inscribed in their online identification. As well as broadcasting the online institutional website 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the physical museum visit now typically includes, electronic kiosks in the galleries that replace wall panels and catalogs, information centers that entice visitors to sit in front of monitors during a museum visit, and electronic collections distributed beyond the museum walls. In the contemporary art gallery, some of the art works themselves are no longer a material manifestation but appear in the gallery in electronic form (see discussion NINCH Community Report 2001**, Hazan, 2001**) [5]**. The institution of the museum is adapting, as new architectures demand new strategies.**

This is also a time where (digital) history is in the making and contemporary collecting practices are being redefined. Walter Benjamin's' work *Art in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction,* which was seminal in bringing into focus the notion of art as politic, referred to mechanically reproduced art and has also similar implications for electronically reproduced art. This paper will illustrate the equation of what has been lost, (Benjamin suggests that it is the aura which has been forfeited) and to what in the process has been gained. Looking to the architecture

of the electronic museum, through digital archives of material collections, the online surrogate museum and digitally born art, this paper will evaluate how electronic artifacts and architectures have made their online screen debut. Now that we are witness to a proliferation of compelling content driven museum web sites that iterate and extend museum functions online, we may also celebrate the liberation of these institutions from their wall-bound status, mapping how they have now become more accessible to the public and consequently more articulated in the public sphere. Of equal interest, looking to the emerging digitally born artefact, we may also welcome at the same time the emergence of new and perhaps enchanting cultural phenomena, the virtual aura.

Falk and Dierking, Directors of the Institute for Learning Innovation decry that *museums are anxious if not downright spooked by the proliferations of virtual museums* (Falk and Dierking: 2000, 231) and note in their key points that sum up their popular book*, Learning from Museums, Visitor Experiences and the Making of Meaning*, that one of the threats they perceive to the museum is *the rapid spread of virtual experiences, virtual collections, and virtual museums which they perceive as undermining the need for real experiences, real collections, and real museums* (Falk and Dierking: 2000, 234). The implications of these architectures for the institutional reality are somewhat less alarming. While electronic applications and environments could be seen to be detrimental to the intrinsic museum experience by some, I would suggest that new technologies working side by side with, or replacing the old merely represent a natural progression of display strategies that serve to enhance and contextualise the collections in the same way that museums have been doing for decades if not centuries.

Falk and Dierking also argue that the battle over the virtual versus real experience, has already been won and that that people will readily choose the real experience over the virtual every time (Falk and Dierking: 2000, 231). However in post-modern society, our participation in the public sphere, understanding of current events, entertainment and life long education have come to depend more and more not only on mediated resources rather than first hand, getting our boots dirty experience that the engagement with the 'real thing' is a luxury that not everyone can find the time to enjoy even though we are all aware of the many ways in which they evoke wonder in us. For the majority of society, without the capital to surround themselves with the original, the museum, the zoo, and the botanical garden offer a public space to languish in the authentic. However with leisure time a limited asset, we depend more and more on the mediated experiences and the surrogate to fill in the gaps. Second hand virtual narratives either from television or digital interaction cause us not merely to take pleasure in or reflect on these kinds of engagement but to actively construct our daily lives through them.

We cannot be physically present at every national celebration and we do not want to be present in a war-zone. We are content to let the camera be our eye and the anchorman our mouthpiece. Where much of our life is *lived* through mediated rather than through first hand experience, much of our daily interaction

is becoming more vitreous than visceral. Over the last 40 years, most of the world's populations have since spent countless hours watching the world*, in vivo, in vitro* on screens in their living rooms, bedrooms and classrooms. Content to watch live sporting events from the comfort of an armchair; we receive the daily fix of news on the allotted time slot and as faithful voyeurs of other people's lives, some real, some not, playing out on weekly dramas on the screen. Marc Auge reminds us of

> 'The false familiarity the small screen establishes between the viewers and the actors of big-scale history, whose profiles become as well known to us as those of soap-opera heroes and international artistic or sporting stars' (Auge: 1995, 32).

Walter Benjamin's discussion in his famous and much quoted essay *The Age of Mechanical Reproduction,* although often quoted in the context of photographic or film practice, reveal that his arguments also have compelling implications for the electronic duplication for the digital image.   Benjamin, writing against the backdrop of the Nazi era in 1936, described the role of art in society and the way that art had become modified, through mechanical reproduction. Benjamin embraced the severing of the quasi-mystical 'aura' from the original as potentially liberating phenomena. By making works of art widely available, it opened new forms of perception in film and photography, and the accessibility of art could move from private to public, from the elite to the masses. While at the same time questioning the need for authenticity, Benjamin welcomed the close-ups and slow motion of the moving image in that they opened up new values for art that were no longer so dependant on cult values or ritual. Thus Benjamin's' work was seminal in bringing into focus the notion of art as politic. This, insight according to Benjamin meant that

> *For the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual (Benjamin: 1935, 1992, 218).*

What had been forfeited in this process, were the 'aura' and the authority of the object, scarred, yet also embellished with the patina of time and prismatic with the marks of human endeavour. It was the aura that contained within it the value of cultural heritage and tradition. Even though loss of the aura for Benjamin meant the loss of the original, the transformation or liberation of the art object to the ordinary represented a gain. For Benjamin, what had then replaced the original was the illusion of the moving image and duplication of the photograph. For post-modern society, we are concerned with the digital image, which, in the same way that the mechanically reproduced object is accessible to others outside of the traditional 'art elite', the ubiquitously disseminated digital image may be celebrated as a *liberating phenomenon* even though what Benjamin referred to as the ethereal aura that has clearly been forfeited (Hazan: 2001).

Photography long left behind the notion of the photograph as historical document, and through aesthetic appreciation, the photograph has come to represent a

theoretical object, attaining a status of its own as an autonomous art form. The ontological evolution took almost a century and we now recognize the capacity of the photographic image to stir emotions and cause wonder. Roland Barthes suggested that photographs contain 'aura' [6] the aura of the lost in *me* and of lost memories much in the same way that Proust's textual reminiscences of the Madeline pastry [7] and the potency of it's wafting odour served to evoke buried memory. In *Camera Lucida,* Barthes distinguishes the "*punctum*" as that accident of photographic detail that pricked him, bruised him and was so evocative to him that it induced an almost transcendental experience, conjuring up poignant, lost memories of his mother.

> My mother was five at the time (1898), her brother seven. He was leaning against the bridge railing, along which he had extended one arm; she, shorter than he, was standing a little back, facing the camera; you could tell that the photographer had said, "Step forward a little so we can see you"; she was holding one finger in the other hand as children often do, in an awkward gesture. The brother and sister, united, as I knew by the discord of their parents, who were soon to divorce, had posed, side by side, alone, under the palms of the Winter Garden...I studied the little girl and at last rediscovered my mother (Barthes, 1981: 68/9).

The potency of the Winter Garden Photograph, for Barthes, lay in its ability to mediate the palpable essence of his mother, telescoped both distance and time across not only across Barthes' own lifetime but also across his mother's lifetime. To return to Benjamin's' essay and the compelling experience of watching a film, he comments…

> Magician and surgeon compare to painter and cameraman. The painter maintains in his work a natural distance from reality, the cameraman penetrates deeply into its web. There is a tremendous difference between the pictures they obtain. That of the painter is a total one, that of the cameraman consists of multiple fragments which are assembled under a new law. Thus, for contemporary man the representation of reality by the film is incomparably more significant than that of the painter, since it offers, precisely because of the thoroughgoing permeation of reality with mechanical equipment, an aspect of reality which is free of all equipment. And that is what one is entitled to ask from a work of art.

The inclusion of video art and digitally-born art in the gallery (as opposed to the digital documentation of the material collections) may be perceived by some as a challenge to the traditional mandate of the institution of the museum, to collect and exhibit singular and valuable material objects for their audiences. But could the new, ontological space that the digitally-born art pervades, once delineated by the framing device of the gallery and enhanced by ambiance of the museum be just as easily perceived as singular or as valuable when framed in the gallery as art or artifact? Could the *reality* of the digital image also be incomparably more significant than that of the painting as Benjamin noted with film, as it permeates reality with electronic equipment and in some form challenges the

monopoly of the material artifact through close ups and juxtaposition of new combinations? As Benjamin noted, *enlargement or slow motion, can capture images, which escape natural vision.* Could the singularity and emotive poignancy imbued in the *un-natural* vision of digitally-born art be a way of recapturing some of the lost aura, so infusing the digitally born artifact with its own, and no less compelling virtual aura?

> The equipment-free aspect of reality here has become the height of artifice; the sight of immediate reality has become an orchid in the land of technology (Benjamin, 1936, 1997).

The museum is traditionally perceived as a space of cultural integrity, set aside from daily life in an isolated bubble, far from the artifice of the media-saturated society.

Plate 1: The real thing, photo of poster in Green Park underground station, London, © Hazan, 2002

While the museum entices its audiences with alluring promises of *the real thing*, its sum parts are more than simply the encounter with the original object, the dissemination of knowledge or even constructivist the educational scenario. Sometimes the museum visit is simply about the social benefit of identifying with, or visiting inside a culturally robust institution as Flora Kaplan reminds us…

Elites as well as competing mobile groups, vying for power, have always used objects, collections, and public displays as a means of differentiating themselves, and legitimating themselves in a social hierarchy. Museums offer the opportunity

to do just that – and exhibitions constitute a major method (Kaplan, 1995: 39).

At the same time that audiences avail themselves of the prestige and power drawn from the physical museum, they are also appropriating museum quality intellectual assets in electronic form from spaces other than the traditional museum, such as on television and over the Internet. When visitors physically come into the bricks and mortar museum, the strength of culturally robust objects, lie in their power to encapsulate cultural discourses and serve as referents to historical processes, yet, as potent as this might be, the museum experience's sum parts is more than simply the encounter with the auratic object. Museums are also about the dissemination of knowledge and the active process of the identification with narratives, other cultures and other histories, all articulated in the constructivist educational scenario [8]. Now audiences are appropriating museum-like collections and museum-like educational encounters in electronic form through spaces other than the traditional museum such as on television and over the Internet. The traditional gallery talk, for example, can easily be replicated through a television program or online presentation. Exploring what can be defined as the museum experience and mapping how museum collections and experiences have made their screen debuts it is interesting to note which have failed in their bid to extend the museum beyond the museum walls and which have succeed in their celebration of a *liberating phenomenon.* This paper will turn to a number of examples of electronic museum web sites in order to explore the new realities of museum dissemination in a bid to illustrate the emerging phenomena of the virtual aura.

The archived collection

Much effort has been invested by museums across the world to digitalise assets and to showcase collections from archived databases on their web sites. This is a logical outcome from the collections management databases that have been development as curatorial management tools across the institution of the museum. With the addition of new interfaces developed for the information kiosk or study room in the museum, these databases could be easily re-purposed for public access either in the museum or beyond the museum walls. Many spectacular interfaces have been especially designed for public interface, such as the *Turning the Pages* [9] project at the British Museum. Visitors are welcomed to virtually "turn" the pages of manuscripts through touch-screens where they can zoom in on one of the convincingly presented electronic manuscripts, the Lindisfarne Gospels, the Diamond Sutra, the Sforza Hours, the Leonardo Notebook, the Golden Haggadah, the Luttrell Psalter, Blackwell's Herbal, the Sherborne Missal and Sultan Baybars' Qur'an. The online version of the last two is also available on the British museum web site. *Turning the Pages* facilitates a new different kind of museum experiences, which not only preserves the original from unwanted handling but also grants the visitor new kinds of meaningful access not previously possible.

Suzan Hazan
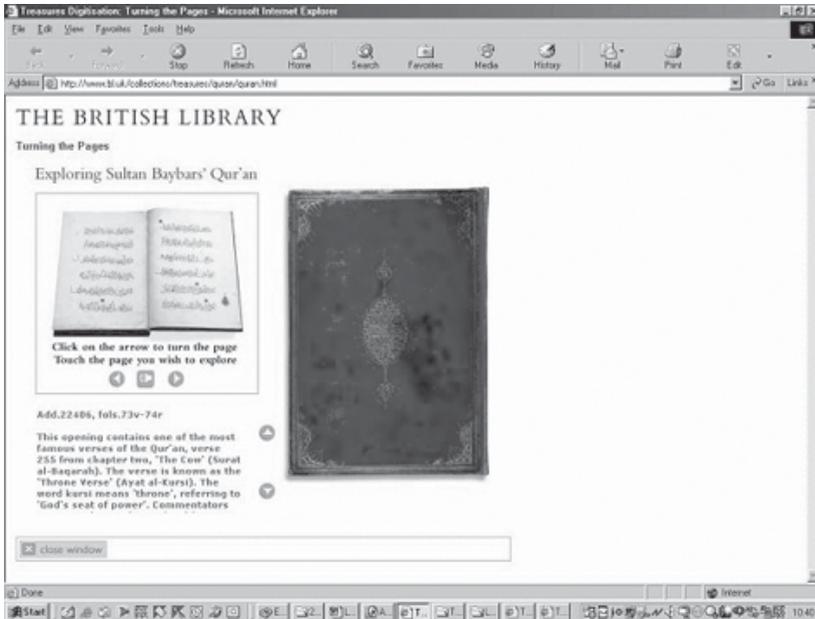
Plate 2: Screenshot of 'Turning the Pages', British Library web site

A critical mass of searchable objects for the public is also available on online collections such as the *Compass* project at the British Museum, and the *Thinker ImageB*ase. [10] from the collections of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (the de Young Museum and the Legion of Honor), USA. Both institutional websites translates the traditional museum metaphor into the digital, through a comprehensive showcase of functionalities in electronic form, highlighting the dynamic of museum activities: visitor information, membership, education experiences and online shopping at the museum store. At the same time, the sites offer the visitor or surfer access to a critical mass of the digital holdings of the real museums allowing for browsing and the selection of digital objects over a self-defined path through the collections. While facilitating active construction of new connections and combinations, the *Thinker ImageB*ase also grants visitors an opportunity to produce their own texts, a self-curated exhibition drawn from the vast holdings of the museums using the especially designed, online interface.

While the de Young Museum is closed to the public until spring, 2005, the database provides authoritative background material both on the exhibitions on display as well as the collections behind the scenes. According to the web site, the collections belong to the public and because the museum is able to show less than 5% of the collections in the galleries at any given time, the institution feel a special responsibility to make them accessible in other ways. The *Thinker ImageB*ase is a fully keyword searchable database, containing 110,000 images from the collections and is promoted as an expression of the museum's mission to provide

meaningful public access to the collections behaving more like a resource and less like a repository. The online collection offers a compelling educational experience, and recalls Andre Malraux's message of universality in his "*Museum Without Walls.*" Just as Malraux predicted and applauded the globalisation process that was yet to evolve, both he and Walter Benjamin would undoubtedly have celebrated the unrestricted distribution of art resources that are now freely bestowed upon remote visitors by such museums over the Internet.

While the potential educational value of such a site is commendable, in that it effectively replaces the traditional learning tool of slides or exhibition catalogue through network distribution, I would question the notion of 'meaningful access.' Not all media make their debuts online equally well. While it is difficult to distinguish a digitally rendered film from its analogue counterpart, or is a photograph in its electronic manifestation ontologically separable from its paper cousin, other media do not translate quite so well. Museums limit their online images to low resolution of their collections quite correctly due to copyright property issues yet the reduction of the electronic representation, of a scanned photograph representation of, say a Leonardo Da Vinci *Last Supper* on the wall of the refectory of the Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan, Italy, or *Marsyas*, Anish Kapoor's sculpture in the Tate's Turbine Hall, embedded in a web page and seen perhaps from one angle does little service to the auratic original object. At the same time, web authors invest considerable time and energy in making images speedily accessible through limiting to low resolution and cropping. It is precisely this immediacy of access that makes the process so alarmingly effortless. The speed factor, the 'click to go' phenomenon, may actually act as a disservice to the collections and act as the antithesis of the enchantment of technology, that in fact contributes to the disembedding of cultural systems.

The digitally- born museum

A museum that does not exist in objective reality and is exclusively constructed electronically on the World Wide Web is the **MUVA, El Pais Virtual Museum of Art** [11]. This museum is a virtual fabrication, and maintains only a tenuous connection to reality. MUVA utilizes a 3D technique, Web2mil, to conjure up a magic environment. Alicia Haber, the Director of the museum, welcomes visitors to the museum, which specializes in contemporary Uraguayan and Latin American art, and hosts extensive collections of paintings by leading Uraguayan artists. Four architects, Jaime Lores, Raul Nazur, Daniel Colominas and Marcelo Mezzottoni were commissioned to prepare the plans for the building, on Avenida 18 de Julio, the main artery of Uruguay's capital, Montevideo. They created a fine arts museum, consisting of galleries for permanent and temporary exhibitions, as well as spaces for informal shows, sculpture garden, restoration workshops, and administrative service areas. The building has five main floors where galleries are open to the public, twenty-four hours a day... virtually that is! Some sixteen graphic and web-designers, programmers, photographers and system managers modeled textures of the walls, stairways, windows, sidewalks, roofs and elevator, pixel by pixel, to provide a sense of 'reality' for the visitors. Intuitive navigation

tools, allowing for fluid exploration around the galleries and collections, were studiously hung and discretely lit. Through embedded 'hot-spots', in the paintings, click-able links refer to in-depth studies of the artist's work, biographies and further information on the thematic presentation of the exhibition.
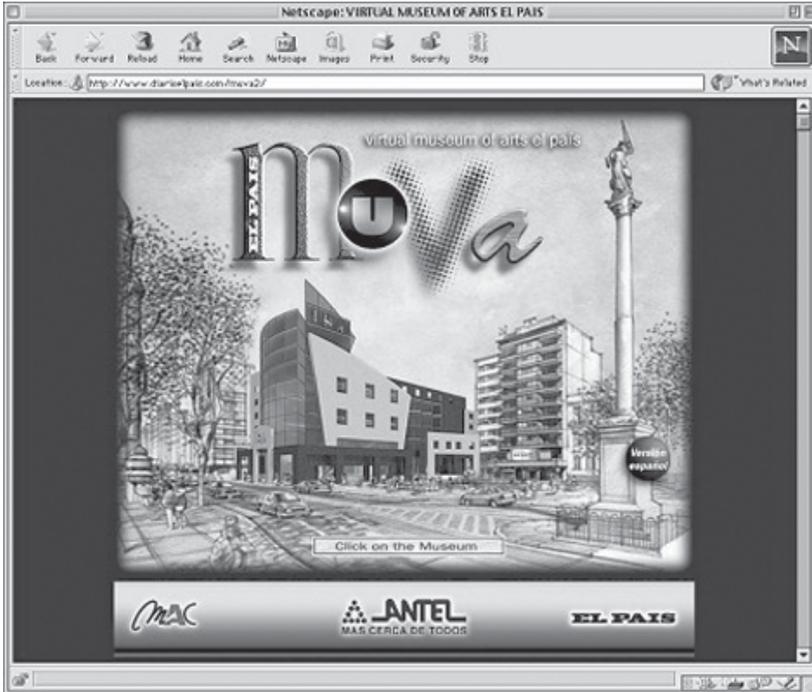
Plate 3

In order to construct the same museum in concrete, steel and glass, it would have cost over 100 million dollars, a prohibitive sum for the Uruguayan reality. Due to the efforts of this highly motivated and imaginative team, Uruguay's artists can now show their works collectively, substituting that impossible museum with their own virtual museum. This echoes Gell's comment that the essential alchemy of art is to make what is not out of what is, and to make what is out of what is not. In this case one is not describing an art object, but an entire museum. But we might also be reminded of Lash, Urry and Giddens' dubious implications for society and discern that the virtual metaphor of a museum might be a reflection of the emptying out of subject and object. Even so, while we do recognize a substantial loss, we might also side with Benjamin that, in this loss, there is also a welcome gain. With the liberation of the original object and its distribution over the Internet, this opens up, for the first time, the availability of Uruguayan art for remote visitors and the opportunity for these artists to reach a broader audience.

Virtual reality art, cyborg sculptures and other technological creations

Since the Duchamp benchmark, artworks have slipped out of the painterly horizon or sculptured form and there probably isn't a substance on the planet, animal, mineral, or vegetable, legal or illegal that hasn't been incorporated into a contemporary art exhibit at one time or another. On January 1st, 2001 **SFMOMA, The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art launched 010101:ART.IN.Technological.Times**, [12] with the gallery component that opened on March 3, which according to their web promotion was to be one of the most ambitious exhibitions in its history, a show filled with animated "paintings," virtual reality art, cyborg sculptures and other technological creations. From the moment it opened, one minute after midnight on the first day of the new millennium it proved to be a popular show, with audiences forming long lines at the front doors. In spite of the fact that some of the interactives, interacted less satisfyingly than the producers had intended, most visitors seemed to find the show novel and engaging, with some even going as far to say that it was an exhilarating experience (see *Medium Isn't the Message; Art Is* by Jason Spingarn-Koff) [13].

Telematic Connections: The Virtual Embrace*, [14]** curated by Steve Dietz, of the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis and curator of *Beyond Interface* and *Shock of the View* produced a travelling show of some 40 works by 25 artists that opened on its first leg of the tour at the San Francisco Art Institute on February 7 in the same year. "*About half the works are world premieres*", said Dietz, "*and many of the others are classics which are rarely seen*". The web-site reflects not only the real and the hybrid elements of the gallery space, but also places the cornucopia of net works of the emerging net art medium into historical context. As the new millennium gather speed, ***BitStreams was unveiled in March in New York at the Whitney Museum of American Art, including some 30 sculptors, painters and video artists, as well as 15 to 20 sound artists exhibited in especially designed sound stations. This type of project was not new to the Whitney who in 1994, was the first major institution to collect a work of Net art, with Douglas Davis' *The World's First Collaborative Sentence* [15] and is an institution that has showcased similar projects over manyyears.

Just as a fish cannot live out of water, so digitally born art/web projects are not able to breath outside of their natural medium, the World Wide Web. When a project is dependent on a series of networked computers for its intrinsic content as *The World's First Collaborative Sentence was, (*with hundreds of active users across the net each making their own contribution to the sentence), this creates more demand, not only on the curatorial staff, the exhibition development team but also challenges the very institutionalism of the institution itself.

Suzan Hazan
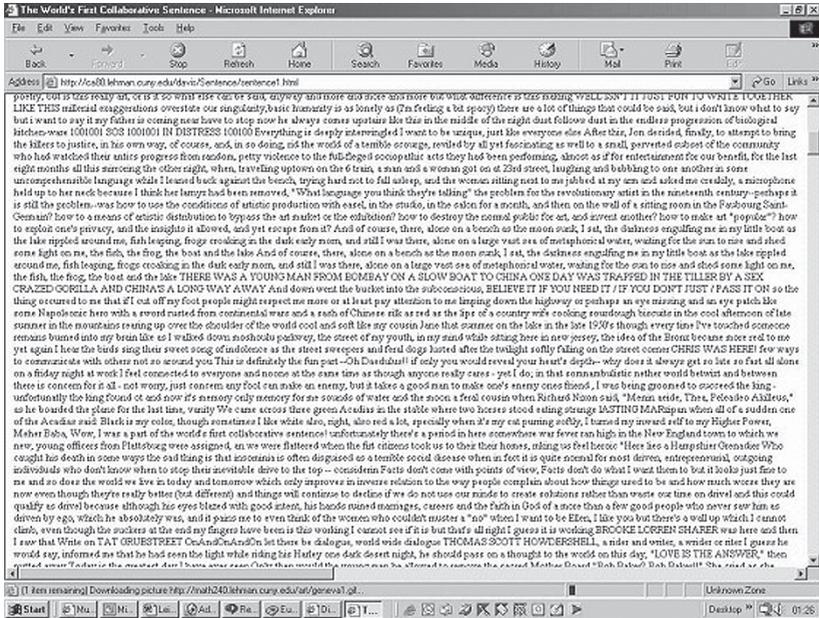
Plate 4: Screenshot of Douglas Davis' *The World's First Collaborative Sentence*

If visitors could just as easily access some of the components of the hybrid gallery experience, such as the web projects from their own homes or office computers, why would they even need to come into the museum at all? The cusp of the new millennium ushered in the institutionalising of what was once perceived as Alternative Museum projects [16], brazenly charging through the front doors of leading institutions around the world and drawing into them hundreds of visitors in their wake. Enticed by the dazzle of the medias' hype of the new, and specifically to a new medium and presumably new kind of art experience, some of the visitors to these blockbusters perhaps had never come to a museum before. Clearly other block busters have marked this phenomenon, often when there is an impressionist ring to the title or a titillating theme such as Body Worlds exhibited in Berlin and London in 2002 [17] but also surprisingly with such shows as the Art of the Motorcycle, exhibited at the Guggenheim in 1998 [18].

There have been many interesting developments at the Tate web site recently. "*Uncomfortable Proximity*" one of the first net projects this institution hosted and served to shake up the very institutional nature of the Tate itself. Where the 'real' Tate provided floor plans for traditional and contemporary collections, the **Tate Mongrel Project**, created by Harwood, took visitors under the floor of the Tate below the floorboards.

> The Tate's scrapbook of British pictorial history has many missing pages, either torn out through revision or self-censored before the first sketch. Those that did make it created the cultural cosmetics of peoples profiting from slavery, migrant labour, colonisation and transportation. Clearly the images in the historic collection and the image of the Tate itself are pregnant with the past's cosmetic cultural surgery made ready for the shopping lists of the future (**Uncomfortable Proximity, 2000***).*

"*Uncomfortable Proximity*" was a project created by Harwood, a member of the Mongrel collective with critical texts by Mathew Fuller, all fully commissioned by the Tate. The texts and images introduced visitors to the precarious foundations of the Tate galleries, the Millbank penitentiary, the filth of the Thames and the hidden history of the slave trade. The accrual of wealth through the slave trade, had implications for generations of British aristocracy that inevitably translated into the currency of art, some of which found its way into the Tate collections. The web site was accessed via the main Tate site, (no longer linked) where it kind of sneaked up on the surfer with what appeared to be a clone of the specific page you intended to visit on the Tate web site. The extra windows need no invitation. They unscrupulously appear on the browser in the background as you clicked your way through the site, and took you into the underbelly of Britain's national heritage and the decaying matter of the 20th century. This challenge to the very institution that was partner to the project and acted as host to the scathing message wais remarkable in itself. However, what this project illustrated was not simply the dubious underbelly of the museum but also the very foundations of the Tate *cathedral*, the circulatory system of art in society, and specifically the sacredness of the British art system.   The use of this media is resourceful, perniciously using the electronic stage to challenge all that is embedded in the mythological nature of the circulatory art system, and symbiotically located inside of the very fabric of its embodiment, the official web site.

Digitally-born art projects, exhibited as hybrid experiences, (the material artefact integrated into the electronic counterpart) have now become fairly mainstream in international art museums, as have their counterpart on the institutional website. Sometimes the website is the only space available to the institution to exhibited collections. At the time of writing this paper (Autumn 2002) the Tate was promoting its new exhibition space, a surprisingly ingenious location, not only for collections, but also for curators and display.

> "In order to fulfil their mission to extend access to British and International modern and contemporary art, the Tate Trustees have been considering for some time how they could find new dimensions to Tate's work. They have therefore determined that the next Tate site should be in space. At this stage a number of practical aspects of the project are being tested and an early pre-opening programme is being taken forward. This will clearly continue the Tate tradition of innovation and exploration, and provide a radical new location for the display of the Collection and for educational projects.

We are very pleased to announce the launch online of our Tate in Space programme." [19].

Conclusion

Through the examples of different kinds of websites hosted by museums it is interesting to see how new media is impacting the institution of the museum and how the different kinds of museum experiences have made their stage debuts. This has implications for how new technologies are being taken up by the museum, already with fervor all across the world, both within the galleries and beyond the museum walls. It is important to look at these experiences critically in order to ascertain whether new media architectures afford meaningful opportunities to enhance and interpret the material collections for the visitors or actively contribute to engaging experiences in new ways that successfully extend the museum mandate. Alternately, museum websites and electronic architectures will only serve to diminish the encounter with the auratic in the museum causing a disembedding of the culturally systems imbued within the original object.

This paper has attempted to map some of the ways that new media interventions have provided new and promising interpretations of the museum model through the electronic surrogate and digitally born, which may in Benjamin's terms, celebrate the liberating nature of electronically reproduced artefact while suggesting new cultural options, such as the virtual aura imbued in newly emerging artistic practice.

Notes

1. http://www.icom.org/statutes.html

2. Electronic correspondence, Mon, 10 Sep 2001.
Sender: Museum TLD News and Announcements
<MUSEDOMA NEWS@MUSEUM.ORG>
From: Cary Karp <ck@nrm.se>
Subject: ICANN Board takes final action on .museum

3. The full text of this agreement is available at <http://www.icann.org/tlds/>

4. <http://musedoma.org/general_principles.html>

5. NET>COM.ORG.MUSEUM COMMUNITY REPORT 2001 - In 1998, NINCH invited leaders in the field to submit   statements on the best achievements to date in arts and humanities computing in order to develop an argument to include humanities computing in significant Federal funding for information technology research.

<http://www.ninch.org/programs/report/hazen.html>

6. Camera Lucinda: Reflections on Photography, 1981

7. Remembrance of Things Past, Marcel Proust, 1922

8. Hein, George, E., 1998, Learning in the Museum, Routledge

9. <http://www.bl.uk/collections/treasures/about.html>

10. <http://www.thinker.org/f>

11. <http://www3.diarioelpais.com/muva2/>

12. <http://010101.sfmoma.org/>

13. <http://www.wired.com/>.

14. <http://telematic.walkerart.org/>

15. <http://ca80.lehman.cuny.edu/davis/Sentence/sentence1.html>

16. <http://www.alternativemuseum.org/>

17. The Body Worlds exhibition was been seen by over eight million people in Japan, Germany, Austria and Belgium and London <http://www.guardian.co.uk> Guardian Unlimited © Guardian Newspapers Limited 2002

18. < http://www.guggenheim.org/exhibitions/past_exhibitions/>

19. <http://www.tate.org.uk>

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Malraux, A. Museum Without Walls

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Hazan has published several publications in new media in education, art, and museums and has presented at numerous international conferences. Since 1999 she has sat on the program committees of both ICHIM and Museum and the Web conferences and in 2001 was keynote speaker at the Museum and the Web conference. She is currently guest lecturer at the Computing Department, teaching the module Web Design for the Cultural Sector. The course emphasizes the correlation between cultural theory and contemporary practice.

Constructing local identity through archaeological finds: the case of Knossos (Crete, Greece)

Esther Solomon

'Museums, those symbols of elitism and staid immobility, are proliferating at a remarkable rate: from new national capitals to Melanesian villages, from abandoned coal pits in Britain, to ethnic neighborhoods in global cities. Local/global contact zones, sites of identity-making and transculturation, of containment and excess, these institutions epitomize the ambiguous future of "cultural" difference'. (Clifford 1997, p. 219)

The recognition of the importance of objects in everyday life and the network of social relations in general, has led not only to the development of different approaches to objects through various theoretical perspectives, but also to the acknowledgment that things like persons, have what Appadurai calls a "social life" (1986). The multiple meanings of things, both past and present, are now studied as part of the objects' "cultural biographies" (Kopytoff 1986, Hoskins 1998, Mavrayianni 1999, Gosden and Marshall 1999). In them, material culture becomes the focus of various experiences, narratives and often the cause of human agency and social action (Miller and Tilley 1996, Gell 1998), during its production, consumption and exchange.

Museums and exhibitions -like other representations of the past which are not verbal and logocentric (see Bloch 1998, Herzfeld 1998: passim) - are also entangled in the adventures of identity, forming a tangible aspect of human historicity. Being "pieces of contemporary material culture themselves" (Tilley 2001: 258), museum collections follow their own "politics of value [which] is in many contexts a politics of knowledge" (Appadurai 1986: 6),[1] and determine the cultural construction of history and memory.

This paper is concerned with those remains of the past which people in the Greek island of Crete (**Plate 1**) decide to preserve for posterity under the heading of 'Minoan cultural heritage', a term which refers to the Cretan Bronze Age antiquities. In this attempt, the site of Knossos (**Plate 2**) and the Archaeological Museum of the city of Heraklion (**Plate 3**), which houses finds of Knossos and numerous other sites, represent the main reference points in any perception of the Minoan civilisation.


 Plate 1: Map of Crete.

Plate 2: Panoramic view of Knossos. (From A. Vassilakis. *Knossos. Mythology-History. Guide to the Archaeological Site.* Athens: Adam Editions: 12. Photo by Y. Yiannelos/ C. Adam).

Plate 3: People queuing in front of the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion. (Photo by N.Kriti: 21/5/2001).

Plate 4: Sir Arthur Evans holding a vase found at Knossos. (Ashmolean Museum Archive, Oxford)

The ruins of Knossos have their own *social life*: they were produced four to five thousand years ago and experienced almost until the end of Bronze Age; they reemerged in 1900 after extended archaeological research undertaken by Sir A. Evans (Plate 4), the risky gentleman, traveler in the Balkans and later Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum.

To date, Knossos constitutes the main attraction for Greek and foreign tourists in Crete, an island known and promoted for its variety of landscapes, historical sites, its tourist resorts and its distinctiveness in terms of local traditions, dialect, food and people's strong sense for place. Knossos is the second most-visited archaeological site in Greece after the Acropolis of Athens and one of the most frequented in Europe (Papadopoulos 1997). Nevertheless, its "exhibitionary complex" (Bennett 1988) causes effects and sometimes the "agency" of several other groups who do not visit the site: Cretans who live in the island or outside it, people engaged in tourism-related activities, people involved in the arts and literature (novelists, poets, painters), those concerned with design, e.g. architects, jewelers, souvenir makers, etc. Local, national, transnational and possibly class and gender elements cut across all these groups.

Moreover, Minoan objects are in continuous motion. They travel physically in exhibitions; as ideas and images in books, in postcards, in brochures, in advertisements, in TV programmes, in cartoons on the local press of Crete, in people's thoughts, photographs and memories of Crete. In other words, the social life of Minoan material culture can be traced through the biographical possibilities of the above contexts and their 'embodiment' in all practices related to cultural heritage, i.e. "viewing, traveling, experiencing and learning" (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1999: 406).

Assuming, therefore, that not only do people give meaning to museums but also a museum can make some aspects of life (more) meaningful, I shall draw on current anthropological studies as well as on my field survey in Crete[2] in order to explore the position of Knossos in the way local people (related directly and indirectly to the site) make sense of themselves in their everyday life.

The background: Sir Arthur Evans and the making of a long lost Cretan paradise

Any account of the ways Knossos has been conceptualised, should be started with Evans's work, as long as the unearth of the site and the flourishing of Minoan studies are owed to a great extent to his romantic quest. It was mainly his assumptions, presented in his monumental work *The Palace of Minos* (1921-1935), that formed archaeologists' and people's beliefs about Knossos and Minoan Crete in general.

A characteristic feature of the whole Minoan civilisation is its monumental structures, known as "palaces". Following other researchers of his times and probably projecting his Edwardian background, Evans saw in the architectural complex of Knossos the base of a king to whom he gave the name of legendary Minos (see Mc Neal 1974, MacEnroe 1994, Zois 1996 and MacGillivray 2000). The myths mentioned in the Homeric poems were given historic credibility and Evans's imaginative visions led him to give similarly evocative names to the palace rooms (Farnoux 1996: 100, Brown 1986: 34-35): the "Ariadne's Bath", the "Throne Room", "the Grand Staircase" (recalling the name of a Victorian staircase at Windsor Castle, Hitchcock 1999), etc. The whole civilization of Bronze Age Crete was named *Minoan* after King Minos and the Bronze Age inhabitants of Crete were called *the Minoans* (see Cadogan 2002, Momigliano 2002). Having confirmed the age of the Cretan finds, Evans put forward the theory of "Panminoism" (Sakellarakis 1998: 198) according to which Minoan Crete was the unquestionable force of those years and the source of all great achievements. By associating the ruins with the Labyrinth and the finds with a king and a queen, he created a strong impression to people both on the island and abroad (Farnoux 1996, Brown 1986).

Minoan Knossos was portrayed by Evans and many of his successors (see Bintliff 1984) as a peaceful society ruled by broad-minded and generous kings, always in harmony with nature (**Plate 5**). Archaeological accounts still stress Minoan society's love for flowers, animals, feasts, sports and colours, the high position of women and the Cretan domination in the Mediterranean. Moreover, Knossos is the only site in Greece where extensive and powerful reconstruction work (**Plate 6**) has been carried out, also by Evans, while the display of Minoan exhibits at the Heraklion Museum is largely based on the auratic character of its objects, presented in a strongly linear typological and chronological classification, explicit of tendencies in Greek museology (Solomon 1999). The uniformity of the display portrays a culture whose values seem timeless, therefore more easily manipulated by powerful gazes, while less exposed to risks of contest. The prehistoric landscape and people's engagement with it seem to be of no interest and Knossos is presented as the outcome of an unproblematic social order. Power relations are not addressed in the display, whose epistemology results extremely weak.
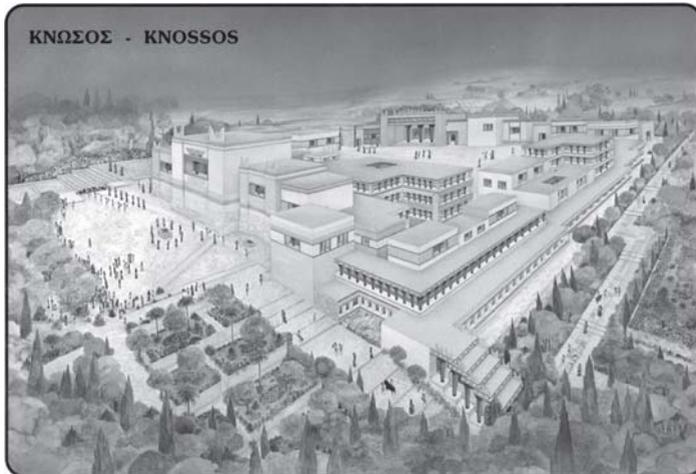
Plate 5: Graphic reproduction of the palace of Knossos, widely circulated in guides, postcards, posters etc. The image includes some dancers in front of the palace and implies the harmonious relationship between people and rulers in Minoan times (see Klynne 1998: 217). Hanging gardens were added without the approval of the consultant archaeologists (ibid. 218), possibly as a projection of past and present-day palaces which are always surrounded by beautifully arranged gardens. (Published by Mathioulakis editions, Athens).
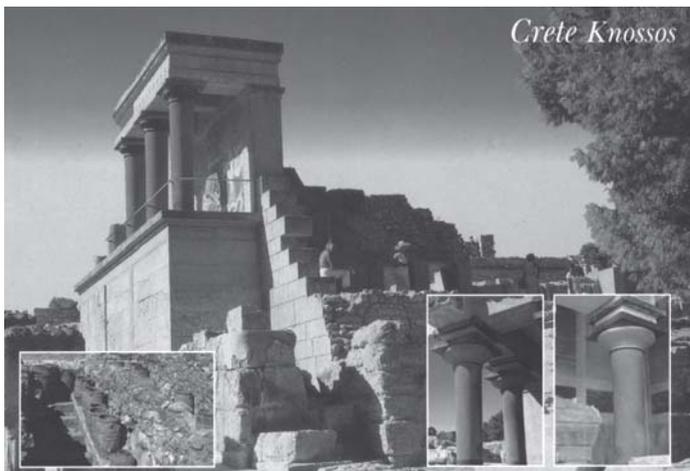
Plate 6: The red columns of Knossos, a characteristic part of Evans's reconstruction work.

Within this context, let us now examine how museum visiting and, more importantly, images of and ideas about Minoan museum exhibits impact on the construction of local identity.

Historical consciousness and the 'intrinsic' value of Minoan objects

'Knowledge about a place is intertwined with the place of knowledge' (Leontis 1995:1 8)

With the risk of oversimplification, it can be argued that Knossos is better understood as part of a Durkheimian classificatory system which divides things into sacred and profane (cf. Woodward 1997: 29), allowing social relations to be produced and reproduced. This seems to be inevitable in a country like Greece, whose ancient history has been "appropriated" by the West and served as the ideological apparatus of the Modern Greek state. As a crucial part of the present, antiquity is recalled in everyday discourses and offers the basis for both the differentiation of the Greeks from "the developed others" (see Just 1989, 1995) and, at the same time, their 'rapprochement' with them.

Yet Knossos, although is not perceived as a sacred archaeological site in the way that Greeks are symbolically identified with the Acropolis (Yalouri 2001, Philippides 1996), remains outside the sphere of the profane. The age of the ruins seems to assign unquestionable importance to them. Knossos is a *topos* (see Leontis 1995) which represents a very complex and old phase of the past (Cretan, and by implication, national), older than the, much admired, classical monuments. It also expresses aesthetic ideals that bring the site closer to the modernist movements of the 20th

Plate 7: Programme front cover of a show given in San Jose, California, by the *Lyceum of Greek Women* of Heraklion, a female organisation, which promotes local culture. The show was titled "4.000 Years of Crete", and included a show called "Minoan Ritual", inspired by elements of the Minoan material culture.

century. It objectifies the powerful myth of King Minos and the escape from the labyrinth, whose impact is strengthened by Evans's restorations.

Images of the Minoan past 'produce' place and space: they are both constitutive

of and constituted by people related to Crete in one way or another. Knossos is part of this differential 'belongingness' to Crete. Copies of Minoan objects are offered as gifts, their images can be found in everyday life objects -not necessarily intended for tourists, aesthetic and moral values associated to Minoan civilization are projected to the present and identified with recent Cretan traditions (**Plate. 7**).

It should be noted that Knossos is located in a landscape thought as quintessential Cretan. The mountains, the sea, the vine and olive fields constitute the territorial imagery of an almost mythical Cretan past. The landscape of the Knossian ruins itself with its endless rooms and reconstructed red columns is a point of reference in almost all representations of Crete. The conspicuous emphasis of Minoan art on naturalistic themes also seems to serve as a lens for experiencing and appreciating the whole place, in an apparent timeless dimension. Although this landscape has only been formed during the last one hundred years, it acquired a special significance in people's minds and lives because it connects the present to the past and the future in one and the same spatio-temporal trajectory (cf. Lowenthal cited in Graham et al. 2000: 18, Edwards 1998: 163). In other words, it is an *emblematic landscape* (Graham et al. ibid.) playing a special role in any attempted Cretan topology.

Knossos in social contexts:

I. Modernity and tradition

'More than a specific set of practices, modernity is a story that people tell themselves in relation to Others' (Rofel 1992 [quoted in Sutton 1998: 35])

Being such an old example of urban society, with obviously elaborate social and economic functions, Knossos is usually cited as a point of departure for modern life: tourist guides, brochures, Cretan migrant associations etc. proudly refer to the "oldest road, city and script in Europe" (**Plate 8**) while the last blockbuster exhibition on Minoan Crete at the Museum of Karlsruhe was titled: "*In the Labyrinth of Minos. The first high Culture in Europe"*, making official and popular representations of the past inextricably linked (**Plate 9**). In this very explicit way, Knossos stands for many values of modernity and 'Europeaness' such as aesthetic sophistication, complex and efficient social organization etc. In other words, it connects Crete with the rest of the modern, the 'developed' world.

This 'modern' aspect of Minoan culture, however, is neither homogeneous, nor static. The Minoan heritage may be used, especially when the notion of (recent) tradition is questioned, in order to differentiate Crete from all concepts of Western progress. Then Knossos, instead of modern, turns into deeply 'traditional', sometimes in "a convenient telescoping of the 'traditional' with the 'archaeological'" (Herzfeld 1991: 257).[3]

Esther Solomon
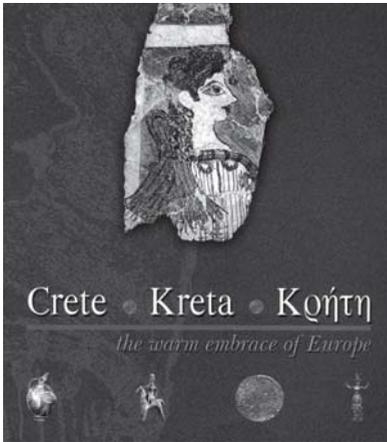
Plate 8: "Crete: the warm embrace of Europe". A famous Minoan fresco called the "Parisian" and other archaeological finds connote the cultural links with European modernity and taste. From a brochure. (Published by the Prefecture of Heraklion and the Commission of Tourism Promotion)

This is the case of some Cretan activities, such as the oil and wine production, the apiculture and the collection of aromatic herbs, which, as evidence indicates, were also practiced in Minoan times. The use of Minoan examples confers authority (**Plate 10**), and, to use Bourdieu's terms (1977: 171-183), renders the economic and symbolic capitals of the island more significant while, it seems impossible to separate them from the academic knowledge on the subject. For example, **Plate 11** shows two "Cretan girls with local dresses" (Kofou 1989: 7) eating grapes in a field in front of the ruins of Knossos. As the guide, in which the picture is included, informs us (ibid: 4) "almost all Cretans, especially those living in small towns and villages, maintain their traditional customs and habits". The book, written by archaeologists and specialists (namely those who usually feel contempt for 'inauthentic' cultural evidence), expresses the perception of Knossos between modernity and tradition. This dualism is often masked under the notion of continuity and has prevailed in Greece in the last two centuries (see Just 1989).

Plate 9: Red columns and Minoan religious symbols (a bull, a double axe and the sacred horns) covering the entrance of the Museum of Baden in Karlsruhe during the exhibition on Minoan Crete (January-April 2001. Photo by the author)
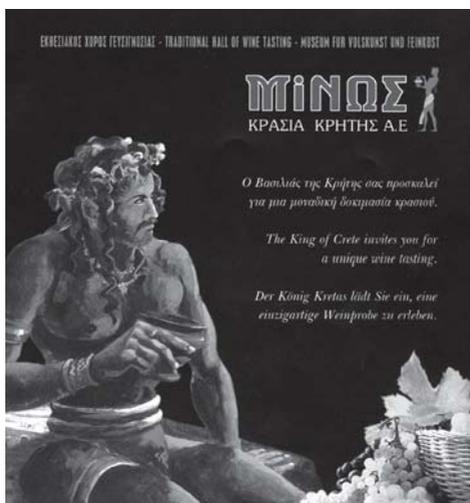
Plate 10: From the brochure of a hall of wine tasting outside Heraklion. Frescos from Knossos, images from the Minoan wine press of Vathypetron as well as objects housed at the Heraklion museum are used for commercial purposes.

Plate 11: Cretan girls in local dresses. At the back Evan's restored walls of Knossos. (From A. Kofou 1989. *Crete. All Museums and Archaeological Sites.* Athens: Ekdotiki Athinon: 6).

Thus it can be argued that Herzfeld's concept of disemia (1987, 1992, 1997), i.e. "the architectural difference between what we think we are and what we project publicly", can operate in relation to the same heritage, by the people of the same place. Different contexts, interests and pursuits stress the apparently contradictory aspects of this structural dilemma.

II. Identification: The use of values reflected on ancient remains

More than other places in Greece, Crete is associated with stereotypes. Undoubtedly, some of them are empowered when intermingled with ancient history. As Herzfeld reports (1997: 160-161), a socialist candidate at the municipal elections from Sfakia, a legendary lawless area of Western Crete, in his effort to discredit a conservative candidate, associated the Sfakians with the ancient warlike Dorians, and the people from Mount Ida (known stereotypically for animal theft, see Herzfeld 1985) with the Minoans. In this case, the fact that the Minoans were more ancient than the Dorians is not an asset (ibid.): it is the supposed effemination of the Minoans that counts in this discourse on masculinity and gender-based Cretan values of patrilinearity.

Power employs cultural characteristics in its game for establishment or resistance. The supposed development and cultural achievements of the 'Minoans' were used differently, when evidence of human sacrifices was found at Minoan sites by archaeologists at Knossos and the site of Archanes in 1980 and 1979 respectively. Popular reactions were strong: Rena Theologidou recorded them in a widely circulated Greek magazine, the *Tahidromos*: "Cannibals? Our ancestors? Impossible…." (cf. Farnoux 1996: 141). Killing or sacrificing people is deemed a characteristic of "uncivilised" societies. Cretans, or some of them, did not wish to project a cannibalistic or 'savage' image of the ancient inhabitants of their island. Unexpectedly, archaeologists found themselves trapped in a picture of Minoan society, largely created by the archaeological community.

III. Other power relations

The production and consumption of Knossos as a public space for people's "education and enjoyment", according to the famous ICOM definition,[4] involves management and decision-making. Thus, contrary to the neutral and inert images of the past often proposed by specialists, the Knossian landscape is also, to use Lefebvre's words, a "site and outcome of social, political and economic struggle" (cf. Graham et al.: 75). Who is benefiting and who is not? Who and for what reason has physical and intellectual access to the site? Knossos places several constraints on the organization of life outside its boundaries: Are all ruins important? Where does the palace of Minos end? The expansion of the city, mass-tourism and other everyday life activities alter or even destroy images of a past culture and its related 'archetypical' landscapes.

Knossos, as an emblem of Crete, makes people feel proud of it. Yet, at the same time, its use and its significance in terms of social understanding may vary enormously.

Ethnographic research traces the mechanism behind the appropriation of the island's archaeological past and its symbolic ownership, as the following case illustrates.

IV. Knossos between the local and the national

'To belong to a locality implies that you belong along with all kinds of other things such as houses, factories, services, and, pasts. Belonging entails a claim on, and a connection to, these things and, therefore, a say in any changes to them, especially changes engineered from the outside (by those who do not belong)' (Edwards 1998: 161)

In 1979, the decision of the Greek government to include Minoan artefacts in a touring exhibition at the Louvre in Paris and the Metropolitan Museum of New York, without all required guaranties for their objects' safety, caused strong protests in front of the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion (Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996: 125-127. Nearly 50.000 Cretans from all over the island, farmers, students and even priests, some of whom had never visited the museum, protested against the "up-rooting" of the Cretan antiquities (**Plate 12**). Oral poets composed mantinades, i.e. improvised verses, against the "sell-out of the Cretan soul".[5] Some of the people (archaeologists included) who spent day and night in front of the museum's gates in order to prevent the police forces from removing the antiquities, did not even accept the necessity to lend the exhibits to the foreign museums, in their words, "to export their cultural heritage".[6]

Plate 12: "The antiquities belong to us"(on the placard). From the protest against the "tearing away of the precious archaeological treasures". Local newspaper *Allagi***, 28-2-79: 1. (Photo by A. Koulatsoglou).**

This unusual protest forms an example of successful manipulation of the national rhetoric concerning the importance of the ancient past of the country. Elements

of it were particularly present in the words of students, schoolchildren and teachers when asked about the reason they protested.[7] The appeal of this popular reaction led to the exclusion of the Minoan artefacts from the above exhibitions, an event celebrated with traditional Cretan dances in a further confirmation of the perceived link between the archaeological practice and the local cultural traditions.

One among the various explanations given to this immense protest (see Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996: 126, also Doris 1981 and Ditsa 1979), was the political disappointment of the Cretans with the conservative government of that time (**Plate 13**). It was also stated that financial interests may have been involved as well, since tourism is largely based on visits to the Heraklion Museum. However, what the above example makes obvious is exactly the interrelation between symbolic and economic capital. It reveals the unexpected ways in which an important monument can cause social action, even against the formal bureaucracy and its policy. The island's museum heritage and Knossos in particular, became the tool for the writing of a Foucauldian *effective history* (1972), at the intersection between the local, the national and the transnational.

Plate 13: Cartoon from the Athenian newspaper *Eleftherotypia* (published on *Allagi*, 7/3/79: 1). A Cretan man in traditional costume refuses to give a Minoan vase to the Prime Minister K. Karamanlis for the exhibitions in Paris and the US. Dressed like an Arab, the prime-minister holds a petrol pipe (alluding to his efforts to resolve the economic problems of the country and guarantee its progress) and expresses his resentment towards the 'ungrateful' Cretans. (Cartoon by Ornerakis).

Conclusion

Nowadays, it is likely that a similar exhibition would not cause the same reactions. Not only because safety regulations have improved but also because exchange and movement of people, ideas and goods (cultural goods included) seem to be implied by the imperative rules of a globalised system. Knossos is gradually transformed into what Nora calls "a lieu de memoire", i.e. "an object containing representations of itself" (1996: 16).

Nora argues that this process of 'memorialisation' occurs due to the lack of major narratives in post-modernity, a lack that makes the monuments of the past (material and immaterial) close to and far away from us at the same time (cf. Benveniste 1999: 20). Minoan heritage often goes beyond narratives of the Greek nationalism. It is involved in the complex segmentation of identities of post-modernity which renders our "being in the world" more fragmentary, fluid and easily contested (Hastrup and Olwig 1997, Bender 1993, 1998). In other words, Knossos is one of these

 "…important prehistoric, geographical, and archaeological sites [which] must be considered *lieux de memoire* despite the absence of any intent to remember, because that absence is compensated for by the work of time and science and by man's dreams and memories…" (Nora 1996: 16).

The impact of Knossos on Cretan social life is not one of direct identification between a *them* (the Minoans) and an *us* (Cretans). The Minoan past is a resource of ideas, of images and cultural elements used in the present for various purposes. Despite the supposed Cretan localism, Knossos is not an easily defined entity and it is not confined in the surface of the archaeological site, the rooms of the museum and the pages of serious archaeological books. On the contrary, it transcends its fences and the museum walls and moves in other social contexts where it acquires new and interesting meanings within the endless semiosis of social relations. As is the case with all material culture, which functions as emblem and "solid" metaphor of identity (see Tilley 1999), interpretations of Minoan monuments and objects are used, accepted, rejected or, more often, negotiated by people in a variety of ways.

Notes

1. Appadurai (1986) deals mainly with the social life of commodities and the (political) links between their value and their (socially relevant) exchangeability. His approach, however, has influenced analyses of material culture at any phase and adventure of their life, not only "their commodity situation" (ibid: 13).

2. The fieldwork was conducted between 2001 and 2002 as part of my doctoral research. Some of the ideas developed here were presented at the last International Congress of Cretan Studies (Elounda, Crete, 1-6/10/2001).

3. Herzfeld's phrase refers to the arguments about the colours of the restored houses of the Cretan town of Rethymnon. The ethnographer reports (1991: 257) that during a conflict between the Greek Ministry of Culture and the inhabitants of the town regarding the preservation of the old houses (Venetian and Turkish), a housepainter justified the choice of russet for his house as both "traditional and Minoan" offering his own interpretation of the local architectural history.

4. See http://icom.museum/definition.html

5. The following mantinada was composed by S. Spyridakis and published on the local Press (newspaper Kritiki Epitheorisi [Cretan Review], 1/3/1979: 1).
Having been worked for thousands of years
with flowers all around, the people's art
has been sold out and goes abroad,
on the road of Mafia on the road of loss.

(translation by Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996: 126)

6. See local newspaper Allagi, 17/1/79: 1).

7. See all Cretan and Athenian newspapers between 25/2/1979 and 3/3/1979.

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Bankside Gallery: Audience Research and Development: Communicating Works on Paper

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This paper conveys the writer's experience as a Marketing Intern at the Bankside Gallery[1] between April and September 1999. Its purpose is to explore the foundations of the **strategic market planning system**[2] (environmental analysis; internal resources analysis; mission and goal formulation), that determine the impending strategy formulation and organisational systems design (Kotler and Kotler, 1998: 60-93). It will be grounded on the results of the market research undertaken in 1999 (development audit; buyers survey; WC21 Open evaluation).

Despite its often unfathomable constitution, Bankside Gallery is an illuminating case study for the English visual arts management: a small to medium-scale organisation of historical import, with a manifold artistic product of remarkable standards and a specialist educational alignment, striving to compete efficiently for the accessible audiences and funding without forfeiting its identity. It exemplifies independent art museums and galleries (Middleton 1999: 62-66), especially those promoting traditional art forms: torn between the past and the future, continental centralisation, British *laissez-faire* and *at arm's length* principles (Hewison, 1997: 32, 47, 121, 174, 176, 231, 252, 260, 264 [Britain]; 121 [France]), and American marketing theories (Davies, 1994; Runyard, 1995; Taylor, 1995; Kotler and Kotler, 1998: 8, 25-7).

Audience development is simultaneously a specialised niche of arts marketing and a free-standing research and policy-making tool. By means of quantitative and qualitative improvement of services for existing and new, strategically chosen, publics, the museum associates its product and mission to all stakeholders' needs and achieves social significance, accountability, prestige, and revenue. Imbuing the mission statement with the values and experiences that the distinct and inter-relating components of our post-modern society share with each other both elevates the museum to the status of an agent of social change and enables the resolution of its internal conflicts (Pearce, 1999: 62-66).

The background material for the study includes:

a)   the organisational study formulated for the University of Warwick at the end of the placement, utilising published and unpublished data (management and financial reports, planning paper, development proposals, promotional leaflets, database, publications for sale etc) and personal experience

b)   the reports compiled for the assigned market research project under the supervision of the then Deputy Director, Mrs. Alison Rowe, and the Director, Miss Judy Dixey (Martinis, 1999);

c)   the *Review of Development Proposals* by independent consultants (Bankside Gallery, 1999).

1. Organisation Description and Macroenvironment

Bankside Gallery is the home of the *Royal Watercolour Society* (RWS)[3] and the *Royal Society of Painter-Printmakers* (RE).[4] The unique and complex nature of the gallery (a merging formula incorporating a limited trading company and an educational charity, no.293194, founded in 1990) and its concurrent ownership status (joint ownership by the Societies, i.e. educational charities, no.25348 and no.313797) make it a stimulating case study.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II inaugurated Bankside Gallery on 11th November 1980 in a Southwark Council property, on the South Bank, located between the Blackfriars Bridge and the Millennium Bridge and next to Tate Modern. This inauguration designated a new phase in the history of the Societies, which had previously been entwined with the Westminster and West End art market. Previous quarters were in 37, Conduit Street (1938-1979) and the Pall Mall East Galleries (1823-1938) (Fenwick and Smith,1997).

This change of abode brought about characteristic profile novelties, and a set of opportunities and threats for the new organisation. The Societies' shows are deprived of the aristocratic profile of the previous galleries.[5] On the other hand, Bankside in an area strongly associated with the British welfare state and the post-war cultural identity (Festival of Britain) (Hewison, 1997: 48, 51, 57-65, 84-5), and brimming with high-quality venues [South Bank Centre (Hewison, 1997: 85-239, 255, 262, 308, National Theatre, Royal Festival Hall (Hewison, 1997: 8, 46, 120, 141, 153, 173, 239, 241, 248, 250, 256, 262), Imperial War Museum, Hayward Gallery (Hewison, 1997: 133-5, 141, 155-6, 173, 182, 241, 248), Southwark Cathedral and Shakespeare's Globe]. These institutions have created a legend, which draws the attention of the international art-loving public. The positioning of the area in the UK art market is very promising (attendance of socio-economic groups: 33% AB and 43% C1). Repeat visits are frequent, either to specific attractions or for general sightseeing and leisure purposes. The current gallery premises aren't particularly suitable for getting the best out of this opportunity. Poor visibility and parking space constrain visits and space limitations halt plans for multiple exhibitions, an up-beat educational program and the in situ display, conservation and promotion of the Societies' magnificent Diploma Collections, but also cultivate the staff's skills and the organisation's flexibility and adaptability.

Nevertheless, the strategic context within which Bankside Gallery could operate is extremely helpful, with the key areas of development focusing on economic regeneration and tourism. In view of an expected growth in sightseeing tourism in London during the next five years, Southwark's Tourism Strategy pays special attention to the Bankside area, with proactive planning and joint marketing campaigns focused on the arts and entertainment. Indicative architectural designs for the re-development of the Southwark and Falcon Point area have been presented, and about forty projects of the Cross River Partnership are under way, finished examples of which are the Southwark Tube Station and the Millennium Bridge. Quality standards are very high, in order to strengthen its

appeal to the aforementioned 'upmarket' public. This is crucial because a) more than half of the area tourists are young overseas people (16 to 34 years old), with limited purchasing ability and b) there is considerable unemployment in the area, amounting to 14.7% in January 1997.

2. Internal Environment

2.1. Management Structure

Plate 1: BANKSIDE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM- STRUCTURE
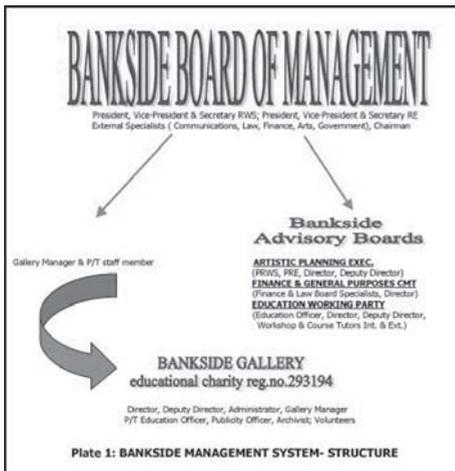
Plate 1

The managerial structure (**Plate 1**) appears centrifugal, but the ***Bankside Board of Management*** (BBM) holds the reins firmly. The above Board seemingly assumes the part that the Board of Trustees plays in most art museums: as 'the highest governing body', recruited for the power, prestige and support of its members to the artistic product, it is expected to set policy and oversee the management.

What differentiates the BBM from a typical Board of Trustees is the fact that half of its members are the Societies' leaders. As owners of the premises and the trading company, the Societies have the final word in issues that would normally be resolved by the gallery team. The BBM external specialists can't substitute the staff's accumulated experience on distinctive offerings, targets and day-to-day operation. The Gallery Directors (Director and Deputy Director) undertake the normal job responsibilities- service planning for various stakeholders, balancing the budget and cultivating the organisation's image- without always having the benefit of initiative and swift decision-making. In that sense, the BBM assumes the actual leadership of Bankside Gallery. It co-ordinates the gallery directorship's work 'at arm's length' via the advisory boards and the trading company. Without some of its Director's say, it is hard for the gallery team to achieve the optimal results (Kotler and Kotler, 1998: 62-3, 299, 307-8 [for Board of Trustees]; 63-4 [Museum directors]).

Gallery financial management is significantly autonomous. The sales' receipts and surpluses are transferred from the trading company directly. A strong representation in the administration of the latter as well as in the Finance and General Purposes Committee is bestowed to the gallery staff. The Finance and Accounting qualifications and experience of the current gallery leadership created

an ambience of offset collaboration in this realm and eased any legitimate fears that past experiences brought along.[6]

It is the artistic product that the BBM keeps at a tight check. The Societies are extremely sensitive to what is exhibited and taught within their gallery. As circumstances don't permit them to exert their identity through the '(regular) interpretation, education, exhibition, outreach, documentation, research and publication' (Museum Association Annual General Meeting, 1998) of their astounding Diploma Collections, this sense of selfhood is channelled exclusively and forcefully into the exhibition and education program. The online statement of the numerically and financially stronger RWS is indicative of how Societies see themselves and the art world. The only way of introducing *novel spirits* might be proven generation of sufficiently augmented media coverage, public appeal and perhaps revenue for the Societies.

2.2. Existing Mission Statements

According to the planning paper,[7] ***"Bankside Gallery aims to provide a pre-eminent London showcase for works of art on paper of the highest quality, painted and printed by members of the RWS and RE and other artists. The Gallery pursues a policy of artistic excellence and aims, by education and example to achieve a wider recognition of the pleasure and enjoyment to be derived from watercolours and artists' prints. The Gallery aims to provide a surplus to underwrite in its work the charitable purposes of the two Societies"***.

As to Education, ***" The RWS and the RE are educational charities. Both have a deep desire to promote the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the visual arts as expressed through the medium of watercolour painting and printmaking. Their educational policy has two aims: to help individuals develop their own creativity through residential and non-residential courses taught to the highest standards by members of the Societies and to contribute to the public understanding of art and its place in interpreting the world in which we live".***

3. Bankside Gallery Artistic Product and the exigencies of the Competitive Environment

In 1999 Bankside Gallery launched 11 *exhibitions*,[8] each of which procured an average of 1,000 visits and £2,500 of net profit. More than half of the program closes in upon Societies' work (three Societies' annual shows plus the summer and Christmas fairs and the New English Art Club exhibition with similar orientation and membership). The style of the works could be described as figurative painting, largely influence by British Impressionism and the landscape painting tradition (naturalistic effects, light, and air and sky tonalities). The Societies have favoured Turner and Constable's patrimony, French Impressionism and Preraphaelites from the start (Spender, 1987; Fenwick and Smith, 1997) and this tradition has

had lasting effects on their artistic production. There is an ambiguous relationship with the Royal Academy. They were initially formed in its opposition, but mellowed with age. Their high rate of membership and participation to RA exhibitions showed that what separated them from the Academicians was a temporary misunderstanding. RWS in particular favours its Victorian affiliations and its international vanguard in the collective celebration of watercolour drawing.

The prototypes that come to the spectator's mind in view of the exhibits include John Singer Sargent, Philip Wilson Steer, Laura Knight, George Clausen and Harold Gilman. Definitely, artists with exceptional talent, high artistic standards, a systematic and professional technique, ease and grace. On the negative side, artists with a certain emotional detachment and restraint towards innovation and modernity. History reminds us that Walter Sickert's Fitzroy Street Group was well represented at the RWS, RE and NEAC membership and exhibitions and most of the members of his circle had been a NEAC's member. Nevertheless, as Frances Spalding mentions about NEAC, 'this institution, alarmed by the threat of Post-Impressionism, had turned reactionary, obliding Sickert and his circle to break away and form the Camden Town Group, which organised its own exhibitions' (Spalding, 1986: 42).

It seems as if this stance has tinged the current attitude of the Societies: their respective proclamations, the gallery's mission statement and, ultimately, the selection of new members and entries for the WC21 Open. Bankside Gallery should consider that its artistic product might not be fully compatible neither with the average art collectors' needs, nor with these of 'art for business' market and the up-and-coming, or already established, art-loving professionals aged between 30 and 50 years old. Many young talented artists could also be kept at bay if membership criteria are kept intact. Eventually, the organisation would depend on a small group of 'famous' artists and affluent 'heavy buyers'. Society members wouldn't necessarily be affected, but the organisation will at some point lose most of its charity traits, fail to transform its opportunities into strengths and exhaust its enormous potential, unless some changes are made.

 No curatorial intervention (selection of works, thematic arrangement etc.) is normally allowable in Societies' shows, in the name of equal opportunities in promotion and sales. A member is appointed each time for hanging the works with the assistance of the gallery staff. Even so, a certain criticism on the position of the works usually occurs, especially from these members whose work has to be shown in marginal places, e.g. in the walls of the hall leading to the toilets. It is difficult to promote a group exhibition with somehow 'difficult' art works, if there is no thematic or historical line and no particular 'argument' to focus on.

It is understood that the heavy task of 'marketing' the gallery to a public potentially unaware of, intimidated by or prejudiced against the Societies and their tradition falls on the WC21 Open and the theme and solo exhibitions, two and one respectively in 1999. Education-wise, the Education Pilot project and the Art Surgery undertook this task . The *Artists' Perspectives* and the residential and non-residential courses helped to involve Society members with a more or less

existing audience. Given the limited financial capacity of attractive 'bonuses', it is difficult for Bankside Gallery to bring in new Friends and students.

4. External Regulatory Environment and Development

Extension of the existing facilities would allow the development of the artistic product (exhibition and education) with purpose-built areas. Cognisant of the associated costs, Bankside Gallery commissioned independent consultants to examine the available options (' do nothing' approach minimalist scenario and major development) from a market perspective, considering in particular the impact of the infrastructure change in the area and the financial implications (Bankside Gallery, 1999: 1). The third scenario involves extension to the river frontage and optionally taking the space currently occupied by the newsagents (gallery space from 293 sq.m. to 668 or 718 sq.m.), and provision of a new gallery, increased storage, enlarged bookstore/retail, multi-purpose area, café, 'back-of-the-house' facilities, and improvements in ventilation, lighting and signage. (Bankside Gallery, 1999:30).

Having considered the weaknesses of this scheme (capital investment, increased payroll costs, demanding management of the on-going process and the future operation) the major regulatory environment (Societies, local authorities) gave their consent. Nevertheless, the project was blocked, due to the veto of the residents of the flats above the gallery, who are already annoyed by the impact of Tate Modern in their daily lives. The minimalist scenario is currently in operation (improvements in signage, lighting inside and outside the gallery, ventilation, etc.), while discussions continue.

5. Market Environment

A museum must tackle number several publics that influence its goals and strategies. Bankside Gallery, parallel to the external marketing consultation described above, decided to monitor the attitudes of its most important publics, i.e. buyers and visitors. The project took place between late April and mid June 1999 and comprised two polls:

   a)   questionnaires exploring the buyers' behaviour, and

   b)   individual shows' surveys, i.e. for the 1999 RE exhibition (" Firm Impressions") and the WC21.

The first poll was initiated for updating the buyers' mailing list, by removing the details of those who didn't wish to hear from Bankside Gallery anymore. Since this process would inevitably involve correspondence with the people in question, the Directorship suggested focusing my internship on monitoring the gallery product's commercial reception, in order to make further counsel to the regulatory environment more meaningful and upbeat, and to help the exhibition and marketing planning. The positive response to the first poll induced the second

survey, to determine how successful the first watercolour open (WC21) had been in making the RWS and the gallery more attractive to a wider audience, and more specifically, to the following target groups: people aged 35-50, the art world, local residents and business community.

5.1 Buyers' Poll

Roughly 200 people that hadn't maintained contact for over five years were forthwith removed from the mailing list. The remaining 1,800 were categorised as follows:

- **category A** (1055 people): regular or one-off buyers, commercially inactive since June 1997

- **category B** (695 people): middle-scale, steady purchasers with an average of less than five minor or three major annual acquisitions and

- **category C** (30 people, including 15 heavy buyers): regular customers with a serious annual acquisition.

The forms were designed accordingly. Questionnaire A requested basic information; questionnaire B was more extensive and lifestyle-oriented, whereas questionnaire C bolstered personal comments and suggestions, since regular customers are usually desirous of personal involvement in policy-making. The returned questionnaires (by freepost) amounted to 400, procuring an encouraging response rate of 22.47% average (28.3% in the case of category A). 385 people (about 96% of the respondents and 27% of category A) expressed the wish to continue receiving information from the gallery. This sample amount to about a fifth (1/5) of the gallery's ***commercial public***, and suffices for its analysis.

5.2 Individual Exhibition's Evaluation Surveys

This section will present the WC21 survey results. Primarily, the latter have been more efficiently collated and allow for an objective exhibition evaluation and a clearer picture of the audience. Approximately 820 people saw the exhibition[9] and 258 of them responded to the survey (approximately 32% response).[10] 88 of these (35%) are new-comers to Bankside Gallery, and in their majority (50 people, 56.8% had never heard of it before.

This public is of interest for strategic marketing and exhibition planning as both potential buyers and participants to Bankside Gallery's activities as charity campaigning watercolour drawing and the RWS (including Friend's scheme and educational provision). Their responses are used a) to discern the reaction of both existing and new audiences to the WC21 Open and b) to see the similarities, differences and overlapping between the publics (buyers and WC21 visitors). This questionnaire looks more attentively than this of buyers' category B for behavioural patterns.

5.3 General demographic and behavioural comments (applicable to all)

5.3.1   The gallery's commercial basis is ageing (fig.1). Three quarters of the gallery's clientele is over 50 years old (75.33%), with many over 65s (28.84%) (Bankside Gallery 1999: 16). Popularity is high with the 50-65-age segment, approaching upper limit (Bankside Gallery 1999: 16). This segment is auspicious for the art market, because of its affluence and tendency to satisfy esteem needs by indulging in luxury and cultural products, as a result of vocational accomplishment and the sovereignty of their younger family. The danger lies in the insufficient substructure for retaining this desirable market once current customers retire and have fewer opportunities for visits and less money to spare. There is about 10% less penetration to the available 35-50 age market than the average, and the attractiveness in the younger generation is alarmingly low (3.64%). Economic adversity isn't enough to justify the almost total absence of the latter age group among the buyers (about 30% less penetration than average in the available market), since products priced as low as £50 are available, especially in the Christmas and Summer Fairs.

Age Grps	Cat'y A %	Cat'y B %	Cat'y C %	Total buyers %	WC21 %
< 18	0	0	0	0	1.39
18-35	3	5.2	0	3.5	10.07
35-50	23	26.4	20	24.00	19.60
50-65	40	39.6	40	39.75	38.90
65+	34	23.9	40	27.75	27.90
N/A	0	5.2	0	1.25	2.14

Fig. 1- Age Segmentation

The success of WC21 to bring in a younger audiences only comparative: the gains in the age group up to 35 years old (about 8%) don't measure up favourably against its losses among the core target age group (35-50). The client basis remains in the 50 to 65 year old generation.

5.3.2   Although precise questions about the socio-economic and gender segmentation of the commercial basis weren't directly asked for in the buyer's poll, mailing list data reveals an over-concentration of women and members of the socio-economic group C, more from the lower section of the latter. The greatest achievement of WC21 was strengthening the product's placement in socio-economic groups C1 and B. Bankside Gallery hasn't been very auspicious in targeting the most up-market segment, i.e. men aged 35 to 50, of the socio-economic groups A and B, including the core of the local business community (City, etc)

Socio-economic

	A	B	C1	C2	D	
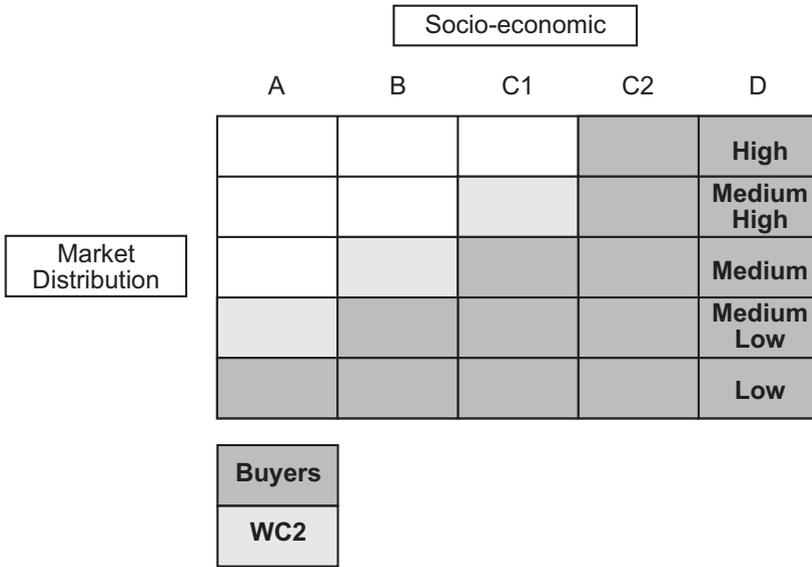
Fig. 2- Socio-economic Markets- Penetration Grid

2.2.3   Visitor rates are very satisfactory (fig.3). The average buyer visits the gallery three to four times per year There is some potential for infrequent visitors and careful analysis is required, since an important rise in the repeat visits of the other segments is unlikely. This particular group didn't see the WC21 much, contrary to those visiting up to once a year. This might indicate an ambiguous attitude among category buyers towards novelties.

No. Visits	Cat'y A %	Cat'y B %	Total %	WC21%
0	5.33	0	4.05	35.0
0-1	15.66	3.2	12.98	12.6
1-2	36.66	22.1	34.02	9.9
2-4	32.66	46.3	37.14	30.1
4+	9.33	26.2	13.76	12.4

Fig. 3- Rate of Annual Visits

6.Comments on Category A buyers

It is crucial to look at the reasons of their aforementioned apathy, which debits the organisation with largely inactive buyers' group (80% of the total sample). Presumably, this is a demographically inappropriate audience, i.e. people of a strict budget, living in a distance that they find hindering (fig.4).

Reason	Total Responses	Total %
Distance	83	41.5
Lack of free time/ other priorities	81	40.5
No real interest in watercolours/prints	5	2.5
No intention of purchase	13	6.5
Other (miscellaneous)	30	15.0

Fig.4- Reasons for not visiting/ not visiting more often (Category A)

Therefore, this segment is likely to be very cautious in their purchases. Competitive market would have been a problem, if they had more time to spare for art works. Lowering prices is not an option; exploiting gift occasions to the utmost is. Selective direct marketing might be a good idea, especially towards those of the respondents for whom variety in exhibits and solo exhibitions would truly prove to be significant motivation for visits and purchases (fig.5).

Reason	Total Responses	Total %
Better prices	73	24.3
More home space/gift occasions	110	37.0
Less competitive market	3	1.0
Variety of exhibits	67	22.3
Solo exhibitions/ favourite artist	44	14.7
Other reason (miscellaneous)	111	37.0

Fig. 5- what would encourage Category A to buy more

7. Comments on Category B

Responses were less but more illuminating than foreseen. This is a hopeful market segment, both commercially and in terms of the work of Bankside Gallery as an educational charity promoting watercolours and prints. Over half of the respondents (54%) are Friends of art institutions, mainly the Royal Academy (29%), the NACF (12%), Tate Gallery (10%), Victoria and Albert Museum (5%) and the British Museum (3%). This 'composition' is beneficial for finding out how well the gallery is placed in an audience favourably predisposed to its artistic policy and aims and what could easily augment its marketability (Kotler and Kotler, 1998: 79-80).

As foreseen, this group is pleased with the gallery exhibits and their value for money, and professed their inclination to make purchases either as presents or for themselves. There are, nonetheless, a few with serious hesitations (4.30%), the reasons behind which need to be carefully thought about. Almost unanimously, they applauded the use of the exhibiting space, though more than half didn't voice an opinion about the shop and the staff (76% and 73% respectively). It is possible that these factors are of little import to them; however, it is more likely that they haven't yet acquired a clear impression. This might motivate the gallery staff to push themselves more to the background and be more proactive with established customers. Those who did make comments are rather happy with the staff attitude, whereas they see the shop as ' only fair'. On the whole, they weren't very contented with the socialising opportunities and the events, and educational provision earned a lukewarm response. It would also be stimulating to investigate the scope of the 11.5% that has objections about the way in which the Societies' work is promoted (fig.6).

%	V Good	Good	Fair	Not so Good	Bad	N/A
Value for Money	43.1	35.7	12.6	1.006	0	0
Interest of Exhibits	48.4	38.9	12.7	0	0	0
Nice for the house/gifts	30.0	39.0	13.7	2.150	2.150	0
Promotion of Societies	15.8	29.5	12.6	8.400	3.100	0
Education Provision	8.4	20.0	20.0	9.400	7.300	0
Socialising / Events	3.1	10.5	18.4	21.050	20.000	0
Use of space	47.0	44.0	5.0	0	0	4
Shop	3.0	10.0	11.0	0	0	76
Staff attitude	13.0	11.0	3.0	0	0	73

Fig. 6- Comments on different aspects of gallery performance

The poll probed this market to name their expectations from Bankside Gallery in two different ways. They were presented with five agents that could prompt them to visit the gallery more often (better parking/transport, longer opening hours, variation/innovation at work, better education provision, café) and asked to pick those applying to them (guided question). Parallel to that, they were encouraged to make personal suggestions. As the answers largely coincide, a collective presentation is chosen, using the average indicator in case of serious deviation. (fig.7). The practical factors at the top of the list confirm that Bankside Gallery would have benefited immensely by the major development scenario. Delegation to the local authorities for improvement of transport and parking provision, and partnerships with the adjoining café and public house would alleviate its two biggest drawbacks in terms of services. Innovations could be a minefield, and are argued for and against with equal passion.

Better parking/ transport	37%
Café	35%
Longer opening hours	20%
More exhibiting space/ multiple exhibitions	15%
Variation/ innovation in exhibits	13%
Better/ wider education programme	10%
Making no significant changes	9%
Better lighting	2%
Other (miscellaneous)	12%

Fig.7- Factors potentially encouraging repeat visits

Audience predilections are indicative of ambiguous attitudes towards sections of the artistic product. For category B buyers, theme and historical shows are simultaneously the most and the least popular (indecisiveness is particularly high for the latter), whereas WC21 visitors are clearly not impressed by such programming parameters. The audience is standardly sceptical towards' the assertion of the Societies' tradition. Society shows -principally the RE annual- require attention for drawing the desirable degree and kind of attention, and introducing current art trends and young/ foreign artists and themes would be advantageous, especially for WC21 visitors. Careful design and promotion would be essential though, since part of the existing audience would be taken aback by too much innovation. (fig.8).

%	Very much		quite		fairly		not much		not at all	
W/C exhibitions	63	77.1	23	10.07	5	5.81	5	2.32	1.5	10.85
Print exhibitions	30	27.9	38	17.40	11	13.50	11	6.69	3.5	8.13
Contemp. Shows	33	39.7	24	20.54	19	14.34	13	5.89	3.0	3.10
Annual Soc. Shows	30	22.5	18	18.21	8	12.71	3	5.81	14.0	10.85
Themed exhibitions	35	26.7	25	19.76	12	15.50	3	3.48	13.0	17.82
Historical Shows	13	19.4	23	14.72	25	15.89	18	12.42	9.0	19.76
Solo exhibitions	*	23.60	*	25.90	*	14.34	*	2.32	*	1.76

Fig.8 - How interested Category B & WC21 are in different types of exhibitions

8.Comments on WC21 Survey

8.1 . The percentage of the newcomers who gave WC21 a try despite negative preconceptions is only 7.9%. The great interest in exhibitions of individual artists leads to the suspicion that most of the rest is the clientele of successful entrants, and might be difficult to maintain due to a lack of serious interest for watercolours, prints and the Societies (see fig.8).

8.2 . People blaming their previous absence on distance (26.13%) form an interesting section. Although at first sight all seem doomed to one-off visits, one third of them is well-matched with the gallery's target markets (35-60, socio-economic groups A and B, museum and gallery goers, art lovers and interested in what Bankside has to offer), apart from the geographical location. Further research, perhaps in the form of focus groups, is recommended; they could help audience development in many ways, from providing information and access to suitable up-market tourism to motivating alternative ways of purchase, targeted blockbuster exhibitions and educational programs. (fig. 9).

8.3 . 71.70% of the visitors are very likely to visit Bankside again and 20.93% are quite likely to do so. WC21, although some regular visitors weren't pleased with the new definition for watercolours.

Never heard of Bankside before	50	56.8
Programme not right for me	7	7.9
Distance	23	23.1
Lack of time/ other priorities	6	6.9
Other (miscellaneous)	1	1.1
N/A	2	2.3
Base	70	*

Fig. 9- Newcomers justification of previous non-attendance

8.4. Press listings (33.73%) and promotional leaflets (25.96%) attracted as many visitors to the attendant exhibition as 'word of mouth' (ca. 30%). Newcomers were equally sensitive to both, with a slight preference for publicity, which is indicative of progress promotion-wise. The percentage of chance visits (passing by 9.68%) confirms the exhibition's appeal and the favourable time and place for attracting tourists, despite poor signage and the non-impressive façade. Art schools' support was less than expected (3.10 %); nevertheless, new contacts were made and the educational world is now well aware of Bankside Gallery and the WC21.

8.5. Successful admissions were more interesting to the current audience than the curated part**.** This probably means that the latter didn't fit in the acceptable style in it. Its concept was on the whole well received and there is room for development in this area, which has been abandoned for the past three years. (fig. 10)

%	Very good	Good	Fair	Not so good	Bad
Admissions	36.40	29.06	19.37	7.75	5.42
Curated part	30.62	29.06	21.70	11.24	5.42

Fig.10- Assessment of WC21 exhibition- Artistic Product

8.6. The staff became the strongest gallery asset during the WC21 (about 90% gratification rate). The building and the use of the available space both pleased the visitors to a degree of 70 %. The shop was judged as only marginally appropriate (45% gratification rate).

8.7.   The need for sitting area and refreshments/ coffee machine is being emphasised, much more so because 73% of the visitors spend more than 30 minutes in the Gallery in a group of relatives and friends (2-3 people). It will also be advisable to extend the timetable and events during the weekends (23% weekend and tourist visitors). This could also enhance the participation of younger professionals who are often unavailable during the week.

9.Conclusions- SWOT Analysis

| STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Established gallery	• Local Authority building
• Strong membership	• Limited space and storage
• Important historical roots	• Limited & inappropriate retail
• Royal Status; Links with RA, NEAC (for certain publics)	• No café
• Educational charity status	• Non-appealing Friends' Scheme
• Local authority building	• Few co-operation with other art venues
• Imaginative uses of space (red walls etc.)	• Limited education program
• Committed heavy buyers; affluent clientele	• Over-involvement of Societies in gallery management
• Development potential for category B buyers	• RA & NEAC links (for certain publics)
• Stable visitor rates	• Available funds
• Reasonable prices compared with competitive environment	• Ageing public
• Committed, experienced and efficient team	• Many ' inactive' visitors & buyers
	• Art not suitable/ attractive to target groups
	• Relatively high prices for existing audiences
	• Insufficient advertisement of low-cost purchase and gift occasions (Christmas & Summer Fair)
	• Exhibition presentation
	• Limited community involvement in exhibition making/evaluation (market research)
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
• Growth in tourism	• Competition
• Growth in arts/leisure sector	• Local community reaction to new and proposed development in the area
• New and proposed development in the area	• Different profile and artistic product of 'national venues'; difficulty in partnerships
• Improved access; tube, Millennium Bridge	• High rates of local unemployment
• Committed local authorities	• Unfavourable international economy
• High-profile, 'national' venues; Tate Modern	• Disasters that may impact on overseas tourism
• Local Business community (City, Southwark)	• Remove of ' Droit de Suite'
• Gift occasions	• Detachment from West End
• WC21	
• Educational Partnerships; Pilot Project	
• Corporate Friends and Corporate Entertainment Outreach Project	
• Starbucks & Founders' Arms (food & beverage outlets in the immediate proximity)	
• Solo Exhibitions	
• Volunteers	

Fig. 11-Bankside Gallery SWOT Analysis

The above table summarises the paper's main points. The implementation of the 'major development' scenario would have been an ideal way of balancing the needs of the different stakeholders. The Societies would have been able to maintain their usual exhibition program as it is, as well as having the opportunity to make their legacy and identity better known by exhibiting the whole or part of their Diploma Collections (Bankside Gallery, 1999:29-30). Simultaneously, the option of more 'modern' work and exhibition management would look less

threatening. It would permit the gallery staff and Societies' members to try their skills in curatorship, challenging the standard presentation systems of both commercial galleries -'deliberately meant to intrigue…the…private collectors-who-know' and to keep away 'the unwanted non-collector visitor, who might be blocking a potential purchaser's view' (Wright, 1989:129)- and the RA - where 'the potential of aesthetic consumption was sacrificed to fulfil maxims of the Victorian schoolroom' (Greenhalgh, 1989:88). The education program would blossom in a purpose-build space of its own and would help to enhance the charity character of the organisation, thus allowing part of the exhibition planning to be more commercially oriented. It is hoped that the efforts of negotiation with the residents won't be abandoned (Bankside Gallery, 1999:30-31), because Bankside Gallery 'has to cater for increasingly fragmented publics who want to learn and do different things at different speeds' (Wright, 1989:119).

In the mean time, the time calls for closer collaboration between the BBM and the gallery staff. The former should realise that the latter is the gallery's strongest asset for the present and the foreseeable future. 'It is noteworthy that many museum [and gallery] staff are motivated more by professional service motivations than by material rewards. Advancing knowledge, pursuing research, safeguarding a mission that is part of a public trust, earning professional recognition and acclaim, educating the public, and doing good work for society are the values and expectations that characterise many who work at museums [and galleries].' (Kotler and Kotler, 1998:64).

The gallery management team and the volunteers have a genuine passion and empathy for the gallery, and because of their vocational training and orientation, they are inclined to spend time and attention in making marketing and communication as effective as possible. 'Well-conceived, well-executed and well-targeted' direct marketing (Kotler and Kotler, 1998:247-258) and PR (Kotler and Kotler, 1998: 235-246) is recommended, with an emphasis on outreach projects, direct mail, expanded databases and website. The BBM might need to consider leaving the gallery team freer to act on its own initiative, feeling sure that they keep the Societies' best interests at heart. The Societies' might decide to change their admission criteria and add more artistically 'novel spirits' gradually. On the other hand, the gallery management would need to be imaginative, invented and focused on the gallery's mission statement, which might benefit from reconsideration in view of an expanded and concise audience research project. Thus, Bankside's exquisite works of paper would have a fair chance of gaining the respect and commercial recognition they are due.

Notes

1. http://www.banksidegallery.com, postal address: 48 Hopton Street, London SE1 9JH.

2. 'Strategic Market Planning System' format explained in Kotler, 1998: 60-93

3. Founded 1804, received Royal status 1880; for details see http://

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www.banksidegallery.com/rws and Fenwick and Smith, 1997; Spender, 1987

4. Founded 1881, Royal status 1888; for further details see http://www.banksidegallery.com/re

5. Currently kept at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford and the British Museum. For the RWS Diploma Collection, see Spender, 1987

6. Certain mistakes of the then management team (separate Artistic and Financial Directors) had brought the gallery close to bankruptcy in 1991-1992. This was dissuaded by the Societies' support and in particular, grace to the RWS capital (K.Henderson bestowal). The present financial arrangements divulge the hard work and excellent collaboration of the Societies and the gallery staff during the past decade in the realm of financial management.

7. Unpublished document , provided by J.Dixey and A. Rowe

8. i.e., two RWS and one RE shows, the NEAC exhibition, two theme shows (" Men on Women-Women on Men", " Light Fantastic"), one one-person shows (Eileen Hogan), the summer fair, the Christmas exhibition, one private hire (degree show of Open College of the Arts for four days) and the major watercolour Open (WC21).

9. Assumption made by dividing the admission income of £2,303 by the average admission of £2.80

10. Response rate to the RE exhibition survey, which served as a pilot, was 4%.

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Methods for a Multi-Sited Study of New National Museums: A Fieldworker's Experience

Emily Stokes-Rees

According to Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1997: 1): 'The single most significant factor determining whether a piece of research will be accepted as (that magical word) 'anthropological' is the extent to which it depends on experience in the field.' Ethnographic fieldwork is traditionally seen as what distinguishes social and cultural anthropology from the other social sciences, and it must be experienced as performed rather than just communicated in dialogue. 'The bounded periods of sociological versions of ethnography,' argues Judith Okely (1992: 8) 'bear no comparison to the long-term and thorough immersion of anthropological fieldwork.' In short, traditional fieldwork involves travel away, preferably to a distant locale where the ethnographer immerses him/herself in personal face-to-face relationships with a variety of 'natives' over an extended period of time.

While this is a familiar representation, it is a rendering of fieldwork that in many respects no longer suffices for many contemporary anthropologists. Moreover, in the face of the mobility and displacement of peoples world-wide, anthropologists are being forced to relinquish the conflation of place with collective cultural production. By highlighting the effects of translocally constituted practices in disparate geographical spaces, we gain new insights on how to observe and understand peoples and cultures as fluid manifestations of specific historical configurations which span both temporal and spatial dimensions.

This paper is based upon fieldwork conducted as part of doctoral research which examines the ways in which the new national museums in Singapore, Hong Kong and Macau are attempting to renegotiate the national past in the postcolonial world. This involved a period of three months spent in the national museums of each country, carrying-out extensive interviewing of staff, community members and others involved in the planning and presentation of exhibitions. It also included a detailed examination of the museums themselves, and collections of documentation from museum files, libraries, archives, government agencies, and other relevant sources. This provided evidence for the tremendous wave of change coursing through the museum world.

A period of twelve weeks was spent actually physically in the museums, usually six days a week for five or six hours a day, interviewing staff and visitors, tagging along on guided tours, attending special lectures and, on occasion, conferences on relevant topics, and generally getting a feel for the museum as an institution. As was explained to each of the Museum Directors in a letter requesting permission to do the research: I was interested in 'the role that National Museums play in the construction and communication of a sense of national identity – a topic of special interest in the case of Southeast Asian states, so many of which exhibit colonial legacies, multi-ethnic populations, and distinctly different histories and traditions. How, therefore, does the National Museum represent the history and character of a unified national entity and at the same time deal adequately with the separate contributions of its constituent ethnicities and histories?'

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This project is thus primarily focused upon the institutions' efforts to project meaning, to cultivate specific constructions of national selfhood, and to evoke particular understandings of place, history, sentiment, and citizenship. Emphasis is, accordingly, placed on the making and reception of major exhibits, and particularly upon the ways these present and negotiate questions of national narrative, and of differences internal to nationality. The policies and debates which inform exhibits were examined, as well as the finished displays in their material complexity. Analysis takes account of architecture, design, the selection of objects, their captioning and presentation, and the messages conveyed through interactive multimedia, audio guides, brochures, and other materials. The ways in which the institution as a whole, and specific exhibitions are promoted, are salient to the inquiry, as are performed mediations of exhibits' meanings, such as docents' and guides' talks, for school children or visitors in general.

In planning how best to study these institutions, it quickly became clear that the archetypal model of anthropological fieldwork was not ideally suited to this project. The objects of study – museums and their contents – do not reside in one location, demanding a multi-sited approach. This method generated a number of questions – What are the implications of moving between various sites during the allotted time, rather than staying in one place? Would this 'count' as fieldwork? Further, the study of organisations has traditionally been ignored by anthropologists because it appears to capture only a small part of people's lives, instead of the 'full view' supposedly attained in a village setting. It was thus with great apprehension that I embarked on this 'fieldwork', with fingers crossed that upon my return it would be accepted as 'anthropological'.

James Clifford (1997) argues that fieldwork as we know it emerged out of, and has thus had to distance itself from, earlier traveling practices such as exploration, natural history expeditions, and the gentlemanly 'grand tour'. Although traveling is an unavoidable part of the classic fieldwork experience – one must 'travel' *to* and *from* the field, and often within it – field research is persistently framed as an act of dwelling (Salmond, 2001: 19). Ethnographers, typically, are travelers who like to stay and dig in (for a time). Unlike other travelers who prefer to pass through a series of locations, anthropologists tend to be homebodies abroad. The 'field' as spatial practice is thus a specific style, quality, and duration of dwelling (Clifford, 1997: 22, 67).

The boundary between dwelling and travel is, however, far from clear. How long must one remain in one place in order to become an inhabitant? One the other hand, those who stay too long risk committing the ultimate transgression – 'going native'. As a way of achieving a balance between dwelling and traveling, George Marcus (1995) points to the practice of 'multi-locale ethnography'.

In his formulation:

> Ethnography moves from its conventional single-site location, contextualized by macro-constructions of a larger social order, such as the capitalist world system, to multiple sites of observation and participation that cross-cut dichotomies such as the 'local' and the 'global', the 'lifeworld' and the 'system' (1995: 95).

David Gellner and Eric Hirsch ask in their volume *Inside Organisations: Anthropologists at Work* (2001: 6): "What are the differences between doing ethnography and doing interviews?" Both can result in the creation of an 'ethnographic study', so how can students tell that they are really 'doing ethnography'? Is only sustained participant observation for at least one year necessary before research can be called ethnography? Some researchers argue that while recognizing participant observation as the ideal, repeated interviewing can achieve ethnographic depth (i.e. Chapman, 2001). Others suggest that the relationship between ethnography and interviews is more of a continuum (i.e. Hine, 2001). It therefore seems to be a question of what one is trying to achieve in one's research which dictates whether 'immersion' or more scheduled encounters are appropriate. Perhaps the key to doing ethnography, whether based on long-term 'participant observation' or shorter-term scheduled interviews is the achievement of an empathetic understanding.

This raises the question of what an ethnographic approach can add to the study of an institution. Why not just ask the staff for an account and move on? Daniel Miller, an anthropologist who has used an ethnographic approach to subjects such as 'capitalism' and 'consumption' in industrialized multicultural contexts, suggests that ethnography is characterized by a 'series of commitments that together constitute a particular perspective' (Miller, 1997: 16). These include being in the presence of the people one is studying, not just that which they produce, evaluating people as material agents in a material world, and not merely by what they *say* they do (Miller, 1997: 16-17), having a long-term commitment to the investigation, and engaging in an holistic analysis 'which insists that…behaviours be considered within the larger framework of people's lives and cosmologies' (Miller, 1997: 17). In other words, ethnography is not merely a method, but is a broader 'approach' and may itself incorporate other 'methods' besides participant observation (i.e. carrying out interviews, undertaking surveys, analyzing texts and other representations) (MacDonald, 2001: 78). In my work, I have also used the metaphor that museums are cultural institutions, and can be seen as mini-cultures, with their own origin myths, beliefs, cultural stories, narrative historied, language, expectations, and age/gender roles and such.

The idea of spending time in the museum carrying out one's research is premised on the notion that researchers can 'get more' this way than relying solely on people's accounts of what they do. For example, in a single interview or account, what one says may be shaped by their own expectations of what they think we want to hear (or not hear) or what they want us to hear. Nevertheless, attention to the creators' commentaries highlights the specific position from which they speak and signals that they may be well aware that the history and identity which their representations attempt to articulate are by no means uncontroversial or uncontested. In staying in the museum for an extended period of time, and to a certain extent 'participating' in museum life, one is able to 'get backstage' and observe the subjects through studying their 'natural environment' - working and interacting with each other. This project, therefore, seeks to go 'beyond performance', not because performance is somehow inauthentic, but because 'the [anthropologist]…strives to contextualise performance in order to understand the factors that made it possible' (MacDonald, 2001: 90).

George Marcus (1995: 96) describes multi-locale ethnography in terms of movement 'out from the single site and local situations of conventional ethnographic research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects and identities in diffuse time-space.' Further, Marcus points out that multi-sited ethnography is designed around 'chains, paths, threads, conjunctions or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some form of literal, physical presence, with an explicit, posited logic of association or connection among sites that in fact defines the argument of ethnography' (1995: 105). He suggests several possible ways to construct these chains of locations, including following people, things, metaphors, plots, stories, lives and conflicts. While I did indeed follow individual people, objects, and themes from site to site, my effort to understand these museums in their transnational context has largely been a process of following the histories and social lives of a collection of institutions. Understanding how these museums encourage viewers to imagine themselves as citizens of Singapore, Hong Kong or Macau, at once intimately and collectively connected with a cultural *national* heritage in disparate locales allows us to, as Appadurai (1988) suggests, blur the boundaries between places and see the family resemblances as well as the distinctive features which cross-cut cultures.

Thus, in many ways, this fieldwork evolved along the lines described by Clifford, Marcus and Hirsch and Gellner, as multi-sited and multi-faceted museum-based fieldwork, involving relations built with museum professionals and visitors (face-to-face and otherwise), archival study, and analysis of cultural forms including texts, exhibitions, images, and artefacts and their accompanying documentation. Some informants were even communicated with via email, letters, and telephone. In every case it was the circumstance which defined the method rather than the method defining the circumstance.

Since identities are not quantifiable in any meaningful way, this study draws on qualitative data and analysis drawn from open-ended interviews and discussions, guided by a set of research questions. The people interviewed, aside from the set interviews with museum staff, are random, but were each born in and are citizens of their particular countries and belong to different religious groups and socio-economic backgrounds. I endeavoured to collect the points of view of numerous people – specialist and lay, old and young, male and female – and to somehow fit these together into an overall pattern.

I also carried out voluntary work in the curatorial departments at a couple of the museums, which allowed me to gain a deeper insight into the functions of new national museums - their projects and visions for communicating identity to the nation. Working in this capacity allowed for collaboration with curators and specialists, provided access to existing documentation, and acted as a channel for introductions to key informants. My primary data was thus collected through participation in museum life, in addition to formal interviews and informal conversations with staff and visitors. Although I also planned to conduct a visitor survey at each museum, eliciting opinions on the nature of national identity, and the perceived role of the national museum in constructing that identity, a number of the museums were hesitant about how this would look, and how my affiliation

to the museum should be communicated to the public. 'The questions you are asking are very political,' I was often told, so in the end I decided to rely solely on the interviews and discussions, and left the questionnaires for another time or place.

Walking around these museums with other visitors, I absorbed meanings, drew maps and pictures of the exhibitions, took photographs and made notes. Behind the scenes, I met with the curators and designers responsible for the displays. We discussed the exhibitions, the ideas they wanted to get across, their backgrounds and politics – threads of meaning woven into the displays, clues for interpretation. I attempted to adopt a kind of 'cross-eyed vision', 'one eye roving ceaselessly around the general context, any part of which could suddenly reveal itself as relevant, the other eye focusing tightly, even obsessively, on the research topic' (Gellner, and Hirsch, 2001: 7), in an attempt to achieve a rich and contextualised understanding of my subject.

Although the main aim of my research was to focus on ideas about 'the nation' and how it is constructed in the museum, I kept finding myself drawn into other matters that did not always feel as if they had anything to do with 'identity' or 'nationhood'. The internal politics of the institution and management issues are examples of these. I came to realize, however, that these factors were also crucial to the way in which the nation was being represented in the museum. For example, the very clear-cut management hierarchy in the Museum of Macau was precisely replicated in the editing process of the exhibitions. As Ms Teresa Fu Barreto, Director of the Museum of Macau, commented during an interview: 'Our superiors in the government do not really respect us as professionals. We have to ask for permission for every small thing. If they want something changed, it would be immediately changed, but if we want to add or remove something, it's a lengthy process. It gets very tiring' (Barreto, 2002).

Recently, Mark Harris (1997: 20) has offered a good description of ethnographic fieldwork which at the same time highlights the difficulty we have in pinning the discipline down clearly:

> Anthropology's spirit is its ability to move restlessly from place to place, to draw connections between them, and to take seriously 'the Other' as a source of ideas and inspiration. In so doing it is reflexive and dynamic, and in this confrontation it is able to regenerate its ideas and it methods...Anthropology thrives best as an eclectic project, some might say an 'anti-discipline', with a generalizing vision.

In the spirit of this quotation, I would thus argue that this project is methodologically distinctive in two senses. First, it is concerned to treat institutions and exhibits not as texts, but as processes that are created and communicated. I have been concerned to trace the debates involving curators, designers, and communities that shape the organization and presentation of particular displays. Secondly, this study is essentially comparative and therefore based upon multi-sited fieldwork. Due to the number of museums visited, not every case study will be all-encompassing. In some cases a focused discussion of a particular feature of a

display, policy, or institution will be more illuminating than an exhaustive analysis of familiar trends. The logistics of spreading one's attention over activities and individuals at several sites necessitates a methodological shift from older conceptions of an extended presence in one locale. In other words, it seems most useful in this instance to define fieldwork not with a time-honoured commitment to the *local*, but with an attentiveness to social, cultural and political *location*. The strength of this type of fieldwork is its malleability, the leeway it allows for the ethnographer to respond and adapt flexibly to circumstances as they arise, and to be open to a wide variety of relationships and interactions. By thinking about how people in another part of the world might do things differently or similarly, anthropologists can raise questions about aspects of social life and local knowledge that might otherwise be taken for granted. It is thus my belief that a bright future awaits anthropological methodologies centred upon institutionally-based and multi-sited studies, helping anthropoligists avoid binding particular cultural forms to particular peoples and places, and allowing for an increasingly global view of the distinctive features which cross-cut cultures.

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