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Museums and crafts

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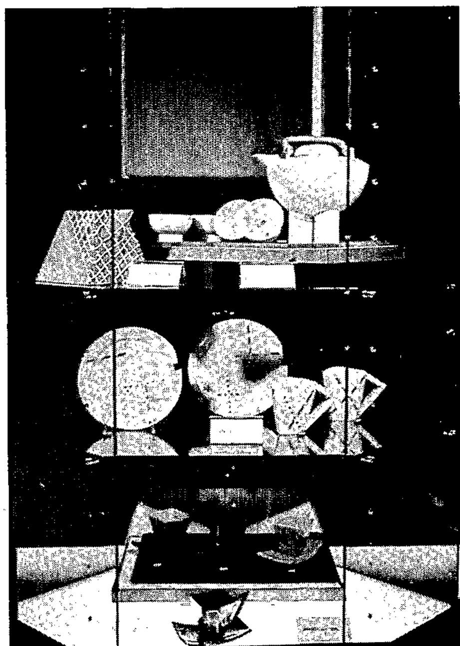

Cover photo: Consignment show, *Our Cup of Tea*; display and sale of contemporary crafted teapots, cups and spoons, made in the United States. Museum Shop, Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., United States, 1985.

A traditional South Indian kitchen with the auspicious kolam decoration, painted with rice powder. This particular decoration is usually done on special days, but a smaller design is done daily after washing the kitchen.

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Editorial correspondence:
The Editor, Museum,
Unesco, 7 place de Fontenoy,
75700 Paris, France

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Museums and

Herbert Ganslmayr

Born in Germany in 1937. He studied Education, Ethnology, Egyptology and Ancient History in Munich and Basle, and received his Ph.D. in 1965. After lecturing in ethnology at Munich University and doing fieldwork in southern Nigeria, he became a curator at the Übersee Museum, Bremen, of which he has been the Director since 1975. He has been a member of the Executive Council of ICOM since 1986 and has also served as Chairman of the International Committee for Ethnography Museums, and Chairman of the ICOM Advisory Committee.

Speaking about 'Museums and Crafts', one is faced immediately with two problems of definition. What is a museum, and what are crafts? The definition of a museum may seem easy: it is a place where objects are collected, no longer mostly from the past, where they are looked after and on display, at least a very small part of them. But museums are still associated with the past and with dust, as the public does not realize the role museums are already playing in solving problems of the present and predicting those of the future. This enlarged definition of the museum will form part of my article.[1]

The definition of crafts or handicrafts is very difficult for me. Being the director of an integrated museum of ethnography and natural history, as well as a specialist in African cultural anthropology, I am faced with several problems: I have to display as art objects items which, in their traditional African context, have never been considered as art. Where they were made, there was no definition of art such as is found in Europe or parts of Asia. But now they are considered as art.

For instance, I am at present dealing with rural crafts from African villages: are they only utilitarian crafts or are they creative crafts, skilled crafts or artistic crafts? Can they be grouped with the artistic crafts of a European town such as Bremen where my museum is situated? In my museum there is an annual exhibition of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Kunsthandwerker Bremens (Association of the Artistic Craftsmen of Bremen). Outstanding pieces of craft are exhibited as well as art objects, but where is the dividing line?

I am not in a position to define crafts, handicrafts or craft objects or to draw dividing lines. The Consultation of Experts on the 'Preservation and the Development of Crafts in the Contemporary World' sponsored by Unesco at Candido Mendes University, Rio de Janeiro, in August 1984, did not find a solution to this problem, so I would like to leave it at that for the moment. Only one further remark: crafts or handicrafts should and will be seen to include more than the rather restrictive definition used, for example, in the Federal Republic of Germany, where, on the one hand, several years' training completed by a 'master's examination' is required and, on the other, additional training in aesthetics, forming and figuration is demanded, before anyone is allowed to be called an artistic craftsman. In the Federal Republic of Germany the problem of definition concerns the dividing line between artistic craftsman and artist, and no longer the one between the artistic craftsman and the common craftsman who produces utilitarian crafts.

Since we are dealing here principally with museums and crafts in developing countries, and since the theme of the conference is 'The Role of Crafts in the Development Process', the terms 'crafts', 'craftsmen' and 'craftswomen' will also include those in the urban and rural areas of the developing countries. The European or, let us say, the industrialized country's definition will not always fit. As I understand it, the task of the World Crafts Council (WCC) is to find a way to group all of them together and make them work together without ideological and financial domination of one group by another.

The new socio-political orientation of museums in both industrialized and

crafts

developing countries changes the museum's priorities. Displays become more important. Their role in formal and informal education is newly defined and strengthened. It was also found that this added importance of the displays has to be reinforced with various educational services. Today the argument about the museum's role in society has more or less come to an end; its significance is fully accepted, though the role it plays will vary according to the different structures of the countries concerned. In industrialized countries it will be different from what it is in developing countries, even if certain basic elements making up a museum will always be the same.

In the developing countries, museums have special tasks or perhaps it is just that special emphasis is placed on certain tasks. One of the most significant of these — as this is part of the process of nation-building — is the preservation of a people's cultural heritage and its presentation in such a way, that the nation's unity becomes visible in the diversity of cultural property. The cultural heritage is an important element for the establishment of a nation's cultural identity. In the case of nations lacking any written historical sources of their own, museums are taking over the function of archives, at least for the material expression of their cultural past.

Thus museums have become something like data banks, holding material which may be used for many different kinds of research. And this is where museums will be increasingly important, particularly with regard to arts and crafts. In their storerooms, and also in their displays, museums hold material documentation on technical skills or work processes which are often long forgotten and for which no written documentation exists. Such skills and processes were developed at a certain time, for certain purposes and under certain geographical, economic, ecological and cultural conditions. Apart from being part of a people's material culture, this material will help a nation or an ethnic minority to find its identity. In addition to being essential aids to anyone writing the social or cultural history of the people concerned, they are of great importance in another respect: they play a significant role in discussions on appropriate technology.

Appropriate technology should not be understood as 'primitive' but as adapted to the geographical, sociocultural, ecological and economic conditions in a particular area. We cannot discuss in detail here the question of appropriate technology, but it should be made clear that it certainly does not mean directing people to use a technology which is felt to be the one most suitable for them. This was done during colonial times, and in many cases it is still happening in so-called development aid programmes. It is only in joint research carried out by equal partners that specific solutions can be found and implemented. A decision on whether or not a certain technology is to be introduced can only be arrived at in discussions with the people concerned. What could the role of museums be in this particular field?

Museums could help to trace traditional technologies, for example, special weaving techniques, which have been forgotten, but which can be reconstructed from material in the storerooms. In addition, museums could help to improve certain technologies, as was done in the Himalayas, where the traditional watermill with vertical-blade wheels was

1. This article is the transcript of a lecture delivered at the International Crafts Conference of the World Crafts Council in Jakarta in August 1985; the characteristic features of a lecture were left unchanged.

changed following the example of a similar watermill in Romania with spoon-shaped blades which catch more water, so that the water turns the wheel more quickly. Small models of both types explained the advantage to the farmers. In the meantime these watermills are used not only for irrigation and grinding corn and rice but also as a power supply for small joiner's shops.

The best example of how museums could work in this field is the National Council of Science Museums in India which runs beside its large museums small district science centres in less developed areas like Purulia, West Bengal. There the regional museum tries to upgrade traditional technologies according to the demands formulated in participation with the population concerned, or to introduce appropriate technologies after research has been done in the large museums. The first project in Purulia was such a success that the Planning Commission of the Republic of India is now giving financial support to the work of the museum.

Why museums, of all things?

The unique quality of a museum is that it possesses original objects, mostly three-dimensional, impressing people by their authenticity and innate charm, and often attracting them more than books, radio or television can. Often a dialogue will take place between the object and the onlooker. In addition to the fascination of the three-dimensional original, the museum offers the visitor a fitting presentation of the object and, in doing so, even takes into consideration the specific visual and mental approach to be expected from certain target groups. Such considerations are supplemented by special efforts on the part of the museum's educationists to make the visitor understand the message of the exhibit. The museum not only provides the space for the display of objects for the exhibitions but rooms for interaction and communication, where the visitor can take an active part. The visitor might also have a chance to participate in museological projects such as helping to plan and carry out an exhibition. A museum like this is no longer a museum in the traditional sense, it is rather a cultural or social centre, endowed with the two elements that are the specific characteristics of a museum: three-dimensional objects and exhibitions.

What has been the role of museums so far in relation to crafts, and what should it be in the future? We shall see that there is a significant difference between museums for crafts and artistic crafts in industrialized countries and museums for crafts of any description in developing countries. As the theme of the WCC conference was 'The Role of Crafts in the Development Process', the emphasis here will be on museums in the developing countries.

In Europe, museums have been founded for the specific purpose of documenting and preserving — rescuing — technologies and products that were dying out. However, such museums were also to serve as 'pattern books', for the further development of the crafts. To give an example from Germany, in 1870 the Bremen Chamber of Commerce addressed a letter to the City Government complaining that the products of non-Bremen craftsmen sold better than those of Bremen craftsmen, and proposing that an institution be created which would supply the Bremen craftsmen with ideas and models. In 1873, the Technical Institute for Tradesmen was founded, and in 1884 the Museum for Applied Art, which in 1922 merged with the Focke-Museum to become today's Bremen State Museum for Art and Cultural History. The activities of the former Museum for Applied Art were, in the first place, of an educational nature. Their purpose was to train craftsmen and to develop the skills of those wishing to improve their artistic abilities as designers, moulders, etc., in trade and industry. The large collection of objects which — 'as a whole or in some of their details, are remarkable and worth copying, which might be applied to modern works of art, or which might serve as an inspiration for the creation of new products and new decorative ornamentation' — was in the first place used for education. In addition, the collection was to improve the public's ability to form an independent opinion, based on a knowledge of styles, aesthetic rules and questions of the applied arts, and to promote the public's artistic taste. There was also a special 'designs bureau' in this museum where original designs were made available to the craftsmen. Designs prepared by trainees or apprentices, as well as outstanding objects, were presented in exhibitions.

For similar reasons the Museum for Applied Art was founded in Frankfurt-on-Main: 'The fact that singular pieces made by craftsmen were supplanted by machine-made products, entailing a loss in quality, initiated the idea that the arts and crafts must be rescued and promoted.' In 1877 the Museum and the Technical College connected to it were established. In many other places, collections of prototypes were set up, for instance in 1880 at Krefeld, as part of the College for Weaving and Dyeing Techniques, which later became the German Textile Museum, or, in Pforzheim, the 'Patterns for Historicist Ornamentation of the Pforzheim Industry' in the late nineteenth century.

All these museums of applied art, municipal or regional museums of art and cultural history, or museums of local history and culture are still collecting such witnesses of the past, in order to increase our knowledge of bygone times and cultures and to demonstrate artistic developments and contexts. These witnesses of the past not only help to broaden the visitor's mind, but they are also still used for the training of craftsmen, as, for instance, in the German Textile Museum where this educational aspect is still emphasized as an integral part of the museum's concept.

Now it is a matter of course that craft objects currently produced, be they utilitarian, creative or artistic, are exhibited in museums. On the one hand, museums wish to demonstrate the latest developments in arts and crafts, and, on the other, they want to call the visitor's attention to the works of certain craftsmen or artists, and perhaps encourage them to buy a piece, which will be beneficial for the artist and his work and for the survival of the arts and crafts. The promotion of the arts and crafts may be supported by a number of activities arranged in connection with an exhibition, such as workshops held by the artists in the museum, lectures by artists and discussions with them, which help to make visitors more familiar with them and their work. An ideal solution would be the installation in the museum of studios for artists. Museum educational activities, demonstrating and explaining certain artistic techniques, would also help to arouse visitors' interest in the arts and crafts and teach them to discern quality. But there is the danger that these activities may degenerate into poor romantic amateurism 'allowing of no profound expression of individual sensitivity or personality'.[2] If these aspects of a negative development are seen, they could be counterbalanced by well-trained and experienced educationists and could finally have positive results.

Sales may be promoted by way of special sales exhibitions, like the ones held at Christmas at the Hamburg Museum for Art and Applied Art and in the museum shops. However, such promotion efforts have raised certain doubts. Although such activities will certainly have a stimulating effect on the visitor, it is often argued that the museum's concern should really be to present developments and reflect them, not to exercise an influence on the visitor's taste. This rule may be illusory in view of the role of good displays in forming public opinion. The museum should be something like a catalyst between craftsmen/artists and the public; it should be a kind of a patron, promoting artists by purchasing directly and commissioning work from them, or establishing contacts between them and the public. Regional museums can take an active part in the promotion of crafts, particularly in areas where only a small number of craftsmen/artists are working. But there is something else museums can do for craftsmen. In view of the special social and economic circumstances in which they now find themselves, museums might help — with exhibitions explaining the situation — to give the public a better understanding of the craftman's changing role.

After these remarks on the positive relations between museums and the crafts, I should like to mention a point which has more than once been a matter of discussion. Museums call the public's attention to certain objects, give them a prominent place and introduce them to the visitor, but they also turn them into 'untouchables', by stowing them away in glass cases where they are shown in what has been carefully considered to be the most appropriate light. Crafts are practical, functional things, and this is true not only for utilitarian crafts. In such displays they are robbed of their function. And this mistake used to be made by many museums: objects were cut off from their function, they were nothing more than objects, *l'art pour l'art*. This happened not only in museums of ethnography, but also in many European museums of art.

Before moving on to the role of craft museums in the developing countries, a short remark concerning the role of ethnographic museums in industrialized countries specializing in the crafts of Africa, parts of Asia and Latin America: one of the tasks of these museums is to minimize prejudices about other cultures and their creators. They have therefore to display crafts from these countries in such a way that their importance and value is fully understandable and so that they can be admired for their aesthetic value and their social and economic importance. These museums can also guide the taste and the purchasing attitudes of their visitors. The Hamburgische Museum für Völkerkunde once had an exhibition of pottery from Spain in which special emphasis was laid on places of still existing, good-quality traditional pottery-making. Afterwards an increase of tourists' visits to those places could be observed.

Craft museums in industrialized countries generally play the same role as those in the developing countries. But here one should always keep in mind that in developing countries museums are not specialized to the same degree as those in the industrialized countries. Often, all the different museum exhibits are assembled under one roof, except in the case of a national museum, presenting either art or ethnological exhibits with at the most a natural sciences section added to it.

Because of the special significance of crafts in the developing countries and because of the specific questions and problems connected with the preservation and further development of crafts, the museums in these countries have an additional task to cope with. What is the nature of this additional task?

Comparing it with the role Jacques Anquetil assigns in his essay on museums,[3] we can easily see the difference. His is still the traditional concept of a museum's tasks, and in his opinion the specific purpose of the craft museum is merely to arouse the visitor's interest and to encourage and promote the crafts and handicrafts mainly by acquiring pieces and arranging exhibitions.

The preservation and promotion of crafts have two different aspects: first their preservation as such, that is, as products; second, the necessity to improve the living conditions of craftsmen and artists, or even to create conditions which will enable them to survive. So this would have to be a joint development, that is, a harmonious cultural, economic and social development. It is now no longer a matter of discussion but an established fact that crafts and handicrafts, whether utilitarian, creative or artistic, are a manifestation of a group's or a nation's cultural identity. On the one hand, they transmit the cultural values of the past, and, on the other, they demonstrate the

2. Jacques Anquetil, *CREA Report*, No. 17, Paris, Unesco.
3. Ibid.

particular craftsman's or artist's creative talent. Such crafts have often been contrasted with industrial products, which might easily induce people to romanticize the crafts and handicrafts.

This tendency is very often an expression of dissatisfaction with the present world situation and nostalgia for 'the good old days', or it is a sign of not being able to cope with the challenges of our time. This looking back, which does not lead to anything new, is only retrogressive and conservative. According to Anquetil, it is actually one of the reasons for the decline of crafts and handicrafts. It leads to conserving objects without meaning and function; authenticity, creativity and originality are lost. The production of crafts and handicrafts becomes mere therapeutic activity.

It is a similar process which leads to tourist art, with different causes and different effects. In defining tourist art, one aspect is always its contradiction to traditional art, which also includes crafts and handicrafts. Traditional art had a function for the society, in which aesthetic viewpoints have also been important. If the function of an object changes—either through internal changes or external influences — the object will no longer be produced, unless it acquires a new function. But if there is a demand on the part of collectors, museums or tourists, the objects continue to be produced, as a source of income. They will change according to the taste of the buyers, and new ones are even invented, as in the case of the Kamba carvings of Kenya or those of the Orang Asli in Malaysia.

Tourist art is mostly seen in a negative way. Very often it is considered as 'degenerate' art, especially since the dividing line between it and kitsch is not easy to define. Tourist villages very often give the impression of zoos in which craftsmen are kept. But since the production of tourist art is very often the only source of income for many people, they cannot be blamed for it. And there are many cases of crafts and handicrafts being revived through tourism, for example, in Spain, Tunisia, Mexico and Western Samoa.

Disdain is not the only or the best approach to tourist art. Since all over the world it is an important source of income, several balanced measures have to be taken. On the one hand quality has to be improved and standards kept up, while still suiting the taste of the buyers, since otherwise there would be no sale. On the other hand, the taste of tourists is not a constant dominant factor; it can be changed; it can be guided. Besides cultural factors, social factors argue in favour of the preservation and development of crafts and handicrafts. These are significant since, as we have seen, the situation of human beings is involved. However, it is not only the social and economic benefits of craftsmen or artists that argue in support of efforts to promote crafts and handicrafts. There are also the economic effects such promotional efforts will have on the development of a region or a country.

On the international market there is a growing demand for crafts and handicrafts. In 1984 it was estimated at $2,600 million. The ASEAN countries alone are at present exporting each year crafts worth $100 million. For the production of these objects, each of the ASEAN countries has been creating jobs for a million people. The crafts and handicrafts have thus become an important economic factor, with the additional advantage of requiring much labour and little investment. It has been estimated that about 15 to 20 per cent of the working population in the developing countries are employed in this sector, and that 30 to 50 per cent of the rural population's income comes from the sale of crafts. This includes the recycling crafts, which in Pakistan, according to careful estimates, have a 15 to 25 per cent share in the real GDP. These figures are based on estimates, because much of this kind of work belongs to the informal sector of the economy and therefore does not appear in official statistics. Some of the small-scale crafts operate in secret to avoid taxation, so they do not appear in statistical surveys either.

After the failure of development strategies conceived in the industrialized countries, such as one-sided industrialization, or the so-called trickle-down effect, other possibilities are being considered, particularly in the field of small-scale crafts and — which is often the same thing — in the informal sector of the economy. The application of different standards has been demanded to measure the quality of development efforts. Their purpose should be to meet demands and at the same time create jobs and income. However, it is now insisted that this cannot be done without the people's co-operation, without their determination to help themselves or without their ability to express themselves. Economic growth in terms of

industrialization is no longer a primary concern.

The encouragement and advancement of crafts and handicrafts can thus play a significant part in the economic development of a country. Not only can crafts bring in foreign currency, or help to save it by replacing certain imported products with locally produced ones, but they can also create new jobs which will, in turn, help to improve the country's economic and social structures.

There is a whole catalogue of measures that have been proposed for the purpose of promoting crafts and handicrafts, such as the training of craftsmen (this should include the provision of more information on technologies and their possible further development), assistance with the creation and maintenance of quality, or the marketing of products and the creation of a suitable organizational infrastructure. Here I would stress that all proposals for the advancement of crafts and handicrafts must be specifically adapted to the regional conditions involved, whether they be of a sociocultural, economic or ecological nature.

Even if a detailed description of possible promotional measures cannot be given here, I should like to single out some aspects which might become the concern of museums. For the entire cultural sector with which I have been dealing above, it is a fact that in the museum cultural heritage is assembled, preserved and as such presented to the visitor. Cultural tradition as well as developments becomes evident in the museum. Both these aspects are determining factors in the establishment of a people's cultural identity. Particular emphasis is placed on crafts and handicrafts not only because they are part of the cultural heritage, with all its values, but also because of their significant role in the living culture, as they preserve their authenticity and originality in the face of a technologized world drifting away from its roots. Anquetil defined this identity as follows in describing the handicrafts of South-East Asia: 'The development of handicrafts enabled them to regain possession of their inner selves, their cultural and moral values, self-confidence and dignity, in short, their identity.'

However, museums also provide some information on the sociocultural, economic and ecological environment of crafts and craftsmen, unless their displays are purely object-orientated. Museums demonstrate and explain the conditions under which certain objects have been created and under which they have existed, and they make plain that cultures are not static, but are constantly subjected to changes. Where such knowledge is communicated to the visitor, crafts will not be looked upon as something belonging to the past, but seen realistically, so that the visitor is induced to think about ways and means of preserving such crafts, or adapting them to a changing environment.

As one of the reasons for the decay of crafts and handicrafts, the disregard for manual work and the lack of understanding for the human and spiritual values of manual crafts has been named, combined with an increasing inability to appreciate works of art. This is true for the industrialized as well as the developing countries. Therefore intensified educational efforts are called for to promote the appreciation of the arts. This is where museums can accomplish a significant task, in view of their role in formal and informal education. In addition to such efforts in the cultural field, museums in developing countries might — like some of those in the industrialized countries — do something to improve the social prestige of craftsmen, by stressing their important role in cultural life and preserving cultural values, and by emphasizing furthermore the role of craftsmen in the economic development of a region or country.

Finally, I should like to take up again in this connection an aspect I have touched on before: the role of the museum as a communication and participation centre. In his essay Anquetil mentions the Mediterranean Centre for Creative Handicrafts, which comes under the auspices of the French Government and whose aims he describes as follows:

> *Its main objectives are to take creative crafts out of their traditional isolation* and to try to serve at one and the same time as a centre for information, exchanges, creation, reflection, co-ordination, research, experimentation, training and distribution, and *above all as a meeting-place of an interdisciplinary and intercultural nature where the cultural and professional identity of one and all is respected and mutually appreciated.*

In view of the museum's newly adopted tasks, the role of this centre might well be played by it. If museums fail to do that, they will have missed their chance to respond to the challenge, but one must admit that many, such as eco-museums and

regional museums, have responded to the challenge.

The opportunities that museums have been given for the advancement of crafts and handicrafts are evident, as they go with the museum's function as a cultural institution. However, there is still another way in which museums can help. To be able to maintain certain standards, one needs, as has often been stated, an inventory of crafts, a complete register including information on the sociocultural, economic and ecological environment of the objects. Information on the role of craftswomen is, in this connection, considered to be of particular importance.

During a seminar on the role of regional museums in West Africa (Lomé, Togo, May 1985), under the auspices of the International African Institute, the establishment of such national data banks, which would later feed into a regional data bank, was postulated by Professor Adande of Benin. In Mali the Musée National du Mali is having a decisive share in a project for the documentation of the country's entire material culture. This project is currently being prepared and, if the necessary funds can be made available, it will be a pilot for similar projects in other parts of the world. Anquetil feels that such data banks for crafts are expandable: 'This data bank could build up its stock gradually, and ulimately cover all the cultural products of the region, including films, plays, painting and sculpture, literature, audio and video recordings', a vision which will perhaps become reality with the Inventory Project in Mali. A data bank such as this, covering a wide range of cultural phenomena, would enable the people concerned to take into consideration the specific environmental qualities of a certain region, before proposing measures for the promotion of local crafts and handicrafts.

Not only in the field of documentation, but in that of research too, museums can play an important part, for example by calling attention to certain traditional technologies and forms which may be revitalized. Museums may also become active in the field of applied research, and the improvement and adaptation of technologies, as in the case of the Himalayan watermill mentioned above. However, museums should not only be centres of research, they should also have workshops where, in co-operation with skilled craftsmen, the most suitable technologies may be discovered and where people can be trained in the use of such technologies. The prerequisites for such combined efforts have in a unique way been created by the National Council of Science in India, with its highly sophisticated science centres, on the one hand, and its district science centres in less developed regions, on the other.

More in keeping with the traditional role of the museums is the role they are playing in the marketing of crafts and handicrafts. Here the museum's main concern is to publicize the exhibits and to set standards by arranging displays in the countries of origin and abroad.

If the idea is accepted that the museum should take care of these tasks connected with the advancement and preservation of crafts, what would the practical consequences be?

First of all, it means a greater awareness of the task and the possibilities involved, both on the part of museums and institutions which group together and represent craftsmen. In a concrete way, it could mean that ICOM, the NGO for the museums, should take up the Unesco recommendations concerning crafts, or those of the WCC, and recommend that its members, and especially certain of its international committees, be active in this field. These international committees which could be asked to co-operate are the International Committee of Museums of Ethnography, the International Committee of Museums of Applied Arts, the International Committee of Regional Museums, and the International Committee of Eco-Museums, which is at the moment in the process of being formed.[4] Their working groups could perform practical tasks, in close co-operation with the WCC and with national and regional groupings of craftsmen. For example they could carry out pilot projects concerning museum shops, craft studios, improved educational activities involving craftsmen, or travelling exhibitions, which could range from the size of museum kits to elaborate art exhibitions.

But museums could also help, as explained above, in building up inventories or data banks of crafts, which could be the basis for further developments. In the developing countries, museums, especially regional and local ones, could play an active role in the preservation and development of crafts. In the present discussion about the role of these museums the craft aspect should be brought in as soon and as strongly as possible.[5]

4. Founded in the meantime as MINOM (International Movement for a New Museology) which became an affiliated association to ICOM.

5. ICOM could help to establish the necessary contacts. Effective co-operation also needs a greater awareness of governmental organizations for crafts and museums, otherwise neither will have the necessary support. As the late Mrs Grace Morley, the famous promoter of museum development in Asia, once stressed at a conference entitled 'Museums and Rural Community' in India, a joint project of Thailand's National Museum with the Department of Adult Education to help farmers near Lopburi failed because the subordinate officers of the Adult Literacy Programmes did not help, since they 'were not committed to the principle of visual communication'.
To provide a basis for further activities, co-operation should not only be established between ICOM, the WCC and Unesco, but also with the Federation for the Development of Utilitarian Handicrafts (FEDEAU).
This conference may propose relevant recommendations in this direction and create the institutional basis for co-operation on the side of the WCC, maybe in the form of a working group.

Extract from the Jakarta Declaration of the International Crafts Conference

organized by the World Crafts Council, August 1985

MUSEUMS

Commission V agreed that museums must be attractive, inviting and vital, placing objects within the social context and reflecting the tradition and heritage of a culture: the past, the present, and looking toward the future. As well as sources of information, they must be a living part of the community, where all are free to participate. They should promote the craft and the maker, providing opportunities for local and exchange exhibitions, for demonstrations, workshops, sales and the education of craftsmen and the public.

The promotion and well-being of the craftsman must have priority in craft organizations.

Recommendations

1. That museums play a more important role in the development process.
2. That WCC asks museums to give more attention to people in remote areas as they also may benefit from museum work in the centres.
3. That museums be aware that continuity is very important in the preservation of cultural heritage. All museums for crafts having mainly historical collections, in both developing and industrialized countries, should make the link with the actual production of crafts and place them in the context of today's everyday life. Staffs must be trained for the purpose, in order to make museums more alive and more attractive. Shops with selected present-day crafts could be established.
4. That all museums, and especially those in developing countries, publish their collections in illustrated catalogues for use in scientific study and as examples for craftsmen.
5. That WCC asks that all development projects have a certain percentage of funds set aside for the preservation of crafts and the betterment of working conditions for craftspeople.
6. That museums and traditional craft industries which are located within the urban/rural historic/traditional living environment must be taken into account in the city's development process.
7. That WCC encourages national craft organizations to accept their responsibility to promote in their museums crafts now being produced. This can include assisting in the training of staff for their activities in the promotion of those crafts.
8. That crafts organizations recognize the welfare of the craftsman as a top priority.

Resolutions

(a) Be it resolved that a working group be established between WCC and ICOM (International Council of Museums) in order to promote co-operation between museums and craftspeople.

(b) Be it resolved that WCC acts as a clearing house for information on:
- (i) Museum projects dealing with crafts;
- (ii) Sources of potential funding;
- (iii) Training opportunities;
- (iv) Technical assistance and consultants.

The role of a craft museum in marketing/promoting crafts, and the Lakpahana experience

Sivagamie Verina Obeyesekere

Born in 1929 in Sri Lanka. Founder member of Sri Lanka Freedom Party in 1952. Chairman, Small Industries Advisory Board, 1961. In 1962 was Delegate to International Co-operative Conference, New Delhi (Sri Lanka Women's Conference). Chairman of the Accommodation Commission, Tourist Development Council, 1963. Established Laksala (National Cottage Industries Emporium, Chairman, Advisory Board) in 1964. Member of Parliament for Mirigama in 1965. First Woman Speaker of the House of Parliament in 1968. Re-elected Member of Parliament for Mirigama. Deputy Minister of Health in 1970. Organized and established the Sri Lanka National Family Health Programme in 1972. Established Lakpahana, private sector organization for development of Handicrafts and appointed Director in 1973. Minister of Health in 1975. Vice-President, WHO Assembly, Geneva, Switzerland in 1977. United Nations Consultant on Population Needs Mission to Sri Lanka 1978/80. Since 1979 Delegate to committees of the World Crafts Council in Japan, Austria, Indonesia, India and other countries. Member of various associations, particularly concerned with public health. Chairman of the Sri Lanka National Artisans' and Craftsmen's Association; has served in numerous other voluntary and social service organizations.

A museum is defined (in *Webster's New World Dictionary*, 1973) as a 'building or area used for exhibiting interesting objects connected with literature, art, science, history or nature'. Dr Herbert Ganslmayr[1] says that

> it is a place where objects are collected, no longer mostly from the past, where they are looked after and on display, at least a very small part of them. But museums are still associated with the past and with dust, as the public does not realize the role museums are already playing in solving problems of the present and predicting those of the future.

In most Western countries buildings set aside for such purposes are now commonplace. Museums as we know them today are highly specialized organizations that have become integrated into the socio-economic, technological, philosophical and artistic concepts of nations.

A national museum embodying all the aspects of human life is too vast a project to be encompassed by one complex organization. Diversification into various specialized fields is necessary to ensure adequate treatment and acquisition; archaeology, religion, ethnology, anthropology, arts and crafts, to name only a few, are special subjects requiring different methods.

The need for special crafts museums is experienced in many countries for various reasons: in Nepal because of the rapidly growing social changes which have accelerated the process of urbanization, resulting in the loss of creative abilities; in Mexico because of the imminent threat of debasement of traditional crafts by the production of cheap souvenirs for tourists.

'The Role of the Museum in Changing Asian Societies with Special Reference to its Role in Preserving and Strengthening Traditional, Rural and Tribal Cultures' was the subject of a Regional Symposium in Sri Lanka in 1977, and many valuable contributions were presented with reference to fine examples of museums in the Asian Region. Dr Grace Morley in her presentation stated that, in New Delhi, India, the role of the Crafts Museum, with its recently founded Village Complex, was providing fine older models for designers and artisans and, in attracting the interest of the public, providing enjoyment, but also instruction on high standards of handicrafts, as a museum's outstanding contribution to this field.

In Sri Lanka, traditional crafts are facing gradual but inevitable decline in the face of the slowly rising and menacing tide of science and technology combined with the growing trend towards urbanization and industrialization and the efforts made to change the life-style of rural people. On the other hand, Sri Lanka with its high literacy levels could well set an example of development in craft production through improved skills and the reduction of the drudgery of labour.

A nation's arts and crafts are a part of its cultural heritage, giving it its individuality, reflecting the life-style of its people, and it is absolutely necessary to protect and preserve for posterity the many material, as well as non-material, forms of this heritage that still exist. This is the prime function of a crafts museum.

A museum should not be seen as a place where antiquities are stored away, to be viewed occasionally by research students or by visitors, tourists, schoolchildren and other casual sightseers. Still less should a crafts museum be seen in this way. In the present context, a

1. See his article on page 2 above.
2. See Mohamed Aziz Lahbabi, 'The Museum and the Protection of the Cultural Heritage of the Maghreb,' *Museum*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3, 1976, p. 145.

museum, or more precisely a crafts museum, is not understood to be a repository of handcrafted things of beauty rendered obsolete by the passage of time. It is seen rather as a storehouse where items are displayed and arranged carefully for the eye not only of the connoisseur, but also of those who need to purchase them for their utility or for their beauty-cum-utility, or for the sheer delight of possessing replicas of them.

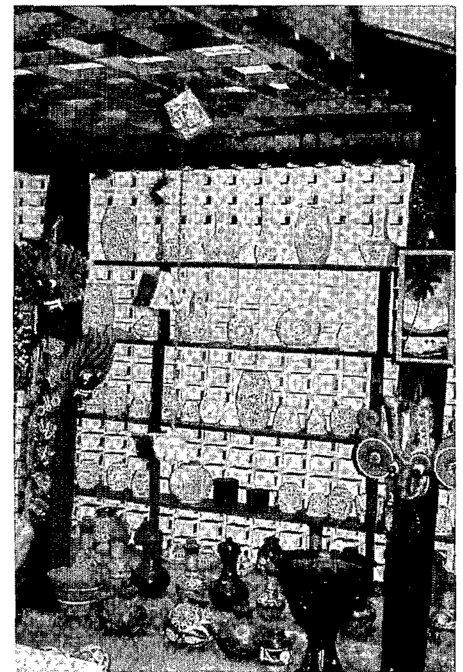
The objectives of such an institute need not be confined to the mere collection and documentation of artefacts and cultural forms within a given field. They could be more general and far-reaching, to provide a living testimony to the history of a nation through the ages. This history would epitomize the nation's dreams, hopes, reverses and aspirations as they are embodied in the vestiges of the past and the achievements of the present. It is thus the crafts museum's task to offer both to the eye and to the mind a concrete and scientific representation of national culture. It is a medium of cultural information which rescues from oblivion and safeguards the foundations of a nation's culture, but without detracting from their authenticity as other media such as the press or cinema are liable to do. It lets the objects speak for themselves.

Culture may be defined as all of a man's acquisitions in the scientific, technical and artistic fields by means of which he takes over the raw material of nature, transforms it and uses it for his own purposes. Thus, the invention of the ploughshare, whose importance for man's evolution was greater than that of the pyramids etc., forms part of the cultural heritage of mankind. Human culture is the only culture there is, as each national culture is an expression of man's presence in a specific natural environment within us, which is a part of our daily lives. It is the function of museums to be the living memory of the people and for the people.

This being so, the crafts museum should contain not only paintings, sculptures, weapons and ornaments, but also everything that binds people to their native soil and to their ancestors.[2]

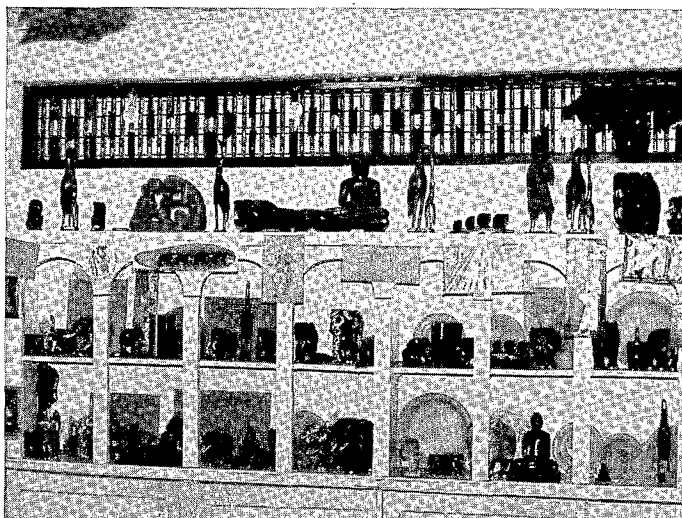
Crafts are many and varied. They are a combination of crude raw material and human skill. The skill may be imposed on the raw material by carving or weaving or moulding or other variations of these three basic techniques. The raw material could be metal (gold, silver, brass, etc.), wood, clay, thread, cloth, paper, rushes, reeds, grasses, leather, feathers, ivory, shell, quills, horn or a host of other such materials. A crafts museum would hold within its walls a full range of this vast miscellany, displayed in such an order that the beholder would view the crafts in their various aspects — the evolution of each craft unfolding its development throughout the ages, and depicting the heritage of a people. The understanding and appreciation of this cultural aspect would certainly serve to promote the value of these crafts.

A crafts museum would also display, to the discerning eye, each different skill, whether simple or highly technical, which has been available during certain periods, in a specific country, culture or tradition. For instance, remnants of clayware from each age are displayed systematically, showing the development of pottery; various designs and shapes in brassware; or designs, shapes and colours in a range of masks. Such displays convey an idea of the available technical skill on which to build, so as to use that skill for the production of items to meet current market demands. In Sri Lanka the rustic pottery that has developed over the ages into exquisite pieces of art and handicraft points towards various possibilities which are used to meet modern market needs eventually leading to glazed pottery, in various modern, abstract styles comparable to the most exquisite pieces of classical Greek or Italian pottery (Figs. 1 and 2). The age-old art of carving, while being preserved, has allowed itself to be developed into meeting the requirements of a market for art in objects of utilitarian value (Fig. 3). A crafts museum could then exhibit the availability of skills from among which technology appropriate to particular needs could be identified and built upon in order to meet market needs. A well-organized and laid-out crafts museum would display so many skills that it would be a demonstration of the



1
Red clay pottery with design and biscuit pottery — very fragile!

2
Hand-thrown pottery in red clay and painted figurines.



3
Carvings in different coloured woods.

4
Brass- and silverware.

possibilities that a particular heritage offers.

A crafts museum would, from its vast range of materials, depict the growth and evolution of skills, the variations in these skills when used on different raw materials and other such valuable information. It would show the visitor and the student how the technique of moulding varies when it is used on brass (Fig. 4) or silver in comparison to its use on clay; how the technique of carving varies when it is used on wood as against its use on brass, silver, copper or gold; how the technique of weaving varies when applied to thread (into lace), rushes and reeds (into basketing or mats), or fibre (into rugs or mats). A museum would also offer a display of each stage of the development of each of these techniques when applied to each different raw material. Really a crafts museum would display and reveal how all these 'dead' materials are given life by manual skills.

From the point of view of the craftsman, a crafts museum would comprise a vital source of inspiration on which to draw. It would be a design house from which to select, emulate and improve, or a departure point for innovation. The museum would be a store-house from which to obtain design elements, particularly lesser-known ones during a given period in time. Out of these elements the craftsman would be able to produce new excellence. The awareness that a museum would give to a craftsman, that he is not alone in the field but the heir to a long tradition which has expressed itself in evolving tangible forms, would necessarily be an inspiration to him, both to preserve the craft's purity and to improve it by innovations calculated to meet current needs and demands.

Crafts are a backdrop to ceremony (Fig. 5). In a particular culture they gain a utility value in a very special sense. In Sri Lanka, for example, as in India, the oil lamp is the bearer of light for common use and it also has a votive use at the time of domestic rites, festivals and ceremonies. It is fully lit, using all seven, sometimes nine, wicks, on auspicious and ceremonial occasions, in symbolic respresentation of the endless increase of light and knowledge produced by the unstinted sharing of wisdom. Hence in Eastern culture the lamp is doubly valuable in a utilitarian sense. This value itself leads directly to the development of a local consumer market. Similarly, in the case of jewellery, Sri Lanka is not alone in recognizing 'utility' value on ceremonial occasions. A wedding is never complete without precious gems, silver and gold adorning the bride and even the meanest guest. Even the clay pot is needed as a setting for traditional coconut flower arrangements at a wedding ceremony, symbolizing the dawn of prosperity. It is also used to boil milk on auspicious occasions like a housewarming ceremony, the spilling over of the milk symbolizing a surfeit of prosperity.

Apart from ceremonies, the crafts are of day-to-day use. For example, a mat (Fig. 6) is used for sleeping or sitting on, a bag is used for shopping, and in more modern usage they become beach bags or beach mats. In fact the vast array of crafts in the Asian countries owe their origin to human needs in daily life. The numerous festivals in a calendar year provide another demand for crafts. With the passage of time craft objects have also

developed an ornamental value. Thus the demand has developed and branched out into many dimensions.

Indigenous crafts and craftsmen flourished under the patronage of kings and nobles in ancient times, but their displacement by foreign overlords caused a radical change in social values. Craftsmen, who ranked next to noblemen, Hondrews, as Robert Knox calls them, were relegated to a much lower social position by a new élite emerging under British patronage, and their work was demoted to an inferior status. Since independence, a slow but inexorable change in social values has taken place, towards restoring the craftsmen to their former position.

Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, author of *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art*, foresaw this decline in 1908 when he wrote:

> In Ceylon, as in India, the direct and indirect influence of contact with the West has been fatal to the arts. The two most direct causes of this adverse influence have been the destruction of the organization of state-craftsmen, following upon the British occupation; and the subsequent systematic neglect, by British and Sinhalese alike, of a local architectural tradition. A less direct, but equally sure and certain, cause of the decline of the arts has been the growth of commercialism, that system of production under which the work of European machines and machine-like men has in the East driven the village weaver from his loom, the craftsman from his tools, the ploughman from his songs, and has divorced art from labour. In the words of Blake:
>
> When nations grow old,
> The Arts grow cold,
> And commerce settles on every tree.
>
> In such grim fashion has commerce settled in the East.

In this context a repository for the products and their genius in the form of a craft museum would contribute in no small measure to the recognition of the importance of craftsmen and a change in popular feeling towards them. This would ensure a logical evolution from the old to the new following a regular pattern of cultural change against the background of the social changes taking place.

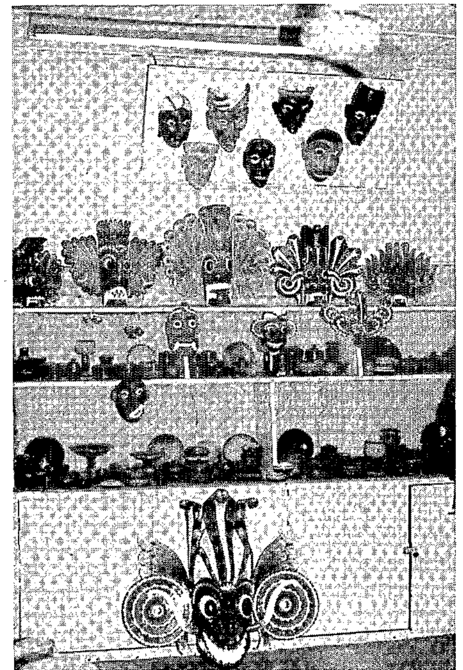
In the Asian countries, crafts museums have a new and important responsibility for the promotion of handicrafts within the country and thereby creating a further interest abroad.

Dr Herbert Ganslmayr, in his article above, very clearly states some of these functions and requirements for the promotion of crafts.

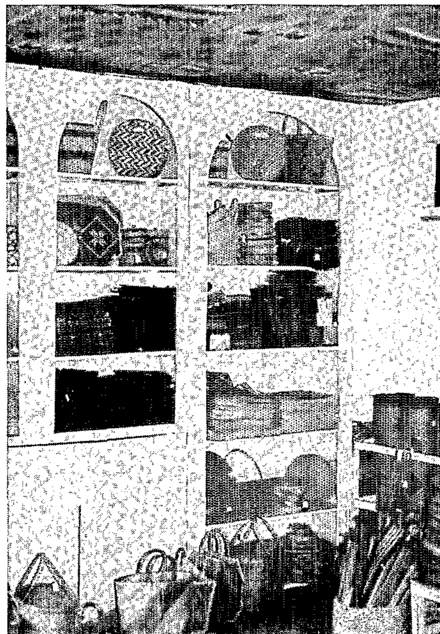
In view of these considerations, the main functions of a crafts museum may be summarized as follows:

Conservation: (a) storage of all crafted objects available; (b) systematic collection of past and present-day objects for the purposes of study, display and loan to craftsmen; (c) systematic recording of the forms, patterns and designs used in the main crafts. I would like to add that a great deal of our valuable artefacts are being taken out of our countries, as our craftspeople do not realize the value of keeping them.

Revival of crafts. Of special importance are: (a) the revival of old crafts drawing



5
Traditional and *kolam* masks used in folk dances, rituals and ceremonies, and lacquer ware for functional use.



6
Rush- and reedware with a fine-weave matting with design for the ceiling.

on objects preserved in public or private collections; and (b) the encouragement of apprenticeship wherever Master Craftsmen are available to teach these crafts. For example, in Sri Lanka in the early 1960s, when serious efforts were made for the first time to revive and develop crafts in the country, an emporium named Laksala was established to promote the marketing of crafts. Not only did this venture open the doors to a complete revival of crafts in Sri Lanka, but it also highlighted the fact that many crafts were in imminent danger of dying out. Immediately, a preservation and protective scheme in the form of a Master Craftsmen Apprenticeship programme was launched, and this far-sightedness has led to greater involvement of people in craftwork, particularly in the traditional crafts.

Loan of exhibits. The organization of direct loans or exhibitions, showing craftsmen's design changes by means of photographs and artefacts, to familiarize them with old products of their craft. For this purpose, specimens from their own locality are used, so as to maintain the purity of the local styles and designs of each community or region. For example, very recently Lakpahana participated in a national exhibition, and took the opportunity of presenting to the public the entire range of traditional jewellery in the form of chains, necklaces and *paddakams* (large pendants) worn down the ages by Sri Lankan women, each chain having a name of special significance. It was an opportunity to compare the old (borrowed from private collections) and the new, and to observe how standards both in design and style, although in quality good, had deteriorated through commercialism inspired by Western influence. Here then was an opportunity for Lakpahana to work with its members to rectify this situation, by showing and teaching craftworkers ways to recover lost quality. Traditional craftspeople rarely keep an example of each of their designs, and thus each generation loses some of the original beauty of form. This was clearly seen in the Lakpahana experience.

Organizing temporary and travelling exhibitions. The need to organize such exhibitions both within a country and outside it cannot be overemphasized. The ignorance among our own people about the variety of handcrafted articles made by their own people is amazing. Knowledge is lacking even regarding the raw material used or the techniques involved in their production. Greater emphasis must be placed on educating the people within a country, and crafts museums could play a real promotional role, especially by organizing regional exhibitions — not competitions — and travelling exhibitions for students in school. For example, recently a group of craftspeople from Thailand, accompanied by Sri Lankans, visited Lakpahana. At the end of the lecture tour, it was the Sri Lankans who were particularly grateful for the experience, and for the knowledge they had gained about the crafts of their own country. Craft emporia too could co-ordinate the research efforts of museums.

Travelling exhibitions both in Asian countries and elsewhere would be of immense promotional value. I am aware

7
Some of the members of the Sri Lanka National Artisans' and Craftsmen's Association, rich in traditional skills and producers of the most beautiful handicrafts in Sri Lanka.

that it was attempted in Canada with success, and recently the Bangladesh Artisans Workshop provided an eye-opener through the wonderful opportunity that craftsmen had enjoyed, benefiting from the experience of meeting similar craftspeople from fourteen other countries in the region. Such an experience brings unity to human aspirations.

The use of crafted objects and the real recognition of the value of those who make them, the credibility of the creative spirit translated into visual reality, will confer on the living museum a promotional and vitalizing role in endogenous development.

Information and publicity. Crafts museums have a unique responsibility in this important area. A library with publications on every aspect of craft development is an important requirement, not only for craftsmen but for students of crafts. Few institutions engaged in marketing have the time to do research to produce the relevant information which, if made available with a craft item, would actually increase sales opportunities. Publicity campaigns through the wide range of media available would both increase domestic sales and exports and deepen appreciation for handcrafted articles in the face of the tremendous competitive market of industrialized goods. An article becomes a real living item when its history is known. Thus crafts museums could award scholarships, grants or other facilities to research students and make such information available, which would play a positive role in promoting and marketing crafts and contribute to the survival of crafts.

Financial assistance to craftworkers. Crafts museums could, through their own programmes or through advice to public and private organizations, provide financial and technical aid for the most skilled and outstanding craftsmen, so as to raise the standards of their work and production, and re-establish a link with old traditions and design. In this way they could influence other craftsmen to produce objects of quality. Such assistance would also help to spread the good influence of crafts museums. However, there are other financial needs of craftsmen and craftswomen in their daily work, such as the purchase of raw materials and tools or other equipment. Such support, if organized through other available channels, would eliminate the stress and difficulties they often suffer in simply practising their trade.

Demonstrations of crafts. The crafts museum need not be static; it could play a living role, by arranging for demonstrations of crafts 'from the raw material to the finished product' — so that it becomes a cultural centre. Here the visitor would have the opportunity of taking an active part, and there would be room for interaction and communication. The educational process thus derived from such demonstrations is well known in Asian countries to be one of the best promotional features in crafts development.

In Sri Lanka, in 1974, the Tenth Anniversary Exhibition, to commemorate the founding of Laksala (Cottage Industries Emporium), provided, for the first time on such a large scale, a demonstration of all crafts including hand-loom weaving. This latter was the most successful in providing knowledge to the public and status and financial reward to the craftsmen. Since then Lakpahana has regularly provided such demonstrations for international meetings, and the crafts represented are enriched by the appreciation of the spectators, who in fact often wish to purchase what they have witnessed being produced. In the centre of Sri Lanka, which used to be known as the Kandyan Kingdom, where the largest group of craftsmen still live and work, the Kandyan Arts and Crafts Association was formed over a century ago in 1882. Here there are daily demonstrations of selected crafts, of great interest to those who visit them.

Thus, a crafts musem can come alive, and such activities can forge a strong link between the museum and the crafts com-

8
'Lakpahana' — the home for marketing the handicrafts of 400 craft members, set in quiet surroundings, and serving the needs of craftspeople and consumers.

munities, promoting the value of their work.

Welfare of craftspeople. Few countries have reliable data on their own craftspeople and Sri Lanka is no exception. To solve this serious problem, crafts museums could take the following steps:

Carry out a general survey of all craftspeople — full time, part time and seasonal.

Make a general inventory of past and present-day crafts and their products.

Make a study of technical and commercial problems facing folk art.

Organize regional studies of crafts and their problems.

Analyse living conditions — housing, health and working conditions.

Make an economic study, showing that craftspeople are valuable contributors to the foreign-exchange earnings of the country; this would involve requesting relevant Ministries and organizations to classify crafts in a separate category and making information available to policy-makers so that they can make budgetary allocations for development programmes in the crafts sector.

Guide and support programmes that will give training and education to craftsmen so that they can secure prices satisfactory for both to the producer and the consumer.

Initiate schemes for national awards. (Reference to 23.8, p. 52, of the background paper on 'The Handicraft Industry in Selected Asian Countries' by C. H. Obeyesekere, is relevant.)

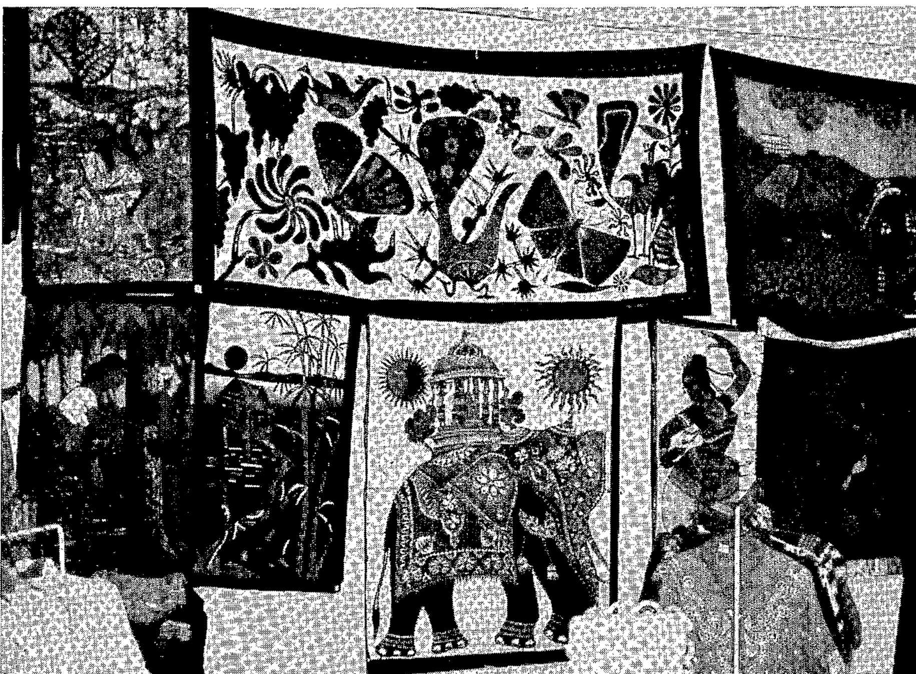
Production processes in relation to Sri Lanka

In general, the working and living conditions of craftspeople are very poor. Therefore, it is important that governments should provide the means by which basic amenities such as higher wages, social-security benefits, improved occupational safety, housing and education can be provided. For instance, a scheme to provide pensions to craftsmen in needy circumstances is a very good way to provide some form of social security to the craft community. Literacy is another area that requires attention. For real progress it is important that craftspeople become literate.

Young people while receiving craft-training either as apprentices or as regular trainees in private or government centres should at the same time be provided with facilities for improving their literacy. We would thus have what is highly desirable — literate craftsmen. Education whether informal or formal would impart independence, dignity and social status to the profession in addition to providing competence.

However, not only must the earning and working conditions of craftspeople improve but their skills must be maintained and respected as well. Therefore, there must be prestige as well as financial rewards. Craftspeople must be honoured with national awards.

In the context of the role of the crafts museum the Lakpahana story should be mentioned.



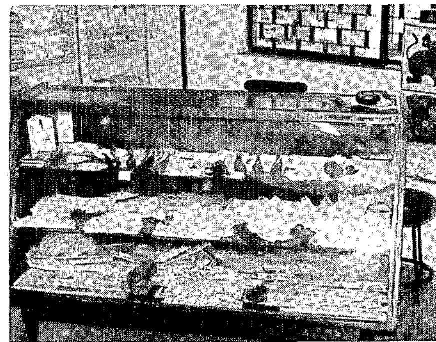
9
Hand-painted *Batik* wall hangings.

Lakpahana means 'the light of Lanka'. In a traditional sense it is a fitting name for a crafts marketing outlet, and as light banishes darkness Lakpahana hopes to bring light to the craftworkers, who toil to preserve the cultural heritage for all of us.

The Lakpahana experience is firmly linked with the Sri Lanka National Artisans' and Craftsmen's Association (Fig. 7) with its membership of 400 traditional and new craftspeople. Individually and personally, we are concerned not only for their production but for their physical and mental welfare. We have witnessed many tragic situations, particularly with old age. One programme for relief in old age is the very successful Savings Deposit Passbook Scheme, which has already proved to be of great benefit. Besides this, friendly relationships and continuous dialogue have created an atmosphere of greater understanding with regard to the value of producing quality crafts, both traditional and new. Craftspeople are slow to accept change in design or methods, but respond eventually. It is not easy to bring diverse communities and persons in crafts together, but the assurance of good marketing opportunities and welfare programmes enables them to care for each other. This has been a rewarding experience (Fig. 8).

How is Lakpahana able to keep alive in difficult conditions? It is faced with an open economic policy which is flooding the markets with every known and unknown imported article, and with the competition of government emporia, which have monopolies over trading and production entities in certain commodities, and have their overheads supported by public funds and reduced mark-ups, in addition to which the present tourist export market is depleted. When Lakpahana was established it was to be kept small, but it represented all Sri Lankan handicrafts under one roof. We wished to have the time to work closely with craftspeople, in order to encourage quality, purity of work and perfection in design as far as possible, and we were content to sell in small quantities, but in a short space of time the supply could not match the demand (Figs. 9-12). More important to me was to witness a craft revival in our membership. Having worked with craftspeople for the past thirty years, I am happy to see in my lifetime a third and even fourth generation of craftspeople, enthusiastically involved in production. The membership of the national Artisans' and Craftsmen's Association is there in full strength to make people aware of crafts. They come and not only see, but by touching, feel through the object, the spirit, the artwork and the design that has unfolded and manifested a human aspiration to create a demand and an appreciation in the minds of the buyers. There will always be that hunger, not only from within Asian countries, but from outside as well. Lakpahana enjoys the experience of being, like all true crafts emporia, a living crafts museum, both for the connoisseurs of artefacts and for the average users of folk art in their lives and homes. Thus when our Crafts Association establishes a crafts museum in the near future it will create that link with the past and present in recognition of one of the most beautiful and traditional sectors of our country which, though economically poor, is so rich culturally.

10
Carved ivory ornaments and delicate tortoiseshell articles and jewellery.

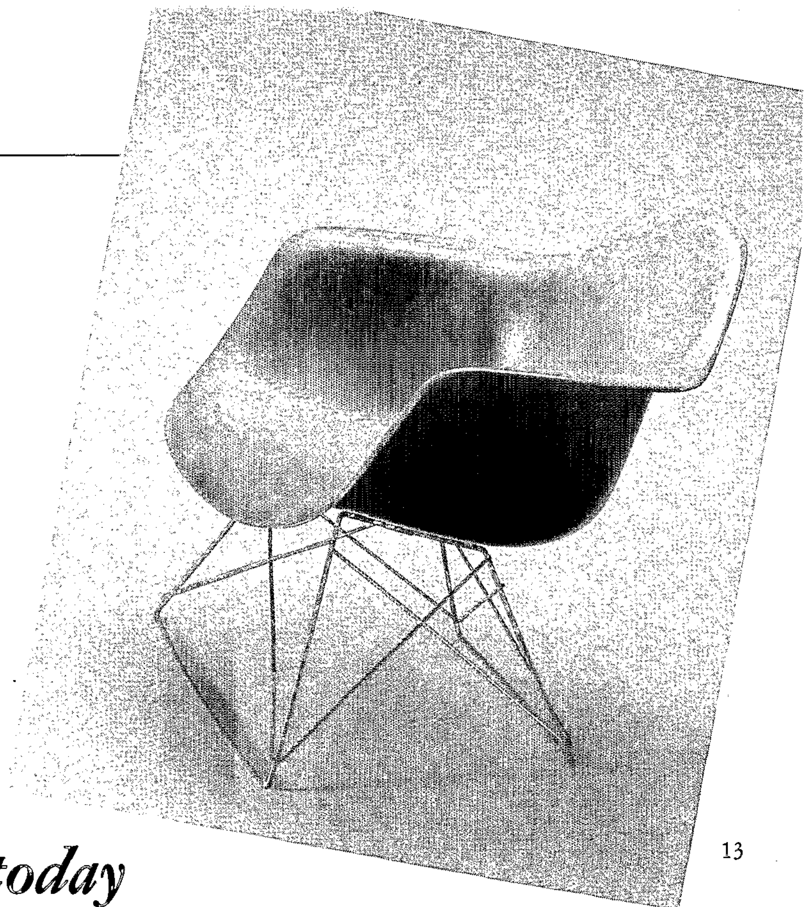


11
Hand-made '*pollow*' lace.

12
Hand-painted *batik* wall-hangings and ready-made clothes.

We have faith in all our efforts. As we have seen over the last thirty years, the WCC has made, and is making, a strong impact on all its member countries. Every meeting has brought out new dimensions of craft development and more emphatically of the welfare of craft workers. As Mahathma Gandhi said:

> True beautiful creations come when right perception is at work. If these moments are rare in life they are also rare in art! ... Meetings and group organizations are all right. They are of some help, but very little. They are like a scaffolding that an architect erects — a temporary and makeshift expedient. The thing that really matters is an invincible faith that cannot be quenched.



The role of applied arts museums today

Jarno Juhani Peltonen

Born in 1936 in Tampere, Finland. M.A. from the University of Helsinki (History of Art and Architecture, Ethnology, Pedagogy, English Philology, Romance Philology) in 1964; teacher-training course from 1965 to 1966. From 1962 to 1967 was Assistant on National Board of Antiquities and Historical Sites (Underwater Archaeology). From 1968 to 1970 Curator and, from 1971 to 1978, Director of the Helsinki City Museum. Since 1978 Director of the Museum of Applied Arts, Helsinki. Lecturer at University of Helsinki for a special course in elementary museology (training course) since 1974; elected member of the Museum Negotiating Committee (Ministry of Education), 1978-81; member of the Cultural Section of the Finnish National Commission for Unesco (1975, 1977 and 1978). Several study tours abroad, in particular ICCROM courses on museum security, climate and lighting, 1976, 1978. Has published various articles on museum display, urban ethnology and museum documentation. Chairman of the Finnish National Committee of ICOM, 1973-84.

13
Easy chair by Charles and Ray Eames, 1949.

Many leading industrialized countries have an important special type of museum — museums of applied arts. The oldest of these were established in the latter half of the nineteenth century when industrialization began to gain momentum. They were probably the first specialized museums to have aims and ideas that were common throughout the world.

Concern for the environment, quality of life, and aesthetic values have brought these museums back to the foreground. Applied arts — industrial design and arts and crafts — are finding their way into more and more museums, while the number of museums concentrating on design is also increasing. Meanwhile, traditional handicrafts and techniques are being collected on an increasing scale throughout the world.

Museums of applied arts were first established at the dawn of the industrial era, and today they are institutions with a variety of descriptive and research functions based on scientific principles. Their tasks include collecting representative specimens of national and international trends in applied arts and promoting respect for tradition and cultural exchange, both of which are essential in establishing a cultural identity. What were originally collections of models for industrial production and exhibits representing the achievements of other cultures, compiled in the interests of educational institutions and those working in design, have become popular museums presenting the design of the industrial era. Of all the different kinds of museums, applied arts museums have perhaps been the ones most clearly endowed with a dual function, since they serve both to explain traditions and to open up new perspectives for the future.

These museums carry out their research and collecting independently. Of their original purpose, a close connection with training has survived, and it has even expanded to comprise instruction in institutions such as comprehensive and vocational schools. The formation of comprehensive national collections is a primary target, but it is generally also considered important to follow international design trends and collect important works from around the world.

The role of the museums of applied arts is becoming more important in strengthening national identity, while at the same time being international in character. Museums must keep up with the times in collecting exhibits which document the present day. They must be prepared to acquire objects when they are new. The message of exhibits and the criteria according to which they are selected change with the times. In the acquisition of exhibits for collections, the reasons for acquiring them must be carefully documented, in addition to other new information on design. Thus collections may comprise exhibits which were never produced industrially.

Museums may also collect other information concerning production, planning, use and evaluation. In this way they fulfil their great educational potential.

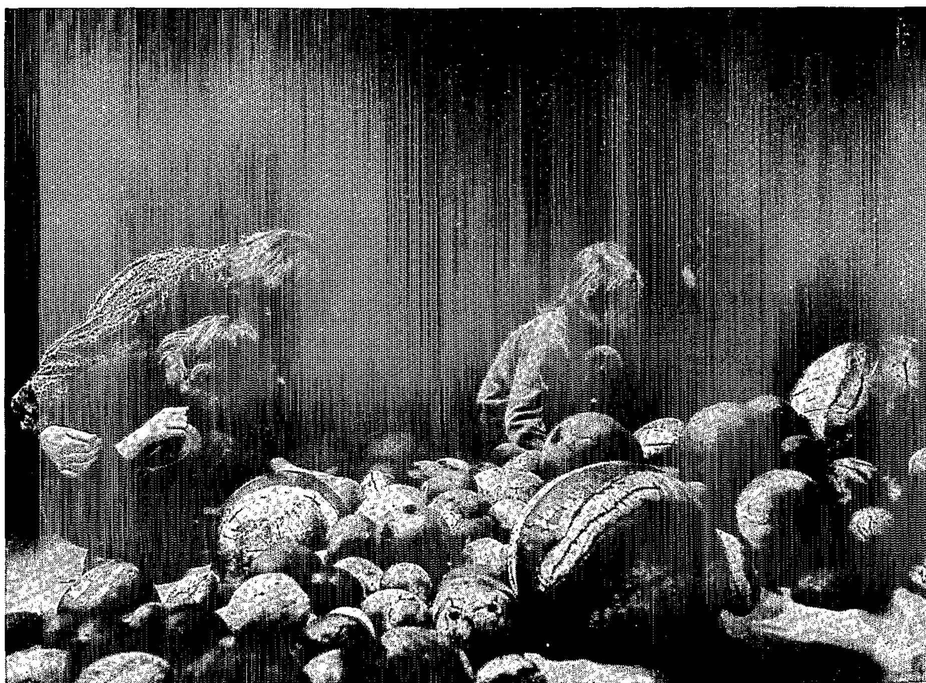
Compared with nineteenth-century objects, many modern ones cause problems, one of which is the durability of their materials. For these and other reasons, the conservator's work is taking on new dimensions. Reproductions of old models have brought up the problem of museum ethics. Sometimes there are no originals in existence, and thus reproductions are the only alternative. Although this may be unsatisfactory, the fact that an object is reproduced is in itself a proof of its popularity and significance in a new environment and new conditions, and thus contributes to the overall picture of design. Another issue is the 'outside-inside' question. Is it enough to exhibit the mere shell of an appliance which is a product of industrial design? Does the casing of a television or radio set represent the function of the objects adequately? The question can be interpreted in various ways. Can a museum present all the meanings of an exhibit if the exhibit is not operable? This is where other museums can help. Is the acquisition of such objects the role of a technological museum for instance?

Preservation is becoming more and more topical. One of the functions of museums is to ensure that artefacts are preserved. The museums should also react to change — such as restyling of interiors, and they could also be consulted when changes are being planned.

Another great responsibility in museum documentation is educating the public. Changing and influencing consumers' ideas on style and taste is a slow process at best, and to do it effectively museums must keep in step with consumer research and general social trends, and formulate their programmes against the background provided by them.

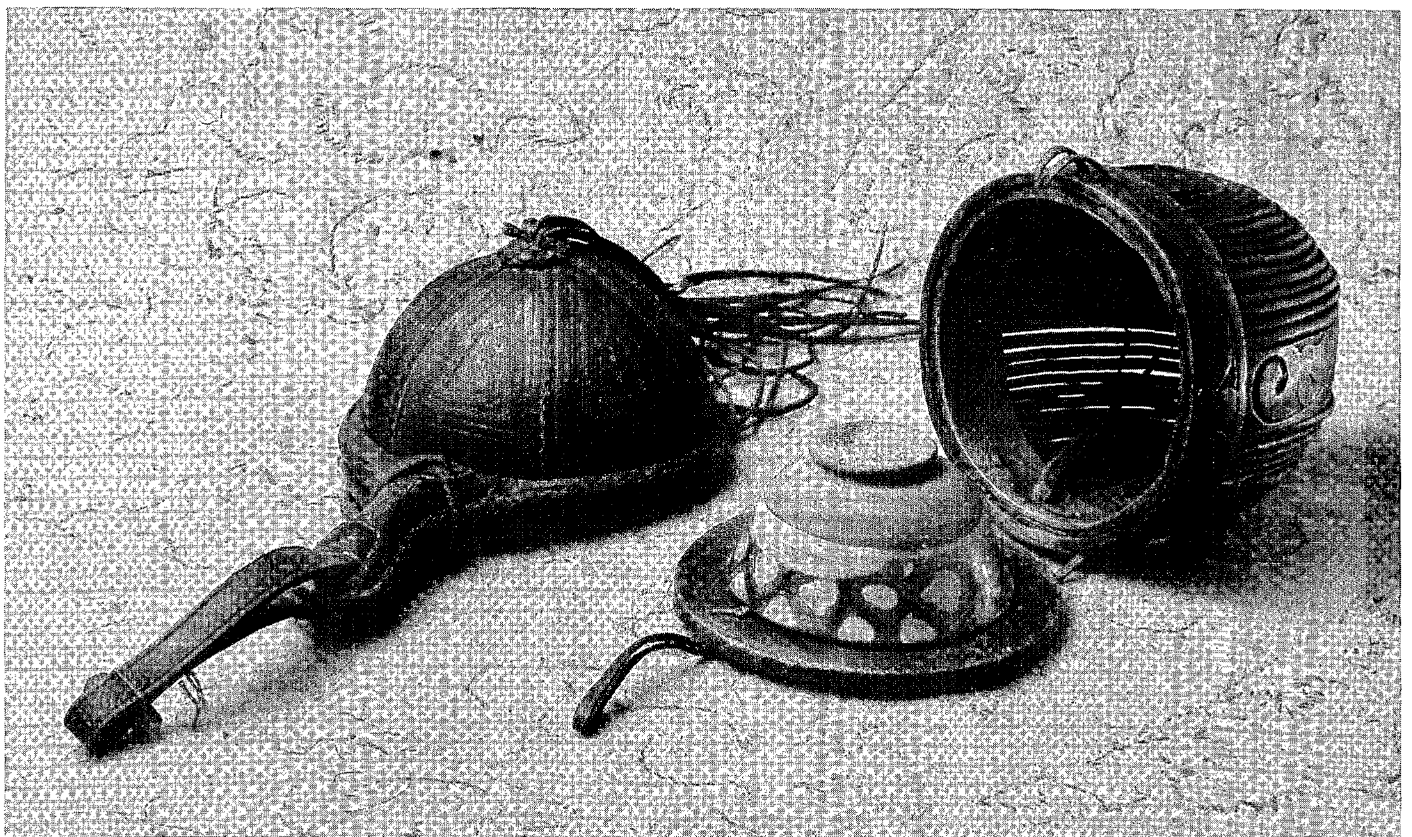
Museums of applied arts have the responsibility for preserving and displaying the achievements of past civilizations and, in this, handicrafts occupy a prominent position. Preservation of handicraft skills — at least in the form of tools —and passing on information about them are an important aspect of this work. As production becomes increasingly automated and industrialization develops, it is the older civilizations and their handicrafts that are in demand, first at world exhibitions, then in museums. European civilization assimilates elements from many foreign, though now familiar, surroundings but it is also of great importance that handicraft skills are preserved locally and passed on to future generations. Part of the responsibility for this should be assumed by museums of applied arts.

As far as the sociological function of museums is concerned, we may say that, today more than ever, museums have to present their collections to those who are not predisposed to receive the message. Exhibitions should be arranged so as to lead even these visitors to see the significance of the institution. On the other hand, a museum such as the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris may be divided up into various specialized sections, such as fashion, glass, posters and industrial design, once the collections are sufficiently large. A similar differentiation is to take place in Finland through the founding of special museums. As the



14
An educational exhibition, *Ceramics for Space*, with works by Ulla Viotti, Sweden, held at the Museum of Applied Arts, Helsinki.

15
Museum Director, Jarno Peltonen, with artists Irma Kukkasjärvi and Maisa Tikkanen at the exhibition on Nordic textile art, *Scandinavian Touch*. Works exhibited by Inghild Karlsen, Norway.



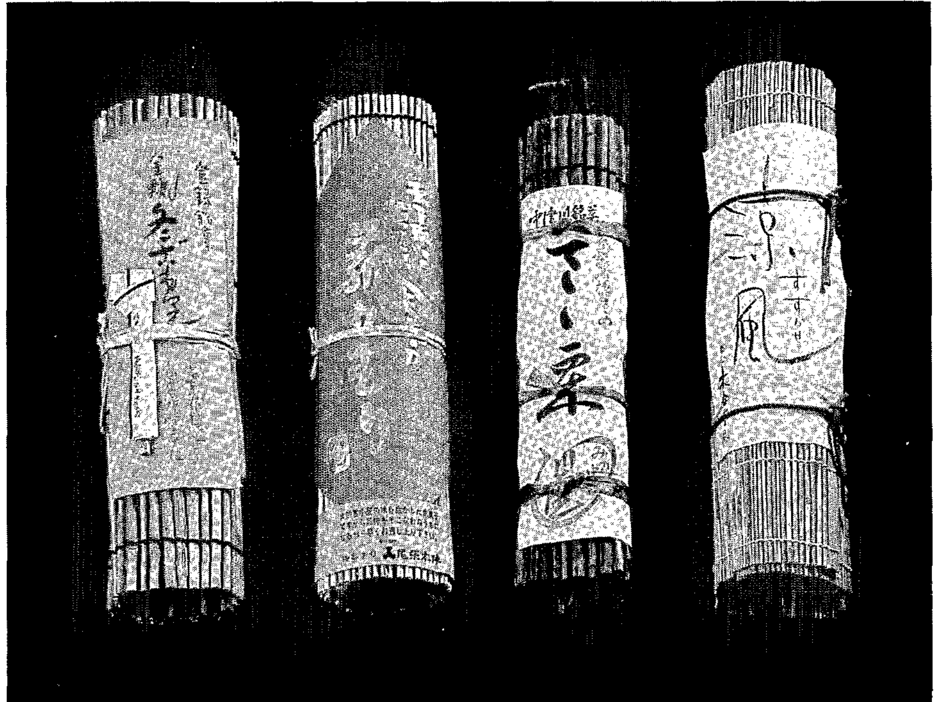
number of museums grows, there will be more and more specialized ones. To stimulate and co-ordinate these developments there should also be a central museum for each field represented in the country concerned. Overly organized and systematic operational models, however, are liable to endanger the human values involved, which are the core of museum documentation. One of the aims of collections should be to help the public experience the frame of reference of a more general way of life.

As a museum develops, its role grows, as does the significance of design. Today, in the nuclear and computer age, the evaluation of industrial or handicraft design on the basis of artistic criteria is no longer enough. The concept of design has broadened to include the environment and our way of life. In discussing design, it is time to start speaking of environmental art, which encompasses or begins with architecture and the other art forms, including the performing arts.

Museums of applied arts play a major role in design training (Fig. 13). In fact, they were originally founded primarily to provide a form of education (Fig. 14). At present there is much room for improvement in co-operation between museums and the design field, and common methods serving present-day needs and views should be defined. High professional standards are required in the field of design today and training is expected to provide the means to meet them. One of the best ways to achieve this is to combine and increase the teaching of design theory and history. The development of industrial and handicraft design is related to the development of modern industrial society. Museums should be ready to respond to this challenge; the practical arrangements may cause difficulty, but training should provide a concentrated survey of the history of design, especially during the last 150 years. Exhibitions are the main form of co-operation between training institutions and museums. Permanent exhibitions should be comprehensive, and special ones should be varied. The museum staff, because of their greater familiarity with the collections, can contribute by clarifying the key concepts which form the background for the exhibits and the general history of design.

As well as being comprehensive, permanent exhibitions should throw light on a variety of phenomena, and the museum itself should be allowed to determine the programmes of its special exhibitions (Figs. 15-17). Their function is to indicate current and emerging trends, and developments which are otherwise significant from the present-day point of view. If possible, museums should try to present topical issues, provided that the general public's interests are also served. In any case, they have the opportunity to adopt a position on current issues and thus influence future choices. Museums provide a stimulating contribution of their own to the formation of our common environment and

16
Traditional crafts from the Soviet Union, in the exhibition *Along the Silk Road*, at the Museum of Applied Arts, Helsinki.



17
Traditional crafts from the Japanese exhibition, *How to Pack Five Eggs*, at the Museum of Applied Arts, Helsinki.

way of life. They are information centres and, as such, are not limited to presenting objects selected on the basis of rigid criteria; they can, more generally, provide information on the present state of affairs and the trends that gave rise to it.

Museums actively involved in present-day problems could co-operate and outline major programmes to raise the standards of the applied arts, teaching, visual culture, and visual communications.

Finnish inspirations

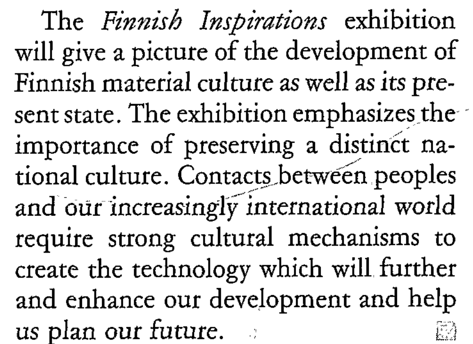
The Museum of Applied Arts has a travelling exhibition called *Finnish Inspirations*, which aims to show national characteristics in contemporary crafts and design. With this exhibition the Museum of Applied Arts in Finland has visited several countries, including Albania, Greece, India, Turkey and Yugoslavia.

In the Finnish way of life, the seasons are very important and our material culture has been marked by work performed during each of them, providing the year with a distinct rhythm. The industrialization and urbanization that have taken place in Finland during the past few decades are decisively changing these traditions, causing considerable concern. Efforts must be made to ensure that the environment which has already been constructed, our natural surroundings, and the rest of our material and intellectual traditions are preserved. National individuality, or identity, has greater significance in our increasingly international world than previously. We are in a transition which imposes many responsibilities on us, one of the most important of which is to preserve our national identity. Museums play a particularly important role in this, since in addition to preserving mementos of the past and conducting research they must also present things that are developing and participate in the creation of further development in an inspiring manner. An artist's work also includes an appreciation of national identity and individuality, the role of the artist being that of a leader of development.

In Finland efforts have been made to preserve our artificial as well as our natural environment. Special regulations have been passed, whose purpose is to preserve particular sites as examples of the achievements of earlier times. Additionally, education and other means are used to preserve traditional techniques and know-how. Specific regional arrangements are made both to regulate the movement from the countryside to the cities and to create enterprises and jobs in the countryside. Efforts are also made to preserve traditions with a rich heritage of artistic handicrafts as well as cottage industries.

The language of form which inspires Finnish individuality is based on the use and further development of traditional materials, a mastery of traditional professional techniques, and the stimuli generated by the environment. These often appear in the use of natural motifs and forms which occurred in our earlier material culture.

The *Finnish Inspirations* exhibition will give a picture of the development of Finnish material culture as well as its present state. The exhibition emphasizes the importance of preserving a distinct national culture. Contacts between peoples and our increasingly international world require strong cultural mechanisms to create the technology which will further and enhance our development and help us plan our future.



Marketing crafts through museum shops

Kathy S. Borrus

Merchandise Manager for the Smithsonian Institution Museum Shops. Presented a paper on 'Marketing Crafts Through Museum Stores' to the Workshop on Crafts Museums in New Delhi, India, in October 1986. She has had extensive buying experience in books, crafts, toys, jewellery, and graphics since joining the Museum Shops' Merchandise Department in 1974. A graduate of Syracuse University with a B.Sc. in Retail Marketing, she attended the graduate school for Business Administration at the George Washington University.

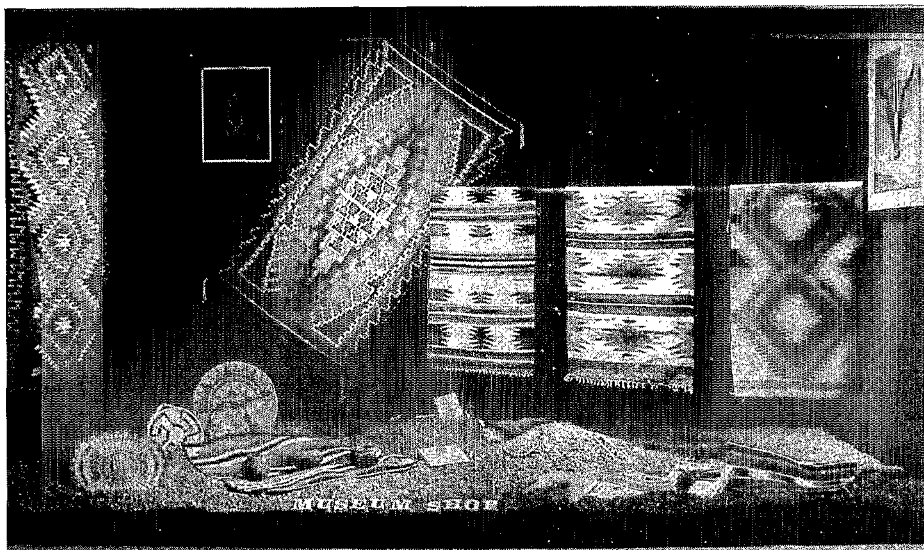
Marketing crafts through museum shops is both an art and a science. Often it is approached only as an art, defining the story and presenting it within the context of the host museum. In fact, to be successful, it must be viewed as a science as well. By science, I mean the planning and analysing of the business in a professional sense, interpreting the figures involved and reacting to them. Ultimately, this produces a profit. I bring this up now as a practical consideration that is too often overlooked in an emotional or romantic view of crafts. To function in a museum setting, to provide the revenue museums need (which allows them the luxury of exhibit creativity), museum stores need to operate both with a visual eye and a financial sense of reality. Thus, the key to successful marketing is the craft-buyer's ability to evaluate and communicate this balance between art and science.

There are several levels at which a balance must be struck: a craft-buyer or shop manager must understand the market, the product, the artisan, and the consumer.

First, there is the market. The museum is a unique environment in which to operate a business. To act as a retail professional in an academic atmosphere means developing one's sensitivity to the art process, to research and to the prevailing mood and structure of the museum (time often hardly matters to museum personnel) while still maintaining one's sense of urgency (to retailers needing goods, services or information, typically, time is of the essence). Patience, tact and profits help the buyer gain the support and confidence of museum directors and curators. At the same time, museum administrators and curatorial staff must perceive the shop's mission and appreciate what they gain from it. They have a responsibility to help educate the buyer in the appropriate craft field and make suggestions on products and relevant reading material. Yet they must also understand the role of buyer/manager as a merchant, and the shop must be allowed the freedom to carry enough inventory to look as though it is in business.

Secondly, product relatedness is a key issue in a museum setting. Each buyer has a responsibility to follow a merchandise philosophy that is slightly different from normal retail stores. The latter ask 'Will it sell?', whereas a museum shop buyer's questions are first 'Is it related?' or 'Is it educational?', and then, 'Will it sell?' Even if the buyer can answer 'Yes' to the first two questions, the answer to the last question is equally important because we are in business to make money as well as to educate. It should always be remembered that we provide a source of unrestricted income for the institution.

Thirdly, the buyer must market crafts with a feeling for both the product and the craftsperson. Selling crafts is unlike selling other products, in that the nature of the craft, its origin and its monetary worth require an educational perspective and mutual respect on the part of the buyer and craftsperson. The buyer needs to appreciate the value of a handmade object, which includes the medium, the time and the skills involved. Traditional crafts also involve the preservation of a heritage. The artisan, on the other hand, needs to understand the market-place and the necessity for continuity of supply and quality. Craftspeople should develop a basic knowledge of normal business practices, a real acceptance of the market



18
MUSEUM SHOP, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, Washington, D.C. This display window, at the entrance to the Natural History Museum Shop, features native American crafts that are offered for sale inside the shop.

value of their work (that is, not under- or overvaluing their craft), and an acceptance that the buyer must make a profit.

Finally, there is the consumer. In a museum setting customers expect to learn more about a craft purchase than they do in a normal retail outlet, and museum shops have an obligation to provide that educational service. Communicating product knowledge, continuity of tradition, and the relationship of a particular craft to the museum in which it is sold is also a powerful selling tool. A well-trained display and sales staff should impart this appreciation to the customer.

Man has always acquired souvenirs of places he has visited, and in the museum environment this presents a tremendous business opportunity. By giving museum visitors a craft product to take home as a remembrance of their trip, the museum benefits financially as well as culturally. This balance between art and science reflects the dual goal of marketing crafts through museum shops — education and profit.

The Smithsonian Institution provides an eclectic setting in which to market crafts. To understand some of what we sell and why, it is necessary to appreciate the environment in which museum shops function. This calls for a brief explanation of the Smithsonian for those who are not familiar with it.

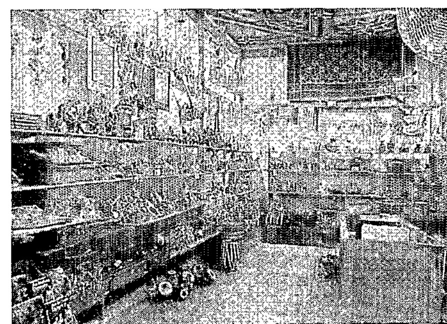
A national legend, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., can be overwhelming in its infinite diversity and special charm. Visitors to the Mall, a vast stretch of land from the Capitol to the Washington Monument, often ask 'Where is the Smithsonian?', imagining that the Smithsonian is one red sandstone building that looks like a castle. The answer is, 'All around you.' What, then, is the Smithsonian? Indeed, it is many things.

Centred on the Mall, the Institution is often referred to as 'the Nation's Attic'. It is the world's largest complex of museums, art galleries and research facilities. It operates thirteen museums and the National Zoo. It houses a collection of more than 75 million objects and specimens, of which only about 1 per cent are on view at any given time. The Smithsonian is devoted to public education and national service in the arts, history, and sciences. It contains the nation's treasures as well as its cultural trivia:

> It will answer inquiries about the historical importance of an object or the provenance of a work of art; lend objects to other museums; offer technical museum training; rent travelling exhibitions on many subjects; provide reports on phenomena such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, animal migrations, and tidal waves; track artificial earth satellites; or help the FBI and the police departments identify the age and sex of a murder victim from a skull or femur.[1]

It is a place both of popular learning and of precise scholarship. 'It is a home for good humour, a ride on a merry-go-round: the stuff of dreams as well as hard facts.'[2]

In 1829, James Smithson, a British scientist who had never visited the United States, left a bequest of $500,000 to the United States 'to found at Washington, under the name of the Smithsonian Institution, an Establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men'. After years of much



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MUSEUM SHOP, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, Washington, D.C. Partial view of crafts stocked in a temporary exhibition shop. Crafts shown are from India in conjunction with the Museum Exhibit, *Adit — A Celebration of Life*, part of the Festival of India celebration.

1. Smithsonian Institution, *Official Guide to the Smithsonian*, rev. ed., 2nd impr., p. 9, Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985.
2. Smithsonian Institution, *The Smithsonian Experience*, p. 15, Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977.

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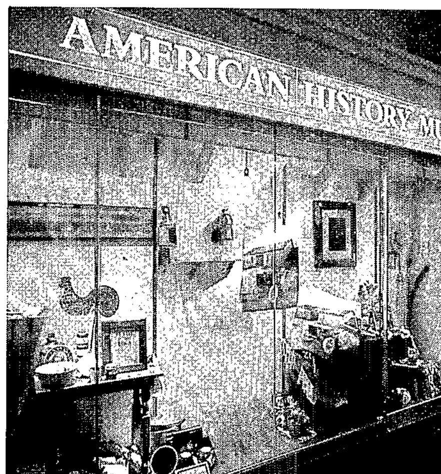
Museum Shop, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Display and sales space inside museum shop promoting traditional and contemporary crafts made in the United States.

21
Detail of display and sales space of American traditional and contemporary crafts.



22
Museum Shop, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Entrance display window featuring traditional American crafts.

debate, Congress passed the Smithsonian Bill on 10 August 1846, which led to the vast storehouse and treasury that the Smithsonian is today.

From its inception the Smithsonian has had an international flavour. Exhibitions in many of the museums often incorporate craft objects from around the world. The National Museum of Natural History (Fig. 18-19) has a vast collection of ethnic crafts from various cultures and countries. The National Museum of American History (Figs. 20-22) houses a diverse range of handicrafts and production crafts from textiles to ceramics and glass from all parts of the world. The Institution's annual Folklife Festival on the Mall features both domestic and foreign crafts and cultural events. As part of the Smithsonian's new Quadrangle complex, the national Museum of African Art focuses on the arts and culture of sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery (Figs. 23-25) will rededicate its efforts to displaying changing exhibitions of American crafts, design and decorative arts. With this extensive craft involvement by the Institution, it follows that the museum shop's craft offerings reflect those of each museum or temporary exhibition. In fact, the Smithsonian's goal, 'to increase and diffuse knowledge', is one which guides the museum shop in its effort to promote crafts.

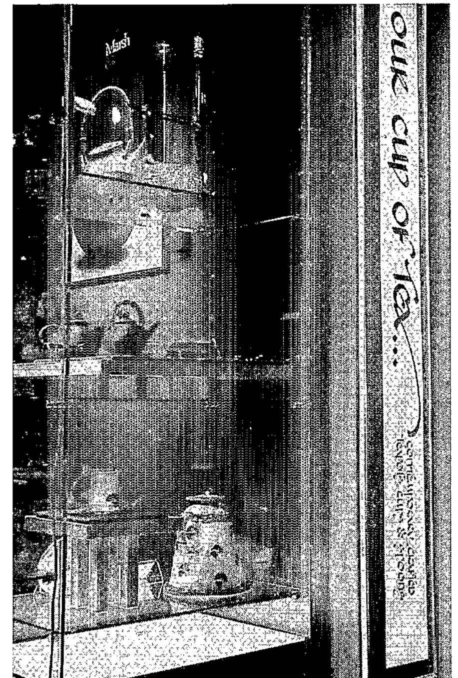
Our craft objects and jewellery are as diverse as the Smithsonian museums themselves. Each shop has a unique look and developing themes for each craft area is an essential element in marketing crafts. The crafts buyer must have an intimate knowledge of each museum so that he or she understands what is relevant and what is not. This work involves developing product groupings, with varying price ranges, which focus on a theme of the museum or exhibition and make a statement. Then the buyer makes a commitment to the craft in space and inventory. It is imperative that the shop should look as though it is in business and tell the story from beginning to end.

Throughout the Smithsonian, countless possibilities exist for marketing domestic crafts. For instance, in our American History Museum Shop, our promotional theme is 'Made in America'. We offer crafts in wood, fibre, jewellery, ceramics and glass.

The aim is to represent the nation's contemporary craftspeople from as many states as possible in the tradition of early American crafts. At the Natural History Museum the shop features North American native Indian crafts as well as crafts from Latin America and Asia. Each theme has its own area and the selection of the merchandise is based on available shop space.

At the Renwick Gallery we regularly hold special consignment shows, on a given theme, where we display and sell contemporary American crafts. Often, in conjunction with the state craft organization, these shows are arranged as sales exhibitions with a jury. They change every two to three months; this is especially important in the case of the Renwick, which has a local following rather than the once-a-year Mall Museum visitor. Rotating shows provide a fresh and exciting craft shop. This sort of show would not be possible if we had to buy outright as we do in our other shops, because inventory investment would be too high and we could not turn it over within a two-month period. Thus, we buy on consignment. These shows are not always profitable, but they provide a forum for crafts and often help to attract visitors to the museum. Even if customers do not buy merchandise for a particular show, they frequently return to buy at another show. Our aim, of course, is to be financially successful with each show. The nature of these sales exhibits varies greatly; they can be offbeat, whimsical, serious, multi-media, functional, etc. Recent shows include *Our Cup of Tea* (utensils for tea service), *Toys for All Ages*, *Boxes and Bowls*, *Encore* (favourites from previous shows), as well as politically inspired crafts, glass masters, jewellery from local craftspeople, and crafts from various states.

For Renwick shows we advertise the show at which prizes are to be awarded in crafts journals or we contact a state craft group. We request slide submissions along with a specification sheet. This submission sheet gives us a uniform way of dealing with the craftspeople and returning the material when it is no longer needed. For these shows we work on the basis of a fifty-fifty split between buyer and craftsman. Separate accounting records are maintained so that when the show closes objects are returned or paid for if they have been sold. Problems inherent in these shows involve finding enough submissions to have a full show and ensuring adequate packing and shipping. Many pieces are fragile and are not always handled or packed properly by either the craftsperson or our warehouse, but generally these sales exhibitions are



23
MUSEUM SHOP, RENWICK GALLERY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, Washington, D.C. Consignment show, *Our Cup of Tea*; display and sale of contemporary crafted teapots, cups and spoons made in the United States.

worth the effort and create enthusiasm among the craftspeople and museum personnel as well as the customers.

The opportunity to promote another culture's crafts usually presents itself when a particular museum or Smithsonian division, such as the Folklife Festival, decides to mount a special temporary exhibition. When this occurs, the marketing link is strong and, generally, we ask the museum for additional selling space near the exit of the show. Before any handicraft purchases are made in conjunction with such an exhibit, our controller puts together a pro forma profit-and-loss statement. Based on anticipated sales, we establish a buying budget and plan expenses. I want to emphasize the practical merits of this merchandise plan: it is 'the *best estimate* of the *income* expected from *sales* and the *expenditures* anticipated for *inventory* during a particular period'.[3] It is a simple dollar plan — an estimate, based on the best available knowledge and historical sales data from similar craft products. It is a tool that helps us to avoid excess inventory and associated costs, provides an indication of sales staff needed, and presents a collective goal for which personnel can aim.

Organizing and planning to present exhibition-related crafts requires additional research and education. Advance discussions about the exhibits or viewing the artefacts with curators and visiting craft sites are all helpful to the crafts buyer, who gains an understanding of the country and culture and thus is better able to promote crafts that truly reflect the tone of the exhibition or the extent of the collections. The next step is to buy the appropriate crafts for resale.

Unfortunately, buying crafts is not as easy as purchasing mass-produced items. Purchasing methods are often similar (negotiating terms, reviewing merchandise at craft trade shows, reading craft journals, meeting with craftspeople in our offices or on site, etc.), but actual purchasing, whether domestic or foreign, can be a nightmare unless a craftsperson or organization is knowledgeable about business.

Time is a critical factor in buying. Because we are dealing with handmade objects, we must anticipate a long lead time. Domestically, while some artisans stock inventory and six weeks is possible, the time from order date to delivery is more likely to be six months. Supplies from foreign sources can take anywhere from six months to two years, and they also present another set of problems entirely.

In this case factors to take into consideration include product liability, product safety and toxicity (if the handcraft is a toy), proper export and import documentation, insect control, obtaining what was actually ordered (often one is required to pay in advance and there is little security against shortages, substitutions or damages), quality control, knowledge of quotas, etc. Some of these problems can be minimized by working through reputable craft co-operatives, but government-run ones can be notoriously corrupt or inefficient and may not give the craftspeople their fair monetary share. Craft co-operatives which are policed by their own members are usually more beneficent to the individual craftsperson. While all these factors are important, it is also essential to allow enough time to acquire sufficient stock to present the complete crafts picture.

Part of the art of marketing any craft, domestic or foreign, is communication. While buying we often take numerous photographs, which are invaluable as a reference once we return home. These pictures help us describe goods to our merchandise and sales staff, they help our Visual Presentations Department to get a feel for the merchandise, they help us to plan the layout of the shop and, most importantly, they create a sense of anticipation among the entire staff of the organization. In our case, divisions not normally involved in planning merchandise events — such as the Accounts Payable Division or the Warehouse — are involved from beginning to end. This merchandise co-ordination effort is vital because so many things that could go wrong are avoided or at least discussed in advance. Our warehouse, for instance, can anticipate what crafts might be difficult to receive or fragile. The Personnel Department can plan for additional sales staff. So merchandising crafts is more than just buying them and putting them out for sale. Communication at every level is essential. Planning the craft area (the visual presentation of the display and layout) is as important as purchasing and fair pricing. Fixtures should enhance craft merchandise, not detract from it or compete with it for customer attention. Good lighting is essential. Colour and background material, books and photographs can help create the story. Clear signs with product information are essential in the museum environment. We also provide provenance information

3. Price Waterhouse, *Retailing Update* (New York, Price Waterhouse Retailing Industry Services Group), No. 1, 1983, pp. 1, 4.

on additional cards which are given to customers with their purchases.

Last, but far from least, disseminating knowledge about crafts in general must include offering for sale an extensive selection of books on their history, traditions, cultures and related matters. I know this idea sometimes meets with resistance because knowledge of the book trade is often limited, but it is a vital part of merchandising crafts through a museum. I cannot stress enough how strongly I feel about this concept: aside from making good business sense (because books do sell), it legitimizes what we are promoting, and in a museum environment this is critical.

In a co-ordinated effort, our mail order division often devotes portions of their catalogue to museum-related arts and crafts. Through pictures of craftspeople at work and of their products and information about books the catalogue attempts to explain the traditional artistry of various countries or cultures. Products sent to customers also include additional educational material. Product supply can be a major problem if one has a catalogue with a large circulation. Financially, this is risky unless it is accompanied by a well established stock.

A joint effort by our museum shops and the mail order department brings knowledge of traditional craft skills to a wider audience than an exhibit can alone, and can also bring concrete benefits to the craftspeople. This raises another issue, which is somewhat controversial. Many of our customers ask how much the individual craftsman receives out of the retail price we establish. At the Smithsonian we believe that if museums are to fulfil this function of promoting native crafts, it is critical that the artisan receive a proper share of the price paid for that handcraft. As a final word, this is what marketing crafts through museums should attempt to accomplish: financial support for the museum and the craftsperson, and better understanding of traditional craft skills and the cultural environment which nurtured them — in other words education and profit.

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MUSEUM SHOP, RENWICK GALLERY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, Washington, D.C. Detail from consignment show, *Crafts from Maine*. Display and sale of contemporary crafts from the state of Maine; mixed media.

Patronage and craft potentials: exploring innovative concepts of selection and display[1]

Stephen P. Huyler

An American ethnologist documenting the rural material culture of South Asia. He has spent several months of field research each year for the last fifteen years in Indian villages. His speciality and doctoral research at the University of London is on contemporary rural terracotta production as relative to historical traditions. As a result of this research he served as a consultant for two exhibitions organized in 1986 by the Festival of India in the United States: the Brooklyn Museum's *From India Earth: 4000 Years of Terracotta Art*, and Mingei International-Museum of World Folk Art's *Forms of Mother Earth: Contemporary Terracottas of India*. In addition to many articles on Indian folk art and crafts, he has recently published a book of his research and photography entitled: *Village India* (New York, Abrams, 1985).

This is a fortunate age for those of us involved in the documentation and display of folk arts and crafts. For the first time in history, our discipline — our passion — is beginning to find popular interest throughout the world. I am fairly young in my work, having only been documenting the rural material culture of India for the last fifteen years. There are many here today who have been at it much longer. And yet for the majority of even my few years, I have been considered an eccentric, one who foolishly spends his time working among the 'lesser traditions'. Suddenly, within the past five years, the rest of the world is beginning to sit up and take notice. Fine folk art is becoming rarer, as collectors everywhere scrutinize the markets for good investments. No longer is the field open for museums to choose whatever they wish for their displays. Markets are selective and competition is rampant. But with this new competitive interest come new possibilities for patronage and expansion which, in turn, challenge us to strike many delicate balances. Museums are now the international vogue. With educated minds beginning to open towards the value of the world's material culture, museums now have a chance to receive the funding and channelled energy necessary to implement far more comprehensive approaches to documentation and display than have previously been possible. I would like to discuss just what is meant by a comprehensive approach, and how it differs from the role of museums in the past. I would also like to explore the effect that patronage, selection and display have upon the crafts themselves, as well as some ways in which successful museums in the future might choose to convey material culture to the public. If I fall into the trap of over-emphasizing Indian art in this article, it is because most of my academic work has been focused on that country. I would hope that much of my experience regarding the selection and display of Indian crafts can be interpreted in the context of other countries.

At long last, the whole approach to the documentation and display of material culture is being questioned and changed. The initiative for this change is coming from within countries such as India, rather than from outside. As the period of colonialism recedes further into the past, old concepts are questioned, some discarded and new solutions found. The British approach to academia was to keep disciplines separate and to specialize: Art History, as distinct from Archaeology, as distinct from Anthropology, etc. It has been said that this approach is an applied example of the policy of 'divide and rule'. In a country with such divergent cultural traditions as India, it certainly has had that effect.

I consider myself an ethnologist, that is, I am an anthropologist interested in documenting the material culture of India. At the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, where I did my postgraduate work, my research was unacceptable to the Anthropology Department. British academic centres of anthropology do not recognize material culture as a subject akin to their own. There are, of course, fine ethnological museums in the United Kingdom, but they have had to struggle against the tide of popular academic sentiment. In India I have frequently run into that same attitude among Indian anthropologists: many are completely uninterested in the documentation of craft traditions. Luck-

1. This article is adapted from a paper delivered to the Workshop on Crafts Museums, as part of Crafts India '86, sponsored by the Crafts Council of India and the World Crafts Council, 9 October 1986.
2. See Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics*, New York, Bantam Books, 1984.
3. Ethnological museums in the West are rapidly changing their emphasis from what George W. Stocking refers to as 'romantic exoticism', a term which describes the tendency to showcase quaint artefacts, to attempts at multi-faceted portrayals of specific traditional cultures. See George W. Stocking Jr (ed.), 'Essays on Museums and Material Culture', *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, p. 12, Madison, Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.
4. 'Art is a primary document in a culture, and as such cannot be explained out of the other elements of that culture any more than they can be explained by it.' — Robert Goldwater, 'Art History and Anthropology: Some Comparisons of Methodology', in Anthony Forge (ed.), *Primitive Art and Society*, p. 10, London, Oxford University Press, 1973.

ily that attitude seems to be changing rapidly. Just within the past few years departments of folklore and courses in material culture are appearing and expanding in universities all over India.

Historically, indigenous Indian cultures taught the interrelation of disciplines, the overlapping principle, just now coming to light in Western physics, which states that the sum of each of the parts is more than the whole.[2] The new approach in India is a return to that understanding, to break down the walls between disciplines so that information about heritage and new technologies can be shared. Ideally, a good crafts museum is the perfect forum for this new approach: a library of material culture containing the wisdom of countless traditions displayed as a catalyst for innovations.[3]

In the field of Indian material culture, we owe a tremendous debt to the pioneering work of Dr Eberhard Fischer of the Rietberg Museum in Zurich, who has for years understood the necessity of impartial documentation on every conceivable detail of a given area's material culture. The essence of that attitude, as I understand it, is based upon the following tenets.

We are all products of our own cultural prejudices, our ways of thinking dictated by our own traditions, our exposures and our education. What we view now as valuable to society may well be inconsequential in the next century. But material culture in this century is changing so rapidly that if we do not document it fully right now, many inherent wisdoms will be lost before we look a second time. If we document everything — every facet of material culture, whether it seems important to us now or not — then future generations will have a chance to approach our traditions in whichever way is most meaningful to them.[4] I believe that the most effective crafts museum of this decade and of the 1990s is one that lays the groundwork for this type of non-judgemental documentation. In India I know of four such leading institutions: the Delhi Crafts Museum, the Mysore University Folklore Museum, the Raja Dinker Kelkar Museum in Pune, and the Calico Museum in Ahmedabad. But in mentioning only these four, I do not mean to do a disservice to the other fine museums which are likewise involved in documenting India's material culture.

Each museum has, of necessity, more of its collection in reserve than on display. The mark of a good director and curatorial staff is the ability to translate that bewildering amalgam of material into something palatable, something from which the public does not run away screaming. The key to a good museum is the way in which it selects items from its reserve collection and outside sources to both entice and inform the public. If crafts museums are indeed libraries of material culture intended to share information about traditions and old and new technologies, then their reserve collections must be readily accessible to scholars and serious students. The storage facilities in many museums are too poorly organized and lighted for this purpose and must be a priority in future budgeting.

The Delhi Crafts Museum truly leads India in its multi-faceted approach to the documentation and display of Indian crafts. From merely a large, albeit superb, collection of Indian folk art housed in the centre of the city, it has expanded into a stimulating 'village', re-creating dwellings from all over the subcontinent, and housing constantly changing exhibitions of crafts and craft production. The Crafts Museum has, then, succeeded in becoming a focus not only for the collecting and documentation of Indian material culture but also for the teaching of craft technology. It has taken that necessary step from static treasure house to progressive educational centre.

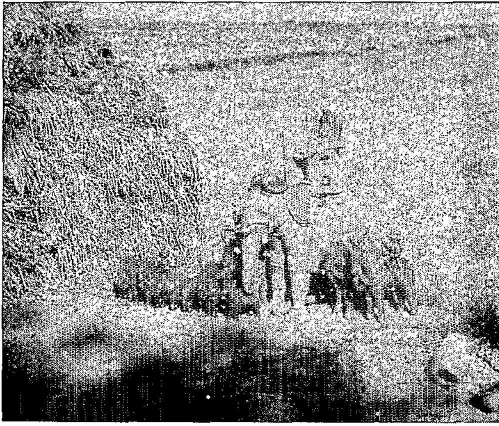
The Crafts Museum has also served as the key institution for bringing together the talented rural craftsmen who have travelled from India to other countries for various exhibitions included in the several Festivals of India held abroad in the last few years. Their demonstrations of craft techniques and their shared sense of personality with the peoples of foreign cultures have been pivotal to these events and highly acclaimed everywhere. India is now leading the world in this approach. It is certainly a cost-effective way, in a country such as India where craftsmen's wages are not so high, to teach the public about craft technology and provide context and environment for the display of crafts (it is not necessarily so practical in higher wage countries). Although all these demonstrating craftsmen have been well chosen as representatives of their diverse disciplines, I question the whole effect of the accolade of 'Master Craftsmen', a certificate of excellence and monetary award bestowed upon selected 'superior' craftsmen annually by the All-India Handicrafts Board. Certainly this form of patronage encourages fine craftsmanship and helps to sponsor many financially threatened artisans, but does it affect the artistic quality of the craft?

Although patronage of the arts has existed in India for millennia, traditional artistry is unselfconscious. A craftsman may be proud of his finished product and the creation of a beautiful or well-functioning object, but the artistic ego as found in the West is rare. As in most other traditional societies, craftwork is never signed; it would not occur to the artist to do so. The highest ideal for a craftsman or artist in India is to reproduce precisely the object's prototype which he learned from his father and grandfather. In practice, however, many objects are unconsciously imbued with the craftsman's personal sense of design, a factor contributing to the vitality of Indian folk-art.

Many crafts in traditional environments are paid for by the barter system. For example, pottery is regularly supplied to a farming family in return for a mutually agreed upon portion of that family's crops. The title of Master Craftsman often brings with it not only an award but also a fairly steady cash income through the new demands placed upon that artisan's products. I would like to explore the process of selecting specific crafts and craftsmen for inclusion in urban exhibitions and the effects that this new patronage has upon them. The photographs of terracottas taken in the field and reproduced here best illustrate my concern.

Figures 26-28 depict terracotta sculptures of an elephant ridden by Mataji and Saivite votive horse figures both made by a Master Craftsman potter living just outside Gorakhpur town. He has since travelled to the United Kingdom and the United States as part of the Festivals of India. His sculptures are regularly stocked in crafts emporia in Delhi, Bombay, and elsewhere. His modelling technique is certainly adept, but I believe that compared with the works shown in Figures 29-32 his pieces are strained and selfconcious.

These latter portray terracotta elephants and a horse, and are found in villages less than 15 kilometres from Gorakhpur. Their freedom of expression and their marvellous sense of design and abstraction stand in sharp contrast to Gulab Chand's work. The craftsmen who made these sculptures are unrecognized by museums, documentors and dealers. Their products and others of equal quality are readily viewable on any of the many



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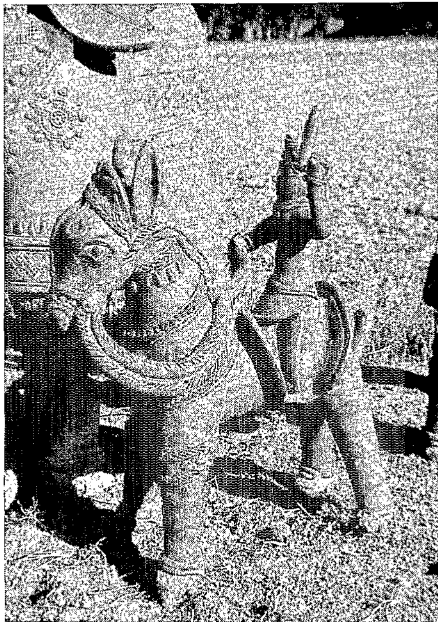

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5. See Kalyan Krishna, *An Ethno-Archaeological View of Indian Terracottas*, Delhi, Agam Kala Prakashan, 1986.

6. Edwin L. Wade, 'The Ethnic Art Market in the American Southwest, 1880-1980', in George W. Stocking (ed.), *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, p. 186, Madison University of Wisconsin Press, 1985. Writing further about the same problem, he says: 'This protective veil of ethnicity, however, can erode the innovative vigour of the art. Those who wish to retain the benefits of their Native American association and exploit the exclusivity of an ethnic market will forever float between the lower tiers of the 'fine art' mainstream and the quaintness of folk crafts. They will have to operate within the aesthetic constraints imposed by humanist organizations, whose inadvertent legacy has tainted Native American artistic expression with the paternalistic sanctions of historic trust, removed from objective criticism, and as a consequence has limited creative self sufficiency.' —Ibid., p. 188.

7. See Stephen P. Huyler, *Village India*, pp. 35-7 and 52-3, New York, Abrams, 1985.

8. See Barbara Fischer, *Indische Stoffbilder: Figurliche Applikationen einer Schuhmachersfrau in Gujarat*, Frankfurt/Main, Inset Verlag, 1980.

9. Shyamchand Mukherjee, *Folklore Museum*, p. 30, Calcutta, Indian Publications, 1969.

roads which surround Gorakhpur, and yet until Kalyan Krishna's publication in 1986 of a book on the terracottas of that area,[5] I am not aware of anyone other than myself having ever remarked upon them.

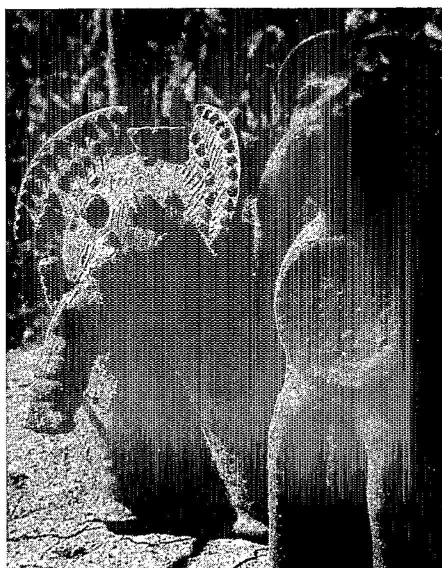
I have focused here upon one extreme example of the effects of craft patronage. There are many Master Craftsmen in India who still maintain a spirited excellence in their products. But the example of Gulab Chand is not unique; I have visited many patronized craftsmen in rural India and frequently found their art more contrived than that of the craftsmen living near them.

What does patronage in our modern society mean for the maintenance of craft traditions? This new worldwide interest in handicrafts and its resultant marketing potentials mean the possible support of artisans previously in danger of extinction. Consequently, on one hand, there is the obvious need for craft patronage and, on the other, the question of the effects this patronage has upon the aesthetics of crafts.

My work draws me to many obscure corners of India. I am constantly enthralled by the high degree of creativity I find everywhere. One of the obvious problems of patronage is necessarily focusing on one person or group to the exclusion of others. My experience, as demonstrated in the photographs on these pages, is that the products of the ignored artisans are often equal and sometimes superior to those patronized (though I readily admit that this qualitative judgement is based upon a personal preference for unselfconscious art).

Edwin L. Wade, an American ethnologist researching the material culture of south-western American Indians, writes about problems of patronage there. He outlines the dangers to which the sponsors of Indian crafts are exposed, and notes:

Characteristically, a philanthropic patron acts either on his own or in concert with an organization of his associates concerned with the plight of the American Indian. The patron and his fellows usually have friends in surrounding Indian communities whom they encourage and sometimes support financially in arts and crafts specialities on the organization's grounds. If the arts seem to be failing, or if the particular community is not doing well economically, the group may decide to hold fairs or special exhibitions where cash prizes are awarded and the Indian artists are promoted. The patron and his organization find themselves so completely immersed in the problems and accomplishments of one group that they may never find time for anyone else. In their enthusiasm, they lose sight of other Indian peoples' problems, and they continue to sponsor the same group,



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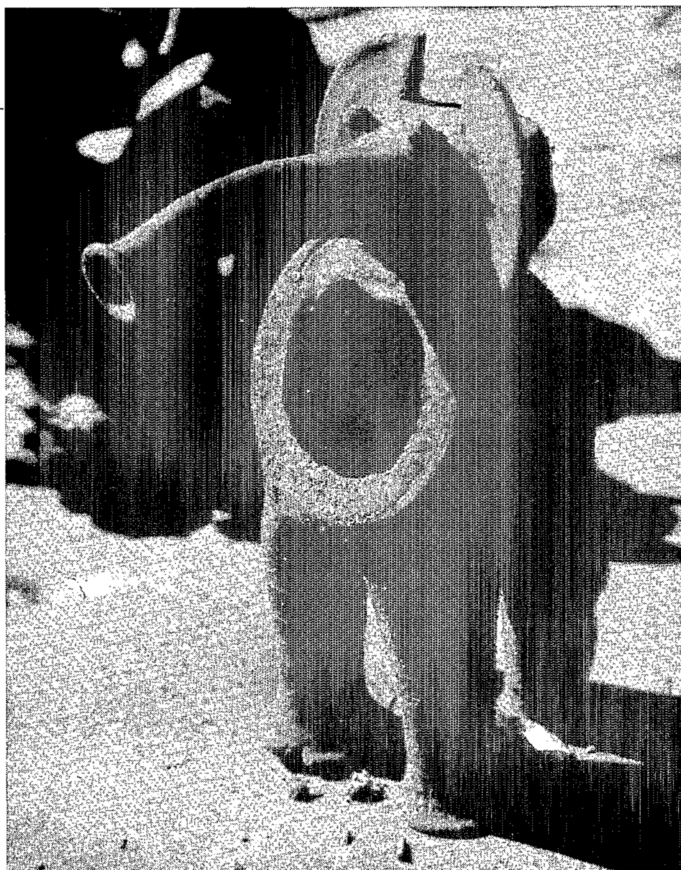

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pour money into their community, and devise one programme after another even after that community may have gotten back upon its feet.[6]

It does sound familiar.

These questions portray the familiar two-edged sword: by neglecting art we kill it but by patronizing it we are in danger of rendering it impotent. In focusing primarily on traditional methods, we can easily lose sight of the natural creativity inherent everywhere. The essence of Indian material culture has always been its adaptability, the ways in which the products of any given people adapt to the environment and to social requirements. Indian artistry has never been stagnant.[7]

Many private individuals and agencies in South Asia are already concerned with encouraging creative craft innovations. One of the most positive aspects of the Master Craftsmen Awards sponsored by the All-India Handicrafts Board is that it fosters the development of more efficient methods and the use of new materials and tools. Another example of innovation is the recent commendable plunge into unknown territory taken by Hakubhai Shah in aiding the development in Gujarat of appliquéd textiles in expressive new forms.[8] If craft patronage is to be kept from atrophying, it is essentail that directions such as these be explored fully and unabashedly. Man's creative potential is unbounded. To be effective, crafts museums must encourage the continued expression of that creativity in craftsmanship as widely as possible, rather than channelling its energies solely into sponsorship of the chosen few. Could we not, for example, explore the patronage of artisan guilds, as practised in the past, rather than focusing on one or two fine craftsmen in a given area? The success of the National Institute of Design may be the answer.

It has been stated that part of the genesis for museums in India was in the tradition of royal galleries and art in temples.[9] Much of the Indian approach to museology and art over the last century, however, has been naturally dictated by British and, more recently, American standards, and it is essential that this approach be re-evaluated. Is it more important to teach Indians, or other non-Westerners, to view material culture with a Western slant, or to channel museum display in ways directly pertaining to their heritage, encouraging a fresh look at the value inherent in their own crafts? Uneducated villagers comprise the major clientele of museums in most parts of India. I have often heard colleagues, both Indian and Western, deride these villagers in city museums who treat exhibits as if they were doing *puja*, or

praying, in a temple. Stone sculptures in museums all over the country bear the freshly buffed marks of worship. Is this a sign of ignorance or valid reverence and should not that attitude be encouraged rather than scoffed at? A similar awe draws hundreds of people each day to witness the mechanical striking doll in a German glockenspiel clock in the Salar Jang Museum in Hyderabad. Although this clock is quite unimportant by European standards, its popularity alone makes it a valid exhibition piece in this museum. What does this suggest? In these days of escalated museum funding, building, and renovation, it is important that exhibitions include popular tastes along with their desire to instruct the public in art appreciation. I feel sure that the documentation and preservation of material culture is essential, so that inherent wisdoms and technologies are not lost for posterity. But the items chosen for display should ideally blend essential information with popular appeal. Perhaps this latter consideration demands that museum exhibits emphasize spirit, ritual, and product rather than showcased masterpieces or uninspired displays.[10]

Art and religion are inextricably tied to one another in traditional Asian societies, one infusing the other. Craftsmanship in traditional India is a tribute to the gods. In making an item of daily or seasonal use, one honours the deity associated with that function. Decoration enhances a craft and makes it more pleasing to the god or goddess. Any attempt to separate traditional Indian art or crafts from religion in a museum context, presenting objects with emphasis on one aspect to the detriment of the other, may mislead the viewer to a false perspective and rob that object of an important dimension, thus doing a disservice to object, viewer, and finally to the culture from which the object came. Paradoxically, the obvious risk in the creation of a religious exhibition in India is that it may pander to sectariansim and further divide already divergent beliefs. The apparent solution is to create exhibitions which convey the inherent spirit with craft traditions and stress the spirit of creativity which unifies different religious beliefs.

One of the most moving experiences in my life was when I was invited by Rajeev Sethi to witness the moring *puja*, or prayers, that took place in the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C., every day before the *Aditi* exhibition opened. In that small place, oblivious to the noises of museum crowds filing by, nearly thirty Indian craftsmen from different parts of India and many different classes — Hindus, Muslims, Tribals and Christians — all prayed together at the same time, each according to his own belief and yet each in harmony with each other. *Aditi* epitomized an exhibition of differing beliefs, and yet it succeeded in conveying spirit without either watering it down or causing friction between sects.

But this was perhaps an ideal circumstance in a foreign environment. One questions whether that type of culturally divergent harmony is possible inside India. Certainly the Crafts Museum under Dr Jyotindra Jain seems to be making headway in that direction, and several exhibitions here have attempted to tie together many varieties of crafts through a common spiritual bond. Although this approach must indeed be handled delicately, it combines naturally cohesive exhibits with popular sentiment.

Even the most exciting crafts when arranged statically in glass cases tend to be uninspiring to the public. The perfect example of a well-designed museum is the Calico in Ahmedabad. Almost every interior surface of the building is covered with textiles, divided into various categories with each field complemented by numerous examples which tend to reflect common patterns and symbols and to draw attention to contrasting ones. Study collections are immediately accessible in any given area, enticing the viewer into wanting to learn more about that craft.

Aditi, in Washington, D.C., was the most stimulating craft exhibition I have ever seen. I was particularly impressed by it there, in contrast to my disappointment with it when it was in London. Many of the same craft and art works were shown in both, but the whole flavour was different. In London, most of the objects were too far from the viewer and poorly lighted, and many were unlabelled. The craftsmen and performers were positioned so closely that they interfered with each other's productions. In Washington, *Aditi* was another world, created sensitively and sensorially in a way that enhanced every piece of art and every craftsman and performer. The crafts were arranged in rich, dramatically lighted displays which focused on common and contrasting themes and astonished the viewer with the vibrancy of Indian creativity. Throughout it all ran a unifying thread of spirit.

The *India!* exhibition at the

10. The tendency of Western culture to 'aestheticize' material culture is well expressed by George W. Stocking, Jr: 'Items that once had multiple functions, so that their aesthetic element could only be isolated by abstraction, have often had their functions reduced in scope by processes of acculturation, with the more utilitarian functions transferred to the products of Western technology. In so far as they continue to be produced, items of traditional material culture are reconceptualized both from the native and the Western perspective in aesthetic terms — whether those of curio kitsch or fine art. Thus objects of "material culture" — which in traditional contexts often had a spiritual value — are respiritualized (in Western terms) as aesthetic objects, at the same time that they are subjected to the processes of the world art market. As their productions become entangled in the market nexus, some of those who were or might have been native craftsmen are transformed into artists in the Western sense. But whether defined as 'art by metamorphosis' or created as 'art by designation', objects that once went into museums of ethnography as pieces of material culture have become eligible for inclusion in museums of fine art.' — Stocking, op. cit., p. 6.

11. In the working stages of this exhibition, the curator, Carey Welch, assured me of his intention to emphasize this spirit. I assume that its absence was due to a fault in communication with the exhibition's designers. The inherent problems are obvious ones plaguing many museums. In this case, the designers were even brought to India to familiarize them with their subject. Their experiences enabled them to convey a sensitive design, but were not prolonged enough to infuse them with a more esoteric sense of India's very distinctive spiritual undercurrents. In the optimum exhibition, a curator can share his insight and intuition with his designers to make a stimulating, cohesive whole.

12. Brian Durrans, 'Vasna: Inside an Indian Village' in Saryu Joshi, (ed.), *Pageant of Indian Art, Festival of India in Great Britain*, p. 134, Bombay, Marg Publications, 1983. 'The main criticism of the conventional view is that it diverts attention from aesthetic inspiration to its material expression, which obscures domains of subtle significance whose aesthetic expressions are transient, non-material or otherwise disregarded as 'art' even by their creators. Ephemeral toys, casual gestures, movements, speech or song, the organization of a meal and utilitarian objects with a limited functional purpose are all potential media for aesthetic expression, and in India may properly qualify as examples of art in a broad sense. It is not just the material object which can be regarded aesthetically, but its constructed context as well: the process of its manufacture, use and accretion of symbolic attributes.' I suggest that those interested in the way in which *Vasna* presented its material read Brian Durrans' article and Haku Shah's 'Rural Living' also in Joshi, op. cit.

13. 'I would suggest there that a more effective and fruitful way of studying the nature and quality of Indian art and the entire relations between art and religion would be in concrete and human terms and not by presenting collective notions or metaphysical generalizations. This may be done by seeking to restore religious, cultural, and social contexts in Indian art. In the process we shall have to make a conscious effort to learn what actual standards of art criticism were in operation among those Indians who had created these works and among those for whom they were created, and not continue to depend on the classical tradition whether to affirm its principles or to deny them.' — Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art*, p. 286, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1977.

Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York was an abrupt contrast. Although most were items of court patronage, examples of tribal and village art were also shown to emphasize the symbiotic relationship which those rural cultures have always had with classical arts. This exhibition was dazzling in its selection and display: many of the finest works of art ever created in South Asia were there, chosen with infinite care and thoughtfulness. But what it gained in refinement it lost in spirit. Although it contained some outstanding pieces of religious art, the arrangement of the whole lacked a sense of the underlying ritual and belief which linked it all.[11]

Perhaps the tendency of patronage to over-emphasize the favoured craftsman and consequently give an unnatural mystique to what might otherwise be viewed as everyday art is best offset by exhibitions such as *Vasna* organized at the Museum of Mankind in London by Kaku Shah and Brian Durrans. In this exhibition a cross-section of a Gujarati village was re-created, accurately furnished with a blend of unremarkable crafts. Items of contemporary technology were freely and unselfconsciously mixed with those of traditional craftsmanship, just as they are usually found in a rural community. Of course not every exhibition would want to portray life quite so literally, as the viewing public is stimulated by exceptional art. But more museums should be conscious of the effectiveness of this new approach and, in future exhibitions, consider the possibilities it raises.[12]

India and other Asian countries have a chance, now lost in the West, to make craft exhibitions an integral part of their cultures, not simply a contrived showcase of inflated segments and highlights.[13] First, documentation must be immediate, comprehensive and non-judgemental. Second, the trend towards using craftsmen to demonstrate techniques is essential, but the selection of those craftsmen and their products must in some way allow a broader spectrum of representation than has hitherto been the norm. Third, the display of crafts should be organized in ways that reflect indigenous response and, in my view, one effective technique is to emphasize the underlying spirit which infuses the material culture of every traditional society. Our exhibitions must recognize that without spirit these crafts would not exist. ☐

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TOPICS

The island of craft ... and an outgoing tide

Stephen Inglis

A Canadian anthropologist who has specialized in art and ethnology. He completed a programme in Tamil language and civilization at Madurai-Kamaraj University (Tamilnadu) and an M.A. in Museology at Calcutta University. His doctoral research was a study of the social organization of potters in Madurai and Ramanathapuram Districts of Tamilnadu. He is currently curator of the South and West Asia programme at the Museum of Civilization, Ottawa, Canada.

During the last few months the news has been going around that the crafts have 'come of age'. Articles, catalogues, and news reports announce the arrival of a 'new era' and 'a new respectability'.[1] To those aware of the fact that many craft skills are the evidence by which we trace the development of the earliest human societies, this may seem either faintly ironical or exceedingly momentous. But of course 'coming of age' refers to the life of contemporary crafts, fine or designer crafts, whose birth (or rebirth) we usually trace to the middle of this century. Those craftspeople who were already alive and working prior to this 'birth' will have to excuse the overgeneralization. As we might all remember from our personal 'coming of age', this experience promises, after a period of readjustment, more freedom, more choice and more responsibility. And, indeed, the reports of the new maturity of craft speak in terms of emerging from a kind of isolation within the arts — a return from an island to the mainland.

I chose the rather literary-sounding title for this presentation because I grew up on the west coast of Canada, and have family and friends living there, a few of whom are artists. I recently heard the story of a woodworker who treasured his isolation to the extent that not long ago he began to build a house on a bare rock about a hundred metres offshore. When the tide is out, a reef connects this little island to the mainland but the rest of the time it is completely surrounded by water. When the local community council, which had not been consulted, moved to block construction of the house, he simply redrew his plans and built a boat instead, for which no approval is necessary. The 'boat-house' sits, firmly fixed on a foundation well above the high-water mark, cosy and dry but only periodically in touch with the larger social world.

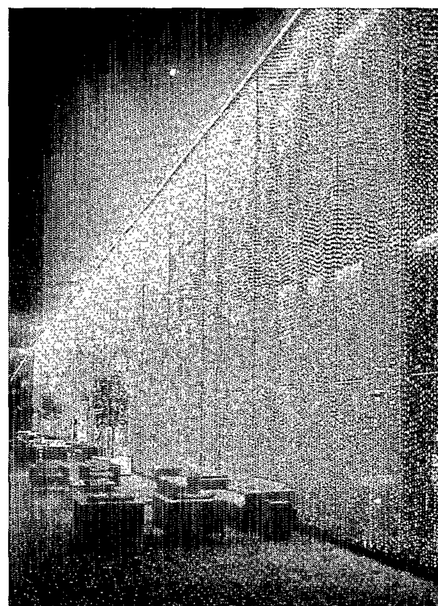
I do not think that more than a small minority of Canadian craftspeople or artists of other kinds are interested in going to such lengths to be alone, yet there is a segment of makers, and perhaps a part of every creator, that pursues art as pure self-realization, which is a lonely pursuit. Despite the value of interaction with colleagues, customers and critics, there has to be time to work out ideas and to perfect skills. There was a natural relationship between the resurgence of craft activity in the 1960s and a back-to-the-land movement which was as much practical as ethical. Some of the isolation that has characterized the crafts has been self-imposed and probably always will be, and there are strategic needs and interesting social and historical precedents for this. The enduring romantic vision of the craftsman as the picture of harmony, stability, and tranquillity, for example, is challenged by the socially ambiguous, anomalous and contentious role actually played by craft specialists in many parts of the world. Yet of more concern to us here are aspects of isolation to which contemporary Canadian craftspeople have been subject through public perception and institutional structures, and not so much physical isolation but isolation within the arts. Most craftspeople, after all, now live in the cities.

The first aspect is public perception. It is an ironic twist of fate that the same 'counter-culture' force that powered the surge in craft skills in the 1960s also left behind it a stigma in the popular consciousness that has taken the better part of two decades to fade, and still has a lot

1. N. Adams, 'Smithsonian Horizons', *Smithsonian*, January 1987, p. 12; H. Giambruni, 'ACC's New Museum: Functional Craft to the Back of the Bus?' *Craft International*, April-June, 1987, pp. 20-1; J. B. Mays, 'Drawing that Fine Line Between Art and Craft', *The Globe and Mail*, February 14, 1986, p. C5.

2. A. Freedman, 'American Style and the Politics of Taste', *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), 1 February 1986.

3. P. Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1984.



33
Curtain, Place des Arts, Montreal, by Micheline Beauchemin.

of life in it. The fact is that many Canadians are still embarrassed by what they associate with the word 'crafts'.

Among the élite in the arts in Canada, there are many who still regard an interest in the crafts as an enormous fashion mistake. People who had trouble dealing with the social challenges of the 1960s remain uncomfortable with what they see as its trappings: mugs, macramé, and by association all materials one can recognize as hand made. Perhaps the reincarnated Memphis style with its sharp lines coated with zig-zags, darts, and dots over solid pink or turquoise has been commercially successful because it covers so well. The 1960s as a period in North American history are still treated as an aberration by some, and as a mystical experience by others; one curator of design who attempted to explain the aesthetics of this complex decade concluded that 'you really had to be there'.[2] Even men and women who lived in the age of Aquarius, and then moved to somewhere like Ottawa, and now form the largest potential audience and market for the work of craftspeople, are only slowly recognizing the developments in the work which distance it from the amateurism, nostalgia, and 'alternativeness' which characterized the proliferation of crafts in the 1960s.

For many Canadians 'crafts' still translates as 'handicrafts', which in turn conjures up uncomfortable associations with some of our society's most delicate taboo subjects like the elderly and the handicapped and some of our least resolved myths like the nostalgic one of vanishing rural life and the wilderness, drifting from the centres of one of the most urbanized and resource-hungry countries on earth. Second, institutional structures and disciplinary categories have, along with popular perception, and frequently in lock-step with them, contributed to the isolation of crafts within the arts. Part of the problem in appreciating the arts in their totality is that 'systems of their study, patronage and exhibition are diverse and self-inducingly myopic'.[3]

This kind of disciplinary tunnel vision has meant that craftspeople and their work have to some extent been kept out of public view, and more importantly, apart from the discourse on art and society that this encourages. Canadian museums were until recently likely to disqualify the contemporary craftsman: not Indian and thus of no interest to the ethnology department; not visibly ethnic, so hardly fit for the folk department; and not dead, so I'm sure history would not be interested either.

Art galleries, on the other hand, although more forthcoming in fits and starts, have their own criteria, be they historical, media-exclusive or just personal. I do not think that in the informed climate of the 'coming of age' I need go back as far as the Renaissance divergence between the notion of craft and that of fine art, or the subsequent narrowing of the notion of art to mean, in some circles, only the recent European academic tradition and its descendant, modern or contemporary art, particularly abstract expressionism. It will suffice to acknowledge that this whole, well-documented development has had a formative impact on the organization of art schools, galleries, and of course, public taste. It has been difficult for craftspeople to maintain a foothold within this world, let alone participate in it, especially during periods of open contempt for materials,

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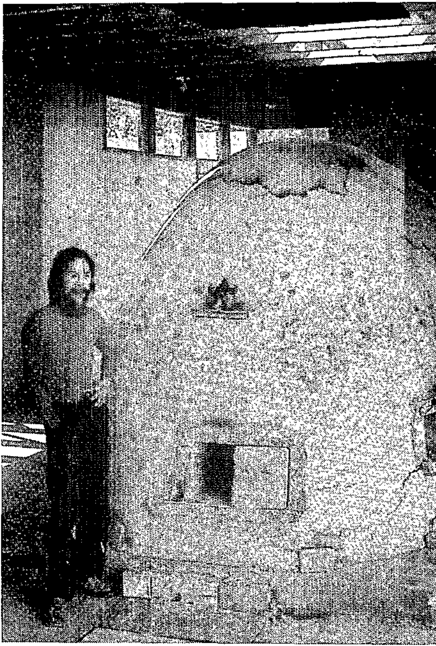
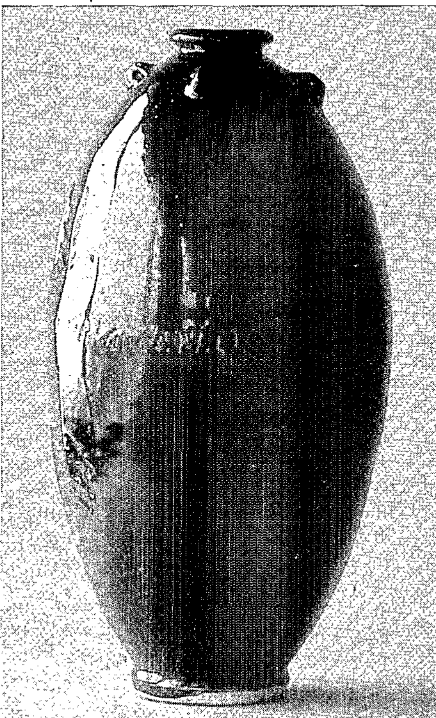
Micheline Beauchemin in her studio at Les Grondines, Quebec.



35
Wayne Ngan in his studio with wood-fired kiln, Hornby Island, British Columbia.

36
Stoneware bottle by Wayne Ngan.



skill and care. It is a process of theory-building that, as Tom Wolfe describes it, flies

> faster and faster, in ever-tighter and more dazzling turns ... let's see, we just got rid of the little rows of hung pictures, not to mention a couple of superannuated critics, and we've gotten rid of illusion, representational objects, the third dimension, pigment (or most of it), brushstrokes, and now frames and canvas — but what about the wall itself? How very pre-modern![4]

As a result, the contemporary crafts have frequently had to settle for their own infrastructure, whether by choice or not: craft galleries, craft magazines, craft audiences, craft research, craft history and the same members, jurors and executives year after year. The dedication and love that people have brought to creating and maintaining what Lucie-Smith calls this 'society within a society' is nothing short of extraordinary, yet at least part of the reason why this 'society of crafts' has developed such a strong identity is because attempts to branch out, diversify or integrate have so often been rebuffed.[5]

What are some of the changes which accompany the 'new era'? As one whose involvement with collections and exhibitions of contemporary North American craft is relatively short, I shall draw on the leeway this gives me to make some broad, general statements. One direction with which many people will be familiar, of course, is the continuous and increasingly rapid erosion of the barriers which art galleries and the fine art establishment have traditionally erected against works of art other than those conforming to a particular range of media and set of social and historical affiliations.

In every medium, artists who may have been affiliated with the crafts move from the 'object' to the 'statement': the exhibitions and catalogues proclaim form and function, form over function, form beyond function and, then, idea beyond form. Craft professionals have by now become accustomed in the journals, conferences and exhibition statements to 'the new definition' of their work (or the work of a segment of their colleagues) for which 'idea is primary and utilization is secondary'.[6]

The willingness of craftspeople to explore new purely aesthetic directions in their work and of artists trained in the fine arts (which, of course includes a good many craftspeople as well) to move beyond traditional easel painting and sculptural media comes at a time when Modernism's dim view of craftsmanship is softening. Art critics, whom craft exhibit organizers have accused of 'extreme prejudice', do not always have to be drugged and dragged to the events. A few seem excited. Some still feel hostile, like Brian Shein who wrote a bitter denunciation of fabric art in a recent edition of *Canadian Art* (Fall/Winter 1986). He sounded hysterical, which is probably a good indication that his resistance is breaking down.

Artists who have struggled for years or even decades to produce fine art while maintaining a special relationship to materials and skills, and an alliance with a craft tradition, may find little consolation now in the fact that major Canada Council grants in existing categories are going more frequently to people from the crafts, or that fine-art collectors and dealers are broadening their scope, or that major commissioned art work is coming back to the crafts, but this is happening. This surely reflects an awareness that craftspeople are not so much branching out from their realm of purely utilitarian or functional work, but rather going back to a wider range of work, from which they had been excluded by fashion.

Yet there is also a certain irony that some should opt for a move from the isolation of a craft mode of work and presentation to the socially even more exclusive world of the fine arts, the Academy where exclusivity is part of the meaning, especially at a time when the Academy itself is trying to become less exclusive, explore new avenues towards relevance, and escape its reputation for, in the words of John Bently Mays, an 'endless poodle parade'.[7]

Even more interesting as an emerging bridge between the island of craft and the mainland of the other arts is an increasing acceptance of the 'craft attitude'; of craft's traditional function and the artistic validity of that function. A new energy for exploring the aesthetic and socially significant qualities of the functional object has become a strong force for correcting a situation, described by Helen Giambruni, where functional crafts have often been forced 'to the back of the art bus', while a lot of weakly pretentious stuff was allowed to 'sit up in front with the high art'.[8]

When I left the inaugural exhibit at the American Craft Museum, *Craft Today*, I felt unsettled, not because the Museum of Modern Art seemed to be spreading across the street to embrace the crafts, as in any case it already has, but

because it seemed that the American Craft Museum was in danger of becoming merely a reflection in the window of the Museum of Modern Art. All those white walls, pedestals, single spotlights and tiny labels seemed as much a capitulation as a victory. The subsequent set of exhibits, especially *Interlacing — The Essential Fibre* with its brilliant juxtaposition of works of fibre art from throughout the world, and of ideas and processes from traditional societies with those of some of North America's finest artists, demonstrated once again that reverence for craft's materials, intentions and traditions is no barrier to creative possibility.

This is, I believe, good news for craftspeople who are fed up with the seemingly inexorable advance of craft towards fine art/mainstream validation as well as those who mourn 'the loss of craft's unique identity as it blends in the stew of the fine arts'.[9] But it is also a positive development for those whose ambitions gravitate towards the fine arts; the expressive value and symbolic meaning of the functional object has never been of more vital interest to all artists.

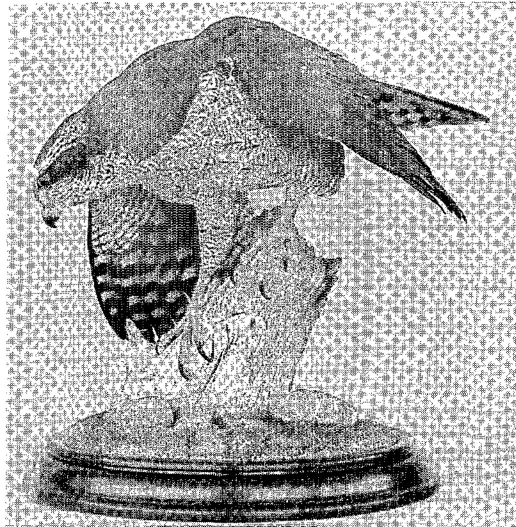
The increasing acceptance of contemporary crafts on their own terms, as an aspect of the arts, coincides with a growing concern within the arts for architecture, design, the decorative arts and other art forms with which the crafts share a history. The contribution of these various streams of art-making to what we know as art and to our social and material lives are the subjects of new gallery, museum and private collections, exhibitions and a good deal of research and publication in Canada. The success of craftspeople in breaking into sources of funding and opportunities for marketing until recently reserved for fine artists is paralleled by several new grants, scholarships and collections which refer specifically to the crafts and their ongoing vitality.

But what I wish to conclude with is a bridge which I personally believe will grow stronger and wider, and which is probably the major concern of many of us who are at the periphery rather than at the centre of craft production. This is the perspective that sees the work of contemporary craftspeople not only in galleries of the contemporary fine arts, and in institutions devoted to the crafts as a separate discipline, but also integrated into Canadian museums and scholarship 'side by side', as Marjorie Halpin puts it, 'with the best of humankind's greatest achievements in wood, stone, metal, clay, and fibre to the extent that we have brought and can bring these things to Canada'.[10]

Contemporary craftspeople are perhaps foremost among all artists in exploring the work of both their ancestors and their contemporaries in other cultures, and yet this wealth of inspiration and interplay is commonly ignored or even suppressed, rather than celebrated. It is high time we rid ourselves of the most noxious tenet of modernist dogma: that art, in order to be effective, has to be detached, disturbing and unlike anything that preceded it. Instead, as Arguelles suggests, the strange identification of 'artistic novelty' should give way to 'artistic purity'.[11] It is well to remember that just as 'masterpiece' once referred to an outstanding work by a craftsman and 'manufacture' once referred to making by hand, likewise 'originality' once meant 'having existed since the origin of things'. It was only in the eighteenth century that its meaning was reversed, and it came to mean 'lack of earlier origin', 'independence or novelty'. I wonder if 'originality' in its first sense (qualities which refer to original human concerns) could be revived as a criterion for judging and selecting works of craft.

The 'reassessment' of crafts is part of a much larger alignment of our artistic values, one that has featured the recognition of the aesthetic significance of functional objects in other societies. The increasing accessibility and circulation of the artistic work of peoples in other parts of the world and in other times, which were once considered mere curiosities or scientific specimens, has stimulated new research into the role of art in society. Claude Lévi-Strauss's famous comparison of the art of the North-West Coast Indians with the finest achievements of Greece, Rome and Egypt, was part of the convergence of the methodologies of art history, critical theory and anthropology. This inspired a perspective in which the post-Renaissance European distinction between fine and applied arts had little meaning. Moreover, in this global perspective, an approach which characterized the crafts as repetitious, mundane and exclusively functional, as opposed to art, which is creative, intellectual and individual, was exposed as one inextricably tied to a colonialist, racist and sexist ideology.

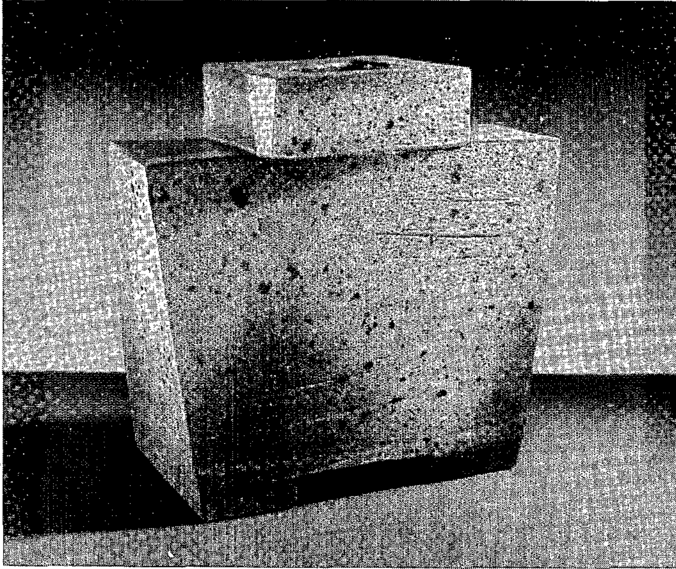
While art galleries show work at the dramatic cutting edge of the craft tradition and specialized craft galleries and museums devote themselves to specialized aspects of the craft tradition as such,

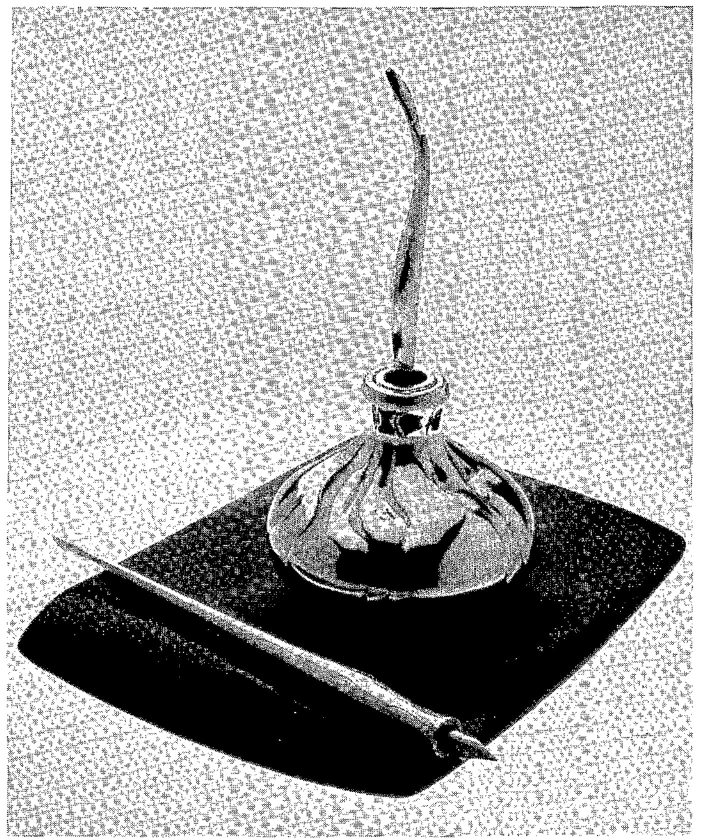


37
Carved wood goshawk by William Hazzard, Regina, Saskatchewan.

4. T. Wolfe, 'The Painted Word', *Harpers*, April 1975, pp. 57-92.
5. E. Lucie-Smith, 'Craft Today: Historical Roots and Contemporary Perspectives', *Craft Today: Poetry of the Physical*, pp. 15-40, New York, American Craft Museum, 1986.
6. See M. Dunas, 'The Modern Ache', *Metalsmith*, Spring 1987, p. 15.
7. J. B. Mays, 'Comment', *American Craft*, December 1985/January 1986, pp. 38-9.
8. Giambruni, op. cit., p. 20.
9. W. Seelig, 'Comment', *American Craft*, April-May, 1987, p. 20.
10. M. Halpin, 'The Recovery of Craft: An Anthropological Perspective', p. 4, paper delivered at the Canadian Crafts Council Annual Meeting, Vancouver, August 1986.
11. J. A. Arguelles, *The Transformative Vision*, p. 256, Berkeley, Calif., Shambhala, 1975.

38
Stoneware vessel by Doucet-Saito, Way's Mills, Quebec.





39
Silver and stone writing set by Lois Etherington Betteridge, Guelph, Ontario.

large multi-purpose museums can, I think, further help to reduce the relative isolation of crafts from 'the intellectual currents which have transformed and been transformed by society at large'.[12] They will do this not by turning contemporary crafts into objects of cool, functionless contemplation, or by 'ghettoizing' them in their own exclusive material, technical or historical categories, but by drawing the lines and emphasizing the links that make the works of craftspeople part of the continual flow of artistic expression.

This means emphasizing the physical involvement of crafts with materials through technical skill and the power of transformation. Knowledge of this kind has become almost a mystery in a society increasingly alienated from the manufacturing process of its own material culture. Obsolescence, disuse and indifference to mediocrity in the quality of what we use and see are continually challenged by the well-made object.

Also important is emphasis on the spiritual involvement of crafts with materials, giving form to human experience, with the power of cultural mediation. Their visual and tactile connections with the land and with cultural ideas help to define a sense of place, which is a persistent issue in Canada.[13] The role of artists in reviving cultural integrity and stimulating development and independence among small groups and communities throughout the world has been profound, as has their role in humanizing urban spaces for large populations. To all these situations of mediation craftspeople bring, as they always have, their special ability to integrate their work of art with the user or viewer.

Freud claimed that every artist has three goals: money, fame and beautiful lovers. For the increasing number of craftspeople taking advantage of the outgoing tide to explore the world beyond the island, it will be clear that, as always, these goals are difficult to achieve. Yet, regardless of what the 'new era' brings, we can be confident that there are people who remain dedicated to maintaining a high level of working skill and vision and that there is a social context in which this work plays a more diverse and dynamic role.

12. Adams, op. cit., p. 12.
13. T. Heath, 'A Sense of Place', *Visions: Contemporary Art in Canada*, pp. 45-76, Vancouver, Douglas & McIntyre, 1983.

A case for the development of world crafts

Patrick Ela

Director of the Craft and Folk Art Museum of Los Angeles where he has served in various capacities since 1976. As a former educator at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and intern at the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen in Munich, he has long been involved with issues and policies related to the public's perceptions about art, craft and design. He holds a Master's degree in Business (Arts Management) from the University of California, Los Angeles, and a Baccalaureate degree in art from Occidental College. He has studied planning and museum management at university level and regularly acts as a consultant to museums, government and corporations.

This article has two aims: to develop a nominal model which describes the general components of world crafts, and to outline a strategy for their development and enhancement.

The author contends that folk arts, crafts and design are related to one another and form a continuum in which the creation and nature of useful objects change over time as societies become industrialized. Thus, folk and traditional crafts are generally produced in pre-industrial societies, production crafts are found in early industrial societies, designer crafts such as the works of Alvar Aalto or Charles and Rae Eames are found in mature industrialized societies, and craft art is found in today's post-industrial societies. In this last case the work of the general public concentrates on services, distribution of goods and information processing as opposed to agriculture and manufacturing.

The author maintains that each of these craft forms requires different approaches for development and that the World Crafts Council could facilitate world crafts by adopting and promoting a system of craft categories and related developmental strategies.

As a microcosm of world cultures, Los Angeles inspires the study of communication, language and material culture. It is a city rich in ethnic and cultural diversity where more than eighty languages are spoken daily.

It is a place where people from the world's developing countries regularly encounter those from the industrialized countries; thus, while rooted in convergent world traditions, Los Angeles is no less dedicated to progress and innovation in design, architecture and technology. This dialectic situation results in intercultural conflict, change and assimilation. Paradoxically, in precipitating crisis, it can inspire dogged maintenance of cultural values and traditions.

The Craft and Folk Art Museum (CAFAM) has, since it was founded in 1971, studied these phenomena and addressed them with an array of programmes on traditional folk arts and contemporary crafts, and design. These comprise the core subject areas for its collections, exhibitions and publications, as well as its educational and outreach activities. Within the purview of world crafts, this range of CAFAM's interests has called for flexibility and openness in approaching traditional museum concerns as well as a desire to provide accessible programmes which will be understood and utilized by a broad public. In particular, the museum has focused on the ethnic diversity of southern California as a basis, recognizing and articulating its broader interest in world cultures.

Around the world, crafts are perceived with varying degrees of immediacy by differing segments of the general public. In many developing countries, they have a primary function: thousands of individuals are involved in their production, marketing and distribution, which can form a large part of the country's export economy. In the American economy, by contrast, they constitute but a tertiary refinement of life.

Crafts development was one of the topics of Crafts India, a major international conference held in New Delhi during the Asian Assembly of the World Crafts Council in November 1986. As a panelist, I was asked to discuss this issue from the perspective of CAFAM. In

preparing my remarks, I sought to clarify my own thinking on the nature of craft and on the interrelationship of the disciplines with which the museum had been working. This in turn consolidated a number of related experiences from the previous year.

In Oakland, California, in June 1986, the American Craft Council held a national symposium entitled Art/Culture/Future. The theme of the symposium was the relationship between craft and art. Included were sessions on craft criticism, how craft artists deal with museums and galleries, crafts and arts in public places, public relations for craftspeople, and general discussions about the future of American craft, with a strong emphasis on the question of whether craft was art or vice versa.

In December 1985, I consulted the Malaysian Handcraft Development Corporation on museum practices and the development of craft programmes which would both preserve the indigenous crafts of the country and develop new forms for export.

In each of these situations, I found that 'crafts' had different meanings and expectations associated with them. In the United States there were craft artists concerned with holding exhibitions in galleries and museums and being thought of as artists. In Malaysia, traditional craftsmen and artisans were concerned with selling their works to domestic and foreign markets. How these two types of craftspeople relate to one another, and what the implications of this relationship are for development, form the basis of this article.

In working with the international crafts community, one becomes aware of traditional crafts, folk crafts, village crafts, indigenous crafts, craft-art, production crafts, designer crafts and mass-produced tourist objects which may be crafted or not. The term 'folk art' is often used in the industrial countries to refer to the traditional crafts of less developed countries. Similarly, craftspeople around the world are described in many ways, ranging from the village artisan to the master craftsman or the 'intangible living national treasures' as they are called in Japan and Korea.

In addressing the issue of craft development, then, it becomes important to determine what type of craft we are trying to develop. This is particularly true for museums, which must formulate a proper role or strategy for themselves in relation to the development of craft at the local, regional, national and international levels.

For the purpose of this article, I have grouped crafts into five broad types, as follows:

Traditional crafts which are specific to certain regions or countries.

Production or workshop crafts where a master craftsman oversees the production and some division of labour may be used.

Designer crafts where designers interact with craftspeople and/or industry to produce an array of useful objects.

Craft art or international style crafts which are mainly non-functional objects in the traditional craft media.

Tourist arts and crafts or works by persons of lesser talent or exposure, who can exist by working in a semi-skilled or skilled factory which generally produces poorer quality tourist objects.

I am most comfortable in relating the concept of craft and craftsmanship to functionality and love of materials. These are inescapable fundamentals in working with wood, glass, fibre, metal and clay. Even art that is called craft, if not functional, must have reference to craft materials or craftsmanship by definition. Similarly, much of the world's folk art and traditional craft is functional in the context in which it was made.

Folk crafts normally serve some utilitarian or spiritual purpose. Purely decorative objects in folk cultures are few and far between, although decoration is often a major part of folk art. There exists in many folk cultures a need to make all things — from the lowest to the highest — beautiful, that is, to imbue one's work with charm and grace or, as Kenneth Ames noted in his article which used the phrase as a title, to go 'beyond necessity'.

TRADITIONAL and FOLK CRAFTS are essentially group expressions made by the group or an individual within it. Folk craft or art expresses the collective aesthetic — the attitude of the group which dictates the form and embellishment of daily or ritual objects. Traditional crafts and arts are found in insular or isolated groups, as in the case of masks from Mexican villages, ceramics from New Mexican pueblos, or traditional textiles from Guatemala. Most often, folk crafts are made by hand or with simple tools. They are generally for use in the society which makes them, but are also sometimes traded or bartered. In modern situations, from Malaysia to Mexico, the nature of the group's aesthetic is influenced by contact with the outside world; new materials, forms and attitudes inevitably result from prolonged exposure to outside influences.

PRODUCTION CRAFTS are often made in large series in a quasi-factory setting. They are associated with technical skill, manual dexterity and repetition, and are essentially made by hand or with some light machinery. Examples include chairs, books, rugs and jewellery. More contemporary production crafts can utilize a greater degree of mechanization or industrialization but most of them rigorously maintain the made-by-hand aesthetic. Production crafts are most often associated with utility, and are found in early stages of industrialization.

DESIGNER CRAFTS are a modern industrial phenomenon in which individuals or groups use techniques of production and mass distribution to provide an array of consumer products. The production can be all by hand or by machine, and the number of pieces can be limited or unlimited depending on the market. The bulk of items we encounter daily are designed and produced, from cars to clock radios, from jeans to jump ropes. Design results in useful mass-produced objects which can be garish or beautiful, either ephemeral like the beleaguered Edsel or lasting like the Barcelona Chair. Note that many developing countries are attempting to evolve towards this mode of production, through the mechanization of their traditional crafts and folk arts, such as the making of silk or other textiles, to exploit larger export markets. The risks attendant on such efforts will be treated below.

CRAFT ARTS or international-style crafts are generally produced by persons working in highly industrialized societies. While they utilize the traditional craft media, craft arts are generally non-functional. In most cases the makers refer to their objects as art or craft art and align themselves with art galleries rather than craft outlets. Because of the factors commonly associated with this category of crafts — lack of function in objects and the aestheticizing milieu in which they are made — it is arguable that craft arts are a post-industrial phenomenon which characteristically occurs as society evolves from one level of industrialization or technological advancement to another.

Each of these categories of craft has persons who excel and produce outstanding works as well as those who produce only modest objects. As to the concept of

quality, I would cite two sources, first, the 1971 United States Government pamphlet, *Encouraging American Craftsmen*, by Charles Counts, in which he states that 'A true craft object reflects the time, the place, the personality and character of the Craftsman, the method by which it was made and its use . . . the object thus created has its own inherent and aesthetic value', and, secondly, *The Crafts in Australia*, published in 1975 by the Australian Government Publishing Service:

> The Crafts Committee views the word craft with pride, not as an inferior form which can sometimes win the name of art, but as a grouping of certain arts such as pottery, jewellery, tapestry; these are creative arts, as are music, painting, sculpture, dance and drama. All of these arts have within them practitioners whose work does not transcend the techniques of their art and those whose work does. It believes that the concept of craftsmanship with its emphasis on understanding one's materials and pride in the way one uses them, a concern for doing an excellent job and obtaining one's satisfaction from doing it, is needed in the world today.

In the broad spirit of these words, one could expect to find quality in the production of mahogany objects commissioned by Dansk International in Honduras as well as in traditional Honduran ceramics. But one must also recognize that the two craft forms — the latter indigenous and traditional, the former international and semi-industrial — come from different points of origin, obey different aesthetic canons, have different markets, and thus have significantly different developmental needs.

These distinctions are essential as we consider the formulation of craft development strategies for the World Craft Council (WCC), our regional and national craft councils, and museums. It is naïve to assume that (semi) industrial production will increase the market share for regional folk arts and enhance life in the producing society. To apply modern technology to traditional or local folk craft may have quite the contrary effect. By jeopardizing authenticity, it can erode enthusiasm for the local craft form on the export market, while locally it may occasion painful social dislocations as centuries of tradition are swept away in a few years. On closer scrutiny, policies enhancing traditional crafts may well turn out to be incompatible with policies supporting production crafts or craft art.

By way of example, consider the Ministry of Trade in a hypothetical developing country which wishes to increase national income from textile exports. To achieve this, the Minister will pay a large bonus to experienced textile artists and weavers who can design and oversee the development of increased and innovative textile production over a twenty-four-month period. In this same country, the Minister of Culture has just begun a campaign to preserve the national weaving traditions. The Minister has found the remaining five master weavers and wants them to spend the next two years teaching their traditional skills and values to the country's leading younger artists. What will happen? Will money or tradition prevail? Can both Ministers accomplish their respective goals?

In another example, a well-meaning bureaucrat enthusiastically retains foreign designers to 'improve' the indigenous crafts in his country through the introduction of modern materials, designs and techniques. Time and circumstances will surely combine to change the nature of the pure local craft form and may one day eliminate it.

These examples underscore the fact that people in executive positions have many different motivations for developing crafts. Moreover, many responsible people are making programmatic decisions without the benefit of generally accepted guidelines on craft development.

Having described the craft categories and noted the potential for conflict which exists among them, I will turn to what we might do to make progress in the development of international crafts over the next five- to ten-year period. First, it is my belief that the WCC can do a great deal of good by recognizing and clearly stating the different categories of craft that exist in the world today. Second, the WCC should recommend broad ways in which each type of craft could be developed. Following these general guidelines, each country would be responsible for the implementation of its own craft development and do so against a backdrop of international consensus. These should be common-sense, practical guidelines which already exist in many forms and only need to be brought together.

The following notes provide more specific suggestions for international guidelines.

For TRADITIONAL CRAFTS we need to: document master craftsmen for future generations; attempt to provide for the passing on of skills to apprentices;

foster the continuation of the practice of traditional crafts (stipends, purchases, and recognition); develop audiences for the purchase and appreciation of traditional crafts (warehousing, distribution); designate master craftsmen when appropriate — the 'intangible living national treasures' of Japan and Korea provide a wonderful model for this approach.

For PRODUCTION CRAFTS we must provide: technical assistance (materials and methods); marketing assistance (warehousing, distribution); recognition of excellence (exhibitions, prizes); audience development (national and international); craftspeople development (educational opportunities). Here I would cite FONART of Mexico which regularly buys art directly from craftspeople and distributes it to the buying public.

For DESIGNER CRAFTS we should: sensitize manufacturers to the need for 'good' design; provide training at home and abroad for craft designers; recognize outstanding designers through publications and exhibitions.

For CRAFT ART we should provide: technical assistance; exchange of ideas (conferences, exhibitions); recognition of excellence (prizes, exhibitions); audience and buyer development; promotion through galleries, fairs and museums; publications.

For TOURIST CRAFTS we should provide opportunities for exposure to broader crafts through periodic educational programmes.

For general crafts development, the WCC should establish a regular international exhibition programme such as a museum route for co-ordinated regular, affordable exhibition exchange.

For their part, museums must play a major role in developing crafts at several levels.

In the TRADITIONAL CRAFTS they should: document master craftspeople through oral history, photography and, where possible, collection of objects for display and study; help promote recognition of master craftspeople by working with appropriate materials; exhibit and publish appropriate materials; advocate proper care and treatment of crafts and craftspeople.

In PRODUCTION AND DESIGNER CRAFTS museums must: recognize quality work through exhibitions; educate the public on issues of quality: collaborate with other museums nationally and internationally to promote world crafts; promote sales of original craft work in shops and outlets.

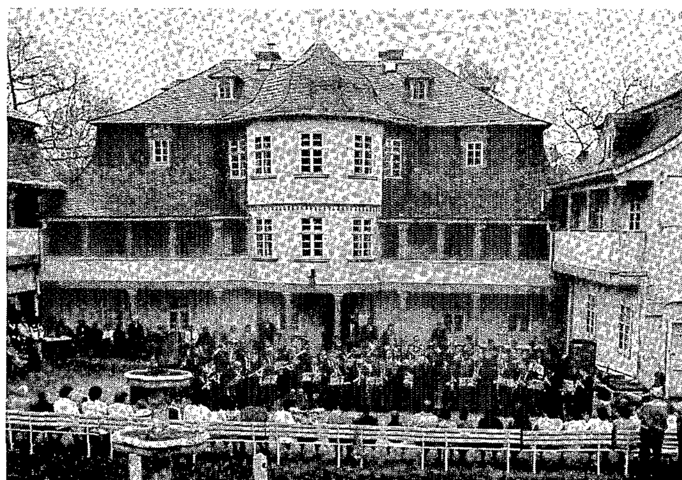
In CRAFT ART museums should: provide recognition of local, regional, national and international craft artists; help exchange ideas among craft artists through exhibitions, publications and educational programmes; educate the general public and provide opportunities for audience/buyer development; support the craft artist in the broader art world.

Craftspeople create because they need to create; like all of us, they must eat. To overlook the inescapable need for economic development as well as technical and artistic development would be naïve. It would also be naïve not to recognize the economic, social, and political considerations affecting craft forms in developing countries or in parts of industrialized countries as in the case of American Indian craftsmen in the United States. Traditional society needs to sustain its tradition and does so frequently through its crafts. A transitional society needs to grow economically and through its economic well-being begin to exert political influence which will benefit its members. In this way the crafts can help make a better world.

The World Crafts Council can take a leading role in the development of crafts by working through its regional, national and local agencies to promote awareness of these important issues and to develop as soon as possible an international agenda for crafts development. The most effective work, after all, will be done at the local level where craftspeople work and sell their wares. It is our responsibility to help them do so.

PROJECTS AND CASE-STUDIES

The Markneukirchen Musical Instrument Museum — the development of the collection, its objectives and scope



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Ernst Gewinner

Director of the Markneukirchen Musical Instrument Museum, was born on 17 September 1929 at Bunzlau. He studied in Meissen at the Martin-Andersen-Nexo Management School and in the Culture and Aesthetics Department of Karl Marx University in Leipzig. He has been engaged in cultural activities since 1952. Since 1965 he has been director of the Markneukirchen Musical Instrument Museum. He is a member of the German Democratic Republic's National Council for Museums.

40
THE MUSEUM OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, Paulus Palace, Markneukirchen. Concert given by instrument makers during the 'Vogtland Music Days'.

The development of the collection

The Markneukirchen Musical Instrument Museum belongs to the musical orbit of Klingenthal in the area of Karl-Marx-Stadt in the German Democratic Republic. The museum is unique in the way it symbolizes the local craftsmanship from which it sprang and the craftsmen themselves who were responsible for its development.

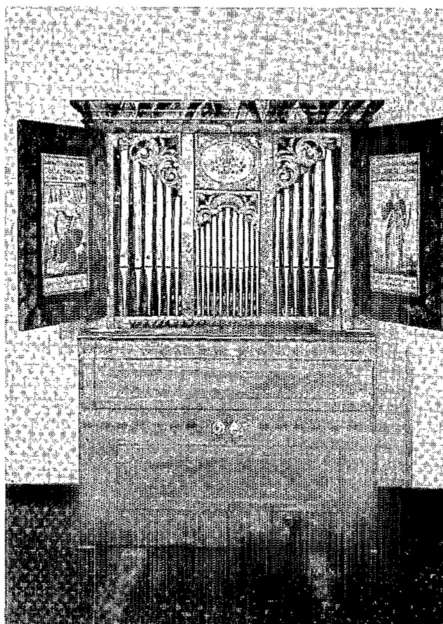
The production of musical instruments in the Vogtland, or the southern borderland of Saxony, goes back more than 300 years. In the mid-seventeenth century the Counter Reformation caused thousands of Protestants to emigrate from the centres of violin production in the Habsburg Empire. They first settled and pursued their violin manufacture at Graslitz and Schönbach in Bohemia, but when the Counter Reformation overtook them there too, some of the craftsmen crossed the nearby frontier into Saxony to establish themselves in the Vogtland, and more particularly at Klingenthal and Markneukirchen.

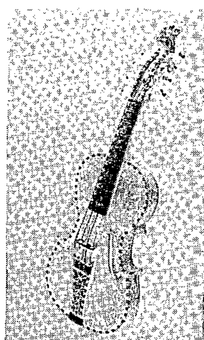
Conditions were conducive to the growth of musical instrument production, and the settlement of the expatriates was further helped by the sympathy and encouragement of the Protestant Elector of Saxony, Augustus I. In 1677 the Markneukirchen craftsmen banded together to form the first German instrument makers' guild, membership of which was confined to violin producers. They were later joined by makers of other instruments. The evidence suggests that woodwind instrument makers joined around 1700, followed in 1725 by string-makers, in 1740 by bow-makers and in 1755 by the manufacturers of French horns. By the second half of the eighteenth century it was already possible to purchase the whole range of orchestral instruments in Markneukirchen.

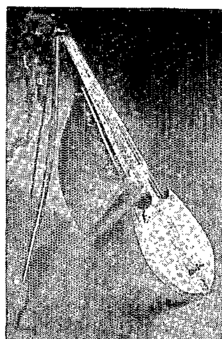
In 1834 the town already possessed a music school, and from 1853 it also had an orchestra, although the inhabitants numbered no more than two or three thousand at the time. The instrument-making industry thrived, and after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71, when capitalism flourished in the German Empire with the stimulus of the newly acquired markets and the 5,000 million gold francs exacted in war contributions from France, there was a further upsurge in the Vogtland's highly concentrated musical instrument industry.

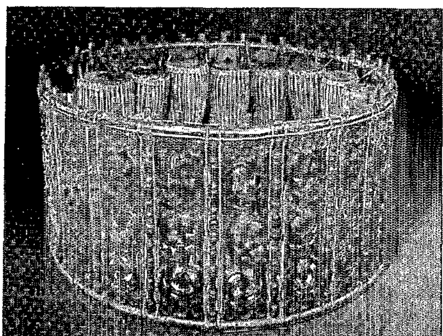
A lively international trade in musical instruments was built up as markets expanded and new outlets were found.

Perhaps it was inevitable that these circumstances should generate the idea of starting a collection of musical instruments. The task of formulating this idea and turning it into a reality fell to the









41
Portable organ by Georg Hammer, Switzerland, 1838. This organ has three registers and 162 pipes, half wooden, half pewter.

42
Violin by A. Sandland, Brunkeberg, Norway, 1921.

43
A *rabob*, an Indian stringed instrument.

44
A set of *tshaing* drums from Burma.

Markneukirchen Trade Association, which was founded in 1872. Many such trade associations were formed around this time in Saxony, for the purpose of helping craftsmen to withstand the concentration of production brought about by capitalist methods of manufacture. The aim of the Markneukirchen Trade Association was to promote the manufacture of musical instruments and defend its interest. Its 363 members — all of them musical instrument makers — organized excursions, lectures, meetings, discussions, exhibitions and the establishment of a library. Encouragement of the rising generation of instrument makers was another of its progressive aims. Urged by the Association, the town established in 1878 a technical college for musical instrument makers, and the Association continued its effort to further the industry's cause by pressing for the creation of a musical instrument collection.

In 1882, some Markneukirchen members of the Trade Association visited the Exhibition of Trade, Industry and Art in Nuremberg and became acquainted with the Germanische Museum's department of historical musical instruments. What they saw there lent further impetus to the idea that a collection of instruments should be established in Markneukirchen, not merely as a cultural institution but also as a showplace for the local instrument manufacturing industry. The Association's secretary, Paul Apian-Bennewitz, put the idea into words, and on 24 February 1883 delivered an impassioned speech to the Association members, urging the creation of a craft and industrial museum.

While this would serve as a source of professional training to the rising generation of instrument makers, it was clear even then that such a museum could also become a municipal attraction and fulfil a general cultural purpose. The idea of forming a museum of this kind was enthusiastically endorsed and accepted by the instrument makers present. On the evening of the speech craftsmen were already donating valuable instruments for the collection, thus laying the foundations for the creation of a comprehensive instrument collection whose present renown cannot have been remotely envisaged by its founders.

In many ways the establishment of the Markneukirchen Musical Instrument Museum differs from that of other museums. It does not owe its creation to wealthy sponsors or artistically inclined and moneyed benefactors, nor is its origin due to the action of dukes or princes like, say, the Grüne Gewölbe in Dresden, which was built up by a series of figures from Henry the Pious to Augustus the Strong, or like the museums of Vienna which were the beneficiaries of Archduke Ferdinand I, or like the museums of Berlin, which owe their existence to the Princes of Brandenburg. The list could be extended indefinitely in any country. The founders and creators of the Markneukirchen Musical Instrument Museum were the broad community of local instrument makers, craftsmen and dealers, who were later assisted in the work of collection in response to letters of appeal which they sent to the Ministry of the Interior of the Kingdom of Saxony and the Imperial Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck.

In 1886 the Trade Association consigned the collection to Markneukirchen Town Council with the request that it be adopted as a municipal museum. The Council accepted the donation and Germany thus acquired the first and only independent municipal museum of this kind (Fig. 40). Over a period of 104 years the museum has obtained some 4,000 musical artefacts representing the manufacture of instruments throughout the world. Although originally described as a craft and industrial museum, the institution is now known to the world as the Markneukirchen Musical Instrument Museum.

A great variety of bodies played their part in building up the collection. First there were the Markneukirchen instrument makers, who gave the collection representative models of local Vogtland manufacture. Then there were the Markneukirchen instrument dealers, who turned their connections in many countries to good account by procuring instruments from abroad (Figs. 41, 42). The government of the Kingdom of Saxony joined its efforts to those of the Imperial Chancellor to acquire musical instruments from distant parts of the globe.

By 1892 the museum already possessed more than 500 valuable instruments. Half of these came from outside Europe and still form prize items in the world-famous collection of exhibits from remote regions. To enlist help in obtaining musical instruments from outside Europe, the trustees of the Markneukirchen Trade Association appealed to the Government of Saxony, which promised to give the project its support and in-

45
The art of bow-making. Werner Übel learnt this art from his father. In 1952 he opened his own workshop, where he now works with his son who carries on the tradition.

46
The leading master violin maker in the Vogtland keeps up the old family tradition: his great-grandfather also worked in Markneukirchen.

structed the Kingdom's Ministry of the Interior to make a suitable approach to the Imperial Chancellor, Prince Otto von Bismarck. Bismarck responded by arranging for the German Foreign Office to send an order dated 6 December 1886 to the Imperial German legations, consultates general and consulates in South and Central America, Africa, the Near East and the Far East, instructing them to purchase musical instruments locally. As a result, the museum received instruments from many countries as gifts from the Government of Saxony. The importation of these instruments was generously made duty free (Figs. 43, 44).

Since 1946 the size of the collection has doubled. The acquisitions come partly from kind donations made by many countries, partly from the generous support of the music industry by the German Democratic Republic, and partly from purchases made by the museum itself in line with its procurement programme. On average, the collection has grown by some 70 items annually over the last fifteen years.

The objectives of the museum

The objectives which the founders of the museum had in mind are apparent in the following extract from the foundation speech of 1883:

> A picture is to be provided not only of the creation of the individual instrument but of the historical development of musical instruments as a whole. How many highly interesting instruments have now disappeared, a knowledge of which would not only fascinate but also instruct us! And how important it is that we should become aware of the history of the instruments we use today, from their beginnings to their present state of perfection!
>
> What a wealth of creative spirit, what musicality and what practical endeavour would dwell in such a collection! The inquiring and inventive mind would be guided along the right path to the achievement of further perfection by contemplating the mistakes and experiments of the past, and what a potent argument this would be against the mechanical sluggard who claims that his years of learning end with his apprenticeship and then, when his obsolete approaches and inherited practices are economically crushed by the wheel of progress, bemoans everything save only his own negligence!

This quotation reveals both the clear foresight of the author and the specific motivation of the project; the economic message is unmistakable.

The apprentice instrument makers and the students at the technical college for instrument manufacture were required to gain not only a theoretical knowledge of what was being made and used throughout the world but also, by practical acquaintance with the artefacts themselves, awareness of experiments and advances that were taking place in the manufacture of instruments. It was of course desirable and indeed necessary for the efficient and highly concentrated music industry to trade with the entire world. Markets for its products were the very lifeblood of its existence, so it was naturally necessary to know what was being made elsewhere, and how.

At that time, the importance of the museum was confined to a fairly restricted locality and its objectives were consequently mainly regional in character. Today the museum enjoys worldwide fame, possesses an excellent collection and receives multitudes of visitors from home and abroad who make full use of its facilities. In these circumstances the purpose of the museum has quite rightly changed, and it now plays a special role as a corporate element of the Museum Service of the German Democratic Republic.

The music industry of the German Democratic Republic today has its own research institutes whose scientific work serves to guide the progress of instrument production (Figs. 45-49). This being so, the permanent display now constitutes the Museum's central activity. European instruments are exhibited according to types and line of development while non-European items are arranged geographically.

Thanks to over a hundred years of

47
Master Edgar Knopf, well-known craft artist. His great-grandfather was already in the brass-instrument trade, and today famous players from Tokyo to Paris play his horns.

dedicated collecting activity the Museum is in an enviable position of being able to exhibit an almost complete range of original items representing the craft. In this it has no rival in the German Democratic Republic and merits the acknowledgement it receives from museum visitors. Its unique position and the availability of its exhibits are used to the best effect in setting out the display in such a way as to give the museum its highly distinctive profile in the ranks of the world's musical instrument museums. The permanent display gives visitors an idea of the many links between technical, social and cultural advances.

Besides its aesthetic appeal, the instrument collection is a storehouse of information, expertise and experience. It encapsulates values, ideals and ideas, and expresses what it means to be human and part of the world. Today's visitor may find and savour in the collection a reflection of his or her own humanity. So instruments whose great day is over remain works of art and representative of a material culture which lives still, whenever they reawaken a viewer's sense of artistry. Visitors find aesthetic, emotional and intellectual satisfaction in the exhibits, which become sources of both knowledge and delight, opening doors to the beauty and diversity of musical instrument manufacture.

There is at present a close relationship between the museum and the instrument manufacture of the Vogtland. The students at the Technical College — the master craftsmen of the future — make regular use of the collection in their studies, as was indeed the aim of the museum's original founders. The trained craftsmen and instrument makers of the Vogtland industry also find the museum to be a fruitful source of inspiration for their craft. Its exhibits give an insight into the technical development of the various categories of instruments, suggesting comparisons, and so stimulating fresh designs. Through its appeal to the younger instrument-makers, the museum is able to mould their sense of history.

At the moment the museum is undergoing extensive rebuilding and conversion. When the collection is reopened to the public in the autumn of 1988 it will comprise the following sections: bowed strings, plucked strings, woodwind, reed, metal-wind and keyboard instruments, mechanical instruments, and instruments originating from the Near and Far East, Africa and South America.

The effective presentation of these items involves a combination of factors, one of which is the museum building itself. Seldom does a museum building form such a fitting framework for its displays as this protected historic residence, built in 1784 in the late baroque lines of the musical instruments. A more admirable complement to the collection could hardly be imagined. Because of this, the display cabinets have been made intentionally plain and unobtrusive in shape, colour and materials, thus allowing the exhibits to blend with the architecture. Printed information and guided tours are provided to help visitors appreciate and understand the exhibits.

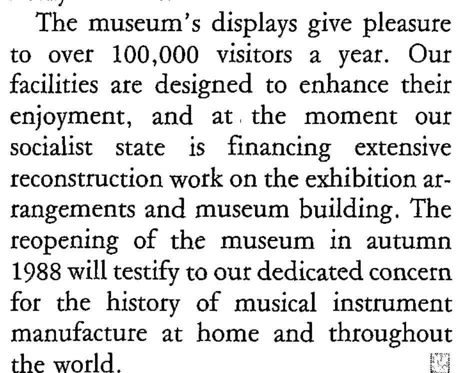
The collection consists of approximately 4,500 musical items illustrating the story of the craft. These include some 2,900 instruments, parts and tools, with 400 instruments from outside Europe. There are also technical books, photographs, paintings, leaflets and advertisements, which help to provide a fuller understanding of the trade. As we have seen, the collection was not the creation of wealthy patrons with an eye to prestige. It does not boast a Stradivarius or a Guarneri, but its instruments radiate the astringent beauty of generations of master craftsmanship. The collection of Vogtland stringed instruments provides an excellent opportunity to study the individual, the community and their development. The oldest Markneukirchen violin in the collection was made by Johan Gütter in 1712, and its originality bears eloquent witness to the long Vogtland violin-making tradition. Instruments made by masters like Ficker, Gütter, Heberlein, Hops, Pfretzschner, Reichel, Voigt and many others originate exclusively from Vogtland workshops and provide a complete history of violin making from 1712 to the present day.

There are also many examples of stringed instruments made in other countries. Comparisons can be made between models from Bohemia, France, Hungary and many other countries, and the collection also contains exceptional designs such as a Stelzner model, a Chanot violin, a Ritter viola, a trapezoidal Savart Violin and numerous other interesting attempts to introduce innovations into the making of musical instruments.

It is not possible here to make even a passing reference to the museum's many other exceptional and outstanding exhibits.

The collection also contains special designs, copies, instruments from remote parts, curiosities and miniatures, showing how broad the spectrum of instrument manufacture is. It thus conveys an overall impression of the growth and maturity of the instrument maker's craft, yet with a rare wealth of detail. We should also mention a Markneukirchen discovery: the metal-reed shawm. This was developed in 1908 and was quickly adopted by the revolutionary workers' movement, whose columns of demonstrators were led by bands of shawm players.

The permanent exhibition illustrates evolutionary trends such as the development of the flute from the simple finger-hole system of the Boehm flute. It has one of Europe's largest metal-wind instrument collections, which gives an insight into the many experiments, innovations and fascinating devices used in valve manufacture. The archaic forms of non-European musical instruments illustrate the course of development by providing comparisons with modern instruments. A top-quality instrument from the current production of the German Democratic Republic's musical instrument industry is also displayed in each section. The visitors thus see instruments which set a standard for the world, such



as the Supita accordion from Harmonikawerke at Klingenthal, the 'Meister Hans Hoyer' double horn, also from Klingenthal, or a viola made by Master Eckart Richter from Markneukirchen. These exhibits document the craftsmen's expertise, and attest to their endeavours to achieve perfection. The aims of the instrument makers who formed the collection 104 years ago have been richly fulfilled.

The museum's displays give pleasure to over 100,000 visitors a year. Our facilities are designed to enhance their enjoyment, and at the moment our socialist state is financing extensive reconstruction work on the exhibition arrangements and museum building. The reopening of the museum in autumn 1988 will testify to our dedicated concern for the history of musical instrument manufacture at home and throughout the world.

[*Translated from German*]

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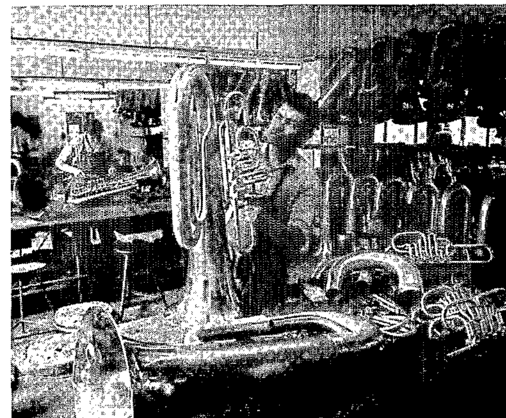
Wind-instrument workshop.



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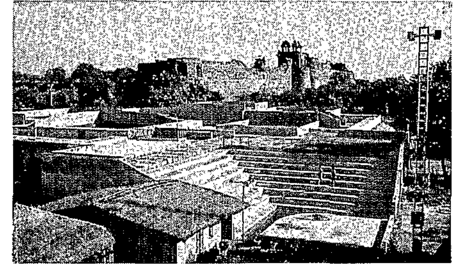
The double-bass instrument workshop was founded in 1882 by J. Rubner. Today it is run by the founder's grandson.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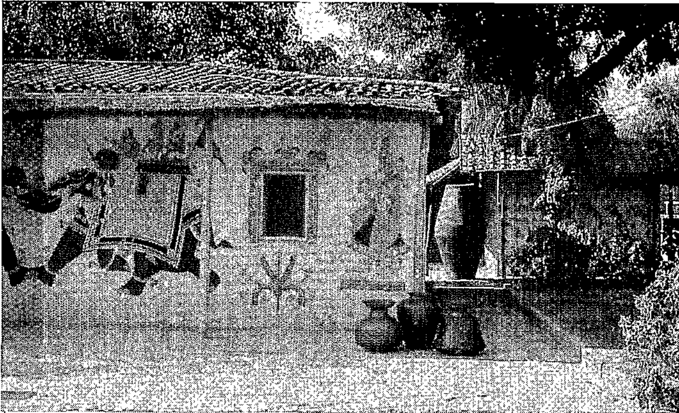
The Crafts Museum, New Delhi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Museum objects on the whole were not originally 'treasures' made to be seen in glass cases, but rather common objects of the market place that could be bought and used by anyone.

Ananda Coomaraswamy

Jyotindra Jain

Born in 1943 in Indore. M.A. in Ancient Indian History and Culture, University of Bombay, 1965; Ph.D. in Ethnology and Indology, University of Vienna, 1972. Research interest in Regional Art Forms of India against background of Mythology and Ritual; intensive field-work in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. Alexander von Humboldt Fellow, South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg, 1975-76. Director of Shreyas Folk Museum of Gujarat, 1976-78. Homi Bhabha Fellow, 1981-83. At present, Senior Director, Crafts Museum, New Delhi. Author of several publications on Iconology and Ritual Arts of India, the most recent being *Painted Myths of Creation: Art and Ritual of an Indian Tribe*.

50
CRAFTS MUSEUM, New Delhi. View of museum entrance.

51
Aerial view of the open-air amphitheatre in the Crafts Museum with Purāna Qal'ah in the background.

The place of crafts in Indian life

In traditional Indian society there was no sharp distinction between 'art' and 'craft'. The Sanskrit word '*shilpa*' has been used to mean skill, craft, work of art or architecture, design or decoration. According to the traditional Hindu social classification the status of an artisan was elevated when he made religious objects so that art and craft were seen, on the one hand, as a form of devotion and, on the other, as a means of upward social mobility. The craftsman is described as the descendant of Vishvakarma, the Maker of the Universe, and is said to have fashioned divine images in his own right. The craftsmen who made simple mortars and pestles for village housewives and those who designed magnificent temples and palaces came from rural stock. There are many indications that craftsmen often organized themselves into guilds, with the intention of protecting their socio-economic and technical interests, and undertook large projects on a collective basis within which they served the very specialized interests of their clients.

The function of craft as a livelihood is often surpassed by its more important function in major ritual events such as birth, initiation, marriage, death, annual and seasonal festivals, etc. Here both the craftsman and his craft contribute significantly to the ritual of the ceremonies. On all such occasions a paraphernalia of textiles and garments, vessels and utensils, toys and games, props and furniture is used. Significantly, the object used for everyday mundane purposes now attains a ritual value, a sacrosanctity, which elevates the craft object, and consequently its maker, to the realm of the sacred. These are, therefore, not only items 'crafted' for the elementary purpose of marketing, but also an integral part of the socio-religious order of traditional and contemporary village and tribal India.

The Crafts Museum

The Crafts Museum was set up in 1956, by the All-India Handicrafts Board, for the purpose of preserving the artistic and cultural heritage of India. The main objective was to collect the finest specimens of Indian craftsmanship, which would then serve as source material for the revival, reproduction and development of crafts (Figs. 50, 51). The Museum's collection of 20,000 items, collected over a period of thirty years, includes icons, lamps, incense burners, ritual accessories, items of everyday life, wood carvings, painted wood, papier mâché, Naga sculptures, dolls, toys, puppets, masks, folk and tribal paintings, terracottas,

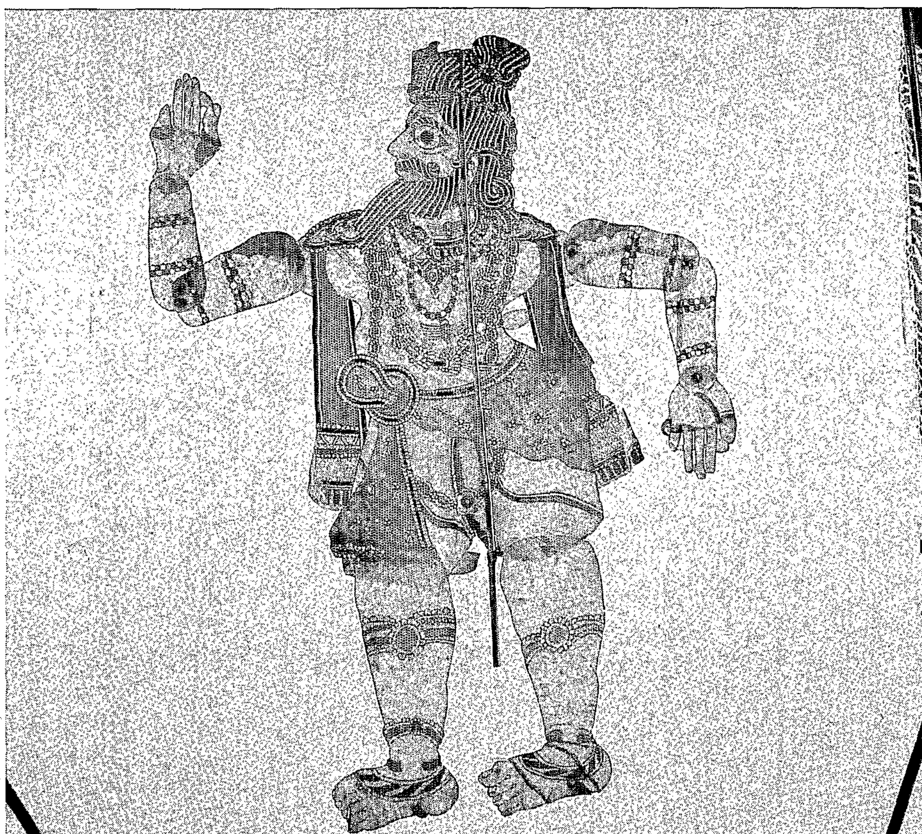
ivories, playing cards, *bidri* work, jewellery and an entire cross-section of traditional Indian textiles (Figs. 52-57). The Museum also has the distinction of possessing a rare collection of carved wooden figures of the *bhutas*, folk deities of coastal Karnataka. The collection truly reflects the continuing traditions of Indian craftsmanship, with both old and new pieces of the Indian heritage displayed side by side to demonstrate the high level of skill that has survived in India. The criterion for selection has never been antiquity *per se*; any piece that shows exquisiteness of craftsmanship, conception, device or design deserves a place in this collection.

The museum complex

The Museum, spread over an area of 3.25 hectares, has three main sections: the temporary display galleries and the store (Fig. 58), the Village Complex and the craft demonstration area. The excellently designed building is the creation of the renowned architect Charles Correa. Placed between the simple rural huts of the Village Complex and the majestic Purana Quila, the building provides a harmonious mediation between the two. It does not overpower the rudimentary huts or challenge the grand presence of the Purana Quila. Rather it derives grace and elegance from both. The galleries, the store, the administrative areas, the library and the conservation laboratory are situated around a series of open-to-sky courtyards. Each courtyard, with its *tulsi* shrines, *champa* trees, large storage vessel exhibits and brick-paved flooring, has all the grace of the traditional *havelis* of Rajasthan and Gujarat and all the charm of a contemporary building. The open walls within and outside the building are strongly outlined by terracotta-tiled roofs. The most important feature of the building is its unique rustic ambience coupled with its modern functionality.

The Village Complex

The Museum's Village Complex began with a temporary exhibition, on the theme of rural India, set up on the occasion of *Asia '72*. Now spread over an area of 2.5 hectares, the complex is an integral part of the Museum. It comprises fifteen structures representing the village dwellings and courtyards of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Bengal,



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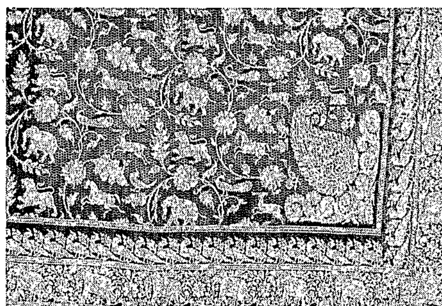
Sage, goatskin leather puppet from Andhra Pradesh; early twentieth century.



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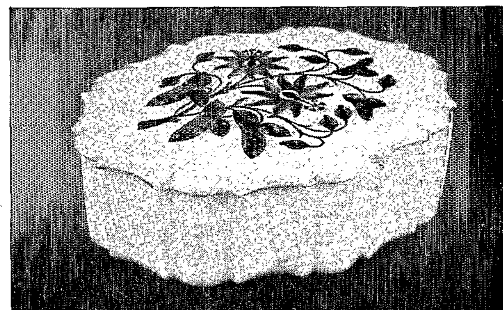
Detail of brocade sari, from Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh; early twentieth century.



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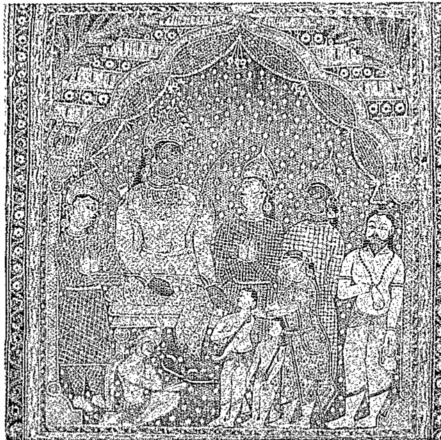
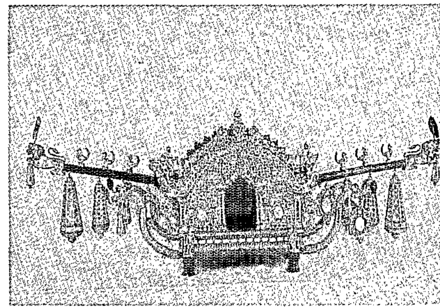
Marble inlay box with lid, from Agra, Uttar Pradesh; mid-twentieth century.

55
The child Krishna holding a lump of butter, cast in bronze, from Orissa; *c.* seventeenth century.





56
Palanquin for ritual procession; wood, mirror and gesso covered with gold leaf, from Tanjore, Tamil Nadu; early nineteenth century.

57
Pata painting depicting a scene from the epic *Ramayana*. Pigment on rag board, from Orissa; mid-twentieth century.

Bihar, Rajasthan and Nicobar. All the huts are built with authentic construction materials by the respective villagers themselves. In every hut items of day-to-day life are displayed in order to re-create the cultural contexts in which such objects were actually used before they became rare museum objects locked in glass cases. Certain sections of the Village Complex have recently been converted into an open-air picture gallery, where mud and cow-dung plaster walls exhibit ritual and festive paintings by tribal and village artists. These paintings not only provide a fairly accurate idea of the village environment but also provide an opportunity for the artist to experiment with his creativity within the parameters of tradition and individuality.

The Village Complex has created a new awareness of and admiration for India's ancient cultural heritage, and we hope it will symbolize the urgency of preserving rural technology and traditional aesthetic values in India as it rapidly becomes industrialized.

Craftspeople at work

The museum invites craftspeople from all over India to demonstrate their crafts in this enchanting rural environment. The demonstration programme provides an opportunity for visitors to see the craftsmen's creations actually taking shape. Unlike assembly-line production, where the factory worker has little or no conception of the object he is producing, the craftsman has a unified vision of his creation. The nature of the materials and techniques, the design and its execution, the socio-religious context and the purpose of the creation are all engrained in his consciousness. To see a craftsman at work is therefore like seeing the universe being formed in front of one's eyes (Figs. 59, 60).

Moreover, the demonstration programme allows craftsmen from different parts of the country to interact with each other. They are also able to refer to the Museum's collection of artefacts and thereby retain their traditional techniques and design. Visitors have the special advantage of purchasing objects directly from their makers rather than through a middleman. They can therefore experience perhaps the most precious of all emotions, which occurs when one person gives a part of himself, in his creation, to another.

The demonstration programme also provides a technical perspective for the Museum's collection, as well as serving as a field for participant observers such as research scholars.

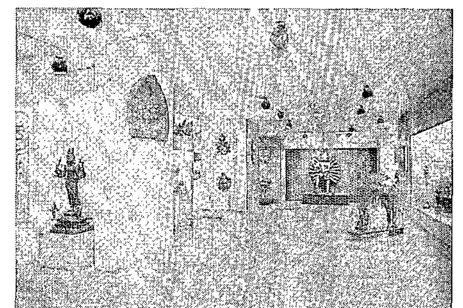
Educational programme and creativity workshops

To practise a craft as a hobby is a Western idea. As the handcrafting of objects became rare in Europe, owing to the mechanized production of items for everyday use, élites turned to the practice of crafts as a hobby. In many parts of India, on the other hand, crafts have survived as a way of life. It is this aspect of crafts in India that the educational programme serves to highlight. The idea is to expose children to the traditional cultural heritage of India, and give them an opportunity to interact with traditional craftspeople, not only acquainting themselves with their techniques and materials, but seeing how creative expression actually takes place (Fig. 61).

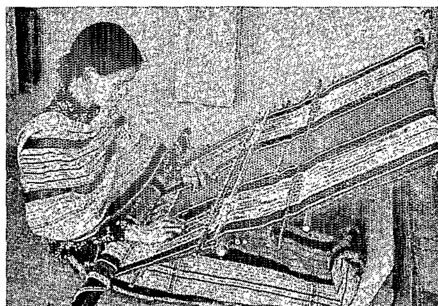
Exposure to clay and the potter's wheel, block printing and dye painting, modelling and metal casting, painting and narrating stories, carving and inlaying in stone and wood, and to innumerable other media and techniques, reassure Indian children that oil-painting on canvas is not the only option for creative expression.

In addition to acquainting children with crafts, the museum organizes special Creativity Workshops. Here a group of children are attached to a particular craftsperson with whom they learn about the basic techniques and the materials, to start with, and then use this knowledge for their own free expression. The best results are preserved for future exhibitions.

With mud-plastered and thatched huts as workshops and brick-paved floors, steps and platforms as open-air studios for the children, the Museum provides an ideal environment for creative interaction.



58
Display galleries for the exhibition, *Continuing Traditions of Indian Craftsmanship*.



59
Craftswomen from the Rabha tribe, Assam, at work on the backstrap or loin loom in the Crafts Demonstration Area.

60
A craftswoman from Gujarat painting a pot.

Research and documentation

The Museum has a special section devoted to research and documentation, which not only studies the existing collection, the craftspeople and their crafts, but also undertakes field research through outside scholars. The Museum has also instituted regular monthly scholarships to encourage specialization at the higher academic levels in the field of traditional arts and crafts.

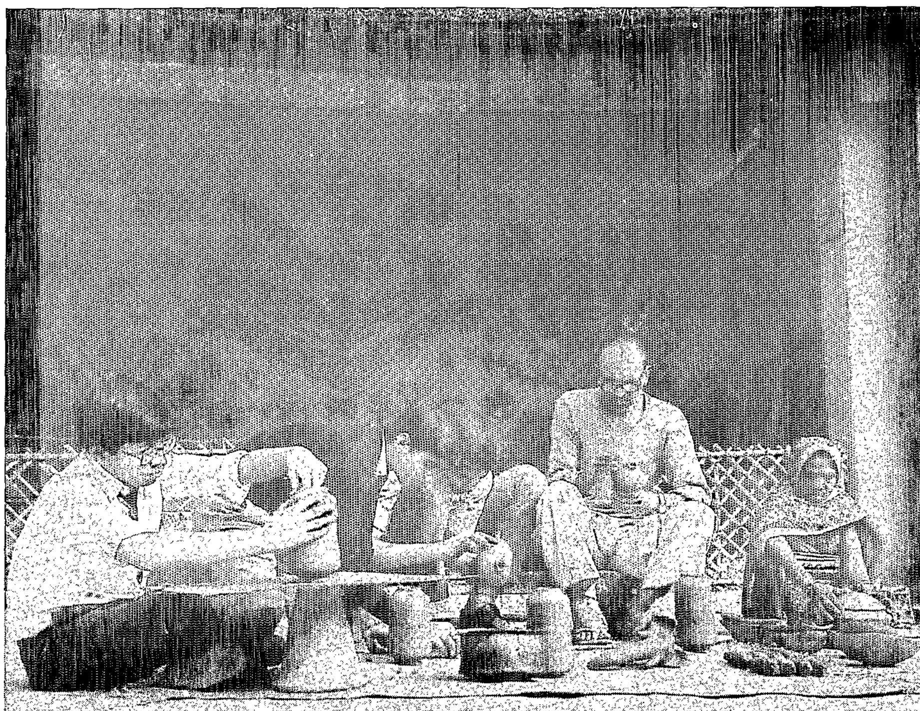
It has a specialized reference library with publications on traditional Indian arts, crafts, textiles, as well as major anthropological works on Indian tribes. The library has about 10,000 books, which include important journals such as the *Journal of India Art and Industry*, *Lalit Kala*, *Roop Lekha*, *Marg*, *Rupam* and the *Journal of India Folkloristics*. Major systematic surveys of arts and crafts were undertaken during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The library has begun to acquire some of these rare and pioneering reports to add to its collection, and an exhaustive card-index of material related to arts and crafts, as well as a National Bibliography of Handicrafts and Handlooms, is planned.

A modest conservation laboratory looks after the preservation of the Museum's collection. Very competently, it meets the needs of textile binding, the mounting of paintings and scrolls, the repair of terracottas and wooden items and the restoration of painted wood and papier mâché. The Museum also has a collection of 16-mm documentary films related to handicrafts and handlooms. Regular film shows are held for the public in the small auditorium, which has a seating capacity of sixty. The auditorium has facilities for the projection of 35-mm slides as well. Lectures by renowned scholars in the fields of art, craft, cultural anthropology, religion, mythology, folklore, and so on are a frequent feature of the Museum's programme.

Performing arts

In traditional India, no sharp distinction was made between the plastic and pictorial arts and the performing arts. There are few traditional performing arts which do not use crafts such as body painting, masks, puppets, costumes, props or musical instruments. To provide a glimpse of this unified tradition, the Museum collaborates from time to time with the Trade Fair Authority of India to arrange shows in which such arts are used. In addition to this, the Museum always has on its premises at least one craftsman-cum-performer such as a puppeteer, or a narrator of painted scrolls. Educational programmes for children benefit immensely from them.

61
A creativity workshop, under the Educational Programme, where schoolchildren work with master craftsmen.

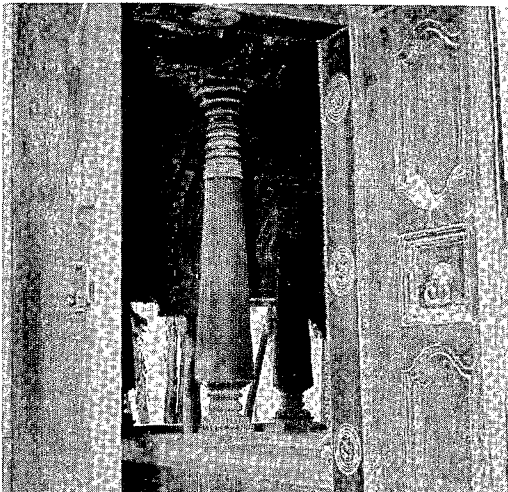


Dakshinachitra, a museum for the folk performing arts

Deborah Thiagarajan

Born in 1943 in Philadelphia, United States. M.A. in International and Development Education, University of Pittsburgh, 1968. M.A. in South Asian Regional Studies, University of Pennsylvania, 1985. Continuing Ph.D. work at the University of Madras, Department of Archaeology and Ancient Indian History. Her dissertation: 'The Development of Surya and Navagraha Worship in South India through the Cola Period'. Museum training at the University of Pennsylvania, University Museum. Convener of the Tamil Nadu chapter of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) since 1984. President of the Madras Craft Foundation. Has had various articles published on the secular architecture and crafts of South India.

62
DAKSHINACHITRA, Madras. Reconstructed Chettinad house, purchased by the museum.



Madras is a sprawling city with a population of 4 million on the coast of the Bay of Bengal, in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

Despite the proximity in time and distance to the rich village culture of crafts, festivals and music which form an integral part of village life in South India, in Madras the links to this wider culture, if not absent, are very tenuous. This is true for most urban centres in India and the gap is widening. Even in village India change is coming very swiftly. Craft skills are dying out as the demand for mass-produced products increases and traditional patronage disappears. Performing folk troupes with their dancers, singers, puppeteers, dramatists and musicians have been largely submerged and superseded by the craze for modern cinema and video.

Despite the need this situation has created, there was no focus by any institution in this large metropolitan centre where one could go to explore and learn about the cultural values of the village as expressed in the art, music and festivals of rural India. It was to fill this gap that the Madras Craft Foundation launched its Dakshinachitra project two years ago. This concept involves setting up a museum in Madras with an integrated approach to the artistic pulse of village life in the four southern states.

The major principle on which the museum is based is that all the village arts, whether music, craft or folk troupes, are interlinked conceptually and in the rhythm of village life. Each one highlights and complements the other. By portraying the full range of arts and interrelationships the museum hopes to bring alive not only the individual objects but the ethos of these traditional relationships and values, which are a part of village life. These interrelationships will be stressed in the displays and programmes of the centre.

To present all the arts in one centre, with sustained programmes of display, research, documentation, recording, live performances and workshops, requires a wide range of professionalism in each area. The strength and uniqueness of Dakshinachitra is its incorporated associations with professional groups in each of these areas. The centre, which began with a core group of trustees to oversee policy and growth, seemed to evolve quite naturally to include three distinct associations: Sampradaya, a society whose interests are the research, documentation and performance of music traditions of South India; Koothuppatirai, a society concerned with traditional drama and folk performing arts, which has its own regional theatre troupe; and the Crafts Council of India whose focus is on the documentation, exhibition and development of crafts. A fourth association is that of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH). With INTACH a very detailed programme of cultural outreach to urban children has been developed.

The founding of the institution has not been easy and many problems are still to be overcome. The major problem has been funding and the acquisition of land for the building in a city where land prices are comparable to those of downtown New York. The Tamil Nadu government has been appealed to and the response has been positive, although beset with procedural delays. The Commissioner of Handicrafts, in the Department of Commerce of the Government of India, has offered the Foundation matching funding for its building, but this grant will be realized only when the land is in our possession. In the absence of a building, the four groups involved in the project have gone ahead with their programmes spreading out through the city. Each programme and research effort gives the team a little more experience and exposure, enabling them to assess the areas of need and identify the types of displays and programmes which will have the

and crafts of South India

most lasting impact. For the development of the museum and its personnel, this initial disadvantage may save us many costly mistakes.

Another major challenge the museum faces is the newness of the subject area. Although anthropologists have done many studies of villages and castes in South India, few people have seriously begun to document its architecture, folk arts and material heritage. Researching designated areas, step by step, and training and recruiting young people along the way in the methodology of research, are considered the primary responsibilities of the Foundation.

For the preparation of display areas and of the actual displays the centre is working with Dashrath Patel, one of India's foremost designers. The concept of the centre in its final form includes not just formal exhibition space, but many reconstructed areas, realistically displaying, for example, kitchens, granaries, courtyards, rooms and, where possible, always recording the rituals and ceremonial marks and decorations which give these areas meaning.

Traditional displays can show the techniques of the craft with the craftsman and his habitat and his link with the temple and village services. For example, the potter not only provides the cooking and water vessels for daily existence but makes wonderful terracotta horses and deities which are presented yearly to the village shrine.

Displays based on the seasons or life-cycle ceremonies will include not only the traditional crafts and festival decorations pertinent to that event or time but the music, the instruments and some aspects of the folk performances which accompany the spirit of the season.

South India shares a relatively common culture, historically, and is composed of four states: Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala, with a combined population of 200 million people. Ultimately the museum will include all four states, but because of the severe limitations of funding and the vastness of the field, research and collections have begun only with Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Kerala was chosen because its more tropical climate, together with its historically unique social system, has generated crafts and an architectural style which form a distinct contrast to the art of Tamil Nadu.

To work out these ideas in display, the centre is conducting several research programmes. Extensive fieldwork and study have been done on traditional architecture in Tamil Nadu, particularly of Chettinad (Fig. 62), an area famous for the large nineteenth-century houses of a Tamil Nadu business community, the Nagarathars. This affluent community attracted many of the state's best craftsmen in metalwork, carpentry and pottery from the second half of the nineteenth century until about 1950, and they represented one of the major patrons of indigenous craft. The centre has recently purchased the entire front portion of one of these houses and several rooms around the courtyard. Many of the household utensils from this area have also been collected.

A second area of research is a project that seeks to document the folklore, craft, music and folk-performing arts and festivals of several villages in Kanyakumari District, the southernmost area of Tamil Nadu. This project began a year ago primarily with documentation of oral folklore and crafts. However, it was soon felt that a much more integrated approach in a smaller area would yield far better results, and a programme with a multi-disciplinary team drawn from each of our associations will begin work in 1987 as a Ford Foundation sponsored project. This team consists of an anthropologist, a folklore specialist, a musician and a crafts expert. The project will focus on the role of folk performances and village craft in the festivals and seasonal events of the village. Our findings

63
A play by Koothuppattirai: a modern play using traditional theatre form of *therukoothu*.

and recordings will be used in the museum's displays, in its musical and folklore programmes for the public, and for archival material.

With a grant from the Craft Museum in Delhi a team of two architects and an anthropologist have begun a documentary project on the secular architecture of Kerala. This project was chosen primarily to aid us in providing the correct space and architectural and craft knowledge of Kerala for the physical design of the museum. While the architects measure, make line drawings and take photographs, the anthropologist interviews the older inhabitants of each home about their rituals and use of space, and identifies all the objects in the home. In this project, collections are being made (or at least identified, as people are often reluctant to give or sell items from their homes) and ideas for the incorporation of traditional rooms and parts of houses or granaries are being refined and clarified.

In order to bring all the groups of the museum into one focus and provide an integrated approach to the art, music and folk performing arts of Kerala, the centre planned a two-week programme of exhibitions, performances and workshops in Madras in September 1987, centred on Kerala. An exhibition of craft and traditional architecture, with workshops and performances for children and for the general public, was scheduled. The university, colleges and other institutions were also encouraged to hold lectures and symposia on Kerala's history, art and music. Funding and sponsorship for these programmes were actively sought.

The museum's relationship with its associations is a loose but co-ordinated one. Each association defines several areas of common interest, as well as its own particular specializations.

A brief description of Sampradaya, Koothuppattirai, Crafts Council and INTACH will help to highlight the character and programmes of the museum. These programmes give the centre its vitality and a dynamic link with the public.

The folk performing arts

The Koothuppattirai group has been studying traditional Tamil folk theatre, seeking in it inspiration for its own plays, which are now being presented in various venues in the city while waiting for a more appropriate theatre as part of the museum. The group consists primarily of artists, dramatists and playwrights, and they have shown vividly how the study of folk art is relevant to today's theatre. Their most intensive study to date has been done on *therukoothu*, a form of street play which comes from Tamil Nadu. Of particular interest are its methods and techniques of presentation, the use this art makes of the body and the relation of the players to the villagers, who are sometimes the audience and sometimes participants (Fig. 63).

Koothuppattirai has a vital role to play in the museum in bringing to life the dynamics of the traditional folk arts. Their two years' work with *therukoothu* has produced substantial benefits for that art as well as for a modern Tamil theatre movement. With Ford Foundation funding they have taken video recordings of the major productions, with precise studies of their basic movements. They have won for *therukoothu* an acceptance and an audience among urban dwellers. When they began, *therukoothu* was threatened with extinction, with many young members of traditional *koothu* families abandoning the stage to look for jobs in cities. Koothuppattirai started taking an interest in their lives and provided links to funding agencies, enabling and encouraging them to study and act in theatre. As an extension of its activities from an urban centre to the villages, Koothuppattirai is interested in opening a school for traditional *koothu* in a village near Madras, which will sustain the vitality of its links with the museum.

At Dakshinachitra, Koothuppattirai will eventually have adequate and suitable space for rehearsals and performances of this art, with an ideal atmosphere for research and workshops. The main analysis and recording of the folk performances to be documented on the Kanyakumari District project will be conducted by its members (Figs. 64, 65).

Music

Sampradaya is the perfect counterpart to Koothuppattirai. The society's activities have been directed towards the research, recording and performance of South India's classical (Karnatic) music, particularly those distinct schools which were on the verge of dying out with the decline of the traditional student/guru (*guru kulavāsa*) method of teaching. With added research funding their programme will now be expanded to include studies of the various music traditions of the south. Their first such programme will be with the centre's project at Kanyakumari, recording and researching the music component in the folk performing arts of that area and interviewing the folk artists.

The recordings of the various performances and troupes of each art form will be accompanied by written, photographic and other documentation material for deposit in the archives. These information folders accompany each recording, and aim at covering the relevant biographical details of each performer (through personal interviews) and at tracing the historical link through which the particular style has been handed down over generations. This will augment the content and technique analysis of the art form by Koothuppattirai. Video recordings of the most interesting performances will also be made.

Sampradaya's archives now consist of over 500 hours of sound recordings of instrumental and vocal music and interviews with musicians and performing artists (Fig. 66). In addition to these, individuals have donated old records and other recorded material. These archives will be stored in the museum once the buildings are ready.

The museum is being given a substantial collection of old musical instruments. Documentation on these instruments, including the history of their music, with recordings accompanying the most interesting instruments, and large photographs showing when and how they are used, will be primarily the work of Sampradaya. Other activities of Sampradaya will be its interaction with musicians, staging of live performances and its educational programmes and workshops for the general public, specialists and musicologists. Sampradaya is particularly interested in workshops focusing on rare and endangered kinds of music and instruments. Its educational programmes for children and teachers will be carried out with the planning of our education department.

Crafts

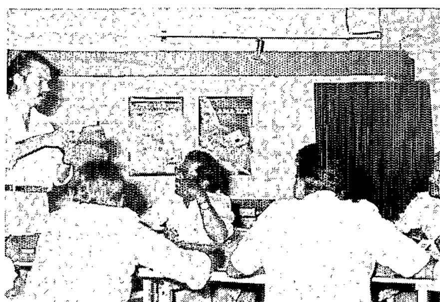
The third major group and the first to associate itself with the museum is the Crafts Council of India, whose headquarters are in Madras. The Crafts Council has five major objectives: the preservation of traditional crafts, their documentation and their promotion to keep them alive, the adaptation of selected crafts for contemporary needs and the provision of alternative marketing opportunities to traditional craftsmen, with support in the form of

64
Kannappan Tambiran and a troupe of *therukoothu* performers; from the Sampradaya archives.

65
Kerala traditional theatre — *kootiyattam*. A scene from the play *Balinadham*.

quick and easy credit. In its relations with the museum, the Crafts Council has a wide range of activities, including exhibitions, documentation, workshops with craftsmen, and the sale of crafts. Temporary exhibitions, crafts lectures, demonstrations and workshops with craftsmen will be their primary input into the museum. The expertise of this voluntary group is accumulating rapidly with the experience they have gained in conducting workshops and exhibitions over the last ten years. A demonstration of their competence was the organization of their seminar, in October 1986, on Craft Museums in Delhi as part of the World Crafts Council meeting. The inspiration for the seminar was the Dakshinachitra Centre, and both the Centre and the Crafts Council have gained considerable knowledge through this seminar. A similar example of co-ordination was the follow-up workshop on 'Design and Display' and 'Reaching out to the Public' for curators from regional museums of South India, held recently in the Madras Museum and organized jointly by Dakshinachitra, the Crafts Council, INTACH and the Madras Museum, which provided the premises (Fig. 67). These activities, which focus on public programmes, are an example of what Dakshinachitra would like to promote with its concept that training benefits all and is the key to achieving excellence not only for itself but for other institutions as well. They also illustrate how Dakshinachitra sees its relationship with its associates.

66
Informal meeting between Karnatic musicians and musicians of 'Sequentia', an ensemble for performing Medieval European music; from the Sampradaya archives.



67
Dr Stephen Inglis of the Museum of Man, Ottawa, Canada, in a workshop with curators from South India.

Programmes for children

In creating an enduring positive environment for the understanding of traditional culture and how it changes and adapts itself, Dakshinachitra's outreach programmes to children and teachers are a major part of its conception.

In India, education consists primarily of rote learning, and visual materials, in the form of good books for example, are almost entirely absent, even in the better schools. In an urban centre like Madras, which is increasingly cut off from traditional culture, the children do not even have the joy of participation in festivals or the proximity of craftsmen to help them mould their concepts of artistry or culture. Temple festivals in the city are so crowded and commercial that their impact is very different from the village festival. In the city, television and cinema are the major windows on culture for most children, and these are highly stylized for mass consumption. It is a pity that the city's government museums have not yet fully understood how they can and must reach out to children.

Dakshinachitra, through its association with the Tamil Nadu chapter of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, has been working out a framework for its cultural programmes in schools. The initial programmes have centred on music and dance, and performing artists are taken into schools in connection with classes for smaller groups on rhythm and movement. A summer camp for children, primarily those from deprived socio-economic backgrounds, brought our musicians, dramatists and artists together in a ten-day workshop, giving the children their first experience of working with clay, painting, learning movement and dance, and dramatic expression (Fig. 68). The result was exceedingly heartening, and one child who showed exceptional talent is now studying sculpture regularly on a Lalit Kala Fellowship. Teacher workshops on music are also a part of the programme. In future programmes, the emphasis will include not only music and drama but traditional crafts and folk art.

Sessions are planned first with a traditional shadow puppeteer, and secondly with a painter of *kalamkari*, a craft of beautifully hand-drawn and vegetable-painted scenes on cloth. Both arts draw on tales from the two great Indian epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharatha*, epics which except for the names of the heroes and the barest rudiments of the plot are unfamiliar to many of today's children. Scenes from the traditional tales will be discussed and the children will be asked to draw their versions of the events, heroes and heroines according to their imagination. A traditional craftsman will then explain how he perceives their portrayals and why. With the puppeteer the children will make puppets and stage a show as well as watch how the puppeteer does his own work. With the *kalamkari* artist the children will also experiment with the craft.

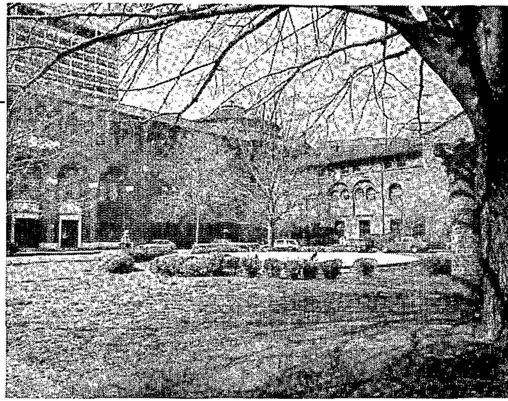
The Centre would also like to set up a mobile unit of displays and music which can be transported to schools, but this is in the still-distant future. The greatest need at the moment is a centre that is adequate for the many schoolchildren who would like to come. This will not, however, be a substitute for our school visits, as many children may not be able to come and see us at the Centre.

Lastly, the museum is working towards an efficient management and administration.

Although our collections are still small in number the Centre operates on the premise that it is easier to begin accession and cataloguing with a system that lends itself to computerization, rather than to re-catalogue at a later stage. As computerization has not been attempted by other museums in the region we have been pioneering our own documentation program, accessioning according to type, function, number, material and location. We would be happy to share our program with other museums once we have ironed out the problems.

The Centre looks forward to the day when it has the luxury of moving into its own buildings.

68
Children in South Madras rehearse for a show they produced on 'Ecology'. Taken from a traditional Panchatantra tale. The papier-mâché trees, masks and backdrops were made by them at an INTACH-sponsored ten-day workshop.



69
THE UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA. Lower courtyard.

Linking the past with the present: ethnoarchaeology in a museum context

Lee Horne

Pedagogue-Anthropologist at the University Museum of Archaeology/Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, United States of America.

70
International classroom speaker Weihua Yeh demonstrates Chinese calligraphy.

71
Shukti Chaudhuri interviews brass-caster Haradhan Karmakar at the Port of History Museum.

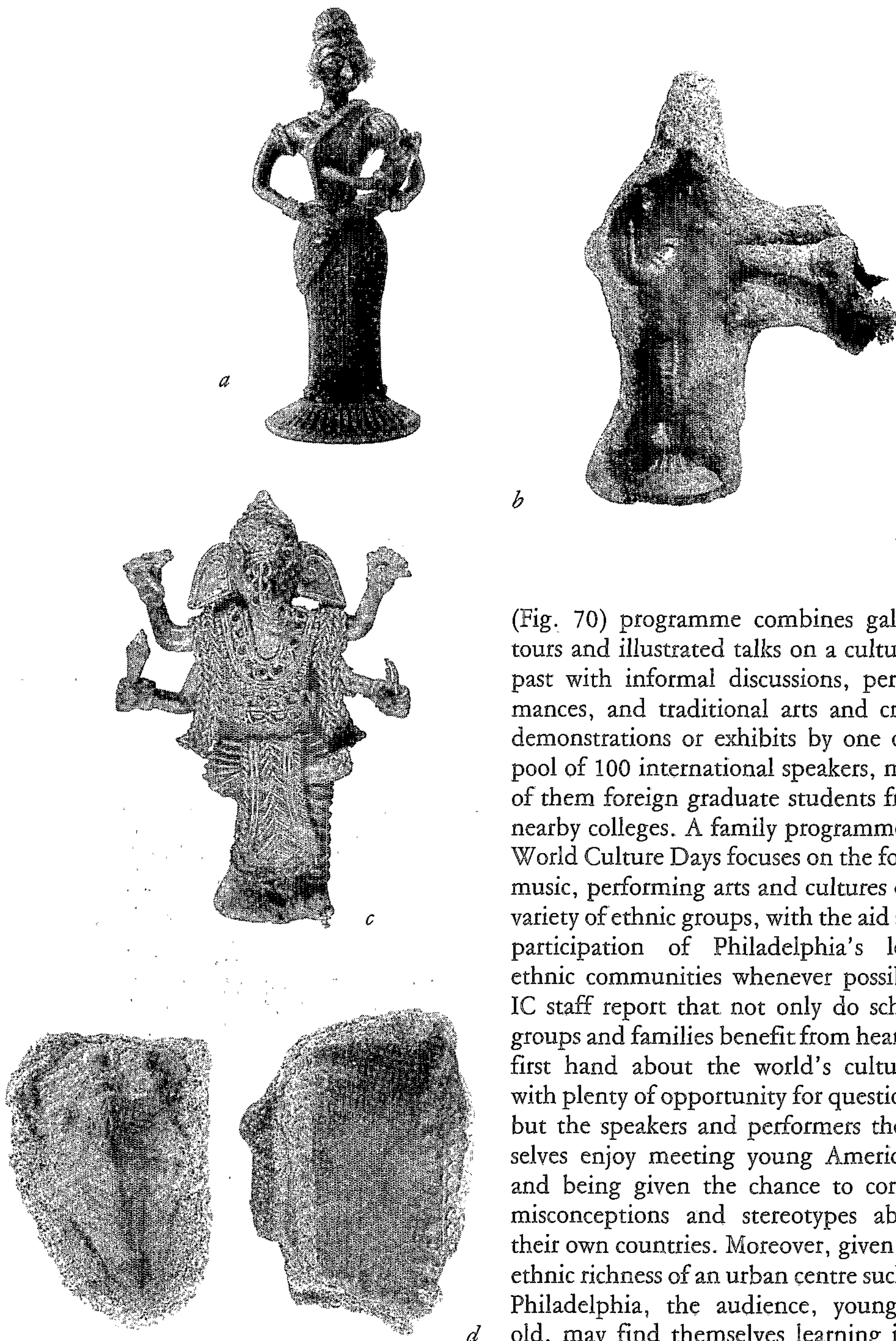
The University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania is an educational and research institution of archaeology and anthropology in Philadelphia. This year marks its hundredth anniversary. It thus came into being during the period of museum growth in the late nineteenth century in North America, when many great collections of art and archaeology were formed (Fig. 69). The University Museum spent its early years amassing collections with which to fill the grand halls envisioned (but only partly realized) by its rich amateur backers. As a university museum, however, it has also had from its earliest days the twin goals of research and education as the rationale for its collections and displays. Today, as is the case with many established museums, its main activities are research, educational programmes and collection management, rather than collection building.

In its programmes and exhibits the Museum has recently become increasingly concerned in breaking down the dichotomy between ancient societies, known archaeologically, and recent ones, known through history and ethnographic fieldwork. The task is not easy, however, as most of the Museum's existing galleries are archaeological, and most of the ethnographic collections and exhibits are now historical, consisting of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century material. Yet the Museum's commitment to presenting world cultures to the communities it serves (many of which are based on ethnic identity) makes it necessary to explore change as well as continuity and contemporary societies as well as past ones. The Museum also seeks to make its relationship with local communities one of interaction and participation rather than passive 'visiting'.

Several of the newer installations reflect this concern. The recently opened Polynesia gallery, for example, includes the archaeological prehistory and spread of the Polynesian peoples as well as their nineteenth-century societies that are so well represented in the collections. *Buddhism*, another new exhibit, focuses on the history and diversity of Buddhism in Asia. It supplements monumental sculpture and architectural fragments with ethnographic material, such as Tibetan ritual objects used by lamas, sorcerers and laymen, and a full-scale Japanese Buddhist altar, to underscore the diversity of the religion as it is actually practised.

New permanent installations, however, are extremely expensive, and must stand in place for a long time. During that time they will be used in different ways for different purposes, and thus are usually designed to be more general than other forms of museum communication. Temporary exhibits, on the other hand, are better able to cover changing or narrowly focused topics, as seen in a recent exhibit on women in Egyptian art and a borrowed photographic exhibit on Yemeni migrants.

The Museum's educational goals are thus only partly met through its exhibits. A number of in-house and outreach programmes, many of which are based on the galleries and the collections, greatly expand its educational functions. The Museum's International Classroom (IC) is especially concerned with finding more effective ways of merging historical and contemporary perspectives on world cultures. Because the IC draws on people, as well as galleries and objects, it adds a dimension of immediacy and liveliness that exhibits alone cannot supply. For example, *The World: Ancient and Modern*



72
Part of the collection of artefacts and debris produced on the day of the casting, and accessioned by the University Museum: (*a*) wax model of mother and child (modelled figures like this are melted out in the firing process and replaced by molten bras); (*b*) a partly opened mould with cast figure still inside; (*c*) a completed brass casting image of Ganesha; (*d*) debris from the casting site: mould fragments with details of the impressions left by the wax model.

(Fig. 70) programme combines gallery tours and illustrated talks on a culture's past with informal discussions, performances, and traditional arts and crafts demonstrations or exhibits by one of a pool of 100 international speakers, most of them foreign graduate students from nearby colleges. A family programme of World Culture Days focuses on the food, music, performing arts and cultures of a variety of ethnic groups, with the aid and participation of Philadelphia's local ethnic communities whenever possible. IC staff report that not only do school groups and families benefit from hearing first hand about the world's cultures, with plenty of opportunity for questions, but the speakers and performers themselves enjoy meeting young Americans and being given the chance to correct misconceptions and stereotypes about their own countries. Moreover, given the ethnic richness of an urban centre such as Philadelphia, the audience, young or old, may find themselves learning in a new way about their own cultural heritage.

Research

In the planning of museum programmes that connect the past and the present, the role of research may not be self-evident, especially in university settings where research tends to be shaped by academic rather than museological considerations. The research project described here, however, is one that was expressly designed to look at both the past and the present, and to add an ethnographic dimension to historical and archaeological studies of metalworking technology.

Most research at the University Museum is organized on the basis of curatorial sections, and therefore of geographical areas, rather than topics. One exception is the Museum Applied Science Center for Archaeology (MASCA), an in-house technical division that cuts across time, geography and disciplines to analyse and interpret ancient and traditional technologies.

For nearly ten years MASCA has taken a special interest in the study of ancient and historical metalworking technologies. Among recent projects are a systematic investigation of mineral exploitation and metal production in prehistoric Thailand, the origins and development of copper-alloy technology in the ancient Near East, and the interpretation of metal production debris from sites playing key roles in the development of the iron industry in the north-eastern United States. The results of MASCA research apply not only to the scholarly task of interpreting the role of technology and technological change in past cultural and socio-economic patterns, but also to more practical museum matters such as the proper conservation, restoration and display of metal artefacts.

Via co-operative links with sister institutions, MASCA's research approach uses modern analytical tools such as proton-induced X-ray emission (PIXE) spectroscopy, scanning electron microscopy (SEM) and X-ray microanalysis (EDAX), combined with social and cultural interpretations provided by a staff of technically knowledgeable archaeologists and anthropologists. In making these interpretations, archaeologists frequently call on their knowledge of how things work in the present or worked in the recent past, by way of comparison or contrast. Research expressly designed for this purpose is known as ethnoarchaeology, the study of the material culture of living societies in order to develop models and methods for

understanding the past. Ethnoarchaeological research covers a number of archaeological topics, most of which deal, one way or another, with how the archaeological record is formed, and how to work back from that record to the behaviour and society that produced it. Ceramic ethnoarchaeological studies, for example, include topics such as production, style, longevity, use, disposal and function, as well as change in any of these.

In spite of the importance given by archaeologists to the role of metal technology in the archaeological record, ethnographic studies of metalworkers and metalworking, whether by archaeologists or not, are surprisingly few. There are a number of reasons for this lack, not the least of which is that examples of traditional forms of metalworking are today far less common than those of, say, pottery production, which is a relatively well-studied activity. Among the places where traditional metalworking still survives are Africa and India. Therefore, when a group of Indian craftsmen, which included a metalworker, came to Philadelphia, we welcomed this opportunity to carry out first-hand ethnoarchaeological observation and documentation.

The project

The case-study itself began in spring 1986 when, sponsored by the Delaware Valley Indian community, the Crafts Council of West Bengal brought a number of craftsmen to another local institution, the Port of History Museum of the City of Philadelphia.[1] Called *Mahamaya*, this exhibition and demonstration of crafts from Eastern India was part of Philadelphia's celebration of the Festival of India. Against a background display of especially fine craft examples from the eastern Indian states, ten craftsmen set up individual work areas in which they could demonstrate and explain (through interpreters) their crafts. Wood carving, lost-wax metal-casting, shola-pith working, ikat weaving, stone carving, clay-image making, pot-making, textile printing and conch-shell carving were represented. The finished products were sold in an adjoining shop, along with a wide variety of other crafts that had been shipped in advance from Calcutta. Staffing the shop and acting as guides were members of the Crafts Council, who had come over with the show, and volunteers from the local Bengali community. The Port of History Museum's Curator of Education set up and led tours for school groups, with an introductory slide show as background. Besides the usual general public, a remarkable variety of visitors with special interests came to see the exhibit, including journalists, other museum curators, scholars, teachers, craftspeople and collectors. Many came back repeatedly.

In March 1986, International Classroom brought Aditya Malakar, the shola-pith worker, and Rabi Kinkar Nandi, the conch-shell carver, across town from the Port of History Museum to the University Museum, where they participated in a day of Indian craft demonstration for groups of Philadelphia schoolchildren. One of the IC's international speakers, a local South Indian woman, introduced the children to some of the experiences of growing up in India and to samples of Indian song and dance; the children joined in the choruses.

At the same time, preparations were being made for a second programme: Haradhan Karmakar, a brass-caster from the Dariapur Artisans' Co-operative in Burdwan District, West Bengal, had for weeks been preparing wax models and moulds at the Port of History Museum, but he had nowhere to build a kiln and cast his pieces. Unlike the potter, who could send his terracotta figurines to a studio for firing, Haradhan needed an open-air kiln in which he could control

73
The brass-casting kiln in the University Museum courtyard. Haradhan Karmakar is building up the kiln wall around the loaded moulds and crucibles.

74
Haradhan plunges a fired mould and crucible in water before breaking it open. Others are cooling on a bed of sand.

1. Mahamaya owes its success to a number of hard-working and talented people, but most especially to Dr Krishna Lahiri and Mrs Eva Ray in Philadelphia, to Mrs Ruby Palchoudhuri and Mr Prabhas Sen of Calcutta and Santiniketan respectively, and, of course, to the craftsmen themselves. Mrs Palchoudhuri is Honorary General Secretary of the Crafts Council of West Bengal. I give warm thanks to Mrs Palchoudhuri and Mr Sen for their knowledgeable assistance, hospitality and friendship, both in Philadelphia and in West Bengal. To Mrs Ray I owe a similar debt; she also read a draft of this article.
And finally, I thank Mr Haradhan Karmakar, the brass-caster, who has throughout been a most patient and willing teacher and the key figure around whom the project revolves.

the fuel and firing himself. In order to provide a casting site, and at the same time to present an unusual programme for schools and the university community, the IC invited Haradhan to come to the Museum and construct a kiln in the lower courtyard.

While the IC was scheduling school groups, purchasing fuel and other materials, organizing deliveries, calling in an international speaker and arranging press coverage and a reception through the Museum's Public Relations Division, Haradhan was finishing his moulds at the Port of History Museum (Fig. 71). My own interest in ethnoarchaeology and in traditional metalworking had already taken me several times to the *Mahamaya* exhibit; with the University Museum now the site for the casting, a more systematic project seemed feasible. Shukti Chaudhuri, then an undergraduate in Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania, joined as translator and assistant.

We started with the technique itself in order to be able to explain to the audience how Haradhan prepared the wax models and moulds that he would fire and to anticipate the casting process itself, when a great many things would be happening at once (Fig. 72). At the same time, we collected as much information as possible (in the short time available) about the social and cultural context in which Haradhan works at home, his own life history, and the ways in which what he was doing here differs from how he works in Dariapur. For the Museum's collections, Haradhan prepared examples of each stage in the process, from core to mould and crucible, with samples of the raw materials and tools he uses (Fig. 73). After the firing, we added baked moulds and cast-brass figurines in various stages of completion to the collection.

The programme on the day of the casting was an ambitious one, and we had to take turns at note-taking and photographing in order to participate in the programme as well as record it (Fig. 74). Besides the school groups who were the main audience, the university community, interested friends of the Museum, and the press were also invited. Slides taken just the day before, in the Port of History Museum, were developed and delivered in time for an illustrated public lecture and film on lost-wax casting at the end of the day. A reception with Indian tea and delicacies followed.

We had already photographed and measured the firing area as if it were an archaeological site. At the end of the day, when the kiln had cooled somewhat, members of MASCA's staff gathered the debris from the casting — broken moulds, cinders and ashes, spilled metal pieces and sand, baked red from supporting the hot moulds. The Museum accessioned these materials as scientific samples; along with the rest of the collection, they will be analysed in order to track the material alterations produced, in this setting, by this kind of technique. Finally, continuing the archaeological bias of the project, we examined the site again several weeks later, after rain and trampling had done their work. This ended the first phase of the project.

Follow-up in India

I delivered a brief summary of this paper at Crafts India '86, the workshop on craft museums sponsored by the Crafts Council of India.[2] There I benefited not only from meeting and talking with those most involved with Indian crafts and craft development, but also from the opportunity to go on after the conference to West Bengal and the Artisans' Cooperative at Dariapur, Haradhan Karmakar's home. My guides and hosts were Ruby Palchoudhuri and Prabhas Sen, with whom I had worked in Philadelphia, and who have both long been involved with these craftspeople.

The brass-casters of Dariapur describe themselves as Malhar and speak a language called Malhar, as well as Bengali. They prefer to reserve the term '*dhokra*', which is sometimes applied to them, for the technique they use rather than for themselves. Like other related groups of lost-wax casters, they were once itinerant, moving from place to place to sell their products directly to villagers (tribal and otherwise) or indirectly to merchants for resale in local markets. In the 1940s they began settling in the vicinity of Dariapur, where they remain today. Their present situation is quite different from what it was before settlement, however. In the 1950s they were found to be in desperate economic circumstances, barely able to make a living any longer from their craft, and having no other living to turn to. Through the efforts of concerned people such as Prabhas Sen, then Director of the Regional Design Centre, All-India Handicrafts Board at Calcutta, the Dariapur Malhar were organized into an artisans' co-operative in 1962; in 1966 they were relocated in their present village. Their

2. I am grateful to the Crafts Council of India for their invitation to the conference. My trip to India was funded by the Indo-US Subcommission on Education and Culture and the University Museum.

distinctive style of hollow-cast ware (shared by other Malhar and related groups found scattered through the states of Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal) has since found a worldwide market, as the Festival of India attests.

The Dariapur co-operative today is still a settlement separate from other villages, with its own reservoir and well, but the artisans are having difficulties which are reflected in their materials and techniques. In Philadelphia, for example, Haradhan had been using (for the most part) beeswax and good-quality brass bought in the United States. The rest of the materials (including mustard oil, earth and rice husk) had been shipped from West Bengal. In Dariapur, when I visited them, they were using shal resin rather than beeswax and had been casting with a white alloy inferior to the brass scrap they usually used. In fact, because of their indebtedness, they could not afford to buy any metal for casting, and their moulds were piling up, unfired for want of brass.

In addition to assessing the general conditions in which the Malhar work at home, I began to get some idea of the considerable contribution made by women in production, how children watch and learn, the spatial organization of work and other activities, and the very serious economic problems they face (Fig. 75). Of course, I also took photographs and collected further examples of cast figures for the Museum. On the basis of this brief reconnaissance in West Bengal and the results of the Philadelphia study, a more developed field research project is now being planned.

Conclusion

This joint effort of research and public event accomplished several things. The Museum now has a collection of artefacts and materials that will eventually become part of an exhibit on the history and ethnography of traditional metalworking technology. The collection has already been used to explain the process of lost-wax casting to university students and museum guides. The public had a chance to see not only an unusual craft demonstration, but also a research project in action. Museum publications on the project and the results will reach an even wider audience. MASCA will use the study collection to test the extent to which the casting debris and products reflect the materials and techniques that produced them. And finally, the groundwork for a fully fledged field project in India has been laid.

I would argue, therefore, that research, crafts and museum programmes have more to do with each other than is immediately apparent. Many, if not most museums, of course, find it beneficial to carry out or encourage research on their own collections — whether in the course of preparing exhibits, conserving or restoring objects, writing catalogues or preparing inventory lists. Fewer, perhaps, undertake field-work, either for further documentation or to make collections. Perhaps fewer still take advantage of their own programmes as research opportunities. Museum programmes tend to go undocumented; certainly most of ours do. In the case of the University Museum, ethnoarchaeological research seems extremely useful, particularly for documenting a metalworking craft. In other cases, other types of research might be more appropriate. For nearly all museums of material culture, combining documentation with demonstrations of how things are made produces lively programmes and relevant research.

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THE DARIAPUR ARTISANS' CO-OPERATIVE, West Bengal. Breaking a finished brass rice-measuring bowl out of its mould.

WFFM CHRONICLE

World Federation of Friends of Museums
Palais du Louvre
34 quai du Louvre, 75041 Paris Cedex 01, France
(1) 48.04.99.55

WFFM newsbrief

The WFFM has just launched a Museum Express operation. This is the first time joint action has been taken through the direct co-operation of the WFFM and ICOM (International Council of Museums), bringing Friends of Museums and full-time professionals together in a common goal: to increase international public awareness of world heritage.

In this operation, Friends obtain a double membership card showing they belong both to the WFFM and to the benefactors of ICOM. This card allows them to join museum professionals and attend as observers at ICOM administrative meetings and have access to numerous museums and exhibitions around the world.

Thus WFFM members unite with professionals in the search for better communication between museums and their publics.

Information from: The General Secretariat of the WFFM, Palais du Louvre, 34 quai du Louvre, 75041 Paris CEDEX 01, France. Tel. (1) 48.04.99.55.

Are museums and Friends meeting the challenge?

Sixth International WFFM Congress, Toronto (Canada), 15-19 June 1987

For the first time a WFFM Congress was held outside of Europe. Edmund C. Bovey, President of WFFM, past President of the Board of Trustees of the Art Gallery of Ontario and then President of the Canadian Federation of Friends of Museums (CFFM) organized this sixth WFFM International Congress in Toronto, under the high patronage of the Honourable Flora MacDonald, Minister of Communications, Government of Canada, and of the Honourable Lily Munro, Minister of Citizenship and Culture, province of Ontario. Using the title 'Metamorphosis, the Challenge of Change', the delegates discussed worldwide concern about the changing role of museums in our society and how it affects Friends of Museums. The Congress was attended by 233 delegates from fifteen countries.

This was a large undertaking. The WFFM Committee was supported both by financial contributions and by the presence of all levels of government, federal, provincial and civic. The Canadian Commission for Unesco helped with the translation costs. Corporate and individual Friends contributed a large portion of the funds required, with a characteristic feature: the individuals were numerous and gave very substantial support. Seventy volunteers had been working for a year to organize the congress and forty-eight helped during the congress. So the Congress itself was a lively example of volunteers in action, providing what is called in Toronto 'the three Ts' — treasure, talent and time.

The Congress was opened at Toronto City Hall, where our international Friends were welcomed by Mayor Arthur Eggleton. During the time of the Conference, receptions were organized at the Power Plant Gallery of Contemporary Art on the waterfront, at the Royal Ontario Museum with its world-famous Chinese Collection and at the McMichael Canadian Collection, Kleinburg.

On the last day of the Congress, a private reception at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) provided the opportunity of viewing the incomparable Henry Moore Collection and other current exhibits. Specially on view at this time were the Klamer Collection of Inuit Art, a portion of the gift of Marcia and Harry Klamer, and an exhibition of recent acquisitions which included major gifts from Joey and Toby Tanenbaum and

Arthur Gelber. All of these are longtime Friends of the Gallery and all the works in the AGO were either donated or purchased by funds raised by private individuals. Thus the AGO is a good example of Friends' action. A closing banquet was held at Roy Thomson Hall, Toronto's newest concert hall, after this reception.

Popular parts of the programme were the visits to private collections and on-site workshops at different museum locations concerning Friends' activities.

The discussions reflected the many challenges produced by the changing situation of museums in the world today, and the importance of having Friends they could rely on was frequently mentioned.

As the guests of the Canadian Society of Decorative Arts, the participants were given an illustrated preview of the new National Gallery of Canada which will open in May 1988, and the Canadian Museum of Civilization due to open in July 1989 — two great buildings set opposite each other on the Ottawa river at the base of the Gatineau Hills. These museums at the centre of this country, which is the second largest in the world, will reveal some 10,000 years of human experience in Canada, with all its immense diversity of geography and peoples. Today, Canada is a global village and it is appropriate that the Museum of Civilization will not only interpret Canadians to Canadians, using new communication technologies: it will also reveal the world to Canada and Canada to the world. Truly, these will be time and space machines, indicating new directions for museums in the twenty-first century.

Richard Oldenburg, Director of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, spoke on 'Financing Museums: Who pays? The Private Sector', and Léo Dorais, of the Department of Communications, Ottawa, spoke on 'Financing Museums: Who Pays? The Public Sector'. These talks showed how new combinations of private and public funding are becoming the norm in many museums, at least in the Western world, and they also provided some useful tips on how to raise money, too, particularly with regard to strings that any combination of funds have attached to them.

Several Friends gave concrete illustrations of 'Authenticity of the Museum Experience'. One example is a large society of Friends which created and supports the Metropolitan Toronto Zoo. It has several popular programmes and one of them in particular is noteworthy here. A person can endow the zoo by adopting a particular animal. He or she can go to visit it. In this way a human being can forge a personal bond with a creature in the natural world we share. It is a most appealing idea for a generation slowly being sensitized to ecology, and for children of all ages, who have responded enthusiastically.

The universal need for a sense of our human history was also stressed. Ayala Zacks Abramov, a beloved Friend of, and major donor to, the Art Gallery of Ontario, spoke of and illustrated the museums of Israel and her slide-talk brought alive this passage by the French philosopher Simone Weil in her book *The Need for Roots*:

> We possess no other life, no other living sap than the treasures stored up from the past and digested, assimilated, created fresh by us. Of all the human soul's needs none is more vital than this one of the past . . . to be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul.[1]

J. Carter Brown, the Director of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., delighted and dazzled the participants with slides of recent mega-exhibitions in that great centre. Of course, these could not be duplicated in many places; few museums have such splendid chips to play in the diplomatic poker games of the great capitals. But the new industrial museums and architectural conservancy programmes connected with them which are developing in the United Kingdom could set standards for others. Such examples play an important part in the life of older centres, towns and regions, giving them a usable past. They seemed economically sensible and socially attractive, and industrial museums, both indoor and open-air, can offer good opportunities for volunteer work.

In this connection, the Director of the London Transport Museum, Michael Fopp, prompted lively questions with an account of his innovative admissions policy. People are let in free to sample the exhibitions: there is no charge for the first half hour of visiting time but they have to pay if they wish to stay longer.

Friends are responding imaginatively to new challenges and helping to bring new supporters into heritage institutions. None the less, the emphasis was on realism, and speakers returned again and again to questions of balance between public and private funding, between special interests and public interests,

1. Simone Weil, *The Need For Roots*, p. 51, London, P. Putnam's Sons, 1952.

between education and entertainment, and between quality and quantity.

Larger questions also emerged. Who, after all, are these institutions for? And for whom are they sacred, and in what sense? Everywhere in the world the interest in and the need for heritage institutions is increasing in response to convulsive changes affecting everybody. One consequence has been an unprecedented implosion — a crush of visitors consisting of both tourists and serious students, placing enormous demands on institution staffs and resources. The discussion of tourism brought out some disadvantages as well as the advantages of bringing more and more people into museums.

In this changing museum world, Friends are ambassadors or mediators between the general public and the professionals, and as such have an important role to play as negotiators of change. The delegates of many National Federations of Friends of Museums, specially from Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Greece, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States, provided lively input for panel discussions on 'Accessibility or Protection: What do Friends Want?' Their clear message was that Friends can and must help make museums user-friendly.

In practical terms, museums have four functions: the first three are to collect, conserve and classify, and the fourth is to communicate. It is in this process that Friends have a specially important responsibility. New electronic communications technologies are, as we know, revolutionizing many museum activities and in some places Friends have learned how they can facilitate useful changes. Internal communications can be improved by new information-storage systems, such as cataloguing and interlinking catalogues, so that the information is more generally accessible and more widely distributed. It is also time to consider seriously the uses of holography in the documentation of heritage materials. We cannot go on collecting or conserving everything but we can record and access vast quantities of information and images. With regard to external communications, bringing visitors in is desirable, even essential, to the economy of many communities, but the price of implosion is going up.

At the closing of the Congress it was observed that less had been said of the opposite process, explosion. There has been talk for years about 'museums without walls', and conveying what museums have to offer beyond the building itself. A great deal of this is being done through publications, photographs and reproductions, but much more could be done with sound and video recordings, so that people can discover in their own time and their own environment what it is we are preserving, and why. New communication technologies offer many new ways to make these riches available across social, political and language barriers, and as Friends we need more Friends who are familiar with these techniques so that we can contribute to the widening of the circles of awareness. The greatest challenge to all of us is to move heritage questions from the periphery to the centre of public thinking, planning and financing. As an Argentine participant pointed out, what protects collections best is a public consciousness that they are valuable.

We may end this report appropriately by quoting Vincent Tovell:

One more question might be posed. Why, beyond the passing pleasures of our work, are these matters so compelling to us? Let me offer a personal answer. We are but twelve years from the year 2000 and we may well ask ourselves: of all the millions of images we have accumulated in our minds throughout our lives, which, above all others, most vividly sums up for us — individually — the twentieth-century experience? Each of us will have a personal choice, some marvellous, some horrifying. For me it is that blue-green marble in the infinity of space — the earth seen from the moon. That image reminds me of the ancient injunction which calls us all to a responsible stewardship of life on this planet, the world of nature and of human history.

As it happens, the Government of Ontario, which has welcomed us here this week, is engaged just now in a Heritage Policy Review and it has published a discussion paper to launch a public debate. A section of it seems to set out some fundamental issues.

New methods of gathering, organizing and controlling information are re-ordering our daily lives. Who is to decide and control what information we do store and who is to have access to it? Where and how? These are questions at the core of our social and political life and they are of special relevance to the policy areas we now label 'heritage'.

Our heritage is with us in a multitude of forms, in our natural surroundings and in the human order. Some of it is still intangible in our minds and hearts, unrecorded: our customs and traditions, habits and rituals. But more and more of it is deposited somewhere as a tangible object — a photograph, a disc, an image of some sort, a work of art, an artefact, a specimen; and caring for them and interpreting them has become a bewildering responsibility.

The knowledge — the understanding and guidance — on which our fragile civilization now depends lies in many places, stored as microbits in some electronic archive, as works of art, recorded folk tales, scientific collections and natural history museums, cathedrals or rows of old houses, perhaps in a pile of archaeological shards, or in the lessons to be discovered in a river system or a silent fossil in a wilderness park, the green world from which we come.

These legacies, living or dead, must be valued, judiciously preserved in good and usable order, to be interpreted and reinterpreted even as we add to them daily. If they are not, we will become — at the least — helpless amnesiacs . . . they are the principal deposits of whatever we know, the sources of all our judgements, of our intellectual and spiritual vitality and our ability to adapt and renew.

It was Christian Pattyn, Chef de la Mission d'Aménagement du Musée des Plans Reliefs à l'Hôtel des Invalides, Paris, who said, 'Le musée de demain sera poétique ou ne sera pas.' So, Friends, good luck![2]

2. This text was written with the collaboration of the Canadian Federation of Friends of Museums (CFFM); William J. Withrow, Director, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (Canada); Vincent Tovell, President of the Canadian Society of Decorative Arts, Toronto.

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