Museum

No 160 (Vol XL, n° 4, 1988)

Nordic museums today

museum

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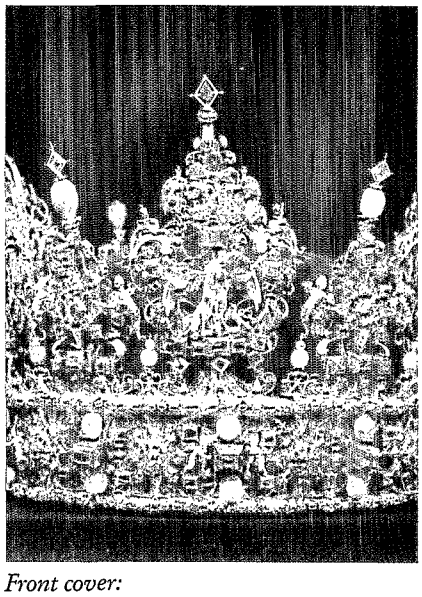
No. 160 (No. 4, 1988)

Maihaugen Open-air Museum near Lillehammer (Norway).



Front cover:
King Christian IV of Denmark's crown. Made in Denmark in 1596 by Dirich Fyring. This work of art in gold was exhibited in the Rosenborg Castle Museum in 1988 to commemorate the 400th anniversary of King Christian IV's accession to the throne. This event was celebrated by eleven museums under the patronage of the Council of Europe.

Frontispiece: Frontispiece of the folio *Museum Wormianum* (1655). The whole collection was bought by Frederik III of Denmark for the Royal Kunstkammer.

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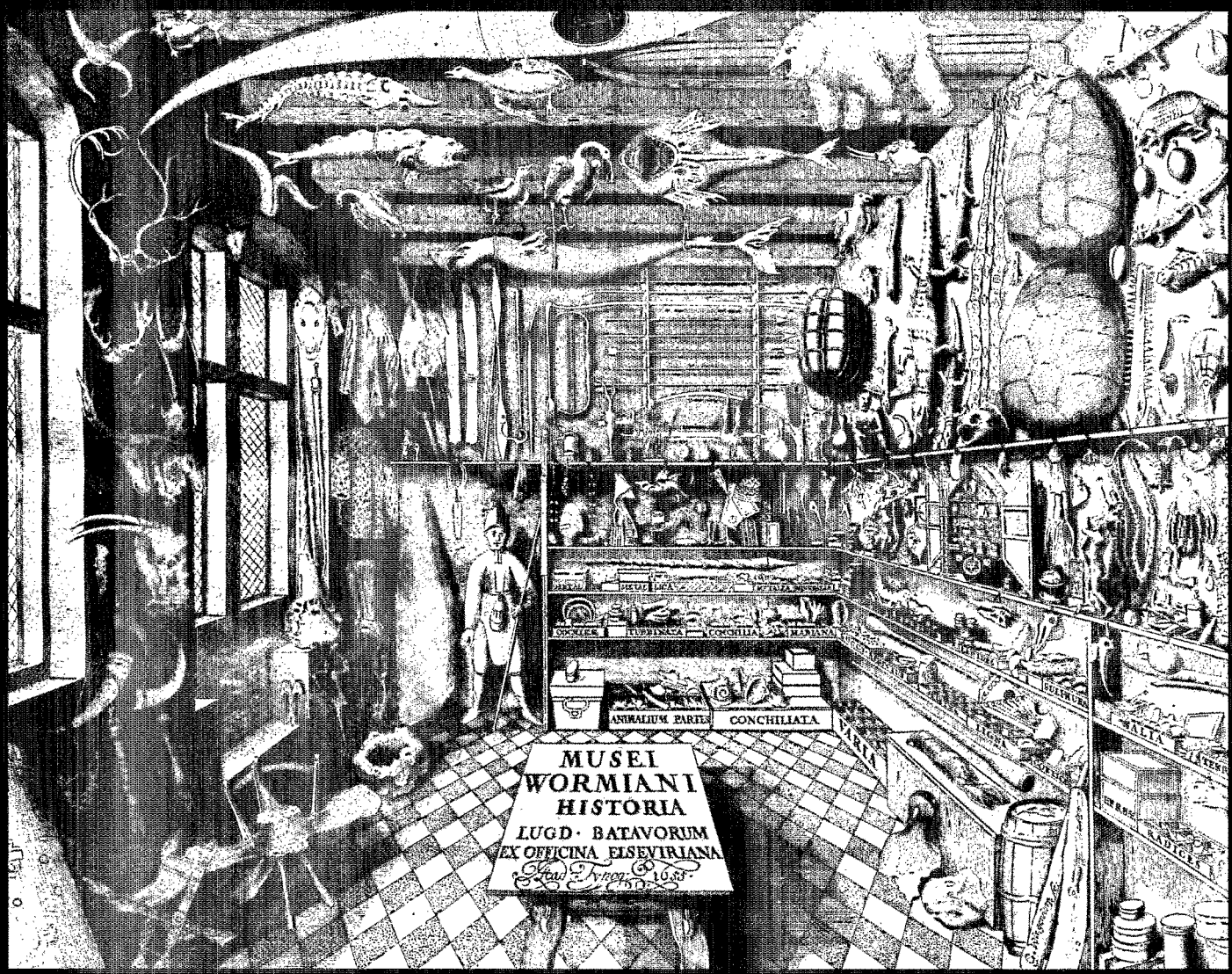
ANIMALIUM PARTES
CONCHILIATA
MUSEI
WORMIANI
HISTORIA
LUGD · BATAVORUM
EX OFFICINA ELSEVIRIANA
Anno Typi: 1655

Nordic museums today

MUSEUM wishes to express its sincere gratitude to Lise Skjøth, who undertook to co-ordinate the preparation of this issue devoted to 'Nordic museums today'. Mrs Skjøth, born in Copenhagen in 1939, holds a doctorate in history of art. Her career has evolved within the framework of Denmark's fine arts museums, about which she has written a number of works. She is a member of the Advisory Board of Museum and Secretary of the Danish National Committee for ICOM.

As we go to press with this number, a final read-through of the articles to be found below brings to mind the end of *Stuart Little*, a modern fable written (for adults as well as younger readers) by the American author E. B. White: 'Stuart rose . . . climbed into his car and started up the road that led toward the north. The sun was just coming up over the hills on his right. As he peered ahead into the great land that stretched before him, the way seemed long. But the sky was bright, and he somehow felt he was headed in the right direction.'

Museum

Photo credits
Front cover: National Museum of Denmark; back cover: Arne Normann; frontispiece: National Museum of Denmark; 1: Bohusläns Museum, Lennart Forsberg; 2: Stiftelsen Jämtlands Läns Museum, Birgit Jansson; 3: Wasavalvet Museum; 4: Anders Rydén; 5: De Sandvigske Samlinger; 6: Arne Normann; 7-9: Natascha Heintz; 10: Gisli Gestsson; 11: Lise Skjøth; 12: Soren Haelgren, Statens Historiska Museum; 13-14: Lise Skjøth; 15: Zache Johansson; 16: Carin Gothelid; 17: Flemming Gedsted Rasmussen; 18: Allan Schnipper, Arbejdermuseet; 19: Claus Jensen; 20: Museum of National History, Frederiksborg Castle; 21-23: National Museum of Denmark; 24: Marten Sjöback; 25: Jan Norman; 26: Finn Martner; 27: Peter Henning; 29: Ethnographic Department, Danish National Museum; 30: John Møller; 31: Niels C. Pedersen; 32: Erik Holm; 33: Per Rasmussenen; 35: Elisabeth Olofsson; 36: Anders Gunnartz, SIDA Photo Library; Stockholm; 38-40: Pohjois-Pohjanmaan Museo; 41: Arne Biörnstad; 42: Bengt Rosén; 43-47: Norsk Skogbruksmuseum; 48-51: Sports Museum of Finland; 52-53: Rolf E. Renne; 54-57: S. A. Milyuchenkov.

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Guest editorial:

Nordic museums—a glance in the rear-view mirror

The five Nordic countries—Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden—possess common roots. Our way of thinking is 'Nordic' and, with the exception of Finnish, our languages are so closely related that we manage to understand one another with a minimum of effort. Of course, there are significant differences between our countries, for example in terms of defence or economic policy; but it is not entirely incorrect to view us as constituting a sort of European province.

As this issue of *Museum* goes to press, several agreements and negotiations around the world are bringing a series of wars and conflicts to an end. We can only hope that this new climate of peace will allow us to release the resources necessary to redress the ecological situation of our planet by ending the over-exploitation of our natural riches, as well as restoring optimal conditions of life for the flora, fauna and, of course, the human populations on earth. Nor ought we to forget all those who are suffering: for example the countless thousands obliged to flee their homelands, or those young people in so-called developed countries who have lost all hope for the future in a hostile world.

In the face of such concerns, the numerous and varied Nordic museums have an active role to play. A certain number can be said to be 'nostalgic', since their mission is to preserve the memory of times past. That is important, for we cannot hope to resolve the problems that confront us without knowing about the past.

History, it has been said, is akin to a driver's glance at his or her rear-view mirror.

Other museums might be said to promote a sort of deliberate escapism. It is surely legitimate to savour the sublime in the arts, in order to draw from them more noble inspiration and renewed energy.

Natural history museums are very actively involved with ecology, and are particularly well placed to inform and sensitize the public about ecological issues.

Certain museums devote themselves, directly or indirectly, to various aspects of our social organization. Thus, for example, in the face of problems created by the inflow of immigrants, they attempt to influence the older 'native' populations by helping them to appreciate the true value of the character and culture of the new arrivals as elements that can act as catalysts in improving the quality of life. In this connection, we would note the special exhibition organized by the Music History Museum at Trondheim, Norway, on the music of the immigrants, and also the Moesgaard Museum's exhibition at Aarhus, Denmark, entitled *Foreigner—For Whom?* Similarly, a series of ethnographic exhibitions, based on then revolutionary principles (including faithful reproductions of natural settings) by the National Museum of Denmark at Brede near

Copenhagen, enabled visitors to encounter, in a new light, the cultures of China, Japan and Brazil, among others, helping to create understanding and respect for the life-styles and the spirit of their peoples.

Museums must also undertake to make the citizenry more aware of their own environment. Not by manipulating visitors, of course, but by knowing how to resist some of the less desirable trends in contemporary society, such as the all-powerful pop-culture industry, the waves of commercial advertising that threaten to engulf us, or the evolution of labour markets, so fraught with difficulties that many young people lose hope and drop out of the race. It is possible that in our part of the world, we need to re-examine our values.

Museums cannot save the world, but by preserving our cultural heritage, they can, thanks to their collections and their extramural activities, make people more aware of relationships and cause-and-effect situations, thus inciting them to pause for a moment and re-examine the situation for themselves.

In Sweden, an extramural museum policy, the result of long reflection, has been elaborated to respond to such fundamental questions as: What do we want to make of our country? What do we want to make of our museums? We must follow the evolution of this situation closely, and identify those areas where we have the most to learn.

ICOM's General Conference in 1989 may offer some answers. It will be held in the Netherlands, where the government has long had a coherent museums policy, under the theme 'Museums as Creators of Culture'.

By tradition, the Nordic countries have always maintained close links between themselves, in the cultural domain as in other fields. Until now, however, Nordic museums were obliged to limit their contacts to occasional *ad hoc* encounters of persons or institutions, the exception being Nordic co-operation in the context of ICOM. But two years ago, the Swedish National Council for Culture took the initiative of inviting the national museums councils and museum associations of the other Nordic countries to meet in Sweden. At that meeting, and at another held a year later, it was agreed that the five countries would attempt to institutionalize and develop their co-operation in the realm of museums. Several joint projects were outlined, but the overriding objective is to gain recognition for the museums in the programme of the Nordic Council, the intergovernmental body grouping the five countries. It is intended to stimulate a greater inter-Nordic awareness, based on our common cultural heritage.

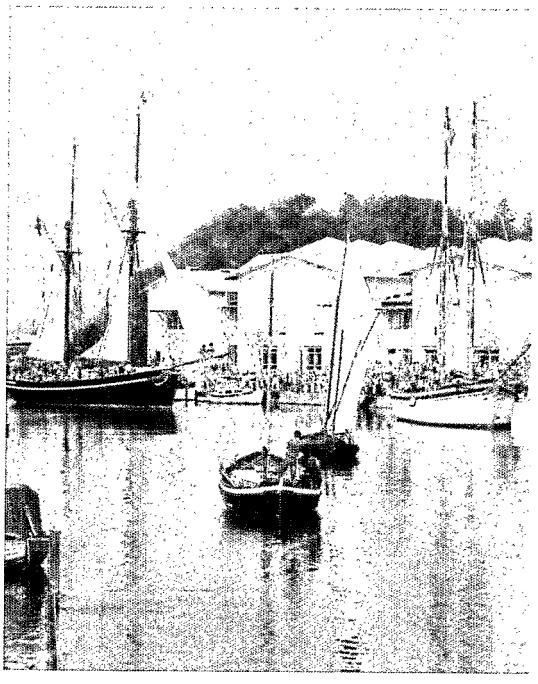
In choosing the authors and subjects for this special number devoted to Nordic museums, we sought to achieve an equitable balance in terms of countries and types of museums, as well as in terms of themes of international interest.

The museum structures of each country are described in nearly parallel articles. These, of course, focus chiefly on those features that distinguish the approaches adopted by a particular government. But they also have another aim: the hope that other countries that may be contemplating adopting new museum structures might draw inspiration from the Nordic experience.

None of the articles pretends to be exhaustive. Readers wishing further information can contact the authors, who will be pleased to respond.

Finally, no single issue of *Museum* could hope to present all aspects of all museums in the Nordic countries. Many articles on Nordic museums have already appeared in *Museum*, and we of course hope to tackle other Nordic subjects in issues to come.

Lise Skjøth



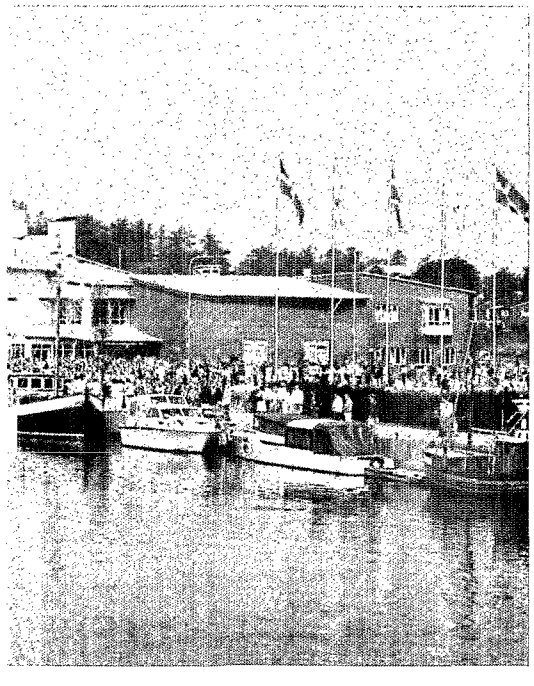
1
Bohusläns Museum. A regional museum situated on the west coast of Sweden. The modern building to the right of the museum on the sea-front is reminiscent of old warehouses of the region.

FIVE COUNTRIES, FIVE STRUCTURES

Developing museums— part of Sweden's cultural policy

Gudrun Vahlquist

Born in Uppsala (Sweden) in 1939. Studied art history, education, sociology, languages and management. Worked with art-in-schools programmes and later with the Swedish Travelling Exhibitions Service (Riksutställningar), as Head of the School Exhibitions Department. Since 1975 at the newly established National Council for Cultural Affairs (Statens Kulturråd), and from 1980, as Head of its Fine Arts, Exhibitions and Museums Department. Member of ICOM's Committee on Education since 1971. Editor of *ICOM Education*, 1974–77. Secretary for Culture, Swedish Commission for Unesco.



In a world context the people, culture, traditions and language of Sweden occupy a modest place. Being close to our Nordic sisters and brothers widens the field and feeling of identity, but in the long run we must accept the natural dimensions and characteristics of our own nation, in all its diversity.

In drawing up guidelines for a national cultural policy, safeguarding and developing the Swedish identity and way of life was very much the focus, as was the need to maintain and stimulate international exchanges in the cultural field. A million persons from other cultural backgrounds out of the 8 million living in Sweden will also guarantee vital international contacts.[1]

In 1974 the Riksdag (Swedish parliament) unanimously adopted cultural reforms involving considerable expenditure on national cultural institutions, as well as on a whole range of development grants (for literature, children's culture, artists' works, regional institutions and popular education). It also defined the eight objectives of a cultural policy interacting with the society at large. This included a desire for vital interaction between the three levels of government—national, regional and municipal. In practice, cultural equality should be just as important as economic and social equality, but it is sometimes even more difficult to achieve.

A challenge to society—and museums

Ever since they were first presented, the cultural policy objectives have served as a source of inspiration in debate, but also in action. Cultural policy should help to protect freedom of expression, promote participation and creativity, counteract the negative effects of commercialism, promote decentralization, meet the needs of disadvantaged groups, facilitate artistic and cultural renewal, preserve and revitalize the culture of earlier times and inspire international cultural exchanges.

Taken seriously—and practically—these objectives are a geat challenge to museums. Given the determination and resources implied by the objectives, many museums would prefer to operate with the full scale of objectives. As museum director Erik Hofrén once put it: 'A museum is the finest cultural instrument there is.' The fact that important museums developed in the past does not, however, mean that they were part of a comprehensive cultural policy, since cultural policy is itself a fairly new phenomenon. Nor does cultural policy by itself give birth to new museums. Initiatives from learned and enthusiastic individuals or groups will also occur at local, regional or national levels.

A diverse network

Museum policy, seen as a strategy for cultural development, has evolved by stages over the past twenty years, though a rough pattern emerged much earlier, characterized by the quantity of large and small museums in the capital, run on a state budget, and a frail, albeit well-distributed, network of provincial/county museums and the museums of important cities. Scattered all over the country, there are more than a thousand small, local open-air museums to be visited only during the summer season. There are in all 250 museums in Sweden open to the public all the year round with professional staff. The total number of persons working in museums is approximately 4,000. One-third of them work at the nineteen national, central museums, only three of which are not located in

1. For a summary of the history of Swedish museums, see Margareta Biörnstad's article on page 190.

2
View of the Jämtland regional museum, in the heart of Sweden.

Stockholm. These museums are funded under national expenditure for the cultural sector. There are another twenty national museums, for example, university museums, royal castles and collections and museums of certain ministries (the Postmuseum, the Arme Museum). Outside Stockholm, the cities of Göteborg and Malmö have a number of museums within their purview. In addition there are twenty-two museums run on a regional basis. The remaining museums are either municipal or run by foundations.

State aid to museums

How does the government support museums? National museums must receive basic support from the state. Where else could they find it, beside some occasional sponsor? Keeping up standards and activities has required great efforts and sacrifices on the part of these museums over the last six years since all national authorities and institutions have suffered a 2 per cent reduction of their annual budgets. Despite this, the central museums succeeded in increasing the numbers of visitors during the same period. These central museums are also expected to offer their professional services and co-operation to the other museums in the country. An important role of national museum policy is played by the Swedish Travelling Exhibitions Service (Riksutställningar).[2]

The ambition of decentralization is firmly pursued as one of the goals of our national cultural policy. The results are obvious, even if full implementation has not yet been achieved, a fact that is vigorously criticized by the regions. The 1974 resolution on cultural policy required national financial support to the regional museums and in 1977–78 the system of state grants was reinforced to support one regional museum in each county as well as in Göteborg and Malmö. The grant aimed at strengthening the existing museums of regional cultural history, also aiding their basic activities and outreach programmes, and helping in archaeological and cultural environment preservation.

In order to understand the role and effects of cultural policy and in fact the entire domestic policy of Sweden, it is important to distinguish between the well-defined responsibilities of national government and the regional and municipal governments respectively. Each level has its own revenues and decision-making assembly, and thus its own institutions. Concerning regional museums, regional theatres and libraries, resources are combined. The financial grant of the state is related to the budget allocated by the region/county and its communities (Table 1).

Table 1. National expenditure in the museum sector (millions of kronor)

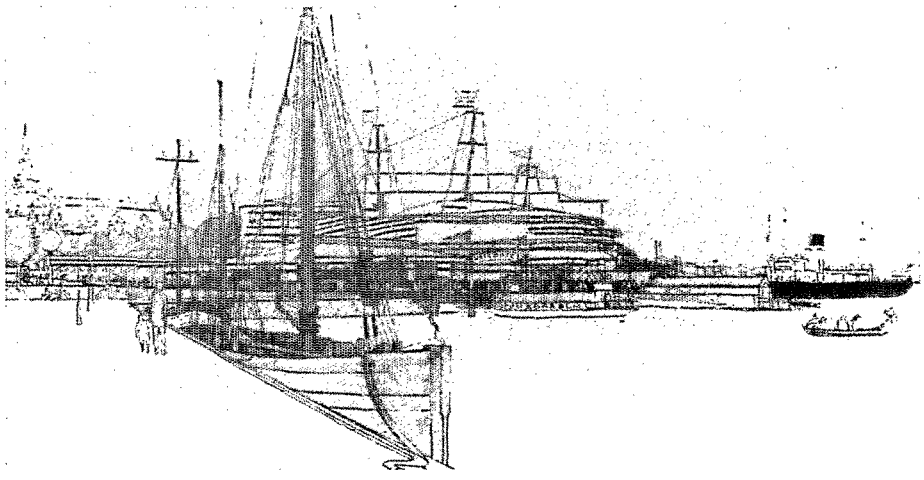
Museums financed by national budget	244
Grants to regional museums	34
Other subsidies to museums	17
TOTAL	295

A growing interest in culture

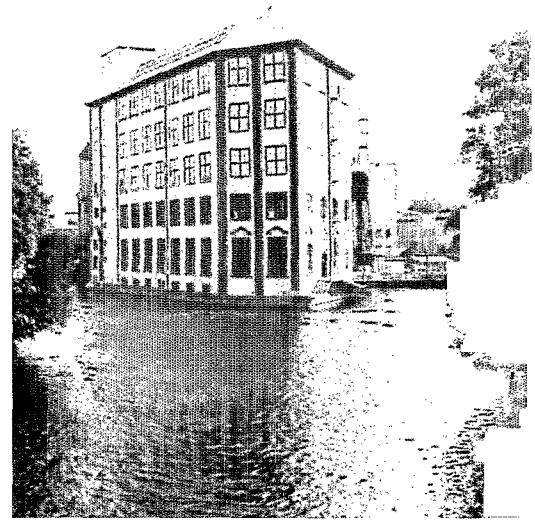
Regions and municipalities are taking on increased responsibilities in the field of culture. The budgets allocated are increasing though inflation has slowed the growth over the last ten years; investments were also made throughout the country in new buildings for cultural activities or in restoring old ones. The role of culture is slowly gaining in importance as a political issue. The cross-sectoral effects are also recognized where benefits in everyday life are concerned, for example in schools, hospitals and town-planning. The impact of a cultural strategy for the future development of the regions is also being acknowledged, especially in those experiencing economic and industrial crises. In such circumstances, regional and local museums have shown a special capacity for supplying information on the historical background, as forums for exhibitions and debate, and for working with regional schools and universities. For example, museums are dealing more and more with ecological and environmental issues.[3]

Museums and the future

The more interesting and vital museums become, the more dynamic interaction between museums and society will be. Ultimately this is a question of the role and possibilities of museums in the future. Despite limited financial resources, museums now have to encounter the problems and challenges of society. At the same time they have to consider their own methods of exhibiting, new information techniques, and how to attract new groups of visitors. In 1986, following close consultations with persons active in the museum sector and elsewhere, and as a result of questionnaires and statistical reports, the National Council for Cultural Affairs (Statens Kulturråd) submitted three reports to the government: *Museum Proposals*, giving the Council's view on the tasks and responsibilities of the national/central museums; *Museum Sweden*, containing statistical data on 150



3
The new Wasa Museum in Stockholm. The *Wasa* warship, which has attracted millions of visitors since its restoration, will be exhibited from 1989 onwards in this building specially designed by the architect Ove Hidemark.



4
Arbetets Museum (Labour Museum). The cityscape of Norrköpping, a typical nineteenth-century industrial town, will soon host a new kind of museum in an old factory.

museums in Sweden; and *Museum Perspectives*, a debate book giving the views of twenty-five personalities on museums and society for the future, together with a representative sample of museological theories and approaches.

Museum Proposals was circulated among museums and other public agencies in the autumn of 1986 before being debated by the Riksdag. The reactions were positive, for the most part, and the government responded to them in a bill concerning the division of responsibilities at the national level. The national/central museums are able to activate and supply expert knowledge and exhibitions, undertake research and development projects, and maintain international contacts in their respective fields. Co-operation between national and regional museums and the Travelling Exhibitions Service (Riksutställningar) should develop further. Co-operation could also involve joint projects, conservation expertise, museum security, staff training and museum education. For some years, for example, priority has been given to developing a common policy of registration and documentation.[4]

In the government bill, five central museums were proclaimed 'statutory museums', each one with co-ordinating duties within its sector, respectively: the Museum of National Antiquities (Historiska Museet); the Nordic Museum (Nordiska Museet); the National Art Museums (Statens Konstmuseer) including the National Museum (Nationalmuseet) and the Museum of Modern Art (Moderna Museet); the Swedish Museum of Natural History (Naturhistoriska Riksmuseet); and the National Museum of Ethnography (Folkens Museum—Etnografiska).

These museums are primarily responsible—together with the Riksutställningar—for the development of interaction between museums in the country at large.

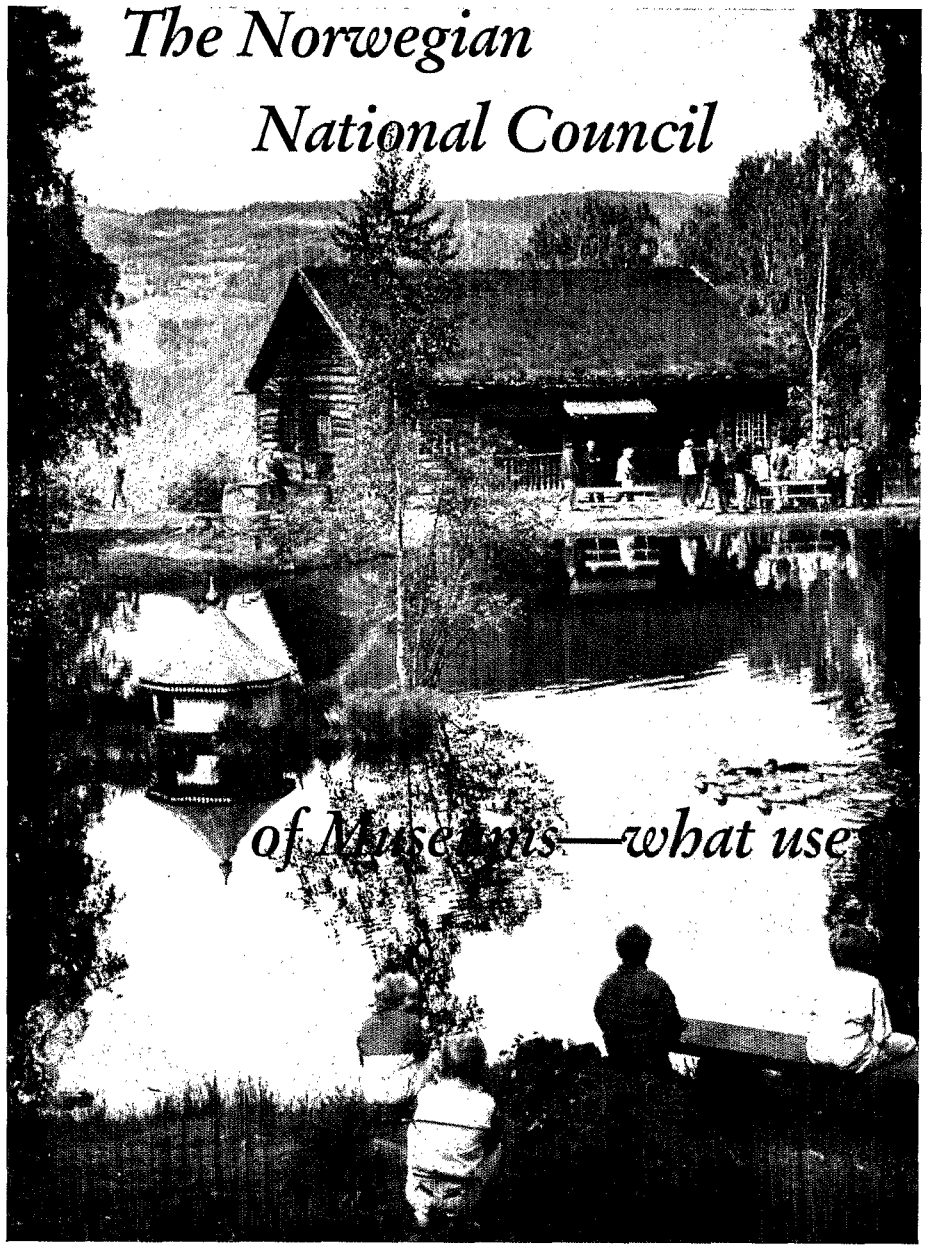
What next?

There are also common project resources totalling 5.1 million kronor with which the National Council for Cultural Affairs (Statens Kulturråd), over a three-year period, can support joint projects run by statutory museums in co-operation with other museums, schools and adult education structures. During 1987 projects were started with the Naturhistoriska Riksmuseet and Skansen Museum on ecology, with the Nordiska Museet on the documentation of immigrants' cultures and with the Folkens Museum on preparing a series of exhibitions on the Third World. A hopefully stimulating project on means and methods to present history in Sweden is being launched by our history museums. There are close contacts between the Council (Kulturrådet) and the professional associations of the museums concerning regional museum development, training of personnel, museum education, conservation methods and other museological questions. In a series of five conferences the Council will meet representatives of regional and other museums in their respective parts of the country to discuss the range of projects, problems and ideas concerning the development of museums. These conferences will also be forums where representatives from schools, universities and adult education bodies in the regions will be invited to speak out. ■

2. See Ulla Keding Olofsson's article: 'Riksutställningar: From Travelling Exhibitions to an Information Centre' and Stella Westerlund's article: 'Twenty Years of Travelling Exhibitions', both in *Museum*, No. 152, pp. 205–6.

3. See article by Bo Nilsson and Bengt Rosén on page 213.

4. See article by Hans Johansson and Bo Nilsson on page 194.



Natascha Heintz

Born in New York in 1930. Studied natural science at the universities of Oslo and Bergen and has a Master's degree in zoology. Since 1968 she has been alternately curator and chief curator at the University Palaeontology Museum in Oslo. She has been active in Norwegian museum associations, especially in her capacity as president of the Science Museum Association and as member of the Norwegian National Council of Museums since its inception in 1979, and as vice-president since 1983. For a period of eight years she was editor of the Norwegian museum periodical *Museumsnytt*.

In the northernmost corner of Europe, exposed to the sea to the west, its topography leaving little room for agriculture, Norway has never been overly hospitable to human beings. To survive, men and women had to know and understand their environment. Where were the best fishing grounds, the richest pastures, forests that provided good building timber or rocks providing mineral resources? From these needs grew our first collections—our first museums—both those documenting our cultural heritage and those dealing with natural history and natural resources.

The museums

Two centuries ago, museums in the modern sense did not exist. Now many of our museums have already celebrated their centenaries. The greatest expansion, however, has occurred in the last fifty years, yielding not only a great number of new institutions, but also expanding existing ones. And the trend continues: the 1987 official list of museums in Norway shows 502 entries, not counting private collections. Some 502 museums in a country of 4 million inhabitants sounds a lot. However, scattered as they are over an area of nearly 400,000 km², there are still many places without a museum at a reasonable distance. The picture of Norwegian museums is even more varied if we consider how the museums are organized and financed. Apart from the university museums in Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim, Tromsø and a few others, which are all directly financed by the national government, the majority of Norwegian museums are financed jointly

5
Open-air museums, also called folk museums, are a prominent feature of Norwegian museum life. Maihaugen, or De Sandvigske Samlinger, covers an area of thirty-six hectares near Lillehammer in central Norway and is one of the largest museums of its kind in Norway. During the summer Maihaugen attracts thousands of visitors.

6
In winter, the open-air museums lie peacefully under the snow, keeping perhaps one building open to the public. Here is Garmo Church at Maihaugen on a winter's day.

7
A small local museum in the Pasvik Valley in northern Norway, near the Soviet border, possessing both cultural history and natural science collections.

by county and state, while others are run by the counties alone.

The National Council of Museums

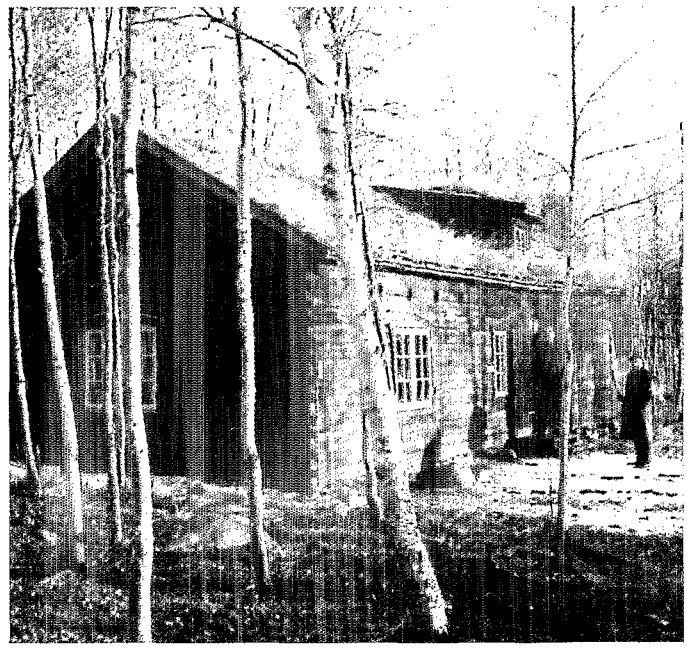
Given so many varied, unevenly distributed museums around the country, there arose a demand for an independent organization to advise the authorities on museum matters. In 1979, after several years of discussion, the Norwegian Council of Museums was established.

The Council consists of nine members, four of whom are appointed by the museum community and five who represent various other fields of public life. The Council is appointed for a four-year term, so that the current Council is the third since its institution. According to its original terms of reference, 'The National Council of Museums shall advise the Department of Cultural and Scientific Affairs on matters regarding museum activities in Norway. . . . The Council shall follow the activities of the museums throughout the country and *inter alia* give advice on how they can best reach a wide public.'

The first ten years

After ten years of existence, it might well be asked, 'Has the National Council of Museums succeeded in becoming a motivating force within the Norwegian museum system? Has it contributed to the development and to the maximum use of the system's resources? Can this element of the Norwegian museum system provide a pattern for the museum communities of other smaller countries?' It is obvious that those who expected quick, impressive results may have been disappointed with the Council. With no money to distribute, it cannot be expected immediately to influence developments within the sectors high on its list of priorities. It is, however, within the scope of the Council's activities to undertake more thorough and far-reaching research than any other museum agency in Norway. Indeed, the Council's most important assignment is the elaboration of a structure covering the whole museum community in Norway, a project made all the more important since decentralization of cultural activities was adopted as a political objective.

In its recommendations, the Council has emphasized the need for a clear division of responsibilities and tasks assigned to the different types of museums, and proposed a tripartite structure. The first group, the national museums, would include university museums, museums with national collections and national monuments. The second group would include the county museums, that is, the central museum of each county. These may consist of one or more units and are the highest museum authority of the county. The third group would include local museums in municipalities or other limited areas, which mainly serve the local communities. Two other organizations, representing fine arts museums and museums of cultural history and natural science, have likewise made proposals for a new museum structure. All



8
The sloop *Pauline* on a sunny day in June in Trondheim Fjord. It is said to be more than a boat and more than a museum. Built in 1897 for the Norwegian coastal trade, it has since been restored and navigates as a boat and living museum.

these proposals are expected to form the basis of a final plan for the redistribution of professional and administrative responsibilities in the Norwegian museum community.

Travelling exhibits

Travelling exhibits have for many years been a regular feature of Norwegian museum life. When the National Council of Museums was established, it was given a mandate to look into this activity. The Council ultimately recommended a decentralized version of such exhibits, called 'Travelling Exhibitions of Norwegian Museums', the main concept of which was to have centrally produced exhibits that could be supplemented locally wherever they went. The scheme was tested in two counties in central Norway. The theme for the test exhibition, called *Far tå folk ig fe* (Traces of Men and Cattle) was the cultivated landscape. Lessons learnt so far have been valuable: much new museum material has cropped up locally, and in most places the exhibit has given rise to many activities. Most of the difficulties encountered were ones of practical organization.

New initiatives by the National Museum Council

To complete the picture, besides tendering advice to the authorities on request, the Council is expected to take the initiative in various matters. Thus it has carried out a review of university museums and discussed the training of the different types of museum personnel. It organized the current census of Norwegian museums and collections and, not least, it is striving to improve contacts between the Council and the museum community in Norway.

How can we answer the question asked at the beginning of this article: Is the National Council of Museums a useful instrument of advice? Or is it a superfluous structure which other countries would be well advised to avoid? Personally, I believe that the Council has an important function in a country like Norway, with its multitude of heterogeneous institutions, large and small, highly specialized and multidisciplinary. Having an independent agency to monitor the situation and give advice on matters of importance to the museums is essential. ■

9
A Samian tent erected at the Kautokeino museum in northern Norway. It consists of a framework of sticks covered with hides or blankets.

Museums in Iceland

10
The National Museum of Iceland. Carved church door from Valthjofsstadur, *circa* 1200.

Thor Magnusson

Born in 1937. Degree *(fil. kand.)* from the University of Uppsala 1963 (archaeology, ethnology). Assistant Curator of the National Museum of Iceland 1964. Director of the National Museum and State Antiquities Service since 1968.

Museums in Iceland are of relatively recent date. The first National Museum was founded in 1863 at the initiative of the painter Sigurdur Gudmundsson who died in 1874. Before that, as Iceland was a part of the Danish state, many Icelandic artefacts, especially from medieval times, found their way to the National Museum in Copenhagen. Some were returned to Iceland in 1930. And before the first antiquities law (1907) many foreigners travelling to Iceland took away with them Icelandic artefacts of historical and cultural value, many of them now found in museums in other countries.

The National Museum

The National Museum of Iceland is a historical museum, dealing with local archaeology, ethnology, church art, folk art, and also fine arts and handicrafts. The Museum initially collected artefacts from very early periods: from the time of settlement by the Vikings to medieval objects as well as other artefacts of beauty or special historical value. With time, however, the Museum has broadened its field to include all kinds of artefacts used in Iceland, whether of local origin or imported.

The State Antiquities Service is responsible for the Museum, which means that the Museum is entrusted with the

11
The farmhouse at Glaumbaer, erected between 1840 and 1880, shows well what these sod-houses looked like. The gables to the left are almost the only timbers visible from the outside. The farm is under the protection of the National Museum and houses the local museum.

12
The farm and church at Langfas, built in the nineteenth century are typical of the architecture of the country of that time. They come under the care of the National Museum and the farmhouses now house the local museum.

preservation of the country's historical monuments. Thus, all archaeological excavations are undertaken by the Museum or under its supervision. The protection and registration of historical sites or sites of archaeological value are also carried out under the authority of the Museum.

From the beginning, the Museum involved itself with the preservation of historical buildings, starting with churches and secular buildings built in the traditional manner with timber or timber-framed, with sod and stone walls and sod roofs (Figs. 10-12). This old method, typical of iron-age buildings in Europe, was in use in many places in Iceland until the end of the Second World War, and some outbuildings of this type can still be seen in remote parts of the country. But the only surviving houses of this type are those preserved by the National Museum or other museums, many of them now used as exhibition buildings for small local museums and collections.

Today the National Museum maintains about twenty-five heritage buildings, most of them nineteenth-century farmhouses and other habitations, churches and work-places (Fig. 13). In the last thirty years the National Museum has also carried out many ethnological investigations, mainly by means of questionnaires, thus documenting in its archives many sources on life-styles in former times. There are also all kinds of documents about Icelandic society as such, especially pre-dating the great cultural and ethnological changes, which can be said to have culminated in the 1940s.

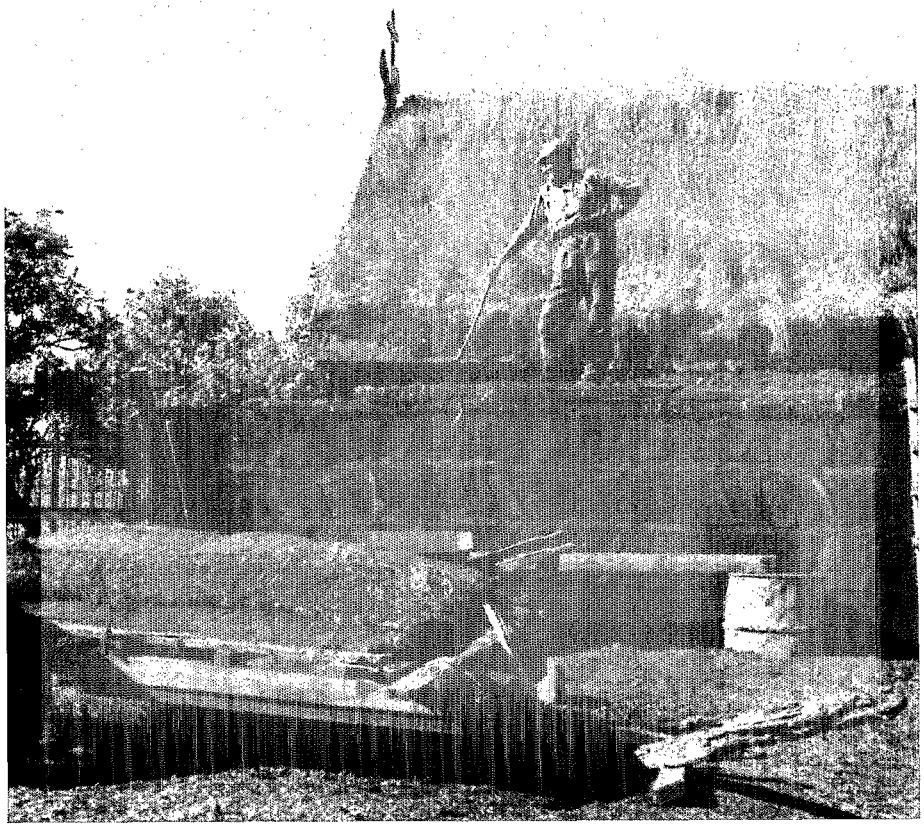
Under the supervision of the National Museum a special fishing and maritime museum is being established. Even though the Icelanders' life is based on fishing, there has never been a special fishery museum, although the National Museum has in its collections many artefacts concerning fishing and maritime history.

Other museums

Throughout the country there are also local museums, most of them rather small and which concentrate mostly on local folklore. Some of them are located in traditional farmhouses, gabled buildings of sod and stone; but others are housed in specially built premises or temporary buildings. Few are in buildings especially designed as a museum; and if the museums are owned by the local district most of them are actually run by a single individual, often the founder of the museum and collector of the artefacts.

The Municipal Museum of Reykjavik is the only open-air museum in Iceland, consisting mainly of houses from the old quarters of the town. It presents the history of the city, from its origins as a small village 200 years ago to the present, as a city of considerable size.

Our museums vary greatly in size and quality, but all of them essentially collect and display items from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as earlier artefacts are increasingly difficult to acquire. These museums, most of which are only open during the summer and



13
The sod-buildings need a careful treatment and often a thorough restoration must be carried out. In 1976 the church at Vidimyri, built in 1834, received new sod-walls constructed in the traditional manner.

whose visitors are mainly tourists, have with time awakened the interest of the local people in their culture, and changed the view of the people regarding the cultural history of their country in general.

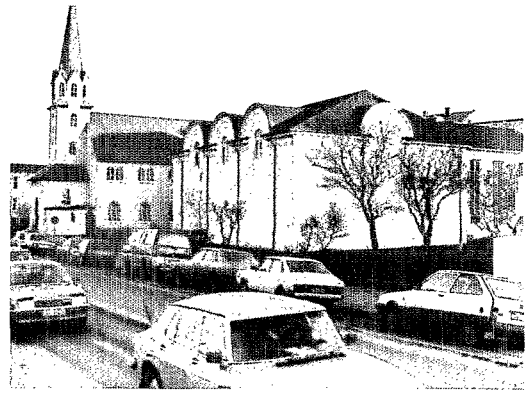
The National Art Gallery, founded in 1886, is the second oldest museum in Iceland. Recently it moved into its own premises, after long being housed in the same building as the National Museum (Fig. 14). The Gallery holds collections of Icelandic art from the twentieth century and, to a limited degree, foreign contemporary art. In the new premises there are modern facilities, such as a reference library and reading room, and the Gallery presents frequent temporary exhibitions, of both Icelandic and foreign artists. Other art galleries, devoted to individual artists, exist in the capital, such as the galleries of the sculptors Einar Jonsson and Asmundur Sveinsson and the painter Asgrimur Jonsson. In recent years, some communities in the country have also established their own art collections, the largest of those being owned by the capital, Reykjavik.

Museums of natural history are few in number. The Natural History Museum, acquired by the state in 1947, was established in 1889 by the Natural History Society. It is the centre for natural science research on Iceland, and is divided into three sections: geological, botanical and zoological. It has a good collection of specimens, but the exhibition rooms are still provisional. A new museum building is to be erected for it in collaboration with the University of Iceland. There are also smaller natural history museums in the larger communities, most of them constituted as school collections to be used as teaching aids.

Museums: the Icelandic approach

Museums in Iceland thus focus on the country as such: human beings living together in a sometimes harsh environment, and a culture which has developed in its own way because of the country's special climate and isolation. There are no museums or collections worth mentioning that deal with the culture of other peoples. Imported artefacts, such as ecclesiastical items from medieval times or more recent industrial products, although not collected, were all used in Iceland and helped the nation to survive. Even though the country is geographically isolated, and its connection with other peoples tenuous, Iceland's isolation has never been total. In the middle ages the Icelandic Church was wealthy, owning a great deal of land, and its connection with the Church on the European continent was very firm, as is well illustrated by surviving medieval church art, which shows a great richness of artefacts of the highest quality.

Iceland's museums have undergone considerable renewal in recent years, as is the case in many other countries. The cultural authorities see museums not only as attractions for tourists but as educational institutions helping the nation to preserve its identity in a world of ever-growing economic interdependence and internationalization. ■



14
The new National Art Gallery of Iceland.

Finland:

Why does every village want its own museum?

Outi Peisa

Born at Rantasalmi (Finland). Graduated in 1975 from Jyväskylä University with a degree in ethnology. Also studied at the Ludwig Maximilian Universität in Munich, Federal Republic of Germany. Worked as project researcher at the National Board of Antiquities in Helsinki 1972–79, and has taught cultural and art history. Since 1981 curator of collections at Porvoo Museum. Member of the Finnish National Committee of ICOM.

Marketta Tamminen

Born at Mänttä (Finland). Graduated from Helsinki University in 1969 with a degree in art history. She worked as researcher at the National Board of Antiquities in Helsinki and as curator of the Archives for Prints and Photographs, 1970–76. Since 1980 director of Porvoo Museum. President of the Finnish National Committee of ICOM since 1984.

Adjacent to the city of Porvoo on the south coast of Finland, three museums with seemingly similar themes and aims are in the making. The Archipelago Museum, which opened recently represents the fishing culture and the life-style of the islanders and the coastal inhabitants (Figs. 15, 16). The Peasant Boat Museum will concentrate on the seafaring traditions of the coastal farming population and will conserve as many old boats as possible. The Boatbuilders' Museum will try to preserve the traditional handicraft and tools of the carpenters and builders of wooden boats.

The three museums have much in common. Each will have a collection of boats; sail-, oar- or motor-powered. All originated as associations of local people formed for the purpose of preserving the area's heritage, all rely totally on voluntary work, and all are supported by intermittent and insecure funding whether from private sponsors or through grants from municipalities. They are also focal points for different kinds of local activities such as festivals, salmon-soup dinners, demonstrations of craftmanship, and tarring of boats. In this, they are typical of the way the majority of the hundreds of small local or folk museums in Finland were born and are sustained.

Museum organization in Finland

In Finland, there has traditionally been a strong duality in the museum field. On the one hand, there is the National Museum of Finland, which evolved from scientific and university collections; parallel with it, there is the central administrator, the National Board of Antiquities. On the other hand, there are the large number of museums independently maintained by urban or rural municipalities, and the museums owned by private associations which have as an umbrella organization the Finnish Museums Association.

Museum administration in Finland is going through a period of strong development and museum professionals are growing more numerous. Therefore a short presentation of the way museums function in Finland may be appropriate.

The central museum authority is the National Board of Antiquities which comes under the authority of the Ministry of Education. The Board directs administration and research concerning antiquities, monuments and sites, and ensures overall supervision of museum affairs. The National Museum of Finland, a department within the Board, functions as the country's central museum of cultural history. To complement the central administration and to facilitate scientific work, a number of tasks have been decentralized to the provincial level. The aim has been to create a network of strong, so-called provincial museums of cultural history and regional art museums to which the central organization can delegate part of its tasks. In the early 1980s, this status was conferred upon twenty museums of cultural history and a number of art museums (eventually these will total fifteen). These museums are expected to aid other provincial museums and to keep central records and archives. Except for one private museum, all provincial museums are owned by municipalities. Each of these museums has a curator whose duty it is to prepare a museum policy for the area, to organize training, exhibitions and information and to provide professional

15
Three members of the Pernå Museum Society admiring the brand-new seine-boat they have helped to build in the Archipelago Museum at Rönnäs after the model of an old boat.

guidance. The state covers these expenditures. All provincial museums will eventually also have an archaeologist and a curator for buildings and monuments. A new law on state support for museums, expected to come into effect in 1989, will substantially increase government funds for these museums.

Finland also has a number of special museums which are national in scope, for example, the Sports Museum (see Pekka Honkanen's article on page 222), architecture, glass, photography, etc. All other museums are classified as local museums, regardless of size, equipment, personnel or field of work. With a population of just under 5 million, Finland has an estimated 650 museums (according to some statistics, more museums per capita than any other country).

Although the provincial museum administration system is relatively new in Finland, its necessity was acknowledged as early as the 1930s. In a short time, the system has shown both its effectiveness and its shortcomings. The increasingly rapid development of society has made it impossible to manage from Helsinki such statutory requirements as preservation and research concerning archaeological and cultural monuments and sites, community and transport planning, and the control of the export of movable cultural heritage objects, while at the same time maintaining scientific rigour and a sound economic basis. By developing the regional administration we can guarantee the presence of a professional expert in every part of the country and ensure that, regardless of where they live, all citizens will have access to high-quality museum services.

Museums new and old

Afer Finland became independent in 1917, museums underwent a period of rapid development, and the need for closer co-operation between museum professionals began to be recognized. At the initiative of some local museum representatives, the first annual Museum Day was held in 1923. Side by side, at this meeting, were museum professionals and amateurs. The Finnish Museums Association was founded at this meeting to oversee development in the field by: (a) providing training; (b) promoting international contacts; (c) organizing information and publication activities; (d) attending to museum interests generally; and (e) developing alternative views to those embodied in state – originated museum policy. Thus, where museums are concerned, co-operation between amateurs and professionals in Finland has long-established traditions, even if the use of volunteers in official museums is virtually unknown.

Despite decentralization, many problems of Finnish museums are far from solved. Just as the mammoth museums of the world's metropolises are staggering under the weight of their collections, so Finnish museums from large to small are reaching their limits. This problem is acutely felt in small rural or village museums which were filled twenty to forty years ago with pre-industrial agricultural implements and whose lack of storage space makes further collecting impossible. The permanent exhibitions cannot change; they are not lively enough to speak to us anymore; new solutions must be found. Yet enthusiasm for museums is very much alive and constantly growing among small associations. Feelings of

local identity have grown increasingly strong. Different kinds of societies and organizations wish to preserve their own particular cultural heritage. Instinctively, they fear seeing their objects and documents disappear into the storage rooms of the provincial museum. As a result yet another museum is founded.

This is perhaps the most important reason for the origin of the three seemingly similar museums mentioned at the beginning of this article. A museum founded locally and cared for locally is 'our museum': it fills a need as a large central professional museum can never do. In a culture as materially homogeneous as Finland's, the specificity of objects is often merely philosophical. From a local perspective, however, every object is unique and important and ought to be on display. It also seems that creating a museum is often more rewarding—and much easier—than maintaining one. Maintaining a museum needs expertise and professional advice that is, however, freely given when asked for.

Life less than eternal

The professional curator, trained to believe that the foremost duty of a museum is to ensure the physical security of the collections, will have to adjust. There are, and always will be, museums that will have inadequate housing and storage, a lack of professional workers or even permanent personnel, and whose financing is insecure. Objects may be handled in a way that may not ensure their preservation for future generations. Nevertheless, these museums play a vital role in creating interest in, and respect for, the life-style of our ancestors. If in a hundred years the objects are worn out by loving handling in the museum, they will have at least fulfilled their purpose for a few generations. Museum professionals must accept the fact that some museums are meant for a life less than eternal.

What the museum professionals can do, however, in the new museum boom, especially in the Finnish provincial museums, is to document and analyse the knowledge and skills that will accumulate in the small museums for the profit of society in general. The co-ordination of the goals and activities of small amateur museums, and the creation of prerequisities for their co-operation with central museums, are among the greatest challenges facing Finnish museums. Alongside the object-centred way of thinking, fostered up until now by the central museums, a new approach must be found. ■

16
The maiden voyage of a new seine-boat.

What future for Danish museums?

Frank Birkebaek

Born in 1945. President of the Danish Museum Council. Historian, worked at the Viking Ship Museum at Roskilde from 1976 to 1978. Named chief curator at Roskilde in 1984. Has written several books and articles on the Viking epoch.

Denmark's network of museums is spread throughout the country. With an independent governing board, each of them is both autonomous and strongly rooted in its region. None the less, these museums make up a coherent whole. Indeed, from the small local museum to the most important institution, the National Museum, they are all governed by the same legislation. Under this law, museum activities are co-ordinated in each province by the provincial museum council.

Museum financing in Denmark is available from three levels of government: municipal, provincial and national. Only the large state museums' operating costs are covered solely by the state.

17
A ropemaker during a demonstration at the Roskilde Museum.

18
At the Workers' Museum in Copenhagen, a scene showing a woman working at home for the garment industry.

Many small collections are not subsidized, but they are none the less entitled to representation on the provincial museum council, where they can express their views and from which they can obtain financial assistance. Under current legislation, only museums recognized by the central government are entitled to public funding.

Every four years, the provincial councils elect members of the museum profession as delegates to the National Museums Council, which also includes representatives of the political parties. The National Council, with its mandate to apply the legislation concerning museums, apportions the state subsidies destined to museums after ensuring that all conditions and obligations have been satisfied. These subsidies represent a certain percentage of the total cash allocated to museums by municipalities and provinces.

Competition and credibility

The system thus established by Danish museum legislation has, on the whole, given excellent results. Denmark's economic situation, however, has been difficult ever since the first oil crisis of 1973, and the government has on several occasions been obliged to cut back the budget for museums. The result has been a slowing down of activity and new initiatives within the museum community. Museums are all the more victims of the situation in that their urgent needs are seldom perceptible to outsiders. Gaps, which for the time being cannot be filled, may only be recognized too late, at which time certain elements of our national cultural identity will have irrevocably disappeared. No society can afford such a loss; but those who are aware of the gravity of the situation are too few to make their voices heard.

It was in these circumstances that, in the spring of 1988, the Minister of Cultural Affairs, anxious to reform (as an economy measure) museum legislation, especially as regards state financing for museums, tabled a draft bill in Parliament according to which each administrative subdivision in the country would be granted a lump sum of funding. Such a system would oblige museums to compete in order to obtain the percentage of those amounts needed to sustain their already reduced budgets.

Accordingly, the members of the museum profession, first and foremost the presidents of the national museum associations, felt obliged to take a position against the draft law. This law has not yet been adopted, and that is why, in my capacity as President of the Danish Museums Council, I would plead for the maintenance of a system which has been found satisfactory by the public as well as by museum professionals.

Thus, on the eve of a possible change in the legislation, it seems to me to be the right moment to review a certain number of principles which have proved themselves in the past, and which it would seem desirable to conserve.

Any museum wishing to be recognized by the state must meet clearly defined criteria. First, it must have sufficient funding to employ qualified staff and to finance, independently, a part of the essential activities of collection, documentation and conservation of the cultural heritage. It should have a well-defined sphere of activity, geographically and thematically, and its specialization should not duplicate that of another museum. The museum should commit itself to the principles formulated in ICOM's code of ethics. Its operations should be examined by an independent body, such as the National Museums Council. The credibility of our museums depends on this. For somebody wishing to make a donation to a museum, for example, there must not be the slightest doubt about the independence and non-commercial character of the recipient institution.

Life insurance

The principle of unity among museums must be reaffirmed. It is very important that all museums be governed by the same legislation. It is the only framework within which they can collaborate and solve their common problems. It is a precondition, for example, for the establishment of a national documentation data bank, in which all museums would be both sources and users of data.[1] Such unity can, moreover, facilitate concerted efforts that go beyond the traditional museum framework, notably for protection of sites, landscape and monuments.

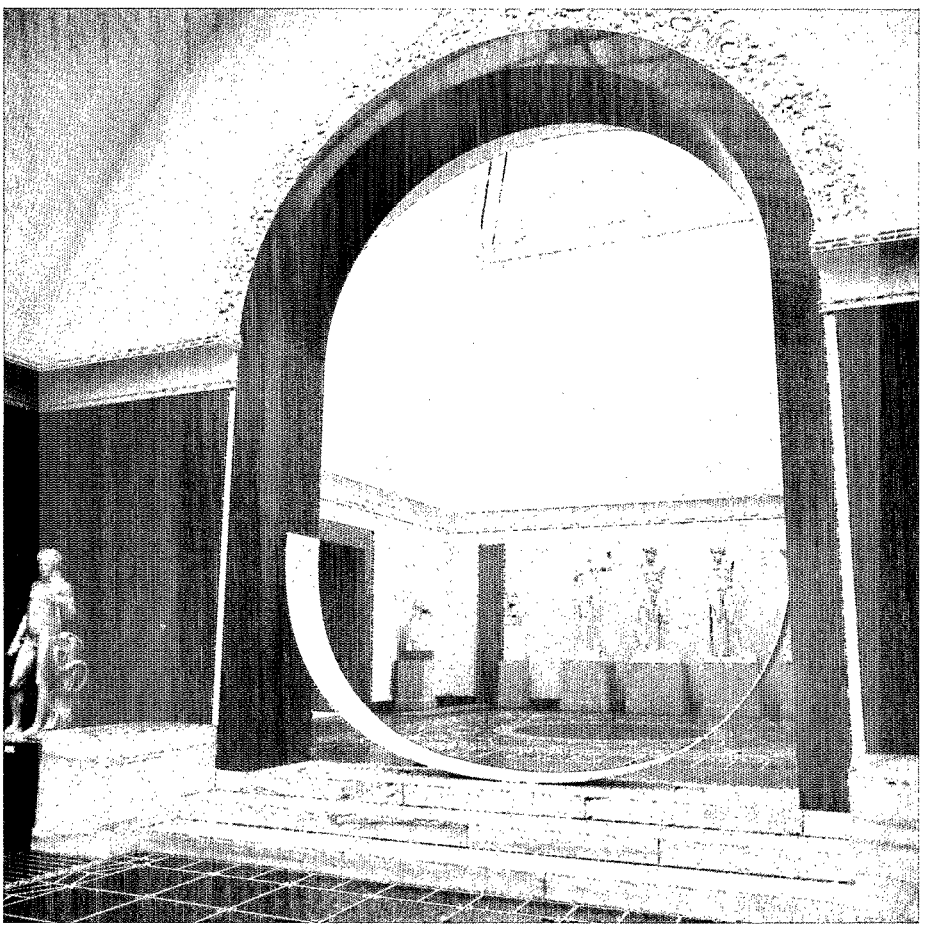
It is very important that museum legislation define norms for the administration and financing of museums, and that it specify society's objectives for museums, thus underlining the interdependence of museums and society. This aspect is far from negligible. There is no doubt of the benefits for the future of museums if they are formally integrated

into the public administration, especially during a period of economic crisis when rivalries tend to become exacerbated. Furthermore, a legislative provision such as this would have the advantage of highlighting the urgency of certain needs while there is still time left to act. In particular, it would be desirable to incorporate in the law a definition of the work that museums be required to do in order to safeguard our cultural heritage, along with a guarantee of the funding necessary to support this action.

Finally, it seems important to maintain a decentralized structure: perhaps not entirely on the level of funding, but certainly decentralized as regards decision-making authority and identification of problems to be solved. In my opinion, the three levels of government—municipal, provincial and national—should contribute to the operating costs of museums. Making national subsidies conditional on local support will inevitably prove to be an incentive. Such financing favours independent initiative and promotes decentralization. The decision to create a museum is born of a local need, and the success of the museum is rooted in the surrounding region. If the museum meets these conditions, it should be recognized as of public benefit, and be granted a subsidy. In a sense, we are talking about decentralization, albeit with 'life insurance', which is not the case where a museum is financed exclusively at the regional or local level.

This question of the creation of museums, whether of purely local interest, highly specialized, or interdisciplinary, brings me to my conclusion. There are still many people who are convinced that museum professionals show an excessive attachment to tradition. Yet the evolution of the museum world over the past fifty years suffices to show their error. In many fields, innovation has been necessary and the professionals have not hesitated to go forward. All of them are willing to listen to criticism and suggestions, and all recognize the value of taking stock of the current situation. They also believe, however, that something of great value might be sacrificed if we were to renounce the principles which, until now, have favoured the harmonious development of our museums. ■

19
A temporary display arrangement by Claus Jensen at the Antiquities Department of the Ny Carlsberg Glypotek in Copenhagen in autumn 1987.



1. See the article by Carsten U. Larsen on page 197.

THE HISTORY OF NORDIC MUSEUMS

The Royal Danish Kunstkammer

Bente Gundestrup

Born in 1946, in Copenhagen (Denmark). M.A. in history in 1976 from the University of Copenhagen. From 1968, employed at the Danish National Museum. Since 1980 co-ordinator for the Kunstkammer Project Group, and since 1983 leader of the Kunstkammer Project. Has published several articles in connection with the Kunstkammer investigations, on the history of Danish Museums, and on objects from Danish collections.

In recent years the history of museums has generated increasing interest among scholars of both museums and universities all over Europe. As museums communicate more purposefully to the public about the origins of their collections, increasing awareness of the history of the museums themselves has resulted. It is assumed that the philosophy and level of scholarly and scientific development of the collector at any given time is reflected in the collection and exhibition of museum objects. In this context, we in Denmark have been fortunate in that our oldest museum collection, the Royal Danish Kunstkammer (Gallery of Art), founded in 1650, has been spared the consequences of war or revolution.

20
King Frederik III of Denmark (1648–70), the founder of the Kunstkammer.

European Kunstkammer

The Renaissance enthusiasm for classical antiquity, and the upsurge in trade resulting from the discovery of new continents, laid the foundation for collections of antiques, art objects, and rarities related to ethnography and natural history. These were assembled in princely, noble and scholarly houses all over Europe. The Turkish conquest of Constantinople in 1453 permitted Europeans to establish more direct contact with the Ottoman Empire, resulting in an increasing number of Turkish objects in European collections. Additionally, the Age of Discovery brought Europeans in touch with many remote regions and enabled them to become acquainted with new lands, new peoples (such as the American Indians, for example), and hitherto unknown natural products, weapons and works of art. These new rarities were soon to be seen in the repositories of art that sprang up all over Europe.

Among these were the Medici collection in Florence, the magnificent collections in Prague and Vienna belonging to the Austrian Emperor Rudolph II (1576–1612), the famous Ambras collection brought together by Archduke Ferdinand in Ambras Castle near Innsbruck, and the *Kunstkammer* of Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria. Of special importance to Denmark was the large and very famous collection in Dresden founded by the Elector Augustus of Saxony (1553–86). Augustus was the brother-in-law of the Danish King Frederik II.

At the beginning of his reign, Frederik II of Denmark and Norway (reigned 1559–88), planned to instal a *drehezimmer* (lathe or turning room) or *wunderkammer* (hall of wonders) in Kronborg Castle. Nothing came of this project, but it illustrates how *kunstkammer* objets, and therefore the rise of *kunstkammer*, became associated with the *drehezimmer* in the palaces. The art of wood-turning was a favourite pastime for generations of Danish kings. The *drehezimmer* was supervised by the royal turner, and access to it was gained only with permission from the king himself. It was therefore natural that this room should be used for the storage of art objects, jewels, ceremonial arms, etc.

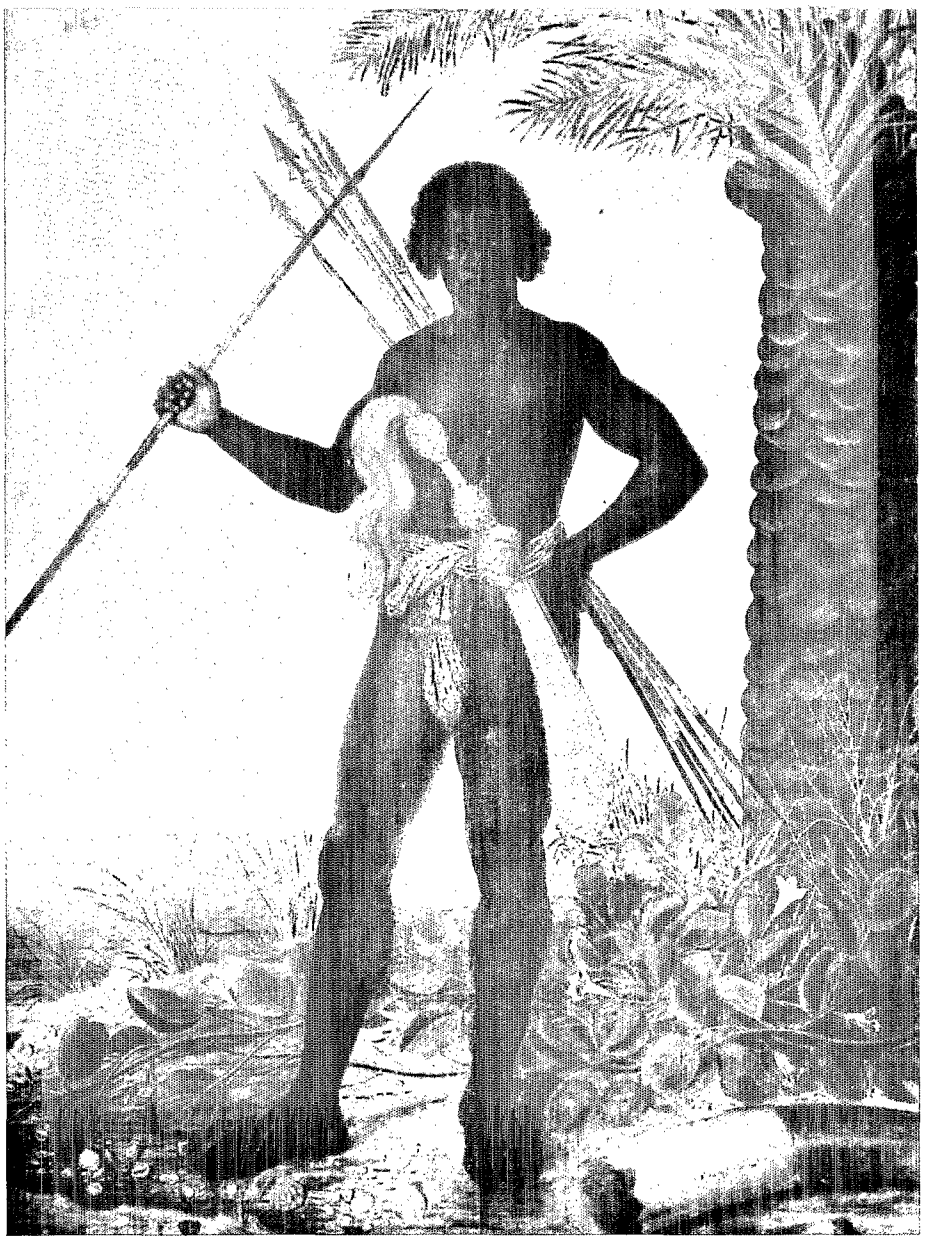
Other rooms besides the *drehezimmer* could be designated as *'kunstkammer'*. Christian IV (1588–1648), the son and successor of Frederik II, had a large collection of rare and valuable weapons in his private lodge at Frederiksborg Castle. Some of these arms were so remarkable that the rooms in which they were kept

came to be referred to as *'kunstkammer'*. In 1623 at Rosenborg Castle there was a small cabinet containing some Japanese swords, knives, tapestries, paintings and pictures, all of it *kunstkammer* material.

Frederik III's Kunstkammer

In 1648, when Frederik III (Fig. 20) was elected King of the dual monarchy of Denmark-Norway, he took up residence at the Castle of Copenhagen, and in a few years the *drehezimmer* held a collection of some size. In 1650 the first Kunstkammer employee was registered on the royal payroll, and from that time the Kunstkammer was considered an established institution. The *drehezimmer* very soon became too small and, in 1653, only five years after the King's arrival in Copenhagen, more than half of the eight rooms newly designated for the Kunstkammer in the south wing of the Castle were occupied.

The collection was enriched by numerous accessions in the following years, and again more room was needed. Plans were made to erect a special building for the royal collections (the Kunstkammer and the Library) and in 1665 its foundation stone was laid. The building was placed next to the King's residence and survived two great fires in the neighbouring castle. Today it contains the Danish National Archives. The Kunstkammer building was not completed until the end of the 1670s and, according to tradition, the transfer of the Kunstkammer collection from the castle to the new premises was not finished until 1680. For almost 150 years the collection remained in this building.



21
Man from Ghana, painted by Albert Eckhout, 1641. The painting was part of an important donation in 1654 from Prince Johann Moritz of Nassau to King Frederik III.

The collection: contents, classification and registration

Our knowledge of the contents of the Kunstkammer and the systems of classification and registration used stems mainly from the various inventories. These were drawn up each time a new keeper was appointed, the retiring keeper (or his estate) being held responsible for the collection.

The earliest surviving inventory dates from 1674, when the Kunstkammer was still in the Castle of Copenhagen. It is a brief list which itemizes, often with no more than one or two words, the contents of the Kunstkammer. It is evident, however, from the names of the rooms and from their respective contents that the collection was displayed according to distinct categories and objective principles. The first room contained natural curiosities, the second artefacts, followed by the Gun Room with antiquities and weapons, the Picture Room, the Mathematical Cabinet containing scientific instruments and clocks, the East India

Cabinet with ethnographical specimens, the Medal Cabinet, and the Model Cabinet.

The next inventory, carried out in 1689, is unusual in that it was not connected to a change of keeper. It is the first record made after the transfer from the castle to the Kunstkammer building. The King, Christian V (1670–99), had ordered an inventory prepared in 1687 and, when finished two years later, it formed the basis of the first printed catalogue of the royal collection. The *Museum Regium*, as it is called, was published in 1696 with numerous engraved illustrations.

These seventeenth-century inventories, as well as that done in 1737, show that the distribution of the objects around the Kunstkammer building followed principles similar to those applied at the Castle. The 1737 inventory gives the following introductions to the various cabinets:

The Cabinet of Medals consisting mostly of ancient and modern coins and medals, and also some rare pictures and peculiar portraits.

The Cabinet of Natural Curiosities consisting of various natural specimens, rare as well as monstrous, from land and sea, in the earth and above the earth, and also a few objects of human manufacture of the kind mentioned above.

The Artificial Cabinet consisting of various sorts of objects of human production: paintings, sculptures, objects of silver and other metals, of bone and wood, of amber and wax, of straw and paper, of glass and other substances.

The Indian Cabinet consisting of various objects mostly from China and East India, also some objects which have arrived from other remote areas.

The Antiquities Cabinet consisting of a great number of ancient antiquities as well as guns and implements of war, curious optical and mechanical inventions, and extraordinary old pictures and the like.

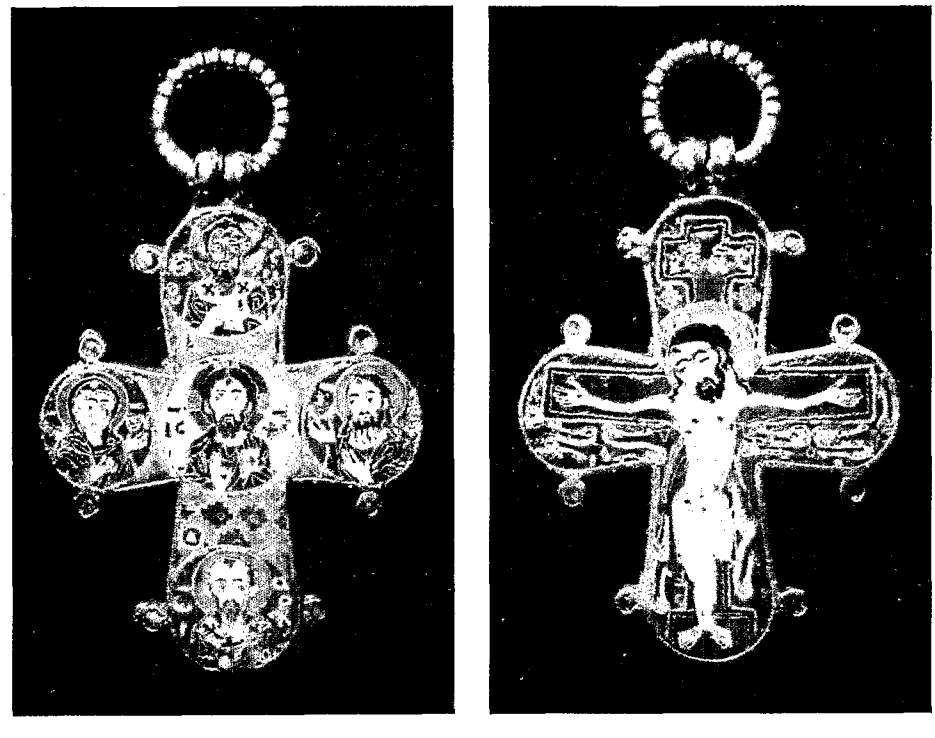
The Heroic Cabinet consisting of the portraits of royal persons and great men, either painted or formed in wax relief, as well as other images shaped in this way from plaster or wax.

The Gallery consisting of the works of various famous painters, representing schools old and new; seascapes, landscapes, paintings of campaigns and battles, historical paintings and the like.

The Perspective Cabinet consisting of various perspectives of royalty, open as well as enclosed in boxes, and also lovely still lifes, fruit pieces, and the like.

The Model Cabinet and the *Antechamber* consisting of various models of civil and military architecture, mechanical works, artificial anatomical specimens, etc., and a number of paintings and other objects which have been stored there after damage.

Common to all the inventories done successively in 1674, 1689, 1690 and 1737 is the fact that they list the whole collection room by room. In this they differ from the three following inventories of 1775,



22
Queen Dagmar's Cross is a small, Byzantine enamel reliquary from about 1100. It was discovered in 1683 in a royal grave at St Bendt's Church, Ringsted, and was placed in the Kunstkammer collection in 1695.

1807 and 1827 which were made as accession lists. The objects in the latter inventories were listed according to category and not only by their place in the collection.

In 1737 the Kunstkammer contained more than 4,000 inventory numbers, together with an impressive collection of coins and medals. By 1775 the collection had grown to around 7,500 items, excluding the coins and medals. The character of the collection altered at the same time, as the growth mostly represented paintings and artefacts. By 1807 the collection had further increased by approximately 3,000 items, mainly in the same categories.

All the exhibits in the Kunstkammer were numbered in the decade from 1765 to 1775. Objects entered prior to 1737 were given an identification consisting of two numbers: the 1737 inventory page number and a serial number. For objects acquired after the year 1737, a different numbering system was adopted. In the accession inventories the objects were entered according to categories, each category being designated by a letter. Paintings received the letter 'a', antiquities the letter 'b', art objects 'c', Indian objects 'd', and natural curiosities 'e'. Objects within each group were thus given both a letter and a serial number, for instance d 179. This method of numbering was used with almost no change until the collection was dispersed.

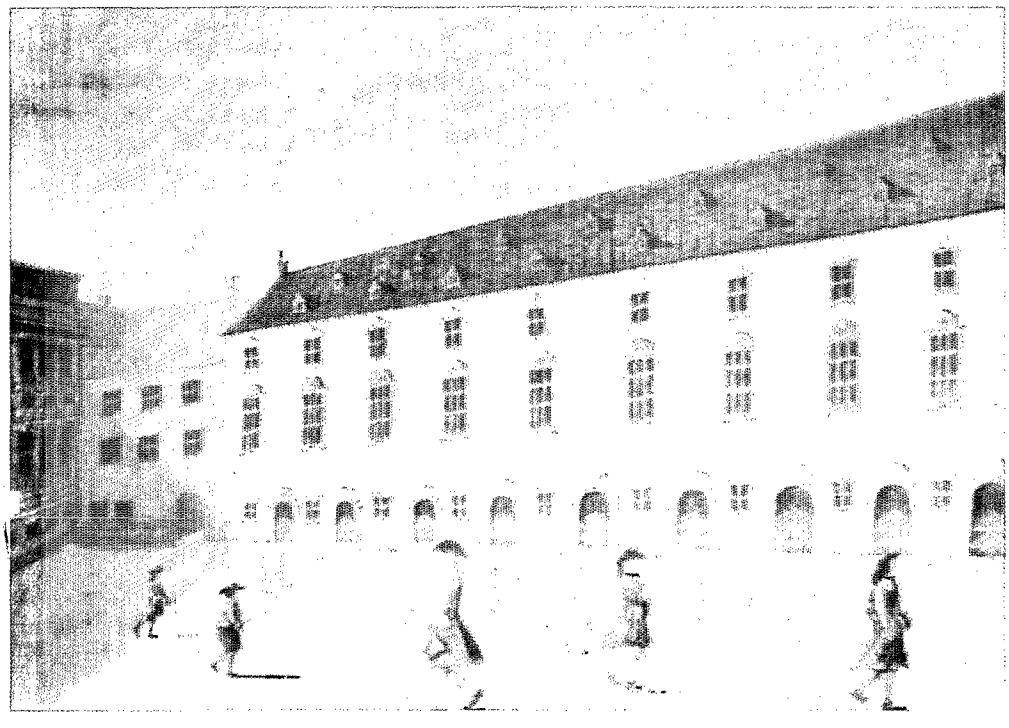
From Kunstkammer to the modern museums of Copenhagen

Towards the end of the eighteenth century the collection became more and more crowded and a more systematic method of classification was needed. The lack of an inventory with proper descriptions became evident, and this factor, along with the development of new scientific ideas concerning special collections or museums, led to radical changes in the Kunstkammer. The prime mover in these changes was the Lord Chamberlain and director of the Kunstkammer, Adam Hauch, who took office in 1802, but who at the same time was deeply involved in the reorganization of several other collections.

Unfortunately, the reorganization made slow progress. Nothing of significance happened until 1821, when six so-called 'scientific committees'—groups of two or three leading experts—were appointed to supervise the classification of the remaining groups of objects.

In this manner the way was finally cleared for a systematic classification of the Kunstkammer and for the creation of new collections and museums. In the ensuing years, groups of items were removed from the Kunstkammer and in several cases united with public collections of similar character. Thus, most of the modern public museums in Copenhagen contain a nucleus of objects from the Royal Kunstkammer.

Since 1977, investigations have been carried out at all museums containing Kunstkammer objects, and all surviving items are now registered. Sometimes it has been quite a detective job to locate and identify objects in the various museums, but we have succeeded in identifying nearly 70 per cent of the original royal collection. The second part of the project is to trace all the items—whether extant or lost—in the old inventories and in other sources such as manuals and accession lists, letters, accounts and inventories of collections. The intention is to publish the four inventories of 1737, 1775, 1807 and 1827, including photos of all extant objects (Figs. 21, 22) and information such as dates, measurements, artists, etc., to make the remarkable collection that was the Royal Danish Kunstkammer known to a wider audience. ■



23
The Royal Kunstkammer Building in the mid eighteenth century. Painting by Johannes Rach and Heinrich Eegberg, 1749.

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Swedish museums: a brief history

24
During the European Architectural Heritage Year which had a large impact on the preservation climate in Sweden and led to a substantial increase in resources for architectural heritage management, the museums contributed wholeheartedly to raising interest in the preservation and care of buildings and groups of cultural and historic interest. View of Fiskebäcksil.

Margareta Biörnstad

Born in 1928, a graduate of the University of Stockholm. Has occupied different positions at the Central Board and Museum of National Antiquities. Member of government committees in the field of cultural resource management and museum policies. Director-General of National Antiquities since 1987. Chairman of the National Committee of ICOMOS and its International Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management.

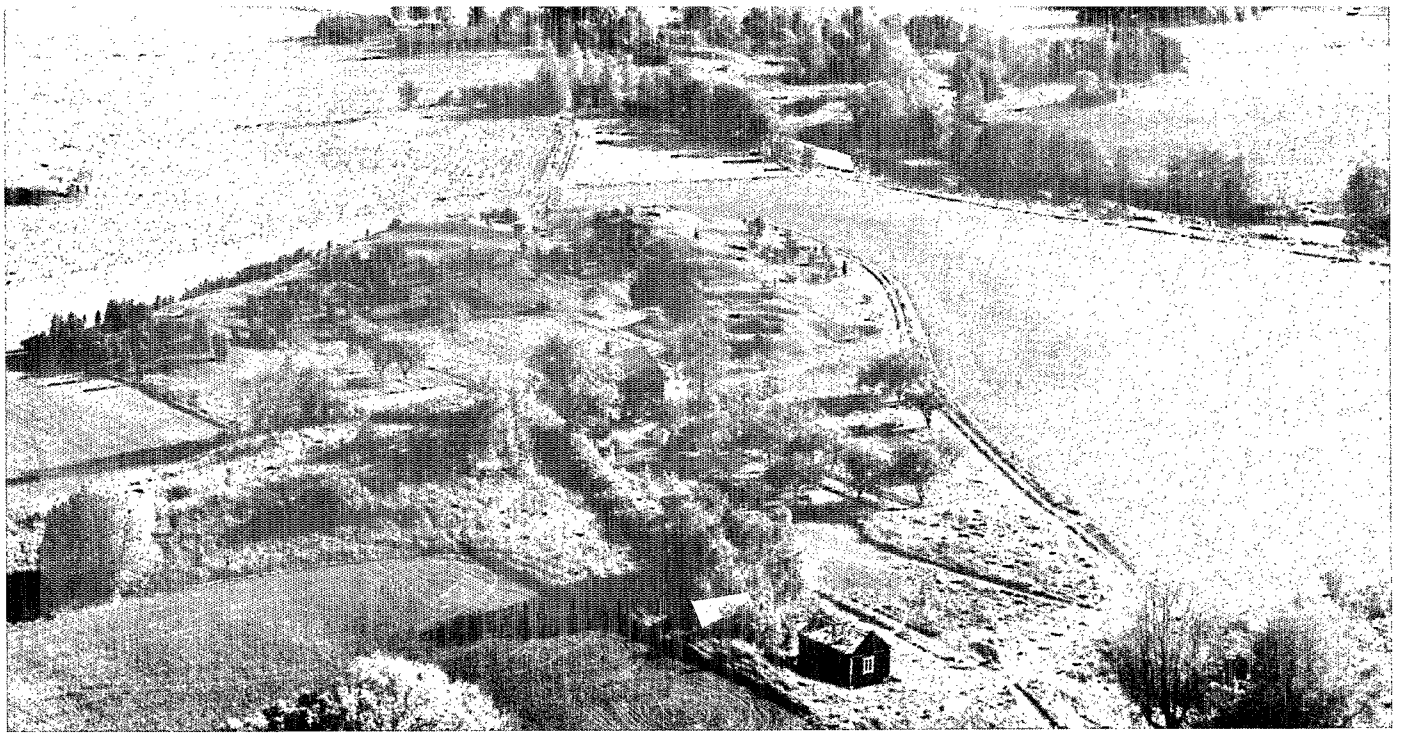
Preservation of the cultural heritage as a public concern has a long tradition in Sweden. As early as the seventeenth century we acquired a special officer of state for the purpose, the *Riksantikvarien* (Director General of National Antiquities). Legislation was passed for the protection of ancient monuments and rules were introduced for the care of a number of outstandingly interesting buildings. It was also during the seventeenth century that the first steps were taken in the study of cultural heritage, by means of inventories, drawings and descriptions.

Public attention focused primarily on archaeological remains—prehistoric burial grounds, cairns, runestones, the ruins of castles, monasteries and fortifications, as well as on churches and national historic buildings. Preservation of the cultural heritage in its initial guise was thus concerned with the historic monuments which could supply background and legitimacy to Sweden as a newly emerged great power.

Attitudes to these activities have of course changed with the passing of time, but well into the present century the approach remained roughly the same. Conservation of our architectural heritage, for example, was still mainly concerned with churches and national historic buildings in the 1930s, and it was not until 1942 that we were enabled to protect buildings in municipal and private ownership.

Since the Second World War, however, we have experienced a great transformation in cultural resource management, and a new view of cultural heritage and its protection has gradually emerged, a view which obtained political backing through the resolution adopted on cultural policy in the 1970s, which has set the course of present-day cultural resource management. In contemporary society, with its powerful forces of change, the goal of cultural resource management should be to campaign actively for making greater allowance for cultural and historical values generally in the public-planning context. Heavy recent emphasis on environmental issues has also had the effect of throwing the social motives for conservation into sharper relief. By safeguarding cultural monuments and environments of outstanding interest, as well as characteristic features of human settlements and the landscape, we strive to preserve a chronological perspective and a continuity which can help to provide security and form part of our efforts to create a living environment of high quality.

Ever since the seventeenth century, preservation of the cultural heritage has been headed by the *Riksantikvarien.* When, in 1789, King Gustav III founded the Kungliga Vitterhets-, Historie- och Antikvitetsakademien (Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities), he placed it in general charge of the preservation work and made the *Riksantikvarien* its Secretary. Through this combination, cultural resource management and historical museum activities were united from the very outset within the same institution. Under the aegis of the Academy, museum activities developed in several fields during the nineteenth century, laying the foundations, among others, of the Statens Historiska Museum (Museum of National Antiquities) and the Kungliga Myntkabinettet (Royal Cabinet of Coins and Medals). The *Riksantikvarien,* as the executive official of the Academy, was put in charge of the museum collections and



25
The growing environmental awareness in the 1960s enhanced interest for the connection between the individual monument and its surroundings, and for preservation with a comprehensive approach. The valley of the Fyris at Old Uppsala.

public activities, the scope of which grew steadily. During the twentieth century when these activities expanded considerably and the demand for specialization grew stronger, specific bodies were set up: the Riklsantikvarieämbetet (Central Board of National Antiquities) for preservation work, and the Statens Historiska Museum for museum activities. Today, both still operate within one joint organizational framework.

Regional development

We encounter a similar situation at the regional level. In the early years of this century, it was proposed that a special regional organization, composed of about ten officials and directly responsible to the *Riksantikvarien*, be established for purposes of cultural resource management. This scheme, however, was thwarted by the economic crisis which followed the First World War. Faced with this situation, *Riksantikvarie* Sigurd Curman chose to concentrate on museums which had grown from individual initiatives in different parts of the country.

These museums were evenly distributed throughout the country, generally one in each county. They were owned by voluntary archaeological or local history associations, and had evolved from the collections which those associations began to accumulate during the second half of the nineteenth century. These museums were short of money, however, and as a rule had no trained staff.

They needed to be reinforced if they were to assist the *Riksantivarien* and take charge of cultural resource management in their own counties. At the insistance of Sigurd Curman, support of this kind was gradually supplied during the 1930s and 1940s. Special state grants made it possible for all county museums to engage a qualified official to take charge of their work. Several museums also received state support for the construction of new museum buildings or improvements to existing ones. In 1947, state support for the county museums which had hitherto taken the form of ad hoc grants, was established on a permanent footing. Ever since, the county museums have received annual and progressively larger state grants towards their wage costs.

Thus, when major social changes came about after the end of the Second World War, every county had its museum or some comparable historical institution which, in addition to its tasks as a museum, assisted the *Riksantikvarien* in matters of preservation. The accelerating construction of housing, roads, power stations, etc., entailed a very rapid increase in the demands made on museum services. The museums met with a favourable response to their participation in public planning, while increasing grants from the state, municipalities and county councils made it possible for them to increase their staff of well-trained historians.

If, to begin with, the expansion of the county museums was above all connected with preservation of the cultural heritage, it was activities aimed at the public, not least in the form of exhibitions, which attracted attention during the 1960s and 1970s. It was also during the 1960s that the role and duties of the county museums began to be debated. That discussion, understandably, was above all prompted by the completely new situation confronting the museums. Whereas formerly their main concern

had been with their collections, that is, with the accumulation, documentation and display of material, the museums were now plunged into a vortex of contemporary developments. Supervision of the interests of cultural resource management in the physical planning context, and in connection with land development of various kinds, had brought museum people into close touch with politicians and with officials in various sectors of the community. At the same time, as a result of initiatives such as temporary exhibitions, frequently on subjects linked with current social changes, a number of museums, both regional and local, acquired new roles as centres of active cultural and social debate. The county museums were in favour of this closer involvement in public planning and regarded cultural resource management as an important part of integrated historical activities.

But there were also critics who felt that the museums ought to concentrate their efforts on traditional museum work as such, and on activities aimed at the public. At the same time, around 1970, changes took place within the national administration which had a direct bearing on regional activities in cultural resource management. County administration boards representing the central government at the local level acquired added duties in the public planning context and were made responsible for the co-ordination of different sectoral interests. To facilitate this co-ordination, several national government authorities at the regional level, which had previously been directly responsible to different central authorities, were now integrated. This was the case, for example, with physical planning and surveying activities, which in turn prompted a discussion as to whether cultural resource management should also be entrusted to the county administration boards.

New ideas, new legislation

As a result of the reorganization of the mid-1970s, close co-operation has been established between the Riksantikvarieämbetet and the county administration boards, on the one hand, and authorities responsible for planning and building, agriculture and forestry, road building, energy supply, etc., on the other. In order to facilitate this co-operation, the county administration boards in collaboration with the county museums, have elaborated specific programmes of preservation work. Apart from a cultural-historic description of the county, these programmes include an account of the main characteristics of groups and objects which are of particular value from a cultural history point of view. Similar work has been carried through in many municipalities and rural districts as a basis for planning at the local level.

Legislation has at the same time been altered in different ways in order to spread the responsibility for preservation work. For example, in the legislation on agriculture and forestry, new rules have been introduced requiring care and consideration for the cultural heritage. A new act on natural resource management and remodelled legislation on planning and building, which came into force in 1987, have also produced a new basis for preservation work. The new planning and building act has given the municipalities increased responsibility and new instruments both for the co-ordination of different interests and for the preservation of the cultural heritage and of the environment (Figs. 24, 25).

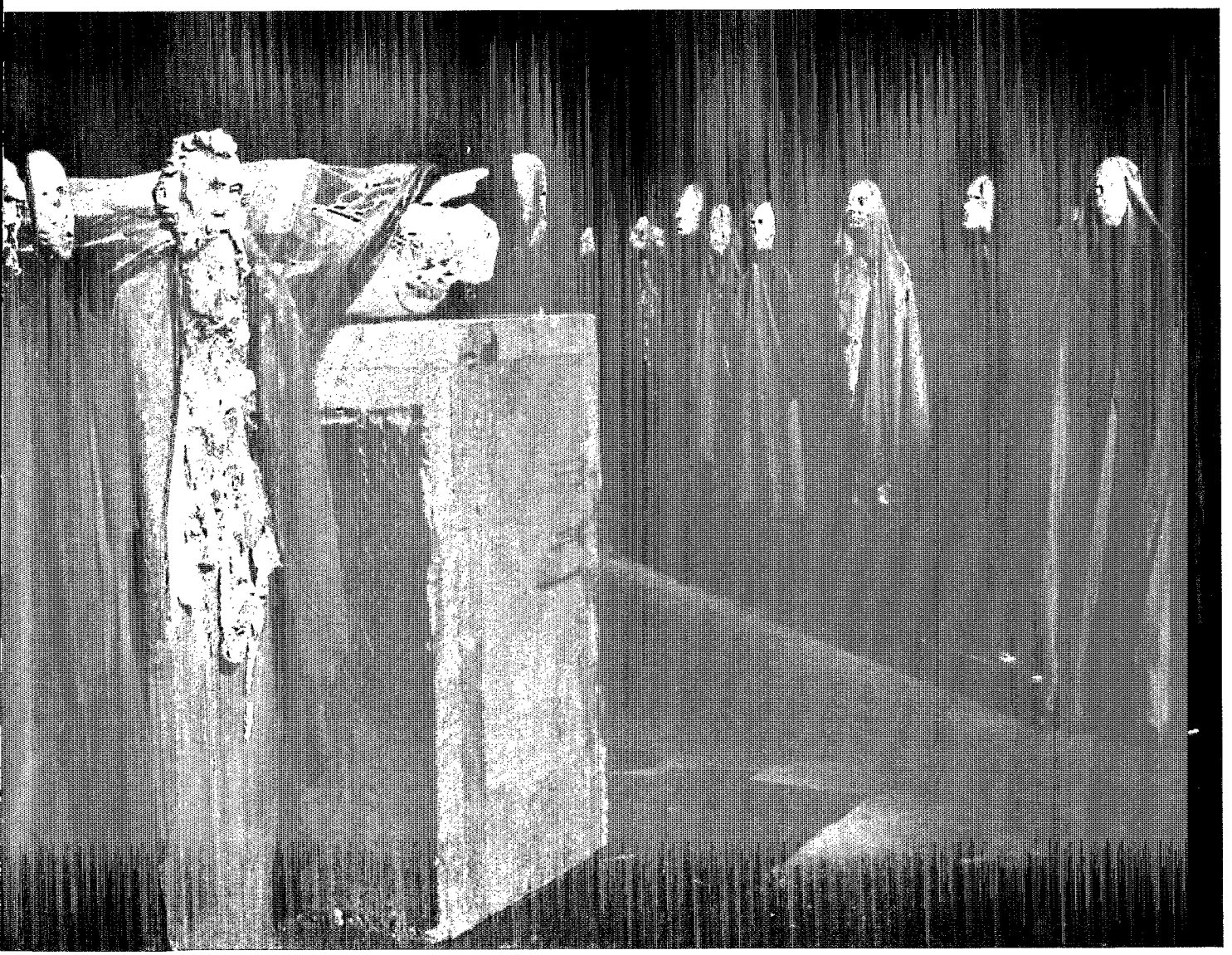
Cultural resource management can be said to operate on two levels: first through participation in social and physical planning and through co-operation with other authorities and with municipalities, and secondly through inputs of various kinds—protection, documentation, care and information—for the preservation of individual monuments and cultural environments of special value. Simultaneously with the government's proposal for a new act on the cultural heritage, a comprehensive programme for cultural resource management was presented. An important feature of this programme is its demand for a broad, integrated view. Cultural resource management cannot be limited merely to monuments and exceptionally valuable sites. It must also concern cultural values in general—including many groupings which bear the stamp of our own time—so that varied and rich everyday surroundings can be preserved and developed. The cultural heritage should be seen as a resource in building a future society. This new all-embracing view is reflected also in the replacement of the older 'preservation of cultural monuments' by the new broader concept of 'preservation of the cultural values in everyday surroundings'. Another essential element concerns the importance of cultural resource management in strengthening local identity and increasing the sense of local attachment both as an impetus to preserving the cultural environment and as an essential part in the moulding of a rich and vigorous social setting.

The role of museums

The pivotal role of museums in cultural resource management has become increasingly apparent. When, as has happened in Sweden in the past decade, the level of ambition is raised and, in addition to the protection of archaeological remains and a selection of outstandingly interesting buildings, greater consideration is demanded for cultural values in general, cultural resource management must above all concentrate on disseminating knowledge of the cultural heritage and on informing owners and users how they are to manage protected land and buildings without damage to cultural values. These are natural tasks for museums, with their wide span of historical

knowledge and their educational competence. The same goes for the work of bringing to life those monuments and historical environments that are popular tourist attractions. To these highly concrete tasks of cultural resource management, I would add another, more general mission related to cultural policy, namely the role of museums as a platform for public debate concerning the shaping of our common environment. There is a great deal of discussion in Sweden at present concerning ways of increasing citizens' influence on, for example, physical planning. Here again, museums can do a great deal to help by informing people how to make their influence felt, by mounting exhibitions that persuade people to accord careful treatment to buildings and the environment (Fig. 26), and by acting as platforms for public discussion between politicians and officials, on the one hand, and the general public, on the other, between planners and conservationists, between young and old, and so on.

In describing the integration of the administrative side of cultural resource management and the activities of the museums, I have referred chiefly to conditions at the regional level. This type of integration is still more apparent in municipalities with museums of their own—for example, in Stockholm, where the City Museum is consulted by the city authorities as an expert advisory body on matters of cultural resource management or urban conservation. It is at the central level, between the Central Board of National Antiquities and the national museums, that co-operation has made least headway. This situation has been recently examined, however, by a special study group appointed by the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs with a view to giving more clearly defined responsibilities for cultural resource management to the central museums. ■



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The *Air Attack* exhibit, organized in 1987 by the Central Board and Museum of National Antiquities to warn the public about the dangers for cultural property of air pollution.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN OLD MUSEUMS

Museum information and communication technologies: the Swedish approach

Hans Johansson

Born in Sweden in 1939. Degree in political science, history and economics. In the 1960s and early 1970s Head of local administration for cultural affairs in two different municipalities and Assistant Secretary of the Swedish Government's General Commission on Cultural Affairs in different positions; now one of two deputy directors.

Bo Nilsson

Born in Sweden in 1941. Degree in art history, ethnology, ethnography and archaeology. Worked with school programmes and later with archive questions at the Nordic Museum in the 1960s and early 1970s. From 1976 to 1983, was head of the photographic department at the City Museum of Stockholm. Since 1984 has been at the National Council for Cultural Affairs working with projects on ecology and new technologies in museums.

The use of modern information technology is relatively limited in Swedish museums. A small number, however, have been working on the development of computerized support systems for the registration of collections for more then ten years. Recently small-scale computerization has begun to be introduced in more and more museums. But their idea of, and attitude towards, the practical exploitation of information technology reflects a fragmented and very uncertain vision. There has been no deep ideological discussion about the role of museums in the new information society. There has been no debate on the effect increased availability of museum resources might have for the public in general, or on how museums might influence, for instance, those concerned with social planning, environmental matters or future studies.

So far, almost all efforts have been aimed primarily at rationalizing the 'housekeeping' of the museum professional. Yet even this will have long-term and indirect consequences by easing the way for more general public access to the information banks in museums. But are we not aiming too low? More ambitious objectives would mean that all museum source material—objects, photographs and other pictorial material, notes and records, reports, transactions about the heritage value of buildings and environments, etc.—might be made available for consultation by a broad general public. The collected material and knowledge of cultural and natural history museums is made up of the accumulated experiences of generations in many vital areas. Such material should be made accessible and be much better used by social planners, politicans, journalists, researchers, teachers, the environmental movement, local-history societies, etc. New archival media and information technology give scope for this kind of thinking; indeed they are a precondition for being able to fulfil this type of mission.

The need for co-ordinated development work

There is an overriding need for co-ordination in relation to the use of modern information technology in museum activities, partly in order to use the economic resources available in the best possible way, and partly as an experiment in achieving integrated information systems among museums. The Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs has overall co-ordinating responsibility in this area. As a result of its investigation on museums,[1] the Council launched a project in the autumn of 1987 on the development of museums as sources of information and knowledge, designed to mount a unified strategy for the handling of information in broad terms within the Swedish museum world.

At the moment we are drawing up guidelines for continued work. The development scheme, from the present situation to the stage of implementation, is complicated and a clear line of approach is needed in order to avoid fragmentation and achieve the co-operation we have sought together with a reasonable degree of unity.

Let us first compare the activities of other cultural institutions with those of museums. Theatres and orchestras offer

1. See the article by Gudrun Vahlquist on page 171.

the public adaptations and arrangements. Those involved in this work have selected, analysed, revised and presented the material, according to their own discretion and talents, to an audience that finds the material significant, interesting and entertaining. Libraries and archives offer their visitors raw material. Here it is the visitor who chooses, reads, interprets and uses according to his or her own discretion and ability. Staff, the collections themselves, and reference works are available along the visitor's way to the material.

Museums, however, have the unique potential for activity on both these levels: they can present material that is particularly interesting in processed form while at the same time, if they so wish and have the relevant resources, they can also provide the raw material.

It is here that the great developmental possibilities of museums lie. By means of exhibitions and displays, guided tours, lectures, catalogues, research reports, etc., the stimulus and interest can be provided which leads the visitor further into the raw material of the museum in the course of his or her own studies or research. Or, put another way, studies using museum material as a base awaken and broaden interest in the total sphere of activity of the museum, and give new impetus for exhibitions, publications, etc. We know this is so because it is already happening. But there is room for much more of this sort of action. Museum collections of objects and specimens, written and visual archives and literature provide a key to knowledge in various areas, in connection with many and varied phenomena. This sort of knowledge is needed in society. It is important to make it available and to stimulate and train people to seek, analyse and use it, and draw conclusions against the background of a historical perspective.

Work at three levels

Giving broad groups access to the raw material in museums implies its use at different levels.

Basic level

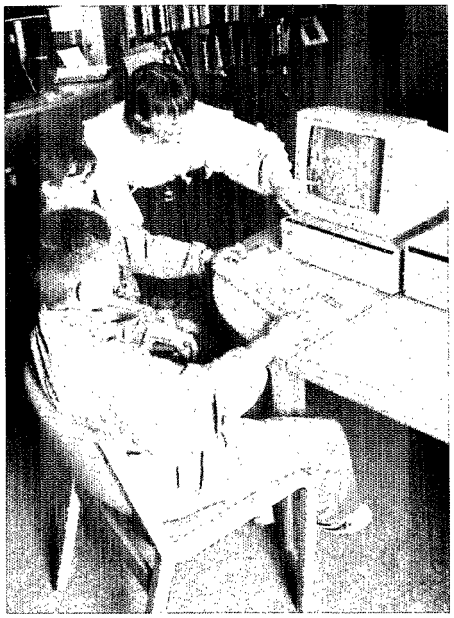
What a visitor at the basic level needs first and foremost is an overall survey of the museum's material and simple access to elementary information about this material. More in-depth studies, with a need for access to more of the material, for example, for detailed study of some part of the collections, requires contact with specialists within the museum. From the point of view of staffing and costs, the basic information must be organized so that people can successfully carry out much of the information search themselves, with only minimal help from the museum staff. The development of systems at this basic level makes particular demands on the use of visual media. Original material cannot, for various reasons, be used to more than a limited extent. Reproductions are needed: copies of photographs, microfilm of archive material, or perhaps the microfilming and/or computer-processed registration of traditional catalogues, handbooks, etc. The visual media and computer processing help with registration, and the search process could be described as a 'hybrid technical answer' that is, combining different techniques. Museums are visual institutions, and their collected material is therefore best communicated via visual storage media. This is the idea which underlies the development of the information centre at the City Museum in Stockholm (Fig. 27). A similar concept—the establishment of a point in the museum to which visitors can turn for an overview and basic introduction with the aid of modern information techniques —is also being applied in the Nordiska Museet in Stockholm and in some of the regional museums in the provinces.

Communicator level

Most visitors today experience museums as a result of what has been put together and communicated by an individual or a team. Usually it is the museum staff-members who are the communicators: it is they who create the exhibitions and displays, catalogues or folders, and it is they who give the lectures. But there are others who also have similar responsibilities: teachers, adult education leaders, and journalists. The role of communicator is integral to the internal activities of the museum, namely the collection, care and preservation of material. It is in part the same people who take on both internal functions and outward-oriented popularization roles. The information systems to be found in museums today have been built up to assist the staff in their activities of collecting, conserving and exhibiting objects to the public. It is this information level, directed towards museum staff, that we term the communicator level.

Research level

Museum material could furnish a basis



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By creating possibilities for far better retrieval of primary materials in museums, we wish to renew museum teaching. School pupils in the *Faktarummet* (Room of Facts) in the City Museum of Stockholm.

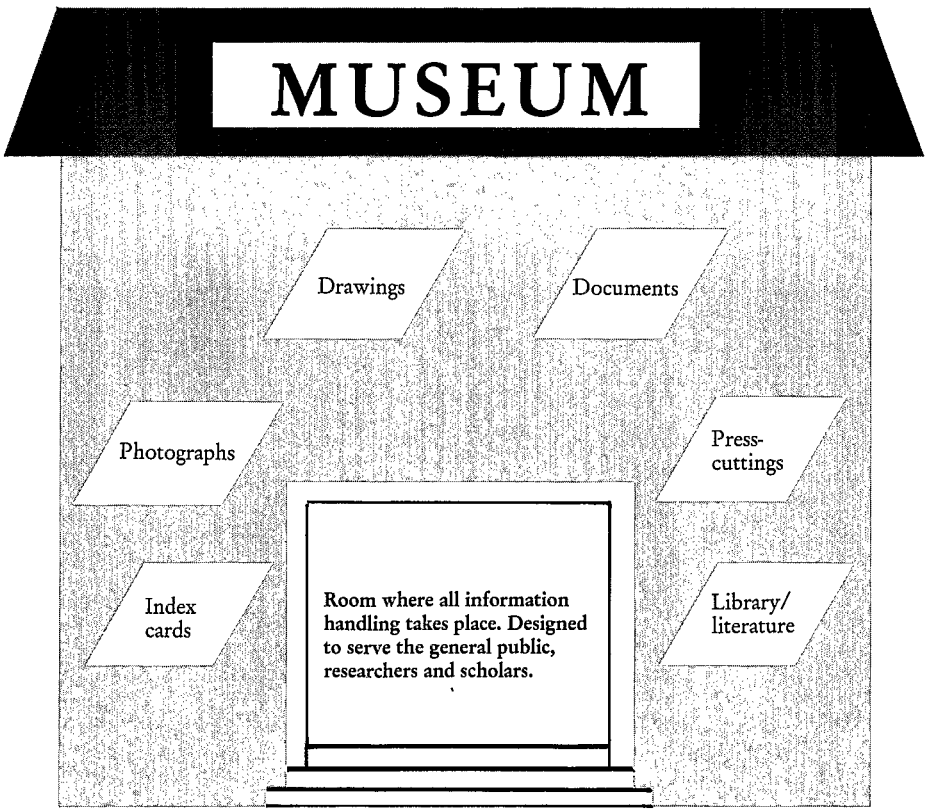
for research to a much greater degree than is the case today. This applies to research carried out in museums, as well as to university and college research projects. Many researchers should and would be able to make good use of the material if only its richness could be appreciated, if only they knew how to gain access to it, how to handle it, etc. Intensified exchange of information between museums and the research world is one of the subjects of our museum investigation, and one that will receive further attention from museums, with support from the Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs. It is self-evident that information technology is an excellent aid for many kinds of sorting and processing of material, for statistics, etc. It is nevertheless important to note that research has also qualitative requirements. Some of the information to be found in museum main registers, card catalogues and other data stores, has shortcomings which limit its research use. Development of information systems at the research level therefore has its own specific needs.

In sum, provision of information, with a broad concentration on open raw museum material, will be at three levels: *a basic level* for those who want general access to the material; a *communicator level* for those who are to select, analyse, work on and present material in, for example, display, lecture or manuscript form, but aimed also at those who collect, maintain and conserve the material; and a *research level.* There are no sharp divisions between these different levels. But by considering them, the range of different user categories and their needs becomes clear, which might ease further discussion aimed at finding common ground for the handling of information by museums. At all three levels there is a need for continued development.

We feel, however, that we are justified in giving priority to the basic level. By using new information technology, for example, in a centrally located information room (Fig. 28), museums gain a new form of communication. Around this can be developed a pattern of museum education whose aims will include the training of school pupils from different classes to carry out their own studies with primary material, to analyse historical material, and to present what they have put together in different ways.

Our experience with the needs of various users will presumably provide additional direction on how museum information-handling can further develop in technical terms at the remaining two levels use, registration methods, choice of nomenclature, etc.

There is increasing interest in this approach among Swedish museums. It is important now to clarify the goals and identify strategically significant milestones for continued work. The development stage will continue for a further two years and will include seminars, contributions to projects and expert assistance from consultants. ■



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A diagram of a museum with an integrated information system: a room where all information handling takes place, designed to serve the general public, researchers and scholars.

Collection management: the Danish case

Carsten U. Larsen

Born in 1952 in Denmark. Degree in prehistoric archaeology and computer science from the University of Copenhagen. Head of the Central Cultural Historical Archive and the documentation project of the National Museum of Denmark.

In 1986 the National Museum of Denmark was fortunate enough to receive a grant of approximately $40 million from a private foundation (Egmont Fonden) and the state to modernize the exhibition, documentation and storage facilities of the collection. Approximately $7 million was devoted to the modernization of the documentation system chiefly through the introduction of new technology. Not only will the grant be used for better internal documentation, but it will also, and mainly, serve to provide better public access to the museum's cultural heritage information. This article describes the automation of collection management at the National Museum of Denmark and concludes with a discussion of Danish legislation, which has made it possible to establish national, automated archives for all museums.

Automation and organization

Generally speaking, the training of computer programmers is oriented towards commercial business applications and they simply do not have the knowledge and insight to deal with the enormous task of automating a huge, 200-year-old museum collection. Similarly, most museum staff have little or no training in the difficult business of systems analysis for computer purposes. It was realized early on that the National Museum needed to employ computer specialists who at the same time were interested in cultural history. On the other hand, there was a need for curators with both experience in museological work and familiarity with computer hardware, software and systems analysis. Together with the scientific staff of the various museum departments, these people co-ordinate the planning, training, implementation and maintainance needed for the automation of the collections. A documentation unit was established in May 1987 and now employs about twenty people.

Training

It is essential to realize that automating a collection is not just a matter of technology. Indeed, it has more to do with scientific museological methods than with technology. Therefore, there has to be an ongoing dialogue between the documentation unit and those familiar with the problems of manual archives. Experience over the past year tells us that the importance of this is often underestimated. The ongoing training of keyboard operators is difficult and neverending. It is not the technical side that causes trouble; in a matter of a week most people have learned to master the keyboard. Rather, it is the interpretation of often very old texts and the conundrum of using the right box for the right information. It takes no time at all for two very experienced curators to disagree about this and the trouble is, of course, that perhaps both are right! Unless time is taken to discuss these matters, and they are treated as a dynamic process, the classical library situation will result: the catalogue tells us where the book should be, but someone has put the book in another place.

The system

The National Museum consists of some seven departments, each with its own collections and system of collection management. In the summer of 1985, the

planning of a common collection management system was started. The project was concluded in spring 1987, and the results display the following characteristics:

All departments will have their needs fulfilled through one system.

Decentralized organization of collection management will still prevail.

One part of the system is alphanumerical and will contain structured information and free text on traditional storage media.

Another part is visual and will contain pictures and film based on optical storage.

A local broadband area network.

UNIX and DOS will be the operating systems for the next five years and the relational data-base management system ORACLE will be the main software.

Alphanumerical registration

The information in the alphanumerical part of the system follows a superior classification which is founded on cultural-historical criteria. These are:

System identification: information which is automatically stored in the system.

Identification: fundamental information which makes the identification of an object possible.

Accession: the information which is added by the museum when the object is obtained.

Provenance: the information which accompanies the object when it is obtained by the museum.

Description: the information which can be observed from the object itself.

Determination: the information which can be deduced from the object or through the context of its discovery.

Administration: the information which is created through the administration of the object.

References: the information which tells where more information can be obtained.

Each main class will hold several data fields as well as free text.

Visual registration

Visual registration can be divided into three elements: photographs, storage and distribution. For security, quality and robustness, the pictures will be on 24 × 36 mm slides. The camera is connected to the alphanumerical data base and a photo number is automatically placed on the border of the slide. This ensures an unambiguous correlation between the alphanumerical system and the visual system. When storing the slides on videodisc, the number on the slides will make possible an automated access to the alphanumerical system. This again ensures the unambiguous correlation between the two systems but also allows for automatic transmission of information from the alphanumerical system to the

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Staff from the Ethnographic Department at the Danish National Museum have been trained in the use of computers. The data of the total ethnographic collection numbering nearly 100,000 museum items were computerized by the curators during the first half of 1988.

videodisc and vice versa. The distribution of pictures on videodisc within the museum will be via the broadband local area network. Not only will museum employees benefit from this; the public will be able to search the alphanumerical system and obtain a corresponding picture, and vice versa. The videodiscs themselves can of course be distributed by mail together with floppy discs containing programmes and additional information.

Status

For the alphanumerical part of the system, retrospective data-entry started in the autumn of 1987 in two departments: ethnography and history/ethnology. A year later approximately twenty persons were engaged in the data entry for some 350,000 objects. Implementation of the visual system has not yet started. The technical planning of this system is nearly finished and the aim is to photograph about 200,000 objects over the next five years. By the time this article is published it is our hope that we shall have taken some 10,000 photographs.

National legislation

Most countries have many museums: each one holds a collection, as well as information about the objects and information about how the objects came to the museum. All these museums need easy, manageable systems for handling this information. Some museums, including those in Denmark, go even further in seeking a system which could encompass not only the collection and its associated information, but also cultural heritage information not necessarily associated with objects, such as archaeological excavations and ethnological questionnaires. Each museum should have such a perfected system. The system should also be national and each museum should be willing to share its information with other museums.

In 1984 the Danish Museum Act stipulated that all museums were to be linked to two central, automated archives: one for cultural-historical museums (archaeology, ethnology, history, anthropology) and one for fine-art museums. The two archives are located in the two largest museums in Denmark: the National Museum (cultural-historical) and the National Gallery (fine art). The two archives are funded by the state, using museum-trained staff as well as computer scientists and benefit by annual appropriations for hardware and software.

Denmark was not the only country to dream of such. Canada already has one, the Canada Heritage Information Network (CHIN), and the United Kingdom has created the Museum Documentation Association. Many other countries are at the planning stage, including other Nordic nations. But it is noteworthy that only in Denmark (so far as I am aware) was such a system specified by law. The reason for this must be sought in the infrastructure of the museum world in Denmark. But this goes beyond the scope of the present article.

A challenge for co-operation

At present, the central, automated archive for all cultural-historical museums in Denmark is located at the National Museum, which has also been granted funds for a retrospective archiving of its collections using the new system.

All this might not have come about without the backing of the Danish Museums Council in the Ministry of Culture and Communication. A tremendous job has been done there to broaden understanding of the importance of common methods in documentation.

On an international scale we owe the ICOM International Committee for Documentation (CIDOC) a great deal. Cultural heritage documentation knows no borders and therefore Denmark is often represented at international gatherings where ideas are exchanged, new methods discussed and friendships made. Museum documentation is based on common internationally recognized museological methods. It is an obligation to learn and teach about them. ■

DREAMS COME TRUE

Return of cultural property by Denmark to Greenland: from dream to reality

Helge Schultz-Lorentzen

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During the past fifty years, Greenland has developed at a more rapid pace than perhaps any other country in the world. From being a Danish colony closed in on itself, with dispersed hunting and fishing communities, it has been transformed into a modern society mainly based on large-scale fishing and with the prospect of future revenues from mineral deposits. Denmark still renders substantial financial assistance, but since the introduction of home rule in 1979, Greenland has assumed full responsibility for the expenditure of these subsidies. Greenland (and the Faroe Islands) are still an integral part of Denmark, but the home government is taking charge of more and more administrative tasks. It was in this context that responsibility for the cultural sector was transferred to Greenland in 1981.

In the turmoil of rapid change, the Greenlanders did not realize the importance of preserving their cultural heritage and the historical records of their previous subsistence life-style, namely their hunting culture. We are therefore grateful today that for more than 100 years the National Museum of Denmark has been very active in Greenland, undertaking or supporting systematic investigations and expeditions to gather knowledge about the culture and history of our homeland. Over the years, a very rich treasure of cultural and historical material was taken to Denmark by the National Museum. This material, supplemented by purchases and donations from Greenlanders and Danish administrators, largely forms the basis of our present knowledge about the history of the Greenlanders, their cultural past and previous way of life.

Early visions

Over the years it was suggested from time to time that Greenland should have a museum of its own. The first time was in 1913, when the Council for South Greenland discussed a proposal from the Danish administration to prohibit the taking and exportation of objects from graves. This traffic had been so intense that many such relics are now in museums in Europe and the United States. The administration therefore recommended that all Eskimo and Norse finds should be given to the National Museum in Copenhagen. The council members refused to accept this recommendation, and suggested instead the establishment of a museum in Greenland, which was to have first claim to all Norse and Eskimo finds (see Fig. 30). The following year, the Council for South Greenland discussed a plan to convert the old Moravian Ny Herrnhut mission building, in Godthåb, into a museum. Although the Council was entirely favourable to this plan, it came to nothing at the time. Fifty years were to elapse before Ny Herrnhut opened as a museum (Fig. 31).

In 1916, the Danish Ministry of the Interior sent a circular to the Greenland authorities prohibiting the excavation of Eskimo and Norse graves without special permission, and directing the authorities to ensure that if artefacts from graves were taken out of Greenland, they went only by way of Copenhagen, where they were to be inspected by the National Museum. The museum would be authorized to select such artefacts that could complete its own collections. This cir-

cular concluded by stating that 'if a folklore collection were established in Greenland, the National Museum would be further required to set apart artefacts appropriate for such a collection'. This was perhaps the first pledge of goodwill towards the Greenland Museum idea.

Nevertheless, the government circular put the museum dream aside for another generation. The Greenlanders did not forget it, though, for in those years quite a few valuable objects were collected and preserved in Greenland.

New initiatives

It was not until 1956 that the next step was taken when four prominent citizens of Godthåb published an article in the Greenland newspaper *Atuagagliutit/ Grønlandsposten*, declaring that the time had come to found a museum. All peoples who develop and renew their culture have an obligation to preserve the memory of their ancestors' culture. We should not be an exception, they wrote. The article noted that the world's largest collection of Eskimo culture was placed in the National Museum of Denmark, whilst there was no collection in Greenland. It concluded with the hope that some of the many duplicates in the storerooms of the National Museum might be transferred to Greenland, should a local museum become a reality. The article was received with enthusiasm. A museum association was formed, and the collection of tools, implements, costumes and skin boats was intensified. The objects were stored in a humble abode, an outbuilding of the Ny Herrnhut mission building later to house Greenland's first museum, as had first been suggested in 1913.

It was only in 1966 that the mission building was handed over to the museum association, and it opened as a museum in August of that year. The following year it was approved as a state-subsidized provincial museum, and in 1972 it was specified in the Danish Museum Act that the Greenland Museum was to be a regional museum. The Greenland Museum was now an established fact, and the idea that had been cherished ever since the Council of South Greenland first brought it up in 1913 had come true. But would there be sufficient material to illustrate Greenland's past in a proper manner? Surely the most valuable material had been transferred to Denmark.

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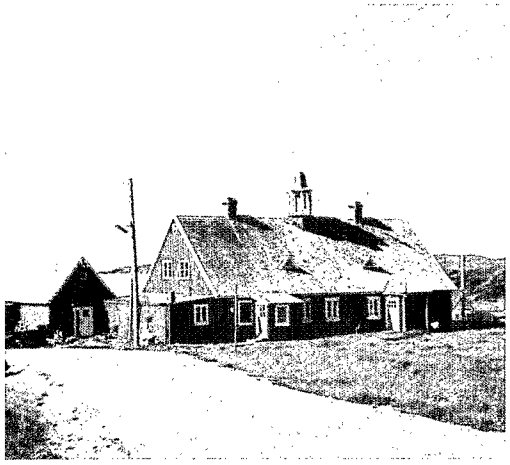
The first Council for South Greenland who, as early as 1913, came out in favour of creating a museum.



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The first Greenland Museum, housed in the building of the old Moravian mission at Nuuk/Godthåb.

The home government takes over cultural affairs

On 1 January 1981, cultural affairs were transferred to the home government, and Greenland's own legislation in this area came into force at the same time, particularly the Protection of Historical Sites and Buildings Act and the Greenland Museum Ordinance. This marked the end of Danish legislation for, and administration of, the cultural sector in Greenland. The new arrangement was to have important implications for the National Museum's role. Until then, the museum had been in charge of research into and popularization of culture and history for the whole Kingdom of Denmark, including Greenland. Now the Kalaallit Nunaata Katersugaasivia (Greenland Museum) took charge of these activities in Greenland. According to the Greenland Museum Ordinance, the Museum's goal was to be the preservation of the cultural heritage of Greenland. All kinds of old objects made or used by human beings were to be reported, and such objects would be the property of the home government. Thus the Greenland Museum had in effect become the national museum of Greenland.

Other museums emerge

Public interest in museums and in the past grew quickly. In the 1970s, several small local museums were founded either under public management or by museum associations. Today ten towns boast a museum (in addition to Nuuk/Godthåb), and more are on the way. These collections include mainly objects from the period after 1930; they do, however, also include some archaeological material. The objects have been acquired by collection, purchase or donation, and the material, together with other sources, can to some extent illustrate traditional hunting culture, including some local variants. Up to 1981, the Greenland Museum carried out systematic field investigations jointly with the National Museum. Now it continues the work alone. Archaeological and ethnological material has thus been acquired for research and exhibition. It is, however, neither extensive enough nor sufficiently representative to satisfy the requirements of a national museum.

The Greenland collections in Denmark

The idea of transferring parts of the Greenland collections from the National Museum to museums in Greenland is not new. As early as 1961, when the plans for the Greenland Museum were just being formulated, the National Museum agreed to contribute to the collections of the projected museum. The promise was later repeated, and when the Danish Minister of Cultural Affairs visited Nuuk/Godthåb in 1976, he undertook to support the transfer of museum objects to Greenland. When the Greenland Council that same year discussed the introduction of self-government, one of the members also raised the question of the return of cultural property from Denmark to Greenland. This was the first time the question became a political issue in Greenland. No claim was made, but it was suggested that Denmark take note of this wish. The National Museum in response sent a letter to the Ministry of Cultural Affairs expressing the view that when home rule was introduced, Greenland cultural property was to be considered as the possession of the people of Greenland. The Museum therefore considered it natural and fair that a major part of the collections be transferred to Greenland. A prerequisite for this move was sufficient development of the museum system in Greenland (i.e. the Greenland Museum) so that museum objects could he held without risk of damage to the transferred collections. A further precondition was that both parties assess the extent and contents of the collection in order to make an impartial estimation of what could be transferred. This would require a meticulous examination of the material and also the re-registration of all ethnographic artefacts and archaeological finds from Greenland. It would also be necessary for the National Museum to conserve a large number of the objects. In the meantime, the Greenland Museum moved into new, larger buildings with modern exhibition rooms, storerooms, archive and conservation facilities. Scientific staff were employed, and, not least, the Museum was now operating on a sound financial basis.

The return of an art treasure paves the way for other transfers

In 1982, Greenland commemorated the 1,000th anniversary of Eric the Red's

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The present buildings of the Greenland Museum.

settlement in the fjords of south Greenland. The National Museum, wanting to highlight the fact that the home government had taken over the museum sector the previous year, and that the museum building in Godthåb had been renovated, and, not least, wishing to emphasize the National Museum's readiness to return cultural property to the country of origin, decided to hand over 'the Aron Collection' to Greenland. Queen Margrethe II of Denmark went to Greenland escorted by the Danish Minister of Cultural Affairs and the Director of the National Museum to hand over officially the collection, made up of 204 water-colours. The event attracted considerable interest not only in Greenland and Denmark, but also internationally. The water-colours were painted in the years 1858–68 by Aron of Kangek, a seal hunter who became a famous artist. This first transfer of cultural property was meant to be the forerunner of several other major transfers which the National Museum and its department of ethnography had repeatedly recommended, and which they hoped would materialize. The festivities in Nuuk/Godthåb provided the occasion for a series of meetings with Greenland politicians and officials. One of the results was a firm promise from the Minister of Cultural Affairs to renew his attempts to secure financial backing and political support to establish formal relations between the two museums with a view to effecting further transfers of cultural property to Greenland.

Formal collaboration

During the following year an agreement was drawn up, and the necessary operational funding was provided. The document was signed in October 1983, by Claus Andreasen, curator of the Greenland Museum, and Olaf Olsen, director of the National Museum. The Ministry of Cultural Affairs and the home government had already endorsed the agreement and the terms of reference of a future commission. The agreement took effect on 1 January 1984. The main objectives were the creation of a museum commission supported by a secretariat. The latter was for practical reasons placed at the National Museum adjacent to the Department of Ethnography. The staff would consist of two members employed by the National Museum, and one member employed by the Greenland Museum. The overhead costs were to be shared by the two institutions.

The Museum Commission

The Denmark-Greenland Museum Commission was set up, composed of three National Museum officials appointed by the Minister of Cultural Affairs, and three appointed by the home government member in charge of culture. They are all museum professionals and well versed in Greenland's cultural history.

The Commission elected the curator of the Greenland Museum, Claus Andreasen, as chairman. Biennial meetings are held, of which two have taken place in Greenland, and the others in Copenhagen. It was originally stipulated that the agreement should be revised on 1 January 1987 at the latest. The Commission recommended, however, that the agreement be extended without alteration. This was accepted by the Danish Ministry of Cultural Affairs and the Greenland home government, which did not find it necessary to set a new expiry date. Thus co-operation continues in its present form until further notice.

The Commission's Secretariat was set up as an independent unit in the National Museum, but it is closely connected with the Department of Ethnography. The Secretariat performs the following tasks defined by the Commission:

Preparing the ground for the transfer of objects from the National Museum to the Greenland Museum. The re-registration of all artefacts from Greenland in the Department of Ethnography is part of this work.

Ensuring that archaeological, ethnographical and ethnological material, as well as the pertinent data, can be transferred.

Establishing a Preservation Archive at the Greenland Museum, including buildings and fixed ancient monuments, thus enabling the Museum to administer the Preservation Act for Greenland.

Preparing Commission meetings and implementing its decisions.

Co-ordinating contacts between the Greenland Museum and Danish cultural institutions.

Organizing further training of the Greenland Museum staff.

The registration of objects and the first transfer

The first and most important task of the Secretariat is the re-registration of the Ethnography Department's collections from Greenland, some 15,000 ethnographical and 100,000 archaeological objects. At its first meeting, the Commission decided to start with the return of ethnographic objects from East Greenland collected before 1900, in particular objects from the famous Gustav Holm Umiak Expedition of 1883–85 (Fig. 33). Some representative archaeological finds from East Greenland were also to be included. The Department of

Ethnography possessed more than 2,500 ethnographic objects from East Greenland, which are more broadly representative of the original Greenland culture than the collections from West and North Greenland. The Commission found it natural to begin with this material, all the more so because it conformed with the Greenlanders' wishes. The East Greenland Project was a 'test run', though by no means an insignificant effort. The archaeological material from East Greenland is very extensive. In the years 1891–1908, Danish expeditions excavated and collected a considerable number of specimens. From 1931 to 1950, Danish archaeologists made systematic excavations of settlements in and north of Ampmassalik, adding more than 10,000 specimens to the National Museum's collections. The re-registration is based on the entries in the inventories. The objects are measured and recorded on new registration sheets. They are photographed and, if necessary, restored. The archives are searched for further information. The aim is to systematize the cataloguing in order to computerize the registration work.

Renovation of the National Museum

The National Museum is facing major construction work, which will involve the removal of the Ethnography Department's collections. This implies the re-registration of all artefacts in addition to those from Greenland. Prior to packing them away, information about each piece is entered into a data bank, and to this end a computer registration system has been developed which is also applicable to the collections in the other departments of the Museum. The Greenland Secretariat also works with this system, thereby contributing to the overall project.

When the registration of the collections from eastern Greenland was completed, the Denmark-Greenland Museum Commission stepped in to select the objects and archaeological finds to be recommended for transfer to Greenland. It was important to bring about complete agreement on the major criteria for the selection, based on fairness and scholarly integrity.

The principles sought to ensure that:

Both Greenland and Denmark would hold a representative museum collection of objects from Greenland.

Both collections would contain ample material suitable for popularization, research, study and teaching.

Collections or groups of objects naturally belonging together would remain together. In cases where this was impracticable, loans or permanent loans were to be negotiated between the two museums.

Should the Greenlanders wish the return of special finds or objects of importance for their cultural identity, such wishes would be respected.

The historical interests of Danish museums would be similarly respected.

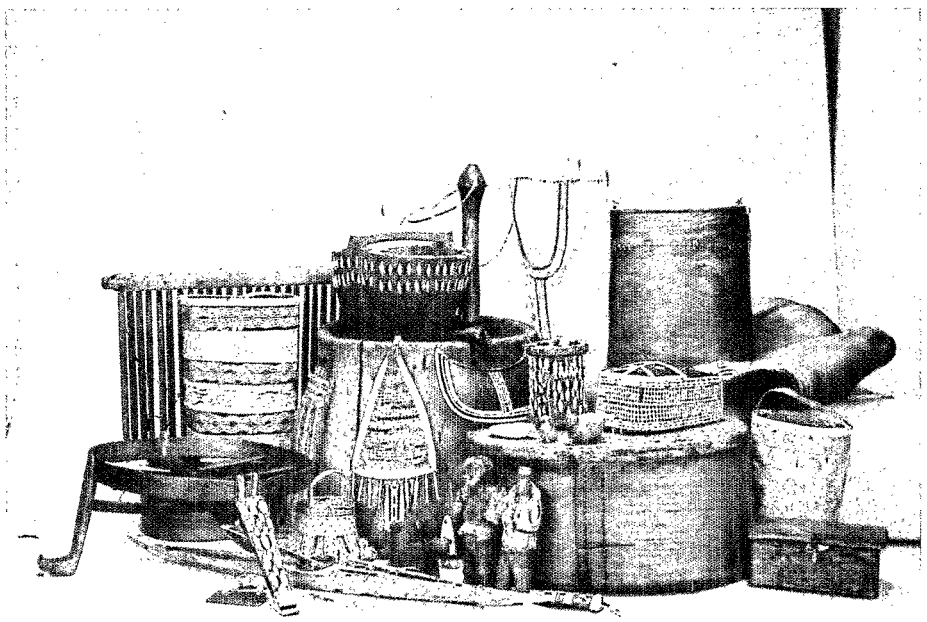
The Denmark-Greenland Museum Commission's recommendations for transfer were then submitted to the Minister of Cultural Affairs for approval.

The following passage is quoted from the Commission's first recommendation to the Minister:

> Most of the ethnographic material recommended for transfer pertains to the traditional hunting culture of the Ammassalik people, i.e. material from the years between 1883 and about 1900. The 748 museum numbers constitute a whole and almost complete exhibition on Eskimo society prior to European influence. The objects are chosen from material emanating from six collections, of which 995 museum numbers remain at the National Museum.

Five representative archaeological finds from different excavations were also recommended for transfer to Greenland. The Commission's recommendation for transfer of objects and archaeological finds was unanimous, and on 26 July 1985, the Minister of Cultural Affairs gave his approval.

Before being returned to Greenland, the objects were exhibited in Denmark. The exhibition, *The East Greenlanders and their History*, opened at the National Museum on 3 October 1985, the 100th anniversary of the Gustav Holm Umiak Expedition's return to Denmark with most of the material that was now going back. The exhibition, which was subsequently shown at Aarhus, attracted 30,000 visitors. After their farewell appearance in Denmark, the objects were packed and shipped to the Greenland



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Several items from the Gustav Holm Umiak collection, which the National Museum of Denmark returned to Greenland in 1986.

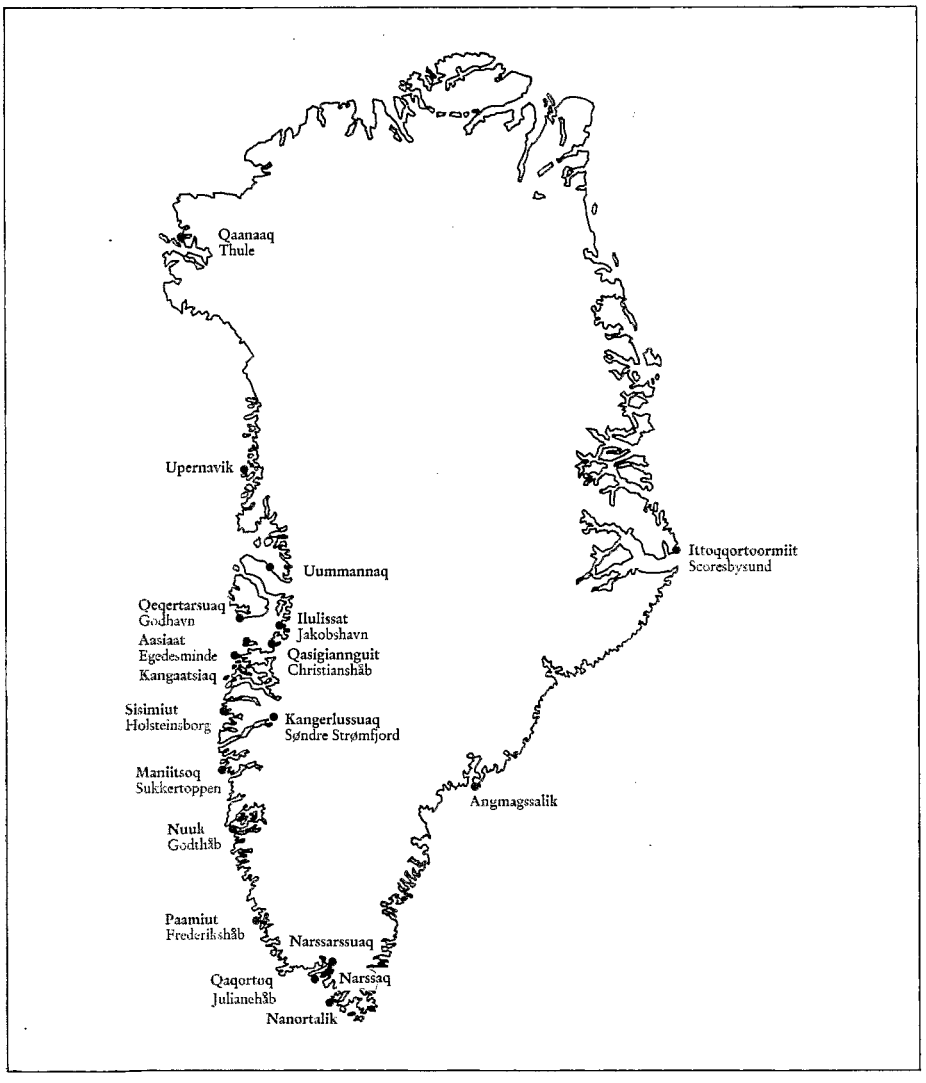
Museum in Nuuk/Godthåb. Despite the fact that the exhibition received extensive press coverage, there was no criticism of the decision to return the valuable collection of cultural and historical objects, which the Danish National Museum had acquired perfectly legally at a time when the Greenlanders were unable to look after them. Indeed, only favourable reactions were heard or printed concerning the way in which the matter had been handled. In October 1986, a superb exhibition opened in the Greenland Museum, presenting the new acquisitions which were officially handed over to Greenland on that occasion; *Tunuaamiut (The East Greenlanders)* was very popular and many Nuuk people as well as Greenlanders from other regions came to see it.

New projects

The next batch of objects is now being prepared for shipment back to Greenland: 300 ethnographic objects from the polar Eskimos and some 3,500 archaeological finds excavated at different sites in Thule District. The transfer will take place in the spring of 1989. The Greenland Museum plans to present the new material in a special exhibition that will also mark the tenth anniversary of home rule and the fifth anniversary of the Museum Co-operation Agreement. Still more transfers are being prepared. The Secretariat is currently planning the return of various means of transport: kayaks, *umiaks* and sledges. This project, however, is more remote, as the Greenland Museum is not likely to be able to store the objects safely until a planned extension of the buildings has been effected.

Is the Denmark-Greenland model applicable elsewhere?

The Co-operation Agreement and the results achieved so far have attracted the attention of the museum world. Unesco and ICOM have followed the developments with keen interest. Staff members of the National Museum and the Greenland Museum have been asked several times to give talks about the Museum Agreement at international museum meetings and conferences. What has caused most interest is that it has been possible to find a basis of co-operation founded on mutual respect and resulting in the return of important cultural and historical material from Denmark to Greenland, without emotional discussions and without claims having been raised. Problems have been solved by two equal partners in a friendly atmosphere and on the basis of objective criteria. With appropriate modifications, the model outlined above might be applicable to certain minority groups and to other countries that feel the need to organize a museum service of their own but that have to face the fact that their indigenous cultural treasures are to be found only in the custody of their former overlords. ■



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Map of Greenland showing the principal towns.

A professional exchange programme: Sweden-Africa

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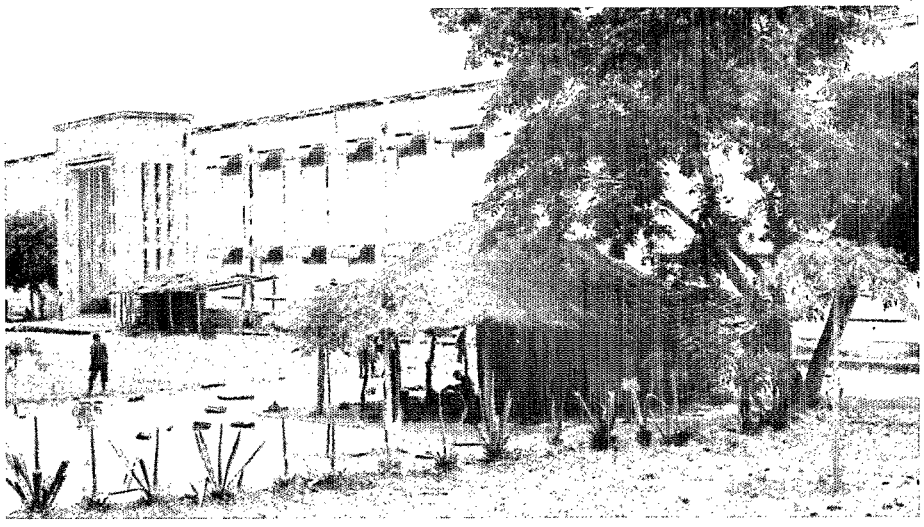
The Swedish National ICOM Committee (International Council of Museums) broached the idea of a 'friendship museum' exchange between African and Swedish museums in 1984. The aim was to find a new way to exchange knowledge. Over a period of years the Swedish-African museum programme has been slowly taking shape, with its content ever more clearly defined. The fundamental idea reflects the objectives of ICOM, as set out in Article 7 of the ICOM statutes: 'to organize co-operation and mutual assistance between museums and between the members of the museum profession in different countries'.

It further seeks 'to define, support and aid museums and the museum institution; to establish, support and reinforce the museum profession [and] to emphasize the importance of the role played by museums and the museum profession within each community and in the promotion of a greater knowledge and understanding among peoples'.

Inspired by these objectives, the idea of a 'friendship museum' exchange found a natural place in the activities of the Swedish National ICOM Committee. The programme enables participants practically and actively to collaborate internationally, and has brought a new international dimension into the Swedish museum world. The exchange programme seeks to develop both individual competence and the work of museums as a whole. It also seeks to induce a process of development, of change, in the concept of the museum and a discussion of the role played by museums and by culture in the life of the individual and of society at large. It is in this context that we addressed ourselves to our institutional members. We sought out active colleagues involved in continuous and long-term programmes, rather than in limited, short-term projects where the contact would come to an end as soon as the work was over. A short-term project might be an element in the on-going exchange, but it must not become an end in itself.

The role of Swedish museums

At the beginning of 1984 a major exhibition entitled *Meeting-Place Africa* opened at the House of Culture in Stockholm. It was actually made up of a large number of smaller exhibitions with such titles as *Pictures for Freedom, Women Against Apartheid, African Textiles* and *Architecture in Africa.* By putting on several parallel exhibitions the organizers wanted to give the visitor an impression of the breadth and depth of African cultural life. We in Sweden have long had a somewhat simplistic picture of the African continent, a view that was belittling and undifferentiated. *Meeting-Place Africa* was a major effort which, besides exhibitions, also included films, lectures and discussions, enabling the visitor to gain an understanding of the overall picture. The event aroused considerable interest in Africa on the part of Swedish museums. In its wake, many museums throughout Sweden have mounted exhibitions on African themes. This interest extended to a sizeable number of countries and to several subjects, such as water, drought, soil erosion, crafts, art, liberation movements, and so one. Many of these exhibitions are small travelling shows produced by Riksutställningar, the Swedish organization responsible for this kind of exhibit. In association with the *Meeting-Place Africa* exhibition the



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The Museum at Nampula, Mozambique. Sculptors from a collective farm are working on their Makonde sculptures in the museum garden, November 1987.

Swedish ICOM Committee arranged a programme entitled *Museums in Africa.* The situation of African museums was presented by Alpha Oumar Konaré, a well-known museum specialist from Mali. In retrospect, we can see that the occasion marked the birth of the Swedish-African museum programme.

The Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA)

SIDA, the Swedish assistance agency, has a broad programme in about ten African countries. The lines on which it operates have changed in many ways during recent years, as a natural consequence of continuous evaluation. In fact, increasing attention has come to be focused on cultural matters. Today, technical assistance is often linked to an integrated cultural and socio-economic programme, since an understanding of the cultural context of the country in question is necessary to the proper adaptation of potential projects. Our definitions of what is 'suitable' or 'feasible' or 'good' must be assimilated and fitted into the context of the recipient country. In the new cultural climate and in line with this new attitude towards culture, SIDA has a growing need for museum workers. Hitherto, cultural action was primarily a matter for social anthropologists; but there is now a growing demand for museologists and people with practical experience in museum work to take part. SIDA has implemented cultural schemes, some small, some large, in Botswana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, the United Republic of Tanzania and other countries.

Museums in the community

There is a lively discussion going on in Sweden today on the theme of culture as a developmental factor and as a moving force in the general development of society. What function, then, is culture serving, and what function could it serve in crisis situations such as big-city rootlessness and the decline of the countryside undergoing depopulation? Such questions are just as relevant in Africa as in Sweden, and between us we can come up with some new answers. But far too little attention is being paid in this context to today's museums and the museums themselves seem to be unaware of what is going on. Museums should play their part in showing both contemporary life and possible futures in a realistic way. We must open our minds to reality and make use of intuition, creativity and imagination in our work. We are living today with an altered perception of reality in which science no longer gives us all the answers. Sheer diversity and the implications of the notion of relativity are undermining confidence. Reality seems increasingly abstract; and the concrete and sensory understanding of the world is being lost.

In this situation, museums can open the way to a better understanding of complex contexts. We can achieve this by using exhibits and collections based on scientific analyses and interpretations that are put across by means of lively instruction. The visitor should be offered an experience that moves him or her towards knowledge and understanding. We museum workers can be rigid in what we think and do, but a network of international contacts could furnish us with inspiration and alert us to openings. When we look at our own culture through the eyes of others we see it more clearly. Peering in from the outside can give undreamed-of insights and ideas.

To share is to expand

All exchanges provide us with fresh and unforeseen experiences. By working, both in Africa and in Sweden, on every imaginable task whatever the size, scope, time and cost, we shall be in a position to achieve enriching results. Every kind of museum work has both a practical and a theoretical dimension. It may be that we do not always pay sufficient attention to the theoretical framework in which everything has its place. Becoming conscious of this is important to the achievement of truly sound work. Exchanges of any kind will have a bearing on the current form and organization of the museum and can trigger changes and bring deficiencies to our notice. Moreover, other forms and kinds of organization can pave the way to entirely new and hitherto unimagined structures in all aspects of museum work. This work can be summed up in terms of its functions, such as collection and documentation, registration and conservation, teaching, exhibition and research, training, and developing the museum concept itself. Inherent in all these functions is endless scope for sharing knowledge, experience and ideas.

The professional exchange programme: for whom?

The Swedish-African museum programme was conceived as a mutual museum development project, not as a

development project between a museum in Sweden and a museum in some African country. We wish to address ourselves to all the countries of Africa in our search for museums that would be interested in linking up with a Swedish 'friendship museum'. We have chosen to focus our attention on a single continent because we believe that this limitation is necessary if we are to achieve any concrete results. In Sweden, our contacts have been with museums that are institutional members of ICOM. Active links with a number of African countries figure as a natural element in the work of the ethnographic museums. Nevertheless, the two Swedish ethnographic museums could well associate themselves with a 'friendship' exchange, even if the programme is not primarily addressed to them. We regard the ethnographic museums as important and valuable partners, possessing a wealth of experience and knowledge by which the 'friendship museum' programme could be supported and enriched. In the initial phase we should first like to involve the Swedish regional museums, since they have a wide-ranging field of activity and constitute a natural base for a broad programme of museum development. But other museums interested in playing an active role are also welcome to participate. A lasting exchange can only be guaranteed once the programme has taken firm root with the governing board of the individual museum and with its staff. Unless the staff are committed to the idea, no exchange will materialize. We are convinced that committed museums and committed museum staff are to be found among ICOM members.

How to join

The programme was initiated and is being run by the Swedish National ICOM Committee. Written inquiries and proposals for collaboration can be addressed to the Committee, whose board deals

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A cultural get-together in the collective village of Muatala, Mozambique, May 1979.

with all incoming inquiries at its regular meetings held six to eight times a year. Each inquiry is studied, and a suitable Swedish museum is contacted to ascertain whether it would be interested in an exchange. When a museum has returned a positive reply, all the relevant information is turned over to it. Detailed arrangements are then worked out between the two 'friendship museums'. The board of the National ICOM Committee sees to the introductions and the co-ordination, and ensures that work gets started. Once two museums have committed themselves to an exchange, the slow business of getting to know one another begins. Participation does not mean obtaining access to a budget. The idea underlying the development programme is that the museums concerned will wish to incorporate the exchange into their normal activities. In those cases where the parties arrive at a major project and are faced with specific issues requiring both financial and informational assistance the National ICOM Committee may undertake to pass on hints as to mode of operation, application procedure and so on.

What has happened since 1984?

Has anything really happened since 1984, or is the Swedish-African museum programme just words? It is important to remember that development work of any kind takes time. Anyone venturing into the programme should be aware of this. In view of the geographical and cultural distances involved, time itself is an active, creative factor. Progress may be slow, but it can be made. The Swedish National ICOM Committee does not offer a cut-and-dried programme; the idea is that the new friends should work one out as they go along. It is in our interaction that we define what we are after. The exchange idea was launched in 1984 with a letter of introduction and an inquiry as to interest sent to the African co-operation body, the Organization for Museums, Monuments and Sites of Africa (OMMSA) and to national ICOM committees in Africa. The responses have been coming in slowly over the years and the Swedish Committee has seized all opportunities to make contact with African museum workers and to talk to them about the programme.

The replies elicited by the letter have been varied. One respondent wanted an address from which to get further information, another sought help in setting up a reference library in his museum. One writer gave an account of his museum, enabling the National ICOM Committee to suggest a Swedish 'friendship museum'. Still other inquiries have matured into projects which, by reason of their content and scope, have been passed on to SIDA, the Swedish International Development Authority.

One project on which SIDA is currently working is the National Museum in Gaborone, Botswana. The Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm is conducting field work and collection efforts together with staff of the Botswana National Museum. The collection work is being reinforced by training in registration and documentation. At the same time, two Swedish museum workers are devoting two years to exhibitions and technical tasks in Gaborone. The project also involves a step-by-step enlargement of the museum building. The friendship museum programme can form part of such complex museum projects, and, thanks to the continuity and permanence of the exchange, provide a follow-up to contacts and efforts already made.

So far, we have been in contact with the following African countries: Botswana, Gambia, Ghana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zaire, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Museums in various categories—ethnography, cultural history, natural history and art—have written to us. As a result, eight Swedish museums, representing all four categories, have entered into an exchange.

Signposts to the future

At the time of writing, the Swedish National ICOM Committee is planning a seminar to be held in Sweden in order to bring these initial contacts to life, to create new channels of communication and to concretize the exchange. In point of fact the event will include three meetings. The friends are being invited to attend a working seminar, lasting just under a week and concerned with the pedagogical tasks of the museums. The participants will join forces in concrete and practical work on exhibition and related tasks. This seminar will be followed directly by an ideas-and-inspiration seminar lasting two or three days, the theme of which will be 'Museums and Culture in Africa and in Sweden.'

To round the gathering off each of the African 'friends' will visit his or her Swedish friendship museum, thus providing an opportunity to bring the local public as well as their own personnel into the international linkage. Internal and external activities, such as exhibitions, informational meetings and lectures, are being planned. By working in this broadly based way we hope that the meeting will bring about many results beneficial to the development of the programme. The Swedish-African museum programme does have a future. We foresee a time in which there will be joint working meetings in Africa and in Sweden both bigger, and broader in scope. It would be appropriate to hold them alternately in an African country and in Sweden. Working along such lines will promote the permanence of the connection. The friendship programme can provide new and viable insights to museum employees, museums and society at large. In Sweden, we see this as an opportunity to develop further our own museums, hand in hand with countries where museums face other levels and/or kinds of problems than we do. ■

NEW INITIATIVES AND NEW IDEAS

Museums across frontiers—the Nordkalottmuseet

Aimo Kehusmaa

M.A. in 1972. Director of the Pohjois-Pohjanmaan Museo (Northern Ostrobothnia Museum) at Oulu, Finland, since 1973. Has participated in Nordkalottmuseet activites since 1975.

Nordkalottmuseet (the Arctic Museum of the Nordic Countries) is a co-operative organization of museums in the northernmost counties of three Nordic countries, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Its aim is to promote cultural co-operation and communication in the Arctic areas of these countries, and touring exhibitions are the central element of this activity.

Collaboration began between three museums more than twenty years ago: Tromsø Museum (Tromsø, Norway), Norrbottens Museum (Luleå, Sweden) and Pohjois-Pohjanmaan Museo (Oulu, Finland). The Cultural Fund of the Nordic Countries financed an experimental period of several years during which, for example, the three museums jointly mounted and sent on tour an exhibition on the wolf. After this preliminary experiment in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the three museums renewed their collaboration in 1975 by making efforts to extend and systematize the Nordkalottmuseet. In the following years, other museums joined the group. An entity with an officially approved charter was formed, and the financial basis of this organization was secured by a subsidy from the Nordic Council of Ministers.

How are we organized?

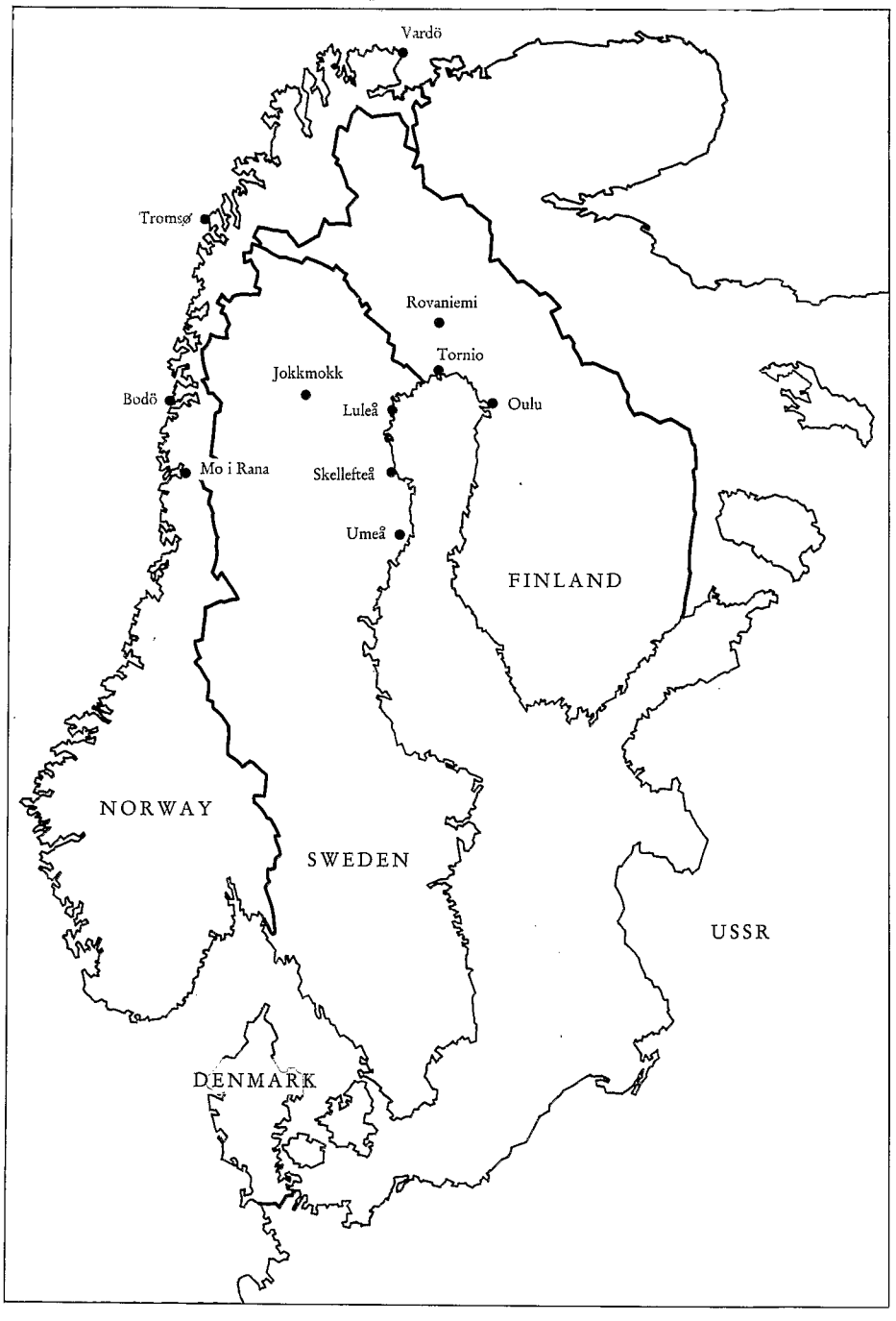
The organization now consists of ten museums[1] and a local co-operative (see Fig. 37). According to the statutes, member bodies have to be museums with a staff of at least two officials with a university degree. In fact, most of our members are museums with regional mandates (provincial museums). The subsidy granted by the Nordic Council of Ministers has in recent years been about 200,000 Swedish kronor (about $35,000). The decision-making body of the Nordkalottmuseet is the annual general meeting at which we discuss the budget, negotiate plans for future projects and exchange experiences obtained in field work.

The basic aim

The driving concept of Nordkalottmuseet is the preparation of touring exhibitions suitable for the vast, sparsely populated northernmost areas of these Nordic countries, regions where as a rule there are no museums. Thus our exhibitions cannot be designed for museums or galleries; they have to be suitable for mounting in various kinds of public centres. Our exhibitions have been set up in schools, village libraries, local town halls, even municipal health centres. The exhibitions must be fairly easy to transport and assemble so that those who receive them are able to manage without any previous experience of museum work. Exhibition venues available in the countryside, as well as the limitations imposed by transportation facilities, determine the size of the exhibitions.

At our annual meetings, member museums suggest new subjects for exhibitions. The meeting chooses those which will be mounted and makes the necessary budget allocation. Common funds are expressly used for the production of touring exhibitions; research work and collecting of material are mainly carried out with the resources of each individual museum.

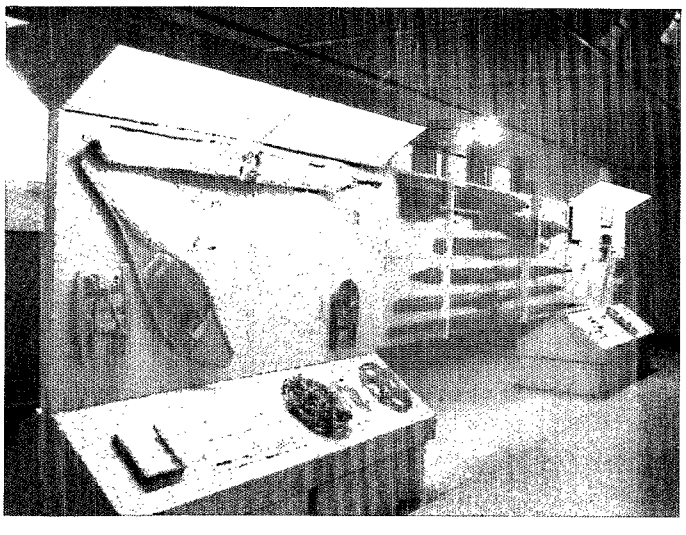
1. Finland: Pohjois-Pohjanmaan Museo (Oulu); Tornionlaakson Maakuntamuseo (Tornio); Lapin Maakuntamuseo (Rovaniemi); Sweden: Västerbottens Museum (Umeå); Skellefteå Museum; Norrbotten Museum (Luleå); Ajtte Samemuseum (Jokkmokk); Norway: Rana Museum (Mo i Rana); Nordland Fylkesmuseum (Bodö); Tromsø Museum; the co-operative Finmark Museumslag (Vardö and other localities).

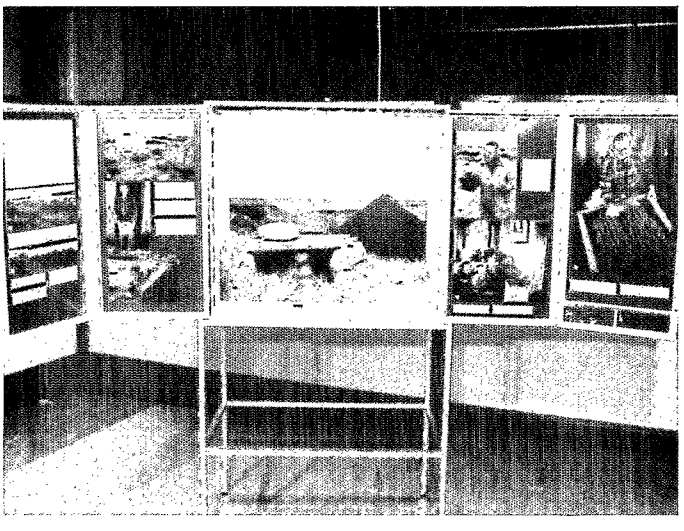


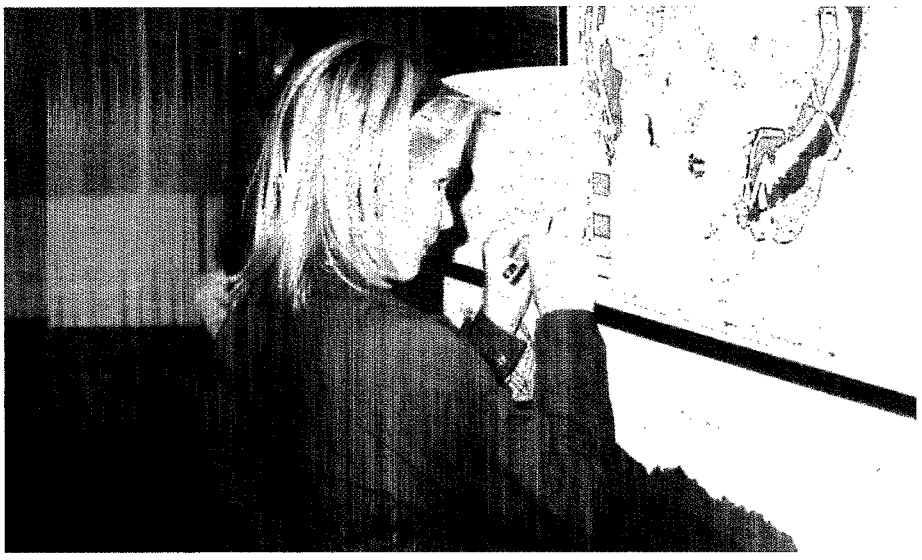
37
Map of the Nordkalottmuseet group.

38
In the course of years many ways of constructing touring exhibitions have been tried. As an example, in the Västerbottens Museum's ski exhibition several separate panels form a solid wall.

39
Many museums have mounted their exhibits in folding cases sold by the Swedish exhibition organization Riksutstallningar. This is a cabinet from the *Sea Birds* exhibition at the Tromsø Museum.







40
Schoolchildren are the most important audience of our exhibitions. There are always tasks and exercises as well as instructions for teachers on how to take advantage of the exhibition in their teaching.

Exhibition themes

Our aim when choosing the themes for exhibitions is that they be of relevance and interest in the geographical area concerned. In addition to themes common to and familiar throughout northern Fennoscandia, more limited subjects intended to promote understanding between neighbouring countries have been selected. During the past twelve years, sixteen exhibitions have been produced, fourteen of which are circulating at the moment, while two have been taken out of circulation after having been shown in all three countries. As well as traditional handicrafts, the exhibitions present other phenomena connected with rural and nomadic livelihoods, such as skiing and skis (Fig. 38), human transport of heavy loads, tar-burning, and sea birds and how to catch them (Fig. 39). Trans-border contacts have always been of great importance here so that it was quite natural to present legal border trade—and smuggling. Although art exhibitions do not actually fall within the mandate of Nordkalottmuseet, a couple of graphics exhibitions have been included because of their Arctic themes and artists. The Second World War left its traces on our area, too, and there are two exhibitions depicting those times; one of them describes evacuating the population from battle areas to a neighbouring country, while the other is about prisoners of war.

Our exhibitions: what is unique

What distinguishes a Nordkalott exhibition from an ordinary touring exhibition is the fact that the show is subtitled in three or four languages. Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish and Lapp. Naturally, all auxiliary material—slides or video tapes, exercises for schoolchildren (Fig. 40), and the like—must be translated into these languages. Additionally, an exceptional durability is required from both the exhibition itself and its packing. Each exhibition tours for six to eight years, and during that time it will be packed, unpacked, put up, taken down and repacked dozens of times.

The member museums are responsible for promoting and circulating the exhibitions in their own area. According to a schedule drawn up at each annual meeting, member museums agree in turn to circulate each exhibition. Consequently, members always have one or two circulating exhibitions to enhance the cultural offerings in their provinces. Our experience shows that this form of co-operation significantly enriches cultural services in regions outside major population centres. ■

Cultural history museums and human ecology—a challenge to integration

Bo Nilsson

(See biodata on page 194.)

Bengt Rosén

Born in Sweden in 1941. Ph.L. in ecology. A teacher of natural sciences, since 1971 at the high school of Visby, Gotland Island. Has worked as a freelance author in news media since 1968. Promoter of the Museum of Nature of Gotland 1974–78. Member of the special committee on education of the Swedish Society for the Preservation of Nature. Has done evaluative work on behalf of the Swedish Board of Research 1985/86.

'Each individual's idea of reality', according the Nobel prizewinner Konrad Lorenz, 'is that with which he interacts daily, with which he has to get to grips in everyday work situations'. Each person builds up his or her own special form of reality in this way. The same can be said of our common way of life, our society. At best these pictures of reality work in most of life's ups and downs. But sometimes another type of reality than that we should most like to see, or with which we would prefer to live, runs a race with us. It may be a question of life or death—someone close to us dies, a prime minister or a president is assassinated—it might be a matter of peace or war, or it could be the collapse of the environment around us.

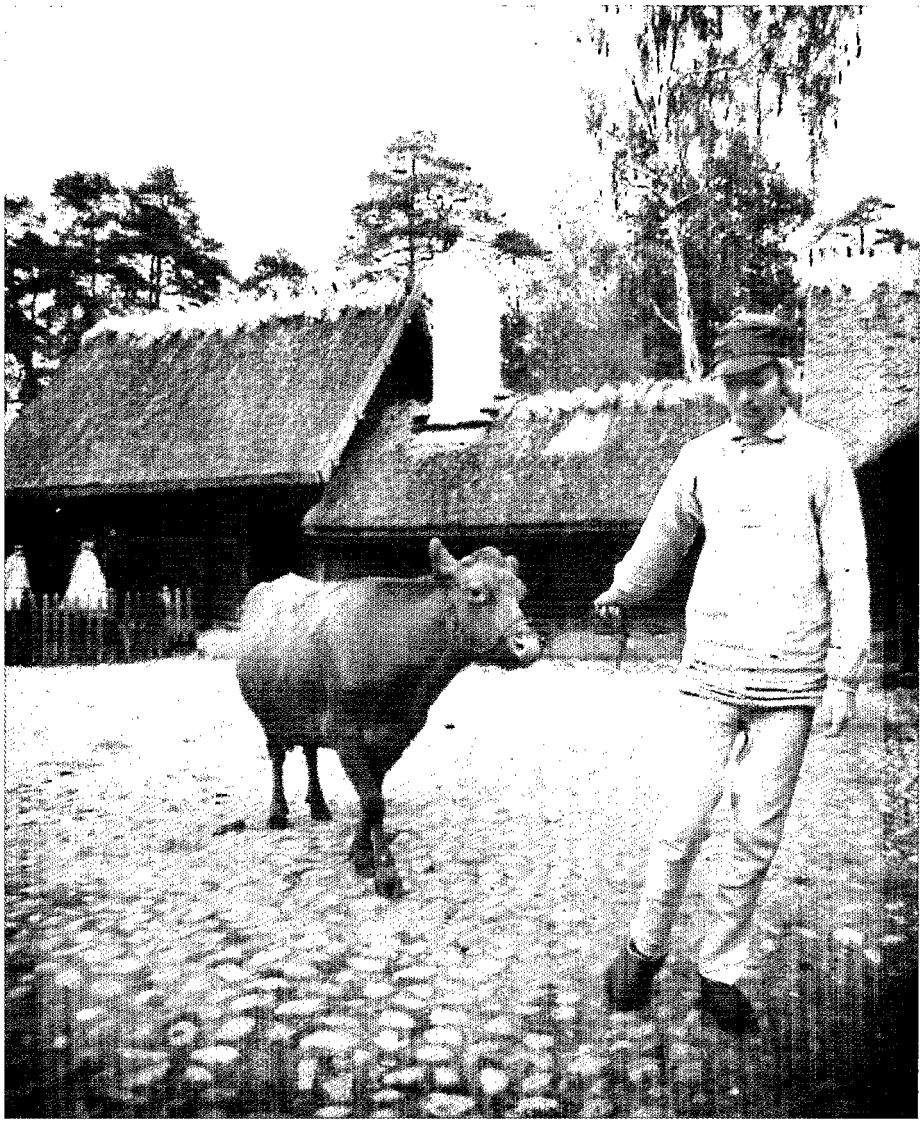
The environment in danger

So far we have not, at the everyday level, noticed so much the fact that the ozone layer has become considerably thinner from the use of freons and other almost indestructible substances; or that the earth's climate is slowly heating up because of increased carbon dioxide from the combustion of fossil fuels; or that on our planet we exterminate at least one animal species every day; or that dioxins collect in our food and inside our own bodies. But in many cases the threat to the environment is quite obvious. It might be the dust bowl in the United States in the 1930s, the catastrophic drought in the Sahel, flood disasters in Bangladesh and China, or forest destruction and the accelerating corrosion of historic monuments and buildings in Europe by acid rain. Sadly, the list can go on and on. We often call these phenomena natural disasters, but in fact they are cultural disasters, caused by our own lack of knowledge, and above all by our own imperfect grasp of reality!

The role of museums

Vital questions affecting the future are at present dealt with at different levels in society, and for many people it can be difficult to form an accurate overall impression. It is here that museums can play an important, indeed a central, role as centres of adult education. Cultural history museums have not traditionally reflected the ecological aspects of our reality. The potential and pattern of life given to us by nature is, remarkably enough, still not reckoned as part of our human culture. Nevertheless humanity during its whole long existence has taken its starting point from, and worked within, an ecological reality. On the basis of the cultural and natural history research of recent years, it is quite clear that cultural history cannot be properly understood without some knowledge of the preconditions and framework afforded to us by nature. And reciprocally, the part played by nature in today's world cannot be adequately grasped without a proper knowledge of the history of man and his exploitation of natural resources. The United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development has energetically pointed to the need for this sort of overall view.

Knowledge and experience can be passed on in many different ways, but no other medium has the same unique possibilities as the museum to work with so many of the recipient's senses: sight, hearing, touch and smell, and sometimes even taste and balance. Museums can



41
Open-air museums offer many possibilities of spreading knowledge about ecology, thanks in particular to the living beings who inhabit them. A view of the Skansen Museum in Stockholm.

combine the intake of knowledge with aesthetic and emotional experiences, and with creative activity, in a way which has no equivalent anywhere else. Neither is there any other forum, which can bring about direct contacts in the same way between the researcher and the artist, on the one hand, and the general public, on the other. Museums can also be a meeting ground between non-profit-making associations and the general public.

In today's situation, therefore, as we face momentous and difficult questions about the future, the contribution of museums to social debate and the dissemination of information is a matter of the greatest urgency. With their multidisciplinary and integrated approach, cultural history museums can assume greater importance as resources for adult education about human ecology. To provide accurate information about present and future paths of growth of our society, they may have to reorient and broaden their research work not only as regards culture, but also in respect to natural history.

The Swedish case

This new role for museums has been highlighted in recent years in Sweden as a result of a survey by the National Council for Cultural Affairs. The Council proposed a number of urgent development projects for museums, including

42
Stensjö (Småland) in 1978. Cultural history museums should cover the historical development of the landscape from the ecological point of view.

one called 'The Spread of Ecological Knowledge'. The objective of the project is to determine how ecologically orientated activities might be integrated with the work of Swedish regional museums, whose activities are concentrated mainly on cultural history and art. A further aim of the project is to study and experiment, at the Skansen open air museum in Stockholm, with the spread of ecological knowledge, and we hope to be able to create a powerful focal point there for ecologically orientated museum education. Ever since its beginning in 1891 Skansen has had an ecological bent (Fig. 41). With a high attendance (some 2 million visitors each year) it should be relatively easy to develop Skansen further in this direction. The National Museum of Natural History in Stockholm has been proposed as the scientific and administrative base for the project, and would also be responsible for the execution of the project together with Skansen and the National Council for Cultural Affairs. The proposal has met with a very positive response and resources were set aside for it by the Swedish parliament in June 1987. The project will continue to the end of June 1990.

The 'Spread Ecological Knowledge' project

The project strives to achieve a real integration of ecology, in the activities of the regional cultural history museums, and by implication to reveal how nature and culture, past and present, interact to form the total human environment. We find the essential elements to support human life, and for humanity's material and spiritual culture, in the interplay between human beings and nature within the ecological framework.

In Sweden, museums are autonomous institutions with their own governing bodies, aims and traditions, so that the way in which this integration is developed will vary from museum to museum. Nervertheless great interest in the project has been shown by the regional museums.

In an effort to strengthen the place of ecology in documentation and information dissemination activities in the regional museums it will be necessary to link the local situation and people's everyday lives with the traditional areas and forms of work of museums. Since throughout history humanity has taken the global ecosystem as its starting point, and been active within that system, there should be no intrinsic difficulty in finding such connections. Museums and history are full of ecological information, even if, until now, visitors have not usually looked at the material from this point of view.

Two main themes

The problem lies rather at another level: that of being able to find subject areas for documentation, exhibitions displays, and other activities with a high degree of both local relevance and general interest. Two subject areas seem to be well suited to this approach. Inherently interdisciplinary, the shifting structure and use of the cultural landscape (Fig. 42) during different periods, as well as the occurrence and use of natural resources, may be placed scientifically on the border between cultural history and natural history. The cultural landscape forms not only the basis of our life-support system; it has also in turn been reshaped by us through time. Moreover, particularly for early subsistence societies, but also in newer industrialized society, it has shaped humanity's imagination, and indeed its whole world-view. This is a natural basis for an 'ecosystem' type of thinking. Alternatively, to apply an ecological perspective in the regional museums, one could start with humanity's economic life. The landscape and natural resources are the prerequisites for agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, shipping, etc. In order to broaden and strengthen the more limited, albeit more concrete, perception of reality determined by local conditions, the work of museums should also be set in a larger frame of reference: the natural parameters for life on earth and humanity's influence on the environment in general. Without such perspectives, we cannot inspire understanding of global events or create conditions, also in an environmental context, for the sort of solidarity necessary with, for instance, the peoples of the Third World.

Museums' social and educational action

Museums are, and perhaps in a certain sense should be, static. At the same time they must be able to accommodate a good measure of dynamism. Museums are educational institutions, and we believe that their dynamism lies in their ability to promote adult education, especially concerning those questions which have the highest current relevance.

The 'Spread Ecological Knowledge' project is about disseminating knowledge of operations and contexts that have to do with our survival. This presupposes among museum personnel a strongly developed sense of involvement in society, an ability to adapt the museum to society's needs, and some form of certainty about the type of role the museum could and should play in a rapidly changing society.

The museum's store of knowledge and the competence of its staff are valuable and necessary assets in the context of contemporary society. We museum professionals must be involved. Cultural history museums should actually be the focal point, since today, as perhaps never before, an analysis is needed of the course of historical events, and historical data must be used in order to come to grips with the future.

Displays and exhibitions are often upheld as the principal forms of expression for museums. But the accumulated knowledge of museum personnel and the source material held by museums can also be used in many other ways. Demonstrations, lectures, study visits and excursions are other possible forms of activity that can advantageously complement displays and exhibitions. The spread of ecological information presupposes interaction between the environment and society. It is also essential that a wider general public, and not only researchers, should be given possibilities to use museum objects, photographic and pictorial material, archives and other documentation more directly. Modern information technology now enables museums to make such items available in new ways for study and research.[1]

Ecology, humanity

Meanwhile, it is important that the basis for ecologically oriented work in museums be not just a matter of crisis-consciousness. Ecology embraces so much and can be endlessly exciting. It can give insight into the fascinating causal connections in nature, into patterns of dependence and co-operation between living creatures and their environment, thereby illuminating other forms of life than our own. By creating new perspectives on life in our own society, ecology can create—or re-create—a respect for life and an understanding of the battle for self-preservation taking place in nature, and a sense of responsibility for the environment. Ecology and other sciences also give us a rigorous basis for feelings of solidarity, not only with all the peoples of the earth, but with all other living creatures.

Humanity's interference with the earth's ecosystem is accelerating. The results are often described in terms of pollution, poisoning, impoverishment, etc. We know that much of the damage done is irreparable, but also that nature sometimes shows an astounding and impressive capacity for healing itself. For each species or ecosystem that disappears the value of those that remain increases. With each new person is born new hope for life on earth—if we learn to use the earth in the right way.

In spite of the negative trends and prognoses for the future the United Nations World Commission for the Environment and Development remains confident for the future. Nevertheless, it is quite unhesitating in its judgement:

> Many of the present efforts to protect and uphold the progress of man, in order to meet man's needs and realize his ambitions, are quite simply not acceptable—either in the rich or in the poor countries. They consume too heavily and too quickly already overexploited environmental capital; so that we will not be able to afford them in the future without going bankrupt. They perhaps show a profit in the balance sheets of our own generation, but our children will be the inheritors of the losses. We are borrowing environmental capital from the generations to come without any intention or possibility of paying it back. Our children and grandchildren will condemn our wasteful ways, but they will never be able to collect the debt we owe them. ■

1. See also Hans Johansson's and Bo Nilsson's article on 'Museum Information and Communication Technologies: the Swedish Approach', on page 194.

Natural history museums: let's get moving!

Christian Andersen

Born New York, 1936. Graduate *(Cand. real.)* in fish biology. University of Oslo. Regional Fisheries Adviser for Northern Norway, 1968–73. Lecturer in zoology, Tromsø Museum, University of Tromsø, 1973–78. Aquarium director and museum lecturer, Norwegian Forestry Museum 1978. President, Association of Norwegian Museum Educators, 1978–81. Editor, *Museumsnytt*, 1984–86. President, Association of Natural History Museums in Norway since 1986.

The continued existence of natural history museums is—in the last resort—dependent on public awareness of the importance of environmental protection and preservation. Without a general acceptance of the need to preserve our natural and cultural inheritance, and of the role played by natural history museums in this process, natural history museums face a bleak future. It is that kind of future we wish to avoid. Unfortunately, in my daily work, in my contact with schools, and in an increasingly more complicated and technological world, it seems to me (and many others) that natural history is attracting less and less attention.

Yet, at a time when ecology is becoming more and more the science of the survival of life, natural history museums should be pointing the way forward: researching and publicizing, explaining consequences, and suggesting courses of action. Natural history museums are of vital importance, not only to the technical development of natural resources—that is the systematic and scientific management of the environment for economic gain—but also to remind people that nature consists of thousands of interdependent living organisms (human beings included), and that the management of nature is, in consequence, also a matter of ethics.

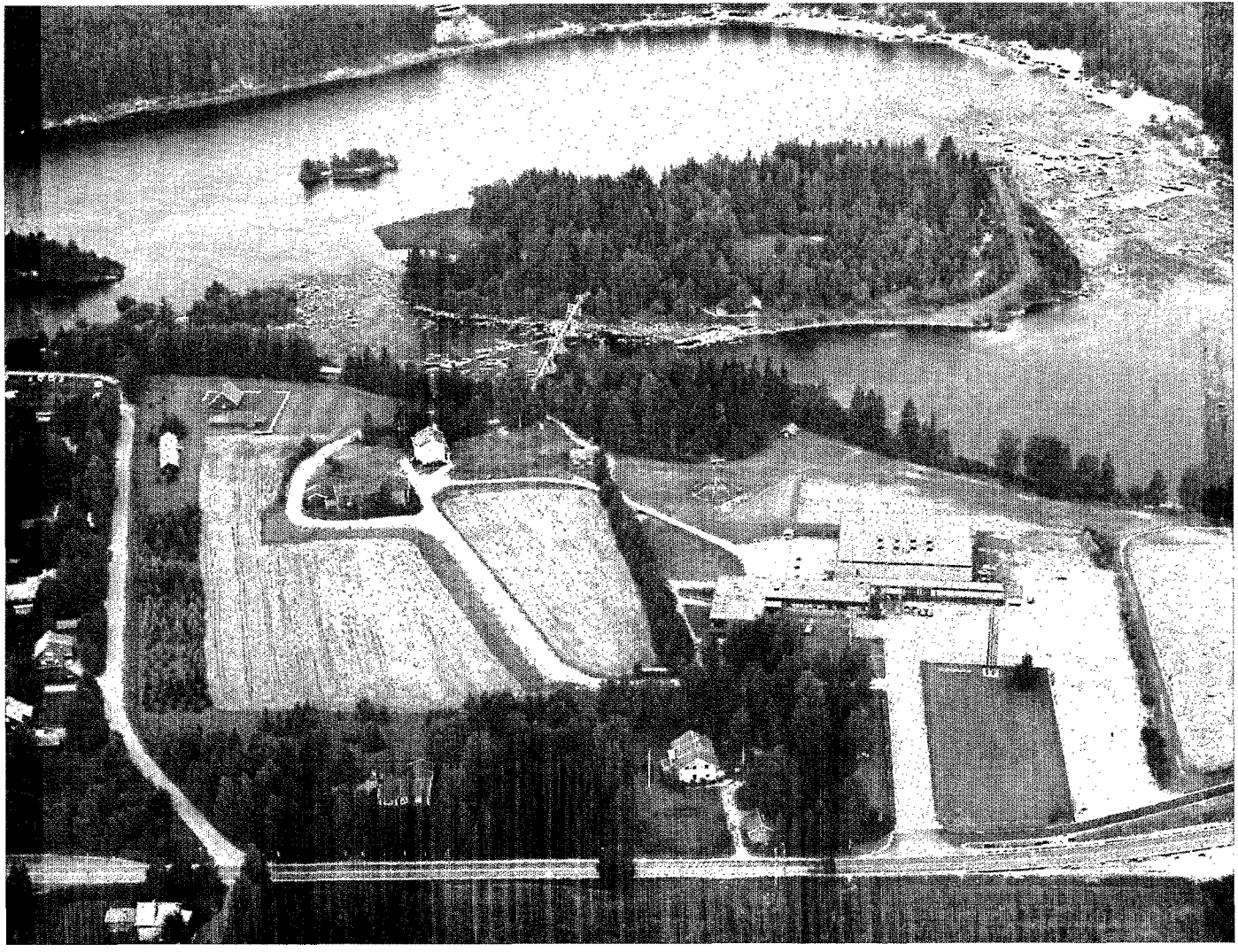
Museums and research

Research is for the most part linked to a museum's collection of exhibits and artefacts. When national and local authorities are planning construction projects (motorways, dams, etc.), there is usually a need to evaluate the environmental, and possibly historical, consequences of their plans. Schemes of this sort require on-site tests and field work, and public works authorities seldom have personnel qualified to make that sort of evaluation. Consequently, they apply to local centres of expertise—museums being those most readily available. This is of benefit to both parties. The authorities acquire the test results and reports that they need, while the museums benefit financially from the reimbursement they receive for their services. This, in times of economic recession and, dare I say, government parsimony, is a welcome addition to meagre resources. Museums may further benefit from new additions to their collections, while museum staff are given the opportunity to widen their experience.

Recent developments, however, have witnessed an expansion of such field work, with the dubious consequence that other bodies have been drafted to carry out tests and research. In such cases, authorities frequently consider museum participation unnecessary, which is unfortunate. Other agencies tend to approach the task from a different perspective, and seem not to consider the long-term research possibilities inherent in their samples and work. Thus valuable artefacts or important research material can be lost.

The museum, a service institution?

It is essential that museums bear in mind that they are primarily service institutions. Thus, it is important to establish and maintain contact with as broad a spectrum of opinion as possible, and particularly with environmental protection institutions and the numerous voluntary



43
Aerial view of the Norwegian Forestry Museum and the outdoor exhibits.

organizations dedicated to the preservation of our environmental and cultural heritage. In Norway, the natural history museums have established a network of contacts with a wide range of individuals and groups—societies, collectors, environmentalists, amateur naturalists, historians, etc. These have a dual function. Not only do they supply facts and information about the various regions of the country, but they also provide all-important feed-back, signalling public reaction and stimulating new impulses. All this enables the museums to provide a better and more interesting public service, thereby awakening public interest not only in natural history as such, but also in the importance of museums to the discipline as a whole.

In Norway, the most important natural history museums are found at the universities of Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim, and Tromsø. Indeed the university museums, fifteen in all, are those which have the best resources, as regards both finances and the number of qualified staff. The remaining natural history museums are, in reality, a mixture comprising regional museums and national museums, each with a close connection to, or with main emphasis on, cultural history. These have been situated in areas remote from university centres.

A number of cultural history museums have natural history sections, or would like to include natural history material in their exhibitions. Recognizing this fact, natural history museums are strongly in favour of close co-operation with other museums. Such co-operation, it is hoped, will increase the level of natural history expertise in local, regional and county museums, and thereby lead to a general widening of interest in natural history.

Natural history in cultural history environments

Following on this line of thought, and in the hope of stimulating naturalists and ecologists to action, the Norwegian Association of Natural History Museums recently organized a seminar entitled 'Natural History in a Cultural History Environment'. One of the aims of the seminar was to amplify and define the Association's policy with regard to the future organization of the Norwegian museum service. The seminar discussed ways and means, first, of strengthening the position accorded to natural history, and, secondly, of effecting greater integration and co-operation between natural history and cultural history.

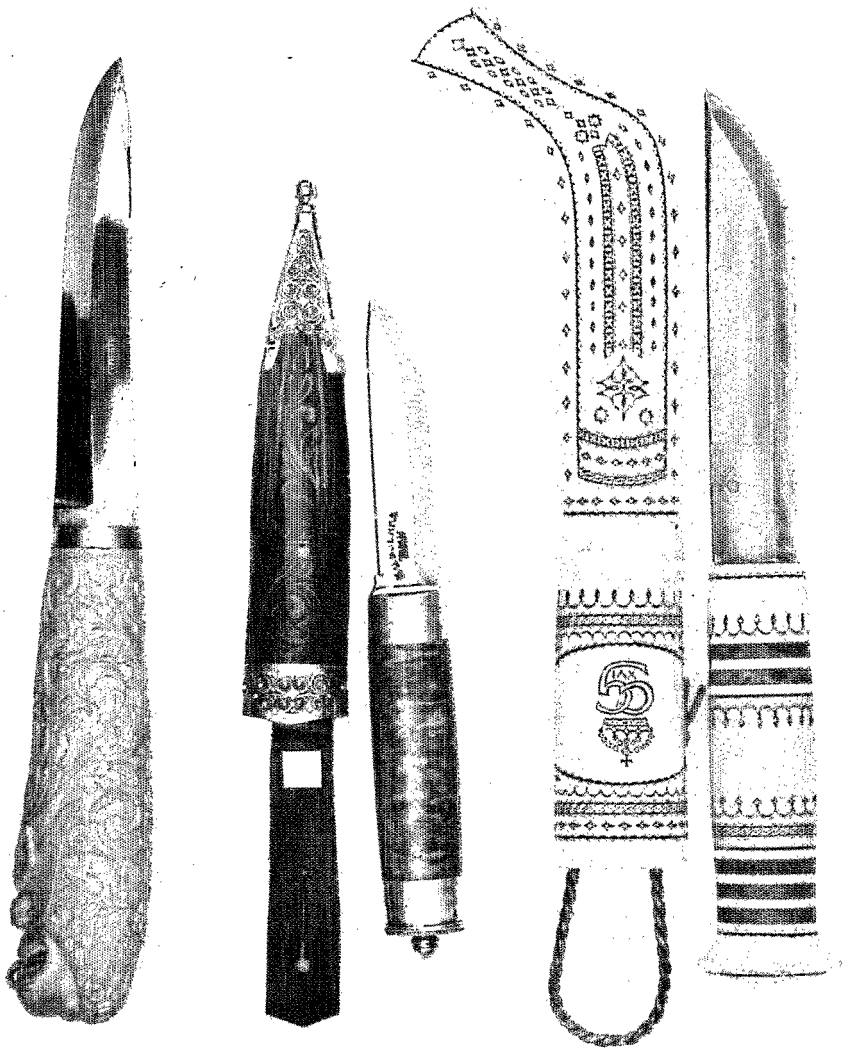
The seminar was of the opinion that, politically, the time was ripe for such a discussion. This conclusion followed upon the publication of the National Museum Council's programme for 1987–90, which advocates the establishment of at least one natural history museum in each county. In the short run this can at best only be realized by a reorganization of existing collections and exhibitions.

The idea of a greater decentralization within the Norwegian museum service has at first a superficial attraction. There exists the danger, however, that such a plan would be at the expense of those museums which, today, are the centres of natural history expertise. A prerequisite of any decentralization would be a strengthening of these institutions, for it is essential to have competent and responsible research and teaching centres, providing a reservoir of knowledge and expertise for local and district museums.

The introduction of natural history material in a museum of cultural history can easily end up in a separate and distinct natural history department, independent of, and isolated from, the rest of the museum. The purpose would be far better served by integrating ecological viewpoints and perspectives into already existing displays and exhibitions. The starting point will be the interplay of a variety of factors: how prevailing natural conditions affect harvests, how human beings influence natural conditions, and the consequences resulting from the numerous ways in which different resources are used. If ecology is to be given more recognition, it is necessary to present material in the context of an ecological system into which human activity intrudes, but always keeping in mind that once upon a time human beings were an integral part of the whole.

A museum cutting across the traditional patterns, and presenting multi-subject displays and information in the context of an ecological system, will have a much greater possibility of linking historical research to local conditions, and in this way build up its own special identity. This, in turn, is likely to attract greater local interest. The most important aspect of this method of organizing and presenting material, however, is that it contributes to increasing awareness and understanding of the interdependence of cultural development and natural environment. My own museum can provide appropriate examples.

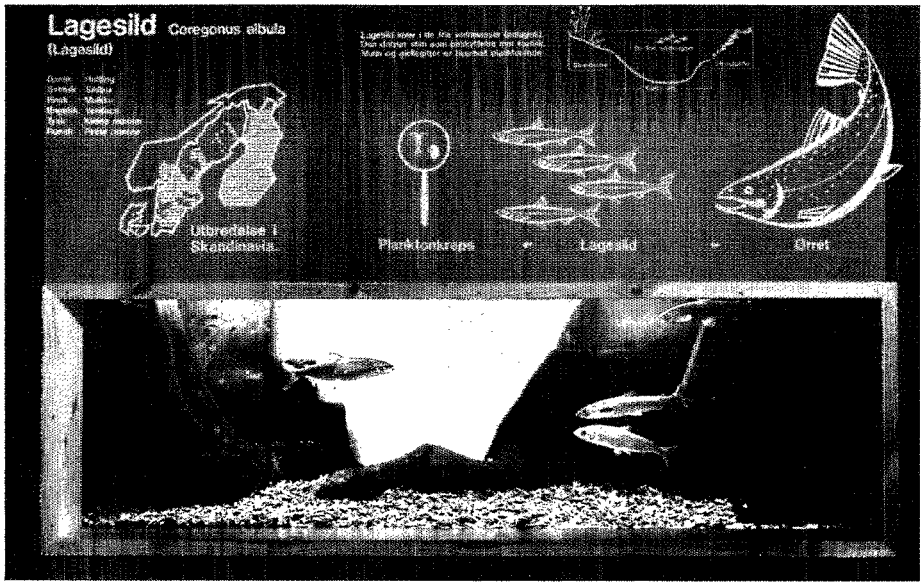
44
Royal hunting knives (from Sweden, Norway and Denmark).



The Norwegian Forestry Museum

The Norwegian Forestry Museum (Fig. 43), founded in 1954 and averaging some 100,000 visitors a year, is unique in that it is the only museum in the country whose sphere of research comprises the utilization of the wilds and forests, that is, forestry, hunting, trapping, and freshwater fishing. The museum is, basically, a museum of cultural history. In recent years, however, the museum has sought, by means of its exhibitions, displays, etc., to throw light on the close connection between natural history and cultural history. The aquarium, presented under the title *From Mountain Lake to River Estuary* and concentrating on the main species of freshwater fish found in Norway, is a case in point.

Besides presenting the fish in a simulated natural environment, the museum provides instruction in the relevant areas of nature and environmental studies. It hopes thereby to stimulate individuals to undertake their own field studies and observations. In its presentation of freshwater fish, the emphasis is placed upon



45
Close-up of the vendace aquarium.

46
Young visitors at the Norwegian Forestry Museum.

the fish as a natural resource, the environmental requirements for their survival, the life-cycle of the various species and how human beings have used and still use fish resources, both as a source of nourishment and as an opportunity for recreation.

A new addition to the freshwater fishing section (cultural history) of the Norwegian Forestry Museum has recently been opened. This is a special aquarium (Fig. 45) for vendace *(Coregonus albula).* Every year, in the short space of a few autumn weeks, large numbers of vendace are caught at the western end of Lake Mjøsa and in the lower reaches of the river Gudrandsdalslagen (which runs into Lake Mjøsa at Lillehammer), when the fish go up river to spawn. The fishing of Lake Mjøsa vendace stretches well back into history, and over the generations has been a resource of such importance as to warrant a special subsection of its own at the museum. A variety of fishing tackle, seine nets, drift nets, fish traps and an assortment of hand nets, was (and still is) employed to catch the fish. Naturally such tackle has always featured among the museum's exhibits, whereas the most important item in this ancient scenario, the fish, has always been absent. This flaw has now been remedied. A tank containing vendace, and accompanied by biological information about the fish, has been included among the exhibits. This aquarium is thus a useful and practical natural-history supplement to an exhibition that is primarily cultural history. We trust the new addition will make the exhibition more interesting and, at the same time, give a wider perspective to cultural history.

Similar projects are on the drawing board, or being carried out.

The Norwegian Forestry Museum has always considered it important to 'bring history to life' by demonstrating, as realistically as possible, how artefacts and exhibits were used. In the same vein, we also try to publicize knowledge that either results from research, or is closely connected with it. Some of these demonstrations and arrangements are of interest only to relatively small groups of people, whilst others attract the public in large numbers. As a biologist in what is primarily a museum of cultural history, I shall restrict myself to those arrangements in which the natural history content is relatively large. Each year, designated days/weekends are given over to particular topics or activities. One such arrangement is 'The Utilization of Fungi and Plants'. Another is 'Popular Geology'. These are concerned with the utilization of resources available to everyone and, beside exhibitions in the museum building, excursions and demonstrations are arranged. Verification checks (for example, to make sure that people have picked only edible fungi) are also part of the service. Local societies (such as the Geology Society and the Society for the Utilization of Plants) are represented on the organizing committees.

Interaction between natural and cultural history

Undoubtedly our largest annual activity is the Nordic Hunting and Fishing Festival (Fig. 47). It normally takes place during the second weekend in August,

and was arranged in 1988 for the twenty-sixth time. An event of this size requires the participation of many partners—organizers, arrangers and personnel—and many of these have been with us for years. The majority design and compile their own displays and activities. The arrangement and implementation involve several hundred people, most of whom return year after year. So does the public, averaging over 11,000 for the two-day festival period.

The Nordic Hunting and Fishing Festival is advantageous in several ways. It is profitable for those firms and companies who manufacture hunting and fishing equipment, and who advertise and market their products during the festival. It is an opportunity to generate revenue for various social and cultural organizations. Even the Forestry Museum, with its workforce of sixty (including a large part-time staff), manages to remain in the black. The most important measure of the event's success, however, must be the quality of the presentation, and the public's reaction to it. Market research studies indicate that 70 per cent of our visitors initially visited the museum on the recommendation of others. A successful festival, therefore, is an excellent way of advertising the museum and attracting new visitors. The printed programme (distributed throughout Scandinavia) and press coverage give a comprehensive picture of the breadth of both the event and the organizations and institutions which lend us their support. Below are just a few of the activities:

Show of hunting dogs (the largest in Norway, comprising some 600 dogs of 25 breeds), exhibition of puppies and demonstrations of obedience training.

Shooting competitions with hunting rifles, shooting with powder and ball.

What to do with the catch—smoking, grilling and preparation of fish.

Making fishing rods, tying flies, casting.

Nature trails, game trails, fish trails, fishing competitions. Demonstrations of various methods of fishing.

Demonstrations of ancient fishing and trapping equipment, net weaving, repairing of nets, use of seine nets.

Registration of fishing rivers and lakes, planning their utilization.

Fish farming, preparing fish and fish products for the market.

Exhibition of antlers, the utilization of the horns.

How to skin and dismember a moose carcass, the salting of hides, tanning, making furs. Leather processing and making of leather products.

The making of sheath knives (Fig. 44).

Those taking part in these demonstrations are also contributing to preserving and strengthening craft traditions, and this in turn reinforces the bonds linking the past and the present. It is intended that people should go home from the Nordic Hunting and Fishing Festival feeling that they have learnt and experienced something. It seems to have succeeded in this purpose.

In order to survive as research centres and service institutions, natural history museums must justify their existence by making the community aware of their value. To do this they must:

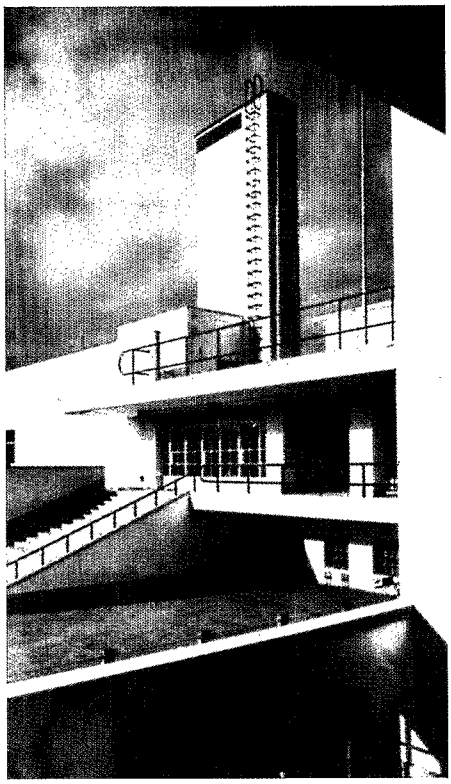
Demonstrate that they possess expertise essential to the development of society as a whole.

Publicize their activities and fields of research, relating them to every-day life, thereby convincing people of their usefulness.

Co-operate with other institutions, and involve individuals and groups (especially local people, societies, etc.) in the work of the museum. ■

47
The Nordic Hunting and Fishing Festival.

SPECIALIZED MUSEUMS AND SPECIAL SETTINGS



48
The Sports Museum of Finland in the Helsinki Olympic Stadium, was completed in 1938, when this photograph was taken. The building has since been enlarged twice.

The Sports Museum of Finland

Pekka Honkanen

Born 1955 in Helsinki, Finland. M.A. from the University of Helsinki in 1981. Lecturer at the University of Helsinki 1981–83. Member of the Finnish Administrative Board of the Scandinavian Museum Federation. Since 1982 Department Chief (collections, research and documentation) of the Sports Museum of Finland.

Finland has always been a nation of sport fanatics. Perhaps that is why the Sports Museum of Finland has, in the 1980s, developed into one of the world's major sport museums. The staff numbers seventeen people (in 1982 there were only four). While income for the Foundation of the Sports Museum of Finland comes mostly from the Ministry of Education, the Museum itself generates 30 per cent of its revenue from its own activities, which is a high proportion in Finland.

The Sports Museum of Finland was founded in 1938 to care for different collections, for example a collection with more than 1,000 skis, which were assembled in the 1930s according to a plan of the Ministry of Education. In the early 1940s the Museum was a allotted space in the new Olympic Stadium building in Helsinki and was officially opened in 1943. The Museum has stayed in the same location since; however, its space has been expanded twice, in 1963 and 1982/83. The Sports Museum of Finland and the Olympic Stadium are like old friends; in 1988 they both celebrated their fiftieth anniversary. The staff of the Museum usually maintain that the Olympic Stadium is situated next to the Museum and not vice versa (but you may get another answer if you ask the staff of the Olympic Stadium).

The Foundation has three departments: the Sports Library of Finland and its Information Service, the Central Archive of Finnish Sports, and the Museum itself. This means that one can find almost everything (*we* say everything) concerning the past and present of sports and physical culture in Finland under the same roof.

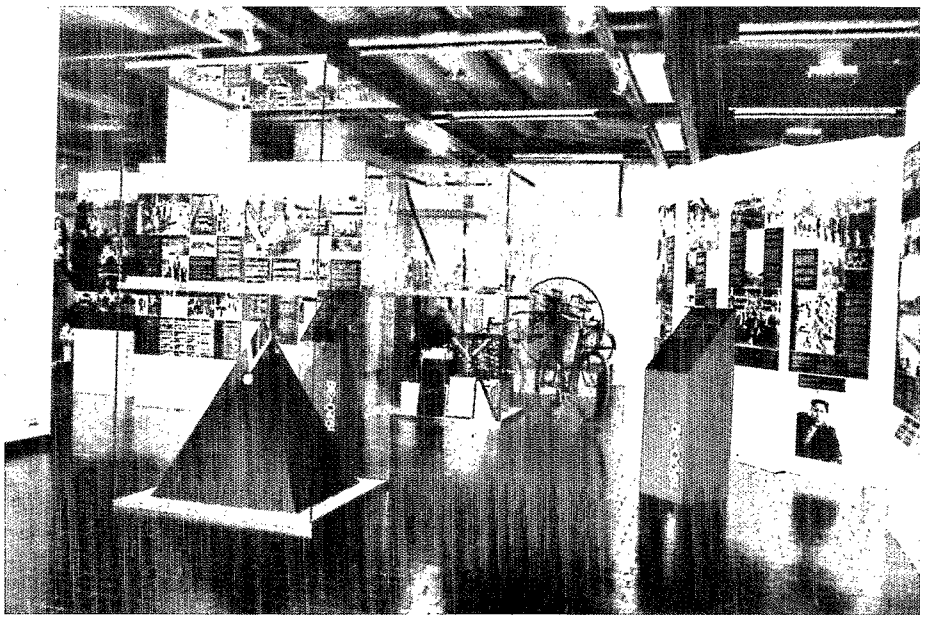
Requests for information have increased very rapidly in recent years. The Foundation of the Sports Museum is able to answer the questions of, for example, the mass media very quickly because of its information resources. During the coming year, all departments will convert to automatic data processing, which will also affect the catalogues of the Museum. The library contains some 20,000 volumes, and subscribes to about 280 journals on sports subjects. It has access to various data bases, and now publishes a monthly reference journal of 170 sports periodicals. Once a week the staff compiles a round-up article about current sporting events or topics, and sends it to subscribers.

25,000 objects, 40,000 photos

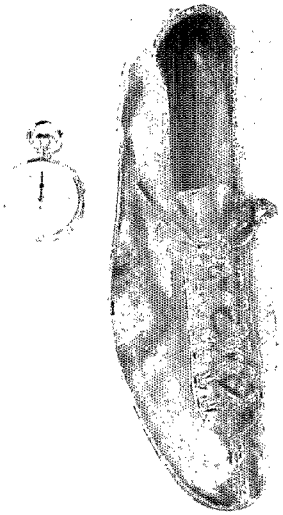
The Museum mounts from five to eight special exhibitions every year. The permanent exhibition shows the development of sport in Finland, and Finland's participation in the Olympic Games. The Museum also holds exhibitions, on request, for outside clients. Another wide field of work at present is documentation on major sporting events in Finland, as well as on recreational sports, often called 'everyman's sports' or 'sports for all'.

The collections are naturally the heart of the Museum. They consist of approximately 25,000 objects on the history of Finnish sport and physical culture. At present the collections increase by 1,000 objects every year.

Another important component of the Sports Museum of Finland is a



49
The new permanent exhibition which was opened to the public in 1984.



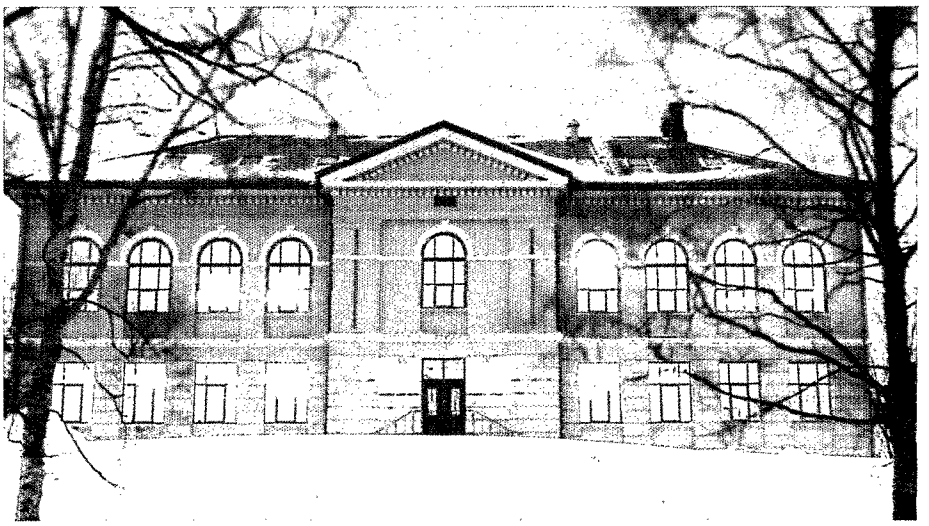
50
Paavo Nurmi's golden running shoe and chronometer.

photographic archive containing more than 40,000 pictures covering the entire history of sport in Finland from the early days, in the 1870s, to the present.

The Sports Museum of Finland is one of the national special museums in our country. The role sport has played in Finnish society has always been very important. In fact sport goes hand in hand with other important fields of Finnish culture, such as music and architecture. At the beginning of this century success in sport meant much to the national self-esteem of a small country that had yet to gain its independence. This role has continued unchanged in independent Finland as well. Sports are one way that Finland makes itself known all over the world, even today. That is why Finns are very pleased if names like Paavo Nurmi, the 'King of Runners', and Lasse Viren are known worldwide. Against this background it is only natural that Finland is careful to preserve the history and traditions of sport and physical culture, a task which has been entrusted to the Sports Museum. ■

51
Dana Zatopkova and Emil Zatopek (Czechoslovakia) and Alain Mimoun (France) taking part in the inauguration, on 13 June 1988, of an exhibit devoted to the fiftieth anniversary of the Olympic Stadium. At the Helsinki Olympic Games, in 1952, Dana Zatopkova won the women's javelin gold medal, Emil Zatopek won three gold medals for running the 5,000 and 10,000 metres and the marathon, while Alain Mimoun won two silver medals in the 5,000- and 10,000-metre events.

Founding an art museum in northern Norway



Frode Ernst Haverkamp

Born 1946 in Oslo. Diplomas in the History of Art, Oxford University, 1973, and Oslo, 1982. Curator, Museum of Applied Art, Trondheim (1984/85) and curator of the Art Museum of Northern Norway, Tromsø since its creation in 1986. Published various articles on past and contemporary art.

52
Night view taken in winter of the building housing the Art Museum of Northern Norway, Tromsø.

The town of Tromsø is situated at latitude 69° N. and longitude 19° E. It has always been a centre of trade and communications, and a departure point for polar expeditions. Recent decades have seen a vigorous expansion of the town, which, with its 50,000 inhabitants, has become an important regional centre, notably regarding medical research activity associated with the regional hospital; Tromsø also has the world's most northerly university.

Since 1970 Norwegian politicians have been increasingly preoccupied with providing better cultural and service facilities for the country's outlying districts. The idea of a museum in northern Norway with a permanent collection of Norwegian art ranging from the early nineteenth century to the present day was aired as early as the 1930s, but the plan for a regional art museum was first given concrete form in parliamentary reports and other official papers in the 1970s. The idea was that the opportunity to experience art must be available to everyone, and that includes people outside the capital or the larger towns.

The decision

To carry out the project, it was decided to establish an independent foundation, which could apply to the authorities for the necessary financial resources, and its inaugural meeting was held in November 1985. A curator was appointed in the autumn of 1986, and the Art Museum of Northern Norway (NNKM—Nordnorsk Kunstmuseum) was opened to the public on 17 March 1988.

The Museum's founding institutions are: the Norwegian National Gallery (Nasjonalgalleriet), the Travelling Art Gallery of Norway (Riksgalleriet), the Norwegian Cultural Council (Norsk Kulturraad), and the University of Tromsø. All are represented on the Museum's board. Other bodies also represented on the board are the Arts Federation of Northern Norway, the Northern Norwegian Association of Visual Artists, and the Norwegian Association of Applied Artists.

NNKM is government-financed, and the sum of 1,385,000 kroner was allocated to meet running expenses in 1988. In addition to the curator, a secretary and a caretaker have been appointed,

and security staff for the galleries hired from a security company. Additional help (e.g. a photographer) is employed on an hourly basis.

For the time being, NNKM has no building of its own. It rents an area of 300 m² on the first floor of the neo-Renaissance building dating from 1894 (Fig. 52) which formerly housed the Tromsø Museum. In recent years the premises were used for exhibitions by the Tromsø Art Association, which still occupies the ground floor, so that all that was required for the rooms to be put into use was a little redecoration and some minor alterations. For example, in order to protect our works of art from the sun, which at these latitudes shines day and night in summer, close-woven curtains were hung in all the windows.

The aim and the collection

The Museum's aim is to create interest in, and increase knowledge about, visual arts and crafts in northern Norway. It is hoped that one day there will be an art academy in Tromsø, to provide genuine artistic education. Starting in 1989, history of art will be a degree subject at the University of Tromsø, and practical experience gained at NNKM will be an important part of the course.

NNKM could not have come into being without the generous help of the national art institutions in Oslo. The Museum's collection consists of a little over 200 items, most of which are on long-term loan from the Travelling Art Gallery of Norway, the Norwegian National Gallery and the Norwegian Cultural Council. Selecting the works and negotiating with the institutions concerned to create a satisfactory collection were challenging, exciting tasks. In some instances, when Oslo owners were unwilling to part with treasures depicting northern Norwegian subjects, the museum had to turn to the Bergen Art Gallery and to the Trøndelag Art Gallery; this was the case with the *Vardø Lighthouse* painted in the 1860s and familiar to Norwegians because it is depicted on their 1,000-krone banknotes.

As a result of campaigns by artists in the early 1970s, an effort has been made in Norway to do away with the former distinction between fine and applied art. Accordingly, NNKM exhibits twentieth-century graphics, sculpture and photography alongside, and on an equal footing with, paintings from 1820 to the present day, as well as modern textiles, jewellery, ceramics and works in wood and leather which are shown in specially built display cases designed by the architect Lars Nerli. Thus, we may admire not only paintings—a waterfall by J. C. Dahl, peasants in their Sunday best by Tidemand and Gude, a snowscape by Frits Thaulow, old seafarers by Christian Krog, a female nude by Edvard Munch, fantastic beings by Knut Rose and Killi Olsen, and abstracts by Jakob Weidemann and Anna Eva Bergmann—but also wine glasses by Ull-Mari Brantenberg, jewellery by Tone Vigeland and Liv Blaavarp, bowls by Benny Motzfelt and knives by Konrad Mehus.

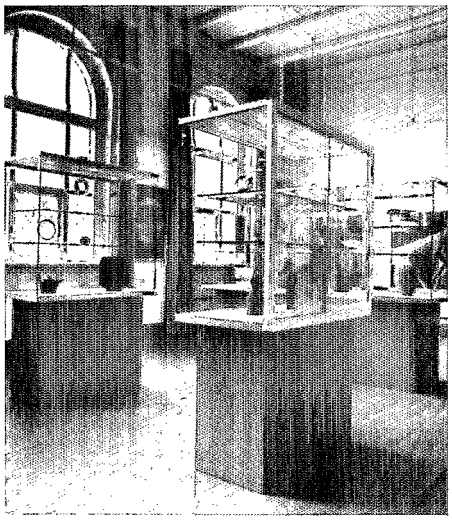
Activities and plans

It is not, however, intended that NNKM should be limited to a permanent collection, albeit one where the public can engross itself in the best of Norwegian art seen in its historical perspective. The next phase in its development will be to refit the second floor to accommodate temporary exhibitions of various kinds. Plans exist for shows of challenging contemporary art, and also of light-sensitive drawings, which we can fully guarantee will not be exposed to harmful light (or much light at all!) during our dark season from November to February. Then too, the Munch Museum in Oslo has kindly offered to loan graphic works by Edvard Munch.

In addition to the Museum's activities in Tromsø itself, which encompass seminars, university lectures, and guided tours of the galleries for all types of groups of visitors from kindergartens to senior citizens, NNKM will take over the Travelling Art Gallery of Norway's role of organizing itinerant exhibitions in the northern counties of Nordland, Troms and Finnmark. This requires a larger staff, and in due course an assistant curator will be appointed for this purpose.

Acquisition policy

The acquisition of works of art has barely begun, because of limited purchase grants. The purchasing committee consists of two elected representatives of the artists' associations of northern Norway and the Museum's curator. The overall goal of the Museum's acquisition policy is to buy contemporary art and, to a lesser extent, older works from our part of the country. Thus, in 50 or 100 years NNKM will house not just what the



53
Applied art objects are exhibited in specially built display cases.

national art institutions relinquished to the north in 1987. It will also consist of a new collection documenting systematically the development of artistic life in the north of Norway, including that of the Lapps, and placing it in its national and international contexts. Besides displaying art, the Museum, in collaboration with the artists' associations of northern Norway, is compiling a computerized reference archive of the artists, art and artistic life of the region, available to journalists, students, schoolchildren and anyone else interested in art. Last year the Norwegian Research Council for Science and the Humanities (Norges Almenvitenskapelig Forskningsraad) made a grant of 25,000 kroner towards the necessary computer equipment.

The Museum was officially opened on 17 March 1988 by Mrs Tove Veierød, State Secretary in the Ministry of Cultural and Scientific Affairs. To mark the occasion, local musicians gave the specially commissioned first performance of *Nonokumu*, a work for piano and brass instruments by the north Norwegian composer Gunnar Germeten Jr, with a prologue written and recited by the author Herbjørg Wassmo.

Judge for yourself

People have flocked to the galleries since the opening. Their response has in the main been positive, but critical voices have been raised in the press, saying that the Museum's displays do not sufficiently reflect the unique character of the northern part of Norway, and do not give due credit to the Lapp contribution to Norwegian art. This is largely because we have had to depend on what was available from the lending institutions. And neither the architect nor the author of this article, who were jointly responsible for the exhibition, feel they should reply to criticism that the arrangement of the pictures, sculpture and objects is too tidy, too 'museumy', and not exciting enough. Readers are cordially invited to visit our museum and judge for themselves! ■

APPENDICES

Authors' addresses

Denmark

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Carsten U. Larsen — Nationalmuseet, Frederiksholms Kanal 12, 1220 København K.

Helge Shultz-Lorentzen — Grønlandssekretariatet, Nationalmuseet, Ny Vestergade 10, 1471 København K.

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Marketta Tamminen and Outi Peisa — Porvoo Museum, Välikatu 11, 06100 Porvoo.

Iceland

Thor Magnússon — Icelandic National Museum, P.O. Box 1439, 121 Reykjavik.

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1984. No. 142, p. 75

Gun Lundborg — Reservoirs of technical variability: collect before erosion sets in
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Sune Zachrisson — Agricultural museums—the story and propagation of an idea
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Kjell Engstrom — The ecomuseum concept is taking root in Sweden
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Stella Westerlund — Twenty years of travelling exhibitions
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1986. No. 152, p. 205

Annette Damm — Reinterpreting the Stone Age at Moesgård
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Jarno J. Peltonen — The role of applied art museums today
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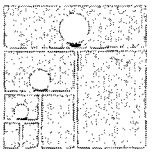

WFFM CHRONICLE

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WFFM newsbrief

Museums 2000

The WFFM, in collaboration with ICOM (International Council of Museums), has inaugurated, with the publication of a book on the Museum of Fine Arts at Ghent, Museums 2000. *This is a series of books in several languages (always including English and French) dedicated to the museums of the world.*

The editorial principle is new: to make the objects in the museums known and liked from different perspectives so that they can become a means of diffusing information on the life of a museum, its action, projects, magic, etc.

*Every book will benefit from a range of original photographs.*Museums 2000 *intends, indeed, to deal with all categories of museums: fine arts, archaeology, history, science and technology, ethnology, ecological museums, parks and reserves.*

The reading and handling of the books will be facilitated by a new and practical presentation as well as the use of different types of paper.

Every publication will be a guide and a souvenir for the visitor, and, for the subscriber, an opportunity to dream and travel.

Who finances museums? The public sector?

'Who finances museums? The public sector? The private sector?' The World Federation of Friends of Museums opened its sixth International Congress, held in Toronto in June 1987, with this twofold discussion so that the Friends might consider ways of attracting private capital to museum development. The salient points of Dr Léo Dorais's talk, which WFFM presents here, should provide people in charge of cultural activities in different countries with food for thought. Dr Dorais is Special Adviser to the Deputy Minister of Communication of Canada, and professor at the Ottawa Faculty of Administration.

The question you put to me—'Museum financing: who pays?'—cannot be answered in absolute terms, since everyone speaks from a particular standpoint. For example, unionized staff-members will tell you that it is they who pay, since they receive starvation wages; a Member of Parliament will tell you that it is the state that pays through generous direct or indirect measures taken to benefit museums; any member of a governing board who has gone the rounds of friends and acquaintances to request funds will tell you that it is largely private patrons and public appeals that pay; the person in the street, the average taxpayer, will tell you without hesitation that all this is so much hot air, and that it is the taxpayer, in the final analysis, who foots the bill. I, for one, think that it is the public sector that pays, though the purely financial contributions from the public sector seem to me to be secondary.

My research has been frustrated by the scarcity of the information available and the near impossibility of drawing international comparisons, for lack of shared definitions. But I would say, in passing, that action by WFFM could be very influential in developing shared definitions. A recognized international voice should exert the necessary pressure on the competent international organizations, both Unesco and the specialized museum bodies.

Be that as it may, how does the public sector contribute to museum funding? My answer is in four parts: (a) a national policy; (b) legislation; (c) indirect aid; and (d) a little money.

A national policy

Policy-making all too often seems to be a vain literary exercise indulged in by civil servants in ministries of culture. Yet, it should be understood that a clear, well-thought-out policy is indispensable if the different partners in museum activity are to act in concert. Only a national policy can prevent decisions from being taken on an ad hoc basis, and according to short-term political criteria. When directives are laid down by national policy, elected representatives can be called to account for their actions. It is also against a national policy that progress can be measured from time to time, goals or deadlines modified and the various roles of the many agents defined and known by all. Guided by such a policy, all these partners can act with confidence.

It is a truism to say that all states today rely on more partners than they did in the past. In Western societies this has meant more and more reliance on the so-called private sector. In a most interesting piece of research on what happened after federal cutbacks in the United States in 1982, Susan Bertram established that 52 per cent of her sample of museums had lost some federal funding in the process. 39 per cent of the museums studied had in fact to cut their budgets, thus establishing that the non-federal partners had picked up only 13 per cent of the cutback. The author concludes that by no means has the private sector filled the funding gap. What is true of the private sector is true as well for the other partners: states, provinces or regional authorities have not jumped to the rescue. The sting has been felt diversely by different-sized institutions. In another analysis of the same issue of cutback in financing, Mary Wilder Greene found that coping with the problem is not as easy for all museums. The size of an institution (determined by its operating budget) seems to be the major factor in the need for federal funds instead of its type, location or governing authority. One very important result of federal funding is its implication of institutional probity, because of the rigorous process that precedes support. The medium-size museums are at greatest risk, says Bertram. The explanation, she points out, is that the 'large' museums, that is, those with a budget of more than $1 million have resources of their own, beginning with the members of their boards, their success at raising funds and, generally speaking, their rate of success in securing funding from a variety of government agencies.

A clearly enunciated and understood policy is a necessity to ensure the partnership between the public and private sectors in Western societies and is a major factor in the promotion of tourism. It becomes evident that 'blockbuster' exhibitions, when successful, not only replenish the coffers of the museums but are a major stimulant to the local economy. The case of New York is well known as a cultural destination, despite some of the social problems that tourists face. A number of extraordinary examples exist in Canada of revitalizing a local economy by cultural activities. As there are always two sides to a coin, the other side of this closeness of cultural activity to the economy is the risk of unwarranted government intervention. As these ventures require millions of dollars and are fraught with deficit possibilities, the role of the state in the absence of a clear policy can be overwhelming and can spill over onto the artistic side of the operation.

The traditional model of a sound policy so far as the role of the state is concerned is that of the United Kingdom, which acts through the Arts Council. The Council remained completely autonomous until 1984/85, when it was placed in charge of providing funds to certain major companies—the Royal Opera House and the Royal Shakespeare Company, for example. This would seem to indicate that even in cases where the tradition of autonomy is most firmly established, direct intervention may occur. The best model is perhaps that of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), which is directly financed by the United States Congress. Its terms of reference follow the cultural policy of the country—which is not to have such a

policy. While providing financial support for certain fields of culture—the NEA, the Institute of Museum Services, the Library of Congress and the Archives—the United States does not have an overall national cultural policy. The trend is rather towards a practice of support for the arts.

The same issues have been discussed in Canada over the last thirty years. So far autonomy has been protected. The future appears, however, to promise the opposite trend. The independent fund-raising bodies working on behalf of the state have been taken over by the Ministry of Culture, and are issued with directives like those received by the British Arts Council. A difficult economic situation may explain why cultural bodies are tempted to barter part of their autonomy for a little money. It should not, however, be forgotten that combining the arts with political power also puts the government and its political programme in a good light. The only real protection is a national policy. Then the state alone is a protecting bulwark for the arts and their practitioners.

Legislation

A law can make a huge difference to the life of museums and to cultural life in general. For example, the Soviet Law of 29 October 1976 stipulates that 'funds obtained from the use of historical and cultural property . . . shall be used only to finance measures intended to protect, restore, conserve and repair historical and cultural property'. This contrasts with the inclinations of certain ministers of finance, who would like to see such funds assimilated to general revenue. The case of Brazil is interesting in that the federal state has adopted a very general structure to take action affecting museums. 'In addition to the National History Museum and the National Museum of Fine Arts, the Union [state] provides for the operation of as many other national museums as are necessary to ensure that historical and artistic works belonging to the Union are conserved and exhibited. The Union also takes measures to foster the establishment of state and municipal museums pursuing the same ends' (Decree-Law of 30 November 1937).

Legislation debates on the status of artists since the Unesco deliberations in 1980 have prompted steady progress in national legislation on these matters. They have had repercussions in both socialist and capitalist countries. In both cases, cultural institutions, and museums in particular, will have very varied works to show their public, depending on the legislation governing the status of artists.

The most important influence on museums from indirect legislation is probably that of laws concerning cultural property and its export. The Convention on cultural property is, of course, gaining more and more signatories and this should be a reason for rejoicing. Much national legislation, such as that in force in Canada, helps museums to acquire cultural property, by refusing an export licence for any item of cultural property considered important, thereby giving cultural institutions the opportunity to acquire it at the market price. Had legislation of this type been in force at the turn of the century, Canada might have kept many of its indigenous works of art that are now scattered abroad.

Other legislation has an effect on the life of museums, since it affects neighbouring fields, such as laws on immovable cultural property, archaeological digs or certain provisions of criminal law defining 'pornography', which can be so broad that they include paintings of nudes!

Indirect aid

The public sector should create favourable conditions for the development of museums and cultural life in general, especially by a tax policy of incentives to cultural activity, measures that can be even more important than the above-mentioned legislation.

A striking example is provided by the United States, which by a single piece of tax legislation has revived interest in immovable cultural heritage. Although the American public sector is not directly involved in the conservation and preservation of monuments and buildings, indirect support through tax reflief brought in more than $300 million for cultural heritage in 1982/83.

The scope of French legislation (Law of 31 December 1968) concerning death duties which may be paid in the form of works of art, book, collectors' items or documents of great artistic value may be gauged from the Picasso collection, received in payment of death duties, which has enabled the creation of a national museum. There is also a law in France whereby a donor can bequeath an item of cultural property to the state, while remaining in possession of it throughout

his or her lifetime or that of the spouse; by making this gift to the state, the donor is relieved of death duties.

In Canada, although legislation in this area does not go very far, no less than 50 per cent of national museum acquisitions are obtained through gifts made for purposes of tax relief. On the whole, the factor which most encourages the private sector to give to cultural institutions is the granting of tax concessions to the donor. A report entitled *Funding of the Arts in Canada to the Year 2000* makes several suggestions: volunteers could deduct from their taxes non-reimbursable direct expenses, such as parking costs, incurred in the course of their voluntary activities; artists might pay their tax in the form of works valued at the market price; gifts to cultural foundations might be deductible at a rate of 125 per cent, as are investments in the oil industry. Personally, I should like to see some imaginative measures introduced. For example, tax concessions might be granted to volunteers according to the length of time that they devote to voluntary work. Even if this were only a token gesture, it would be perceived as indicating the public sector's willingness to encourage and reward voluntary work. Another idea, which would be very effective in strengthening ties between the cultural sector and tourism, would be to produce a 'cultural passport', that is, a booklet which would be stamped each time a museum or any other national significant cultural institution was visited. The visitor might have any expenses arising from such cultural visits refunded through tax rebates. All this shows that the role of the public sector is paramount in creating favourable conditions in which the other partners can play their part to the full.

A little money

The needs of museums will forever exceed the availability of funds, public or otherwise, simply because they are dynamic institutions and the fever of collecting knows no cure. The very purpose of museums is precisely to conserve as large a collection as can be had for present and future generations' use and enjoyment. In that context, museums can never call it quits. The public sector cannot forever say 'yes' to never-ending demands.

Authors have recently suggested that there are three perspectives in museums concerning public sector financing. The first perspective is called the 'royalist'. It is generally held by the largest, most established institutions, centrally located in large metropolitan areas. They believe that it is proper for governments to subsidize the arts, and that government support should increase rather than decrease. The 'realists', on the other hand, are generally found in medium-to-large institutions who perceive themselves to be making the best of current circumstances. They do not expect sweeping changes in either government or private sector attitudes. The last group, the 'radicals', think that neither government nor the business sector can or should be the salvation of the arts. They think that the traditional role of government in bailing the arts out of financial difficulties is debilitating, only promotes managerial mediocrity, and provides artificial support for groups which perhaps should not be saved. Answers to the question of funding by the public sector are largely based on these attitudes.

Recently, public financing from local rather than national sources has occurred in a growing proportion. Situations differ so greatly from one country to another, and there are so many specific characteristics, that overall conclusions are difficult to draw, and international comparisons are virtually impossible.

Different governments have hit upon so many new ways of subsidizing museums that it is a hard task to make a complete inventory. Canada has undoubtedly found some of the most original solutions. The cultural domain can acquire new funds through lotteries. The Federal Canadian Government pays for the insurance of major travelling exhibitions, for example, supplementing regional initiatives. In Canada, a twelve-page booklet lists the free services available to Canadian museums through the federal ministries and their agencies other than the national museums. Where all levels of governments are unwilling to provide 100 per cent financial backing, they have developed a range of highly effective procedures. In addition, museums will be increasingly called upon to earn a larger share of their operating budget. It is not inconceivable that free entry to museums will become a thing of the past if funding by the public sector continues to be sought. This opens up wholly new prospects for the operation of museums. Museums—and their managers—will have to learn to use marketing techniques to sell themselves to the public, since their fund-raising capacity will depend increasingly on their own efforts and their success in attracting visitors. This may seem like heresy to the 'royalists', but normal to most other people.

Not only funding

First of all: the non-financing role of the state is expanding and takes several forms. The necessary contributions of an overall policy, a legislative framework and a variety of forms of support have filled the gap created by the low growth of subsidies over the past two years. Secondly, a strategy of intervention for museums should be worked out which would introduce more arrangements for indirect support, either through legislation on the status of artists or more generous tax provisions for donors. This would lighten the public sector's contribution to museums. Lastly, a new partnership should be established between the public sector, museums and the private sector. The few available figures clearly indicate that the private sector has not completely filled the space left vacant by the relative withdrawal of the public sector from museum funding. This new partnership must necessarily be founded on a clear policy that only the public sector is in a position to announce and implement. So I shall repeat my initial conviction: it is the public sector that pays, but not only through funding. ■

FEATURE

As a supplement to the present number, we are pleased to publish the following article, which an abundance of material had made it impossible to include in No. 157 of Museum *on the theme 'Museums and Crafts'.*

The role of the Byelorussian SSR's museums in the preservation and popularization of folk crafts

S. A. Milyuchenkov

Born in 1949 in Minsk, Byelorussian SSR. In 1973 graduated in history from the V. I. Lenin Byelorussian State University. 1975–77 senior research worker at the National Museum of the Byelorussian SSR. Since with the Institute of Art, Ethnography and Folklore of the Byelorussian SSR Academy of Sciences as senior research worker. In 1982 awarded the degree of Candidate of Historical Sciences in ethnography. Author of a monograph on folk pottery in the Byelorussian SSR and of numerous articles and booklets. Co-author of several works on folk arts and traditions in the Byelorussian SSR.

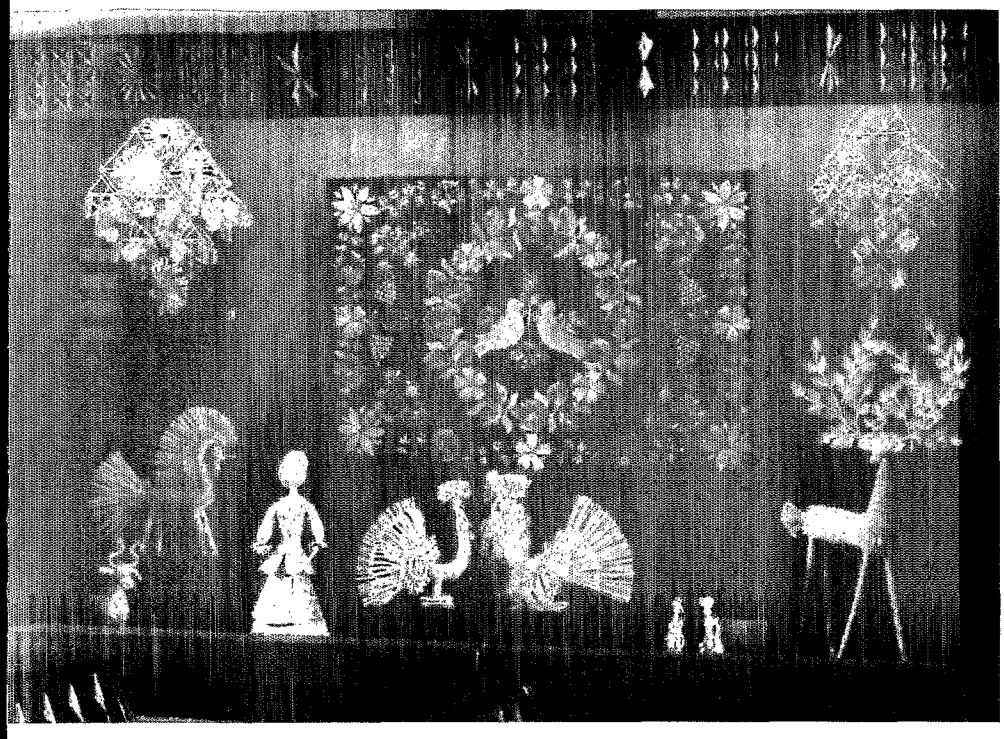
The first museum collections of works of folk craft were formed in Byelorussia in the nineteenth century, when many people still engaged in the various crafts and trades. Systematic collection, however, did not begin until the period after the Revolution. The first directions and programmes for the collection of ethnographic material were drawn up in the 1920s. Entry into war by Nazi Germany against the USSR in 1941 and the occupation of the Byelorussian SSR led to the destruction and looting by the invaders of the greater part of the richest collections of the Republic's museums. In the post-war period, beginning with the 1950s, work was resumed on the collection of examples of folk craft-work and articles that were part of the traditional way of life. Two events furthered the work of collecting material: the gradual re-establishment of the network of museums of regional studies and—still more important—the decision of the government of the Republic to establish the Byelorussian SSR State Museum in Minsk. The collection of examples of folk crafts has greatly increased in size over the last fifteen years.

The folk trades and crafts section of the museum collections of the Byelorussian SSR usually consists of a stock of articles and ancillary scientific material. These include artefacts and working tools, examples of folk art, descriptions of production techniques, and photographic material. The stocks are built up in various ways, in accordance with clearly defined programmes and plans, usually by obtaining them from the people in the course of expeditions to study everyday life in the past, or during ethnographic expeditions, or by purchasing them from the craftsmen who make them. At the same time, descriptions of the different types of craft and of the articles collected are written, and they are photographed. Through purchasing from working craftsmen, museums attempt particularly to stimulate their creativity. Experience has shown that this often gives museums a chance to commission the making of many articles that are no longer in use, the techniques for making and decorating them being in some cases almost forgotten.

As a result of systematic collecting, various collections of examples of traditional crafts and folk art have been built up in almost all the museums—there are more than forty—of local studies, ethnography and art at the national, provincial and district levels.

Some of the crafts represented

Weaving, embroidery, lace-making, pottery, wood-carving, painting, straw weaving, wicker-work and many other crafts are represented in the collections. Each craft is illustrated by objects with different characteristics depending on their purposes, the techniques used in making them, and local artistic styles—objects made of fabric, straw and wicker, wooden and ceramic vessels, furniture, toys, etc. Most of them were in everyday use before they were acquired by the museums, or were made with acquisition in view. Nevertheless, they are usually of quite a high aesthetic standard. Even today, it is difficult to say whether their artistic value or their place and role in the culture of the Byelorussian people is the



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A showcase containing straw artefacts, 1960–80, in the Raubichsky Museum of Folk Art.

more important aspect of these objects. Only time will tell. At this stage, it should be said that the many museum collections quite clearly demonstrate the wealth of applied art produced by Byelorussians, enabling us to understand its nature and traditions and to trace its development. However, the collections of the Byelorussian SSR State Museum, the Byelorussian SSR State Museum of Art and the Museum of Ancient Byelorussian Culture are particularly important. All the aspects of Byelorussian folk art and crafts, which in various forms are still alive today, are represented in these museums.

The largest collections in the folk-art sections of these three museums are the textile collections. These include altogether about 2,000 examples of home-woven articles—patterned towels, table-cloths, covers, rugs, runners and other items, as well as national costumes, which are closely related to this form of applied art. The costumes are made of home-woven, and in some cases of factory-woven, fabric. It is not surprising that the textile collection is so large, for weaving is the most widely practised form of Byelorussian folk art. Quite recently, at the beginning of the twentieth century, it was practised by women and girls in almost every peasant family.

The traditional textiles collected by the museums are of linen, woollen or hempen yarn, coloured with vegetable dyes. White linen fabrics decorated with red, red and black and occasionally black woven or embroidered designs are predominant. Often the cloth has a distinctive silvery patterned background, an effect obtained by the regular mixing of bleached and unbleached linen threads. In modern home-woven textiles, the designs are more complex and the colour range is wider, because factory-spun threads and homespun yarn coloured with chemical dyes are now more widely used in folk weaving. This change in the decoration of textile articles has been most marked in the design of bedspreads and rugs.

The examples of Byelorussian national costume to be seen in museum collections are distinguished by their vivid design, composition and decoration, of which there are a large number of local variants. The most richly decorated designs are found in female festive clothing. This consists of a white shirt with patterns on the sleeves, shoulder inserts, collar and front, a multi-coloured striped or checked skirt, an apron similar in colour and decoration to the shirt, a sleeveless jacket made of factory-woven fabric decorated with appliqué work, a patterned belt and a head-dress. The development of the art of embroidery is closely connected with the decoration of clothing.

In recent years the Byelorussian SSR State Museum and the Museum of Ancient Byelorussian Culture have built up large collections of examples of one of the ancient Byelorussian crafts—pottery. Museum workers in collaboration with scholars have carried out many studies in former centres of pottery work and in all those now active, and have collected articles from them. In this way examples of both traditional and modern folk ceramics have been added to the stocks; close contacts have been established with many craftsmen, the creative aspect of their work has been revitalized, and many of the old ways of decorating and protecting the surface of pottery articles have been revived.

At present the museums' collections include ceramics from about thirty pottery centres in all the historical and ethnographic regions of the Byelorussian SSR. The examples collected vary considerably in their form, dimensions and practical uses. In particular, there is a wide range of different types of vessels for the cooking, storage and transport of food, and also tableware and decorative ceramics, toys and other articles.

All these objects are interesting not only as part of a way of life, but also from an artistic and technical point of view. They show that each craftsman working in the different pottery centres often solved similar problems in his own way, using different methods of production and artistic techniques. For instance, articles made of speckled pottery, which were tempered after firing and dipped burning hot into a flour and water mixture, are very striking. This process made the clay vessel less porous, and its surface was covered with brown and black speckles, which produced a distinctive decorative effect.

Most of the folk ceramics are glazed articles. In their colouring they range from light yellow to dark brown, and they are often decorated with wavy linear ornament in counter-relief and underglaze painting with plant or geometrical motifs in two or three colours—white, green and brown paints on an ochre or red background. The many examples of glazed ceramics include numerous articles of a high artistic standard. Of

particular interest are the pottery articles from Ivenets in the Minsk district, with their polychrome geometrical ornament in the form of flows. They are represented by a large group of household and decorative pottery, the work of several generations of craftsmen.

Woodwork

Woodwork has for a long time been widely practised in the Byelorussian SSR, a region rich in forests. Naturally this is reflected in the museum collections, which include many traditional wooden tools and vessels. They show that Byelorussian wood-carvers characteristically have the ability to bring out the natural plastic qualities of the material in the sculptural and functional form of the articles they make. Decoration, if any, is restrained, and external qualities are stressed by the natural beauty of the colour and texture of the wood.

The people's artistic taste and interest in figurative representation can be seen most clearly in the simple silhouettes of carved salt-cellars and ladles. The handles of the ladles are decorated with a rosette, the symbol of the sun, and made in the form of the stylized head of a horse, duck or cock. The salt cellars' shape is reminiscent of a duck. Zoomorphic motifs in folk woodcarving are based on deep-seated traditions. They are connected with the spread of the cult of animals and birds in the depths of antiquity. Certain tools, mainly distaffs and the sticks used by reapers when tying sheaves, were also decorated with ornamental carving in counter-relief. Sometimes the folk craftsmen made wooden carvings of a religious nature. These articles are no longer in use, but thanks to the museums they have taken on a second life, and are enriching the contemporary folk art of woodcarving.

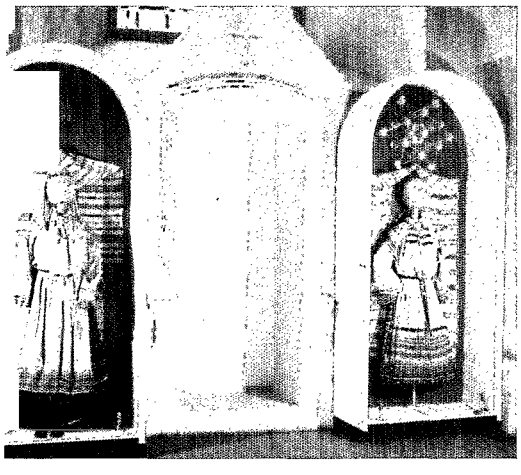
The examples of Byelorussian national musical instruments collected by museums reveal one of the outstanding aspects of traditional art, the wealth of cultural objects produced by the skilled hands of folk craftsmen. They are part and parcel of the culture of ritual occasions and feast-days and of the rural economy. The most complete collection of folk musical instruments is that formed by the Museum of Ancient Byelorussian Culture. This collection includes various types of self-sounding, membrane, wind and stringed instruments in wood, birch-bark, ceramics, metal and leather. The vast majority of them were made for the museum about ten years ago by folk craftsmen who maintain close links with many amateur folk-art groups and base their work on age-old traditions.

Among the articles produced by folk trades and crafts, those woven from straw, wicker and pine roots are of special interest. The museum collections include two large groups of such articles. The first includes baskets, purses, hampers, baskets for sowing seeds, measuring vessels and other everyday articles, most of which are no longer in daily use. They are of various dimensions and forms. Their striking effect is due to their structural design, colouring, weaving pattern and surface texture. Especially effective are the large vessels for the storage of corn, cereals and flour, made by the spiral weaving of skeins of golden straw with brown withies. Baskets for carrying various foodstuffs are also rightly included in the works of applied art. The rhythmical alternation of withies of the same or different thickness in combination with the spiral, intersecting or transverse-ribbed weaving pattern makes these articles extremely decorative.

Rebirth of straw art

The second group consists of articles made of straw: decorative boxes, figures of people, birds and animals, masks, various decorative compositions and panels, the consecration of an art based on ancient traditions. In the past, straw was used to make ritual sculptures and articles for interior decoration: the stars that are part of Christmas ceremonies, figures of people and birds, and garlands. The examples of straw holy gates, dating from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century, taken from the iconostases of village churches in the Brest District, which are now in the collection of the Byelorussian SSR State Museum of Art, are masterpieces of applied art. Their ornamental composition is elaborate, the exceptionally striking decorative effect being obtained by the skilful use of only two types of weaving in various combinations. The use of straw by Byelorussian craftsmen for such important purposes is a unique phenomenon in applied art the world over.

The modern art of artistic straw weaving in the Byelorussian SSR, which is based on rich folk traditions, has developed considerably in the last fifteen years. Its rebirth and development are primarily the result of the work of master



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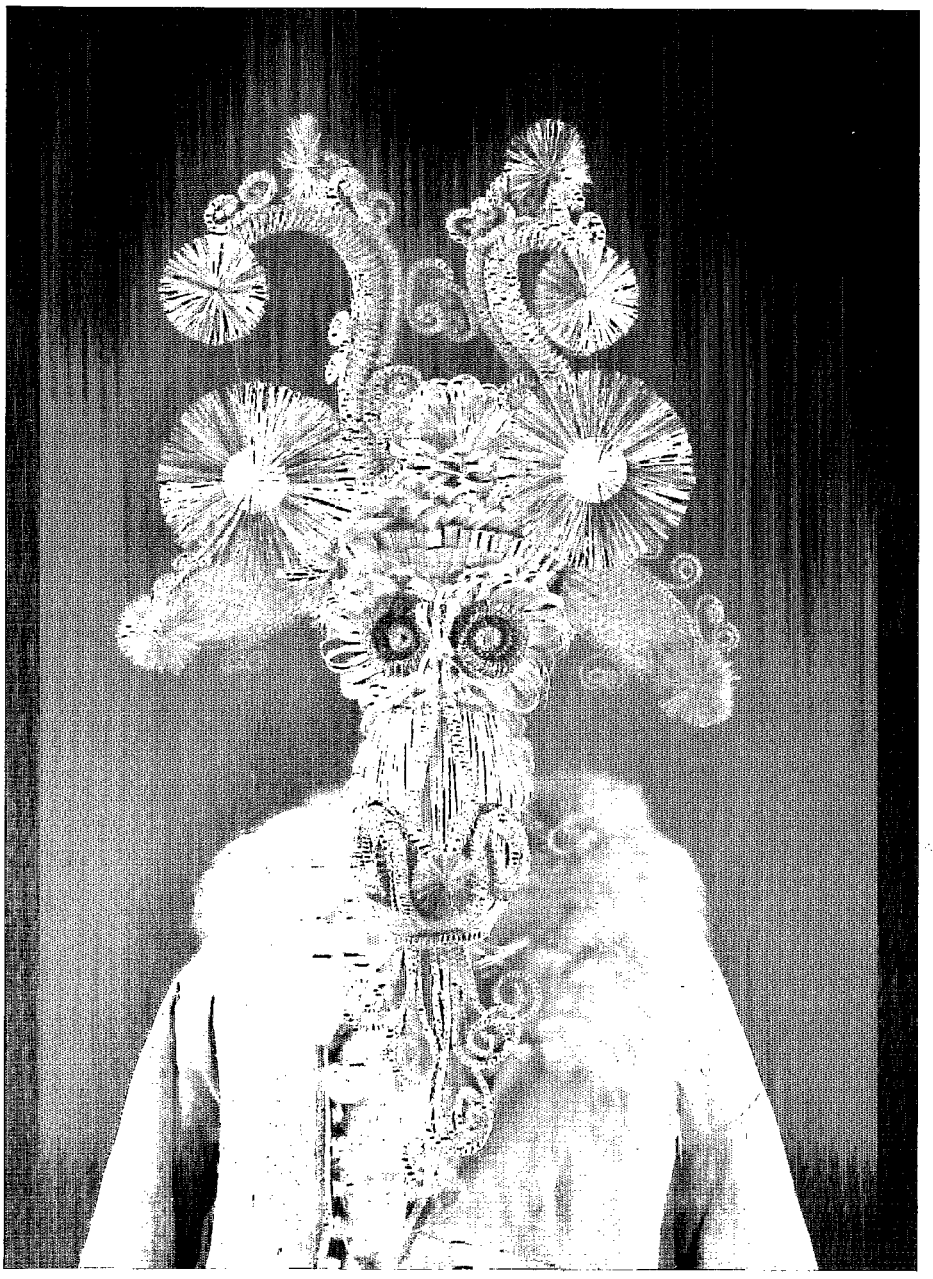
Zaslavl' Museum of Trades and Folk Crafts. Examples of Byelorussian national costumes from the early twentieth century.

craftsmen who have a sound knowledge of the traditions of folk art, and are able to combine new and ancient techniques of weaving, largely owing to their acquaintance with museum exhibits. The fame of Byelorussian straw-weaving craftsmen has now spread well beyond the Republic's frontiers. The imagery of folklore predominates in the works they produce, which today have their rightful place in the collections of many museums. It can be seen both in the subjects and in the very nature of the work of art. Figures of fairy-tale birds, horses and deer, animal masks and genre compositions illustrating the village way of life in the recent past are full of folk poetry and figurative motives from folklore.

In Byelorussian applied and decorative folk art, straw smoothed out and cut into shapes has long been used in appliqué work for rugs and for inlays in wooden chests, boxes, salt-cellars and frames. Today this art has reached a very high standard. In the museum collections it is represented by vivid decorative compositions depicting birds, animals and flowers which show up effectively against the black background of linen rugs, and by golden ornamental patterns of a geometrical nature on chests and boxes.

This description of the works of folk art in museum collections would be incomplete without some mention of the traditional art of decorative painting in colours. This is mainly represented by articles for the interior of the traditional home, such as chests, and rugs made of home-woven linen. The collections also include gingerbread and Easter eggs decorated with polychrome painting.



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Raubichsky Museum of Folk Art. Straw mask: 'Goat' by T. Agafonenko, 1976.

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Black-polished ceramics by A. Tokarevskij, 1977.

There is much else in the museum collections of Byelorussian folk crafts in addition to the categories just enumerated, including beautiful examples of applied art made of birch-bark, metal and paper. Every year new articles are added to the museums' stocks, providing evidence of the depth and variety of folk culture and the vital links between its present and past, which are of great significance for the future.

The museums' role

The work done by the museums of the Byelorussian SSR for the collection of such articles gives a valuable moral, creative and material stimulus to modern craftsmen working in folk arts. It draws the attention of various strata of society to their work, and thus raises their prestige in the eyes of the public, in particular through thematic exhibitions. Folk art and crafts are exhibited in many museums, but they are best represented in specialized museums. Each of these museums has its own specific architectural and artistic design, and its own distinctive theme and scientific conception, which in combination with the riches of Byelorussian folk culture and its wide variety, make the exhibitions unique both in design and in content.

Museums do much to popularize folk art by organizing exhibitions of their collections. Thus, in recent years the Byelorussian SSR State Museum has shown exhibitions of *The Folk Art of Byelorussia* and *The National Costume of Byelorussia* in Minsk and many other towns of the Republic, and also beyond its borders. The costume exhibition was also shown with success in France in 1981. Excursions, lectures, talks and other cultural activities are organized at the same time, and they, too, help to encourage the people at large to care for their cultural heritage.

The study and publication of the material collected are an important part of the activities undertaken by the museums of the Byelorussian SSR for the preservation of folk crafts. The work is performed both by museum staff and by specialists of the Academy of Sciences of the Byelorussian SSR. This arrangement has produced more than ten monographs, and museum catalogues and albums devoted to folk trades and crafts and different types of Byelorussian applied art published during the 1980s alone. This, together with the universal accessibility to the museum collections, is a great stimulus to artists and craftsmen, and fosters the maintenance and creative use of folk traditions in crafts today.

The outlook for museums working for the preservation and popularization of folk art in Byelorussia is good. The Government of the Byelorussian SSR has decided to set up a new museum—the Byelorussian State Museum of Folk Architecture and Everyday Life. Work on it is expected to be largely completed by 1995. This open-air museum, which will have an area of 100 hectares, will include examples of wooden architecture, cottages and farm buildings, and an exhibition of all the traditional trades and crafts of the Byelorussian people, many of which are still practised. This is another important step towards the conservation for posterity of the rich cultural heritage of the Byelorussian people. ■

[*Translated from Russian*]

There is more to come . . .

In future numbers of *Museum*, readers will find articles on:

- The situation and prospects of museums in countries where Portuguese is spoken.
- How museums might 'de-school' their education programmes.
- Computerization of Soviet museums (the Loch Ness Monster took part—but you'll find out more about that when you read the article).
- Business sponsorship of museum activities.
- A museum for the blind.

And . . .

- An unnecessary museum.

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