

# *Museum*

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## **Serving museums : external support**

# ***MUSEUM***

A quarterly published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris, is an international forum of information and reflection on museums of all kinds, designed to enliven museums everywhere.

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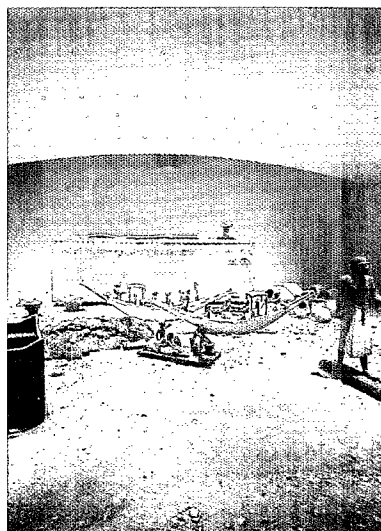


Photo by Guido Fino

**Optical-fibre lighting at the Turin Museum of Egyptian Antiquities (see article on page 208).**

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## CORRESPONDENCE

### *Questions concerning editorial matters:*

The Editor, Museum,  
UNESCO, 7 place de Fontenoy,  
75700 Paris, France  
Tel.: (33) (1) 45.68.43.81  
Fax: (33) (1) 45.67.16.90

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75700 Paris, France

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'The results obtained with [our] qualitative tests confirmed saliva as the "best" cleaner for the surfaces tested, especially for the gilded ones. Nevertheless, attention must be drawn to the fact that red and blue mat surfaces were slightly attacked, showing that saliva dissolves vermilion and azurite.'

Paula M. S. Romao, Adilia M. Alarcao  
and César A. N. Viana  
'Human Saliva as a Cleaning Agent  
for Dirty Surfaces'  
*Studies in Conservation*, London,  
August 1990

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*From the Editor*

*'A little help from our friends'*

In many parts of the world, museums' functions are becoming more diverse with almost each day that passes. Also, the possibilities offered to museums by every generation of new technology are barely understood, much less taken advantage of, before the next generation sweeps into view. In this bewildering and fast-evolving situation, it is no wonder that museum management increasingly calls upon external support in the form of services and products.

The practice is perhaps particularly widespread among medium- and smaller-sized museums; they cannot afford (or do not need) full-time highly qualified staff in certain areas of specialization. Recourse to external assistance can, however, also be observed in larger museums. And if it is found chiefly in industrialized countries, it may also be seen at least occasionally in the developing regions of the world.

To offer an overview of museums' present-day use of external support is the main purpose of this issue of *Museum*.

Despite space constraints, even our limited sampling ranges quite widely. Externally designed products covered below include all-glass display cases, signposting, optic-fibre lighting and tailor-made androids. Extra-mural services reported on here span professions as diverse as public relations, training of volunteer guides and stonemasonry in the restoration of monuments that are also museums.

The we/they relationships between museums, on the one hand, and external bodies and specialists, on the other, are not always problem-free, as is pointed out in the article immediately following this editorial, 'The Care and Feeding of Museum Consultants.' Yet the occasional misunderstanding or conflict must be overcome since, like the Beatles, more and more museums can probably only 'get by with a little help from [their] friends.'

After looking at this issue's main theme, we come to our usual four features. Following them is an exceptionally abundant harvest under our 'And what's more . . .' section. Here readers are invited, *inter alia*, to learn how one museum of modern art encouraged visitors to 'talk back' to it, to visit a single-parent museum in central Argentina and a rug museum on the Kazakh steppe, and to become acquainted with "Economuseology" – A New Term that Pays Its Way".

A.G.

P.S. We regret that his responsibilities as Director-General of the Caixa Foundation, Barcelona, have obliged Luis Monreal to resign from *Museum's* editorial Advisory Board; we thank him warmly for his generous co-operation over the years.

# We/They

## The care and feeding of museum consultants

Roger L. Wulff and Gonzalo Palacios

*As museums diversify and the management procedures and technologies they use become ever-more complex, they increasingly call on consultants for help. In this article, Roger L. Wulff, who is an American and President of Museum Services International, and Gonzalo Palacios, a Venezuelan and Director of the same firm, look at some of the advantages and pitfalls of consulting, and make some suggestions for museums wishing to call in consultants.*

What is a museum consultant? One might think of an 'expert' called in to identify, work on and solve a specific problem. Problem-solving is, however, only one of the reasons for obtaining the services of a consultant. None the less, it does point out an important factor: a consultant is 'called in'. Thus, the consultant is an 'outsider' to the museum, with all that this implies.

### Why use consultants?

The reasons for calling in a consultant are many and varied. A major one is that the consultant possesses certain specialized expertise for which the museum has a pressing need and which is not met by anyone on its staff. Often, the reason for the absence of on-staff expertise is that the organization does not require such expertise on a daily operational basis.

Secondly, a museum may use a consultant to solve a temporary personnel need with an eye towards employing him or her as a full-time staff-member at a later date. This is an extremely cost-effective method of recruiting staff, but it is not usually a good way to win friends in the consulting organizations from which the new staff-member is, as it were, 'poached'. Such a recruitment method also tends

to antagonize regular staff-members who may wish to compete for the position in question. Another reason to obtain the services of a consultant is that the chairperson of the board decides (often suddenly) to proceed with a project he or she has been thinking about for months, but who has no one on the staff capable of executing and completing it. Special projects occupy a good amount of a consultant's time and effort.

In addition to all the above reasons, some museums obtain the services of a consultant in order to provide an objective and independent solution for a problem which has defied the efforts of regular personnel. All individuals have their own subjective opinions, and have differing organizational pressures operating upon their thinking and actions. An individual from outside the organizational environment is often able to solve an insoluble problem by providing some fresh thinking on the subject.

Following the same train of thought, consultants are utilized by some museums precisely because they are not affiliated with any one product or service organization. Although it may be possible to obtain free consulting services from commercial businesses (especially in the design of certain systems they hope to sell to the user),



The scapegoat.

the end-product will be biased towards the product or products with which that organization is affiliated. Still another reason for obtaining the services of a consultant is not usually mentioned: that is that the consultant is retained when the museum is in trouble and needs a scapegoat.

### *The contingencies*

In financial terms, the museum consultant is quite different from the salaried staff-member. The consultant usually receives no regular compensation from a single museum (unless he or she is on the staff of a museum service organization funded by a local or national government or under a long-term contract to a single museum). This situation dictates some methods of operation which some museum staff-members may find objectionable. Museum staff-members should, however, understand how the profession of museum consulting works and what would happen were they in the same situation. Since the museum consultant receives no regular income from a single museum, services performed must be charged for on some regular and logical basis. The end-product of a consulting project being difficult to assess, the most sensible basis for charging for services performed is to charge

for the time spent upon the relevant project. The consulting rate per hour or per day will differ depending on various factors involved in the assignment. Yet, whether it be an hourly or daily rate, or the total cost of the entire project, it will be based on the time involved on the project.

Since museum consultants receive no regular income from a single museum, they also receive no traditional employment-related benefits (pension, medical insurance, life insurance, etc.), which must be purchased by the consultants themselves. Another element entering into the calculation of consultants' time rate is the fact that it is impossible for them to spend thirty-five or forty hours per week on a single consulting project (unless under a long-term full-time contract at one museum). It is no secret that a professional museum consultant must work on more than one project at any given time in order to obtain a sufficient level of income. Juggling time schedules for the different consulting projects, travelling time, preparation time, attending professional meetings and continuing-education activities, client contact and general office work, reveals that time spent actually working on the project – also known as 'billable time' – is about equalled by general administrative duties which occupy 'unbillable time'.

Another aspect of museum consulting which some museum staff-members find objectionable is the fact that consultants must constantly market their services to the museum community in addition to performing assignments. If museum consultants received a regular salary from a single museum or a group of museums, there would be no need to market their services to the museum community and all efforts could be focused on consultancy projects. However, this is not usually the case with independent museum consultants and they must market their services in order to retain their independence which, as remarked on above, is one of their attractive features.

We might ask whether there is any task within a museum that a consultant cannot do. The answer is 'yes'. A consultant cannot perform a task or work on a project which demands a constant presence in a museum or requires the consultant to make a major decision for the museum. Other than

these two elements, a consultant can tackle virtually any task within a museum.

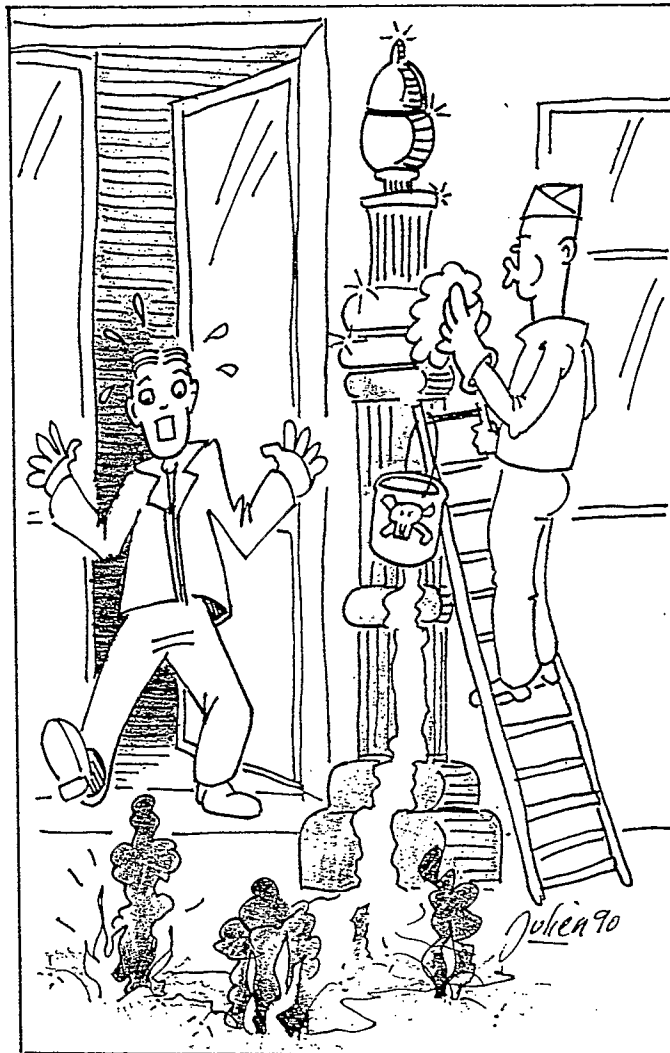
### *Selecting a museum consultant*

After the decision is made to obtain the services of a museum consultant, one must ask: 'How do I find the best individual or firm for this project?' Before beginning the search for the consultant, one should complete a description of the consultant's tasks for the project and the tasks or responsibilities of the museum staff involved in the project. This will not only help organize one's thoughts, but it will tremendously assist the consultant in understanding what is expected of him or her. The project description can also serve as the basis for a discussion of consultancy fees.

In attempting to find the best consultant for a particular project, a search of sources is wise: professional museum organizations, museum service organizations, etc., will be able to provide reasonably objective consultant information. Also, contacting colleagues within the museum community for referrals, recommendations, and information on experiences can be helpful, though these colleagues are not always objective. Once a list of three or four consultants or consulting organizations has been drawn up, direct contact should be made in order to determine: (a) their interest in the project; (b) their availability for the project; (c) who could do the actual work on the project and obtain CVs of individuals; and (d) the approximate costs involved. After all the above information has been studied, analysed and a decision has been made, the time to discuss a contract has arrived.

The contract is an agreement between two or more parties which covers all eventualities that might arise in the project. This is the time to remember two of Murphy's laws: 'Whatever

Cleaning up.

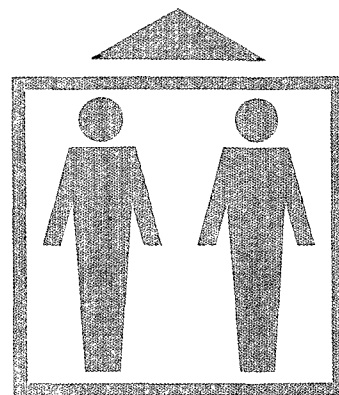
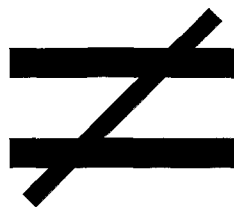
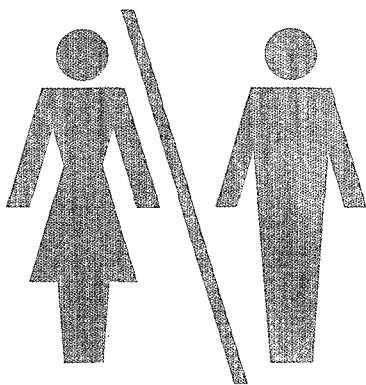


can go wrong, will go wrong' and 'When a piece of bread slips out of your hand, it will always land on the floor with the butter-and-jam side down'. Does this sound far-fetched? Here is an example of how Murphy's laws affected an actual contractual situation five years ago.

A large non-profit health organization contracted with a local service organization to clean and renew the surface coloration of two large bronze architectural lamps standing on either side of the white marble steps leading to the front door of its headquarters building, and the bronze flagpole in front of the building. The service firm cleaned the green surface material from the lamps and flagpole with the proper chemicals. But in the process of cleaning, the green tarnish flowed over the white marble staircase and platform of the flagpole. The health organization's contracting officer had not stipulated that the service organization was to protect the marble surfaces during the cleaning process; the green stain is still there!

The single most important factor in the relationship between the museum and the museum consultant is a continuous line of two-way communication. Without this, consultants cannot perform to the best of their ability and to the highest satisfaction of the museum client. Museum staff should understand how consulting operates and vice versa. Most reputable museum consultants are museum professionals who follow the same ethical codes as the staff, and are genuinely committed to the field of museology; they are just a little more independent and entrepreneurial. ■





## Signposting in museums

Patrice Roy

*Where can I buy a postcard? Where is the coffee-shop? Where is the pre-Columbian gold? Where are the Dogon masks (not to be confused with the Picassos, which are of course quite distinct from Fragonards)? Hell's bells, where is the way out? There is only one option open to the museum that does not wish to have a bewildering – even dangerous – Tower-of-Babel-like confusion on its hands, and that is to put up signs. In this article Patrice Roy, of the Paris-based Roy-Saier firm, which has been providing architectural and decorating services to museums and other official and private institutions since 1984, explains the ins and outs and some of the ups and downs of the art-cum-science that happens to be his profession: signposting.*

The problems associated with signposting are international: first, because museum visitors throughout the world are international; secondly, because every museum, be it in Africa, Asia or Europe, in the town or in the country, rich or poor, classical or modern, needs to provide clear directions for and look after its visitors, who often have little time to waste.

### **Museums: structure and content**

The question of signposting arises in two instances: (a) when a museum is under construction or renovation and a whole signposting system has to be designed for it; and (b) when an existing museum needs a new signposting system. In either case the object of the exercise is that visitors be informed in an effective manner of what the museum contains – that is, its collections, works, services and facilities – without disturbing either its internal architecture or its displays.

### **Role of signposting**

The role of the system is to incorporate two-dimensional information into a three-dimensional space. The designer must therefore co-ordinate two types of skills: graphic design, that is, the selection, drafting and layout of text and image; and product design, which concerns the object carrying the sign, such as a notice board, video terminal, interactive screen, console or reception desk.

The system must satisfy the follow-

ing five principal conditions: (a) it must furnish the right information at the right time; (b) it must be easy to read when the museum is crowded; (c) it must be compatible with the functioning of the building; (d) it must be integrated into the architecture of the building; and (e) it must be consistent with the museum's public image. It is easy to tell whether it is effective: the visitors don't complain, they don't get annoyed with the staff – and they come again.

### **Information in the right place**

Particular items of information are required at each stage of the visit; if it is given too soon visitors forget it and if given too late it is useless. A feeling that 'something is missing' can disturb people's perception: the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, after it had been restored, was opened to the public before the lavatories were operational, and visitors took the lift pictogram (a standard international symbol) for that of the WC. As soon as the lavatories were opened the confusion ceased.

### **The drawbacks of success**

The information should be legible to everyone. Apart from the questions of translation and colour-blindness (which affects 8 per cent of the population), this means that the messages must be visible.

Overestimating the number of people expected to visit a museum could make what should be a pleasant place



Entry sign.

for an outing look like a disused airport. Conversely, underestimating the number makes the signposting unusable. The Georges Pompidou Centre, which opened in 1977, houses the National Museum of Modern Art, the Industrial Design Centre, the Public Information Library and about a dozen exhibition galleries and conference rooms, all under the same roof. From the very beginning the number of visitors has far exceeded the most optimistic estimates: with an average of 26,000 a day, that is 5.7 million a year, it has more visitors than any other cultural institution in France. In 1978, it became evident that the signposting system had to be completely redesigned. The main concern was to prevent the crowds from getting jammed at the bottom of the escalators, lifts and staircases and in other areas.

***The architecture, or  
'What supports should  
be used for the signs?'***

Anyone fitting out a museum dreams of discreet but efficient, invisible but legible, minute but identifiable signposting. In practice, signs have long been considered unavoidable intruders that thrust themselves into settings

that were rarely designed for them, alongside works that had also not been created to fit in with signposts and placards.

If signs are now accepted (thank goodness!) it is probably because they have become an indispensable feature of contemporary museums. Because of this their design, the materials of which they are made and their colouring are as carefully planned as any other element of architecture or decoration. In the châteaux of the Loire valley, for example, the signposting reproduces the blue-grey of the slate and the white of the limestone. In Turkey, on the other hand, the colour we found was that of the whitewashed clay walls.

***Operation and duration***

Signs help the public to use buildings, but they also help buildings to adapt to its visitors. The system must necessarily be designed to incorporate any changes to the premises in which it is installed.

At CNIT, an international congress centre in Paris, all the information on each floor (covering more than 1,000 m<sup>2</sup>) must be capable of being changed in one night. To make that possible we

used a system of letters cut out by computer from adhesive film that can be removed by heat only – with a hair dryer!

### *Public image: a global concept*

A museum is a cultural enterprise. As such, it must present all its activities coherently to its patrons, visitors, partners, customers, and suppliers: this is the concept of the overall image. The co-ordination of all text, logos, iconographies and layout defines what is known as the graphic identity, which combines with the image of the collections, the buildings, the quality of service and the staff to form the global concept.

Redesigning the signposting, the most important link between an institution and its visitors, is often the most effective means of renovating its public image. For this reason the French Ministry of Culture has made us responsible for signposting in state-owned listed monuments managed by the Caisse Nationale des Monuments Historiques et des Sites. The special signs we have produced are designed to symbolize the dual character of the buildings in question, combining highly resistant materials such as enamel, which is stable and stands up well to heat and ultraviolet rays, with finishes that will alter and deliberately be allowed to acquire a patina of oxidation. The enamel represents the perennial character of the monuments, and the patinas of oxidation represent the inevitable and accepted erosion wrought by time.

### *Contemporary needs*

The permanent presence of signs is characteristic of contemporary cultural institutions. The complexity of the buildings is compounded by the visiting public's growing need for information. In January 1990, during the ten-day Salon International de la Muséologie et des Expositions, we were visited by 1,200 museologists. Some came from as far away as Seoul, New York, and eastern Siberia, while others came from Belgium. Each one had a signposting problem, which were all different; their needs could be met only by devising a tailor-made system for each. ■

# *Volunteer guides – a condemned species?*

Jan Swagerman

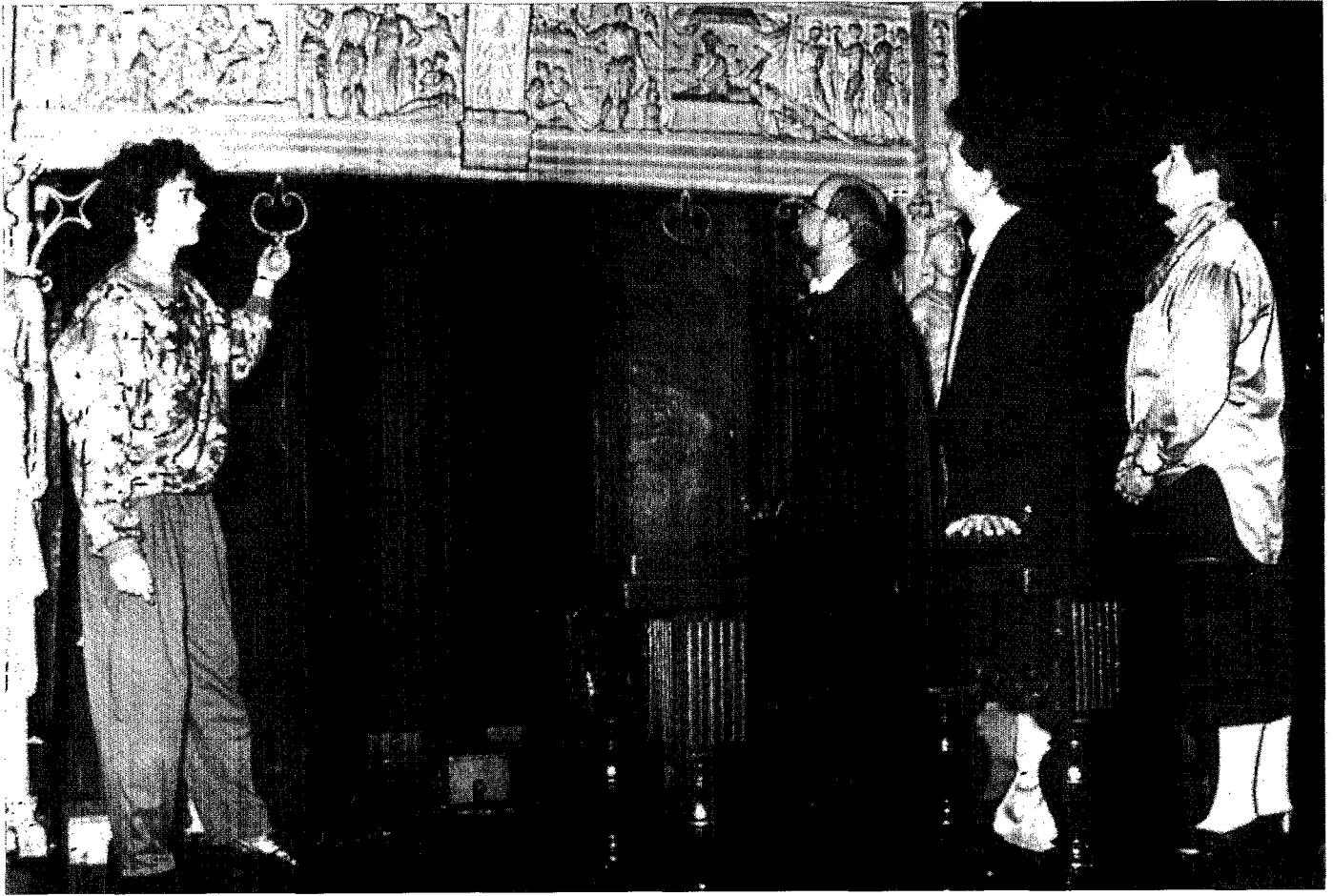
*Are the days of volunteer museum guides numbered? With big museums relying increasingly on professionals well versed in high-tech audio-visual equipment, and even smaller institutions moving down the road of professionalization, should volunteer guides look for alternative ways to invest their dedication and free time?*

*Netherlands museum consultant Jan Swagerman, M.A., thinks not. In this article, he draws on his experience in training volunteers to improve their guiding performance. And he invites Museum readers interested in finding out more to contact him directly: Postbox 1644, 1000 BP, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.*

Scenario No. 1: It's pouring with rain in a small town in the Netherlands. A raggle-taggle group of tourists seek sanctuary in a local museum in the hope of salvaging something from their afternoon in an unknown and very wet provincial town. Unfortunately, it's not their day. They enter what seems to be a reconstruction of a steam-powered mill. A local enthusiast overwhelms them before their raincoats are even hung up with facts and figures about atmospheric pressures in boilers and pipes. This guide seems to be more interested in his schematic diagram of the steam mill than in the wellbeing of his visitors. It is difficult for him to understand that there can be anything even approaching the fascination of a model steam mill. At the end of the visit the guide and the visitors go their separate ways with a vague feeling of disappointment.

Scenario No. 2: A group of post-graduate students undertake a journey to a science museum having been correctly informed that a variety of technical principles will be demonstrated and explained there in a lively manner. They are met by a bright spark with a pink spotted bow-tie who entertains them for the rest of the day. They are offered coffee and cakes and entertained continually with jokes and anecdotes. The visitors' attention is certainly captivated by this colourful figure. They are set one playful puzzle after the next. Great fun, but . . . They too leave the museum disappointed. The scientific information they had come for was not provided to them.

These are just two examples of what can go wrong when people with little more than good intentions take it upon themselves to be voluntary museum guides. Glossy museum brochures are fine, but a good guide will be remem-



Coen Admiraal

Student guide Elisabeth Vos in action.

bered most, and can be the beginning of the word-of-mouth advertising that is so important at this time when museums compete for 'clients'.

### *Professionalism versus volunteers?*

In the Netherlands today there is a movement towards the professionalization of all museum staff, a movement which will tend to sweep away non-professional volunteer guides. The question is, therefore, how can we train these volunteers to become more professional in their approach, and at the same time save them from elimination? Before suggesting some answers, let's see who these volunteers are. Museum volunteers in the Netherlands are as varied as the museums in which they work. Here are a few examples:

*Simon*, a radio enthusiast who has turned his enormous collection of wireless sets into a museum. Only half a word is needed to elicit a stream of fascinating information about broadcasting techniques.

*Piet*, a man with clever hands and a golden heart, a walking encyclopedia as far as information about his village is concerned, and the proud manager of the village museum. Indeed, it is difficult to convince him that there is anything of importance beyond the town limits.

*Tessa*, a student busy with a thesis which ties in nicely with the exhibition currently on show at the town museum. As far as details go, one can't fault her. Every date and stylistic detail is minutely explained... regardless of whether the visitors are interested.

Probably the only things these individuals have in common is that being a museum guide is not their main job, and that none of them has any special training as a guide.

In the present situation it is clear that this type of amateurism must become a thing of the past. For one thing, there is now such a wealth of audio-visual material available that amateurism is a no-longer-needed stop-gap. For another, voluntary work within the museum is often at odds

with modern management concepts; this is certainly true at large, busy museums in major cities. Rather than throwing the baby out with the bathwater, however, we should be putting more energy into increasing the effectiveness of our volunteer guides, particularly in small, specialized museums. It is my philosophy that the human being is an irreplaceable medium. The human being is the link connecting the world of interests and ideas that museum visitors bring with them into the museum, and the 'other world' that awaits them there. The human being possesses that special, subtle mixture of qualities other media lack by nature. Museum guides can function primarily as hosts, that is, as providers of advice and information. They can share their own experience, or help in integrating old knowledge with new. Often it will be the guide's enthusiasm and inspiration that will be most important; no machine, however sophisticated, can respond to a visitor's questions with genuinely inspiring enthusiasm.

### *Swim without getting wet?*

In his book *Educating Artistic Vision*, Elliot W. Eisner talks about a threefold approach to artistic education: content-specific, teacher-specific and student-specific. All three aspects are equally important. The same principle applies, I feel, to teaching museum guides. The first two necessities, a good exhibition and the openness of the visitors to the exhibition, are beyond the immediate control of the guide. He or she acts, rather, as a bridge between these two. Towards this end, several videos have been produced in the Netherlands, one of which is accompanied by a good, clear syllabus that can be used independently of the video itself. Nevertheless, this is a bit like trying to learn to swim without ever getting wet. The only real way to learn is by jumping in.

Your first guided tour is of course preceded, accompanied and even followed by the obligatory butterflies in the stomach. You may be lucky enough to have someone accompanying you on your first tour, but the time will come when you are alone for the first time with a group, and it won't be too long before you are confronted with a group that you find impossible

to make contact with. What do you do then? Although practical experience is indispensable, it is not sufficient. It is never a good idea to learn your skills exclusively 'on the job'. It is much better to practice with simulated reality first, together with other guides, in a safe – or at least less threatening – experimental environment such as a practical course, where a variety of styles and possibilities can be tried out, and where you will feel inspired and supported.

In different parts of the Netherlands, there are now courses designed specifically for training volunteer guides. The emphasis in these generally short and intensive sessions is on awareness of one's actions and how these respond to an interact with the needs and expectations of both the museum and the visitors. I myself have led a number of these and my experience prompts me to present – modestly – some observations and advice to readers of *Museum*.

How, for instance, can you break the ice and begin training at the same time? At one course I led, participants were first asked individually to introduce themselves by taking a few minutes to talk about one object brought from 'their' museum. These mini-presentations soon became a regular ritual which helped everyone to get to know each other, while also functioning as a good starting point for assessing presentation techniques. Ice-breaking and skill-building are all the more vital since in such courses one sees the same problem arising as is usually found in beginners' drama classes. It is always disconcerting to hear one's own voice, to observe the way one stands, the way one uses one's hands, as becomes quite obvious when a video-recorder is used and the tapes played back without sound.

### *What unexpressed expectations?*

In a later course, each participant was asked to prepare a mini-tour for the following day. Although it was made clear that this was going to be just a test of presentation techniques, quite a lot of people made a detailed study beforehand of the objects on display. This proves that it gives a great feeling of security to have plenty of facts at one's disposal. It is much more difficult to

get oneself and one's facts across, particularly since all parties involved in museum situations do not always articulate their needs. The central theme of a course book I have put together based on training carried out is, in fact, to find out what the unexpressed expectations are, be they the visitor's, the guide's or the museum's. The important point is to find a consistent approach to what are often contradictory interests. The guide is literally the mouthpiece through which the director of the museum speaks to the visitors. But different types of visitors require different interpretations of the collection. This diversity of communication makes it entirely possible that one guide will get on quite well with a certain group while another will not, simply because the second one does not speak the 'language' of that group. This applies quite often to work with teenagers.

The role of the museum guide is to convey involvement and enthusiasm, and to offer a new way of looking. In this sense, the museum guide is a kind of priest, initiating the visitor into a new, unknown world by opening a passage between the known, outside world and the unknown, inner world of the exhibition. The same is true whether it be a medieval castle or a reconstitution of a bakery. But if the general mission of the priest-guide is clear, the ways it can be carried out vary to a sometimes confusing degree.

There are, for example, many volunteers who have their own individual style of presentation. That is all very well, but it is not necessarily enough. It is thus often quite a struggle to convince these people to focus less on their own concerns and to concentrate more on the needs of different categories of visitors. In one course we tried to find out what the needs of a teenager might be in relation to a certain museum. We used a simple association technique. All the words we could think of associated with the

word 'teenager' were written down on the left side of a sheet of paper. On the right we wrote the word 'museum'. We then tried to find as many connections as possible between the two sides. This proved very revealing and useful.

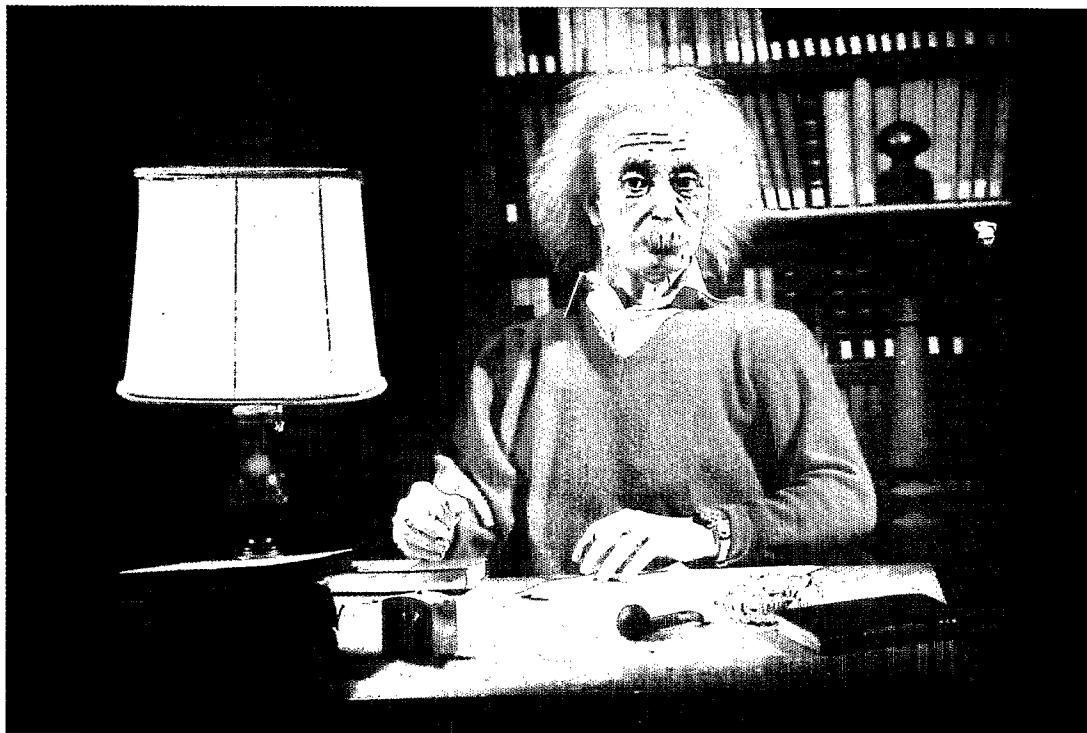
### *Communication, collections, results*

In my experience, training of volunteer guides needs to answer questions concerning communication, the collections and the results. First, how is information disseminated on a tour? Where do you give which information? How is it received? What questions do you ask, and why? How do you develop your story as you move from room to room? What needs extra attention – safety, museum image, the wishes of the group? How about other practicalities – the starting and finishing times of the tour, where the toilets are situated, the possibility of buying souvenirs at the end of the tour? Next, the collection itself. Is the exhibition the central focus of your presentation? Is there a particular theme to the exhibition, for instance a particular style or period? Does the display attempt to illustrate something abstract, such as social convention or morality? And last but not least, was the tour a success or a failure, and for whom?

In my view, there is actually no such thing as a good or a bad tour; rather, there should be continual refinement of your performance. Insistence on this constant improvement of volunteer guiding is the more important since in training designed to produce fully-fledged museum professional guiding quite often takes second place to curatorship and other aspects of museum management. This state of affairs is just one more reason to give support and attention to those who are trying to make the best out of a difficult job and who give freely of their time and energy to voluntary guiding. ■

# *Animation in museums – Did someone say ‘android’?*

A *Museum* interview



*Museum had an appointment that afternoon with Bernard Szajner, who is the ‘animator’, rather than the chairman and managing director, of Animation, Recherche, Technologie (ART). Punctual to a fault, Museum arrived slightly ahead of time, leaving behind the Paris of the twentieth century to enter a cul-de-sac in which Dickens or Balzac might have felt at home, with its weed-fringed paving-stones, its single or at most two-storey houses, where the few passers-by seemed to hug the walls. . . . There, Museum found ART’s headquarters, a former workshop now converted into a denlike office crammed full of computers and hi-tech gadgetry.*

*Bernard Szajner was still in conference, so Museum asked for some background information. Coffee was served and an invitation to watch a video of L’Esprit de la Révolu-*

*tion, a show created by ART as part of the festivities to celebrate the Bicentenary of the French Revolution in 1989.*

*No sooner had the small screen lit up than a folk character from the late eighteenth century appeared. Without more ado, the tatterdemalion introduced himself:*

*It’s me, François the Pedlar.  
Buy my pictures, buy my ribbons!  
Tuppence a song . . . !’*

*And François began to recount in a stentorian (but strangely familiar) voice the first stirrings of revolution in rural France in 1789. His gestures were somewhat ostentatious, his mouth a shade toothy, but these histrionics, no doubt unobtrusive at night and from a distance (the television screen can be pitiless to actors!), were redeemed by the little monkey perched on*

**Did someone say ‘Albert’?**

Photographs by courtesy of ART

*François's shoulder, which now and again nodded its head as it hearkened to its master's highly instructive tale.*

*Doubtless beguiled by the excellent coffee, Museum took a moment or two to realize that François was not an actor – not a human Thespian, at any rate, despite the superb voice of Jean-Louis Barrault any more than the monkey was a real animal. Robots, perhaps? Not at all. Automata, then? Wrong again. Today, the talk is of 'androids' – and there are more and more of them to be seen in museums.*

*Androids: this was precisely the topic we had come to talk about with Bernard Szajner, who entered the room at the very moment the 'François-the-Pedlar' video was coming to an end, just as a somewhat baffled Museum was finishing the coffee. . . .*

*Museum:* Shall we start with a little history? For instance, Henri IV of France, who put on shows in the Château of Saint-Germain-en-Laye that ended with the audience being copiously sprinkled with water by automata. . . .

*Bernard Szajner:* When François I met Leonardo da Vinci, whom he called his father, since he regarded him as someone quite out of the ordinary, Leonardo is said to have made an automaton, a lion, which stepped up to the king and opened its jaws releasing a shower of fleurs-de-lys.

*Museum:* We have got to the heart of the matter right away.

*B.S.:* We have indeed! There had to be a meeting between those two remarkable personages. And what did Leonardo do? He set the stage for the encounter, the better to transport the king into his own world. To do so, instead of addressing him directly, he paved the way for the message he had to convey, preparing the ground for their exchange by means of that extraordinary act of magic – a theatrical build-up.

Our approach is the same as Leonardo's. We set the stage so as to create a build-up, to put the public in the right frame of mind. Our stage-settings serve as a key to open locked doors and remove barriers, when the subject is complicated or boring. Our role is to set the stage in such a way that the living world, real or imaginary, is recreated, so that the public responds with enthusiasm and wants to know more.

That's why that image of Leonardo da Vinci and his lion perfectly symbolizes the work we are doing.

*Museum:* But what is your background? Acting?

*B.S.:* I am totally self-taught, a dilettante in the true (and best) sense of the term, that is, someone who does only things he enjoys doing, things he's mad keen on. Initially, I studied electronics, and today I am, among other things, the manager of a firm, albeit a rather special type of firm. This firm is the perfect, and necessary, tool for bringing together a technically skilled, creative team, one that believes passionately in what it's doing and is able to design and make a living reality of the projects we originate. In the team, I'm not only the company director but also the one who devises the shows. I devised and staged a show for the Bicentenary of the French Revolution. I'm also involved in studio recording work; for example, I composed the music for that show.

*Museum:* So, you are a project designer, composer, performer, businessman and manager.

*B.S.:* Yes, but hold on; I'm not the one who does everything, far from it. My overall grasp of the job, including the technical side, enables me to harmonize the operation as a whole. But each member of the team is perfectly familiar with the other jobs involved. In fact, my own role is above all that of, let's see . . .

*Museum:* 'Animator'?

*B.S.:* 'Animator', right. But let's come back to the automata, to their origins. There are lots of anecdotes like the one about Leonardo da Vinci – or about Van Kempelen, the chess-player, who, legend has it, was sometimes a real automaton, sometimes a man disguised as one. There are all kinds of extraordinary tales focusing on humanity's age-old fascination with this quasi-divine ambition to create life by artificial means. However lifelike or unlikelike the motions they go through, we are fascinated by automata.

*Museum:* How do you account for this fascination?

*B.S.:* The ingenuity, the observation and patience that were needed in order to translate human gestures into mechanical operations, for example in the eighteenth century, was quite fantastic! Today, there is probably no longer anyone capable of making automata as they were made in those days, in so sophisticated and elaborate a way. At least, if it were possible, the price



would be prohibitive. Those automata were built in an age when time did not have the same value as it has today. Some people may well have spent their entire lives at it. I believe those old craft workers solved the problem of getting the balance right between function and beauty long before the word ‘design’ was coined.

### *Dinosaurs and the ratburger*

*Museum:* What was the first museum you came in contact with?

*B.S.:* The Musée Grévin, with its fabulous waxworks. I must have been eight years old. The first time I saw an automaton was in a museum, the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers; I must have been seventeen at the time. I visited the museum, and was struck by the automata – which are still there today. That experience must have lodged itself in the back of my mind, together with my memories of the waxworks in the Musée Grévin.

*Museum:* And how did you first come across androids as a museographical aid?

*B.S.:* I was sent by the Cité des Sciences et de l’Industrie at La Villette on an assignment to the United States, to look into the new audio-visual media that might be used at the Cité, then at the blueprint stage. That was the first time I got to grips with museum problems. The study assignment took me to Epcot Centre, Walt Disney’s last creation. I was bowled over by it! Walt Disney, who called himself a public entertainer, paradoxically taught me a great deal about scientific, historical and technical matters through his shows. The information, aimed at the general, lay public, is presented in such a simple, warm, persuasive manner that you take a real pleasure, a genuine delight in discovery.

For example, in the energy pavilion you are transported back to Palaeolithic landscapes, surrounded by dinosaurs and pterodactyls, and you have the impression of actually being there. You are so keyed up, so receptive that, when it is explained that that was the period when the oilfields were being formed, the information is imprinted indelibly in your brain. What better means could one dream of to ensure that such knowledge is taken in, understood and the gist of it retained?

At Epcot, I attended three-dimensional presentations, strongly influenced by the theatre, in which the actors were replaced by a new generation of automata that Disney’s team had developed twenty years earlier, using a technique known as ‘audio-animatronics’. ‘Audio’ because they speak, and ‘animatronic’ because they are electronically operated.

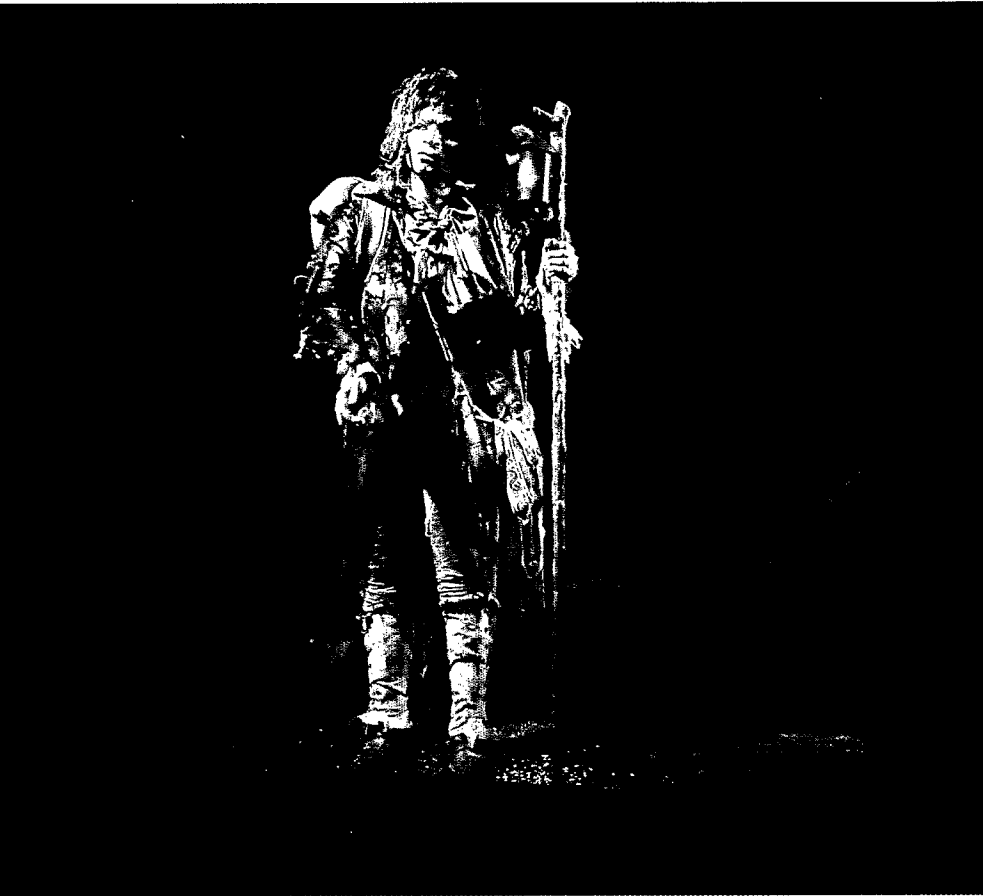
*Museum:* What was the spin-off from that assignment?

*B.S.:* As far as I was concerned, enormous enthusiasm and the desire to create automated shows that brought knowledge, information and entertainment to the public. That was some ten years ago, and staging automated shows was already entering the realm of things we could do: sets, sound, images. . . . The only thing we didn’t go in for was the famous audio-animatronics.

We therefore launched our own operation, our ambition being to develop the manufacture of these animated figures we called ‘androids’. We preferred in fact to find our own name for them, rather than to gallicize Disney’s term. Besides, the word ‘android’ is to be found in Diderot’s and d’Alembert’s *Encyclopaedia*, and denotes an automaton resembling a human being.

From the Cité des Sciences et de l’Industrie we received an order for the prototype of an animated head. Our enthusiasm for our work drove us to go further, and to create not just the prototype of a head but a whole android, complete with moving arms, which performed in a setting complete with props.

For us, that prototype marked the start of an activity that we have been developing for many years now. The research that has gone into it has been very costly and, with the exception of a small grant, entirely unsubsidized. Fortunately, orders began to come in. For example, there was a show that was put on and subsequently relocated several times at the Cité, and that ran again for two years without any kind of breakdown – which gives you some idea of the degree of reliability of our productions. There was also a temporary exhibition on the theme *Innovation and Setting Up in Business*. A short scene located in a fast-food restaurant, ‘The Ratburger’, was acted out by several characters representing a fairly broad cross-section of society. These androids, slightly



'It's me, François the Pedlar.  
Buy my pictures . . .'

over three feet tall, fell into a discussion on innovation and setting up in business as though they were characters out of a La Fontaine fable.

The show, which was greeted enthusiastically by the public, then went on a six-month tour of the provinces, under canvas. Lastly, we put on a show in the entrance to a temporary exhibition on agribusiness, which also enjoyed considerable success. It emerged from an assessment of the public's reaction that 80 per cent preferred that little show to the exhibition as a whole.

### *A matter of ethics*

*Museum:* After that?

*B.S.:* Well, for the *Eureka* exhibition at the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie, we created an 'Atlas' android, over two metres tall, set up in the entrance to the exhibition, who greeted visitors in stentorian tones and briefed them on what they were about to see.

*Museum:* What would you reply to someone who might say that they did not want to be conditioned in their responses by the organizers of an exhibition?

*B.S.:* You have put your finger on a tricky issue, one that affects everything to do with communication. We are convinced that, if a message is well designed, the public will be more receptive to its information content, and so more satisfied. Hence visitors will leave the exhibition or the museum with the perfectly justified feeling of having learned something.

The role of the Atlas android was to blot out the preceding environment, to help them make the transition. Its height, its voice and its impressive utterances all had a 'shock effect' on the public, making visitors more receptive to the exhibition they were about to visit.

*Museum:* To which it might fairly be replied that that was exactly how film directors operated under Hitler, for example Leni Riefenstahl in *The Triumph of the Will*.

*B.S.:* Let us not confuse the means with the end. The use of staging techniques for propaganda purposes by the Nazi regime was undoubtedly highly effective, and posed a problem of ethics with a vengeance. And I can tell you we are fully conscious of the problem, and have already turned down orders.

*Museum:* For example?

*B.S.:* We were asked, for instance, to use laser effects to animate a certain politician's speech. We refused, and the reason I gave at the time was precisely the Nuremberg association. The fact is, we don't consider that we have the right to promote one or another party line.

### *'No' to lazy communication habits*

*Museum:* Let's change the subject. Has there been any museum order that you found humorous?

*B.S.:* We've found all our orders attractive. For example, *Le Rêve de Petit Pierre* (Little Peter's Dream), concerning the relationship between the tool and the human hand, an extremely knotty, laborious subject that we had to make comprehensible to a young audience. We chose to treat it in the simplest possible manner. Little Peter is in his nursery, daydreaming, and starts a discussion with his marionette, Pinocchio. Pinocchio is in fact a most interesting character, straddling the frontier between two worlds: the

world of human beings and the mechanical world. Like the others, this scene is designed to meet two essential criteria: to be enjoyable, and at the same time to convey knowledge – to put across information. Nevertheless, the aim is never to say everything there is to say about a subject, but rather to provide a key that will enable the visitor to open a door and find his or her own way around the exhibition.

*Museum:* Isn't there a risk that the androids will put actors out of business?

*B.S.:* Certainly not! I'm an actor myself on occasion, and sensitive to such problems. Androids are employed only when real-life actors can't be. You see, androids aren't locomotive, they can't move around, nor can they call upon the vast range of expressions that humans can. They are endowed with a vocabulary of facial expressions that remains pretty rudimentary.

Also, they are actors without talent, which paradoxically enough is an advantage. They have only as much talent as the director has, but they're absolutely faithful. In other words, if the director is gifted, the android will be equally so, consistently, endlessly in fact.

Another thing: employing androids makes it possible, again paradoxically, to put the best actors on stage, those one would never have dared to dream of 'directing'. For example, in the case of the show for the Bicentenary of the French Revolution organized in the Tuileries Gardens, the pedlar's voice was that of Jean-Louis Barrault. It was any director's dream a dream, though, that could never have been realized if Jean-Louis Barrault had had to perform on stage non-stop, every ten minutes, twelve hours a day, seven days a week, for months on end.

*Museum:* Androids are a spin-off of high technology. What are their most remarkable features?

*B.S.:* Many. I can quote to you the example of the number of movements brought into play by the androids' performance: 20,000 mechanical movements every day, a very considerable figure. The degree of reliability needed for such performances can easily be measured. Try and build a motor-car that had to run ten to twelve hours a day, seven days a week, all the year round, without any servicing!

*Museum:* If a museum with a relatively fat bank account wished to place

an order with you, what three pieces of advice would you offer it?

*B.S.:* First, to reread the definition of a 'museum' adopted by ICOM, which in my view is decisive, and highlights the key role of every medium of communication. Visitors need things to be presented to them in an attractive way.

Second, since the public today is surrounded by highly sophisticated communication gadgetry, it is undoubtedly essential to make the most of technology's potential in order to bring people enjoyment, albeit with certain safeguards, such as not using technology as an end in itself, but only as a means. The aim must be to call on technology when it can help to get the information across, and not in a systematic, mechanical or unthinking manner, which is a soft option leading to lazy communication habits.

Finally, structure the visit. Make it, and the entertainment it provides, a progressive experience. In other words, map out the exhibition as an introductory tour, with alternative itineraries branching off. Either visitors prefer to be guided, in which case it is necessary to help them to find their way around; or they want to remain free, in which case it is vital to maintain the coherence of the exhibition, regardless of the itinerary chosen. This boils down to putting visitors in the right frame of mind for the discovery they are about to make.

*Museum:* Let me end this interview with a personal impression: you and François the Pedlar are a bit alike, in the sense that your business is to sell images, notions and songs, and so on.

*B.S.:* That's true. The pedlar's pack contains all sorts of treasures, so everyone can discover in it something he or she can learn more about – with enjoyment. ■



## *In love with glass*

Till Hahn

*Without glass, most museums simply could not function. But, as with many things in life that are indispensable, glass tends to be taken for granted – with, perhaps, the special excuse that, in display cases and vitrines, it is used precisely in order not to be seen. ‘Out of sight’ should not, however, mean ‘out of mind’, as is shown in this account by the director of an old and well-known firm specializing in providing glass to museums, of his company’s story.*

I first thought of calling this article ‘The History of Display Cases’, but that would have been a real exaggeration since glass-sided boxes have been built for museums for rather longer than Glasbau Hahn has been in the business. This being said, we are not exactly newcomers since the first all-glass display case was invented and built by my father, Otto Hahn, in 1935; so we have a respectable half-century’s experience as purveyors to museums (and much more in dealing with glass).

After school Otto Hahn had been trained in the glass business of his father, and grandfather. Then he contracted the wanderlust bug and went to the United States, mainly New York and Los Angeles. There, he discovered that shop-window glass was often mitred at the corners and joined with a glue instead of a vertical mullion, a pretty solution to the old corner-joint problem. This was done, however, not for aesthetic reasons, but rather to save the cost of corner posts. Also, the

**Typical example of a hood case, perfect in respect of simplicity and dust-protection. The whole hood must be lifted to place a display, however, and the case size is thus limited by its weight.**

grinding of the glass edges was rather crude, the glue brittle, and additional clamps were used to keep the corners where they should be.

Nevertheless, when Otto Hahn returned to his family business in Frankfurt he experimented with the same all-glass technique for display cases. His father was not at all enthusiastic about his son's ideas, but tolerant enough to give him a chance. The advantages of an all-glass hood case are obvious: it is the least visible means to protect an exhibit, thus concentrating the interest of visitors upon the *objet d'art*, rather than distracting them with a shiny metal frame or heavy woodwork. The French author and pilot Saint-Exupéry once said:

'Perfection obviously is achieved not if you can't add anything but if you can't leave off anything!' The all-glass hood case is a perfect example of this epigram. Today, these thoughts seem logical enough; but one must realize that in 1935 Otto Hahn was the first in Europe to bond glass to glass, creating three-dimensional corpuses, rather than using glass only to fill open spaces. The start of production was not easy. First of all, the glass had to be cut and processed to much higher tolerances than earlier, since the edges were completely visible and would not hide inaccuracies as frames would.

Next, the glass cement, which Otto Hahn originally imported from the United States, showed its limits. After curing, the glue became very hard and brittle. So he started himself to mix a glass cement that was strong but still retained a certain elasticity, was difficult to cut open but yet repairable, and that formed a strong joint but, if overstrained, gave way before the glass broke. These requirements were self-contradictory; therefore a good glass cement could only be a compromise between opposing qualities. One of Otto's secrets in making this cement was the addition of rabbit fur to the

mixture with an effect similar to blending straw with mud. [How ever did he hit upon rabbit fur for this purpose? – Ed.]

The first all-glass hood case was marketed by one of his employees and Otto Hahn himself, in a wooden box with two traps and carried by hand. Thus encumbered, they visited department stores, architects, collectors and – of course! – museums. The elegant, clean lines of the all-glass cube met with immediate interest and acceptance. 'The time was right,' recalls Otto Hahn, who at 85 still works in his office. 'The Bauhaus style had developed; architects and designers were searching for a new simplicity.'



The three Hahns: Otto ...

### *Beautiful but unpredictable*

Success, however, only stimulated further innovation. The hood case might be perfect in design, dust-protection and cost. But its size was limited by the strength of the people who must lift it. 'How can we have access to the inside of a case without lifting the glass cube?' Otto asked himself. And he answered: 'If we can't raise the top, let's drop the bottom!' By turning a crank the display platform could be dropped into the base to receive the display there and be raised again afterwards. He even got a patent for the idea; but I don't remember if we ever sold one precisely of this kind.

My father was not satisfied. 'If you ponder about a problem long enough,' he said, 'something is bound to come to mind.' I am not sure how long he mull'd this one over, but the result was a new patent, which proved a major innovation and started a worldwide recognition of Hahn All-Glass Display Cases: the three-way sliding door! A proper sliding door is supposed to move right and/or left, which requires

a gap between the movable and fixed panels. When closed, Otto's door was pressed against the body of the vitrine. To open it you first had to move the bottom of the sliding door outwards about 10 mm away from the body of the case and only then slide it to either side. Eureka! The three-way sliding door combined ease of access with the near airtightness of a hood case.

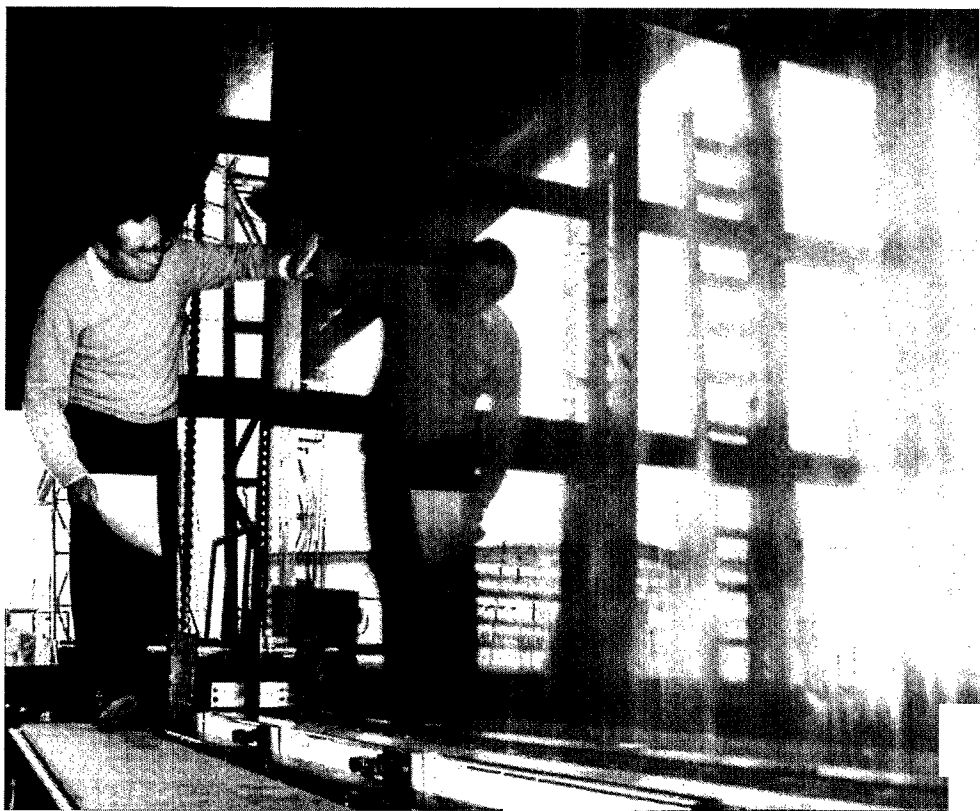
As things developed, there was hardly a limit to the design of cases. They grew bigger and bigger, longer and longer, wider and wider. My father, you see, is a unique combination of craftsman and a do-it-yourself physicist. He started to experiment with glass to find the limitations of this beautiful but also often unpredictable material. To work with glass is a little like playing with a baby tiger. You can get a nip in the hand and really wonder what for! You really have to love glass in order to understand it, and even then your grasp of it will only be partial. It is only in recent times that serious studies have been carried out to get very precise data; but there still is a 'twilight zone', because the behaviour of glass depends very much on the raw materials used, the cooling process, the kind of cut used and the clean-edge work.

Otto's two-man crew for display cases soon expanded into an ever-growing department of Glasbau Hahn, and even his father, Heinrich Hahn, had to admit that his son's 'crazy ideas' had proved successful. Indeed, the firm received recognition and laurels, such as a Grand Prix in Paris (1937), an Award of Honour in Brussels (1958) and, recently, the Deutsche Auswahl (1985).

### A confession

Do I lack modesty? Not at all, since this is the moment to make a confession: Glasbau Hahn did not design all these new techniques and offer them to the astonished world *ex nihilo*. Often it has been the other way round, in fact. Architects, designers and museum specialists all over the world called on us for ever more intriguing and daring constructions. We never had much chance to rest on those laurels we had won, but had to keep on thinking and developing. We do not consider ourselves to be any brighter than other people. Nevertheless, almost everybo-

... Thomas and ...



dy at Glasbau Hahn is a highly trained craftsman, in love with and dedicated to our work. Therefore we hate to say no to a request for a new design or approach. Rather, we take pride in finding a solution, often in the form of an idea which might seem to be utterly insane at first glance.

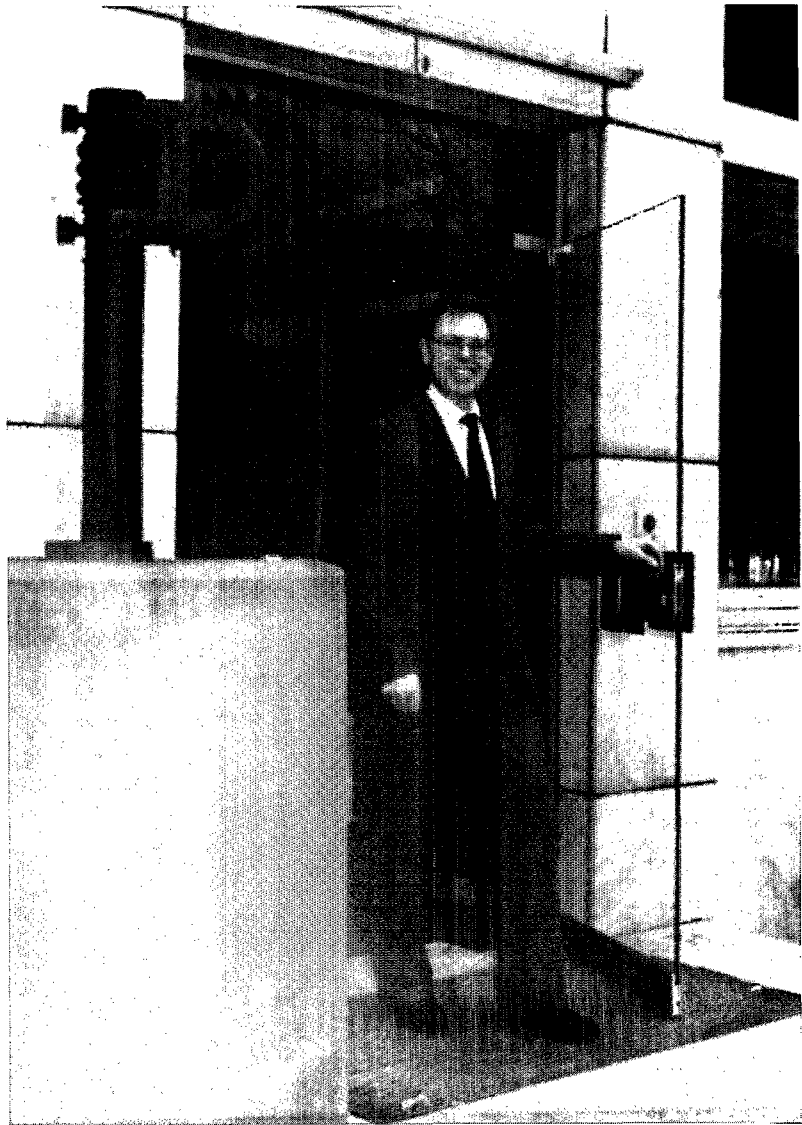
For instance, we owe the design of the Otto Hahn Module System to the director of a museum who wanted a modular display-case system without unsightly vertical posts, with modules of uniform sizes, and easy to transport, install, take apart, add on to, regroup and so forth. The main problem was the need for a sliding door, still with the proven three-way action, but able to move in front of adjacent panes. Otto's best 'student', Klaus Fischer (now head of the display case department), solved the problem with an ingenious invention, the dual sliding door.

With the exception of a few standard-sized table cases and the Hahn Module System every single case at Glasbau Hahn is custom tailored. I

shall never forget the incredulous eyes of an American visitor, who had asked for the price of a case 38 centimetres longer than our recommended size listed in the catalogue. 'But this is not a standard size!' exclaimed the gentleman when I mentioned that the cost would be almost the same. 'Well,' I said, 'we have no standard sizes, but are here to build the display case you want rather than to restrict our clients to certain models.' I should add that some of our tailor-made products do look a bit odd, much to the dismay of my father, who still keeps a watchful eye on our commissions. (I like to recall that he, in turn, sometimes left his own father shaking his head in dismay.) The main point is that we owe most of our ideas to our clients; our job is simply (?) to make them work.

Having talked about the outside appearance and qualities of a display case, let's also take a quick look at the inside. We often are called on to quote for an 'airtight' case. Well, for the fun of it we once built an airtight one-cubic-metre

... author Till.



glass cube, each side measuring exactly 1,000 mm, made out of 8-mm float-glass on all six sides. It lasted exactly six hours. Then, because of the rising barometric pressure, it imploded! (When people say 'airtight' they usually want us to build a dust-protected case. This we can do!)

### *Creative crossfire*

If a case could consist of glass only we would not have to worry about environmental problems which might endanger the conservation of exhibition material. Steel or aluminium are on the safe side; but what about lacquer? We buy blockboard or plywood with an extremely low amount of formaldehyde; but what if the wood was contaminated while it was still growing in a polluted area? The textile cover of the display platform can be dangerous, too. In such instances 'fairly airtight' vitrines can accumulate a concentration of possibly dangerous fumes, which are quite noticeable if, when

you open the case, you take a sniff inside (I don't advise it).

It has been a long way from the first all-glass hood case Otto Hahn and his mechanic trotted around to prospective customers until the many cases we have built for the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Louvre, and so on. However the forms change, and whatever the technical (and technological) innovations may be, we are constantly caught in a creative crossfire, faced with a need to combine the aesthetic requirements of design with the necessary functions and performance of the case. For us, including my brother Thomas, this is a challenge, keeping us on our toes and constantly looking for new solutions and constructions; in any event always in love with glass. ■

# LET THERE BE LIGHT

*In the following two articles, Anna Maria Donadoni Roveri recounts how optical-fibre lighting was experimented with at the Turin Museum of Egyptian Antiquities (where she is superintendent), while Pier Enrico Gurlino and Carlo Albana (specialists with the Luceper company that undertook the work) explain the advantages of this new form of museum illumination.*

## *A 'first' in Italy*

Anna Maria Donadoni Roveri



'Light means damage in the museum' – so begins an article by C. Thomson and L. Bullock on 'Conservation and Museum Lighting'. On the other hand, it is also obvious that in total darkness a museum would be utterly useless. It is thus between these two extremes that museum staff must manoeuvre, without, of course, forgetting what has been known and repeated for a long time about the damage that light can cause, particularly to more fragile material such as textiles, drawings, water colours and organic matter in general.

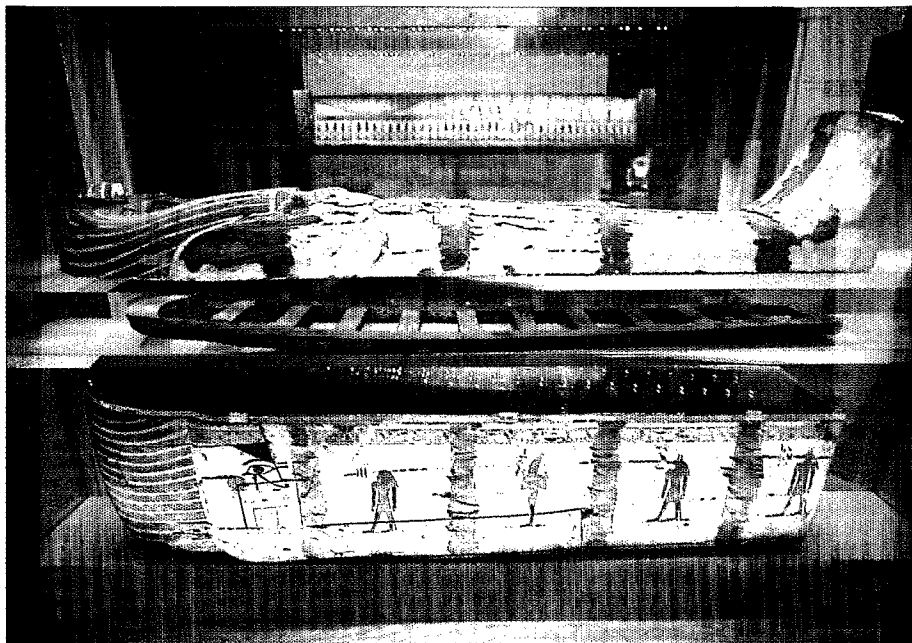
In a museum of Egyptian antiquities more than in any other, materials extremely subject to deterioration predominate. They include, besides those traditionally quoted in handbooks on conservation, papyri, reed mats and baskets, foodstuffs and beverages, even vestiges of leaves and flowers which have retained their original colouring to some extent, and above all the human and animal finds. Already in the second half of the nineteenth century the curators of the Turin Museum of Egyptian Antiquities placed the papyri



in the north room as 'the one which seemed most suitable for their conservation owing to its softer light'.

At the outset one has to choose between natural and artificial light, but here the choice is imposed by the very nature of the showcase and, of course, budget considerations. At the Turin Museum of Egyptian Antiquities preference was accorded from the outset to natural illumination, which does not clash with the interior of the seventeenth-century palace in which it is housed. Only in a few inner rooms was it necessary to have recourse to artificial illumination. Artificial light is of course available as required during certain hours of the afternoon and in the evening, but the question will have to be reviewed during the impending rearrangement of exhibition space.

Precisely because of this future rearrangement, the offer made to the museum by the Luceper company was received with great interest. What this firm proposed was to make a preliminary study and estimate for a system of illumination by means of optical fibres, ensuring above all that harmful ultra-violet and infra-red radiation was completely eliminated – according to tests made by the Istituto Galileo Ferraris – while actually allowing improved visibility of the objects displayed. In the spring of 1988 it was therefore agreed to introduce the system experimentally in a showcase in which objects varying in shape and size were suitably arranged and to measure both the capacity of the system to filter harmful radiation and the visibility of the display. At the time when this experimental phase was coming to a successful conclusion, with excellent results as regards both the visibility and the safety of the exhibits, an exhibition financed by the Province of Turin was being prepared, chiefly with material from the Museum. Advantage was taken of this exhibition, entitled 'From Museum to Museum: Past and Future of the Turin Museum of Egyptian Antiquities' (19 October 1989 to 21 January 1990), to extend optical fibre illumination to the whole display, that is, to all the showcases.



Guido Fino, by courtesy of the Turin Museum of Egyptian Antiquities

### *Shadowless lighting*

The showcases, designed by the architect Graziano Romaldi, were wood and crystal parallelepipeds containing easels and supports for the various types of material. Illumination was by means of bundles of optical fibres installed in the tops of the showcases. The installation consisted of series of small holes each housing a light source. The trickiest moment was when each of the light sources had to be positioned in such a way as to bring the light beam where it was needed in order to provide optimum visibility of the object. In fact, it entailed positioning 1,318 light sources with the objects already arranged in the showcases. This called for great patience and meticulous work, for which the Museum is pleased to extend its thanks to P. E. Gurlino and C. Albana, the authors of the next article.

The final result was breathtaking: the most delicate reliefs of Djoser, dating back to the Third Dynasty, the finer details of which are likely to escape notice with natural illumination, stood out with remarkable clarity. Even more extraordinary was the rendering of the textiles displayed – two tapestry

rugs dating back to 1450 B.C. and some fabrics of the Coptic period – which acquired a brilliance inconceivable with traditional lighting systems. A definite advantage, too, was the fact that they were no longer subjected to the radiation which over the preceding eighty years had markedly faded their colours. The other objects also gained considerably in visibility, mainly owing to the elimination of shadows. Particularly effective and evocative was the illumination of the reconstitution of the Gebelein tomb of Iti, lit from above with 56 lux. In this way shadows were eliminated and every detail was perfectly visible.

This exhibition afforded an opportunity of trying out for the first time in Italy a lighting installation which seemed extremely worthwhile and likely to be used widely in future in view of its undoubted advantages. The museum also benefited from the efficient collaboration of the firm that imports the fibres. As well as largely financing the project, this company made available the experience of its technicians with their remarkable capacity for interpreting our museum's suggestions. ■

# Creative light



Guido Fino, by courtesy of the Turin Museum of Egyptian Antiquities

Pier Enrico Gurlino and Carlo Albana

The electrical installation of a great museum in which we had installed light sources of the highest quality was barely completed when the curator, before placing the exhibits in the showcases, wanted to know the levels of ultra-violet and infra-red radiation from the lamps. That light spells damage in museums is something we know from experience, but it was an aspect to which we had never attached due importance. It was as if this was 'something everyone knows but nothing can be done about'.

The curator, however, pressed us for an answer. He wanted to know the amounts of ultra-violet and infra-red radiation emitted by the lamps in order to calculate the risk. The manufacturer of the lights was unable to provide a satisfactory reply. Without such a reply, the curator put the fragile exhibits away in cupboards inaccessible to the public. His zeal seemed exaggerated. It was only afterwards that we realized he was right.

The problem then was how to eliminate the emission of ultra-violet and infra-red radiation. With filters? But what percentage do they eliminate? And how long do they last? Who would think of changing the filters when they were worn out? No, a simpler answer had to be found – and one without exceptions.

Optical fibres were devised for this very purpose illumination without damage.

Optical fibres consist of a strip of glass clad with a glass cylinder with a much lower refraction index. The light therefore does not travel laterally but is conveyed from one end of the fibre to the other. The fibres packed into bundles act as conductors of light. Transmitted in the visible spectrum, ranging between 400 and 780 nanometres, the light is of the purest and is completely free of harmful ultra-violet and infra-red rays.

## *The curator as artist*

The following basic rules may therefore be regarded as establishing the ideal conditions for museum lighting: Blinds to keep out the natural light, which is difficult to control and is conducive to the ageing of the exhibits.

Indirect lighting of low intensity which can be controlled by a dimmer and which can be directed to prevent the appearance of unwanted shadows.

Optical fibres for maximum luminance of the exhibits.

When working with optical fibres, one is fascinated by the infinite possibilities of playing with light. Light becomes a creative medium. It is no longer the light technician who is in control, but the museum curator turned artist who positions the light as desired, identifying himself or herself with the originator. Contrasts, light and shade ef-

fects can be created and light from below can be directed upwards without dazzling the spectator or revealing the source of the light beam. The object to be illuminated is shown in three dimensions.

Optical fibres do not conduct power or heat, nor do they wear out. As they are innocuous, the public can even touch them without risk. Another possible use of optical fibres, in view of the potential intensity of the light emitted, is the scrutiny of canvases for fakes, harmful micro-organisms or earlier pictures painted over. The authors of this article think that optical fibres will become vital not only for the lighting of museum exhibits but also for research and restoration. ■

# Profession:

## stonecutter

A *Museum* interview



Photo provided by Mathieu Canavaggio

*Mathieu Canavaggio is a strapping 30-year-old Frenchman. He is a stonecutter by trade, but he doesn't cut just any stone. What he's interested in is good-quality stone, preferably with a long history behind it. He specializes in the restoration of historic monuments and in the past few months he has worked on three Paris museums which are monuments in their own right: the Hôtel Carnavalet (Paris history museum), the Hôtel Donon (Cognac-Jay Museum) and the church of Saint-Martin-des-Champs (national technology museum).*

*What does he have to say about his work and what is it, first of all, that makes a young man opt for a manual trade which is hard, poorly paid and, one might have thought not so very long ago, practically obsolete?*

*Mathieu Canavaggio:* I had a difficult time as an adolescent. At fifteen I was bored at school. My mother said to me, 'Right, now you don't have to go to school any more, find something you want to do and get on and earn your living.' I jumped at the idea. One of my mates was a stonecutter, my parents had a friend who was a sculptor. . . . So I went off to a youth camp as a volunteer to do restoration work. It was organized by the Club du Vieux Manoir,<sup>1</sup> and we worked on a great twelfth-century church in the Poitou region. The atmosphere was fantastic; I gave it everything I had because I wanted to show – in fact I probably wanted to prove to myself – what I was capable of.

*Museum:* And what happened after that?

*M.C.:* Well, I wanted to go on another voluntary youth work camp,

this time with Les Compagnons Bâtimeurs (Building Companions youth organization). But when my father was looking for their phone number in the directory he came across the number of the Compagnons du Tour de France Craft Guild.<sup>2</sup> So off I went to serve with them as a mason's apprentice for two years. Then I wanted to move up a step and learn to be a stonecutter, which is quite different from being a mason. But the guild officials wouldn't

1. See Christian Barbé's article on voluntary youth work camps and museums in *Museum* No. 163. – Ed.

2. The craft guilds in France, which date from the Middle Ages, offer apprenticeships in certain manual trades (particularly in the building industry): they involve the Tour de France scheme whereby journeymen travel around France from one master craftsman to another, learning all the tricks of their chosen trades. The craft guilds also have their own philosophy and their own rites. – Ed.

hear of it, so I decided to leave, without having been initiated into the guild's rites and mysteries. But I still go along with its moral code: the job is more important than the person doing it, the main thing is for the job to be done properly. . . . That didn't stop me from being a trade-union representative though! Self-sacrifice, yes; self-fulfilment through work, yes; but exploitation, no!

*Museum:* And what about your work on museums?

*M.C.:* Well, that's something else. On a 'normal' job, you're still in the capitalist system. You're treated like dirt and you botch things up to earn a pittance. It doesn't matter how you do the work, so long as there's a profit to be made. Restoring a museum can be quite different. Once your tender has been accepted, you don't have to be at each other's throats all the time. It's not quite so much the law of the jungle.

*Museum:* Why is that, do you think?

*M.C.:* People get to know one another and work as a team. It's nothing like the usual kind of job. There's a higher goal; things matter, somehow.

*Museum:* And from the technical point of view, are there any particular problems?

*M.C.:* That's just it, there are problems that come from feeling that things matter. For example, there was one place where, before the stonecutters started work, the glaziers came and took out the stained-glass windows. Of course that left gaping holes in the walls of the museum, and that meant a huge intake of air. If we had worked in the usual way there would have been dust all over the museum, and that would have damaged things that couldn't be moved. So we first had to make a kind of airlock on either side of the windows, which made work on the scaffolding difficult. And then, no diamond discs: we weren't allowed to use machinery but had to do everything by hand. Although it made the work very difficult for us, no one complained. That's what it's all about, feeling that things matter.

*Museum:* So you feel really involved?

*M.C.:* Yes, completely. After all, it's quite something to look at a row of stones that another stonecutter put together in, say, 1240 and to see that they haven't budged a fraction of an inch in all that time. Imagine what it feels like

to run your hand over a piece of stone made shiny by the years, and then to find a rough patch, left by the stone-cutting tool. I sometimes find I have tears in my eyes – tears of admiration, but also partly of pride because I am working in the same tradition as the man who worked on that stone before me. But I make no secret of it. I am a mystic and the reason I'm a union activist is to stop bosses from getting on the nerves of stonecutting mystics!

*Museum:* What about the architectural side?

*M.C.:* There again, I have some ideas that don't go down too well at the moment.

*Museum:* What do you mean?

*M.C.:* Authenticity, for instance. I certainly don't agree with Viollet le Duc who in the nineteenth century designed whole new sections for medieval cathedrals or châteaux he was supposed to be restoring. But, on the other hand, does authenticity mean an old building should always be made to look as it did at the very beginning? In some cases – the Hôtel Donon for instance – it makes no sense at all to do that. The building had changed over the ages. There was no need to strip off particular layers that had been added over the years and become an organic part of it. After all, human beings once had fins and tails; but does that mean we should have fins and tails now?

*Museum:* Do stonecutting and philosophizing go together?

*M.C.:* I'll tell you; I know stonecutting inside out and up to a point I don't ask for anything else. But if I'm asked to chip away at a wall which I know will be weaker afterwards, well I'm going to give the matter some thought, aren't I? But it's not all deadly serious, you know: stonecutters like a good laugh too.

*Museum:* For example?

*M.C.:* Well, when we were working on the church of Saint-Martin-des-Champs (a real gem – the earliest Gothic arches in Paris), we had set up our workbenches in a little garden behind the apse. But the garden could be seen from the street and people just settled down to watch us. We began to feel a bit like monkeys in a cage! So we put a notice on the fence around the garden which said: 'Stonecutting is a nice job but it makes you thirsty. All contributions gratefully received. . . . and no free photos!' They took it seri-

ously and we got enough to go off and really quench our thirst!

*Museum:* Do you ever go to museums?

*M.C.:* To be honest, not very often. Museums aren't usually very lively places. Actually that's what I don't like about turning old houses into museums. I prefer the blackened stone, courtyards full of workshops with corrugated iron roofs, workers plying their trades, and the neighbourhood kids playing games. To my mind there's often something a bit morbid about museums. ■

# *A bridge between cultural communicator and curator*

Bernadette Alembret

*Ten years ago, at least in France, the concepts of 'marketing', 'communication' and 'culture' seemed to belong to entirely different worlds. Two pioneers in the field of cultural marketing and communication, Anne-Marie Thibault and Bernadette Alembret, who run the agency known as Public et Communication, were among the first to turn their attention to cultural institutions and, more specifically, to museums. They approached museum curators and explained to them how the techniques of marketing, advertising and communication could be used by a museum and what they could contribute to its development, image and future. In this article, Bernadette Alembret tells the story of the agency she heads.*

The challenge was difficult and the hindrances many. Museums were still often conservative strongholds. Access to works of art was considered a privilege, promotional activities seemed to be the preserve of the commercial side alone and funds seemed to be beyond reach. A few blockbuster exhibitions, most of them in Paris, for which advertising budgets had been provided, drew very large crowds, but these were exceptions far removed from the management practices and daily routine of the general run of French museums.

Where would the breach be finally made and the first bridge established between curators and 'cultural communicators'?

The breakthrough came with the plans for brand-new museums or museums being renovated, often under the direction of young curators sympathetic to co-operation with new partners and anxious to make a success of the projects entrusted to them. There was also a breakthrough among the local elected representatives who realized what the artistic heritage of their town or region could do for its image, economic development and tourist industry and who, accordingly, made cultural development a major plank in their policy. The first public relations job entrusted to me was in connection with the opening in 1980 of the Musée de Préhistoire d'Île de France at Nemours. This is a superb glass and concrete building standing on the edge of the Forest of Fontainebleau, the result of a successful association between the architect, Roland Simounet, and the curator, Jean-Bernard Roy. In it, ex-

hibits and environment are intimately blended. It was the first time that a museum had entrusted responsibility for its press and public relations policy to an outside agency, but this team effort, ably co-ordinated by the curator, earned the museum a special acknowledgment in 1981 in connection with the Council of Europe museum prize.

## *A skill brought to bear*

The success of that first effort won over a group of young curators in close contact with their colleague in Nemours. In the months that followed, I was also asked to handle the opening of the Musée d'Archéologie at Guiry-en-Vexin, and then the opening of the Musée de la Figurine Historique at Compiègne and of the Musée d'Art Contemporain at Villeneuve d'Ascq, and the reopening of the renovated Musée des Beaux Arts at Evreux. The Association of Museum Curators of the Île-de-France region organized in 1984 the joint mounting of ten exhibitions in ten museums in the Île-de-France, an operation which attracted considerable attention and for which our agency was asked to handle co-ordination and communication matters. A very important step had been taken. Funds had been secured, a new approach was being accepted and shared, and the best advertisement for this new policy was its results.

This team of specialists was also called upon to promote a number of individual exhibitions. These included the Matisse and Boilly exhibitions mounted by the Musée des Beaux Arts

in Lille and, between 1987 and 1990, the Dubuffet exhibition organized by the Museum of Issy-les-Moulineaux, the exhibition on the emergence of national sovereignty mounted by the Musée de l'Histoire de France, and the Grau Garriga retrospective organized by the museums of Angers.

Now that it was becoming clear that communication techniques were not only desirable but necessary in order to attract the public to new ideas, some of those in charge began to wonder at an early stage whether their plans matched the concerns and needs of their target publics. Thus in 1973, the Georges Pompidou Centre in Paris asked Anne-Marie Thibaut to do some market research into the interest shown by the general public in contemporary art. Some ten years later, in 1984, the opening of two major centres of contemporary art – the Villa Arson in Nice and the CAPC in Bordeaux – was preceded by feasibility studies carried out by Anne-Marie Thibaut.

Curators embarking on renovations or who have decided on a change of policy or a new development turn to Public et Communication for studies and advice. Examples in 1989/90 have included the Ecomusée at Le Creusot and the Musée des Beaux Arts at Tours. Whether they want to plan the use of space, study the markets or ways of arranging their reception facilities, seek marketing advice or devise communication plans, museums now make use simultaneously of scientific research, museographic and museological analyses and surveys of the needs of various publics and of ways of stimulating their interest. In this context, Public et Communication has thus played a part alongside many teams, including the Direction des Musées de France, the Cité de l'Industrie et des Sciences de la Villette, the Mémorial de Caen, the Centre National de la Mer at Boulogne-sur-Mer and, in 1990, Océanopolis at Brest. The opening to the public of this Centre Français de Culture Scientifique et Technique de la Mer, the first of its kind, was a resounding success, with 250,000 visitors in ten weeks. Equally successful were the Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain in Nice, with 50,000 visitors in eight weeks, and the Espace Albert Kahn in Boulogne which had 65,000 visitors in ten weeks.

It is now accepted that marketing and communication skills applied to culture can provide support, be effective and bring results for a museum at a crucial moment in its development, such as its opening or renovation, a special exhibition, etc.

### *The next step*

The next step was to make these isolated activities into something continuous and to introduce a communication policy and a constant concern for the public's wishes as a permanent feature of the management of any cultural institution. The desire for 'success' and large numbers of visitors had to be changed in the minds of those in charge into a concern for image and reputation and for the cultivation of permanent contacts with one's partners. There had to be a change-over to the idea of a policy of interaction between a museum and its environment and the choice had to be made to maintain lasting relationships with all those with whom the museum had contacts: institutions, elected representatives, scientists, researchers, artists, French and foreign colleagues, the worlds of business, education and tourism, communities, associations, the press, the general public and so forth.

Public et Communication attaches great importance to this basic work which links the consulting agency with the museum management and which it carries out on a permanent basis, side by side with its clients. In agreement with those in charge of a museum, Public et Communication lays down their objectives and strategies, assesses their performance, seeks a visual image for them, brings out documents and posters, builds up a feeling of loyalty in the information networks and expands their files, handles co-operation with friends-of-the-museum societies and with the regional and national press and helps museums to make optimum use of their funds and develop partnerships.

This remarkable development in the museum world of recent years was reflected in the organization of two international events, one public and the other private: the *Ruée vers l'Art*, the 1985 and 1987 arrangements for which were entrusted to Public et Communication, and the Salon International des Musées et des Expositions (SIME),

communications for which were handled at the outset in 1988, and again in 1990, by the agency. Both were examples of the refinement of the role and function of museums and exhibitions – whether on ancient or contemporary art, and whether state or private museums. The heart of the matter was the relationship between a museum, art, and the public concerned and the challenge was, during those events, to draw as many visitors as possible who would subsequently become a sensitive and devoted public. The results in both cases were quite conclusive. Hundreds of thousands of visitors were drawn to the first *Ruée vers l'Art* and this led to a 15 per cent increase in museum attendance the following year. SIME drew 40,000 visitors to the Grand Palais in Paris in the space of five days the first year and 55,000 the second.

We believe that the momentum a marketing and communication agency can impart to the planning, launching, numbers of visitors and reputation of a museum no longer requires proof. If this effort is to be continuous, however, it calls for the setting up of a special unit in the museum, which can carry on the work that has been begun. The establishment of a communication policy is not like a virtuoso performance but a daily task that requires follow-up and determination. The results will be lasting only if this condition is met. Outside agencies and in-house departments are not in any way antithetical but are complementary and work together productively. ■

# Revamping Moscow's Tretyakov: the director and the architect

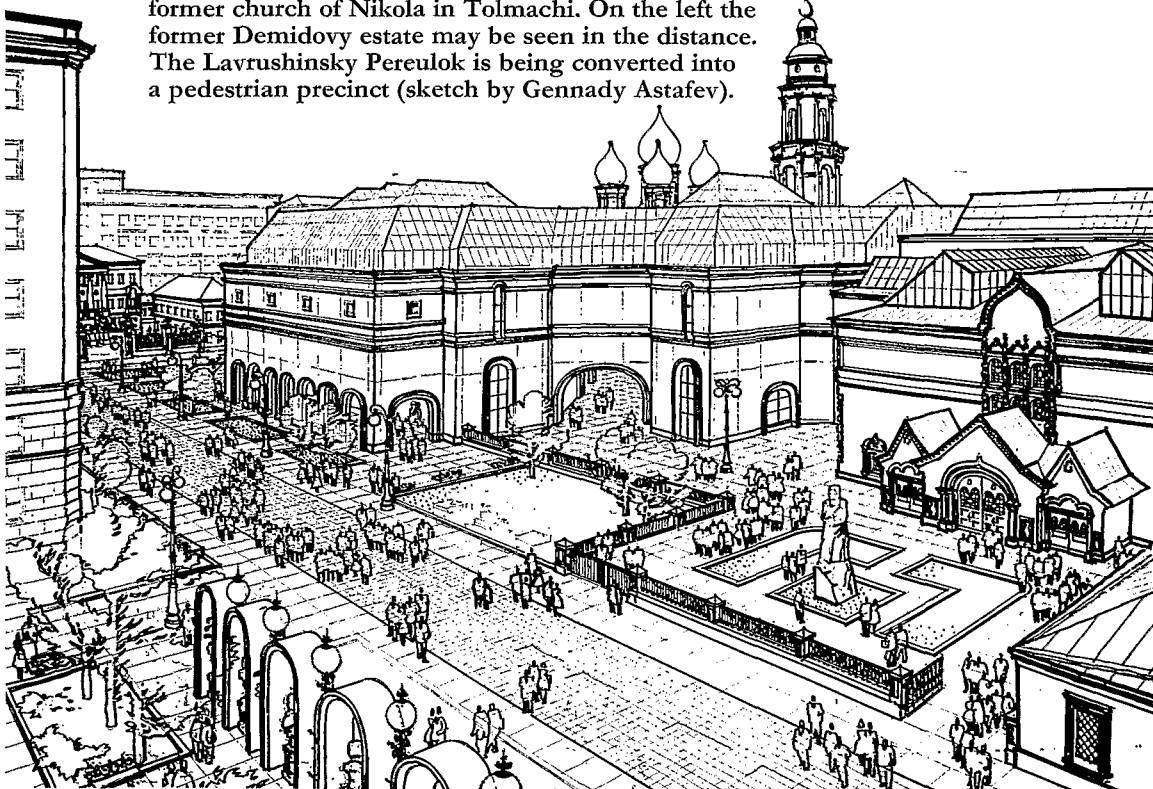
For several years now the Tretyakov State Gallery, one of the world's largest art museums and one possessing a magnificent collection of Russian pre-Revolutionary and Soviet art, has been under reconstruction in Moscow. How is the work going? And what problems cropped up in the co-operation between different partners? The Director-General of the All-Union Museum Association of the Tretyakov State Gallery, Yuri Korolev, and the Chief Architect, Gennady Astafev, spoke to Irina Pantykina, Editor of the Russian edition of *Museum*, about the work's progress, the shape of the revamped museum and the problems encountered by the people working together on the project.

## *The Director: 'If the builders don't let us down'*

*Irina Pantykina:* The Tretyakov Gallery has been closed to visitors for seven years. It goes without saying that only very serious circumstances could have forced the closure of this important museum of national art for such a long period of time. What were those circumstances?

*Yuri Korolev:* The circumstances were certainly very serious. You must remember that the gallery developed out of the private collection belonging to Pavel

To the right, the main entrance of the main building of the Tretyakov Gallery. To the left of the entrance is the technical block, behind which may be seen the domes and bell-tower of the former church of Nikola in Tolmachi. On the left the former Demidovy estate may be seen in the distance. The Lavrushinsky Pereulok is being converted into a pedestrian precinct (sketch by Gennady Astafev).



Tretyakov (1832–98). The pictures were originally hung in the rooms of his house on Lavrushinsky Pereulok. When the space became too cramped for the much expanded collection Tretyakov decided to build special premises for it. The construction of the first two rooms attached to his house was completed in 1874. But the collection continued to grow, and Tretyakov was obliged to build four successive extensions. More space was added to the building during the Soviet period, and the gallery acquired a further seventeen exhibition rooms.

### Finding a common language

By the time I arrived at the gallery ten years ago the situation had become very bad. First of all, the building was unsafe (according to the experts it would have remained standing for five or at most seven years) and, secondly, it was impossible to display the collection properly in the rooms available. Remember, Tretyakov in his day had tried to find a site in Moscow for a new museum building as his collection was constantly expanding. By the time he presented the collection to the City of Moscow in 1892 it already comprised 2,000 works. The Tretyakov Gallery's collection now contains some 90,000 items, a large proportion of which had to be kept in the reserves. Naturally, museums need reserves, but the dream of the director and staff of any museum is to put as many of the works as possible on permanent display. But for us this was quite impossible: we were unable to display either the Russian or the Soviet collection properly. We realized that the only thing to do was to carry out major repairs to the building, reconstruct the gallery and build new premises for it. Nine years ago we put the matter before the USSR Ministry of Culture. At the time there were practically no resources being allocated to culture, and it was extremely difficult to obtain the go-ahead for such a major operation. Nevertheless, we eventually got it.

*I.P.:* Where did you start?

*Y.K.:* We had to provide the architects with project specifications, but unfortunately the Soviet Union lacked experience in the construction of such large museums. What should a modern museum be like? What would restoring and expanding the Tretyakov Gallery entail? All sorts of questions had to be answered concerning the building's foundations, its fittings, the air temperature, humidity and circulation, the lighting in the rooms, the hanging of the pictures and so on – and to answer them we had to go halfway around the world and have a good look at museums in the United States, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and other countries.

Then there was a question of choosing an architect. The State Institute for Theatre Design was commissioned to work on the project for the reconstruction of the Tretyakov Gallery. The Institute's staff were admittedly experts, but we were unable to find a common language: their attitude seemed to be that they knew it all, and what we needed were colleagues. We then approached Mosproekt-4, a design institute headed by Igor Vinogradsky, and the teams headed by Gennady Astafev and Boris Klimov began working with us. Following a

particularly heated discussion on the project one day the architects rang my home at one o'clock in the morning and said, 'Everything we said today was nonsense. We've got a new idea.' That was when I realized they were the people we needed and that was how a team of like-minded people was formed. And we are still working with these same architects. We discuss together the problems facing us, we argue and we wrangle, but we never fall out, because we share a common goal.

*I.P.:* You spoke about major repairs to the building, remodelling the gallery and building new premises. Could you give more details of the work proposed?

*Y.K.:* The gallery occupied almost a whole city block and a number of buildings outside that area. We not only had to repair and remodel the gallery building but also to repair and restore the other buildings and adapt them to the needs of the museum. Even that didn't solve all the problems, as the gallery needed more large spaces. Hence the idea of putting up new buildings alongside the old one.

*I.P.:* Another question. The Tretyakov Gallery was closed for the entire period. I know it must have been very difficult to take such a decision as the gallery was closed not for months but for years, and Moscow therefore had no museum of national art for a long time. Repair and construction work in large museums is usually carried out in stages, with a part of the exhibition remaining open to the public. Why didn't you do it like that?

*Y.K.:* This question was seriously discussed. Many people thought that the gallery shouldn't be closed and that the building could be reconstructed in stages. But only five of the fifty rooms were safe at the time: the others could have collapsed at any moment. After asking experts and builders for advice we realized that the gallery would unavoidably have to be closed. It's obvious now that if we had kept some of the rooms open we would have exposed the works of art to serious risk.

### The future of the old building

*I.P.:* Where did work on the gallery begin?

*Y.K.:* With the depository. It was built by a Finnish company, UIT. You may wonder why we turned to a foreign firm: as I have already said, no one in the Soviet Union had any experience of constructing large museum buildings, and the work had to be completed within a short period of time. The Finns carried it out in fourteen months. In our view the depository will still be one of the best in the USSR in fifteen to twenty years' time. We have really managed to construct an 'intelligent building'.

The depository is a storehouse and a 'hospital'. It contains stores for paintings, drawings, sculptures and applied art, restoration workshops, a photographic laboratory, a carpenter's workshop and much more besides all fitted with the latest equipment. The depository also has viewing rooms. The dimensions of all the rooms were determined by the needs of the gallery. Everything is interconnected and carefully thought out.

But building a depository and transferring works of art to it is not the end of the matter: the building must be



used. The staff of the operational service were trained while the depository was being built: they went to study in Finland, and the Finns assisted them in Moscow. As a result we have a team of well-trained, qualified staff.

After the collection was transferred to the depository we had to face a very serious situation: the works of art, being exposed to unfamiliar conditions, began to show signs of deterioration. Later on, in the United States, I learnt that the Americans experienced the same problem when their museums acquired air-conditioners with precise parameters for temperature and humidity. But at the time we went through a really bad period. The keepers didn't understand what was happening; it took time to get to the bottom of the problem and restore the works of art to their proper condition.

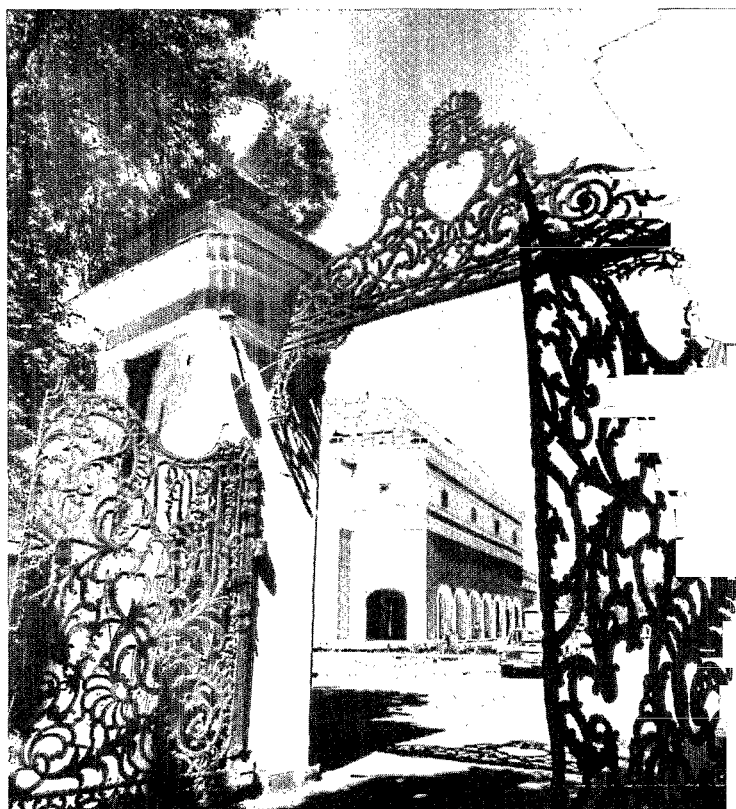
After handing over the depository to us the same Finnish firm started work on the construction of the technical block, so called because its basement houses the gallery's various technical services, including the system that maintains a constant level of temperature and humidity in the buildings, the central heating units, the transformer substations, the fire-extinguisher station, etc. The floors at ground level and above are given over to areas that serve a variety of purposes. There is a multipurpose 400-seat conference hall with the very latest equipment which can be used for ceremonies, conferences (including international conferences, as there are facilities for simultaneous translation into seven languages) and theatrical performances. In the technical block there is also a lecture hall with 280 seats (the Tretyakov Gallery has an intensive lecture programme) and a magnificent studio on two floors for work with children.

The gallery has never before possessed temporary exhibition rooms, some of the permanent exhibition rooms having to be cleared each time to make room for temporary exhibitions. That was bad for the works of art that had to be put in store from time to time, and it was also an unacceptable way to treat our collection. The temporary exhibition rooms, which have an overall area of 1,500 m<sup>2</sup>, are located in the technical block. Space has also been found for a computer centre. We have acquired an Olivetti computer and we intend to store in the data bank information about all the Russian and Soviet works of art held in the museums of the USSR. This is an enormous task, of course, but it will soon start to pay dividends.

*I.P.:* And what has happened to the old building of the Tretyakov Gallery?

*Y.K.:* Work on the old building went full steam ahead while the new buildings were being constructed. It needed foundations (which it lacked), horizontal and vertical damp-proofing and reroofing. We disturbed nothing and preserved whatever we could. Work is in progress, but we are short of builders at present.

What is to be displayed in the main building? Previously there were two rooms of icons; now there will be seven, plus three rooms of ancient Russian applied art. There will be separate rooms for well-known artists. We have 20,000 drawings and paintings, but only a few were previously on display. When the reconstruction work is finished the main building will have six rooms



View of the technical block from the courtyard of the Demidovy estate (architect Gennady Astafev).

with special lighting for the display of drawings and paintings. The new Tretyakov Gallery, in fact, will enable us to display much of what was previously kept in store.

*I.P.:* In other words it will not be the Tretyakov Gallery as we remember it, no longer a single building but a complex of buildings?

*Y.K.:* Yes, it will be a cultural history centre. As I said, the gallery has been given a number of nearby buildings. For example, we're organizing an open reserve of ancient Russian art in an eighteenth-century house and an exhibition of drawings and paintings in a nineteenth-century house.

*I.P.:* One last question. When will we be able to visit the renovated Tretyakov Gallery?

*Y.K.:* The entire complex should be open in 1991 – if the builders don't let us down. ■

## *The architect: 'An island of the arts'*

*Irina Pantykina:* The reconstruction of the Tretyakov State Gallery is nearing completion. The project was developed in your institute. As the project's chief architect, please tell us about your work.

*Gennady Astafev:* First of all I should like to say what I was responsible for: the design of the gallery's new buildings, the creation of an integrated system of public services and amenities for the entire area and the reconstruction of individual buildings. My colleague, Boris Klimov, who is also chief architect for the project, has been concerned mainly with the buildings requiring reconstruction, that is to say the gallery's main building and a number of so-called 'small houses' in which exhibitions and various departments of the museum will eventually be located.

We began by investigating what our predecessors had done: the people who put up the building in Tretyakov's day, the artist Vasnetsov, and the leading Soviet architects Shchusev and Rudnev. We thought not only about constructing a building for the museum's present vast collection but also about a long-term plan for the gallery's development, the town-planning conditions in the historic conservation area of Zamoskvoreche and the establishment in the longer term of a cultural history centre based on the Tretyakov State Gallery. With these aims our institute, the Moscow Scientific Research Institute for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Health Facilities, worked out an overall plan for the development of the Tretyakov State Gallery, the construction work being divided into stages.

### **Turnkey construction**

Before designing the new buildings we carried out a study of the area's architectural history, that is to say a study of what had been built there at different periods, starting with the sixteenth century. On the basis of the information we obtained and taking account of the city's and the gallery's needs today we decided on the nature of the facilities and the shape of the buildings and worked out the technical specifications.

*I.P.:* Did you receive any help from the staff of the Tretyakov Gallery? What were your relations with them like?

*G.A.:* The help provided by the gallery staff was invaluable, especially when we started work on the design of the exhibition rooms and depositories. The gallery's director, Mr Korolev, set up a special working group that liaised with us. The group was made up of art experts, restorers and other specialists. At first it was quite difficult for us to find a common language, as the gallery staff had no previous experience of working with

designers: they couldn't read the working drawings – but they soon learned.

We ourselves had no experience of museum design work. We began to make a serious study of the problems involved in their construction and operation and made several trips in order to study various museums. We were always having meetings with the gallery's staff, during which they explained to us what they needed. Minutes were taken and had the status of official documents recording the decisions adopted. Through our joint efforts we managed to find ways of creating the best possible conditions for works of art in the depository, the technical block and the main building and comfortable conditions for the visitors.

*I.P.:* Let us return to the design and construction of the gallery's new buildings, the depository and technical block, which were built by a single Finnish company. What were the company's responsibilities, and what were your relations with it?

*G.A.:* First of all I should point out that the Finnish company UIT was selected on the basis of competitive tender for both jobs. Under the contract the company agreed to participate in the preparation of the working drawings (with their know-how) and to undertake the turnkey construction. It was our job to produce the preliminary design and the technical specifications for the company in all areas of the project. We also had to harmonize all the working drawings. After exchanging documentation and sketches with us at the contract design stage, the company started on the working drawings. They then handed them over to us for inspection and harmonization of all types of work (i.e. architectural and constructional work and all technical services).

The deadlines they set us were rather tough (thirty days, and for work on the interiors ten days) and the work was intense – sometimes discussions with the Finns would go on until late in the evening – but at the same time I found the experience creative and enormously satisfying. The chief contractor was Glavmosstroy, which made a substantial contribution to the construction work (preparing the site, digging the foundations, etc.). But of course our entire project was successfully completed because of the Finnish designers and highly qualified builders who carried it out. We learnt a great deal about the organization of design work from the Finnish companies, though our architects were as equally qualified as the Finns. Indeed, the Finnish architects would not have been able to carry out the work required on this site, as it demanded a detailed knowledge of our installations, the history of the region in which the building work was carried out and the 'flavour' of the old Zamoskvoreche area.

The depository was built in fourteen months. As for the technical block, the Tretyakov is still waiting for the company to carry out certain types of work, so the building has not yet been formally accepted by the State Commission. But leaving aside these trifling problems, which crop up in any undertaking, especially one as complicated as the design and construction of a museum, I would say again that we were very fortunate to have the opportunity to work with UIT.

### **Pedestrian precinct**

*I.P.:* As I understand it you have managed to achieve what was wanted in both buildings – to provide optimal conditions for works of art and a comfortable environment for people. Perhaps you could say something about the outside appearance of the depository and the technical block. They were designed to match the gallery's main building and blend in with the historical urban setting, weren't they?

*G.A.:* In designing the façades for the two buildings we incorporated the creative ideas employed in the treatment of the façade of the main entrance. That is why you find the same proportions in the design of the façades of the depository and of the technical block, the modular pitch of the arcades and windows, the combination of red brick walls with white stone ornamentation. I should like to emphasize, however, that this is not just a copy of themes from old Russian architecture but a creative reinterpretation of the inheritance of the past.

*I.P.:* Has provision been made for disabled people who wish to visit the gallery?

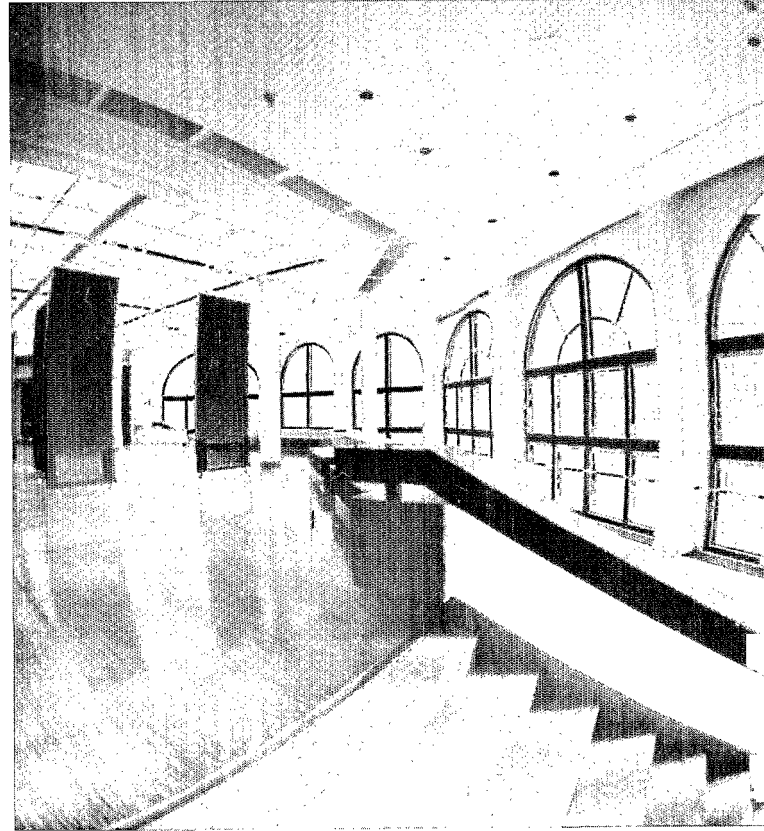
*G.A.:* People in wheelchairs will be able to reach the main building and the technical block from the pedestrian precinct of Lavrushinsky Pereulok, taking the lift to the second and third floors. As the buildings are connected they'll be able to move freely from one exhibition room to another.

*I.P.:* You're working on an integrated plan for improving the area. Could you please give us some details?

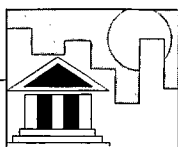
*G.A.:* The other buildings belonging to the gallery are grouped around the buildings we've just mentioned, forming a kind of 'island of the arts'. An integrated plan has been drawn up for the improvement of this entire area. Lavrushinsky Pereulok will become a pedestrian precinct, and we intend to surface the pavements with white flagstones and the roadway with small red paving stones: this will be reminiscent of old Moscow, with its cobbled streets and limestone pavements. As various activities will be taking place in the district and large numbers of people are expected a series of public catering facilities (snack-bars, cafés and eventually a restaurant) and public lavatories will be opening there. A car park will also be located near by.

In conclusion, I should just like to say how very fortunate I've been. It's an enormous pleasure to work on the design of a facility like the Tretyakov Gallery. Few architects ever have such good fortune. ■

Illustrations by courtesy of the Tretyakov Gallery



One of the exhibition rooms in the technical block. On the left, panels for the display of pictures. The panels may be moved in various directions on rails built into the glass ceiling. They can thus be shifted as required for exhibition purposes.



# How many in Bucharest?

Corina Sandu

*After so many dramatic events in Romania, how are Bucharest's museums faring? Romanian-born, French-naturalized Corina Sandu, who has a Master's degree in museology, went there to find the answer to this question which is sure to be of interest to all our readers. The first thing she discovered was that no one could say with any great certainty how many museums there were in the Romanian capital. Corina Sandu, who in Museum No. 168 wrote about the present state of the journal *Revista Muzeelor* and its future prospects, explains the reason for this lack of nevertheless basic information (which elsewhere is quite easy to obtain).*

At one time there was a blank. Many people were hardly even aware of Romania's existence.

Then came 22 December 1989, a date we shall all remember because of its horrifying images, more reminiscent – especially to Europeans – of the latter days of the Second World War. Thanks to television coverage, people everywhere saw and experienced the Romanian revolution, which sprang from the despair of a people humiliated for years by a pitiless dictatorship. The Romanians paid dearly for their desire for liberty with loss of life, the destruction or scarring of buildings and also the destruction of numerous works of art. We can still remember the picture of the flames engulfing the Museum of Art and the Central University Library of Bucharest on the night of 22–23 December 1989.

At that moment, the world discovered for the first time a people, a country and a culture. Until then, Romania had existed for itself alone, completely cut off from the outside world. Romanians could not get out of the country and foreigners had trouble getting in.

Who among *Museum's* readers knows anything about the collections in Romania's museums? Who is familiar with the research and published work of Romanian specialists in the fields of museology, restoration and archaeology? We went to visit the museums of Bucharest and it was a trip full of discoveries and surprises.

Thanks to an effort by museologists, restorers and researchers, unprecedented in Romanian history, the country's heritage has been saved and is being

protected and preserved by the museums.

## MAKING HISTORY DISAPPEAR?

In 1977, Bucharest had fifty museums, including national and municipal museums and private collections. After the earthquake of that year the situation changed. There was a sharp drop in their number when the Museum of Collections was set up to house all private and memorial collections. The establishment of this museum represented the first stage in the dismantling of Bucharest's small museums, the collections of which were destined to be hidden away in stores rather than put on display.

The 1980s saw the start of the massive demolition of Old Bucharest. Historic monuments, churches and hospitals were destroyed before the very eyes of the people, who were powerless to do anything but lament their history going up in clouds of dust. To wipe out the history of a city and replace it by gigantic palaces, such was the plan of the dictatorship which at all costs wanted the history of the country to be counted as from its own beginning.

But history existed in the museums. How could it be made to disappear?

To begin with, museums were shown to be both unnecessary and non-productive. A law was passed obliging them to pay for themselves – a difficult task in a city where there were no tourists and where practically the only visitors were groups of schoolchildren and students.

The second major stage in the elimination of the museums was to be the amalgamation of all those in Bucharest in two or three buildings, or maybe just one, to be called the 'Museum of Museums'. Happily this project did not have time to become a reality.

#### A DESERTED MUSEUM

The existence of any museum depends on the public's interest in its collections. The Museum of the History of the Communist Party and of the Revolutionary and Democratic Movements of Romania thus closed on 22 December 1989.

The Museum of the People's Revolutionary Struggle (founded in 1951) and the Museum of the History of the Romanian Workers Party (founded in 1954) were merged in 1966. Their collections were moved to spacious quarters in the building which housed the Ethnographic Museum, whose collections were broken up and scattered throughout other museums in Buchar-

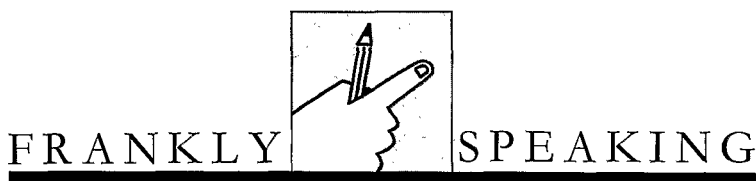
est and in the provinces. The new museum's collections were made up of graphic propaganda material consisting for the most part of enlarged photographs (because the originals were too small to do justice to the grandeur of the events portrayed) and photocopies (because wilful retouching of history is often less visible on a copy than on the original). This museum, a place of misinformation and the falsification of history, disappeared suddenly. People had visited it not for pleasure but because they had been obliged to. The building is to be restored and returned to the Ethnographic Museum, which will at last be able to reconstitute its collection.

In addition, the Museum of the History of Romania which, besides its own magnificent collections, was obliged to house a stock of gifts presented to the dictator on his countless foreign visits, is glad to have recovered a large floor area so that it can show to advantage items that are a testimony of Romanian history and culture.

#### NEW MUSEUMS IN BUCHAREST

Bucharest lost a number of historic monuments which were razed to the ground when work was begun on the gigantic buildings that are now what one might call its heritage. Since no one wants them to be destroyed, specialists are trying to find some use for them – perhaps as museums. One example is the unfinished building at the corner of Stirbei Voda Street and the Splaiul Independentei, which has a floor area of over 24,000 m<sup>2</sup>. The Ministry for Culture and the Commission for Museums and Collections are considering the feasibility of establishing a museum of universal contemporary art since there is no museum of this kind in Romania.

As to the question of precisely how many museums there are in Bucharest, we have not as yet come up with the answer but we promise to let you know very soon. ■



## Jean Rouch: setting the stage for things that matter

### A Museum interview

From *Moi, un Noir* to *Cocorico Monsieur Poulet*, (to mention just two), Jean Rouch is known to the public primarily as a film-maker. And not just any film-maker: his feature films and shorts can be corrosive, revealing, comic and bittersweet. He is perhaps less well known for his 'activist' role in charge of the French national Cinémathèque, or for his part in launching and encouraging, with faultless respect, a great number (he's lost count by now) of young film-makers in France, Africa and elsewhere, establishing a solid network of friends as he goes. *Museum* was lucky enough to catch a glimpse of all three of these facets – film-maker, activist and mentor – in the course of this interview.

*Museum*: When was your first visit to a museum?

*Jean Rouch*: I was about eight years old at the time, so it must have been around 1925, when my father took me to the Louvre. It's funny, but I don't remember a thing about the exhibits. I was mainly interested in what the Louvre must have been like in the early days. I remember asking my father where the King's office had been.

A bit later on, the Louvre's Egyptian collection came as a real awakening to me. I was particularly attracted by a model reconstruction and felt how amazing it was to be able to see with my own eyes things that had been buried beneath the sands for thousands of years.

*Museum*: And then?

*J.R.*: My main interest continued to be in form, and I wondered, for example, why the *Raft of the Medusa* measured several metres each way while the *Mona Lisa* was much smaller. And I couldn't work out why the *Winged Victory* and the *Venus de Milo* had parts missing. My father explained that if they hadn't lost bits, they would perhaps have been completely uninteresting.

As a boy, I crossed the Luxembourg Gardens on my way to school every day, and I remember thinking that the statues there would, as a matter of course, wind up in the Louvre when they reached retirement age.

It was when I was seventeen that I really began going to the Louvre often. My family was full of painters, so it was

only natural that I should be interested in painting. In fact, I took it up myself.

You know, the 1930s were a quite extraordinary time in Paris. At the Café de Dôme at Montparnasse, I saw the young Salvador Dali dash off a sketch in a few quick strokes. He spoke to me about colour: Prussian blue and Courbet's use of dark green. He was the one who urged me to go to the Louvre to see Courbet.

*Museum:* Didn't you find the sheer number of paintings at the Louvre daunting?

*J.R.:* Not in the least. I was very selective. I would go to a museum – and still do, in fact – just to see one painting! Just two months ago I did that very thing at the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. I spent ten minutes looking at one painting, then left. However, if another work in the same room had been missing, I would have noticed and it would have spoiled it for me – as if the staging of the painting I'd come to see was somehow incomplete. Strange, isn't it?

*Museum:* The all-seeing eye that takes in everything at the same time isn't a human eye – it has to be mechanical; a camera lens, for instance.

*J.R.:* Wait, we'll talk about film-making in a minute. But first I'd still like to say something about the Louvre and Paris in the 1930s. The Louvre was my Academy of Fine Arts.

*Museum:* Wasn't it a sort of film school for you, as well?

*J.R.:* Not at all. My film school was Henri Langlois, the founder of the French Cinémathèque. What a character he was! All around us, there was an effervescent atmosphere of what I suppose you could call 'cultural modernism'. There was the surrealist André Breton, who read his poems at the newly opened Théâtre des Champs Élysées, Picasso's *Guernica* was on exhibition (the fact that the world was already on the road back to war made the modernist movement even more frantic: sensing that the worst was yet to come, artists stepped up their pace), and the Salle Pleyel, that bastion of classical music, opened its doors to jazz musicians, the likes of Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington. In the midst of all this, there was Henri Langlois – with some electrical flex tied round his waist instead of a belt – screening old films that you couldn't see anywhere else in a very plush red-velvet-and-gilded-wood type of cinema in the eighth *arrondissement*. There was nothing contradictory in that. I loved those old films, but then again, I

loved the song *On the Sunny Side of the Street*.

*Museum:* What's the connection?

*J.R.:* That's just it: the whole thing was like a living museum – a little crazy at times – but a museum all the same. What I mean is, it was a stage for living works of art – things that really mattered!

*Museum:* Weren't there innovative museums being opened at that time – like the Musée de l'Homme ethnography museum?

*J.R.:* The Musée de l'Homme is a bad example. The Ethnography Museum that preceded it had dioramas – life-sized reconstructions. With them, when a child came across a warrior, for example, he was scared stiff and never forgot it. But when the Musée de l'Homme was opened in 1937, the models disappeared and their magic along with them.

Take the Dogon masks, for example. Marcel Griaule brought back loads of them. But shown in lifeless display cases the way they are, they're nothing more than lifeless objects. It's like putting Nijinski's costume from *Afternoon of a Faun* behind glass. It may be beautiful, but it's static, meaningless!

I had looked at and studied the Dogon masks at the Musée de l'Homme, but I hadn't really *seen* them. It wasn't until much later, when I saw them in action in Malian dances, that I really discovered them. Now, there's a lesson in museology for you!

*Museum:* Are there any others that come to mind, based on your experience?

*J.R.:* Lighting. It's incredible how even a minor change in lighting (or should I say *especially* a minor one) can influence one's perception and interpretation of an object, whether on a film set or in a museum. Let me give you an example. I'm currently in the process of putting a film together (as a matter of fact, I must be going soon) about the French Revolution. To illustrate the problem of slavery, I'd found a painting I wanted to use. Just a touch of additional lighting – using a small quartz light – brought out details we simply hadn't seen before.

Then, and here I come back to the idea of visiting a museum to see a single painting, it's important to be selective. I feel it's often the collections themselves that are to blame for the overcrowding of canvases on a wall or the congestion in display cases. In these instances, there should be a better balance struck between the size of

the collection and the space available for its exhibition. This no doubt ties in with acquisition policies. I find that museum buyers sometimes act like those *nouveaux riches* who buy books by the yard which they'll never even open, you know: 'Hey, and throw in three and a half yards of those fancy bindings while you're at it!' In other words, you've got to make choices, be selective.

I was at the Rotterdam Festival a few days ago, where they screened two thousand films in five or six cinemas in less than a week. Can you believe it – *two thousand!* What a futile gathering! It was movie bulimia! The poor critics scrambled from one cinema to another, seeing only a few minutes of only a fraction of the films shown. No one, in any case, saw anywhere near even a quarter of them. It was as bad as if they'd been zapping television programmes with their remote control – they ended up not seeing anything at all.

The Maeght Gallery at Saint-Paul-de-Vence has come up with a solution. There, the motto is not 'more and more' but 'little and good, and in very good taste'. How many museologists today have good taste? The French Cinémathèque would like to see them – but we don't guarantee any salary!

*Museum:* I can see you're looking at my watch; I know you have to be off. It's a shame we didn't get round to talking about film-making.

*J.R.:* But we've talked of nothing else in this interview! Seeing, lighting, perceiving, interpreting, making a tasteful selection, setting the stage for living things that matter. What is film-making, if not that? ■

# RETURN AND RESTITUTION OF CULTURAL PROPERTY

## Unidroit Draft Convention focuses on purchasers

Lyndel V. Prott

*What measures can be taken to overcome the 'intentional unawareness' of certain purchasers of cultural property whose legal ownership is in doubt? This is a major question addressed by a new draft convention whose text is published below and which is presented here by Lyndel V. Prott, a noted specialist in international heritage law and past Chair of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation. This article was written before Ms. Prott took up her present post as Chief of the International Standards Section of UNESCO's Division of Physical Heritage.*

In 1982 it was recommended to UNESCO by consultants who had prepared a report on illicit traffic in cultural property<sup>1</sup> that a body concerned with the unification of private law such as the Hague Conference on Private International Law or the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (Unidroit) in Rome should be asked to take up issues of private law relating to illicit traffic. These include, for example, the protection of the bona fide purchaser, which could act to serve the interests of those knowingly involved in the illegal trade. A recommendation to this effect was adopted by a Consultation of Experts on Illicit Traffic of Cultural Property to improve the implementation of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property in April 1983.

UNESCO then made available resources enabling Unidroit to have two studies made on the problems of private law raised by efforts to control the illicit trade.<sup>2</sup> Following these reports a Study Group of Experts was established to draft a preliminary Convention on Uniform Rules. This Study Group, to which UNESCO sent two consultant experts and a representative of the Secretariat, met three times in Rome at Unidroit Headquarters, in December 1988, April 1989 and January 1990. From its work has emerged the draft Preliminary Convention whose text follows. The text has been approved by the Unidroit Governing Council and will soon be submitted to a group of governmental experts for further study and comment. Finally, the text will be submitted to a full diplomatic conference which will hopefully adopt a definitive final text.

The Preliminary Draft Convention will be of interest to museums, collectors and dealers because it will place a greater burden of care on purchasers of cultural objects if their acquisition is to be protected. It is also of interest to lawyers because it will change, in respect of certain cultural objects, rules which have a long tradition in the civil law systems of Europe and provisions elsewhere which have been modelled on them.

### 'BENIGN IGNORANCE'

The complexity of the law and the relative unfamiliarity of lawyers with the special problems of the illicit trade made the work of the Study Group of Experts particularly difficult. As a general rule (there are a few exceptions) common law, the system in force in many English-speaking countries, does not protect the acquirer of stolen goods. The civil law systems in force in Europe, and systems modelled on them, protect a good faith purchaser after a short period of time (immediately in Italy, after three years in France, after five years in Switzerland). This rule has been seen as a principal support of the free circulation of goods and a cardinal feature of many of the legal systems. It is one that many lawyers would not like to see disturbed.

Yet it is clear that the presumption of good faith which applies has helped

1. L. V. Prott and P. J. O'Keefe, 'National Legal Control of Illicit Traffic in Cultural Property', Paris, UNESCO, 1983 (UNESCO Doc. CLT-83/WS/16).

2. G. Reichelt, 1986 *Uniform Law Review*, Vol. I; 1988 *Uniform Law Review*, Vol. II, No. 53 (English), No. 54 (French).

to encourage buyers of cultural objects not to make inquiries about the origin of goods being traded, thus avoiding learning information which would reveal that the objects were stolen, illegally exported, clandestinely excavated or otherwise illegally traded. This attitude of 'benign ignorance' and 'intentional unawareness' has enabled traffickers to pass on illegally traded goods at full value and thus encouraged their activities. It is noteworthy that some lawyers from civil law countries who are particularly experienced in the problems of the illicit trade saw no alternative but that of requiring a higher degree of prudence of the part of acquirers.<sup>3</sup>

The preliminary draft tries to find a solution by encouraging purchasers of cultural objects to use whatever means they can to ensure that they are not acquiring an object that has been illicitly traded. The draft Convention is quite revolutionary in requiring the return to their owner of cultural objects which have been stolen. The possessor will only be entitled to compensation if he or she has exercised the necessary diligence to prevent the purchase of stolen objects. This will include consideration of the price being asked, the circumstances of the transaction, whether the seller is a well-known and accredited dealer and so on. Article 4(a) specifically mentions 'any accessible register' of stolen cultural objects. This will include the records of the International Foundation for Art Research (IFAR) as well as a new computerized data bank which is likely to be established by the insurance industry in London.

The provisions concerning illegally exported cultural objects are a little more complex. Because of the conflicting views on the varying breadth of export controls (from very few to almost total restriction), it was felt that a middle path should be adopted, and only those cultural objects made subject to return which both the state requesting return and the state of location would clearly accept as important enough to warrant adoption of an obligation to return. It seems reasonable for any state to accept that co-operation in respect of an object whose export has damaged its physical security, or whose abstraction damaged an important cultural context, or whose physical integrity is at stake (e.g. by its division into parts), or whose export has interfered with its use by a living culture. The fifth category, mentioned in Article 5(3)(e),

concerning the outstanding cultural importance of the object for the state requesting the return was added to cover situations like that of the Tarana-ki panels (see *Museum*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 4, 1982) which might not seem covered by any of the other criteria, but clearly were the kind of exceptional cultural resources which had a special place in the cultural life, past and future, of the state claiming them.

#### INCREASED PURCHASER DILIGENCE

The preliminary draft Convention will not put any great burden on states, and they should not be deterred from adhering to such a text by fear of a further drain on already strained resources. The obligation will be, as it should be, on the purchaser of cultural objects, to make appropriate inquiries at the time of purchase. Civil law states would, if the present text were adopted, need to enact legislation changing the rules which presently make it impossible for an owner to retrieve cultural objects even though he or she can prove them to be stolen from him or her. Many states will have to adopt legislation to enable them to ensure the return of the important illegally exported cultural objects described in Article 5. The obligation is consistent with, and amplifies, the provision of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property and is similar to the solution already adopted for its implementation by some countries (e.g. Canada and Australia).

The present draft still has many phases to pass through before it becomes an international instrument. The Study Group of Experts has clearly provided a text which goes a good way towards improving the present unsatisfactory state of the rules of private law by encouraging increased diligence in purchasers and improving international collaboration on return or restitution of cultural property. ■

3. J. Chatelain, 'Means of Combating the Theft of and Illegal Traffic in Works of Art in the Nine Countries of the EEC', pp. 87-97, 114, Brussels, Commission of the European Communities, 1976 (CEC Doc. XII/757/76-E; also available in French); R. Fraoua, *Le trafic illicite des biens culturels et leur restitution*, p. 179, Fribourg, Éditions Universitaires, 1985; S. Rodota, 'Explanatory Memorandum', in Council of Europe, *The Art Trade*, pp. 1-10, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 1988.



# Preliminary Draft Unidroit Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects

## Chapter I. Scope of application and definition

This Convention applies to claims for the restitution of stolen cultural objects and for the return of cultural objects removed from the territory of a Contracting State contrary to its export legislation.

### Article 2

For the purpose of this Convention, 'cultural object' means any material object of artistic, historical, spiritual, ritual or other cultural significance.

## Chapter II. Restitution of stolen cultural objects

### Article 3

1. The possessor of a cultural object which has been stolen shall return it.
2. Any claim for the restitution of a stolen cultural object shall be brought within a period of three years from the time when the claimant knew or ought reasonably to have known the location, or the identity of the possessor of the object, and in any case within a period of thirty years from the time of the theft.

### Article 4

1. The possessor of a stolen cultural object who is required to return it shall be entitled to payment at the time of restitution of fair and reasonable compensation by the claimant provided that the possessor prove that it exercised the necessary diligence when acquiring the object.
2. In determining whether the possessor exercised such diligence, regard shall be had to the relevant circumstances of the acquisition, including the character of the parties and the price paid, and whether the possessor consulted any accessible register of stolen cultural objects which it could reasonably have consulted.
3. The conduct of a predecessor from whom the possessor has acquired the cultural object by inheritance or otherwise gratuitously shall be imputed to the possessor.

## Chapter III. Return of illegally exported cultural objects

### Article 5

1. When a cultural object has been removed from the territory of a Contracting State (the requesting State) contrary to its export legislation, that State may request the court or other competent authority of a State acting under Article 9 (the State addressed) to order the return of the object to the requesting State.
2. To be admissible, any request made under the preceding paragraph shall contain, or be accompanied by, the particulars necessary to enable the competent authority of the State addressed to evaluate whether the conditions laid down in paragraph 3 are fulfilled and shall contain all material information regarding the conservation, security and accessibility of the cultural object after it has been returned to the requesting State.
3. The court or other competent authority of the State addressed shall order the return of the cultural object to the requesting State if that State proves that the removal of the object from its territory significantly impairs one or more of the following interests:
  - (a) the physical preservation of the object or of its context,
  - (b) the integrity of a complex object,
  - (c) the preservation of information of, for example, a scientific or historical character,
  - (d) the use of the object by a living culture,
  - (e) the outstanding cultural importance of the object for the requesting State.

### Article 6

When a State has established its claim for the return of a cultural object under Article 5(3) the court or competent authority may only refuse to order the return of that object when it finds that it has as close a, or a closer, connection with the culture of the State addressed or of a State other than the requesting State.

### Article 7

The provisions of Article 5 shall not apply when:

- (a) the cultural object was exported during the lifetime of the person who created it or within a period of fifty years following the death of that person; or
- (b) no claim for the return of the object has been brought before a court or other competent authority acting under Article 9 within a period of five years from the time when the requesting State knew or ought reasonably to have known the location, or the identity of the possessor, of the object, and in any case within a period of twenty years from the date of the export of the object, or
- (c) the export of the object in question is no longer illegal at the time at which the return is requested.

### Article 8

1. When returning the cultural object the possessor may require that, at the same time, the requesting State pay it fair and reasonable compensation unless the possessor knew or ought to have known at the time of acquisition that the object would be, or had been, exported contrary to the export legislation of the requesting State.
2. When returning the cultural object the possessor may, instead of requiring compensation, decide to retain ownership and possession or to transfer the object against payment or gratuitously to a person of its choice residing in the requesting State and who provides the necessary guarantees. In such cases the object shall neither be confiscated nor subjected to other measures to the same effect.
3. The cost of returning the cultural object in accordance with this article shall be borne by the requesting State.
4. The conduct of a predecessor from whom the possessor has acquired the cultural object by inheritance or otherwise gratuitously shall be imputed to the possessor.

## Chapter IV. Claims and actions

### Article 9

1. The claimant may bring an action under this Convention before the courts or other competent authorities of the State where the possessor of the cultural object has its habitual residence or those of the State where that object is located at the time a claim is made.

2. However the parties may agree to submit the dispute to another jurisdiction or to arbitration.

## Chapter V. Final provisions

### Article 10

This Convention shall apply only when a cultural object has been stolen, or removed from the territory of a Contracting State contrary to its export legislation, after the entry into force of

the Convention in respect of the Contracting State before the courts or other competent authorities of which a claim is brought for the restitution or return of such an object.

### Article 11

Each Contracting State shall remain free in respect of claims brought before its courts or competent authorities:

(a) for the restitution of a stolen cultural object:

(i) to extend the provisions of Chapter II to acts other than theft whereby the claimant has wrongfully been deprived of possession of the object;

(ii) to apply its national law when this would permit an extension of the period within which a claim for restitution of the object may be brought under Article 3(2);

(iii) to apply its national law when

this would disallow the possessor's right to compensation even when the possessor has exercised the necessary diligence contemplated by Article 4(1).

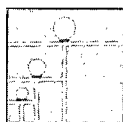
(b) for the return of a cultural object removed from the territory of another Contracting State contrary to the export legislation of that State;

(i) to have regard to interests other than those material under Article 5(3);

(ii) to apply its national law when this would permit the application of Article 5 in cases otherwise excluded by Article 7.

(c) to apply the Convention notwithstanding the fact that the theft or illegal export of the cultural object occurred before the entry into force of the Convention for that State. ■

# WFFM CHRONICLE



World Federation of Friends of Museums

Postal address:

Palais du Louvre,

34 quai du Louvre,

75041 Paris Cedex 01, France

Tel.: (1) 48 04 99 55

### *WFFM Newsbrief*

As volunteers working to safeguard the world heritage, WFFM members deem themselves to be directly concerned by the Universal Declaration on Volunteering just adopted by volunteers brought together by the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE), whose main lines are as follows:

- Volunteering is, by its spirit of partnership and brotherhood, an element of personal growth that stimulates a spirit of solidarity.
- Social and community responsibility are part and parcel of each and every commitment to volunteer.
- This responsibility means, for the volunteer, confidentiality, co-operation in the exercise of his/her functions, and the right to training; and, for the organization concerned, the duty to assess the risks incurred, to reimburse the volunteer's expenses, and to foresee the way in which his/her assignment will be concluded.

As far as possible, WFFM will, in future, take these principles into account. ■

# Organizing a photography competition for young people – the experience of the Friends of Museums in Belgium

*When the Belgian Friends of Museums organized a photography competition for young people in 1989 they wanted to stimulate young people's interest in museums and involve them in some practical way in museum life while giving museums the opportunity to find out what young people really thought of them. We asked Catherine Fache, an art historian who works with Belgium's Royal Museums of Fine Arts and who co-ordinates several projects designed to heighten young people's awareness of art and museums, to tell us about the competition and some of the lessons she thinks could be learnt from it.*

**Catherine Fache**

In June 1989 the World Federation of Friends of Museums announced that it was organizing a photography competition for young people to coincide with its triennial Congress which was to be held in Córdoba (Spain) in April 1990. The Association of Friends of the Royal Museums of Fine Arts<sup>1</sup> immediately decided to do all it could to promote this international competition. For some years the Association had been wondering, with some perplexity, how it could stimulate young people's interest in museums; for despite the incentive of reduced subscription fees for that age-group, the under-thirties represented only one-tenth of its membership.

Two factors had to be considered. In order to increase the numbers of young members, this target public had to be sought out and presented with an attractive image of museums, however, the intra- and extramural activities proposed should not be seen as competing with the education service, but as having their own specific aim.

It was agreed that advertisements in the quarterly newsletter which is sent to Association members would not be the best way of publicizing this competition, but that the media, schools and the world of photography should also be contacted. The competition thus took on a life of its own and its organization became a sort of competition within the competition. It was very quickly recognized that the publicity campaign should be the responsibility of all Associations of Friends and particularly of their young members. It thus seemed natural to organize it under the aegis of the Belgian Federation of Friends of Museums.<sup>2</sup> Now, while the Federation does valuable work, not everyone is convinced that it is indispensable. As the most active members of Belgium's various Associations of Friends, who are mostly volunteers, al-

ready make a very substantial contribution, it is difficult to mobilize support for a federal structure as well. The proposal that this somewhat lacklustre Federation should be asked to organize the competition was welcomed by those who had been seeking ways of putting some life into it!

**THE THEME: 'AROUND MUSEUMS: COMINGS AND GOINGS'**

The theme, application procedures and the rules for the competition organized in Belgium were essentially the same as those decided on by the World Federation. However, the few modifications that were introduced – on the advice of a number of experts on the panel – made it quite independent of the international competition. It took on a life of its own.

Young people were invited to take photographs around museums, perhaps of the comings and goings at the entrance, with or without people, and from any angle. Although the subject was interesting, care had to be taken to present it in a stimulating way rather than as a series of restrictions. The rules (see box) allowed each participant to submit a maximum of five photographs and the panel was to decide on the basis of the overall quality of each set. The photographs could be

1. The Association of Friends of the Royal Museums of Fine Arts, which was founded in 1967, is one of the largest museum-related voluntary associations in Belgium. It owes its importance to its connection with this prominent Brussels art museum.

2. The Belgian Federation of Friends of Museums was established in 1973. It is composed of 38 Associations of Friends of Museums with a total of 22,363 members. The aims of the Federation are to provide a link between the various groups in the country and help them to get to know each other, and to co-ordinate their activities.

Poster (Flemish).

**FOTO-  
WEDSTRIJD  
VOOR  
JONGEREN**

**RANDOM  
HET MUSEUM:  
in- en uitgangen.**

Eerste prijs:  
8 dagen te New York  
voor 2 personen.

De inschrijvingsperiode (inschrijfdatum: 15 maart 1990) zijn beschikbaar bij de  
FEDERATIE DER VRIENDEN VAN DE MUSEA VAN BELGIË  
Museumstraat 9 - 1000 Brussel - Tel.: (02) 511 41 16

WORLD APPLIES HDM DECHY

**CONCOURS  
DE  
PHOTOGRAPHIE  
RÉSERVÉ  
AUX JEUNES**

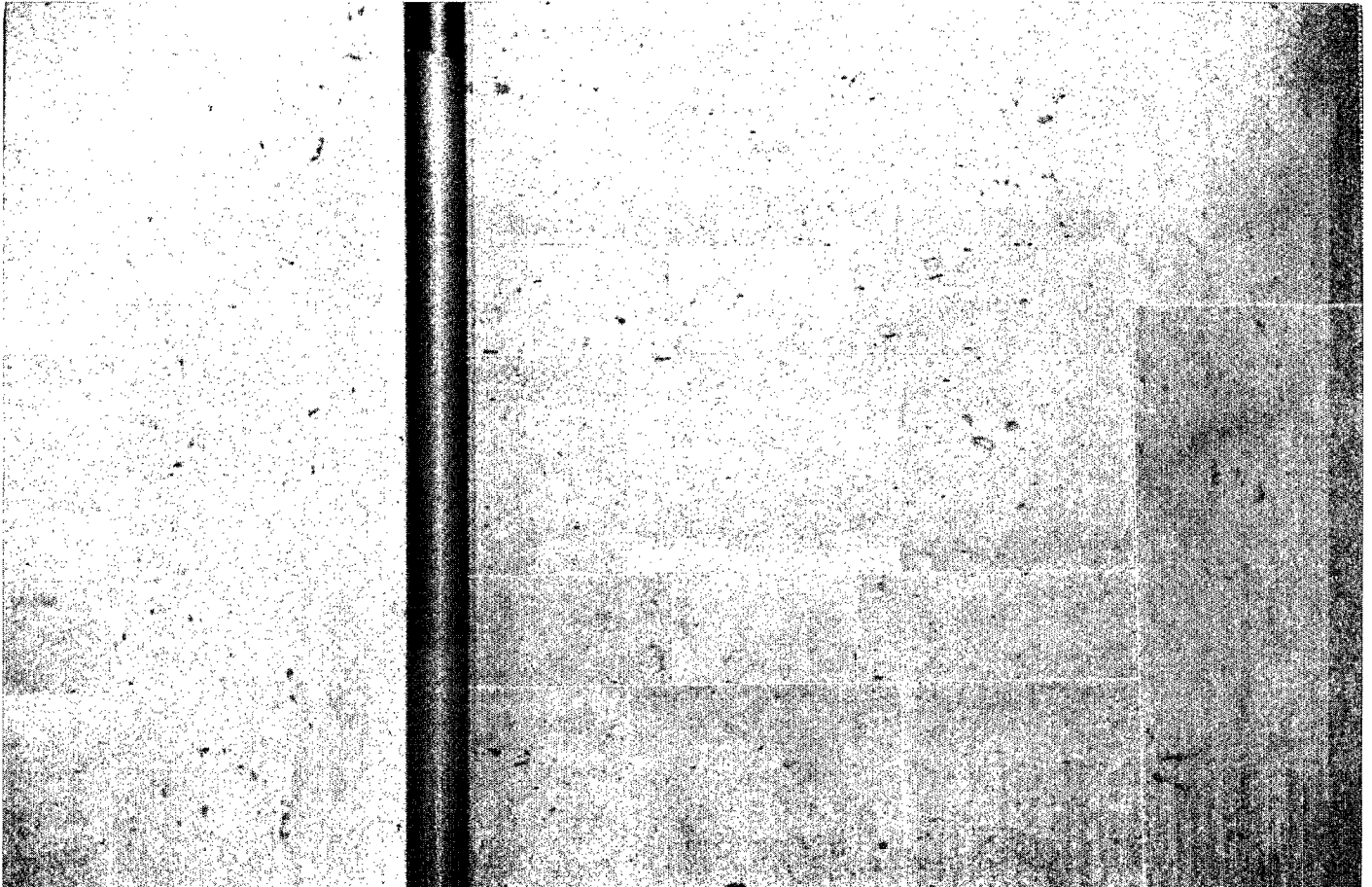
**AUTOUR  
D'UN MUSÉE:  
entrées & sorties.**

Premier prix:  
8 jours à New York  
pour 2 personnes.

Les bulletins d'inscription (date limite le 15 mars 1990) peuvent être obtenus à la  
FÉDÉRATION DES AMIS DES MUSÉES DE BELGIQUE  
Rue du Musée 9 - 1000 Bruxelles - Tél.: (02) 511 41 16

WORLD APPLIES HDM DECHY

Poster (French).



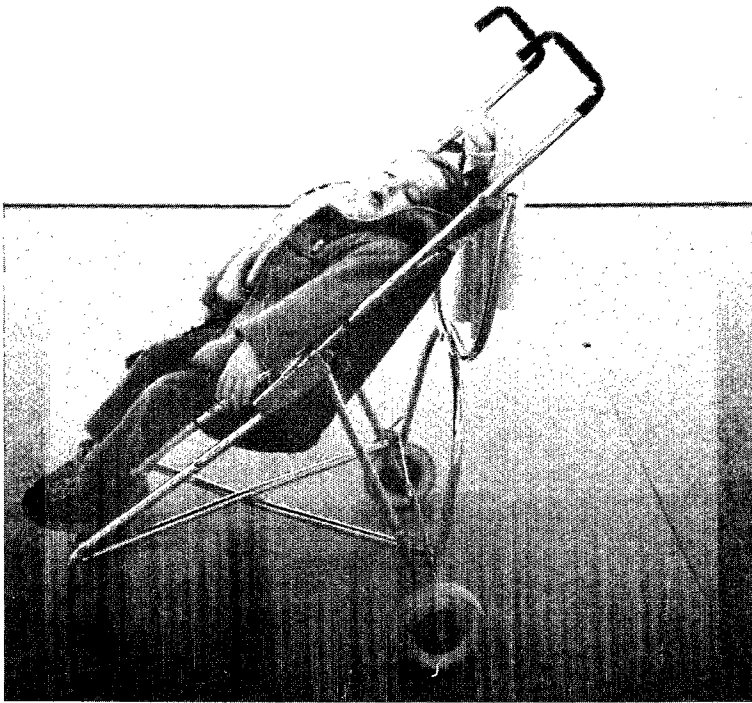
Alexander Lindner, 23 years, first prize.

## **Belgian Federation of Friends of Museums**

### **Rules of photography competition**

1. The competition is open to young people residing in Belgium who are no older than 25 years of age on 16 February 1990.
2. Contestants must observe the laws and regulations governing photography in the country where their photographs are taken.
3. Specifications:
  - (a) only photographs printed on paper shall be accepted, in colour or black and white;
  - (b) each participant may submit a maximum of five photographs.
  - (c) The prints may be submitted in several sizes: from 13 × 13 or 13 × 18 to 30 × 30 or 30 × 40 cm, and must not be framed;
  - (d) a label with the name of the participant, his/her address and the name of the museum photographed should be attached to the back of each photograph.
4. Deadline for submissions: photographs, accompanied by an application form, should be deposited at, or sent to, the Belgian Federation of Friends of Museums, rue du Musée 9, 1000 Brussels, Belgium, by 15 March 1990.





Renaat Thijs, 21 years, second prize.

Xavier Löwenthal.



submitted in several sizes, ranging from a minimum of 13 × 13 or 13 × 18 cm to a maximum of 30 × 30 or 30 × 40 cm. Entries had to be submitted in the form of prints, either colour or black and white.

While colour photography is very common in a recreational context, black and white photographs are still popular in photography classes and workshops where young people develop and print their own negatives. Colour is associated with amateur photographers, while black and white remains the medium of those seeking to develop a more professional approach.

By casting our net widely enough to cover both groups we were running the risk of appealing to neither. This became clear as the entries came in and the panel of judges made their decisions and comments. Definition of the age-range posed a very similar quandary: anyone who was 25 years of age or younger on 15 February 1990 was eligible. Perhaps those at the top end of the range would think it beneath their dignity to compete with people much younger than themselves, while the younger ones might be discouraged by the prospect of competition with their elders.

Of course, the prizes were a big draw: the first prize was a one-week holiday for two in New York – a dream for many a young European! The second prize was a weekend for two in London. Consolation prizes in the form of art books were to be awarded to a dozen or so runners-up. Contributions to the competition from several companies and institutions were very much appreciated: Sabena World Airlines offered the trip to New York, the Crédit Communal gave moral and financial support and the Brussels Tourist Office offered its patronage.

Information leaflets and posters in the two national languages were distributed to all secondary schools and selected higher-education establishments and also to museums, photo galleries and cultural centres. The press and the audio-visual media were also contacted. Lists of all these institutions, tailor-made and containing all the necessary information, were obtained for the purpose. Some Associations of Friends of Museums made a point of relaying news of the competition to their members and to local newspapers. The impact of this publicity campaign was phenomenal. Approximately 1,500 additional leaflets had to

be sent out at the request of teachers, organizers and individual young people. The first entries began to come in a few weeks later and by the 15 March 1990 deadline 200 entries had been received.

They came from all over the country, mainly from adolescents of 12 to 18 years of age. Several entries were received from pupils from the same class, no doubt encouraged by their teachers. This was very positive, and we felt that one of the main objectives of the competition had been met: to give young people an incentive to visit museums and to take a personal and creative look at them.

As the panel based their decisions on the intrinsic quality of the entries, the winning candidates were all from the upper end of the age-group and, obviously, more experienced. The panel itself consisted of a chief curator, two directors of photography museums, the editor-in-chief of a photography magazine and the director of the Brussels Tourist Office. The first prize was won by Alexander Lindner (23 years old) and the second by Renaat Thijs (21 years old), and consolation prizes were awarded to a number of young people between the ages of 18 and 23. Interestingly enough, the winning entries were not all of people entering or leaving museums.

#### AFTER THE EVENT

The panel of judges certainly served the cause of photography by setting high standards, but perhaps they did not attach enough importance to the need to encourage creativity in young people.

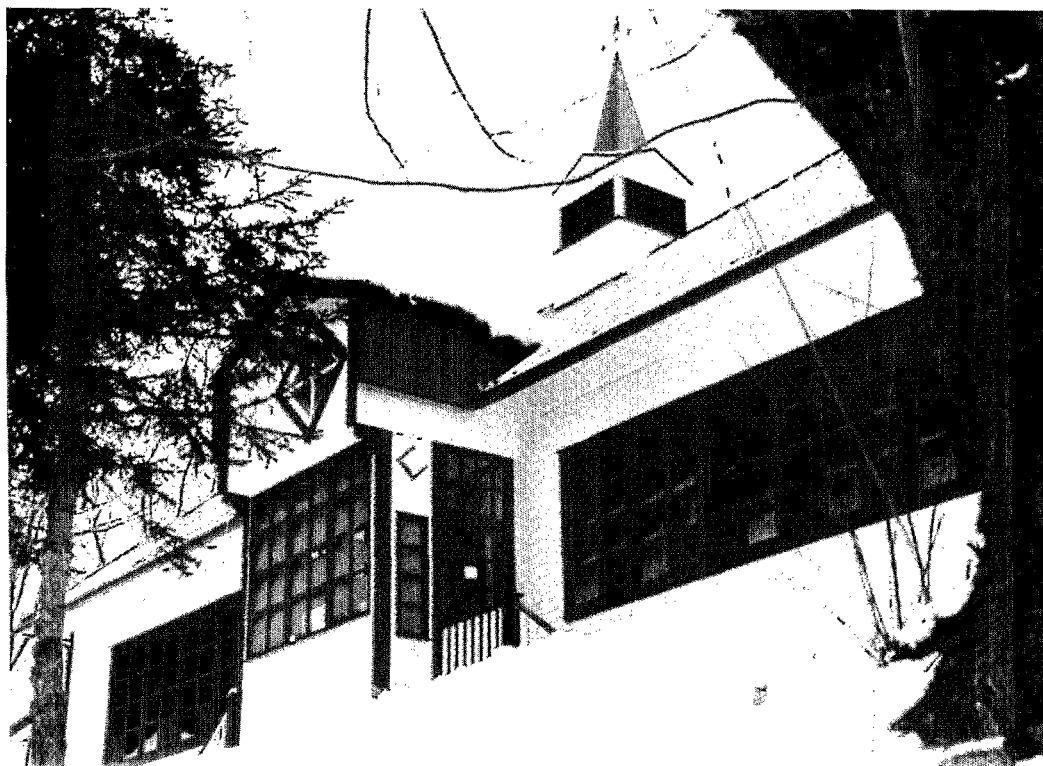
They tended to pass over photographs which, though of little artistic merit, showed evidence of observation, humour and poetic insight. It thus seems best not to ask young people to use methods and techniques in which they are not sufficiently well versed. This would apply to other media such as painting, literature or video as well. In future we would no doubt decide before we started whether we wanted to offer rewards to young people of proven talent or to encourage amateurs by offering them an opportunity to develop their creative gifts.

In this case our primary objective was to stimulate the interest of young people in the Friends of Museums movement. The competition was a definite success from that point of view, if only because of the number of parti-



cipants it attracted, even if it is still too early to say whether it has brought any young blood to the Association of Friends of the Royal Museums of Fine Arts. ■

And what's more . . .



The Saint-Gilles Paper Mill  
at Saint-Joseph-de-la-Rive,  
Charlevoix, Quebec.

## 'Economuseology' – a new term that pays its way

Cyril Simard

*In issue No. 162, Museum created the new term 'museconomics' to draw attention to (rather than define) a still somewhat hazily understood set of interactions between museums in general and the economic life of our societies, and to suggest that any museum that disregards economic trends is asking for trouble.*

*Now we have another neologism – 'Economuseology' – which does more than draw attention to or define a new idea: it expresses a concept that is already a reality, at least in some countries. We have asked the very first 'economuseologist' to tell Museum readers about it. He is Cyril Simard, architect and ethnologist, former director of planning and development at the Museum of Quebec and now Chairman of the Cultural Property Commission of that 'Belle Province'.*

As Canada is now busy setting up several major new museums, it might be useful to make known the findings of some research in applied ethnology I carried out between 1984 and 1989. My particular concern at that time was the management of art, and in recent years I had noticed a number of developments in different parts of the world. So I analysed various experiments and projects with a view to updating ideas about the conservation of the cultural heritage and traditional crafts:

On a visit to the Kilkenny Centre in Ireland, I was struck by the 'new look' given to traditional Irish craftwork and by the design services offered by this centre to companies looking for new models.

At the PLUS workshops in Norway, visitors can talk to designers and walk around the workshops; this

sparked my interest in interpretive centres maintaining an active dialogue with their 'customers'.

In Vermont, United States, I was astonished to learn that the Billings Farm and Museum financed its museum partly from the profits made from the sale of pure-bred horses.

These museum-businesses, like tens of others in the Netherlands, Sweden, France and even Canada, have the same basic concern: a continual search for means of self-financing.

With financial resources becoming scarcer everywhere, and craft workshops and the crafts themselves almost dying out, I set about researching and analysing this problem, then on the basis of my findings carrying out an experiment to devise a way of combin-



ing culture and economics so as to promote development. That is how the idea of 'Economuseology' took shape. It was subsequently put into practice in a small firm producing hand-made paper, the Saint-Gilles Paper Mill at Charlevoix in Quebec, Canada.

A MARRIAGE OF SYSTEMS

'Economuseology' is a recent coinage and the concept it expresses reflects a new cultural approach linking small crafts with museums, in the broadest sense. The aim is to provide a sound financial basis for a new kind of undertaking that seeks to encourage and make known the material culture of a particular locality. The purpose of this new type of production centre, which also involves various interpretive activities and efforts to promote the local heritage, is to revitalize traditional products and adapt them to contemporary needs. It is thus a kind of marriage in which the two partners – business and museum – are brought together, usually under the same roof, for self-

financing purposes. If this self-financing is successful, the economuseum can then plan its future more confidently, manufacture higher-quality products, train a new generation of skilled craftsmen and add to the interest of cultural and scientific tourism in the area.

The differences between an economuseum and the traditional types of museum on the one hand and business on the other are clearly set out in five analytical grids. Table 1 is an example showing how the economuseum compares with other establishments in the field of conservation.

It should be borne in mind, however, that the 'profitability' and 'productivity' of an economuseum have both quantitative and qualitative aspects. The economuseum's primary target, to be self-financing, is easy to equate with 'quantitative' productivity that can be measured in the normal way by means of sophisticated accounting techniques and standards; but no less important than the economic aspect are the social and cultural returns and

the contribution made to the heritage. These 'qualitative' returns are the essential benefits to be derived from an economuseum, and they are more difficult to measure.

When coupled with 'museology', the prefix 'econo-' takes on a new dimension and creates a new approach; it designates the primary target but at the same time offers connotations of autonomy, productivity and competition in the museum world. This new word is now associated with particular methods, contents and management processes.

Economuseology therefore refers to a marriage of museum and business. It would be a small business undertaking: Operating on a craft basis.

Producing traditional and/or contemporary objects with a cultural connotation (connected with the object itself, the material used, the place or an individual).

Backed up by activities and interpretive displays illustrating traditional and present-day output.

Drawing attention to the environmen-

TABLE 1. Conservation and training

Conservation	Traditional museum	Interpretive centre	Ecomuseum	Economuseum	Cultural industry	Commercial aspects
Basic purpose	Conservation and display	Theme-based conservation	Conservation focussed on local identity	Conservation to bring out potential of object and craft	Conservation as pool of ideas	Conservation for comparison of imitation
Focus	The collection	The theme	The collective memory	The product and craft	The aesthetic qualities of the object	The prototype
Attitude to the object	The object for its own sake	Illustrative qualities of the object	The object as evidence	The object as inspiration for new products	The object as personal fulfilment	The object as source of profit
Attitude to production techniques	Authenticity and historical exactness	Symbolic interpretation of a chosen theme	Ability to produce with traditional technology	Adaptative potential of traditional techniques	Profitability of the technique	
Attitude to site and building	Content more important than the building itself	Object more interesting when in natural and historical context	The global environment: factor of identity	The building crystallizes the specific character of the milieu	The building as a centre of life and creativity	The building as an instrument of production and sales
Main basis of activity	The collection and works displayed	Studies of the main theme	Life and experience of a community	Technologies of an active workshop	Creativity of an independent creator	Performance and skills of the company
Aims of training schemes	For quality of restoration and conservation	For understanding of techniques and methods	For understanding of local way of life	For production of quality objects and updating of techniques	For creation and production of quality objects	For greater productivity and efficiency
Type of instruction provided	By specialists and graduate volunteers	By local specialists and volunteers	Cultural activities by local specialists and volunteers	By craftsmen	At further training level	At further training level
Training and further training of staff	Specialist studies	Specialist studies	Self-instruction	Apprenticeship system and specialist studies	Apprenticeship system and specialist studies	Specialist studies

tal qualities and value to the heritage of building and/or site. Having as its basic objective the achievement of overall self-financing.

The main objective is thus strictly financial: to self-finance all operations, both commercial and cultural. To achieve this the designers of the system have to develop new products and market them at a profit before going on to the next stage, the establishment of the museum side. As they have to plan everything on the basis of financial resources generated by their own financing capacity they are usually forced to moderate their architectural ambitions and guard against delusions of grandeur. This means that the traditional process of establishing a museum has to be reviewed in its entirety. It should be noted that we are primarily concerned with craft workshops that are still active precisely because they have learned how to survive.

The second objective, which is a qualitative one, is to create a new range of products, the main concern being to conserve what is best in the tradition. At the same time as giving satisfaction to customers looking for top-quality products, what is produced should meet internationally recognized standards in the field concerned. The context, that is to say the architecture and presentation, must aim at the highest standards too. Ideally, the values by which the basic team – an eth-

nologist, a designer and an architect – should be guided are the quality of life, environmental protection, human scale, and appropriateness to the region. A pluridisciplinary team of this kind would ensure complementarity and a proper balance of functions from the start.

Lastly, the third objective is to contribute to the development of cultural and scientific tourism in the region concerned by selling the product in a suitable museological setting. This enhances the built heritage and assists in preserving the character of the region. So the museum section too will be of a new kind, serving as an interpretive centre that focuses on local products and explains to visitors the various techniques involved. It will also enable them to compare traditional products with their modern counterparts since the works displayed are chosen for their ability to stimulate the imagination and creativity of both visitors and craftsmen. In brief, the emphasis is laid on an interpretation of the objects, which includes the activities involved in their production and direct contact with their makers, on the assumption that the customer on the spot provides the best test of the product's saleability.

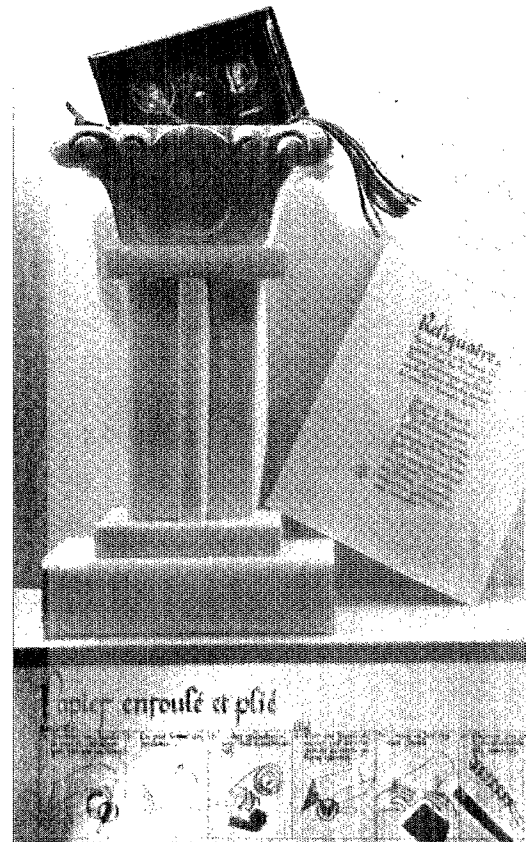
As a guide for interested individuals and bodies, the questions below, presented in grid form, were based on three objective-related criteria (economic, qualitative and technical) and

A craftsman uses his screen to make sheets of paper one by one, as was done in the seventeenth century.



TABLE 2. Fifteen practical questions as a guide to feasibility

Criteria	Conservation	Production	Distribution	Marketing	Management
Economic objectives (self-financing)	1. Can the craft be taught through apprenticeship in a workshop?	2. Can the profitability of the present product be based exclusively on its quality?	3. Can related information and activities be provided without undermining profitability?	4. Have potential customers been clearly identified?	5. Is the present management free to make its own decisions? What is the management's legal and financial standing?
Qualitative objectives (quality of product)	6. Is the technique inherently educational and relevant to the local community's heritage?	7. Does the specific nature of the product give it the stamp of authenticity?	8. Is the subject chosen interesting enough in itself to attract the public?	9. Can the present workshop produce enough to meet demand?	10. Can the very small scale of the business be preserved? (Small is beautiful)
Technical and administrative objectives (cultural and industrial tourism)	11. Would you feel the site would be made more attractive by incorporating some object which forms part of the local heritage?	12. Can the product be counted on to promote and enhance the locality?	13. Could accessibility and participation be regarded as your hallmarks?	14. During the season, does the product meet the requirements of tourists?	15. Could you broaden the range of your associates and advisers?



five major functions (conservation, production, distribution, marketing and management). The full version of the study<sup>1</sup> takes up these questions one by one and gives practical answers on how the overall concept should be put into practice, including further reading, analytical grids, kind of staff needed, methods of management, types of expertise required, and so forth (Table 2).

A PROTOTYPE THAT WORKS

The Saint-Gilles Paper Mill, which used to produce hand-made paper but had to close down in 1984 for financial reasons, offered us an opportunity to put our ideas into practice. At the same time, more research was carried out into folk arts and traditions at the School of Architecture of the University of Laval and in the Arts Section (Design) of the Sainte-Foy College of General and Vocational Education in order to check out various hypotheses. The findings of this research were positive. Now, after five years of the new approach, the paper-making business and its associated museological activities are completely self-financing, and

this has encouraged a great many business people to support the development of credible projects that will in the end be independent, profitable undertakings.

The concept has thus demonstrated its ability to provide permanent jobs and, in a business framework, to foster the development of new traditions. This success story recently moved the Quebec Ministry of Tourism and the Entrepreneurship Foundation to recognize economuseology as a valid concept. In 1989, the Papeterie Saint-Gilles and its economuseum were awarded the Grand Prix de l'Innovation Touristique. ■

Symphony in white: an evocative display of locally-produced paper.

1. Cyril Simard: *Comment rentabiliser une entreprise culturelle*, Montreal, Édition du Centre Éducatif et Culturel Inc., 1990, 170 pp.

# How we manage curators

*Sylvie Wagemakers, born in 1950, in Bandung (Indonesia). Studied social sciences (Catholic University Brabant, Tilburg). From 1981 to 1988, teacher at business schools. Since 1988 she has been senior management consultant for Rijntraining at Oosterbeek, Netherlands, specializing in management training. This article is an adaptation of a talk given to participants of ICOM '89 at Leiden.*

*Ton Wagemakers, born in 1950, at Vught (Netherlands). Studied social sciences, history and anthropology (Catholic University Brabant, Tilburg) and museology (University of Leiden). From 1973 to 1988, teacher at business schools. From 1983 to 1987, project manager of the Netherlands Textile Museum. Since 1988, co-ordinator of the curators at the Museum of Ethnology in Rotterdam.*

In museum management, the human element is sometimes neglected or ill-understood. Yet a museum can be seen and analysed as a group of human beings, or a group of such groups, and its management is, therefore, very much a social skill. This skill involves considerable sensitivity to the need to clarify as much as possible the nature and limits of the roles and responsibilities of the different individuals and groups involved as well as the relationships between individuals and groups.

Once upon a time there was a museum with a very clear and simple structure. It had a director and a number of curators, with lower-ranking staff to look after the collection and attendants in the rooms open to the public. But times changed. Other types of staff gradually appeared on the scene: book-keepers, technicians, secretaries, educators, conservators, publicity officers, automation experts, and so on. In other words, the organization became a perfect example of a bureaucracy, with formalized rules and procedures, supervision by superiors, standardization of activities and roles and authority based on social position within the hierarchy. The museum now seemed to be becoming a real organization, which would surely make staff better able to perform their duties. As it turned out, however, this was not the case for all members of staff. At symposiums, in articles and in letters to newspapers, particularly over the last few years, it has become clear that the curators find themselves unable to function in a bureaucratic organization of this kind. It makes them feel ill, and their performance is poor.

We should now like to open a new perspective. First of all, we wish to advocate the appointment of a professional manager as head of the curators. Secondly, we urge that curators be treated as professionals. This is our message, no more, no less. We should,

Sylvie and Ton Wagemakers

however, like to elaborate on it for at least two reasons: first, in many museums curators hardly get the chance to function at all; second, this has a dreadful impact on the quality of museum products such as exhibitions and catalogues.

In order to be perfectly clear, let us first consider a number of theoretical notions relating to: (a) the professional; (b) the curator as a professional; and (c) the manager. In the second half of the article, we will take the case of the Museum voor Volkenkunde (Museum of Ethnology) in Rotterdam, and explain the way in which work there for over a year has been carried on by a professional manager of curators.

## THE PROFESSIONALS

Let us start with a profile of professionals. They operate on a basis of professional autonomy. This manifests itself in the following ways:

They determine themselves the objectives and content of their job.

They are able to locate and select the relevant knowledge required for their own specialized field.

They set the priorities for the work to be carried out.

They choose the partners with whom they wish to work on a particular assignment.

They determine the basic approach to the work.

There are various ways in which professionals differ from other functional groups within their organization. They do not think in terms of the organization as a whole; each is concerned with his or her own specific interest. The organization is there to provide a job and a salary. The aims of the organization are subordinate to professional objectives; the arguments on which decisions are based are of a professional nature and do not take into account the aims of the rest of the organiza-

tion. Professionals work on the basis of personal contacts, in other words personal preferences play a very important role. The challenges to which they respond are related to their specialized field. They attach great importance to integrity, based on the norms within their own professional group. They feel that the rest of the organization should in no way question the validity of these norms, otherwise there will be crises of confidence or conflict between professionals and management.

The organization or those who manage the professionals should also bear in mind that professionals think on the following lines. They are entitled not to implement management decisions if these are in conflict with their own values and norms. Professionals do not wish to be 'steered'. They see themselves as the only persons responsible for the output of their work, even if many others have also contributed. For example if an exhibition is very successful, a curator expects all the credit. Professionals will always view the activities of management with a critical eye.

#### CURATORS AS PROFESSIONALS

The above-mentioned characteristics of professionals also apply to curators. The curator's job includes the following dimensions, all of which justify or even require professional autonomy:

The purpose of a museum is to take care of something for which society has a high regard: the cultural heritage of its own people and of others must be conserved and made accessible to the public.

In the interest of the objects curators must adhere to specific professional standards. These are not laid down in a professional code of ethics, but they are generally accepted. For example, curators do not engage themselves in any form of dealing in objects; they display objects with respect for their context and describe them with the necessary scholarship.

The curator's customer is often a colleague from another museum or a researcher at a university or institute. (There are also the collectors, who are often extremely knowledgeable in their own particular area; the curator is the only person in the museum who can talk to groups such as these.)

The curator is often the only person who can say what an object repre-

sents and assess the merits of a donation or purchase.

It must be possible for the autonomy claimed by the curator to be expressed directly in terms of the functional requirements of the work itself and the interests of the collection. These interests of the collection are: the description of objects, a sound acquisition policy and, *inter alia*, making the collection accessible to others by means of exhibitions, lectures and publications.

#### MANAGERS OF PROFESSIONALS

What is the work of managers of professionals in a bureaucratic organization? There are certain principles and axioms which they bear in mind:

Professionals cannot be managed by the imposition of rules and procedures.

Managers must concentrate on increasing the quantity and quality of the professionals' output.

They should create the space for the professionals to function in their own particular fashion within the bureaucratic organization.

Finally, they must do everything in their power to ensure that the aims of the organization and those of professionals are, as far as possible, identical.

This leads to the following strategy in the work of professional managers. They must shield professionals from the organization, solve practical problems and be authorized to act on their behalf. In matters relating to their own specialized field, however, professionals should defend their proposals themselves. If ever ideas or proposals are rejected by the organization, the manager must ensure that the rejection is never based on the actual content of what is suggested by the curator; in other words, only 'external' interventions, such as financial considerations, should be allowed as exceptions in such cases. Conversely, the professionals should understand very clearly that they have no say in the general policy decisions of the museum.

Managers have to give professionals scope for open-ended experiments, and to make it clear to others within the bureaucratic organization that the working style of the professionals has to be different in order for them to achieve their goals. If curators come up with any ideas that are in the in-

terest of the organization as a whole, managers should ensure that these ideas are followed up. Finally, managers must work together with professionals to translate the latter's proposals into output, having a care for both quality and quantity.

#### A TEST CASE: THE MUSEUM OF ETHNOLOGY

Let us now turn to an actual case: my [Ton Wagemakers'] work at the Museum of Ethnology in Rotterdam.

Some time ago an advertisement was placed to find a co-ordinator for the curators. It asked for someone with management qualities who was also prepared to gain knowledge of Asia or Latin America. The requirement was for a 'participating leader'. The final choice was a professional manager with museum experience and a certain knowledge of anthropology. It was a newly created position, recommended in a report following a crisis of confidence between management and curators. One of the reasons for the crisis was the change from a simple organizational structure to a bureaucratic one, as referred to above.

Analysing this particular situation I was also struck by four points of a more specific nature:

For some years 70 per cent of the budget for the purchase of objects had been spent on automation. This drastic reduction in the budget meant that the expertise of the curators was rarely called on for the purchase of objects. Moreover, other people within the organization could also make purchase proposals.

The curators were spending only a small part of their time on what I consider to be the most important task: the description of objects. Much more time was spent on checking simple data for the automation project.

The expertise required for the important large temporary exhibitions was increasingly coming from external specialists.

Less use was being made of the museum's own collections as a basis for large temporary exhibitions; this meant the museum was not using the knowledge of its own professionals.

To put it in a nutshell, the curators did not get the chance to function as professionals. I made it my task to treat the curators strictly as professionals

and to mediate between the professionals and the bureaucratic organization.

I started by having long discussions with each curator. Everything was considered: their academic background, their views on the museum, their interests, what exhibitions they would most like to put on, and so forth. I also studied the policy documents and objectives of the museum. I decided to start with the policy relating to acquisitions, as that in my view touches the very core of the work of the curator. The document on which I had to base myself was drawn up in such general terms that basically any donation or proposal for purchase was acceptable.

I then asked two curators to draw up a discussion document stating what they wanted to acquire over the coming years. The advantage of this approach was that the documents could then be evaluated by their colleagues. After various discussions within the group the other curators followed with their own documents. A few months later agreement was reached as to the acquisition priorities for the next four years. Moreover, each curator was allocated a part of the purchasing budget for the next four years. Each now knows the exact amount at his or her disposal.

This general policy, including the financial arrangement just mentioned, was approved by the museum management. From then on the curator had to produce a document justifying each proposal in terms of the general policy. Detailed discussions then took place within the group. Sometimes other curators find that there has not been sufficient research into the origin or significance of an object, or that the proposal does not fit in with the overall policy agreed on. The discussions also serve to develop qualitative criteria which must be met by a purchase of donation. If the group agrees with the proposal, it then goes to the management. It is not the co-ordinator but the curator (as a professional) who justifies the proposal. In principle, the management should consider whether the proposed purchases conform with the policy already agreed on.

#### CO-OPERATIVE PLANNING

A further step has recently been taken. Curators have translated their part of the policy document into a plan of action for the next four years. This covers research, a supplementary description

of that part of the collection which they wish to expand and an investigation of the market which also indicates where in Europe items can still be bought and the amount of travel required for the purposes of orientation and acquisition. These plans of action are discussed both separately with the co-ordinator and with the group as a whole. The other professionals are highly critical. In one case a curator had to go back and do his 'homework' again no less than three times before the others would accept his proposals.

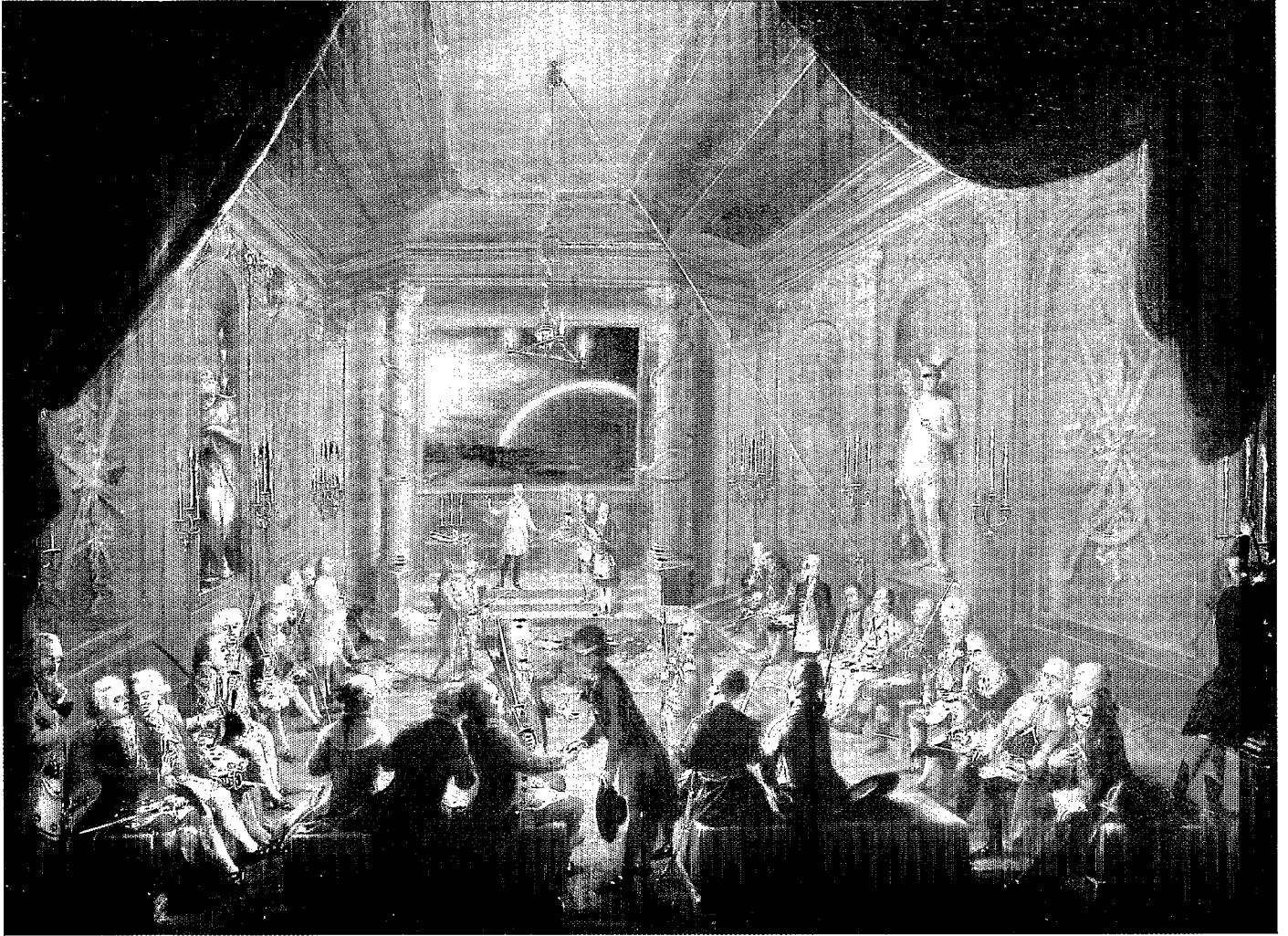
One advantage of the plan of action is that it is now possible to draw up an exhibition schedule for each curator. Exhibitions for two curators in 1991 and 1992 were moved to the initial planning stage. With one of the curators an experiment is under way to see if activities such as research, acquisition exhibiting and publishing can be brought together in a sort of marketing plan. As can be seen, we are doing things step by step.

A major conclusion we have come to is that particular attention should be given to the formulation of the desired results. In a separate discussion with each curator these are converted into terms which can be quantified: the number of descriptions per year, the number of checks on simple descriptions for the purposes of collection management, the number of lectures held and the type of public to whom the lectures are to be given (in order to assess the level of difficulty), the scope of catalogues and other publications, and the amount of time spent on exhibitions (including the design, the selection and description of objects and the general texts).

A discussion follows on the differences and similarities in various curators' planned results, and adjustments are made on a voluntary basis. We have now instituted a quarterly assessment of progress towards planned results. One aspect of this is the mutual evaluation of purchase proposals by the curators. In the coming months we shall be discussing the quality of the descriptions of objects.

We hope that we have made it clear that curators should be treated as professionals both in the theoretical and in the practical senses. This is in the interests both of the curator and of the museum organization as a whole. Curators will produce professional results only if they are treated as professionals by the museum organization. ■

# Recalling Mozart as a Freemason



Painting showing an initiation into a Viennese lodge, about 1790, by an unknown artist. (Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.)

Ferdinand Zörrer

To mark the two-hundredth anniversary of the death of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart on 5 December 1791, a number of museums put on special exhibitions during 1990/91. Some of these have shed light on a less-well-known facet of the composer's life and personality: his activity as a Freemason. In this article, the Grand Archivist of the Grand Lodge of Mozart's native Austria outlines his masonic membership and reports on some of the exhibitions.

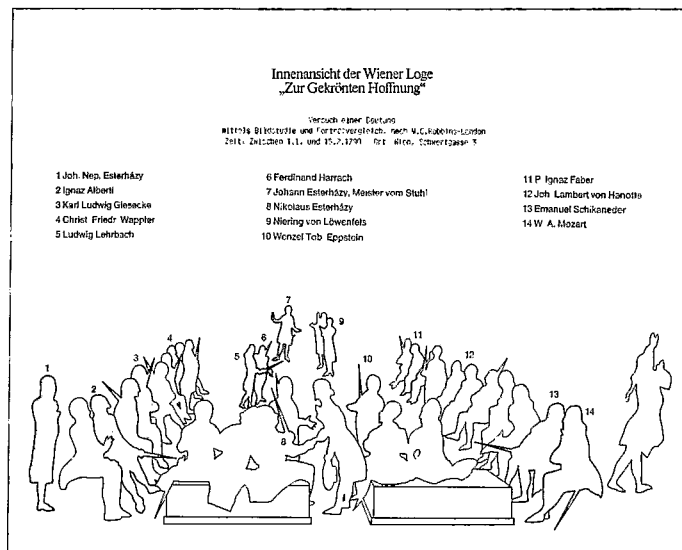
On 5 December 1784 the Viennese Freemasons' lodge Zur Wohltätigkeit (Beneficence) sent word to sister lodges: 'Proposed for admission: Kapellmeister Mozart. Our former Sec'y. Bro. Hoffman forgot to announce this proposal to the most honourable sister lodges; it was already announced four weeks ago to the honourable district lodge and we should therefore take steps in the coming week for his admission, if the most honourable sister lodges have no objections to him.'

It is not known who proposed Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart for admission to Freemasonry. It may have been the Master of the lodge, Freiherr Otto von

Gemmingen, who in 1778 was a patron of the composer at Mannheim.

After his initiation on 14 December 1784, Mozart visited the famous Zur Wahren Eintacht (True Concord) lodge. It was this sister lodge that raised the Entered Apprentice to the Fellow Craft Degree on 7 January 1785, following a request of his own small lodge. We know of no record about Mozart's ascent to the third degree (Master Mason), but it must have occurred after a very short time, as was usual in those days. Wolfgang Amadeus himself proposed his father, Leopold, to his lodge, and the older man's initiation took place on 6 April

A drawing, by H. C. Robbins-Landon, identifying the persons in the lodge painting.



1785. On 24 April 1785 father and son visited the Zur Gekrönten Hoffnung (Crowned Hope) lodge. It was then that a new cantata by Mozart was played, *Die Maurerfreude* (Masonic Joy, K471). Because the minutes of the True Concord have been conserved, we know that Mozart was a very eager participant at lodge meetings. It was perhaps Mozart who proposed Joseph Haydn to the True Concord; the other composer's initiation took place on 11 February 1785.

Thanks to announcements, numerous invitations and other masonic documents, we know of Mozart's very frequent masonic activities, which distinguished him from many other famous brethren of the Craft, and continued until his death. During a third-degree lodge meeting after Mozart's death a memorial speech was made by the actor Karl Friedrich Hensler, who said in part:

It was the will of the Grand Master of the Universe to cut out of the Chain one of our most loved and most meritorious members. Who didn't know him? Who didn't esteem him? Who didn't love him? Our worthy brother Mozart. . . . He was a mason by reason and mind . . . who never forgot to be a human being.

#### PATIENCE AND TRANQUILLITY

By contrast to his celebrity in the world of music, Mozart is not everywhere known for his Freemasonry. Precisely for that reason it is very important to recall Mozart as a Freemason by exhibiting relevant documents and items. Most masonic documents concerning Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart are kept in

the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv in Vienna as 'confidential documents'. These documents are presented (in the form of copies) at an exhibition at Austria's Freemasons' Museum at Schloss Rosenau (near Zwettl, Lower Austria, 125 kilometres from Vienna), where it is possible to visit original lodge rooms dating from the mid eighteenth century. This special exhibition, entitled *Brother Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*, opened on 7 April 1990 to close on 3 November 1991. Among displays are several membership lists, confirming Wolfgang Mozart Imperial Royal Kapellmeister as being a Mason of good standing, and a letter from Wolfgang Amadeus to his father, Leopold, who was very ill, in which he related his masonic experiences. Another letter, to his friend and masonic brother Johann Michael Puchberg, revealed Mozart's lack of money. There is also to be seen the already-mentioned memorial speech, made at his lodge. Also on show is the masonic clothing of a contemporaneous member of Mozart's lodge, brother Franz Johann von Bosset: two aprons, a little trowel with a blue ribbon, and a small key made of ivory, as well as his Master's certificate. Belonging to the same lodge as Mozart in 1789, von Bosset is very likely to have possessed the same masonic items as the musician.

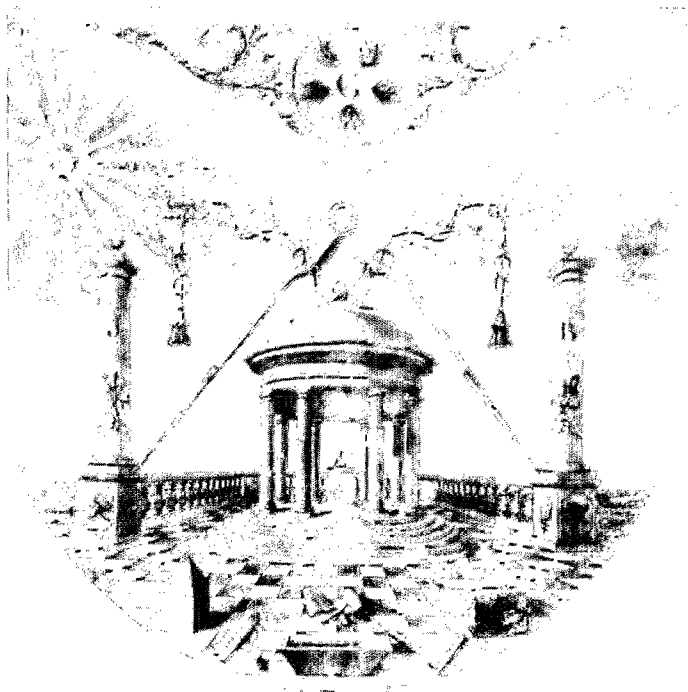
Also displayed at Schloss Rosenau are prints of all the of Viennese lodge seals from the time of Mozart's membership. There is a panoramic view of Vienna in 1785 where Mozart's apartments and the location of the lodge houses are marked. A very important object is the famous *Journal für Freimaurer*, where at the beginning of the

first volume (1784) there is printed Ignaz von Born's essay *Über die Mystereien der Ägypter* (About Egyptian Mysteries), which is one of the sources of Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute*. Another brother and member of Mozart's lodge from 1786 to 1790 was Joseph Baurnjöpel, who wrote a book displayed in the exhibition entitled *Grundlinien eines eifrig arbeitenden Maurers* (Principles of an Eager Working Mason), illustrated with numerous engravings and drawings showing the rituals of the various degrees. It was also used by female lodges (known as 'masonry of adoption'), which existed in Vienna at this time. Brother Johann Georg Kronauer's album is shown with its sketches and writings by many masons, including an entry by Mozart on 30 March 1787, written in English: 'Patience and tranquillity of mind contribute more to cure our distempers [than] the whole art of medicine.'

#### MASONIC MUSIC

A special part of the exhibition deals with other important masons and their relationship to Mozart. Quoting those involved in music alone, there are the singer Valentin Adamberger, Pasquale Artaria (who published compositions by Mozart and Haydn), Emanuel Schikaneder (librettist of *The Magic Flute*), and Joseph Hadyn, who was a special friend of Mozart. Nor does the show forget Mozart's masonic music, which is represented by various scores, including *Die Maurerfreude*, the *Maurensische Trauermusik* (Masonic Funeral Music, K477), and the *Kleine Freimaurerkantate* (Small Freemasons' Cantata, K623), the last opus contained in





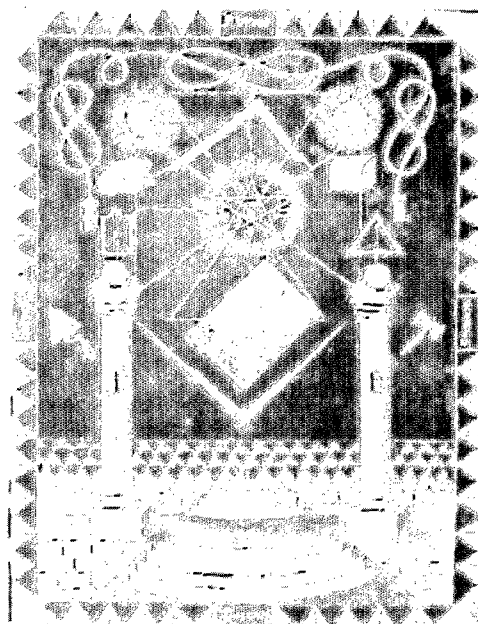
A masonic apron from the eighteenth century.

Mozart's autograph catalogue of his works composed from February 1784 until shortly before his death on 5 December 1791. There is also detailed documentation on Mozart's last opera, *The Magic Flute*, and all the masonic background to this masterpiece, whose first performance was conducted by the composer himself on 20 September 1791, a few weeks before his death. As background music visitors hear the Austrian national anthem, written by Mozart as a song for the closing of lodge meetings – *Lasst uns mit verschlung'nen Händen . . .* (Let Us With Joined Hands . . .), later known as *Kettenlied* (The Chain Song).

Returning to the capital, visitors can see a world-famous oil painting by an unknown artist – the only one of its kind – owned by the Vienna Historical Museum. It shows a meeting of a Viennese lodge about 1790. Some of the thirty-five members of the lodge are known by name, including, in the foreground, Mozart chatting with Schikaneder his librettist. The Historical Museum also owns a remarkable 'tapis' (masonic carpet, representing the image of the lodge) which was used by a Viennese lodge in Mozart's time, discovered in 1860 near the Kärntnertor when the town walls were being demolished. It was the centre-piece of a special exhibition, held in 1984, commemorating the 200th anniversary of

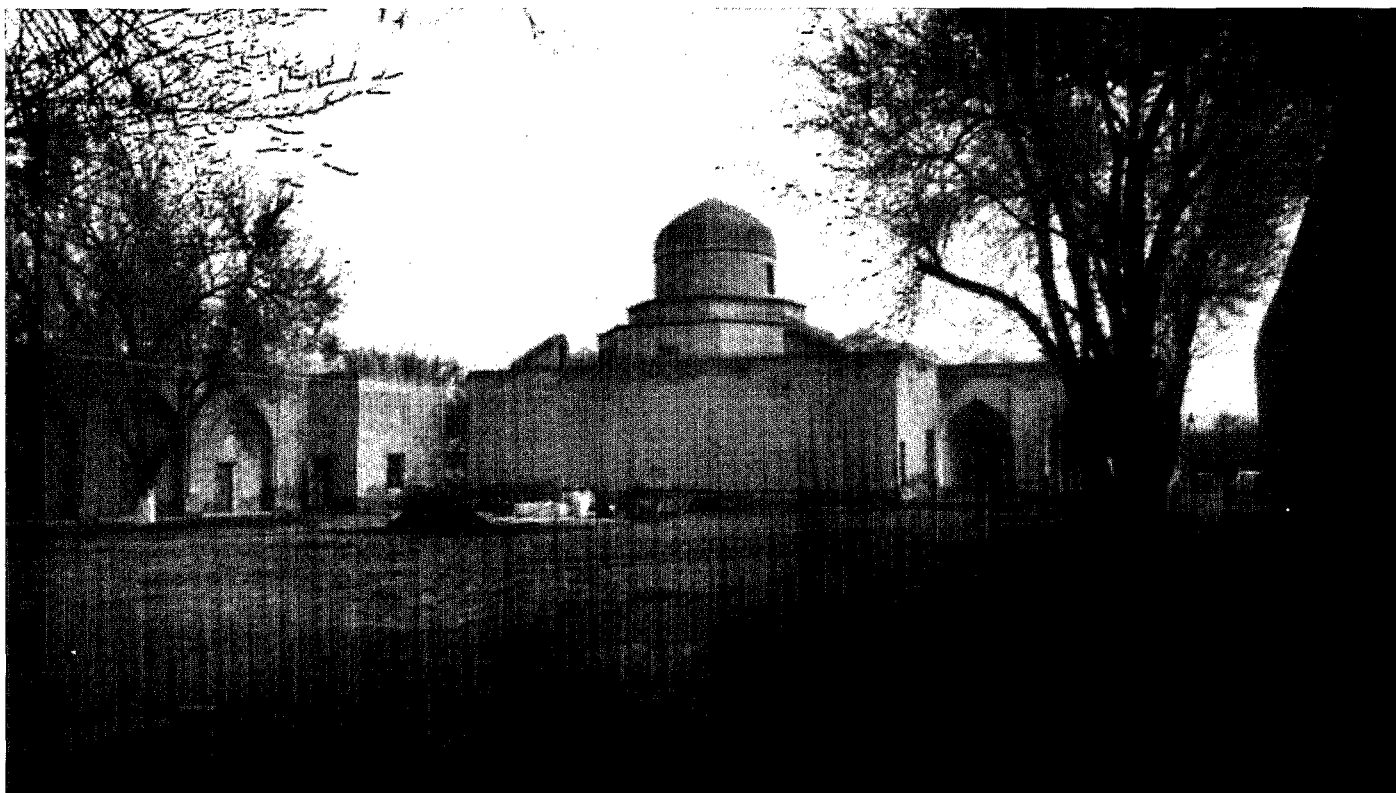
the first Austrian Grand Lodge and where hundreds of masonic items, most of them belonging to the archives of the Grand lodge of Austria, were on display. A special section was dedicated to the above-mentioned lodge painting, and another – containing thirty-three items – to Mozart and Haydn. Some of them were shown again at the great Mozart exhibition in Vienna in 1990/91. There was also an exhibition in Salzburg, organized by the Mozarteum, which displayed some items of masonic origin. At the time of writing there is some talk of holding a Mozart-related masonic exhibition in one of Prague's museums during 1991, while the Netherlands had their taste of Mozart as a Mason at Zeist Castle in 1990: *Mozart en de Vrijmetselarij* (Mozart and Freemasonry).

Perhaps after 1991 Mozart will be known as a Freemason to far more people than nowadays, thanks to a remarkable series of exhibitions. ■



'Tapis', from the book by J. Baurnjöpel, *Grundlinien eines eifrig arbeitenden Freimaurer*.

## A Museum report



## A Kazakh rug museum in the making

Flocks of white, brown and reddish sheep were munching peacefully one morning recently as *Museum* drove over the gently rolling Kazakh steppes, strewn with wild tulips, to reach Chayan. This town of 6,000 inhabitants is located in the southern corner of the Kazakhstan (USSR), halfway between the regional capital, Chimkent, and Turkestan, a medieval city boasting monuments dating back to the tenth century A.D. Not nearly so ancient is Chayan's mosque and *medersa* (Koranic school) complex, now being restored.

'These buildings are only about a hundred years old,' explains restoration director Ishmaev Isakhan, 'but they have a place in our hearts because they were built mainly thanks to donations from simple townspeople.

And in those days one small goat – the price of a single brick – was really worth something.'

Thanks to the mosque and *medersa* Chayan became a centre of Islamic learning, attracting boarding pupils from all over Kazakhstan for half a century. The complex was taken over by the state and secularized in 1927. Now it is being restored and will soon be used for several purposes.

### ADMIRE . . . AND BUY

In one building a mosque is to function again, while certain rooms of the low cloister-like *medersa* will once more offer Koranic instruction. The rest of the *medersa* and the earlier main mosque building have become the Chayan Rug Museum and Workshop.

The main mosque building, slated to house the museum, and cloister-like *medersa* (Koranic school), which will be shared by religious instruction and rug production.



Restoration director  
Ishmaev Isakhan.

'Sheep have been a mainstay of our people for generations. Among other things, they give us wool to make rugs for domestic purposes as well as to pray on,' continued Ishmaev Isakhan. 'We don't even need to dye most of the wool since it comes originally in different colours. So you see, it was quite natural that we got the idea of documenting the history and production of rugs in a museum, with both educational and beautiful displays.'

The entire process – from shearing and spinning through design and weaving – will be explained and illustrated. For this, the museum will include a workshop.

'The workshop will have a teaching function, of course, but also – and just as important – a commercial

function. Local people and visitors will be able to *buy* as well as admire our rugs.'

That idea prompted *Museum* – ever promotion-minded – to ask director Isakhan if he had even heard of our magazine, whose Russian-language edition is, after all, issued more than 3,000 kilometres to the west of this rather remote town, in Moscow. It turned out that he not only knew *Museum* but had just subscribed to it.



# *In Central Argentina: a single-parent museum*



Aroldo D. Rosso

The museum building.

*Many museums nowadays are vast enterprises with a large staff and a director whose profile resembles that of a commercial manager more than that of a curator. The opposite, however, can also be found in many parts of the world: the unprecedented development – generally far from the big cities – of small, intimate museums whose existence is often due to a single person. This is a phenomenon that might be called the ‘single-parent museum’. There is one particularly interesting example in Central Argentina, and we now give the floor to its founder, Aroldo D. Rosso.*

The Ambato Argentine Archaeological Museum is the result of over forty years of my life’s work devoted to the search for the roots of humankind in the territory that now forms Argentina. Everything began around 1948, when the forests in the north of the province of Córdoba began to be exploited near the provincial boundary of Santiago del Estero. Not far from this spot are to be found the Cerro Colorado works of rock art, which are of worldwide renown. The discovery of such archaeological treasures kindled a flame that lay hidden within me, for archaeology was a subject that had fascinated me from early childhood onwards.

I began to work through a bibliography of the best known Argentine and foreign specialists, so as to improve my basic knowledge of the subject. As a result of this study, and as my knowledge increased, I felt a growing desire

to embark on research and carried out some field work, thanks to which I was able to set up a small collection.

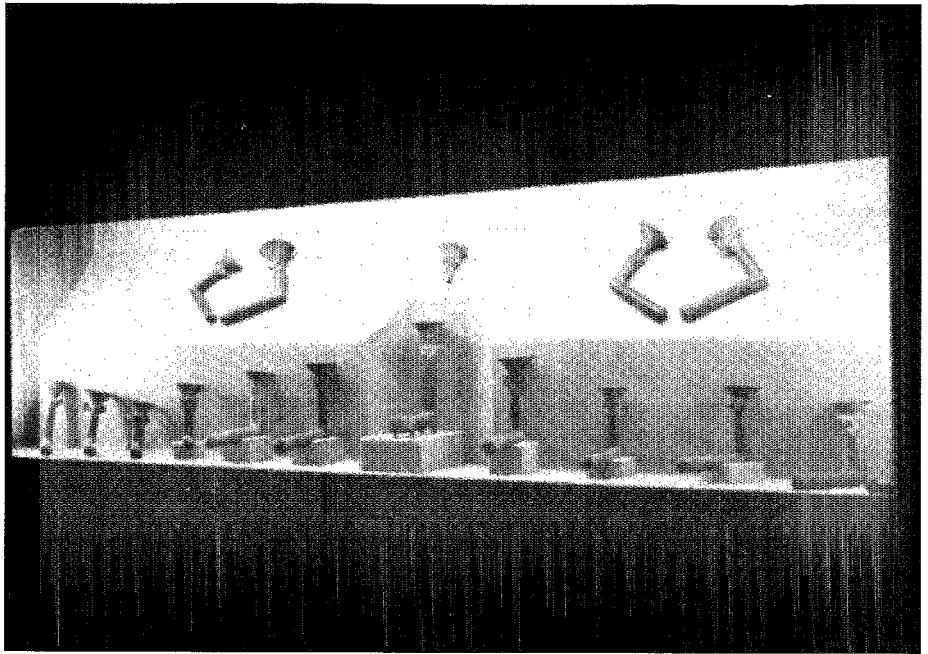
In 1967 I happened to meet a school inspector who told me that in Los Varelas, a small town in the north-east of of Catamarca Province, he had found a very unusual vessel. He described the symbols appearing on it, and I came to the conclusion that it must certainly be something new, since it did not correspond to the characteristics of anything known up to then. I immediately went to the site, saw the vessel and realized that it was an exceptional example, as its iconographic details did not correspond to anything known before then; that it really was something new, which also suggested the existence of an unknown culture. I acquired the vessel, so as to avoid losing such a valuable item, and began prospecting the area.

There was a marvellous yield of archaeological material: ceramic vessels and vases painted in red, black and white on a brown or buff-coloured background, or incised with white or red lines on a black, brown or red background, some depicting a human face, others an animal shape, decorated with painted or carved motifs representing cats, birds or serpents in symbiosis and in a constant trilogy suggesting the deity, which can be interpreted in different ways according to the angle and position from which they are viewed. Thus a bird's head can become that of a cat, and vice versa; in some cases the cat's tongue represents a serpent ending with the head of either a cat or a serpent. The harmonious lines and the delicately painted or incised decorations give these objects a high artistic quality in which no details spoil the overall design.

A large number of ceramic pipes, pipes for smoking hallucinogens, decorated with anthropomorphic faces and zoomorphic shapes generally situated under the bowl, were also discovered. Some of the figures are realistic and some more stylized. One of the pipes has a cat modelled on the lower part of the stem supporting the whole pipe, while under the bowl there is a llama's head decorated with serpent-like motifs painted in four colours: white, black, red and yellow.

The special characteristics of the iconography and design of the material excavated confirmed my belief that I was in the presence of a new culture. I therefore felt it necessary to report my discovery to the National Council for Scientific and Technical Research, which I did in 1973 through Dr Oswaldo Heredia, then researcher at the Council and professor of prehistory and archaeology at the National University of Córdoba.

Throughout all these years of research and field work I was also experimenting with restoration work. Thus, once the necessary skills had been acquired, thousands of hours of work were spent in treating items in the collection one by one, cleaning and restoring them, with results that were judged highly satisfactory.



FROM RECOVERY AND RESTORATION TO THE FOUNDING OF A MUSEUM

The results of the work of recovering and restoring the objects led me to the conclusion that such valuable material could not be reserved simply for the pleasure of a small group of my friends and acquaintances. This gave me the idea of setting up a museum, so that the public also could appreciate the objects, since our archaeological work is practically unknown to ordinary people. At the end of 1973 the first exhibition was held in the town of Villa Carlos Paz during the tourist season, when there were a large number of visitors, and it produced fine results. Other temporary exhibitions followed, in different cities: Córdoba, Santa Fé and Buenos Aires, the last of which attracted many thousands of visitors.

In 1987, thanks to the goodwill of the Governor of the province of Córdoba, Dr Eduardo César Angeloz, a subvention was granted to the Town Council of La Falda to acquire the large house that has now become the museum. The house was leased to me for a period of twenty years for the development of the museum. In this way I was able to realize a dream that had pursued me for fifteen years. In an effort to use the experience gained in the previous exhibitions I planned to make a museum full of light, movement, colour and life, so as to bring out the best in each exhibit through clear, simple explanations avoiding over-technical

The Aguada culture (Ambato period). Showcase containing pipes for smoking hallucinogens.

terms that would be comprehensible to the majority of visitors. As the museum consisted of sixteen rooms, it was possible to arrange the exhibits chronologically and progressively, moving from the remotest times to the most recent in a clearly marked circuit. Clarity of presentation is all the more important in that the museum covers 14,000 years of cultural development in the territory of what is now Argentina, from the time when man first trod our soil up to the Colonial period.

#### THE JAGUAR CULT

Although it is not possible in so small a space to describe the whole collection I should like to highlight some of its most outstanding features. To illustrate the Pre-ceramic period, for instance, a vast stretch of time from 12,000 to 1000 B.C., stone objects are exhibited, such as hammers, hand-axes, rasps, scrapers, arrowheads and spearheads. Other rooms contain objects from the Aguada culture (650 to 900 A.D.), which are characterized by

the beauty and delicacy of their design and their incised symbols in which the constantly recurring presence of the jaguar, in symbiosis with the bird and the serpent, forms complex figures that are sometimes obscure in meaning and, as I have already said, can be interpreted differently according to the position and angle from which they are viewed.

The museum also contains ceramics from the Late period (the Hispano-Indian period A.D. 1540–1700) and the Colonial period (after A.D. 1700) that, despite a profusion of colours, reflect the decadence of values and artistic criteria. Stone sculpture has disappeared, but funerary urns for children, belonging to the Santa Maria culture, are striking on account of their colours, the symbolism of their motifs and the harmony of their forms.

Lastly, so as to make the museum more accessible, interesting and informative, all the rooms contain greatly enlarged photographs showing sequences from the excavation of some of the exhibits, the detailed layout of

the constructions uncovered during excavation and also of the villages, monuments and other archaeological ruins, each accompanied by a written explanation. Visitors are thus able to get a much clearer overall picture of archaeology and really understand it instead of merely looking at strange exhibits they cannot interpret. ■

**The Aguada culture (Ambato period). Vessel with white incised designs on black ceramic. The design, in negative, depicts a cat balanced on its front paws, its tongue transformed into a series of cat-like serpents; the tail bears a similar design.**



## VOX POPULI

*'Talking back' in Winnipeg*

Heather Mousseau

*Are visitors enraptured, annoyed, indifferent? Museums can find out by asking them to 'talk back', as does the Winnipeg Art Gallery in Manitoba, Canada. The gallery's public-relations assistant tells Museum readers what happens, how and why.*

When it was founded in 1912, the Winnipeg Art Gallery was Canada's first civic gallery. Now, 78 years later, it is still one of the country's pre-eminent art museums, recognized for the excellence of both its exhibitions and its programming. One of the gallery's most innovative programmes, which is now exciting a lot of talk, is called, appropriately, *Talkback*.

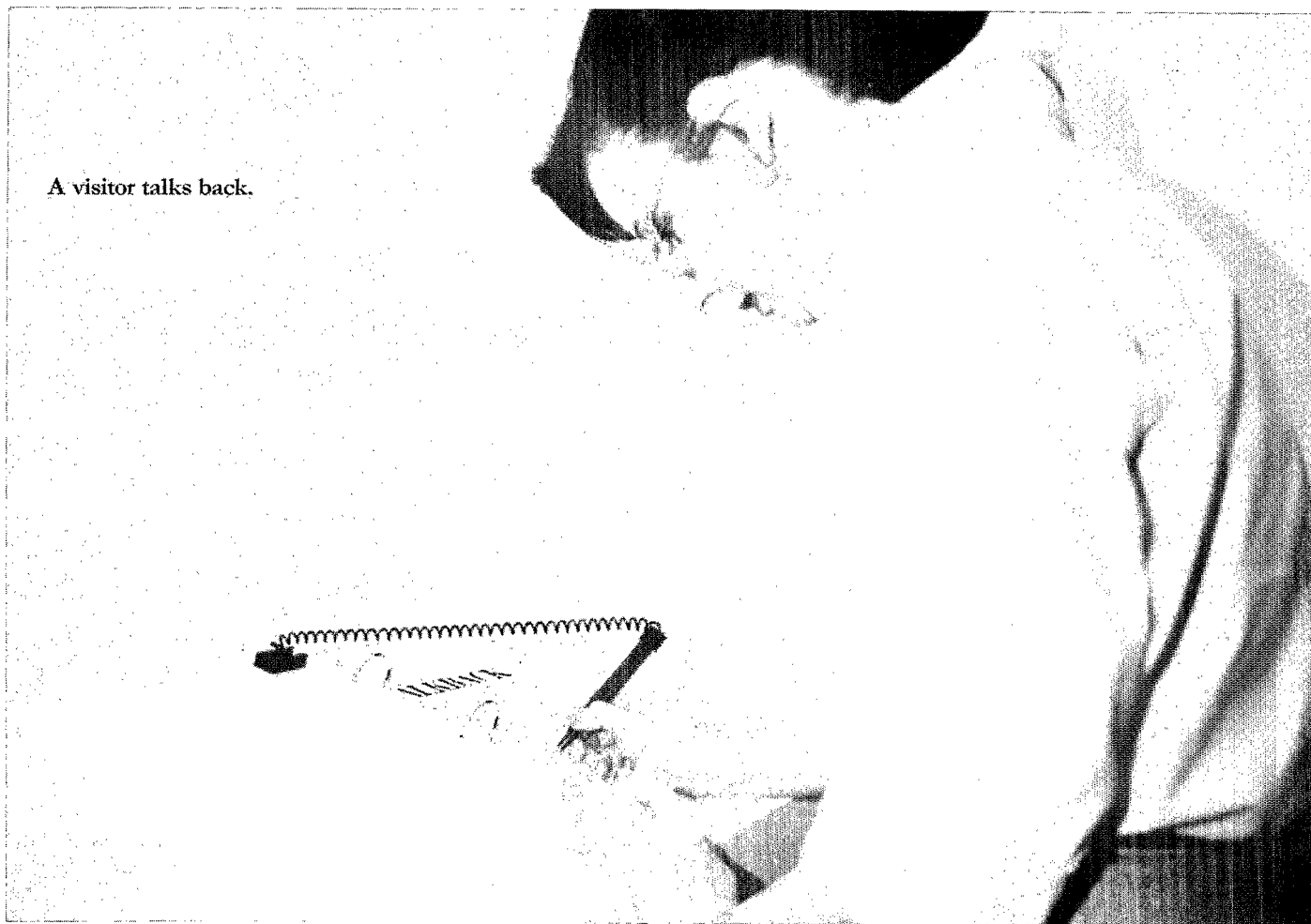
In this media age, communication is a two-way street – letters to the edi-

tor, phone-in radio programmes; even television news seeks viewer reaction.

Art museums, on the other hand, have historically communicated in one direction only. Through catalogues, brochures and handouts, they offer their interpretation of the art on display, while making little or no attempt to find out what their visitors think of specific exhibitions or works of art.

But according to Donna Bolster, Winnipeg Art Gallery's art educator,

A visitor talks back.



Photos by courtesy of the author

'Art, particularly contemporary art, often evokes a strong reaction and people have a need to express that emotion.'

Hence *Talkback*, an interactive programme for the casual visitor, begun in October 1988. 'A tour group can discuss the art with the guide and each other. *Talkback* is for people who don't have that verbal outlet. It gives them the opportunity to communicate their feelings in some way.'

A book of *Talkback* sheets, posted near the exit/entrance to an exhibition area, contains questions which offer the visitor a starting point in viewing the exhibition: 'Consider how these images, in combination with the two figures looking downward, hint at a theme of the cycle of life.' 'How has transforming the drawings into larger paintings altered the visual impact of the images?'

Visitors are invited to jot down their views and opinions on what they have just seen. And they do just that. 'Bold and exciting' and 'Boring, overblown and ugly' - referring to the same exhibition. 'I was overwhelmed by . . . the

ideas it put forth' alongside 'I didn't understand anything.'

'*Talkback* sets up a dialogue between the gallery, the artist and the viewer,' explains educator Bolster. 'It allows the viewer to have a voice, to be part of the art. We try to suggest that there are no definitive answers to the interpretation of art.'

It is an attitude that is appreciated. 'I enjoyed making my own interpretation of the works - a change from having things rammed down your throat.'

### Comments on comments

The most interesting aspect of *Talkback*, says Bolster, is the interchange between the participants, people commenting on someone else's comments. 'I absolutely agree.' 'You don't know anything.' 'You're both wrong.' 'Referring to that person's comments two pages back . . .'

The response to *Talkback* has been excellent. 'I think this is a wonderful idea . . . it engages and challenges people, something I've never seen in a gal-

lery before.' 'I think *Talkback* is a great idea!'

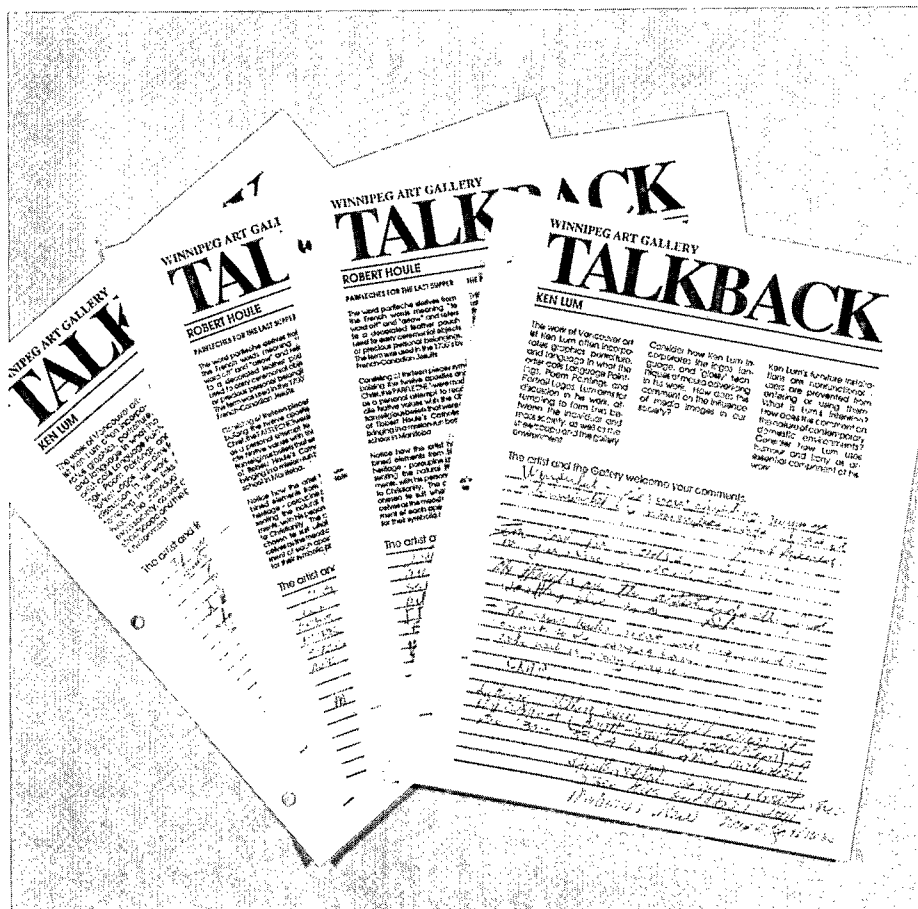
The artists, who receive copies of the *Talkback* sheets, think so too, according to Bolster. 'It's a wonderful, informative way for them to get audience feedback on their work. Some artists specifically ask that the sheets be included with their exhibitions.'

The *Talkback* sheets also help the gallery curators and educators to become more aware of community response to the various exhibitions, not only with regard to the art itself but also to its method of display.

'We have made some changes in response to *Talkback* suggestions,' says Bolster, 'such as larger type-face on labels, labels placed lower to accommodate people in wheelchairs, different lighting. These are small things, but they all help to enhance people's enjoyment of their gallery visit, and that is very important.'

For galleries planning their own talk-back programmes, Bolster has a few tips. 'Let people figure it out for themselves. Help them come to their own conclusions by giving them a direction of thinking through interrogative questions rather than simply telling them. An artist's statements, direct quotes, are very important in helping people understand what he or she is trying to express through the work.'

*Talkback* sheets.



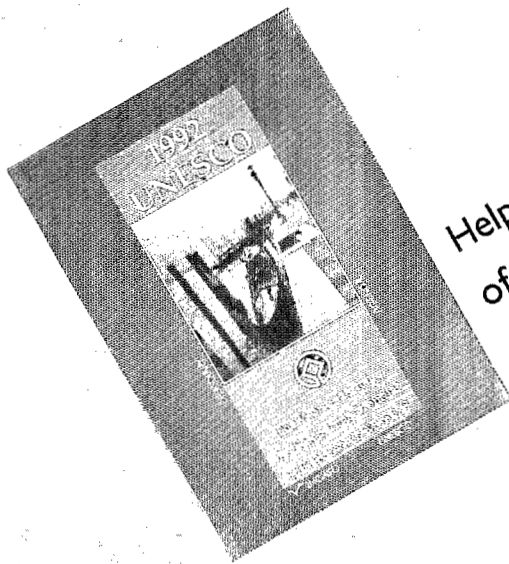


Dear Editor,  
 We are very interested in the courses organized by the Howell Living History Farm in New Jersey, presented in *Museum*, No. 166, in the article by Chet Teller, 'A New Jersey Farm Museum Trains Development Volunteers for Africa, Central America and Asia'.

*Jean Bosco Mpankima,  
 President of the Anthropology  
 for Research in Central Africa Foundation,  
 Brazzaville, Congo.*

Dear Editor,  
 Thank you for the specimen copies of *Museum*. I won't subscribe, however, until you have a budget for photography.

*John G. Morris, Paris.*



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The year 1992 will mark the 500th anniversary of Columbus's historic voyage, with the official slogan recalling 'The Encounter of Two Worlds'. *Museum's* first issue for the year takes a rather broader view: '1492 and Afterwards – The Encounters Continue.' It reports on museums' commemoration of African emigration to Cuba, German emigration to Brazil and Japanese emigration to Peru, and also takes a look at the influence of Latin American culture returning to Europe.

Happy reading!

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