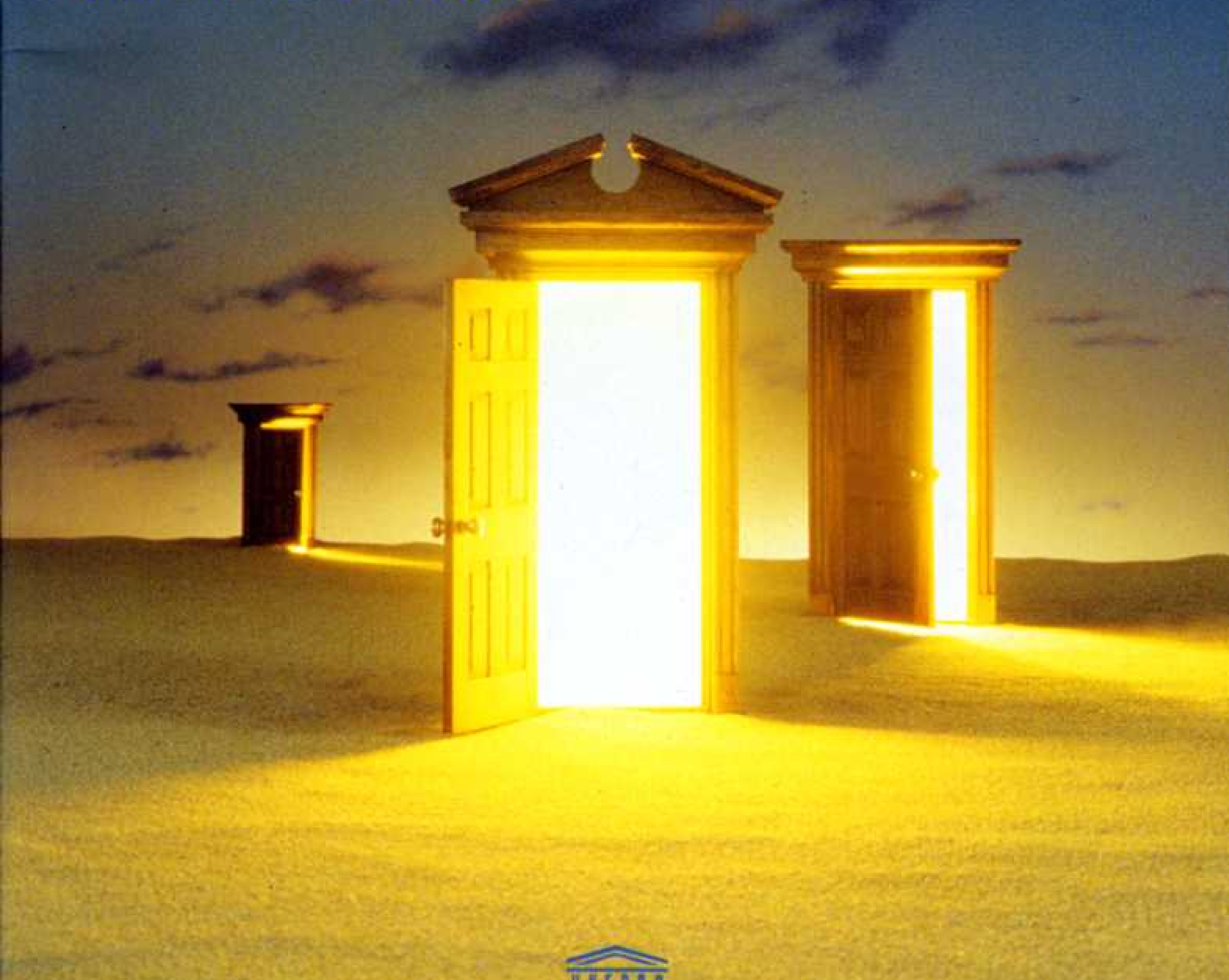
museum international

207

University museums (2)

Hadrian's Wall: the longest museum?

The Kunsthaus of Bregenz



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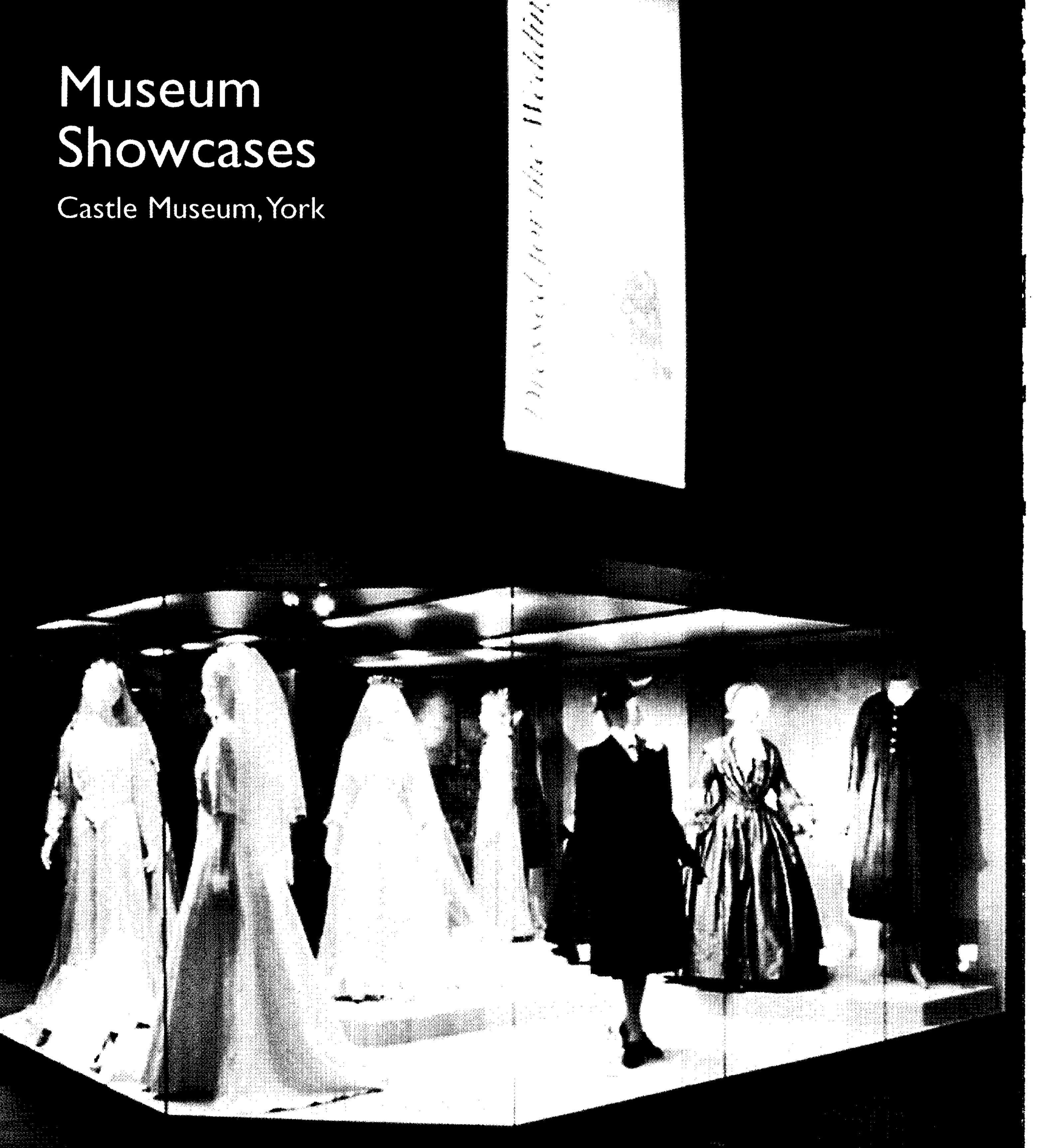

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STOLEN

Early twelfth-century celadon seal in the shape of a lion. Dimensions: height 6.8 cm, diameter 6.3 cm. One of twelve items of Korean pottery stolen from a museum in Kyoto, Japan, on 13 November, 1998. (Reference J-NCB/C-287/99/99-238/30K Interpol Tokyo).

Photo by courtesy of the ICPO–Interpol General Secretariat, Lyons (France).

Editorial

In this second issue of *Museum International* devoted to university museums we continue to explore the variety and diversity that characterize these institutions. (A look at one subject index for university museums on the Internet site of the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa (http://sunsite.wits.ac.za/mus) reveals the following categories: Anthropology, Antiquities, Archaeology, Art, Botany, Biological Sciences, Classics, Cultural History, Earth Sciences, Entomology, Ethnology, Geology, Health Sciences, History, History of Medicine, Mineralogy, Music, Natural History, Numismatics, Palaeontology, Photography, Physics, Politics, Science and Technology, Social History, University Memorabilia, Writing and Zoology.) Yet despite this seeming heterogeneity, there is a common thread that binds them together: unlike most museums, they are part and parcel of another entity that is undergoing far-reaching scrutiny and soul-searching, that is to say, the university itself. The challenges confronting these institutions have a direct bearing on the museums they host and support and it is thus appropriate to examine their fortunes and their future.

The ground-breaking report of UNESCO's International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century,[1] chaired by Jacques Delors, former President of the European Commission, and composed of fourteen eminent figures from all over the world, had much to say about higher education. Many of its insights shed light on the new role and pressures facing university museums as well:

> Higher education is at one and the same time one of the driving forces of economic development and the focal point of learning in a society. It is both repository and creator of knowledge. Moreover, it is the principal instrument for passing on the accumulated experience, cultural and scientific, of humanity. In a world where resources of knowledge will increasingly predominate over material resources as factors in development, the importance of higher education and of higher education institutions can only grow. Moreover, the effect of innovation and technological progress means that economies will increasingly demand competences that require high-level studies. . . .
>
> Social pressures and the specific requirements of the labour market have resulted in an extraordinary diversification in institutions and in courses of study. . . . Universities no longer have the monopoly of higher learning; indeed, national higher education systems have now become so varied and complex in terms of structure, programmes, student populations and funding that it has become difficult to categorize them.[2] . . .
>
> It is primarily the universities that unite all the traditional functions associated with the advance and transmission of knowledge: research, innovation, teaching and training, and continuing education. To these one can add another function that has been growing in importance in recent years; international co-operation.
>
> These functions can all contribute to sustainable development. As autonomous centres for research and the creation of knowledge, universities can address some of the developmental issues facing society. They educate the intellectual and political leaders and company heads of tomorrow, as well as many of the teachers. In their social role, universities can use their autonomy in the service of debate on the great ethical and scientific issues facing the society of the future, and serve as links with the rest of the education system by providing further learning opportunities for adults and acting as a centre for the study, enrichment and preservation of culture. There is increasing pressure on higher education to respond to social concerns, while the other precious and indispensable features of universities, their academic freedom and institutional autonomy, have also been the focus of attention. Those features, although no guarantee of excellence, are a prerequisite for it. . . .
>
> Thus, everyone should be able to count more or less directly on higher education for access to the common heritage of knowledge and the most recent research findings. The university must accept a kind of moral contract with society in exchange for the resources assigned to it by society. . . .
>
> In addition to preparing large numbers of young people either for research or for specialized occupations, the university must continue to be the fountainhead at which the growing numbers of people who find in their own sense of curiosity a way of giving meaning to their lives may slake their thirst for knowledge. Culture should here be considered in its widest sense, ranging from the most mathematical of science to poetry, by way of all the fields of the mind and the imagination.

Concluding that universities ensure the key functions of preparing students for research and teaching, providing highly specialized training courses, catering to the needs of lifelong education and fostering international co-operation, the Commission went on to affirm that the university exercises 'a kind of intellectual authority that society needs to help it to reflect, understand and act'. By seeing university museums in this light, the message is clear and the mandate indisputable.

M.L.

Notes

1. *Learning: The Treasure Within*, Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, Paris, UNESCO, 1996.

2. *Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education*, Paris, UNESCO, 1995 (UNESCO doc. ED.94/WS/30).

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Educating the muses: university collections and museums in the Philippines

Ana P. Labrador

'This is a period of reckoning for old and new museums in the Philippines in general and the university museums in particular.' With this in mind, Ana P. Labrador describes the growth and the renewed importance of university museums that characterize the Philippines today. The author is assistant professor of Art Studies at the University of the Philippines in Diliman. She is a specialist in museum studies and the theory and aesthetics of non-Western art. She has a Ph.D. in Social Anthropology from the University of Cambridge in England, focusing on museology and material culture, and has recently published articles in Humanities Research, ArtAsia Pacific Journal *and* Cambridge Anthropology.

Most university museums established in the Philippines were organized on the basis of teaching collections, such as botanical and zoological specimens. Except for one university collection, those that were reportedly put together in the nineteenth century are now defunct. Contemporary university museums were started mainly in the 1960s – a period of expansion for educational institutions and specialization of academic disciplines. In most cases, the bulk of the collections was donated by teachers and students through expeditions and personal interest. This practice is in contrast to the way other museum collections developed through gifts from wealthy patrons. As a result of their accrued sentimental value, objects in university museums became more precious in the sense that these motivated museums to continue operating, however, their emotive appeal does not necessarily translate into financial and political support for their maintenance. Gradually these collections lost their role as complementary teaching tools, becoming neglected, mismanaged or even stolen.

University museums in the Philippines are now eclipsed by national and some private museums in terms of size and importance. This has mainly to do with the place of museums in academic life and the context within which a national museum has become increasingly important in defining national identity.[1] Moreover, university museums usually house collections that are identified with specialized academic knowledge rather than those that provide visual and material information to all sorts of people. Consequently, objects are displayed in a way that may not make accessible the ideas they should be evoking. In this article I hope to tease out the reasons for the current trend of growth and maintenance of university museums despite apparent problems of relevance and funding, and to propose possible strategies in the context of the actual role of museums in the academic system and in the state of museum practice in the Philippines.

Museums in the Philippines are believed to have begun in universities during the Spanish colonial period. Some museum personnel claim that museums originated from the Ateneo Municipal and the University of Santo Tomas (UST) when these were still located in Intramuros – the fortress city of Spanish Manila.

The UST Museum of Arts and Sciences originated from a collection purposely formed to supplement medical instruction in 1871. As the Gabinete de Fisica (Cabinet of Physics), the collection satisfied the requirement for the establishment of the Faculty of Medicine,[2] which included fossils and stuffed animals for the university's natural sciences courses. Progressively the collection expanded to comprise religious artefacts, ethnographic objects, historical memorabilia and works of art. It was no longer constrained by the scholastic predicates of past collecting practice. This eventually became the UST Museum, displaying objects in exhibition spaces that are primarily open to its students.

In 1940, the museum moved to its present site and shared space with the offices of the university administration, graduate school, library and science departments. It occupies a former hall with a seating capacity for 5,000 people during assemblies. Due to the growing collection, the once ample museum space became cramped with cabinets and objects. Since 1988 the museum has been undergoing major renovation, aiming to rationalize spaces for keeping and exhibiting collections, as well as for museum offices. It is also unique among university museums in the country for producing a newsletter, as well as occasional papers co-published with other departments.

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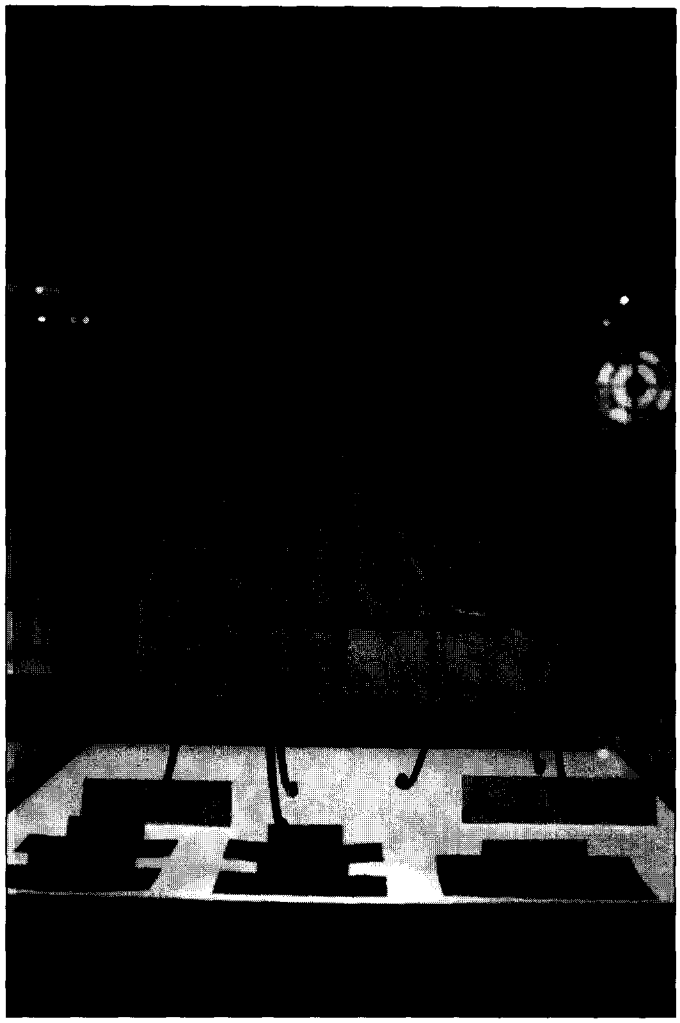


Skulls excavated at Argao Cebu, on display at Southwestern University Museum, Cebu.

The prevailing Victorian philosophy of enlightenment that formed the UST collection gradually eroded when the United States colonized the Philippines at the turn of the twentieth century. The objects for education in classrooms and university-based museums lost their importance to the objects specifically collected to define colonial programmes and, later, national identity. This began in 1901 with the establishment of the Insular Museum of Ethnology, Natural History and Commerce. As a component of the new colonial territory's projects, the museum complemented the work of the Bureau of Ethnological Survey. The latter was primarily led by American anthropologists who inventoried and collected objects and members of 'non-Christian tribes' of the Philippines. Representative objects and people were sent to the United States for exhibition at the St Louis Exposition of 1904. The subsequent return of objects from the World's Fair prompted colonial authorities to rename the museum the Philippine Museum. It became the National Museum in 1928, consisting primarily of ethnology, natural sciences, fine arts and history divisions. In this sense, the type and classification of its collection came from the manner by which university museums were organized.

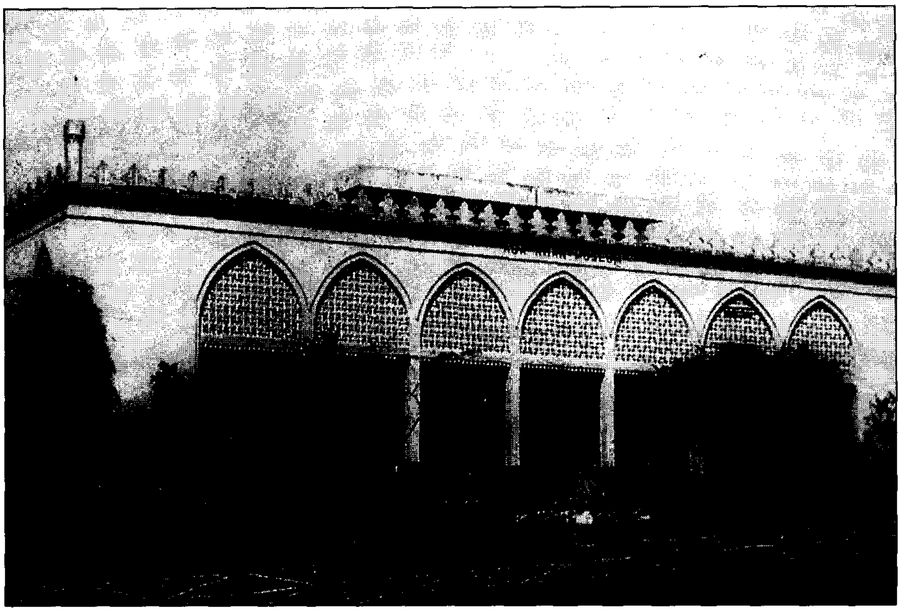
The university museum as model

Museums originating from universities were models for many national museums of formerly colonized nations because the former antedates the latter. The difference, however, lies in the museums' purpose: national museums are mainly dedicated to define ideological structures of nations and nationalism, while the emphasis of university museums is upon scholarship and the academic institution's notion of education. As a result of the changing social role of museums in the Philippines, university-based museums gradually declined in significance when museums became part of nation-building projects.

Within museum systems, there are conventional categories for classifying museums according to the types of the predominant collection (i.e. art, ethnographic or design museums). These are part of the professional and economic specialization developed through the history of museum work.[3] Objects classified as natural history and ethnography accounted for the majority of collections in most university museums in the Philippines that began during the twentieth century. They have, in turn, become models for collections classification at the National Museum of the Philippines and this has shaped collecting activities within museums, indicating a link with academic practices in universities.

The emphasis on using objects in projects of nationalism is a marginal concern for university museums, which tend to focus more

Photo by courtesy of the author



Aga Khan Museum, Mindanao State University, Marawi City, Mindanao.

on research interests. While the majority of the university museums in the Philippines comprise mainly ethnographic, natural history and religious artefacts, there are also those that strive to encompass most of the material culture related to other academic disciplines. It is uncertain whether generalist museums tend to outlive specialist ones. Perhaps it is not the category of the museum that guarantees its long-term existence but, rather, the maintenance of museums that depends upon the foresight of museum managers, sound museological practices and financial support. The museum community's involvement may also ensure its long-term success. In the following sections, I look at three specialist university museums to determine if those elements I have mentioned contributed to their success, or, if absent, may have led to their decline.

The oldest among this type of museum established in the twentieth century is the Museum of Ethnography and Archaeology, managed by the state-run University of the Philippines Department of Anthropology. Following the classification devised by US-trained cultural anthropologists, objects of ethnography and archaeology were later expanded to include human remains in developing physical anthropology as a subdiscipline. The bulk of these collections originated from the personal acquisition of American anthropologist Dr H. Otley Beyer, who organized the Department of Anthropology and became its first head.

The museum's collection gradually grew through donations from students returning from fieldwork. Despite its auspicious start and a secure space, the UP Anthropology Museum (as it is now known) had a troubled existence soon after its transfer in 1949 from the old university campus in downtown Manila to its permanent rooms in the Arts and Sciences building at the suburban Quezon City campus. This had partly to do with the retirement of Beyer in 1954. Upon his death twelve years later, the museum lost most of his collection because his estate decided to sell it. Apparently there were no clear terms for the bequest of the Beyer collection to the university.

The lack of a coherent delineation of management responsibilities within the Department of Anthropology also contributed to the decline of the museum. Although the successive department heads after Beyer marked their particular interests in the museum by expanding the collection, their attention was soon diverted by the institution of degree programmes and research projects. The waning of their focus on museum anthropology reflected the development of academic anthropology as a discipline. Objects slowly lost their place as analytical tools in anthropology and this may have been the reason why museum anthropology lags behind its counterpart in academe.[4] More importantly, however, the lack of financial support and political will contributed to a vicious circle that caused the decline of the UP Anthropology Museum. As of this writing, it is still closed while undergoing organizational restructuring and physical renovation.

The problems that beset the UP Anthropology Museum did not seem to appear in other ethnographic museums. For instance, the privately owned St Louis University (SLU) Museum of Arts and Culture in the highland city of Baguio began with a collection gathered for the anthropology

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course in 1969. Students outside the course, including members of the Student Council and a federation of students from indigenous groups of Benguet, Ifugao, Bontoc, Apayao and Kalinga (BIBAK), augmented the collection.[5] The clear terms of donation proved to be the strength of the SLU Museum. Although the burgeoning collection has caused its permanent areas within the library building to become crammed, students and guests continue to visit the museum to view or research the collection.

This situation is similar at the state-run Aga Khan Museum. It is one of the few university museums with its own purpose-built building. Constructed on the campus of the Mindanao State University in Marawi City, Mindanao, the two-level structure has a distinctive Moorish façade. It was named after Prince Karim Aga Khan IV who provided much of the funds following his visit to the University in 1963.[6] The ground floor houses the ethnographic collection with objects that mainly came from Mindanao groups, and the natural sciences collection occupies the upper floor where there are spaces for a laboratory, exhibition and storing specimens.

The Aga Khan Museum is also set apart from other university museums for having separate curators and staff to manage the two collections. The curators are principally experts in the field with which the collection is linked and have some form of museum training. Moreover, the museum has short- and long-term programmes for development, including a conservation laboratory and lectures using museum collections to encourage more visits. On the whole, the Aga Khan Museum seems to succeed where others lag behind, combining museum management expertise with foresight, proper museum practices and financial acumen.

Emphasizing professional skills

The interesting aspect of current university museum activities is that they tend to reproduce their past functions and examine the present role of museums. The renewed attention of governing bodies to museums indicates the changing importance of university museums in particular. Apart from the addition of the Southwestern University Museum on the southern island of Cebu, plans for two new museums of medicine linked to university teaching hospitals in Luzon are underway.

Furthermore, the dissemination of the International Council on Museums' (ICOM) Code of Professional Ethics through national museum associations has contributed to an awareness of the importance of staff qualifications. Despite the present lack of self-regulation and accountability among museum personnel, it is interesting to note that there is a growing demand for short training courses, internships and degree programmes. This has partly to do with Civil Service requirements for employees of state-run museums to obtain graduate degrees, making them eligible for promotion to managerial positions. In addition, the demand for museum training was an outcome of the new Local Government Code of 1991, which stipulates the establishment of provincial, municipal and city cultural councils. There is also an increasing network with overseas museum workers as a result of memberships in ICOM and the regional meeting of its Asia-Pacific Committee (ASPAC) held in Manila in 1997.

These circumstances have been anticipated by the development of an interdisciplinary Master's degree in Arts Studies with concentration on Museum Studies at the University of the Philippines. Admini-

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The descent of the Holy Spirit, *bas relief in wood from Dagupan, Pangasinan, from the collection of the University of Santo Tomas Museum of Arts and Sciences, Manila.*

stered by the Department of Art Studies, it was instituted in 1998 after five years of deliberation. Its primary goal is to assist in the creation of a professional museum system nationwide. The interdisciplinary approach of the degree programme evokes the department's active links with other departments that offer courses related to areas of museum and cultural work. This includes anthropology, fine arts, education and public administration.

Other university-based, non-degree programmes are also being pursued by personnel from both public and private museums. This is perhaps due to the prestige attached to university programmes in contrast to those short courses sponsored by national museum associations or cultural organizations. For instance, the head of the UST Museum has recently initiated a plan to offer a post-baccalaureate diploma in Museology. This programme reinforces the justification to maintain the university collection, echoing the original aim in gathering the objects. Unlike its role in the past, however, the collection will be placed in an interdisciplinary context rather than as specialists' isolated interest. This has led to re-contextualizations of objects which promotes better care for and access to them.

'A museum is a good idea'

In many contemporary university museums in the Philippines, the philosophy that defined the collections and its management has been the notion that the institution of a museum is a good idea. Those objects painstakingly gathered and recorded have been useful teaching tools as well as emblems of the disciplinary interests of leading faculty members and their students. In most cases, however, this is not enough to sustain the daily maintenance of museums and their collections.

This is a period of reckoning for old and new museums in the Philippines in general and the university museums in particular. The active creation or renovation of museums in academe was the result of the recent centenary celebrations of the Philippines' independence from Spanish colonial rule. Aside from government and private funds that were made available to cultural institutions, the centenary programmes became a source of pride for many Filipinos. Museums became focal points once more because of the material culture that they keep. University-based museums were part of this process, consequently examining their present and future roles.

In response to the demands for professional qualifications within and outside the universities, members of the Museum Studies Programme at the University of the Philippines are extending their expertise beyond the confines of the graduate programme they administer. They are also developing strategies to encourage the care and management of the university's

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collections. Located in eight campuses nationwide, these collections have yet to be properly documented after their inventory in the 1980s. There are also few programmes that encouraged the use of those objects in an interdisciplinary and multicultural framework.

As of this writing, the first University of the Philippines systemwide meeting on museum studies and museum practice is being scheduled for October 1999. This will involve faculty members teaching museum courses, as well as those who are responsible for a museum within the university system. Colleagues who were planning to set up a museum or teach courses are also being encouraged to participate in the meeting. The rationale for the strategy came from the institution of the graduate degree in Museum Studies. The course committee members felt that it would be incongruent to encourage professional qualifications while the university's collections are undermined by mismanagement and the lack of a coherent policy.

The aim of the meeting is to exchange strategies concerning the teaching of museum-related courses at undergraduate and graduate levels. This is also connected to the concern over the care of university collections and maintenance of museums and other places housing collections. Some of the approaches that are being proposed for the meeting include presentations of case-studies, methodologies and hands-on training.

Towards the end of the meeting, draft resolutions will be encouraged and proposed. Among those to be offered are memberships of the International Council of Museums, the adoption of the ICOM International Code of Professional Ethics and the creation of a governing body within the university specifically concerned with the work of museums. This body would be responsible for the maintenance of present collections, protecting them from misuse, and the development of clear guidelines regarding the acquisition, loan and donations of future collections. The workshop participants may decide to convene again in the future. Moreover selected parts of the proceedings will be included in the published handbook, which will include methods of teaching museum courses and using university collections as teaching resources. Although the organizers perceive the meeting as only one among many strategies, they consider the event as part of a process of rescuing university collections and museums from the present lapses of their administrators. ■

Notes

1. F. E. S. Kaplan (ed.), *Museums and the Making of 'Ourselves'*, London, Leicester University Press, 1994.

2. R. T. Jose, *A Guidebook to the Museums of Metro Manila*, Manila, Presidential Commission on Culture and the Arts, 1988.

3. R. Lumley (ed.), *The Museum Time-Machine: Putting Cultures on Display*, London, Routledge, 1988.

4. B. Durrans, 'The Future of the Other: Changing Cultures on Display in Ethnographic Museums', in Lumley, op. cit.

5. E. Zerrudo, *A Guidebook to the Museums of Northern Luzon*, Manila, National Commission on Culture and the Arts, 1996.

6. F. R. Demetrio, *A Guidebook to the Museums of Mindanao*, Manila, Presidential Commission on Culture and the Arts, 1991.

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'A developing sense of crisis': a new look at university collections in the United Kingdom

Kate Arnold-Forster

*A growing concern with the care and handling of some of the richest university museum collections in the world led to a nationwide review and sparked considerable new thinking in the United Kingdom. Kate Arnold-Forster, formerly a practising curator, is a museum consultant specializing in collection surveys and reviews, and in strategic matters. She has been involved in five of the regional surveys of higher education collections in the United Kingdom: in London, the north of England, the south-west, the Midlands and the South-eastern Museum Service (Western Region). Other recent research projects include a review of British music museums (*Museums of Music, *HMSO/MGC, 1993), and collaboration in the museum sector (*Collaboration Between Museums, *MGC, 1998). She is a member of the Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC) Museums Registration Panel and a fellow of the Museums Association.*

The history and origins of museums in the United Kingdom are closely linked to its universities. The Ashmolean Museum, of the University of Oxford, is generally recognized to be the oldest public museum in the country, and possibly the world. First opened in 1683, in a building now occupied by the Museum of the History of Science, its founding collections (including the contents of the Tradescant Ark) were presented to the University by Elias Ashmole in 1677. But donations to universities and colleges of cabinet collections, curiosities, coins and antiquities were recorded well before the seventeenth century. In later years, the development of systematic collections in scientific disciplines formed the basis of several great university teaching and research museums (for example, the Sedgwick Museum of the University of Cambridge (founded in 1727), the Hunterian Museum of the University of Glasgow (in 1807), the Manchester Museum (in 1888)) as well numerous smaller departmental collections. Thus, universities have become custodians of some of the greatest museums in the United Kingdom, if not the world; they record the preoccupations and tastes of scholars, collectors and academics, but also the accumulation of basic teaching material over generations.

During the past twenty years, however, there has been a growing concern over the condition, resourcing, safety and future of university museums and collections, known as Higher Education Museums, Galleries and Collections (HEMGCs), in the United Kingdom. In response, the University Museums Group (UMG) was formed in 1987, with aims 'to improve the status and effectiveness of University Museums' and 'to assist in the identification and listing of university collections'. It is the only national organization exclusively devoted to promoting the interests of HEMGCs. Recent changes to the constitution mean that its membership is now open to a broader range of individuals working with, and interested in, the activities of HEMGCs. The Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC), which is the government advisory body on museums, to be superseded from 2000 by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLAC), has also long been an active advocate and adviser on university museum matters. It has helped foster and support the programme of regional surveys of HEMGCs, and the related attempt to examine more fully the distinctive features of the context to which these collections belong.

HEMGCs in the United Kingdom are managed under a variety of arrangements, in some cases as a distinct institution, but also as part of a school, faculty or department. More recently, a number of higher-education institutions have taken steps to disengage museums and collections from departments and have transferred them to academic support services, or even to their public relations and marketing division.

Only the major university museums, or HEMGCs, are open on a regular basis to the public, and maintain a range of public services, education and exhibition programmes comparable to those of regional and national public museums. Yet among this small group, a number of university museums (in Oxford, Cambridge, Glasgow, Manchester and Norwich, for example) have, in recent years, been at the forefront of innovative developments to extend access and lifelong learning opportunities through their collections. In doing so, they have played an increasingly important role in promoting the cultural contribution of their parent institutions to the wider public.

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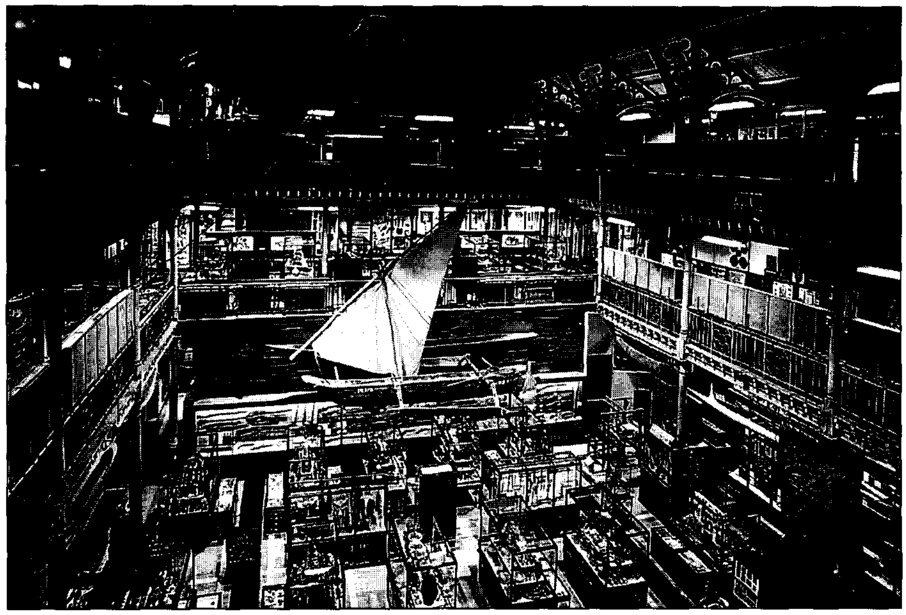

© Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

Interior of the Pitt Rivers Museum, showing an outrigger from Zanzibar.

However, while the best-known HEMGCs in the United Kingdom are recognized, nationally and internationally, for the quality and importance of their collections, they represent only a tiny minority of the total number of predominantly small departmental collections held by universities and colleges. And, as far as the public is concerned, almost all HEMGCs in the United Kingdom are unknown and remain inaccessible within their departments and institutions. Currently only twenty-one of the estimated 400 HEMGCs benefit from extra earmarked revenue funding from higher-education sources in recognition of their special responsibilities. The rest are solely dependent on the very modest resources made available to them from higher education teaching and research budgets, generally under the auspices of their academic department.

The typical HEMGC has been formed to serve the teaching and research requirements of an academic department, or primarily as an amenity for its institution (such as an art collection). Difficulties, however, have begun to arise as many of the older collections have become less relevant to teaching or research, even though they may still contain material of considerable significance. Most lack formal management structures, or collection management policies. Likewise, among the majority, standards of care, such as those required by the MGC Museums Registration scheme, fall well short of those recognized in the wider museum community, a consequence of a severe shortage or reduction of resources, as well as the absence of appropriate skills or access to suitable expertise to manage them. Often HEMGCs have suffered from the loss of former purpose-designed museum accommodation, and have been relegated to poor storage, with no form of environmental control or monitoring. A further difficulty is that in many situations documentation is non-existent or inadequate, hampering the use and accessibility of collections even further.

Beyond the Ark ... and beyond

The process of surveying university museums, galleries and collections was initially prompted by what has been described as 'a developing sense of crisis in university museums'. Funding cutbacks and evidence that collections were unprotected by management structures, combined with recognition of the need to identify and assess the extent of what collections were still held by higher education institutions, led to the first regional survey report covering the University of London (1989). This was followed in Scotland (1990) and the north of England (1993). In the decade since the survey process began, higher education in the United Kingdom has undergone major reform and reorganization. This has brought greater scrutiny and competitiveness, particularly through the regular assessment of research and teaching linked to funding, and a significant increase in the number and diversity of institutions within the scope of the project.

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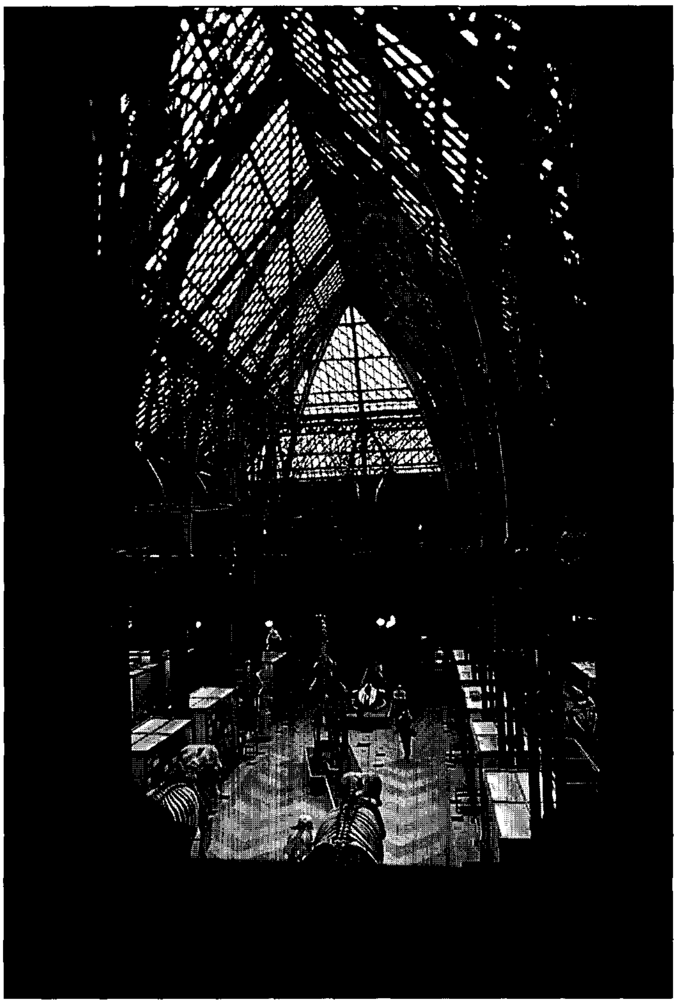

General view of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History.

The publication in May 1999 of *Beyond the Ark*, therefore, marks the completion of the latest part of this nationwide audit.[1] It is only one of several new regional surveys in progress or recently commissioned. In the last two years, projects have been completed or are underway in Northern Ireland, Wales, the south-west, and the East and West Midlands. Only the eastern and southern regions of the south-east have yet to be undertaken.

The region of southern England covered by *Beyond the Ark* is particularly rich in HEMGCs for a small geographical area. It covers ten institutions, including the Universities of Oxford, Southampton and Reading, an art college, a teacher-training college and the Open University. Thirty-eight museums and collections are described, ranging from major internationally recognized institutions such as the Ashmolean, the Pitt Rivers Museum, the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, and the Museum of English Rural Life, to collections numbering fewer than 100 items.

Many of the traditional disciplines associated with university museums, namely archaeology, fine art, biology, ethnography and geology are well represented. The survey identified seven higher education institutions with geology collections, four with herbaria and other biological collections, six with fine-art collections and three with archaeological material. Fine departmental collections, such as the Ure Museum of Classical Archaeology at the University of Reading, illustrate the exceptional quality of some of the smaller HEMGCs. The collection of old masters at Christ Church Picture Gallery is another example that exemplifies their importance. But, by comparison with earlier surveys, the findings of *Beyond the Ark* are notable for the several recently established collections. These are not simply collections amassed from the relics of former research or redundant equipment. Instead, several are associated with subject areas new to these surveys, in part brought about by the inclusion of institutions involved in a wider variety of applied and vocational disciplines, especially in art, media studies and design. For example, vocational courses and research in typography and graphic communication, animation art, textile design and furniture manufacture have all stimulated the growth of specialized collections, which may be in areas that fall outside

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© Bate Collection of Musical Instruments, Oxford

A quintet of serpents being played during a Bate Collection Study Weekend.

the scope of mainstream museums and are thus a particular strength of some HEMGCs. The collections of the Department of Typography and Graphic Communication, for instance, are unparalleled in their depth and scope, despite being primarily created as a departmental educational resource.

In many respects the overall findings of *Beyond the Ark* are comparable to earlier surveys. The difficulties of generating and sustaining resources to support core functions, such as conservation and documentation, or to develop public services and access remain fundamental problems for almost every HEMGC. But the report also points to some encouraging evidence of a more meaningful role for them in the United Kingdom through the emergence of new forms of access (the use of information and communication technology playing a prominent part), through a reinvigorated approach to collections-based teaching and research, and through the promotion of HEMGCs as a 'shop window' for their institutions. Its recommendations aim at bringing greater definition and strategic purpose for HEMGCs, while its conclusions look to the task of ensuring the survival and future vitality of HEMGCs by clarifying their principal needs as:

- fostering and building upon their teaching and research functions;
- identifying the part they can play in their institutions' promotion of access and lifelong learning to a wider public;
- assuming considered responsibility for the co-ordination, development, and management of their HEMGCs;
- strengthening their links with the wider museums community;
- considering the role that they can play within the developing regional political and cultural structures.

It is also worth mentioning how new independent research into the management of HEMGCs in the United Kingdom has produced a valuable additional perspective to the work of the collection surveys. *The Management of Higher Education Museums, Galleries and Collections in the UK*,[2] a report prepared by Melanie Kelly provides a detailed source of unattributed comment and views from those directly involved in working with HEMGCs. This evidence naturally compliments the consultation process carried out by the collection surveys. The report examines the internal and external role of HEMGCs, their government and management structures, resource providers, users and staff. The Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Department of Education for Northern Ireland have also recently commissioned research that examines 'the nature and relationships between the cultural facilities and services of higher

© Rural History Centre, Reading

A schools activity programme at the Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading.

education institutions and the wider community of providers and consumers of cultural facilities and services'. Museums, along with libraries, sport, tourism, arts and archives are considered. *Partners and providers*, by the Centre for Cultural Policy, University of Warwick,[3] focuses on the development of the public service role for all forms of higher education cultural provision, giving particular prominence to the developing regional role that such institutions are assuming.

The conclusions of the survey and the publication of *Beyond the Ark* led the UMG, in collaboration with the South Eastern Museums Service (Western Region), to hold a pilot symposium, at Southampton Institute on 14 May 1999. The programme was divided between sessions and discussion addressing general strategic and funding matters, including a talk on international developments and links between university museums from Peter Stanbury of Macquarie University, New South Wales, Australia, and papers on individual collections. Among the contributions from particular collections were accounts of recent initiatives and research from newly formed, as well as long-established, HEMGCs, such as the Petrie Museum of University College London, the Bill Douglas Centre for the History of Cinema and Popular Culture of the University of Exeter, the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture of Middlesex University and the Fine Art Valuation Study Collection of Southampton Institute.

It is hoped that this will be the first in a series of regular conferences/symposia that will raise awareness and promote discussion of the many academic, fiscal, political and managerial issues which face university museums and departmental collections throughout the United Kingdom. On another level the meeting was warmly welcomed by many delegates as their first chance to meet and exchange ideas with colleagues from a wide range of other institutions. Thus, the symposium was a timely opportunity to take stock of recent developments amongst HEMGCs in the United Kingdom, to consider their future prospects, and to consolidate a growing appreciation of the common concerns that link HEMGCs, both great and small. ■

Notes

1. K. Arnold-Forster, *Beyond the Ark: Museums and Collections of Higher-Education Institutions in Southern England*, South Eastern Museums Service (Western Region), 1999.

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3. P. Shaw, *Partners and Providers: The Role of HEIs in the Provision of Cultural and Sports Facilities to the Wider Public*, Centre for Cultural Policy, University of Warwick/HEFCE, 1999.

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Dealing with change: university museums of natural history in the United States

Peter B. Tirrell

Their unique position as a link between scientists and the public has lent a new dynamic to university museums of natural history in the United States. Peter B. Tirrell is associate director of the Oklahoma Museum of Natural History at the University of Oklahoma. He played a pivotal role in the strategic planning, design and development of a 45-million-dollar project that includes a new facility for the museum and is the immediate past president of the Association of College and University Museums and Galleries. With more than twenty-six years of professional experience, he has served on visiting committees for the Accreditation Commission of the American Association of Museums and on survey teams for the Museum Assessment Program.

As we enter the new millennium, the vitality and resurgence of university museums of natural history in the United States have been attested by unique success stories of significant new building projects. Their future appears bright, but the road to success has meant years of heroic planning and development against nearly overwhelming odds. To accomplish this, they have had to overcome problems in their past and answer a series of sobering questions about their future, from how to fix crumbling walls and leaky roofs to how to position themselves in the educational marketplace. The key to their survival has been their ability to deal with change and to strategically plan, fund and build new facilities. The successful museum projects can serve as models for museums that are trying to plan and build new facilities, university or non-university.

There are more than sixty university museums of natural history in the United States that have been important, highly visible assets to the academic and public communities. Many of these museums, founded in the late nineteenth century, grew enormously in the first half of the twentieth when field collecting and the science of taxonomy were at their heights.[1] The legacy of this period is a collection of hundreds of millions of anthropological, geological, and biological artefacts and specimens that are of inestimable value (e.g. 6 million at the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History, University of Oklahoma). They have documented the diversity and history of life on Earth and provided the basis for ongoing research and teaching activities to the world's scientific and cultural communities. In addition, university museums, many also designated as state museums, once played a leading role in the interpretation of natural history for their community. Their habitat dioramas, for example, were elaborate, beautiful, instructive and highly popular exhibits of the period. Through their teaching, research and public services, the museums have reached and influenced the lives of many millions of people over the years.

The value and relevance of university museums of natural history have not been as clear during the last half of the 1900s. The museums became problematic to their universities and some were at risk of becoming derelict or defunct (a few were closed and their collections were warehoused or dispersed). Among the reasons for this was a major shift in mainstream science research and teaching from taxon-based classes (e.g. ornithology) to functional theme classes (e.g. behaviour). There also was a shift towards more interactive and hands-on interpretation (e.g. from habitat dioramas to discovery rooms). To further complicate matters, the museums often had to deal with a parade of transient administrators. The results have been profoundly negative for the museums when short-term administrators subjected them to short-term thinking. University officials zealously cut programmes and jobs and/or failed to provide proper housing and support for collections. Some even suggested selling collections to solve cash-flow problems! They did not take the time to explore, understand and invest in the long-term benefits and opportunities that the museums could provide.

The museums also faced a critical need for new facilities or serious repairs and renovations to their old buildings. It has been said that the major issue facing virtually all established natural history museums in the twenty-first century is the repair and renewal of their physical plants.[2] At the Oklahoma museum, for

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example, the local fire department estimated that a fire would completely destroy one of the buildings in only a few minutes. The building was formerly a leaky horse stable, which housed thousands of anthropological artefacts.

As the museums came under siege and neglect, their institutional values were weakened and/or decentralized. Conflicting institutional values often gave rise to tensions and a lack of cohesive identity among a demoralized staff. Some of the museums had fragmented pockets of excellent research programmes or educational activities, but lacked a singular direction or purpose. Most of the museum directors, trained as scientists, were unprepared to deal with the corporate challenges of redefining and reinventing the whole museum. They struggled to manage the problems, benefit from their successes, create strategies for solutions and articulate a plan that showed the value of their museums to their superiors and supporters. In the rest of the museum community, the impression was that the university museums were not collecting any longer, were not exciting and were no longer leaders in the field.

Successful museums: strategic planning and development

Some museums have defied the odds. In February 1999, the Sternburg Museum of Natural History, located at Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas, opened a newly renovated facility of 9,385 m^2 at a cost of $18 million. By June 1999, the museum had more than 50,000 visitors, far exceeding its expectations. In May 1999, the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History moved into a new, state-of-the-art, 18,000 m^2 facility located on a 25-hectare campus site at the University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma (opening spring 2000). Funding for this $45-million project has been completed, and the university has approved an additional annual appropriation of $2 million to assist with operations and staffing, and additional in-kind services valued at $1 million. Initial planning for new facilities has been done at museums such as the James Ford Bell Museum of Natural History at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis/St Paul and the Burke Museum of Natural History at the University of Washington, Seattle.

The University of Oklahoma was able to build one of the finest university natural history museums in the world, despite the fact that Oklahoma is one of the poorest states in the country (average salary for state employees ranks fiftieth in the nation). According to Michael Mares, the director, 'The project demonstrates the recognition by the legislature, the university, the people of the state, and private donors that the museum plays an important role in the scientific and cultural life of Oklahoma.' How did it happen? With strategic planning, as exemplified by the Oklahoma and other museums. The best plan is one that defines the comprehensive focus and thrust of a museum's actions and resources to create its most advantageous position in the future.[3] The Oklahoma and other museums had to identify and assess their unique internal and external factors, such as their vision, identity, mission, resources, facilities and governance. For example, the Bell has been assessing the role that its natural history dioramas will have in the future. Following internal and external assessments, the museums were able to redefine themselves. For example, the Sternburg and Oklahoma museums revised their vision and mission to increase their role in public education. To

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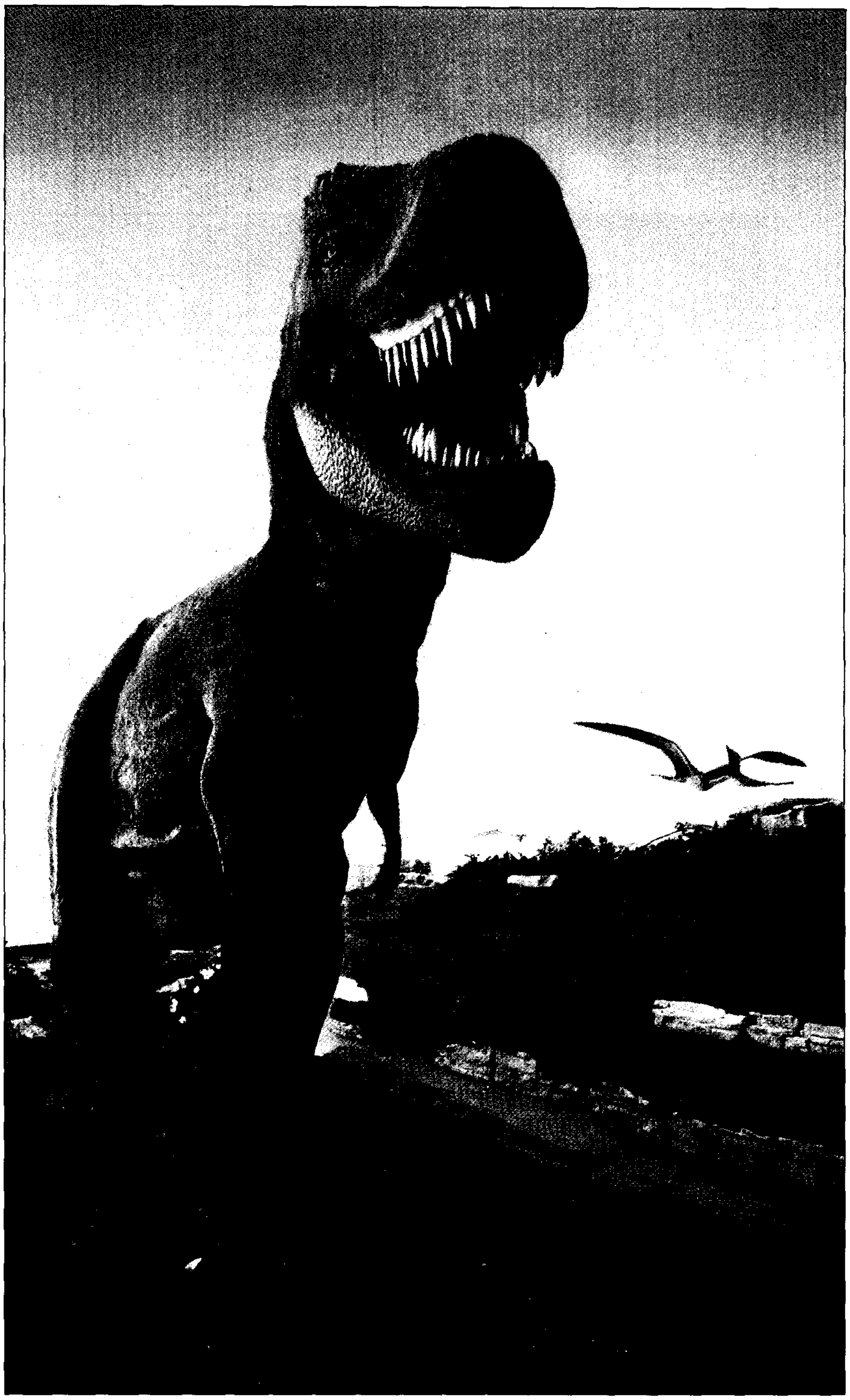
reposition themselves, the museums also had to propose scenarios with appropriate strategies, simplify and prioritize realistic action steps, create a schedule and a budget, develop alternative scenarios to respond to opportunities and setbacks, and establish benchmarks and evaluation criteria. For example, in 1987 the Oklahoma museum took successful steps to become the official state museum of natural history, a position that has since increased its ties and opportunities for support with the state and the university. By contrast, the Burke museum has proposed a split from its university parent that may enhance its opportunities for private funding. The Bell museum explored partnerships with the College of Natural Resources aimed at teaching environmental science. By making these assessments, creating flexible plans and putting them into action, the museums have been able to redefine and position themselves, illustrate their opportunities, strengthen their situation with their academic and lay communities, and compete favourably to gain the desired momentum or result.

Strategic planning and change initiatives also require urgency, a powerful planning coalition, and a clear vision. How did these museums meet these requirements? What elements were most important to their success? To answer these questions, I interviewed the directors of the museums and made extensive observations of their institutions. I added my perspective as associate director at the Oklahoma museum.

Elements for success

All the museums have benefited from participation in some combination of self-study, outside analyses, peer reviews, and accreditation based on professional practices and standards. The cumulative findings and recommendations from these activities have been essential in creating strategic long-range plans. The Oklahoma, Sternburg, and Bell museums have taken advantage of programmes such as the Museum Assessment Program (MAP), developed and managed by the American Association of Museums (AAM), and funded by the Institute of Museum and



© Sternburg Museum of Natural History, Fort Hays University, Hays, Kansas

A full-sized, robotic dinosaur confronts visitors to the Sternburg museum's spectacular walk-through diorama of Colorado during the Cretaceous period. In the background, pterosaurs soar over the sea that covered Kansas at that time.

© James Ford Bell Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Visitors enjoy a diorama at the University of Minnesota's James Ford Bell Museum of Natural History.

Library Services. The MAP initiative provides a series of grants for peer review of general operations, collections and public programmes. The Oklahoma museum also benefited from participation in the accreditation programme of the AAM, also a comprehensive peer examination process. The museum had to meet established standards and practices in many areas, such as collections, education, long-range planning, governance, exhibits, finance, security and facilities. Preparing for accreditation was a highly instructive process.

The museums also reached out to their public in highly visible and positive ways to develop a popular constituency, thereby increasing their strength with their supporters and providing a concrete illustration of service. Since 1982 the Oklahoma museum created a sophisticated outreach/travelling exhibits programme that has reached more than 6 million people in eighteen states and Canada at 807 showings, including schools, museums, libraries, banks, shopping malls, and Native American tribal centres. The Burke museum also has an outstanding series of Traveling Study Collections (kits) that serve a statewide audience such as schools, libraries and summer camps. The Bell museum has increased its outreach programme through activities such as Bell LIVE!, a live video presentation that enables school students to interact with scientists in the field. The Burke museum produced several high-profile exhibits working with its Native American and ethnic communities.

The museums convinced their superiors and supporters that there was a crisis, or a 'brush with death', as one director put it. Personalizing the crisis has also been the key to success for the Oklahoma museum. One strategy the museum used was behind-the-scenes tours of collections for university administrators, VIPs, local

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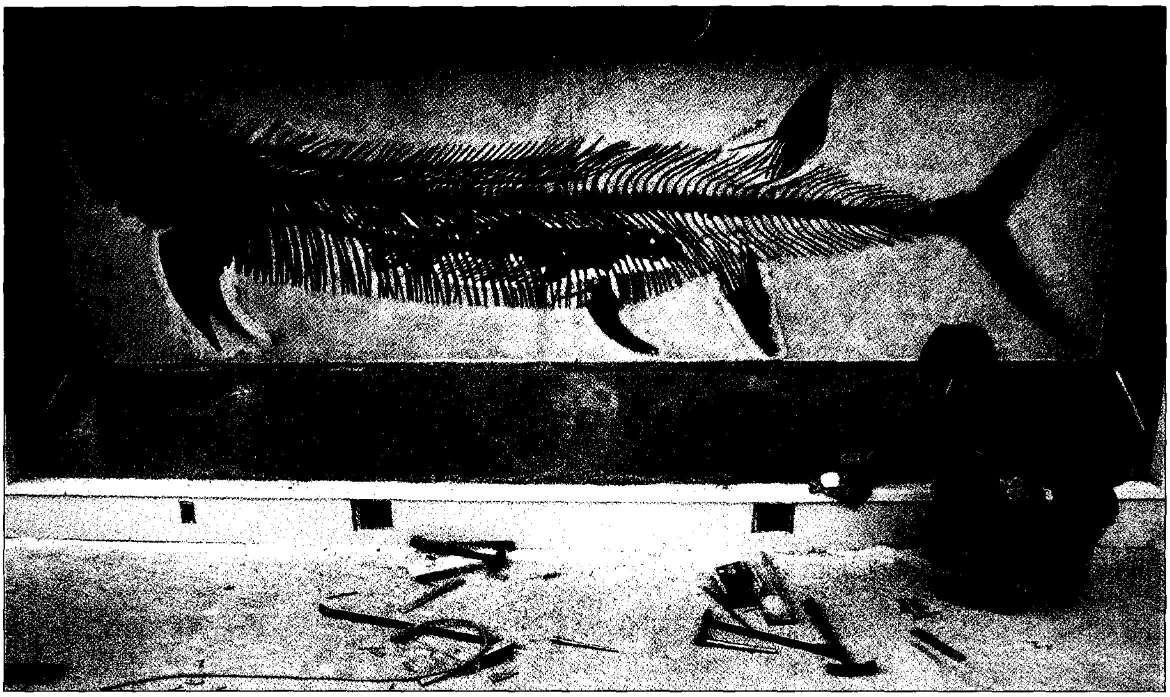
officials, supporters, and thousands of private citizens. Many of them came away in tears after viewing the artefacts and specimens housed in the leaky old horse barn. They begged for a way to save their treasures and their heritage. The director wrote a book called *Heritage at Risk* which portrayed the beauty and significance of the collections and illustrated their disastrous storage conditions. The book was given to politicians, education officials, and business and civic leaders who took notice and came to see for themselves. They, too, were galvanized into action. The crisis became the cause of the electorate and their officials.

Each museum created a unique vision and portrayed the value of what their museum could become. The Sternburg and Oklahoma museums borrowed techniques and strategies from the business world to illustrate their opportunities and showcase their superlative collections and successes (e.g. travelling exhibits). They created marketing and business plans to illustrate that the museum had an economic value, or an 'economic return', to the business community by attracting tourists and visitors who would spend money on food, lodging, and recreational activities. The plans also helped convince university officials that new museum facilities would be highly valuable assets through activities such as exhibits, statewide outreach, cutting-edge research, core teaching, graduate and ethnic studies, and VIP tours. Oklahoma University's new president, David Boren, a former Governor of Oklahoma and US Senator, has assisted the project in every way possible. He recognized that the new museum would not only protect his heritage, but would be an excellent addition to the university community. Moreover, the museum could be a tool to attract students, help raise private donations, and show the university's best public face.

To raise funds for new facilities, the successful museums have also had to form synergistic and symbiotic liaisons with politicians, business people, civic organizations, and special interest groups. For example, the Oklahoma museum worked with two local grassroots organizations to schedule and steer a general bond election for $5 million to successful passage. University and museum officials then worked to form a campaign council and, with state legislators, the two groups obtained $15 million for the museum as part of a general higher education bond issue. Another $20 million was received from private sources. The Sternburg museum also worked with university and local government officials to obtain its building at a nominal cost. The university, the city, and the county also provided in-kind contributions for the majority of the museum's construction.

A natural interface

University museums of natural history in the United States have a special role. They are vital centres of learning and are actively engaged in collaborative research, collecting, teaching and public service. Society is clamouring for an interface between the scientists and the people. What other institutions are more ideally suited to meet this demand? Through exhibits and educational programmes, they can introduce a fascinating array of real objects to their students and visitors of all ages. Fossils, feathers, shells and insects can fire the imagination as they are touched, sorted and discussed, and complex concepts, such as biodiversity and extinction, can be made clear. The crisis in science education in and out of the


© Sternburg Museum of Natural History, Fort Hays University, Hays, Kansas

An exhibit preparer begins finish work after moving the famous 'Fish-Within-a-Fish' *fossil exhibit from the old museum building and mounting it on the wall in the new building at the Sternburg Museum of Natural History.*

classroom frames a multitude of opportunities for the museums in the educational market. The museums also provide leading scholars who are role models in many fields of research, from systematics to conservation, where they train the scholars of the future. University museums are actively collecting thousands of specimens each year with some of the fastest growing research collections in the nation. They and their university parents need to work together to redefine and reposition themselves, develop their constituencies, and create ongoing strategies to build new facilities. Museums and universities are permanent, long-term, educational institutions by definition. Great universities have great museums! ■

Notes

1. Janet K. Braun and Michael A. Mares, 'Natural History Museums: Working Toward the Development of a Conservation Ethic', in M. A. Mares and D. J. Schmidly (eds.), *Latin-American Mammalogy: History, Biodiversity, and Conservation*, pp. 431–54, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press.

2. Karen L. Goldstein, 'Funding', in 'Toward a Natural History for the 21st Century.' *Museum News*, Vol. 76, No. 6, November/December 1997, pp. 46–7.

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University collections in Aotearoa New Zealand: active past, uncertain future

Neville Hudson and Jane Legget

Stepping up partnerships with mainstream museums is a new path being taken by a number of university museums in New Zealand – and for many of them, their very survival is at stake. Neville Hudson is a geologist by profession and has been collection manager of palaeontological collections and teaching resources manager in the Department of Geology at the University of Auckland since 1996. He has recently also taken responsibility for the rocks and minerals collections. Jane Legget has worked in museums in the United Kingdom and New Zealand. She is currently a co-manager of the New Zealand Museum Standards project, an initiative of the National Services of Te Papa – the Museum of New Zealand, and an associate lecturer in Museum Studies at Massey University. She is the author of Local Heroines: A Travel Guidebook to Women's History in Great Britain *(London, Pandora Press, 1994).*

The university curator is a rare and endangered species in New Zealand. As a small country, New Zealand is hard-pressed to support its seven universities, four of which are colonial foundations that operated as colleges of the University of New Zealand from 1870 until 1961. This British legacy in the tertiary-education sector extended to the development of collections as integral to the teaching of several academic subjects. Teaching collections were built up in the natural sciences, classics, archaeology, anthropology and medicine, in addition to archives, special library collections of rare books and pictorial holdings, and university art collections. While many were initiated with a specific teaching purpose, other collections are the research accumulations of individual academics. What is certain is that few today are used or managed effectively, and many have suffered from lack of care and have often become regarded as 'part of the furniture', or at least more as decorative curiosities than active academic resources.

At present there is no comprehensive data available on the range and extent of university collections though there have been attempts to survey the scene. In 1994 a survey[1] established the existence of eighty-nine collections within universities, some of which have the title 'museum'. Omissions include, for example, Massey University's silver collection and its other fine and decorative art collections, one with a published catalogue. As the survey asked those completing it to assess significance in national and, if appropriate, international terms, many collections are claimed to be highly important, but against what yardstick? There has been no direct follow-up from this survey and the status and condition of some collections remain unclear. Recently an Academic Audit Unit was set up by the New Zealand Committee of Vice-Chancellors to monitor standards of teaching, research, management and development within the seven universities. University libraries are already under scrutiny, but there are no immediate plans for university collections to receive the unit's attention. Professionally curated collections can serve the scholarly community effectively and enhance the institution's academic reputation. A proactive approach can also promote 'town-and-gown' relationships and assist in attracting the all-important fee-paying student.

A sign of central government interest is a study commissioned in 1998,[2] but, in keeping with the philosophy of the current government, the emphasis is on the potential economic value through benefits to scientific study which can enhance the country's primary industries. The Ministry of Research, Science and Technology's thinking on 'national curations, collections and databases'[3] does recognize the scholarly value of collections, but principally as resources that could attract foreign researchers and foster productive partnerships with overseas institutions. In this context the focus should also include university-held historical, cultural and art resources, which could contribute directly or indirectly to tourism, a major earner of foreign currency for New Zealand. However, it is clear that lack of any national strategy puts at risk collections held in universities (as well as those in Crown Research Institutes), many of which have developed in an ad hoc way.

The geological collections at the University of Auckland represent a typical scenario. Within a small department, the palaeontological collections and the rocks and minerals have been curated separately as an adjunct to the duties of technical staff

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© Maureen Lander, University of Auckland

*Auckland University students studying Maori material culture are extracting yellow dye from raurekau branches (*Coprosma grandifolia*). The drying flax fibres had earlier been dyed red using tanekaha bark (*Phyllocladus trichomnoides*).*

whose primary tasks have been in support of academic teaching and research. The collections' growth has been organic rather than planned. The palaeontological collections are significant research and reference resources, housed in less than ideal conditions but regularly consulted. Changes are made only rarely to display cases in various teaching laboratories, lobbies and corridors of the department as well as a formal museum foyer. While there is an academic nominally in charge, the daily management responsibility falls on devoted technical staff, as other duties allow. Without their personal commitment to the collections, there is no doubt that these resources would be neglected with the associated information fragmented or indeed lost. With a minimal budget, efforts are made to ensure a working resource that continues to add value to the experience of students and faculty, but recent staff restructuring and redundancies have created both threats and opportunities. The decision to curate the two collections together suggests a rational approach within a small department with limited resources, but the increased responsibility for fewer staff – currently only one part-time collection manager – offers greater challenges.

Perhaps the best used and resourced scientific collections are those in the medical schools at the universities of Auckland and Otago, where both pathology and anatomy museums are key resources in medical training. The Hocken Library, also at the University of Otago, has a professionally curated pictorial collection of some 12,000 items, a premier national resource. Of undoubted international importance is Auckland University's Archive of Maori and Pacific Music which has dedicated staff, environmentally controlled storage, active collecting and research strategies and computerized indexing. Its enlightened access policy grants Maori individuals and groups wanting to learn traditional *waiata* (songs) a free dubbing service, with copies of over 400 Maori tapes of oral history, traditional oratory, chants and music accessible in the reading room. It is the primary resource for the ethnomusicology teaching in the university but it also builds positive relationships for the university with the wider Maori community.

Archaeological collections held within Auckland's Department of Anthropology provide reference material of fauna, shell and stone for students and staff. Its museum displays have ceased to be actively used, pending proposed course developments. Its national conservation laboratory for waterlogged wood and other organic materials serves both departmental research and teaching but also generates income from outside work. While the finds from excavations need a long-term home after the results of analysis have been fully published, considerable quantities of cultural and natural specimens are held for extended periods on the premises, rarely in ideal museum storage conditions. Antiquities legislation requires finds to be housed with registered collections, and thus archaeological finds will ultimately be housed in the Auckland Museum, where they can be professionally curated.

Some collections are little known both within their own institutions and beyond. Canterbury University has a museum of

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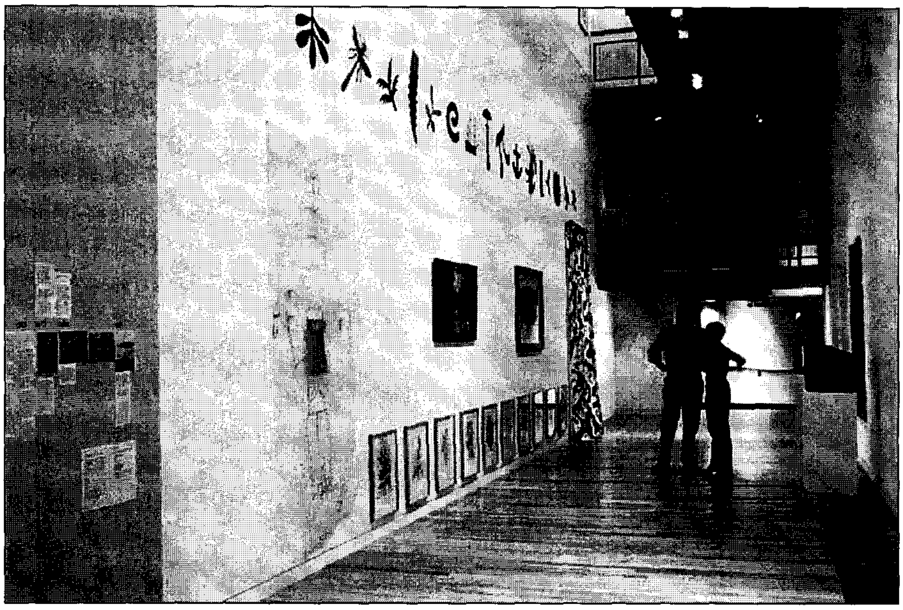
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classical antiquities, but while it features on the university's website, it is not listed in the 1994 survey or the New Zealand directory of museums.[4] Only recently did Canterbury University acknowledge publicly its collection of the medals of Sir Ernest Rutherford, an archive of the medallist's art as well as a record of the achievements and honours of New Zealand's sole Nobel Laureate and the university's most revered graduate. The resulting exhibition in the city's Canterbury Museum and the associated publication[5] represent a positive collaboration between these two Christchurch institutions.

Outside the mainstream

In the nineteenth century, the four older universities – in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin – were closely linked with the large provincial and national museums in these emerging cities, grounding them in traditions of academic research. In the case of the latter two universities, Canterbury Museum and Otago Museum were university-run institutions until devolved to serve their respective regions after the Second World War, and they continued to have university representation on their boards of governance under their own Acts of Parliament. Some of these scholarly relationships remain, through honorary research associateships, informal and formal research and teaching partnerships. However, in general the university museums and collections have not benefited from the curatorial practices that have evolved in the mainstream of museums, and their staff have not engaged in the professional museum community to any significant extent. While there are some individual memberships, only two university institutions belong to Museums Aotearoa, the professional body. This further reflects the inevitable primary allegiance of academics in charge of collections to their subject discipline, and the view expressed by the Smithsonian Institution's Director of American Studies, Wilcomb E. Washburn,[6] that university museums serve scholarship, and not the other way round.

None the less, the universities need to address their responsibilities for their collections seriously. There is much to be learned from the mainstream museum community, which has developed practices that meet the specific needs of New Zealand collections, users and stakeholders. Among the latter, the Maori are becoming more aware of museum issues that have implications for their community. These include the call for culturally appropriate care for *taonga* (treasured cultural heritage) held in collections, access to information, involvement in the interpretation of collections and recognition of the contributions of Maori understandings of the natural world.

These issues are receiving some attention in the universities. University Maori Studies departments are undertaking research that can increase knowledge about both mainstream and university collections. The Maori Studies department of Auckland University actively involves its students in exploring the technical and

Manufacturing Meaning: The Victoria University Art Collections in Context, *the opening exhibition in September 1999 of New Zealand's newest university museum, the Adam Art Gallery, Te Pataka Toi.*

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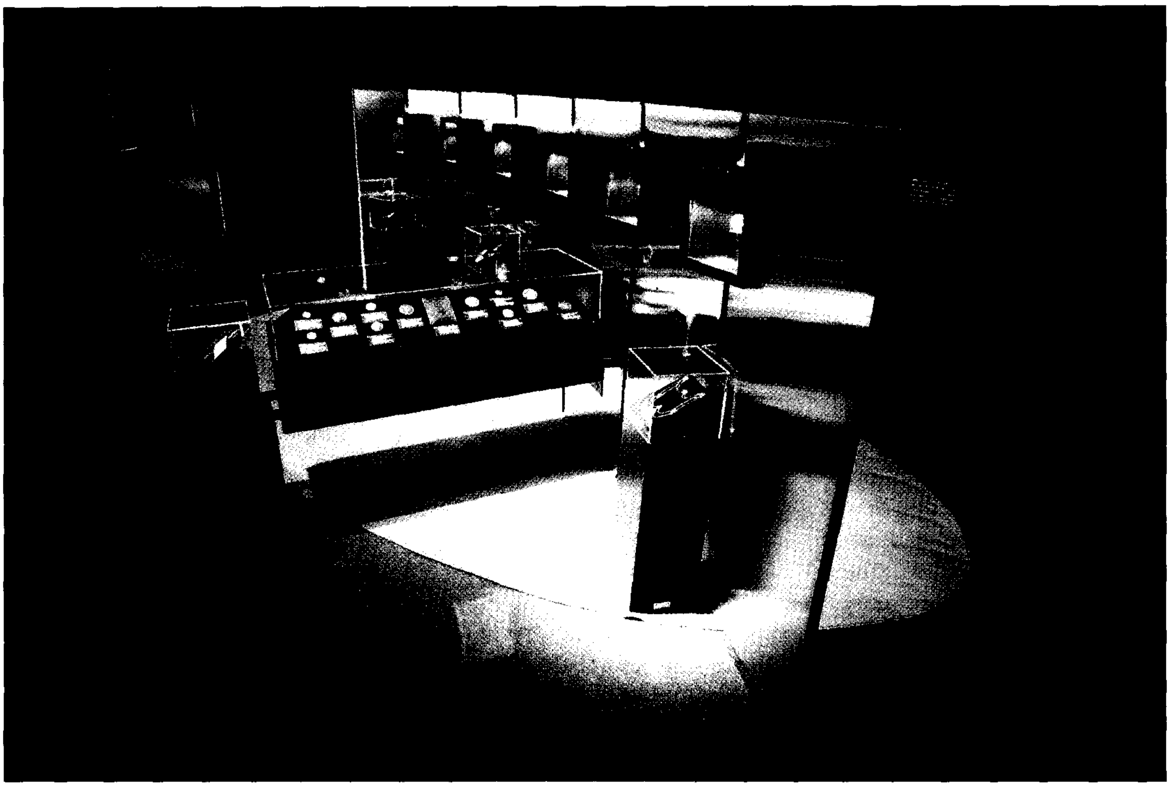

Golden atoms. *The university comes to town in Christchurch, where Canterbury University exhibited its collection of Sir Ernest Rutherford's medals in Canterbury Museum, 1999.*

stylistic details of Maori material culture – contemporary, historical and archaeological – using collections from museums throughout the country for reference and as starting points for experimental work to reproduce traditional activities and creative products. These projects add to our understanding of past skills, providing insights that assist museums in their own interpretive and conservation tasks. Research into *matauranga Maori* (Maori traditions of knowledge) also takes place in some science faculties and is contributing to new natural history galleries at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa and the Auckland Museum.

Massey University recently relocated its Museum Studies staff into the School of Maori Studies. Currently the only university training graduates for museum employment through a graduate diploma or Master's degree, its staff now are well placed to expose students to both Maori and *Pakeha* (non-Maori) perspectives on heritage thinking. Graduates generally find employment in mainstream museums or other heritage agencies, as openings in universities, always scarce, are becoming scarcer.

There is no doubt that university curators and collection managers are generally isolated from their colleagues in the mainstream museum profession. It is appropriate at this point to return to the case of the geological collections at Auckland University. The collection manager took advantage of the opportunity to participate in a national programme to pilot the concept of a New Zealand museum standards scheme. While testing its appropriateness to the university sector, it also offered a framework within which to develop and review policies and procedures. It has proved useful in defining and identifying shortcomings. In turn this has informed forward planning for the collections in the context of budget cuts and impending space charges, strengthening the case for much-needed compactor storage. It has also provided opportunities to meet with other museum staff.

Positive signs?

As with the university collections in Australia,[7] those in New Zealand suffer from the Cinderella syndrome. Their value

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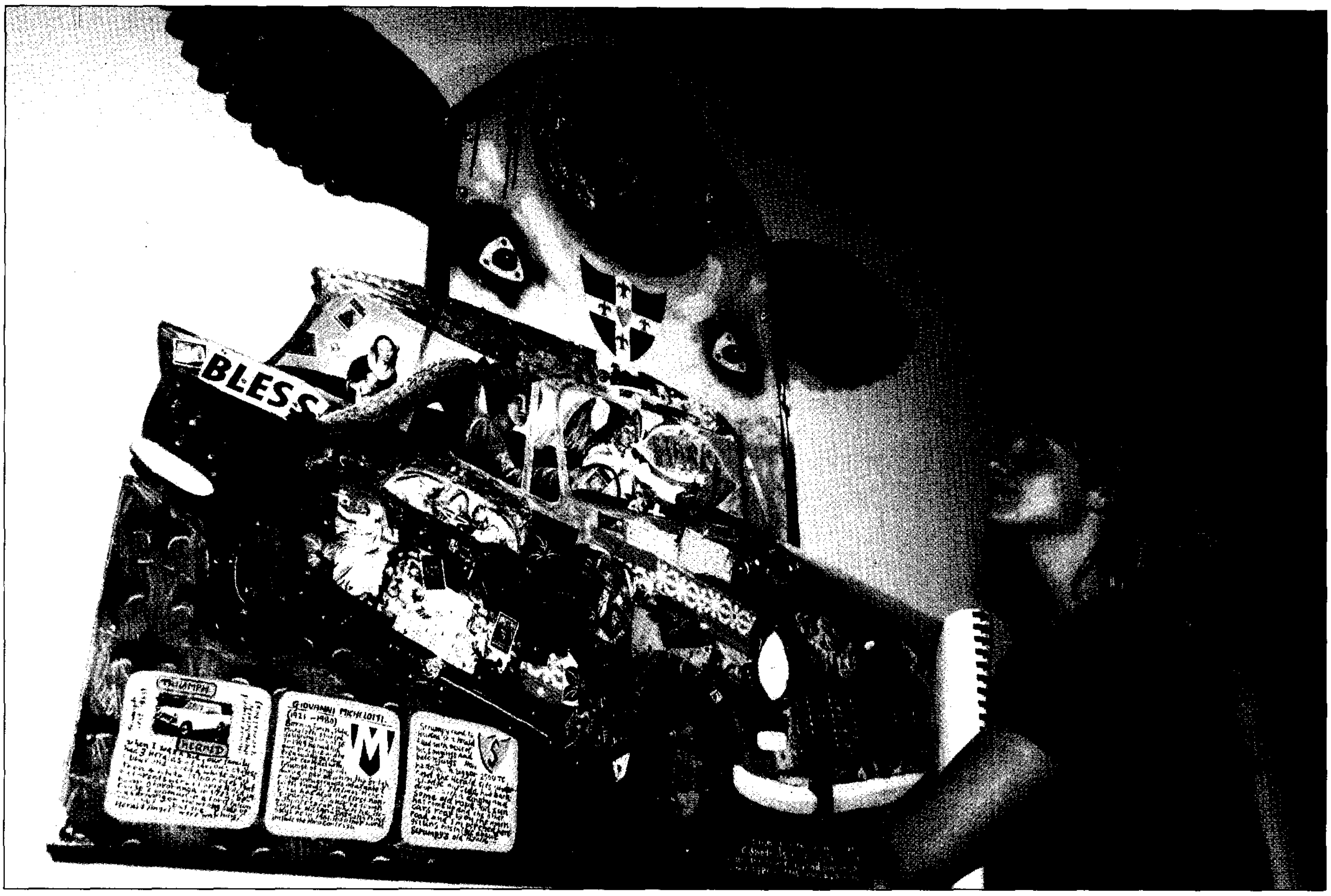

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Visiting student Ella Robertson admires Tim Chadwick's Hark the Herald Angels Sing *while touring the Massey University Art Collection.*

is overlooked, generally because they owe their existence to earlier generations of faculty members, either as by-products of research or as redundant legacies of academic content or teaching methods that have been superseded. Potential fairy godmothers, such as enlightened university policy, private patronage or a government that revalues them as 'knowledge capital' have yet to appear. Universities are stretched to deliver their current teaching, and collections-based research is not in fashion. Mainstream museums are mostly too busy getting their own houses in order to be able to take on additional collections and give them the professional management that they deserve. The government has just spent NZ$300 million on a groundbreaking national museum, which means it is unlikely to invest in university collections in the immediate future.

While the immediate outlook for university collections may not be promising, there are some positive initiatives. Auckland University and Auckland Museum signed a co-operation agreement in 1999, which proposes future sharing of academic and curatorial expertise, access to each other's collections, opportunities for research projects and student supervision, and potential training ventures. The Auckland Museum has already contracted scholars from the university to guide the development of new history galleries and the Maori interpretation of the new natural history galleries. This symbiosis allows academics to present their scholarship to new audiences, while providing the museum with up-to-date research. It also acknowledges that the wider expectations of mainstream museums mean that in this way they are able to maintain, at least vicariously, their traditional research role. Waikato Museum of Art and History in Hamilton has gone further in operating a 'historian-in-residence' programme, making a historic house that it manages available as work and living space for a visiting researcher

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who will undertake local historical studies, an opportunity welcomed by academics at Waikato University.

Another promising sign is the opening in September 1999 of the purpose-built Adam Art Gallery by Victoria University in Wellington. This is an initiative of the Art History Department, designed to contribute to the wider intellectual life of the university through its focus on the visual arts. However, the Gallery's mission also embraces the multidisciplinary resources of the university, including collections held by other departments, such as geological and herbarium specimens, classical antiquities and Pacific Island material, offering challenging exhibitions, curated by or involving contemporary artists as well as academics and students. The Adam Art Gallery will not be primarily a collecting institution, but its experienced staff will manage and develop the university's holdings of 200 art works, and set new standards in professional museum practice within the university. It may also take a lead in bringing university collections into the wider New Zealand museum fold.

While most university museums and collections may not currently demonstrate best practice in terms of collection management and have limited opportunities to serve a broad public, they can underpin their holdings with sound scholarship in ways beyond the reach of most mainstream museums. Surely the way forward for both universities and New Zealand museums is to build on both new and historical partnerships. The agreement between Auckland University and Auckland Museum also suggests a direction that gives recognition to the importance of university museums and collections, benefits their management, viability and long-term survival, and strengthens professional collegiality. ■

Acknowledgements. The authors wish to acknowledge the assistance of Dr Harry Allen, Professor James Belich, Dante Bonica, Maureen Lander, Dr Mere Roberts, Zara Stanhope, Dr T. L. Rodney Wilson and Anthony Wright.

Notes

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University museums in Japan: a time of transition

Tatsufumi Kinoshita and Ryo Yasui

A growing awareness of the untapped, often neglected riches to be found in Japanese universities is giving rise to a new impetus on behalf of university museums. Tatsufumi Kinoshita is a researcher at the Institute of Exhibition Art and Technology Co. Ltd, and was assistant curator at Minato City Local History Museum, Tokyo, from 1988 to 1990. Ryo Yasui is an independent museum media co-ordinator in Tokyo and currently a lecturer of museum studies at Obirin University, Tokyo. Tatsufumi Kinoshita and Ryo Yasui were editor and associate editor, respectively, of the Directory of Museums, *Vol. 1:* University Museums; *Vol. 2:* Children's Museums *(Tokyo, Total Media Development Institute Co. Ltd, 1997/98).*

The University of Tokyo Museum re-opened in May 1996 after a major renovation of the old facility, which had been established in 1966. The museum has been enlarged and the number of staff increased, and since reopening has held a series of ambitious exhibitions, the first being *Characters in History* (September/October 1996), followed by *The History of Botanical Studies in Japan* (November/December 1996). The third exhibition, *The Digital Museum* (January/February 1997), caught the eye of the media and the public with a new image of a multi-media museum that was very different from the traditional approach. Multimedia technology was fully incorporated with digitalized graphic panels; a virtual gallery of the Golden Hall of Japan's prestigious Buddhist Horyu-ji temple, which is Japan's oldest wooden architectural structure; a mobile information device for visitors in the galleries. There was a model of a *dotaku*[1] which was the product of research using vast image data obtained from digital scanning. The exhibition looked just like a high-tech commercial showroom; however, it was a true experiment in nature. The museum's ambitious plan is to make a digital archive of the entire collection of 6 million objects, a plan being observed with keen interest elsewhere in Japan.

Ambitious projects among other national university museums soon followed. Kyoto University opened its museum in April 1997 and added departments of natural and technology history to the old museum of cultural history, which had belonged to the Faculty of Literature. Although exhibitions and lectures are currently held in the old museum, a new building is scheduled to open in 2001 and will house the storage, exhibition and research facilities of the two new departments while the cultural history department's facilities will remain in the old museum. About 2.5 million objects of academic interest have been collected over its 100-year history, and the new museum is to make access to the collection much easier. Tohoku University (Sendai) has collected about 2.4 million objects over its ninety-one-year history and part of its natural history collections is exhibited in the university's Natural History Museum, which opened in 1995. A committee to establish a new general museum was set up in 1998 and strategy planning is currently in process, though the opening date has not yet been fixed. The new University Art Museum of the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music opened in 1999. It will feature performances and concerts as well as art and its 8,720 m^2 of total floor space will certainly rank it as one of the largest university museums in Japan. Hokkaido University will also open a general museum in 2001 and there are similar plans at Kyushu University, Nagoya University and Tsukuba University.

There is also strong interest in museums among the private universities in Japan. The Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum and the Aizu Memorial Museum of Oriental Arts established by Waseda University (Tokyo) were reopened in 1998 after major renovations. Established in 1928, the Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum is the only museum specializing in theatre arts in Japan and is famous for its important collection of the Japanese Noh, Bunraku and Kabuki theatres. The Aizu Memorial Museum of Oriental Arts is based on the collections of the art historian, Dr Yaichi Aizu (1881–1956). The renovation of the two museums is the first stage of Waseda's plan to establish a general museum in the future. The Kyoto Museum for World Peace at Ritsumeikan University was established

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© Kyoto Museum for World Peace, Ritsumeikan University

Permanent exhibit of Japan's fifteen-year war in Asia and the Pacific at the Kyoto Museum for World Peace, Ritsumeikan University.

in 1992. It is the only comprehensive peace museum established by a university and has been delivering peace messages to the world in co-operation with other museums including the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and Nagasaki A-bomb Museum.

Although the University of Tokyo Museum made a dramatic debut, it would be misleading to think that university museums are playing a leading role in Japan. Unfortunately, the contrary is true. It should be noted that university museums, mostly national ones, are only now becoming active after a very long hiatus. Nobody in Japan would argue against a university having a library for education and research, but university museums have no place in people's minds. As a matter of fact, until recently the term 'university museum' was only familiar among a restricted number of people both inside and outside the campus.

In contrast, almost every university in the Republic of Korea has one or two museums, a result of government regulations for universities from 1967 to 1982 that stipulated that each university had to create a museum of at least 200 m^2. The law is still active and as a result museums have established an important role. In Japan, government regulations for universities require them to maintain a library but nothing is mentioned about museums. Interestingly enough, the faculty of pharmacy is required to maintain botanical gardens.

Facts and figures

According to the Museum Accreditation Code of the Japanese Museum Law, the accredited museum must have: a total floor size of more than 132 m^2; collections that are stored by classification; staff who have completed the curatorship course[2] or have equivalent experience; permanent exhibits and temporary exhibitions; and more than 100 annual open days for the public. Although the University of Tokyo Museum has the basic functions of a museum, it is open to the public only during special exhibitions, and thus has not been given government accreditation and is not included in the official *Directory of Japanese Museums*[3] edited by the Japanese Association of Museums.

It is difficult to assess the number of university museums in Japan because the field is in its infancy. However, according to the data given in the *Directory of Japanese Museums*, seventy-nine museums are found in fifty-nine universities. As the total number of national, municipal and private universities is 1,192 (604 universities and 588 junior colleges),[4] it can be seen that only some 5 per cent have museums. Of the 124 national universities, 16 maintain 25 museums, while 4 museums are found in 3 of the 121 municipal universities. Among the 947 private universities, 40 boast a total of 50 museums. In sum, museums are found at the average rate of one for every twenty universities, with the percentage of museums in national universities slightly

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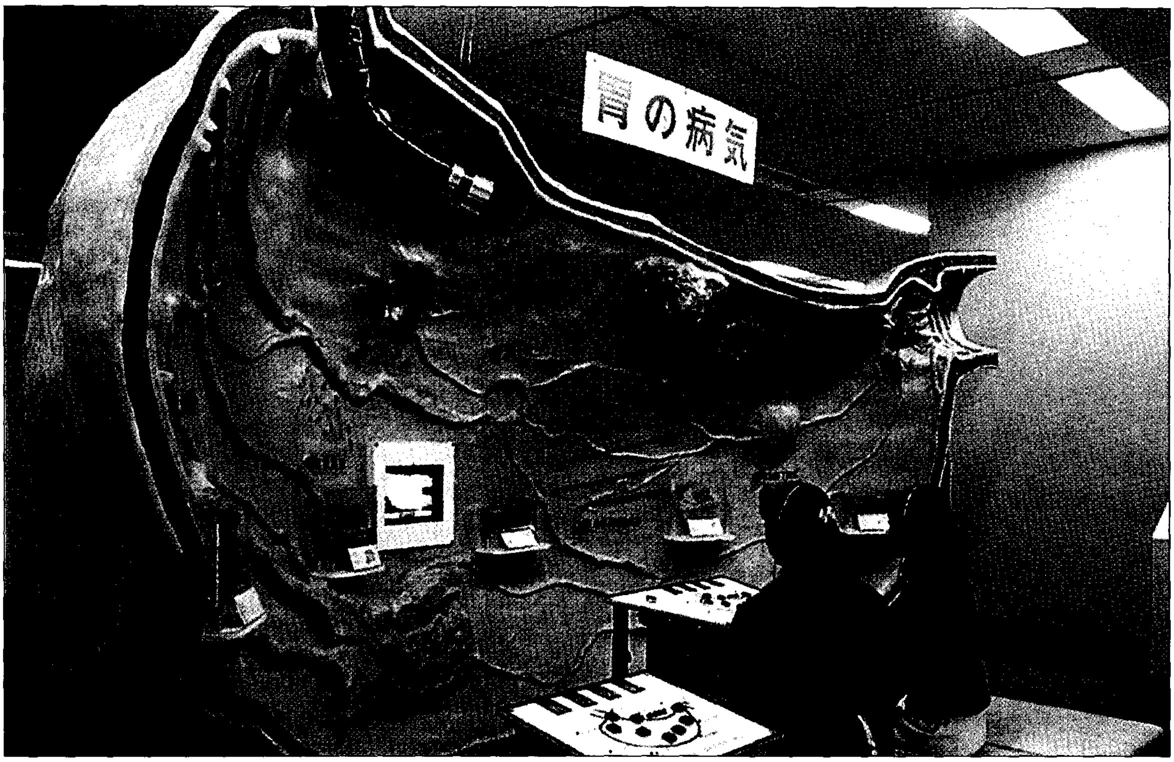

© Kawasaki Medical School

A model of the stomach used for teaching purposes at the museum of the Kawasaki Medical School.

higher than in the municipal and private institutions. These seventy-nine museums include the following categories: botanical gardens (10), natural history (9), general (6), technology (5) and aquariums (2). Nearly 60 per cent (47) are museums of history (35) and art (12), and most of these are found on the campuses of private universities. On the other hand, museums of natural science are usually found among the national universities. The shortage of data on the size of exhibition areas makes critical comparison difficult, however, with space ranging from 500 m^2 to more than 2,000 m^2 in the case of two museums, the floor space in most Japanese university museums is relatively small compared with their prestigious counterparts in North America and Europe.

In 1994, the Ministry of Education conducted a survey of 553 university museums and collections which revealed that 413 facilities with collections of academic interest were found in 150 universities. The majority reported that they had poor storage conditions for their collections and a shortage of staff to take care of them. Based on these findings, two reports were submitted to the Council of Academic Activities, whose members are appointed by the Prime Minister. One provided 'Guidelines for Digital Documentation of Academic Collections with Databases'. The other was entitled 'Proposal for Establishing University Museums: The Collection, Storage and Utilization of Academic Collections' and was essentially a guideline to promote and create university museums in Japan. It had this to say about the current status of the environment of the collections:

> Academic collections are assembled and enlarged along with the process of academic research. However, due to the lack of storage facilities and shortage of staff, poor conditions were found in many university museums. The examples included collections kept in the researcher's own room and the absence of basic documentation (i.e. labels, etc.). Although academic collections cannot be replaced, there are many cases where the attempt to com-

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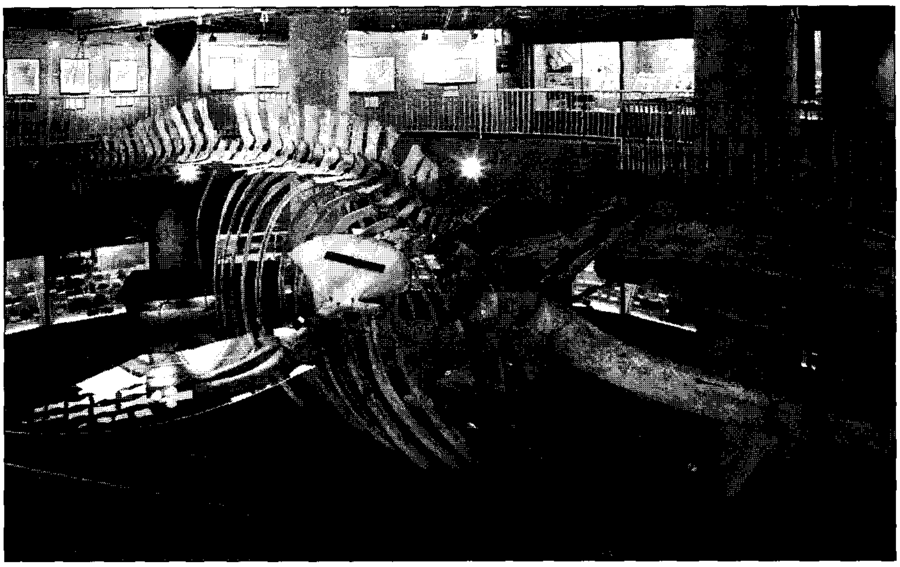

Whale skeleton at the Museum of Natural History, Tohoku University.

puterize and document academic specimens failed. In some cases, these specimens have been inadvertently destroyed by researchers. Because of these poor conditions, only a few people have knowledge and access to the collections. On the other hand, documented collections are rarely used by outsiders because there is often no reference service nor adequate storage system. In other words, many of the collections cannot be used in spite of their academic and educational value. Except for a few cases, conditions surrounding the museum collections are extremely poor in Japan compared with university museums in Western countries, and these obstacles impede further development of academic research and discipline.

Although it is regrettable to report this situation, the recent action taken, mainly by national universities, to establish or reinforce university museums under government initiative gives some hope for the future.

Problems and prospects

According to the 1994 survey, some 25,380,000 objects are to be found in 450 universities. Those institutions that have not replied to the survey and those collections that have not yet been documented would most likely increase the total number. It is easy to imagine that many undocumented collections are ignored as 'junk' in spite of their academic value, as was the case with the old, disused scientific instruments we found piled up in a vacant lecture room in a national university. No doubt the fate of those 'poor' objects was to be transformed into ashes in the incinerator. This shocking experience led us to study the potential use of these ignored resources as museum collections. The urgency and importance of drawing attention to university museums ripened as a directory of university museums.[5]

Japan is witnessing rapidly growing expectations towards university museums as a valuable resource not only with regard to enhancing and preserving important academic collections but also concerning exhibition, education and information programmes. Moreover, the interdisciplinary activities of the university museum might overcome the rigid bureaucracy found in many faculties and departments in Japanese universities. Unfortunately, preservation, inheritance and usage of academic collections as important resources have been ignored since the first university was established in the Meiji era (1868–1912). It is only recently that an initiative has begun for action on university museums.

Many difficulties lie in the path of university museums in the future. One is the population decrease in Japan, which will result in a smaller younger generation

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and a much larger older generation. Universities are attempting to alter their management style to suit the needs of the age of lifelong education. The current economic climate in Japan is another obstacle, and a long cold period is continuing for the universities. In addition, in April 1999, the government decided to change the management of its national museums and galleries from government dependency to self-support, which was to take effect within three years. The national universities will also eventually be forced to sustain themselves within a few years. Thus the economic basis is currently very unstable and this makes for troubled times ahead for universities and their museums. Shortage of professional staff also limits museum activities. The development of academic studies in museum work is lagging, and no independent course of museology, conservation science, exhibition planning, museum education, museum computer science or museum management is to be found in Japanese universities. Students are given only broad and primitive courses in basic curatorial practice and introductions to various theories. Finally, as there is no accounting category for exhibitions in the budget of Japanese national universities, they are unable to provide for exhibition costs in their operating expenses. Staff working for municipal museums would undoubtedly find this incredible!

Nevertheless, a group of national university museums was established in 1998 and held its first meeting at Kyoto University. Although only twenty-four museums were represented, the group, whose secretariat is at the University of Tokyo Museum, is expected to take the leading role in the development of university museums in Japan. At the eighteenth General Conference of ICOM, held in Melbourne in 1998, a group to establish a new international committee for university museums was formed by Dr Peter Stanbury of Macquarie University in Sydney. Such a global initiative should certainly encourage the development of university museums in Japan. ■

Notes

1. *Dotaku* – a bell-shaped bronze produced in Japan during the Yayoi period. In height they range from 20 cm or less to more than 100 cm.

2. According to the Association of University Curatorship Courses (chairman, Dr Yuji Kato, Kokugakuin University, Tokyo), there are about 250 universities, including junior colleges, which have two-year courses for curatorship training. The successful student receives the certification required when applying for a curatorial position.

3. *Zenkoku-hakubutsukan-soran* [Directory of Japanese Museums], Tokyo, Gyosei. 1998.

4. *Directory of Japanese Schools, 1999*. Tokyo, Hara-shobo. 1998.

5. *Directory of Museums*, Vol. 1: *University Museums, Institute of Exhibition Art and Technology*, Tokyo, Total Media Development Institution Co. Ltd, September 1997.

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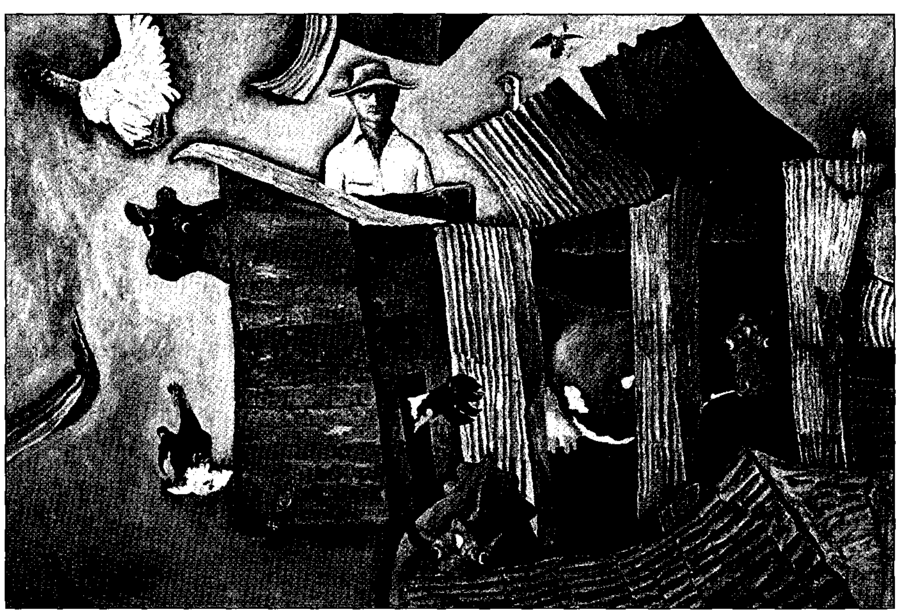
From campus to city: university museums in Australia

Sue-Anne Wallace

Two worlds are now essential to the security and growth of university museums in Australia: the campus and the city. Sue-Anne Wallace explains how this relationship took shape and what it might augur for the future. She was recently course director of the Museum Leadership Programme at the Melbourne Business School, University of Melbourne, and until July 1999 director of Museum Education and Curatorial Programmes at the Museum of Contemporary Art, and acting director of the museum since late 1998. She has been president of Museums Australia since 1996, and sits on a number of boards and committees associated with universities and the cultural sector, including the Australian Indigenous Cultural Network and the Constitutional Centenary Foundation, in which role she has been working to have cultural issues considered in the Australian debate on the constitution and the republic.

When the first report of the Australian University Museums Review Committee was published in 1996, under the title *Cinderella Collections: University Museums and Collections in Australia*, forty-four art, fine art and sculpture collections were identified among the 256 museums and collections. Some of these collections survived with no full-time staff allocated to their management, while the largest at the time, the Museum of Art at the University of Melbourne, had nearly fourteen staff and 10,000 objects. Yet this extensive study undertaken for the Vice Chancellor's Committee of Australian Universities did not include one of Australia's most public university collections, that of the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) in Sydney, with more than forty full-time staff, a collection numbering 8,000 objects and three floors of exhibition galleries (approximately 2,500 m^2). This lacuna was addressed in the second review, *Transforming Cinderella Collections: The Management and Conservation of Australian University Museums, Collections and Herbaria* (1998). Yet, the omission appears to identify the conundrum facing university museums and collections that seek to widen their audiences, and even to take the bold step off campus, exposing both museum and collection to the challenge of anchoring them intellectually and financially to the university campus, while simultaneously allowing the museum to exploit its city interface and corporate potential.

Established in 1989 as a non-profit company by the University of Sydney, with the support of the New South Wales (NSW) Government, by 1996 the MCA was markedly different from other university museums, its antecedents in a teaching department of the university seemingly obscured by its prominent harbourside site in the heart of the city. Its founding lay in a bequest to the University of Sydney by an expatriate Australian graduate, John Wardell Power. His bequest, described in his will of 1939 and made known to the university some twenty-two years later upon the death of his widow, stated:



© Queensland University of Technology Art Museum

William, Josephine and others, *oil by the Australian artist William Robinson, 1984, at the Queensland University of Technology Art Museum.*

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> I give and bequeath the remainder of my [shares] ... to the University of Sydney New South Wales to be used by them for the foundation of a Faculty of Fine Arts in such University or the further endowment of such Faculty if existing ... to make available to the people of Australia the latest ideas and theories in the plastic arts by means of lectures and teaching and by the purchase of the most recent contemporary art of the world and by the creation of schools, lecture halls museums and other places for the purpose of such lectures and teaching and of suitably housing the works purchased so as to bring the people of Australia in more direct touch with the latest art developments in other countries.

A graduate in medicine of the University of Sydney in 1904 but an artist throughout his life, Power died in the Channel Islands in 1943. The Second World War had not reached its end and his generous benefaction to his Alma Mater remained unknown until the year following the death of Mrs Edith Power. From 1962 until 1965, the terms of the will and its value were the subject of many legal debates. However, in 1965, there was sufficient agreement on the intent of John Wardell Power, for the Power Institute of Contemporary Art to be established and, in 1967, for the appointment of its first professor, the Australian art historian Bernard Smith. As to the museum, however, while the first acquisitions for its collection began in 1967, it remained a temporary gallery in the university grounds until 1988, able to show only part of the collection at any time.

The consolidation of the collections and their exhibition became a priority for Professor Virginia Spate, appointed as the director of the Power Institute in 1979. In 1983, co-curators Leon Paroissien and Bernice Murphy were appointed to the museum, known as the Power Gallery, on the understanding that they would give priority to finding a more public space for it, as implied in Power's will. However, without the commitment of a far-sighted government in the state of New South Wales, it would not have proved possible to establish the museum on such a prominent site.

In 1984, the NSW Government (a Labour government under Neville Wran) publicly declared its intent to provide a building at Sydney's Circular Quay for an art gallery of the Power Institute. Five more years were to pass before the government, then a Liberal one under Nick Greiner, formally assigned in 1989 the building formerly occupied by the Maritime Services Board headquarters to the University of Sydney. With such a site in hand, renovations proceeded apace to convert the office building to one capable of exhibiting major large works of contemporary art and able to provide spaces for the sort of pedagogical activities prescribed in Power's will.

On 11 November 1991, the Museum of Contemporary Art opened to the public. An occasion fêted by government, university and the museum fraternity alike, the opening was seen as the successful culmination of nearly thirty years of effort and lobbying on the part of the university and the arts profession. Yet, Power's bequest, in spite of its magnanimity, was from the start pulled in two directions that have over time become antagonistic rather than symbiotic.

The Power Bequest was the impetus to found both the Power Institute of Con-

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temporary Art and the Power Gallery, now known as the Power Institute: Centre for Art and Visual Culture and the Museum of Contemporary Art respectively. While the former remains housed on the campus of the University of Sydney, the Museum of Contemporary Art is located some ten km south at Circular Quay. The site that made it possible for the MCA to develop a high public profile also distanced the museum from the university. Such distance became financial, as well as physical, as the Power Bequest funds gradually drained away from the museum. This placed increasing dependence upon the museum's capacity to raise 90 per cent of its operating expenses per annum. Again the museum prospered due to its site, which enabled the museum to connect with the corporate sector of the city and attract substantial sponsorship. This included the support of Southcorp Wines, one of the most significant corporate sponsorships of any Australian art museum, resulting in a three-year programme, the Seppelts Contemporary Art Awards. However, it was a challenging financial environment and at times professionally fraught.

Coherence and international focus

The collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art reflect the environment of its foundation: the Power Collection of works acquired before the company was formed in 1989, and the MCA Collection, acquired after 18 May 1989. By 1998, there were approximately 8,000 objects in the collections of the MCA, 3,500 assigned to the Power Collection, and 4,500 to the MCA Collection.

The Power Collection includes the bequest in 1961 of more than 1,100 works by John Wardell Power, whose life focused on the arts rather than the field of medicine in which he trained. Among these are 329 paintings, representing the achievements of his *oeuvre*, one that awaits scholarly pursuit and publication. A collection of 217 works from Ramingining in Northern Arnhem Land (Northern Territory) was purchased for the collection in 1984/85. These are principally bark paintings and woven objects. The remaining objects of the Power Collection, more than 2,000 pieces, are works purchased by the curators of the collection, Gordon Thomson (1967), Elwyn Lynn, both artist and curator (1968–83) and Leon Paroissien and Bernice Murphy (1984–89). Professor Bernard Smith undertook a limited role in acquiring works in 1968. The concentration of the responsibility for acquisitions in the hands of just five individuals over the period of more than twenty years has given a coherence to the Power Collection and an international focus, broken only following the appointment of Paroissien and Murphy, who began to purchase contemporary works by Australian artists and to actively seek indigenous art for the collection.

From May 1989 until 1998, the MCA Collection was built by Leon Paroissien (retired as director in 1997) and Bernice Murphy (chief curator to 1997, director 1997, resigned 1998), author of *Museum of Contemporary Art: Vision and Context*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 1993. Acquisitions included two further collections of indigenous works, the Arnotts Collection (273 bark paintings, including a number by the renowned artist Yirawala, given to the museum by Arnotts' Biscuit Company Ltd) and the Maningrida Collection, consisting of 560 pieces including sculpture, woven objects and some bark paintings, held in trust for the people of Maningrida in Arnhem

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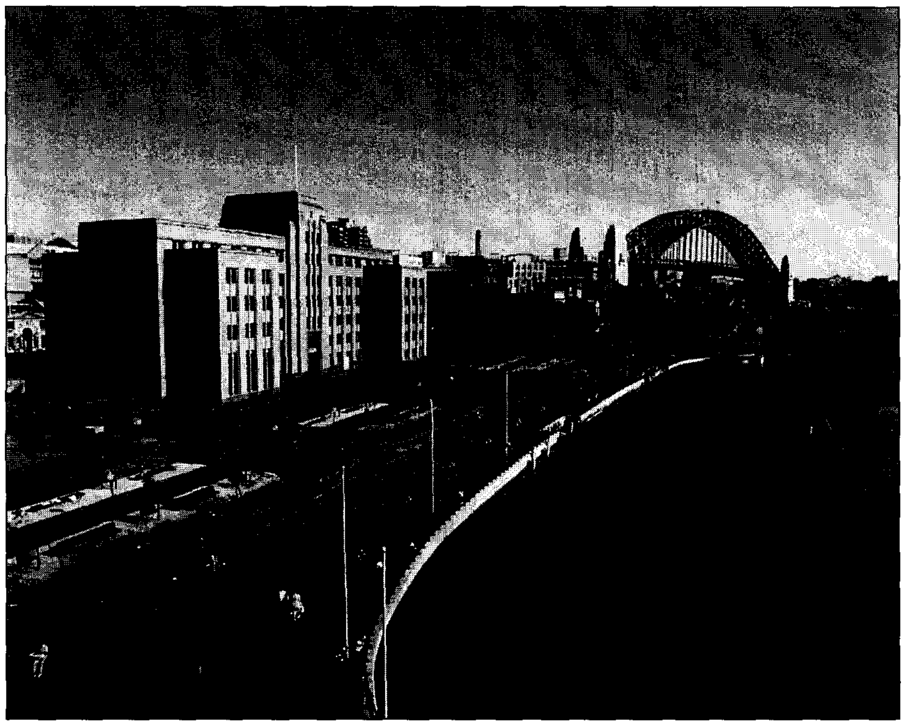
Land. This joint responsibility for the collection, assumed by the artists and the museum, was a unique arrangement entered into by the MCA in 1990, ensuring that a cultural relationship was set up with the Maningrida people, and that both parties contributed to the relationship based on trust and mutually agreed and shared cultural interests. One of Australia's pre-eminent collections of contemporary art, the Smorgon Collection, the gift of Melbourne collectors and patrons Loti and Victor Smorgon, was acquired in 1995. This collection of 149 paintings by contemporary Australian artists fleshed out the collection of Australian works that Paroissien and Murphy were building. A second private collection with an international focus, the Kaldor Collection of 143 paintings, sculptures and works on paper, is on long-term loan to the museum. John Kaldor assumed the role of chairman of the company in 1998.

A unique aspect of the MCA Collection is the Contemporary Art Archive, an archive of some 2,000 pieces by Australian artists, acquired from 1990 by gift and purchase, relating to the intellectual and conceptual processes that artists engage with in the creation of their work. This collection is especially relevant for research and, therefore, a most appropriate initiative for a university art museum.

More than 1,000 other works, both Australian and international, make up the MCA Collection. Taken as a whole, the collections of the MCA have significant holdings of multiple art works, light works, and works by major artists including Australians Mike Parr, Juan Davila, Imants Tillers, Peter Tyndall, Yirawala; and numerous works by major international artists including Rebecca Horn, Colin McCahon, Robert Longo, Georg Baselitz, Jean Tinguely, Helen Frankenthanler and Gilbert and George.

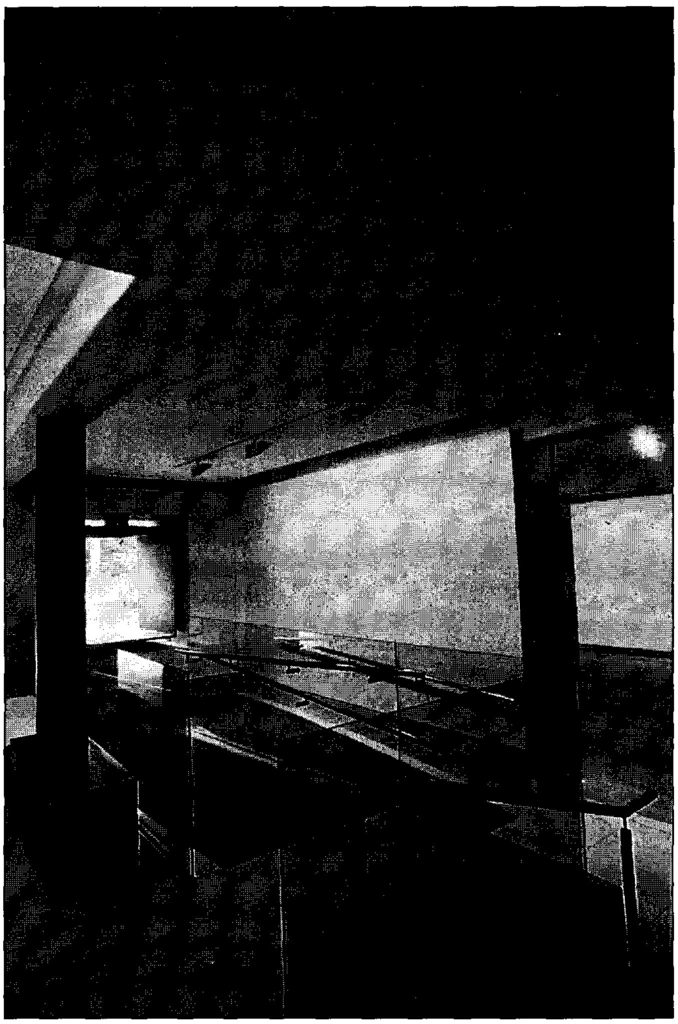


The Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney.

© The Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney

Marketing difference

In positioning a cultural institution in the public mind and marketing to both broad and niche audiences, identifying the museum, its foundation, its collections and its history are key elements. One of the founding parents of the MCA, the University of Sydney, is Australia's oldest university, created in 1850, arguably a key benefit to a new institution endeavouring to secure its reputation and achieve recognition. Further, at the time of its opening, the MCA was the only public art museum to be associated with a university; equally, the University of Sydney was the only university to have established a museum in the public arena. This is not to say that other universities did not have links with museums; the



The Queensland University of Technology Art Museum, the newest art museum in Australia.

difference with the MCA was the scale of its foundation and its location off the university campus. In its 1996 edition, *Cinderella Collections* listed forty-four art collections.

In Australian universities many of the collections are for internal rather than external benefit, being distributed in the buildings of their universities more for visual pleasure than academic pursuit. Among other university art museums that do attract public, more than academic, audiences, are two in Perth, Western Australia (the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery at the University of Western Australia and the John Curtin Art Gallery at Curtin University); three in Melbourne, Victoria (the Ian Potter Museum of Art at the University of Melbourne; the Monash University Art Gallery and the RMIT Gallery at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology); one in Canberra, in the Australian Capital Territory (the Drill Hall Gallery, Australian National University); and two in Adelaide, South Australia (the Art Museum of the University of South Australia and the Art Museum of Flinders University of South Australia). Of these, only one, the Art Museum of Flinders University, established a city venue in 1997 to complement its campus location. This small second site (90 m long) allows the Flinders University Art Museum to take travelling exhibitions, enhancing its audience potential, while also exploiting the opportunity to showcase its university collections twice annually. For all that, clearly the Museum of Contemporary Art remains a maverick institution among university art museums.

The second of the MCA's so-called parents, the Government of New South Wales, provided the MCA with a site steeped in the history of the European invasion and subsequent settlement of the indigenous lands of Australia. The harbour land identified by the coastal people of the region, the Eora, now occupied by the Museum of Contemporary Art, was the place where the Union Jack was raised on 26 January 1788, and where the British ownership of the Aboriginal lands now called Australia was proclaimed. While the MCA has built significant collections of indigenous art since the mid-1980s, at the time of its opening, though acknowledged in its exhibition programmes, indigenous visual culture did not figure highly in its marketing strategies.

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The MCA positioned itself on Sydney's, and indeed Australia's, cultural stage as the national museum of contemporary art and focused on achieving a match between the latest in contemporary art and ideas and an adventurous art-going public. Audience surveys in 1996 showed that MCA visitors were 'younger, wealthy professionals living in affluent suburbs', who viewed the MCA as being 'sophisticated, outgoing, cool, cheeky, attractive and energetic'.

Dissociating, in name, the Museum of Contemporary Art from the Power Bequest had implications that struck at the core of the institution's foundation, perhaps allowing the university to believe it had lessening responsibilities to support the museum it founded, and indeed that in its city location the museum had the capacity to create its own funding base through patronage and sponsorship. Circumstances seem to suggest otherwise. When the MCA made public its financial statements for the year ending December 1998, it posted a deficit for the third consecutive year. In spite of an active year artistically, presenting thirteen international and Australian exhibitions, performances, lectures and events, the increased reliance on sponsorship, coupled with a tougher financial climate and more competitive environment in the cultural sector, placed intolerable strains on the museum. A new director, Elizabeth Ann Macgregor, from Birmingham (United Kingdom), was appointed and took up her position in September 1999. Talks continue between the New South Wales Government and the University of Sydney as to the financial commitment each is prepared to make to secure the future of the MCA. The government has provided a A$750,000 one-off bail-out to enable the museum to continue to trade in 1999. While the MCA's future may hang in the balance and public debate as to its role has hardly abated since the end of 1998, there is strong community support for a museum of contemporary art in Sydney. Whether it will remain linked to the University of Sydney is to be determined.

In 1988, one of Australia's newest university art museum buildings, the Ian Potter Museum of Art, opened at the University of Melbourne, housing the university's art collections that were acquired since its establishment in 1853. The newly created museum is known as the Potter, a name that links it irrevocably with the Ian Potter Foundation, a major founding patron of the museum and other university projects. It sits on the edge of the campus, fronting one of Melbourne's busiest streets, Swanston Street, anchoring the support of the two worlds essential to its security and growth, the campus and the city. ■

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University and universality in Belgium

Bernard van den Driessche

In Belgium, the model of the university museum as an outgrowth of and responsive to a closely knit academic community is gradually giving way to that of an institution which aims to serve a larger public. But this evolution has been uneven and is far from universal, as explained by Bernard van den Driessche, administrator of the Museum of Louvain-la-Neuve (Catholic University of Louvain), which he helped set up in 1979. Vice-chairman from 1992 to 1995 of the ICOM Belgian National Committee, he was co-ordinator of several issues of La vie des musées (Museum Life) *published by the French-speaking Association of Belgian Museums. He is currently president of Museums and Society in Wallonia, an association formed in 1998.*

The question of relations between town and gown and, more particularly, the university museum and the non-university community, certainly does not concern Belgium alone, but may be usefully introduced by a comparison with examples of museums in two other countries. This should help readers to draw a parallel with the more familiar situation in their own country.

Montreal, 1996: McGill University, Redpath Museum. In the heart of this bilingual metropolis of Quebec, on Sherbrooke Street West, the university campus stands out as a clearly defined town-planning entity. Near the main entrance to the campus a single building houses well-stocked collections of African ethnography, Egyptian archaeology, mineralogy and biology. Visitors are surprised to find that entrance is free: all they have to do is sign their names in the visitors' book on arrival. In the hall a temporary exhibition marking the university's 175th anniversary shows how student life has evolved over the years. Leaflets set out on a table describe a 'discovery workshops' programme designed for the information of families. The person in charge of the ethnographical collections briefly indicates just how reluctant the university authorities are to open up the museum more widely. Even though it is on the city's doorstep and has working relations with other museum-type institutions through scientific collaboration and its loan service, it is seen as a resort of academics and not in any way as user-friendly to the public.

Amsterdam University, 1997: Allard Pierson Museum. Once the premises of the Netherlands Bank, situated in the heart of the city near the station, far from the other university buildings and surrounded by offices and shops, the museum participates in the dynamic of the neighbourhood. Since its transformation into a museum in 1976, when it was completely renovated for its new function, the building has projected the image of a living museum with a worldwide reputation for its valuable collection of Mediterranean archaeology, frequently shown in temporary exhibitions. When in 1972 we visited the museum in its previous premises, inaugurated in 1934, its image was then very similar to that of the Redpath Museum in Montreal. A complete change took place in 1976, when the present museum was inaugurated by HRH Princess Beatrix.

The question is: Are university museums in cities, or on campuses, weighed down by the age of their parent institution? Have they become special showcases opening up to the society that surrounds them? Are they prepared to venture on the curious situation of being institutions that are both academic (laboratories for the training of students in the fields concerned) and civic (open to the public for continuing education, places of culture, leisure, pleasure)? Are universities ready to consider their museums as areas for contact with society, and consequently grant them the financial and human resources needed to carry out this mission, while complying with their duties as curators of collections? These are questions we shall try to answer with reference to the situation of Belgian university museums and collections.

Three universities in the French community of Belgium, on the territory of the region of Brussels and Wallonia,[1] and two others in the Flemish part of the country illustrate the diversity of present-day situations and the solutions adopted more or less deliberately by each institution. Given the country's geographical limits we should bear in mind the fact that the distances between these various institutions rarely exceed 80 km.

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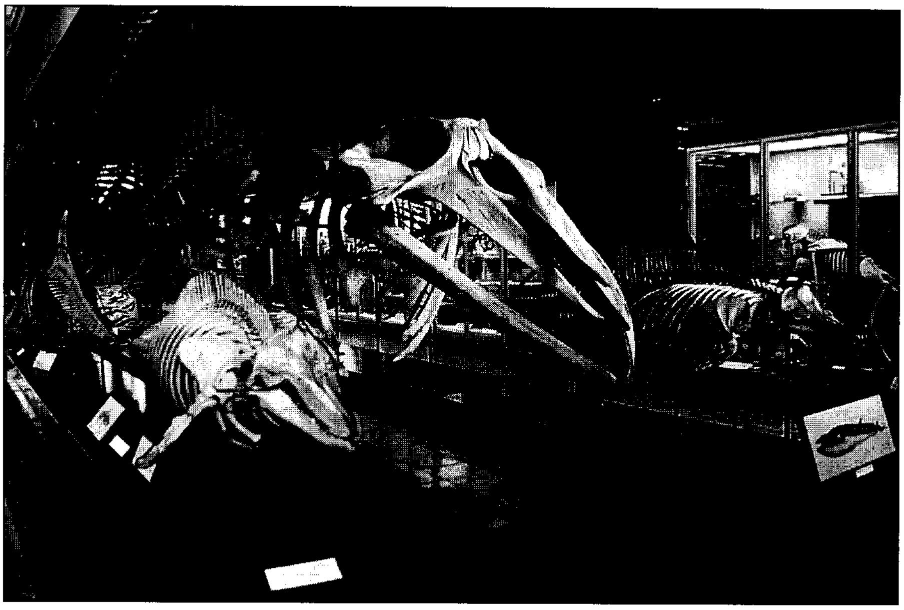

The Dubuisson Aquarium at the State University of Liège.

Liège: where art and history meet

In Liège – a city of art and history on the banks of the Meuse whose past is bound up with the fame and vast power of the Bishop-Princes – the State University, which opened in 1817, has buildings both in the centre of the city and on the Sart-Tilman campus, to which it was relocated in 1965. The educational purpose of the university's mainly scientific collections was laid down in a decree of 1816 by King William I of the Netherlands (of which Belgium then formed a part) requiring the constitution of collections to illustrate the courses of the newly established universities.

This was the case with the university's zoology collection, which, gradually added to by curators over the years, has now become the Museum of Zoology. The Marcel Dubuisson Aquarium has also expanded, and an agreement signed between the university and the municipality, which provides financial support, has made it a centre catering for a wide public, in particular schools.

In 1996, in the wake of the first tourist projects backed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the State University of Liège inaugurated the Observatoire du Monde des Plantes (Observatory of the Plant World), a 2,000 m^2 glasshouse complex designed to attract the general public. Set up on the campus of Sart-Tilman, on the hills overlooking the city, it fits in perfectly with its surroundings. It also houses the Outdoor Museum, whose contemporary art brings together nature and architecture. Created at the time of the transfer of part of the university in the late 1960s with the aim of safeguarding a natural environment being encroached upon by new housing, the project involved a number of landscape architects who established harmonious links between the new buildings and the surrounding forest. The museum is the result of a partnership between two institutions, the Ministry of the French Community and the organization University and City, and now provides a 'discovery' itinerary of about 100 works.

The collections hemmed in by the old university buildings near the Place du XX Août in the city centre do not yet dispose of public areas that could be thrown open permanently to the public in the same way as Liège's many other museums. These collections comprise the university's art collections and the Wittert Gallery (old and modern paintings), which contain rare items such as prints, coins and medals, and the African ethnographic collection as well as the Museum of Prehistory. The university's scientific activities also extend to two other establishments: the House of Science and the Planetarium.

With its wide range of museum facilities the University of Liège well illustrates the different possibilities available, that is, the collections now open to the general public, and cultural assets still awaiting space in order to be similarly made publicly accessible.

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Brussels: an embarrassment of riches

Founded in 1834 in the capital of Belgium, which has now become the capital of Europe, the Free University presents a different range of museum facilities, marked by the phenomenon of 'satellization'. These include the Museum of Science at Parentville, the Ecomuseum of the Viroin-Treignes Region, the Museum of Medicine and the Auguste Lameere Zoology Museum, as well as collections used for teaching purposes, such as medicinal plants, types of marble, miniature models of mining equipment, specimens of anatomy and human embryology, geographical maps, and rare books and fine art objects from the collection of the Belgian writer, Michel de Ghelderode.

The most successful museographical projects are situated on the territory of the Wallonia region, relatively far away – by Belgian standards – from the university campus. The Museum of Science at Parentville is situated in the suburbs of the old industrial centre of Charleroi, while the Viroin-Treignes Ecomuseum, just under 100 km from Brussels, has joined with other local museum- and tourism-related institutions in an attempt to enliven a rural area deserted by its original population and marked by high unemployment. The relocation of these university institutions is in keeping with the university's stated aim of bringing together the inhabitants of Wallonia, many of whom are faculty members or students. This is a clearly expressed desire by the university authorities to achieve greater openness. Through these institutions the university opens up to an urban area affected by the recession and a rural area lacking cultural infrastructures.

The Museum of Science at Parentville, with organizational assistance from Objective: Research, a non-profit-making association linked to the university, is a centre for spreading scientific culture among the public of all ages, many of its cultural activities being designed for secondary-school pupils. It lays emphasis on interactivity and learning through play, while ensuring scientific rigour in the design of its exhibitions (for example, *Being Computer-minded*, *The Aspirin*, *Ernest Solvay and his Times*, *The Universe and Life*, *The Ant World*, etc.).

Installed in the home-farm of a castle listed as an ancient monument, in the village of Treignes, the Ecomuseum uses its collections and photographic and graphic material to develop the themes of the mechanization of agriculture from 1800 to 1950, clog-making, slate mining, marble quarrying and stove manufacturing, all mementoes of local craft techniques which have now disappeared. With other types of museum, such as the Musée du Malgré Tout (a private museum of prehistoric archaeology, also located at Treignes), the Steam Engine Museum at Mariembourg, and the Espace Arthur Masson recently created by the Wallonia region and named after a local writer, the Ecomuseum helps to revive a region that was almost deserted by its population some twenty years ago, and attracts tourists even to such a remote part of the country. However, the absence of any real participation by the local population in the different stages of elaborating and managing its projects makes it difficult to classify this as an ecomuseum strictly speaking. The remoteness of these museums means that they are rarely visited by people from the university, and are thus in fact cut off from their Alma Mater.

The university's other two museums, located in Brussels, are less involved in

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the relationship between the university and its surrounding population. While the Zoology Museum more traditionally caters for school groups, it remains primarily an educational instrument for students. The Museum of Medicine, opened in 1995 in a building of the hospital and university complex situated on the Erasmus Campus on the other side of the city, tries to build bridges between the medical faculty and the public and to use its collections to show how medical concepts have evolved from ancient times up to the present day.

© ULB/Treignes

Treignes, the farm-castle housing the Ecomuseum of the region of Viroin, part of the Free University of Brussels.

Louvain-la-Neuve: where a university created a town

The situation is entirely different for the Catholic University of Louvain, which dates back to 1425 but was forced for political and linguistic reasons to leave its original site in the city of Louvain (Leuven) in the province of Flemish Brabant. Since 1972 this French-language university has created a new town with the highly evocative name of Louvain-la-Neuve. This is the only example of a university creating a town on previously agricultural land, and is the first and only example in Belgium of a university museum open to the public. Part of the Department of Archaeology and the History of Art, it was inaugurated in November 1979. The university city, designed on a human scale and entirely pedestrianized, is linked to the commune of Ottignies, with which it forms the independent municipality of Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve. It now has approximately 30,000 inhabitants, 15,000 of whom are students. Work has begun on the construction of a large central shopping mall, with a cinema complex, which, combined with its position 30 km south-east of Brussels, will attract still more visitors. In the centre of the town, the Museum of Louvain-la-Neuve currently occupies a surface area of 1,000 m^2 on the ground floor of the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts building.

At this first stage the museum is closely involved in the activities of the Department of Archaeology and the History of Art while also reaching out to the town population with a whole calendar of temporary exhibitions. Mounted alongside or even within the permanent collections, these numerous exhibitions early on gave rise to the concept of a dialogue between art and culture. The art, archaeology and ethnography collections built up solely from gifts and legacies and inspired by this original concept, have taken on such importance that in March 1999 the university authorities adopted a project for the construction of a separate building, which has been entrusted to the Belgian firm of architects Philippe Samyn and Partners. The site chosen is on the Main Square, next to the cinema complex and near the Jean Vilar Theatre, whose reputation has spread far beyond Belgium. The new museum, to be offi-

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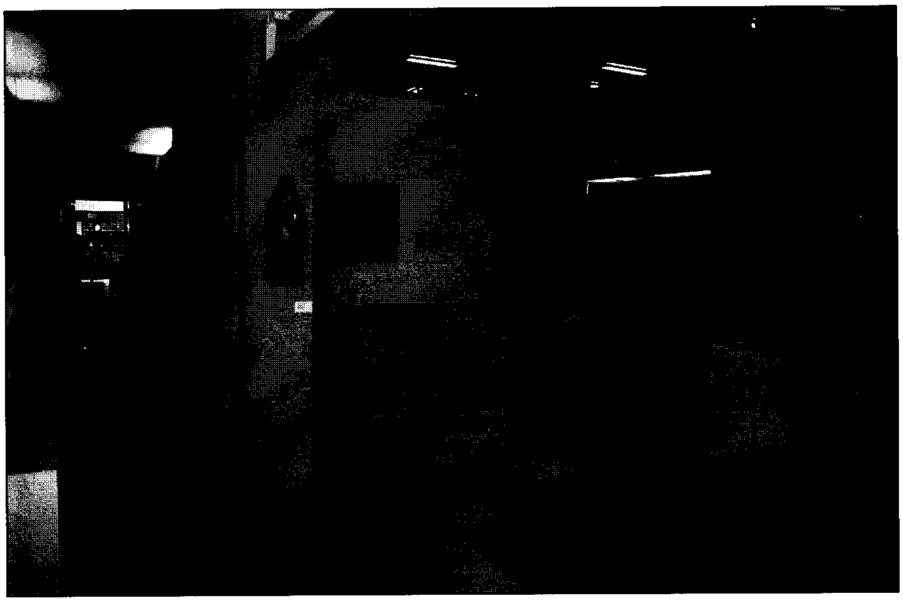

View of the main room at the museum of the Catholic University of Louvain at Louvain-la-Neuve.

cially known as the Museum of Dialogue, will comprise an area of 4,000 m^2. This will enable it to carry out still more effectively its firmly declared role as a great cultural centre and the showpiece of the university.

Without going into the details of its history, it should be noted that recognition of the museum's function in both town and university is accompanied by a shift in its place within the university's structure. From a simple entity within a department and faculty, it has become a fully fledged service providing scientific support (in the same way as the university's libraries) and coming directly under the university authorities, with a managerial council consisting of eminent representatives not only of the university and the world of culture, but also of local, provincial, regional and community authorities. In its twenty years of existence, the museum has played a major part in the difficult task of integrating the university and its town into its new environment. Several temporary exhibitions, mounted in collaboration with student organizations, have helped to establish links with nearby small towns, in particular as regards the local heritage. In addition, the museum's conservation and restoration workshop is largely responsive to requests from those in charge of the local civil or religious heritage, in constant collaboration with, for example, the Royal Institute of Artistic Heritage.

The development of the information technology service in 1989, and the production of multimedia tools as from 1993, make the Museum of Louvain-la-Neuve a standard reference at the national and even the European level. The introduction of information and communication technology tools, produced entirely by the museum (its CD-ROM, multimedia consultation terminals, website), is also proof that the museum is recognized by the university itself. In addition, the EOLE project (remote access to a multimedia information system on the Belgian heritage) has been developed thanks to the skills acquired by the small museum team.

The museum also provides a reference time scale for a town where everything starts by being new and in the making. Neither inside nor outside the university campus – but in fact, in a town constantly undergoing change – the Museum of Louvain-la-Neuve has sought and still seeks to provide both town and university with a sphere in which the public can enjoy freedom and creation through contact with different forms of art presented in permanent or temporary exhibitions, in particular in the field of contemporary art.

In this respect the museum certainly differs from the institutions mentioned above. It is involved in discussion of the idea which Patrick J. Boylan proposed at the first seminar on university museums

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held at Alicante in 1997: 'Most important is the fact that through dynamic programmes of temporary exhibitions and collection presentations, especially contemporary art, university art museums are increasingly perceived as an instrument for the entire academic community and the public at large and not merely for specialists alone in the academic field.'[2]

The Catholic University of Louvain has other collections to which the public has however more limited access. These are the biology collections of the Museum of Life (used by students and on request by primary- and secondary-school pupils), and, at Woluwé (Brussels), the collection of pharmacy jars assembled in the Salle Couvreur, and a garden of contemporary sculptures laid out in 1987.

The Flemish community

The two universities situated on the Flemish territory of Belgium have less richly endowed collections, and do not so far have museums open to the public. The Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Catholic University of Louvain), founded in 1425 and established in the provincial capital of Flemish Brabant has a relatively important artistic, archaeological and African ethnographical heritage, but does not yet have a museum. The Rijksuniversiteit Gent (State University of Ghent), with a rich archaeological and ethnographical heritage that has been built up ever since its foundation in 1817, is still no further than the stage of planning a museum, despite announcements to the contrary. Admittedly these two cities, whose movable and immovable historical heritage is very rich, have nothing to lose from this situation. The St Ignatius University Faculty, which has been housed in Antwerp since 1965, has in addition to an already prestigious heritage a department of prints, mainly dealing with the history of the city. However, visitors can only gain access to it on request at the Hotel Van Liere, an early sixteenth-century patrician residence.

A typically Belgian situation?

Belgian university collections and museums, though all relatively near each other, thus differ not only in form, scale and structure but also in their development within their parent university. It is clear that several systems have emerged over the years, depending on the way in which these institutions have evolved. In some cases the absence of a university museum, notwithstanding the existence of large collections, may be due to an urban environment that already has a rich heritage, so that the university is not motivated to exploit its own heritage on behalf of an already privileged civil community (Louvain, Ghent and Antwerp). Another factor may be that these universities have not undergone any major material change: for example, expansion or partial relocation to a new campus.

The example of Liège, with a major relocation to the outskirts of the town of Sart-Tilman, and even more that of Louvain-la-Neuve, with the transfer of an entire university and the establishment of a new town, illustrate on the contrary a determination, and indeed the need, to avert the risk of creating a university ghetto. Obviously, art collections in particular, which are widely accessible to the public, help to achieve this aim, as is amply attested by many North American examples. The choice made by the Free University of Brussels, with its separate units of a science museum and an ecomuseum, reflects Belgium's special situation, but is certainly also to be found

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elsewhere, namely an expansion of the university into areas normally outside its field of action.

Thus, while the aim at the time when university collections originated was to have available *in situ*, within the university itself and for its own almost exclusive use, reference collections for study and teaching, the ways in which universities have developed have led them to make their knowledge, research and part of their heritage available to a larger public. The example of Belgium clearly shows that the key issue is not whether museum or university collections are located in or outside the campus, university or town. Rather, what really matters is the relations that the managers and cultural organizers of these institutions establish with a non-university community while at the same time continuing to be recognized and respected by the academic community, which in itself comprises a large public of students, teachers, researchers, office staff, technicians and workers. As places open to the public, museums make possible encounters between two different worlds which cannot ever have too many buildings or open spaces for people to get to know each other in a congenial environment. This brings out the full meaning of the comment by Patrick J. Boylan quoted above.

The fact remains that the means available to museums often fall short of the expectations of those in charge of them. Given the developments all museums are going through, university museums must, like others, find fresh solutions as regards financing, acquisitions, publicity campaigns, etc. However, in one area at least, they have the advantage of belonging to a parent institution involved in the development of new information and communication technologies.[3] Belgium's Museum of Louvain-la-Neuve is an excellent example of this. What is more, the development of information technology tools, widely supported by the Friends of the Museum, has given the museum greater prestige within the university itself. The development of inventory databases such as in Australian museums, and European projects currently being devised (in Norway or Spain, for example) clearly show the input from research carried out within university museums. All this has brought us to the stage where we realize that the question of the types of relation between town and university is no longer relevant, and that we should be thinking again of the tandem 'university-universality'. ■

Notes

1. *Guide des musées. Bruxelles-Wallonie* [Museum Guide. Brussels-Wallonia] Ministry of the French Community of Belgium, 11th issue, 1997, 453 pp.

2. Patrick J. Boylan, 'Universities and Museums: Past, Present and Future', pp. 11–21. Paper presented at the first Seminar on University Museums, Alicante, 1997.

3. Belgian museums on the Internet: http://www.muse.ucl.ac.be/museum/Musebe.html

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Forum UNESCO – University and Heritage

Jonathan Bell

A unique project that has UNESCO and universities worldwide joining forces to safeguard the cultural heritage is described by Jonathan Bell, a graduate of Harvard University and the Sorbonne, who has extensive academic and hands-on experience with Buddhist murals in China and Tibet. As a UNESCO consultant, he helped develop and administer a number of cultural heritage projects around the world, particularly Forum UNESCO – University and Heritage. He is currently pursuing graduate studies at Columbia University.

The world abounds in astounding cultural heritage sites inextricably linked to the history, tradition and lives of one or more peoples. Fashioned by human genius or created by the careful hand of nature, these sites are living testimony to a past that can never be recaptured. They serve as monuments to the accomplishments and value systems of an entire race and act as empirical links to epochs long since past.

As the planet ages, so do these sites so profoundly interwoven with our own human history. The ravages of pollution, mass urbanization and natural disaster combine with neglect to leave these structures and natural sites in a dangerous state of disrepair. The threat of their complete disappearance is far from myth. Intervention is, therefore, a constant necessity if we are to maintain for the future what remains of the past.

The sheer number of historic sites and cultural monuments makes organizing efforts to preserve them a daunting task. As professionals continue to work towards their goals, both in the short and long term, it becomes more and more evident that the needs of these sites far surpass their available resources of expertise, technology and funding. However, much of the manpower and know-how, as well as the financial means, necessary for the development and completion of preservation and restoration projects rests within many institutions of higher learning. These projects geared towards the enhancement of cultural heritage can, in turn, provide universities and other specialized institutions with valuable hands-on training opportunities for their students and appropriate venues for the allocation of external funding. There is a self-reciprocating relationship between the professionals and their academic counterparts that needs to be exploited.

Despite the seemingly natural relationship, a large gap has traditionally existed between public and private funding sources, on the one hand, and professionals in the field of cultural heritage protection, on the other. *Forum UNESCO – University and Heritage* is the result of a desire to incorporate the astounding technical, human and financial resources of universities and bridge this gap in internationally guided efforts to preserve the world's cultural legacy. Created in 1996 on the occasion of an international gathering at the Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, Spain, Forum UNESCO is a network of universities whose aim is actively to involve students and professors in cultural heritage work. As the only United Nations agency entrusted with the protection and enhancement of the world's cultural heritage, UNESCO recognized its founding role in the creation and promotion of such a network. Together with the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and the Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA), and the International Union of Architects (UIA), UNESCO undertook the establishment of Forum UNESCO to facilitate the preservation of cultural heritage.

An international database of courses related to cultural heritage work (e.g. architecture, preservation, conservation, museology), scholars, and various ongoing projects is housed within the Universidad Politécnica de Valencia. This body of information, accessible to anyone interested, has already greatly helped to draw the world of restorers,

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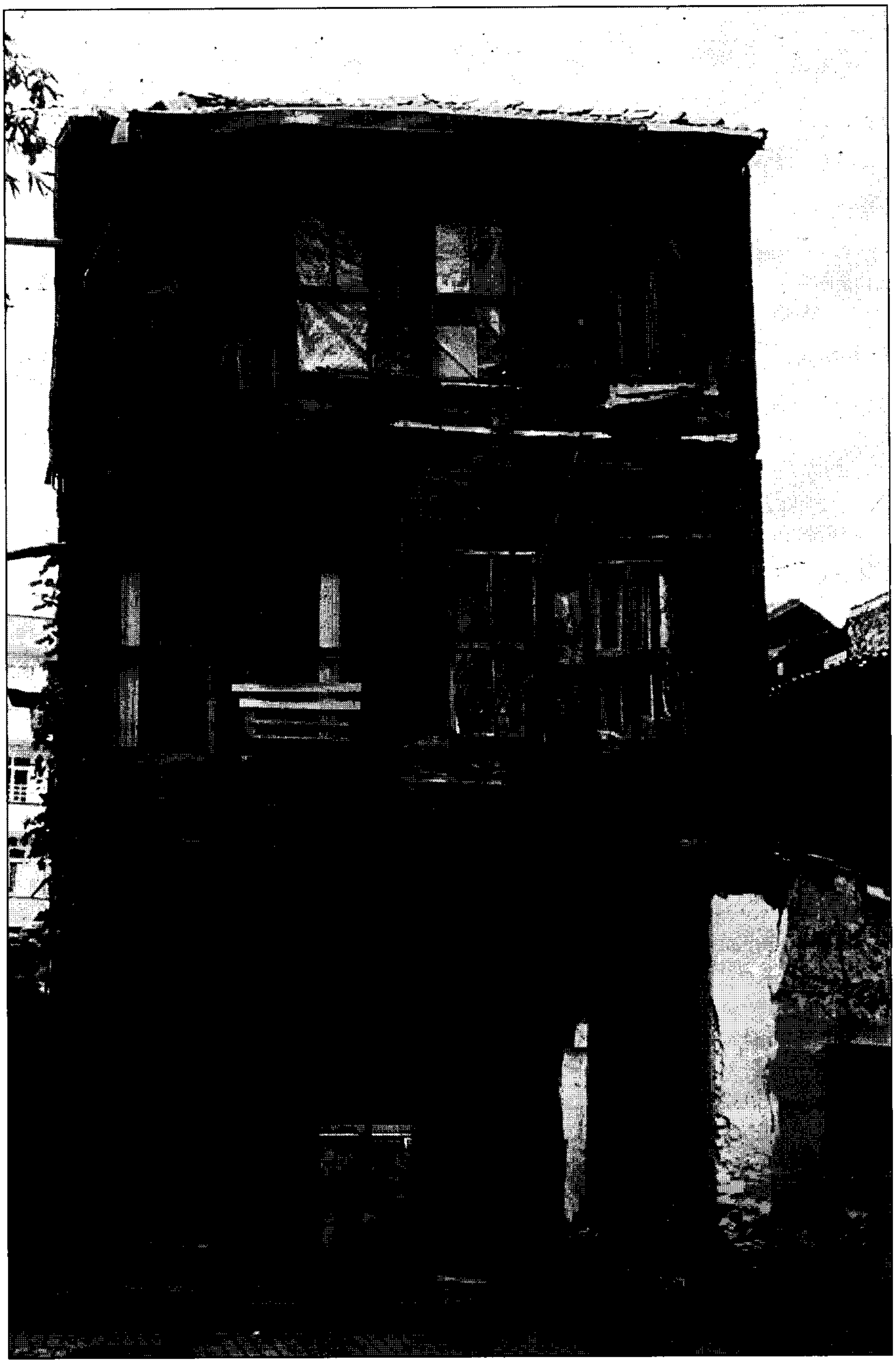

The project of restoration work on old wooden houses in Istanbul came to light during the Melbourne meeting of Forum UNESCO – University and Heritage.

preservationists and others much closer together. It is also a valuable resource for students hoping to gain experience and participate in restoration projects around the planet. From this point in Valencia, a web of universities and institutions involved in the preservation, conservation, and restoration of cultural property spreads across six continents. The institutions involved generally provide extensive course work and fieldwork in related disciplines and are linked through representative groups of students and professors.

Perhaps even more interesting and important than the database, are the yearly meetings hosted by different universities boasting an interest in preservation work. These conferences attract professionals and educational representatives from numerous countries to discuss restoration methods, exchange ideas and adopt projects whose results can be followed. As annual exchanges that attract more and more participants each year, they are proof of the popularity and success of the Forum UNESCO network between universities and other institutions. Not only are they well attended, but each event ends with a list of adopted projects exemplified by international co-operation between universities.

For example, in 1998 in Melbourne, at the third International Forum UNESCO – University and Heritage conference more than 140 representatives of various universities and institutions from around the world gathered to address the problems of preservation work and commit themselves to projects focused on the enhancement and protection of valuable vestiges of the past. The conference, held at Deakin University, convened an international community of professors, deans, rectors and students involved in cultural heritage work who reaffirmed their devotion to conservation and restoration efforts. Some twenty-five projects and activities, designed to enhance cultural heritage sites and presented by the participants themselves, were signed into action during the five-day gathering.

On 5/6 July 1999, a Forum UNESCO – University and Heritage Rector's meeting

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was held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. This event was attended by ninety-five representatives of various institutions in thirty-one different countries. University presidents, rectors, and deans were present alongside government and NGO officials. Discussion of the immediate and long-term goals of the network dominated, with a focus on efforts to better inform the public and policy-makers of cultural heritage efforts and their importance. Harvard University, for example, presented an ongoing project in which government officials are trained in both the public and private domain of cultural heritage issues. The university offers a class for members of the United States Congress to sensitize them to urban problems and issues of heritage preservation. Harvard is also interested in co-ordinating workshops about issues of urbanism and heritage on a global level.

Proof positive

Since its inception four years ago, the participants have already adopted and completed an exhaustive list of restoration and preservation projects touching every corner of the world. The University of Punjab, Pakistan, has conducted in-depth research on the history, design, and landscaping of the Shalimar Gardens in Lahore, Pakistan, as well as devised a thorough plan for their preservation and enhancement. In March 1999, the Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá, Colombia, held an international workshop examining the ongoing restoration of the San Fernando de Bocachica Fort, a site currently included on the World Heritage List. Most recently, in June 1999, Lund University in Sweden, in co-operation with Yildiz University in Turkey, began restoration work on old wooden houses in Istanbul. This project, now well under way, came to light during the Melbourne meeting and currently demonstrates the advantages of collaboration between various institutions.

Another project whose progress has been notable was adopted during the second International Forum UNESCO – University and Heritage held at Laval University in Quebec, Canada. The project consisted of an international competition for the design of a poster and logo promoting the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. Jointly hosted by Savannah College of Art and Design, Georgia, USA, and UNESCO, the competition resulted in applications from hundreds of entries from young persons around the world. Once the final decisions are made, the 1970 Convention will be represented by a new unique logo and benefit from heightened publicity.

The strength of this network lies specifically in the contact between the co-operating institutions and in their mutual encouragement. When specialized institutions work side by side on a project, there is an important exchange of knowledge, technological know-how and resources that have local impact. This exchange not only sees a particular project through to its end, but also engenders future co-operation as well as attracts attention to current needs in the field of cultural heritage work. An example of how international and inter-institutional contact lead to increased local efforts can be found at the Universidad de Buenos Aires in Argentina. There, work is currently underway to create a national database of heritage projects, restoration techniques, and other pertinent information. In September 1999, the university organized a workshop on the rehabilitation of old buildings for future use, in which

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new technology in the field was presented and emphasis placed on the importance of interdisciplinary and community participation in such efforts. Experience gained primarily from the Forum UNESCO network and its meetings inspired the Universidad de Buenos Aires to take similar measures at home.

As we step across the threshold into the future, it is vital that we do not turn our backs on the past. The lessons that we have learned since our beginnings on the planet still mark the land. Archaeology has taught us of the glory of civilizations long gone and the exploits of our predecessors. Monuments and other surviving human expressions still serve as models of technology and physical records of events and people that might otherwise be forgotten. The heritage being lost every day is the inheritance of the entire human race.

As more and more sites find themselves in danger and in immediate need of international assistance, individual institutions have less time and fewer resources available to devote to their preservation. However, joint effort can effectively meet these needs. Proper planning and co-operation can preserve those monuments and places considered to be of unique importance to humanity's cultural history. Forum UNESCO was created as a meeting place for professionals and the public, and a forum for new ideas and strategies in the conviction that international interdisciplinary co-operation coupled with public education and support can ensure that our past will survive into the future. ■

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Managing a museum 120 km long

Arthur Gillette

How do you manage what might be called the longest museum in the world? To find out in the most down-to-earth way possible, Arthur Gillette recently hitched a rucksack onto his shoulders and hiked some 70 km along the many extant vestiges (and a string of attendant museums) of the Roman wall that originally stretched 120 km across England from east to west, from the North Sea to the Solway Firth. The author, an intrepid outdoorsman, is former editor-in-chief of Museum International *and, since his retirement in 1998, a freelance writer on cultural heritage issues and guide to strolls through the history of Paris.*

Hadrian's Wall was built over about a decade beginning in A.D. 122, and was intended 'to separate barbarians and Romans' (*Historia Augusta*, fourth-century chronicle), that is to say as a frontier barrier between the Roman Empire's colony of Britannia and the Caledonian warriors marauding from the north. Today, it is just south of, and roughly parallel to, the border between England and Scotland.

Averaging about 4 m high by 3 m wide, the wall was built in sections by legionaries some of whom carved still-visible signatures on it. It had a mile-castle every thousand paces, signalling turrets (smoke by day, torches at night) between them, and seventeen fixed forts each housing several hundred soldiers. The foundations of many of these structures still exist. According to one estimation, the wall's construction required the quarrying, transport and placing of 30 million facing stones; and the cost of such a massive project in today's prices would be about $5.5 billion.

Over the centuries, nature has taken its toll, damaging, or in some places destroying, the wall. Also, stone has been looted from it in the 1,600 years since the fall of the Roman Empire. Along my itinerary, bits had been recycled *inter alia* in many farmers' dry-stone boundary walls, the medieval Lanercost Priory (sited near Hadrian's Wall precisely to facilitate such re-use), and the grandest free-standing rural privy I have ever seen.

Nevertheless, much of the wall and ancillary buildings are still extant because its course passes through little-populated stretches of (often stunning) countryside, sometimes perched atop unassailable crags. Almost everywhere one looks it snakes away into the distance, up hill down dale, like some endless sea serpent, sometimes all but disappearing beneath the furze only to resurface majestically a few metres farther along.

Such a pervasive monument could not but influence local place-names. I encountered such toponymic souvenirs as Wallsend, Walltown, Burnt Walls, Chesters (from the Latin *castra* – camp), and Stanegate (from Old Norse meaning 'stone road') recalling the Roman thoroughfare that passed just south of the wall.

Hadrian's astonishing barrier understandably attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year, up by more than 50 per cent since the mid-1970s, now reaching an annual total of about 1.25 million for the whole wall. Some pause for a few hours only, others ramble good lengths, even all of it. How do increasing numbers of tourists affect the wall? 'More and more litter,' notes Frank Balme, a maintenance officer. 'Then, there's damage caused by what I call "boot erosion" – believe it or not, despite our warning notice boards people actually climb up and walk along the top, loosening the masonry. And vandalism, too, with souvenir hunters ripping out stones.'

What are the solutions to these problems? 'It would be a real shame to rope off the wall since visitors do get a physical kick out of actually touching it,' says Frank Balme. 'Somehow, people have got to learn to know it better, and so to respect it more.' That's where museums come in.

'Gladiators 4, Lions 2'

Presentation and interpretation of Hadrian's Wall are the sole functions, or among the main aims, of no less than ten museums of different sizes along or near its route, not to forget twelve officially recognized wall sites, mainly forts and mile-castles, but also

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Hadrian's Wall up hill and down dale; the best way to visit is on foot, but some stretches are accessible to the handicapped.

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including interpretation centres, and hundreds of signposts, some in French and German as well as English. According to Adam Slade, general manager of the Birdoswald Fort Visitors' Centre, 'without the many explanatory displays, the wall would be just a row of piles of rubble randomly stuck together – meaningless!'

The Tullie House City Museum in Carlisle is as good a place as any to be introduced to the wall, if you are approaching its extant vestiges from the west. Tullie House offers a selective permanent exhibition including many surprising artefacts, such as intact wooden practice swords and phallic good-luck charms. And a 'worm's eye view' case takes you below the street level of Luguvalium (Roman Carlisle) to discover pre-Roman strata of habitation and history.

But the stress is on interactivity. Visitors are, for example, invited to test their skill with a *cheiroballistra*, a kind of mounted crossbow that makes a sharp 'thwang' when, having taken careful aim at an already-many-holed sheep skull, you pull the trigger. A quiz challenges youngsters to recall information just presented to them by the *Off the Wall* temporary exhibit. The questions are not simple, and one suspects that the intention is that parents and other adults should be appealed to for help, thus testing and stimulating their own retention.

'What happened to the Ninth Spanish Legion?' asks one panel. The inscription *Leg*[*io*].*VIIII.H*[*ispana*] appears stamped into a roof tile dating from A.D. 108, however by A.D. 160 the legion had disappeared without trace and not even the experts can explain the mystery. The healthy message seems to be that 'even the experts' don't have all the answers.

A similarly participatory approach is found at the wall's military museum at Carvoran, which simply invites visitors to 'Join the Roman Army!' and then explains experientially the rigours involved. The Vindolanda Roman Fort and Museum offers, in clement weather, an opportunity to chat with archaeologists excavating as yet unexplored parts of the site, and who regularly turn up such treasures as a recently unearthed collection of Roman wooden manuscripts including a birthday invitation, a traveller's expense account, a request for help in finding a 'decent inn', and a complaint that *Brituncuil* ('little Brit') soldiers refused to mount horses before throwing their javelins.

Wall-related publications often demonstrate much imagination. At the Once Brewed Visitors' Centre, one may purchase *The Roman Record*, a modern newspaper-style account of Roman history, with such zany eye-catching headlines as 'Double Trouble: Wolf Boy Kills Twin Then Founds City' (remember Romulus and Remus?), 'An Empire is

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Born: How Caesar Seized Control,' 'Rome No. 1!: Eternal City or Fleshpot Cesspool?', and 'Smash and Grab, Your Nine-step Guide to Acquiring a New Country,' not to forget such sports items as 'Latest Amphitheatre Results: Gladiators 4, Lions 2' and adverts such as 'Roman Rulers! Make a Big Splash with the ULTIMATE in Bath House Luxury!' Although aimed at the younger generation, *The Roman Record* is regularly seen in parents', even grandparents', hands.

Generally avoiding overkill, audiovisual presentations broaden wall museums' palettes. At the Once Brewed Centre, visitors can buy a copy of the video cassette they have just viewed. 'The only problem,' explains Manager Alison Blair, 'is that we just can't keep enough US-compatible cassettes in stock to satisfy North Americans.' I was prepared to find Disneyish fault with the audio-enhanced replicas of a temple, shop and house at the fourth century Vindolanda site – but couldn't. The temple's soundtrack – a succession of thanksgiving, supplication and other prayers to the nearby brook's nymphs announced by little bells – is mesmerizing; the grocer's spiel is appetizing; and, at the legionary's home, his wife's description of domestic daily life is fascinating.

'Spot on!'

Visitors, of course, come mainly from the British Isles. But increasing numbers of foreign visitors are finding their way to the wall. At the Once Brewed interpretation centre, leaflets are now supplied in French, Italian, Dutch and German, as well as English. Proud of their overseas heritage, Italian visitors are now beginning to come in numbers for the explicit purpose of visiting Hadrian's Wall. The Once Brewed Centre is located cheek by jowl with England's oldest youth hostel that hosts many non-British hikers, bikers and motorized tourists. Manager Alison Blair finds this proximity 'a good thing', partly responsible for the growth of annual visits from about 68,000 in the mid-1980s to some 78,000 at present. Nevertheless, the age profile is 'still predominantly 30 and up.'

© Arthur Gillette

Re-use of stones from Hadrian's Wall at medieval Lanercost Priory (the grey blocks to the right).

There have, however, been changes over time. For example, she reports 'a much greater interest in history than previously, a greater amount of time per visitor spent along the wall, and a more focused intention to take in a museum or two'.

Visitor reactions tend to be quite positive according to Gillian Goodfellow, a staff member of Carlisle's Tullie House. 'To be sure, we do get some negative comments, mainly from the more academic-minded people,' she explains. 'But since our 1991 revamp, we've become a very family-friendly museum.' Comments in the visitors' book, often penned in a young hand, bear this out: 'Excellent,' 'Magic,' 'Great and interesting,' 'Spot on!'

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Despite considerable rain during my hike, I noticed several school classes clambering about various fort sites and nearby stretches of the wall. At a signalling turret one very wet kilometre from the Housesteads Fort Site and Museum, a rain-caped group of youngish teenagers settled down on the ancient stone and opened plastic-protected notebooks. 'Now, what were the turrets used for?' asked their teacher. Eager hands shot up on all sides.

What are the economics of presenting and explaining Hadrian's Wall? Predictably, shops are widespread and offer a variety of wares, including publications that range from the informative but silly *Roman Record* to serious and tempting academic fare (at Vindolanda, which has its own research unit, for example). Postcards abound, as do trinkets of various kinds, such as rulers for converting Roman to Arabic numerals – and perhaps reaching something of a limit with the Hadrian's Wall refrigerator door magnets on sale at Once Brewed. One visitors' centre charges a small fee for making bed-and-breakfast reservations. Adam Slade, general manager of the Birdoswald Fort Visitors' Centre says that his site must generate income to cover all its expenses through entry fees, tea-room and shop. 'But,' he adds, 'there is no uniform pattern for financing, given the great diversity of institutions concerned.'

Manager Alison Blair at the multilingual Once Brewed Visitors' Centre.

© Arthur Gillette

And the diversity is great indeed, with well over fifty different national, regional and local, governmental, non-governmental and private entities – ranging from small municipal councils to the giant English Heritage organization – actively and durably involved in presenting Hadrian's Wall to the public. 'Doesn't that make for confusion, even chaos?' I asked Adam Slade. 'Well, it used to. As recently as five or six years ago, we were, if not in fierce competition with one another, at least like ostriches with our heads in the sand.' The designation in 1987 of Hadrian's Wall as a UNESCO World Heritage Site opened the door to some forms of co-operation since, says Adam Slade. 'It obliged us to come up with management plans, which we obviously couldn't prepare entirely on our own.'

World Heritage responsibilities – and constraints – are taken quite seriously, I found. At the Once Brewed Centre, Alison Blair tussled with the installation of a new telephone line. 'We can't string it in the air – that would disfigure; but we can't dig underground either because there's a Roman *vallum* earthwork moat in the way!'

The creation in 1995 of the Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership[1] (actually in gestation from three years previously) has been, according to Adam Slade – and his view was echoed by other site and museum managers – 'important for giving overall focus and cohesion. While keeping our own separate institutional

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identities, we work together, there are joint task forces on just about any topic you can think of, from overall strategy to signposting. This spurs staff enthusiasm and makes our aggregate efforts much more comprehensible and attractive.'

A network of twenty different operators, the partnership has an annual budget of about £150,000 ($240,000), half from its members' fees and half from European Union sources. And it counts very concrete achievements. These include, for example, such jointly produced periodicals as the attractive magazine *News From Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site* and the *Calendar of Events within the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site*. 'Events' is surely too passive a term, and if a good English translation of the French *animation* existed, it would belong here. Witness, some of the 'events' listed for spring and summer 1999: a 'Roman Festival' at two successive locations, featuring Roman recipes, stories and music, not to forget 'a Wild Celt'; 'Meet a Roman Soldier' (who presumably survived the Wild Celt); 'Nest of Freebooters', a guided walk near the town of Gilsland; and, to mark Museums Week, 'Behind the Scenes Tours' at the Corbridge Roman site.

Most promising project

The Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership has made a special effort to involve local people, particularly farmers over whose land and among whose sheep and cattle access to and along the wall often passes. Wall maintenance officer Frank Balme remarks: 'I can understand full well the annoyance of some people whose livelihood can be damaged if, for instance, walkers' unleashed dogs go after their livestock.'

Partnership project manager Jane Brantom points to a two-pronged approach here.

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A recently stolen 'souvenir' left this gaping hole in Banks East Turret's masonry.

'First, we have worked on a strategy – needed for decades – of engaging schools, local authorities and businesses (including farmers – the National Farmers' Union co-operates with English Heritage, one of our members) in preparing local action plans for wall promotion, and secondly, we try to sensitize visitors to the farmers' problems, among other things by disseminating a "countryside code of conduct".'

During my four-day adventure along the wall, my only encounter with a farmer was when one took the trouble to come out of his house and kindly point me in the right direction when I had blithely gotten off on a wrong trail. No annoyance there, but Frank Balme's point is obviously well taken, and the partnership's efforts welcome.

With very diverse members, the partnership has its limits. An attempt to mount a joint ticketing scheme was, apparently, not a resounding success, for example. On the other hand, some areas of wall management seem to require more harmonization. Thus, while my ICOM

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(UNESCO-supported International Council of Museums) membership card gained me free entry to most museums and centres at what is, after all, a UNESCO-recognized World Heritage site, two steadfastly refused to honour it, or even attempt to determine its validity from other sources.

Perhaps the partnership's most promising current project is creating the Hadrian's Wall National Trail, stretches of which have already been put in place, and which is scheduled to be fully operational in 2002. Maintained and generally well sign-posted though they are, present pathways tend to become mud – deep mud – when it rains, and have a way of occasionally abandoning the walker in open pasture-land just as the light is beginning to fade. A young Australian returned almost in tears to the Once Brewed Youth Hostel, where I was staying, after her afternoon's search, as vain as it was wet, for the Housesteads Fort and Museum, all of 5 km distant.

Does the trail's creation raise the prospect of overcrowding? 'Not really,' replies Jane Brantom. 'Relatively few people try to hike the full wall distance, a daily average of less than 100 in peak months. Then, too, the trend is actually for fewer visits at some of the central sites, with more and more people going to the peripheral ones.'

In the summer months, a special Wall Bus scheme, with linkages to railways and promoted by the Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership, offers targeted access via public transport thus hopefully limiting the growth in private vehicle traffic. One person I met who wouldn't have minded an overcrowded-because-more-accessible trail was Wynn Smokes, a retired florist from California. On her first trip to Europe, she badly wanted to visit Hadrian's Wall (remembered from a childhood school-book) and some of its attendant museums. On her first attempt to climb towards the wall up a steep path, where water gushed among uneven stones and squelching mud, she had been turned back – by a nasty blister. ■

Note

1. For more information: Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership, Eastburn Park South, Hexham, Northumberland NE46 1BS, United Kingdom. Fax: 44.1434.601.267, e-mail: hadrian@hadrians-wall.org website: http://www.hadrians-wall.org

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Towards a new vision of the museum: the Kunsthaus of Bregenz

Mihail Moldoveanu

Museum architecture and museum collections are not always compatible, and new buildings may overshadow the works they were designed to enhance. A notable exception is described by Mihail Moldoveanu, a freelance photographer and writer based in Paris.

The idea of the 'museum,' as it took shape during the nineteenth century, has become obsolete. Initially modelled on the cabinet of curiosities, this institution now has to house just about everything that society produces, admires or wants to remember. Today, museums are often first-rank commercial success stories. They have much in common with theme parks – Disneyland in Florida is the most famous archetype – sharing with them not only a very large public but an increasing number of similar characteristics as well, beginning with the techniques to control visitor flow and ending with the installation of restaurants and shops selling a wide variety of 'homemade' products which can now often be bought on the Internet.

The objective of attracting a very large public for museums may be seen as both a logical consequence of the process of democratizing access to culture and as an attitude of political demagoguery. None the less, a few voices can still be heard, from time to time, saying that mass education weakens the primary function of the museum, which is to exhibit, collect and promote research work by specialists. In general, politicians consider this point of view as that of an intellectual élite group and attach little or no importance to it.

In the United States, which is experiencing a veritable boom in this field, more than 150 museums have been constructed or extended in the 1997–99 period alone. Edward Able, president of the American Association of Museums emphasized in a recent interview that 'Museums have not only become important educational institutions ... they have also become the new town halls which play a central role in the cultural, social and economic life of their communities.'[1]

An initial sign of this increased importance in relation to other public utilities is the quest for a 'representative architecture', a term that in this case signifies a recognizable 'stamp', or a building designed in a very particular way. The ideal solution is to have a well-known architect construct an extravagant building, museum administrators having become well aware of the effectiveness of the message that architecture transmits. To make sure of success when they envisage important architectural work, they organize restricted competitions to which they invite almost exclusively celebrities, or, to shorten the process, they simply give them the contract.

Examples of this evolution abound, and not only in the United States. None the less, the first major museum to make a radical departure from the 'historic' model is American and dates back to the 1950s, namely, the Guggenheim Museum in New York. This pioneering architectural masterpiece by Frank Lloyd Wright rejected all previous experience in the field (Beaux-Arts as well as Modernist). In a single space, a very long spiral ramp – the gallery – turns and turns around a well of light formed by a magnificent central skylight.

The next stage in the definition of a new type of museum, more adapted to the 'action' requirements of a society undergoing fundamental change, came in the shape of the Georges Pompidou Centre in Paris constructed by Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers in the 1970s. Here, the collections – their very large number notwithstanding – occupy only a fifth of the entire building, a kind of transparent box that also houses temporary exhibitions, libraries, cinemas, various activities and, most of all, a lot of visitors.

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'The two buildings mark out an urban space which has a surprising effect.'

The 'museum rush' became widespread starting from the 1980s. A prosperous town like Frankfurt-am-Main had to construct, in addition to its venerable Städel Museum, a constellation of new museums by Richard Meier, Oswald Mathias Ungers and Hans Hollein. At the beginning of the 1980s, Meier, Ungers and Hollein already enjoyed the status of 'internationally famous architects'.

During this period, France gave its Louvre the now world-famous pyramid constructed by I. M. Pei, designing an enormous car park in its basement at the same time. The National Gallery in London added a new wing by Robert Venturi, while the Metropolitan Museum in New York was enlarged in a manner lacking in grace: the new wing housing the Temple of Dendur seems to have been designed more for social functions – such as banquets and receptions – than for displaying art. Still in the 1980s, James Stirling built the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart, Arata Isozaki was invited to construct the MOCA in Los Angeles, and I. M. Pei finished the extension of the National Gallery in Washington, D.C.

During the 1990s, the race for museums bearing a 'stamp' gathered even greater speed. Much more often than before, the contents lost their pride of place in the general definition of the museum institution, and the 'place' became the main attraction. Three Spanish museums fully illustrate this new order: the Centro de Arte of Galicia, executed by Alvaro Siza in Santiago de Compostela, the Museu d'Art Contemporani in Barcelona, designed by Richard Meier, and the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, the work of Frank Gehry.

The 'stars' continue to be provided with plenty of work. Some of their museums opened recently, while others are still under construction. To cite a few of the most significant examples: Richard Meier and his enormous Getty Center in Los Angeles; Rafael Moneo and his Modern

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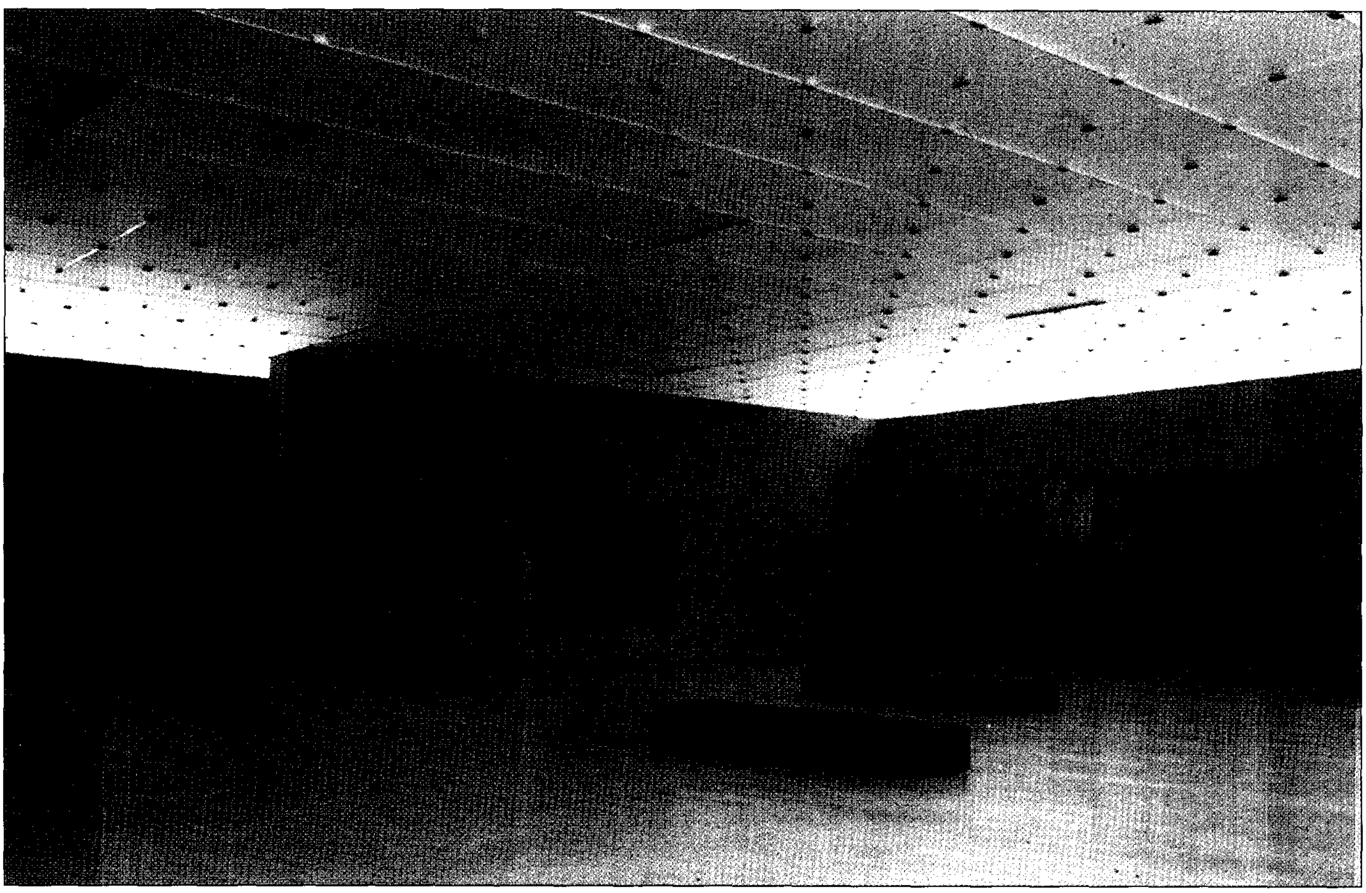
Art Museum in Stockholm and the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston; Santiago Calatrava, who is working to finish his strange Milwaukee Art Museum; Tadao Ando, who is designing a museum for Fort Worth, Texas; Daniel Liebeskind who has finished the Jewish Museum in Berlin; Steven Holl who has created the remarkable Contemporary Art Museum in Helsinki; and Mario Botta who is working on the Modern Art Museum in San Francisco. The expansion and modernization of major museums are also being carried out at an accelerated pace. After the extension of the Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Pompidou Centre has reopened after two years of renovation, Rafael Moneo is carrying out major extension work on the Prado in Madrid, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York will be redesigned and enlarged by Yoshio Taniguchi.

In regard to art museums, especially contemporary art, the risk is that many of these new buildings can complicate the viewing of their contents by their own overbearing architecture. In certain cases – for example, the Guggenheim in Bilbao and the Modern Art Museum in Frankfurt-am-Main – the internal architecture is adapted to the specific needs of a number of exhibited works. Nevertheless, a certain degree of ambiguity, which is sometimes recognized, persists. It is largely the logical result of the symbiosis between a ▶

'The Kunsthaus is the choice meeting place between contemporary architecture and contemporary art.' Here, a gallery on the third floor.



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The Kunsthaus of Bregenz, situated on the esplanade of Lake Constance.

'plastic' art, which – led by the evolution of its own concepts and that of technology – is constantly extending its own limits, and an architecture that is undergoing similar artistic changes, and constantly renewing its vocabulary.

The Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao now offers the clearest example of the difficulty of such a relationship. When Richard Serra, the sculptor, was invited to exhibit enormous objects made of steel, he said recently that the room that had been reserved for him – Room 104 which is used for temporary exhibitions – 'had always "swallowed up" all the works which had been exhibited in it . . . now you enter into the space of the works and not that of the architect'.[2] But attention must be drawn to the price that has been paid: huge works which maintain a dialogue with Gehry's very particular architectural morphology, constructed with the assistance of one of Gehry's engineers and the backing of a technology that is comparable – in other words, extremely sophisticated – to the one used to construct this prodigious building. How many artists can repeat the same feat?

Today's architects often see the museum as providing the ideal opportunity for experimenting with new design forms, an approach that does not necessarily lead to the creation of spaces that improve the public's contact with the exhibited works. However, the experience gained over the past few years can be used to define the characteristics of a new art museum capable of showing a high level of compatibility between its works – which are extremely varied – and its architecture. Able to adapt to the various requirements of its contents without dominating them, such architecture must reflect the noble character of these works.

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A 'stamp,' not a 'style'

This new ideal was brilliantly illustrated by the Kunsthaus in Bregenz, Austria, on the border with Switzerland. The story of this fascinating building, which was finished in 1997, is very special. If the municipal officials are today well satisfied with the overall result of the entire operation, it is only because the architect had to ignore most of the numerous pressures being applied on him during the project's design and construction. This building is 'signed' by the Swiss architect Peter Zumthor, who enjoys a surprising degree of fame despite a very scanty output. The great strength of his buildings lies in their coherence and their total adaptation to their given functions. In 1999, he was awarded the prestigious Mies van der Rohe Prize for the Kunsthaus in Bregenz. Winner of a competition, this project embodies a radical position with respect to its siting on the esplanade of Lake Constance, its function and its internal construction. The main volume of the building stands out with elegance and sobriety: an opaque glass prism, designed to represent a sanctuary of art, without making the least concession to the 'picturesque'. It continues the frontage line in this central area of the urban nucleus, but without entering into a more sustained dialogue with the neighbouring structures. The building creates its own environment and provides neither spectacular views of the lake nor a cafeteria on its terrace; visitors remain focused on the purpose of their visit, in close communion with art. The intransigence of this architectural approach is also witnessed in the functional separations: a large translucent section is designed to house only the works of art while the subsidiary functions – administration, archives, shop and cafeteria – are grouped together in an independent building situated behind the esplanade and painted in black with a few white touches here and there. The two buildings mark out an urban space which has a surprising effect on the town centre. The strange presence of the black building heightens the mysterious character of the big 'ice cube', whose continuity of surface is broken only by a modest entrance door and a barely distinguishable service access.

The main volume of the building is original in many respects. Light is treated with particular deference. Diffused, soft and omnipresent, it is homogeneous in a most uncommon way. All the interior spaces are 'enveloped' by very large technical chambers in order to be able to control – without disturbing the visual aspect of the rooms in any way – not only the diffusion of light but also the heating system, the various changes required by museum activity, air circulation and acoustics. All these 'workings' are hidden away between the external façade and the corners of the rooms, as well as behind ceilings and underneath floors. A system of mirrors is used to 'transport' daylight ➧

The entry hall and exhibition space showing works by Danish artist Per Kirkeby.

© Mihail Moldoveanu

over the entire surface of the translucent ceilings in such a way that all the floors benefit from a mysterious zenithal light. A sophisticated lighting system compensates the variations of natural light. The Kunsthaus – 'art house' to give it a literal translation – comprises four storeys that enjoy daylight and two basement floors. The skin is surprising at close view, being an endless succession of 'scales' made of translucent glass. Their disposition creates the optical effect of a vibrating surface, but in fact they are the same smooth panels that make up the inside ceilings. This material, which dissolves in daylight, glows in the evening when the building functions like an urban lamp.

The spartan elegance of the interior favours concentration, as does the very discreet contact with the outside world and the restricted number of 'visual accidents' that could catch the eye. The spiritual nature of the exhibited works is emphasized. Such rooms can enhance primitive art works as well as Renaissance paintings or constructivist sculptures. The building as a whole can enter into a dialogue with contemporary experimental art, a very rare quality.

The Kunsthaus is the choice meeting place between contemporary architecture and contemporary art. It possesses the capacity to heighten the effect of the works, which resonate with the space. In certain specific cases, architecture and art use a common vocabulary, each intensifying the other. They are then united in an experience that the visitor will find unforgettable. ■

Notes

1. *International Herald Tribune*, 23 October 1999, p. 10.

2. *Connaissance des Arts*, No. 564, September 1999, p. 113.

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Forum

Kenneth Hudson, Forum's guiding spirit, died on 28 December 1999, 83 years young. An 'irrepressible, endlessly curious, obstinate talent',[1] he delighted in stirring, shaking, confounding, scandalizing and amusing his countless admirers and his few detractors. An eclectic personality, outstanding in many fields, he will assuredly be remembered most for his relentless probing into all the dusty corners of the museum world, his refusal to accept the 'tried and true' and his boundless capacity to ferret out information and transform it into knowledge.

From his massive The Directory of Museums *(1975), written in collaboration with Ann Nicholls, to* New Museums in Europe 1977–93 *(1993), he scoured the museum world and told us all about it:* A Social History of Museums *(1975),* Museums for the 1980s: a Survey of World Trends *(1977),* Museums of Influence *(1987)* Museums: Treasures or Tools *(1992), are but a few of his many publications.*

In 1977, he launched the European Museum of the Year Award with a small grant from the European Cultural Foundation. Again aided by Ann Nicholls, he turned a fledgling, shoestring operation into a prestigious international event, raising the money to keep it going, deftly managing a cosmopolitan team of judges and devising ways of evaluating museums of varying types and nationalities. He looked for fresh approaches and hidden talent and was quick to spot them both.

Kenneth's eye was always fixed squarely on the future; in a letter to Museum International, *dated September 1999, he wrote:*

At the moment, I'm devoting a sizeable part of my ancient thoughts and energies to writing a long introduction to the EMYA brochure for 2000. The theme is the major changes that we can expect to see in the museum world during the next 20 years. . . . Four points seem to produce a fair degree of common agreement [among members of the European Museum Forum]:

1. *That museums in their traditional form are going to have an increasingly difficult time financially and a number of them will go bankrupt and close.*

2. *That the people who work in museums, especially as directors, will be drawn from a much wider field. The directors are likely to be required above all to have had successful previous administrative experience, not necessarily in museums. They will be essentially businessmen and businesswomen.*

3. *That the struggle to maintain a creative and sensible balance between the object-based and the computer-based museum will intensify.*

4. *In financing and running museums, private/public partnerships are inevitable. The paradise when the state or municipality provided all or even most of the money to run a museum is vanishing fast. There will be no more public money.*

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All of this means that the concept of 'the museum profession' will have to be re-defined.

We are pleased to publish the following Forum piece, one of the last that he wrote for Museum International. *It is quintessential Kenneth Hudson: sharp, provocative and underpinned by his abiding conviction that museums are, above all, not about objects but about people.*

Museums and the human comedy

Every aspect of our lives is a coin with two sides. On one side is something serious and on the other something ridiculous. This amounts to saying that 50 per cent of what we do, possibly more, is absurd and possesses humorous potential. Sex contains a great deal of absurdity, and so do fashion, military customs and organization, sport, restaurants and politics, to select only a few examples. But it is absurdity that gives flavour and variety to life and that gives the human comedy its richness and its appeal. The ability to be aware simultaneously of both the serious and the absurd is precisely what makes great artists and great writers great.

By presenting everything in a serious manner, museums make themselves absurd. They falsify life. As responsible institutions, their task is to present their objects in a complete context, which means inevitably their human and social context. Taboos are created by people who are frightened of acknowledging the absurd. To call museology a science is the ultimate absurdity. To deny it is primarily an art is the most dangerous of taboos.

Museology is an incestuous practice. Just how incestuous and self-deceiving it is, I have been brought to realize in recent years by a series of fortunate accidents. I have space to mention only two of them. During the early 1990s I used to go to London every Monday to teach an interesting group of American high-school students, drawn from all over the United States, who had come to England for three months in order to 'be exposed to an exotic culture'. When one group departed for home, another one arrived. I enjoyed these 20-year-olds very much. They had fresh, uncorrupted minds and enormous self-confidence.

I took each group to spend a morning in the National Portrait Gallery. We went first to Room 18, which contained eighteenth-century English portraits, and then we moved on to the early nineteenth century in Room 19. My method was to turn them loose in Room 18 and to tell them that when one of them discovered something particularly interesting, he or she was to call me over and we would discuss it as a group together. One girl was quick off the mark. 'Professor,' she said, 'why have all the men and women in these portraits got double chins? Did they really have double chins or did the artists just decide to do it?'

I explained that the eighteenth century was a period in British history when a lot of new money was being made. Dynasties were being founded, titles and estates were being acquired and fine new houses built. People at the top of society were doing well. The double chins were a signal to the world that they were generously fed and comfortably off. We were in the middle of a most interesting discussion when a lady visiting the gallery came across to

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us and said rather angrily to me: 'Sir, I wish to protest. All this talk about double chins and prosperity has nothing to do with art. You are prostituting art.'

'Madam,' I replied, 'these things have everything to do with art. They form the social and human context to eighteenth-century art. Double chins are providing these students with a valuable insight into English history and English society. That is one of the functions of art.' But she was not to be satisfied and went away muttering, 'Prostituting art.'

My second example came my way a little more recently in Düsseldorf, a city that probably has more art historians to the hectare than anywhere else in Europe. I was in a newly built gallery that used a lot of top-lighting. One result of this was that people standing or walking in the gallery appeared to have only two dimensions, instead of three, an optical phenomenon which neither the architect nor the museum's director was able to account for. The gallery was quite well patronized at the time of my visit and I drew the attention of several people to the fact that, seen from a distance, they all looked like cardboard cut-outs from a children's theatre. All but one of them found the situation remarkable and said that it made their visit to this prestigious art museum more interesting. The exception was a lady dressed from head to foot in black leather, who became as angry with me as the visitor to the National Portrait Gallery had been. She used almost the same language. My observation, she said, had nothing to do with art, and she resented having the matter pointed out to her. It interfered with her devotion to the pictures.

From these and many other incidents that have enlivened my life I have concluded that both those who present museum collections and many of those who visit them are an over-serious lot, a special breed of humanity. I do not feel that the public as a whole benefits from such a refusal to take pleasure in the human comedy. I believe that it is socially irresponsible and absurdly puritanical and that it unnecessarily restricts the number of people who could take pleasure in museum visiting. I plead for museums that are equally interested in both sides of the coin called humanity, the serious and the absurd. And for the appointment of more curators with a sense of humour.

Note

1. John Letts, *The Independent*, 24 January 2000

Readers reply to Forum

In Museum International, *No. 201, Kenneth Hudson asked 'Is the creation of museum education departments misguided?' Felipe Arias Vilas, director of the Museo do Castro de Viladonga, Spain, replies.*

A Department (Section or Service) of Education, Dissemination and Cultural Action exists in our museum, and its activities consist of the cultural dissemination of the contents of the museum and the archaeological deposit on which it is based, with particular attention being given to the school-going public (organized groups). The person in charge of this department holds a university degree in Art History (specializing in Museum Studies), with experience in teaching work with groups, under the constant supervision

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of the museum director. The Education, Dissemination and Cultural Action Service has existed since 1986 (the year when the museum was opened to the public), but a staff member has only been exclusively assigned to it since 1997. In our case, the success and output of the Department of Education are usually measured by: (a) the recurrence of school visits (from the same establishment or with the same teacher) or of visits by other types of public; (b) the activities carried out by the schoolchildren in the museum and on the deposit site; (c) our presence in the various communication and cultural media (including the Internet). The museum's technical personnel all hold university degrees, have been trained and are, at present, solely concerned with the museum and cultural heritage duties. Education is indeed one of the main purposes of the museum. It is not the only one, however, and all the museum's objectives are important and complement each other. In any case, the educational purpose should be understood as encompassing schoolchildren as well as all social groups and levels, thus enhancing the possibilities for lifelong education.

museum international

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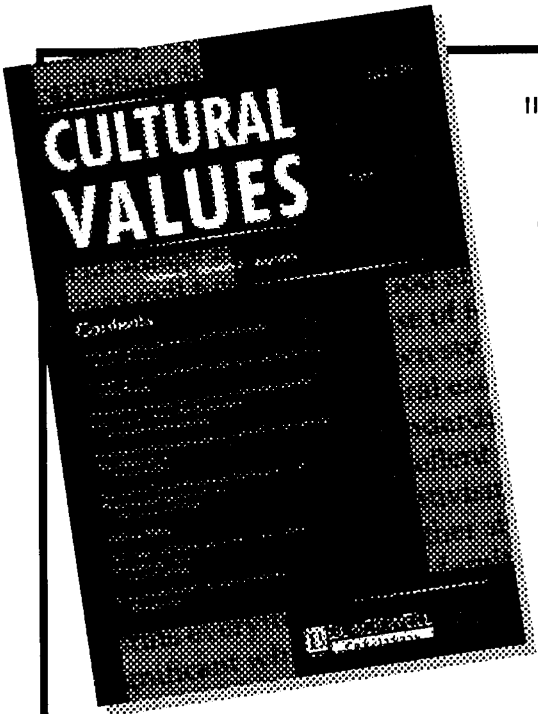

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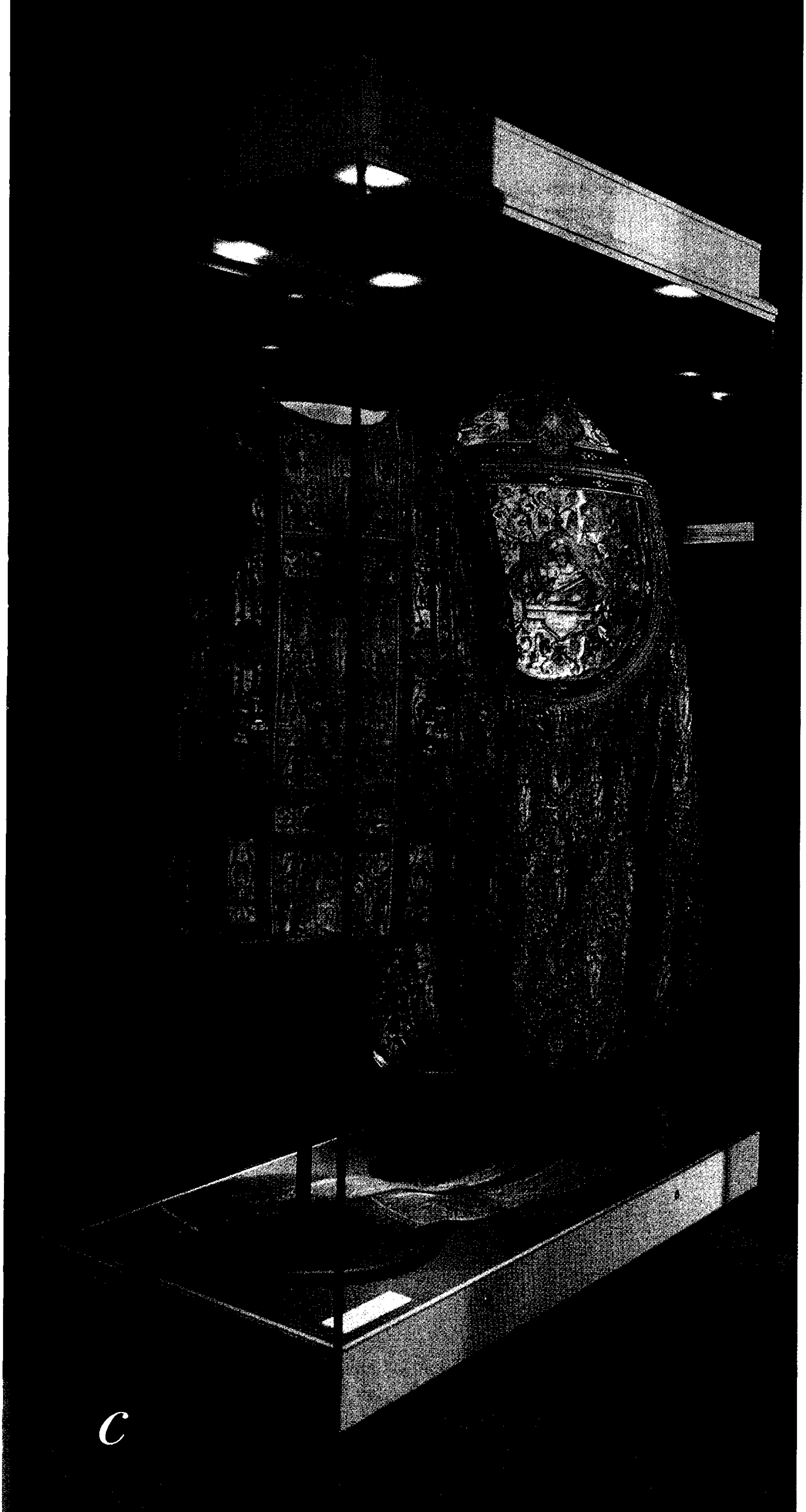

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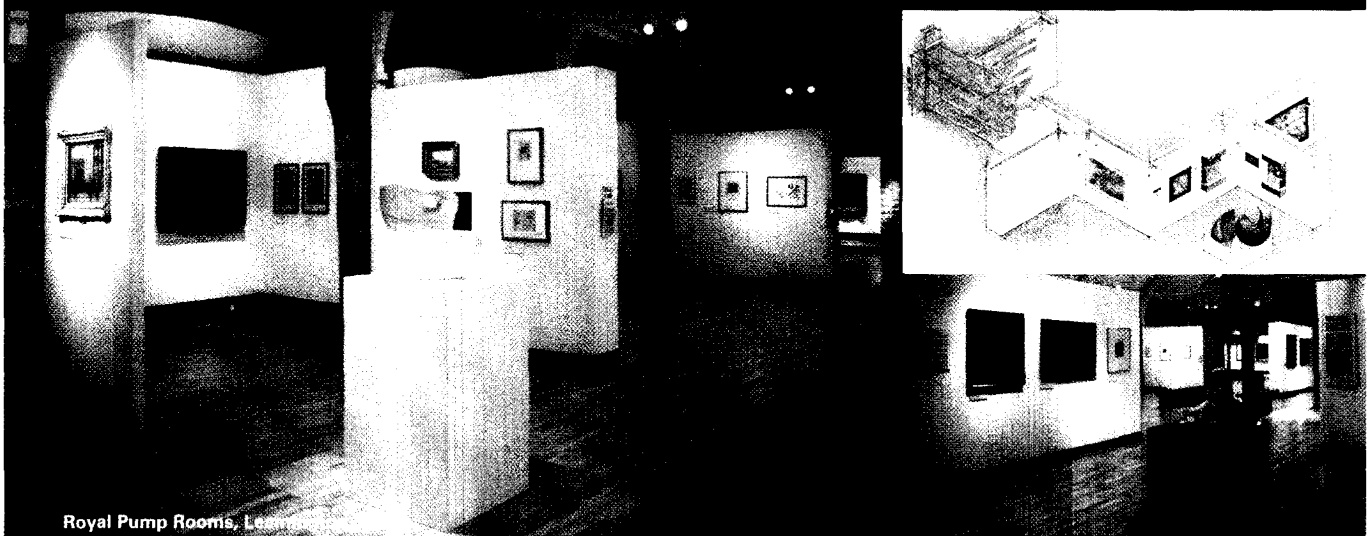

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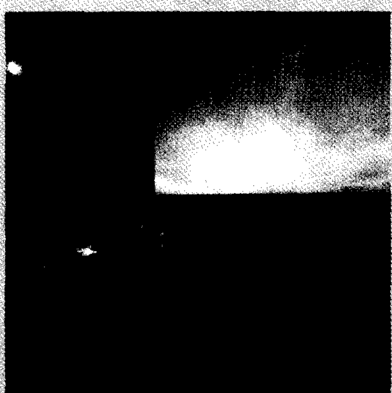

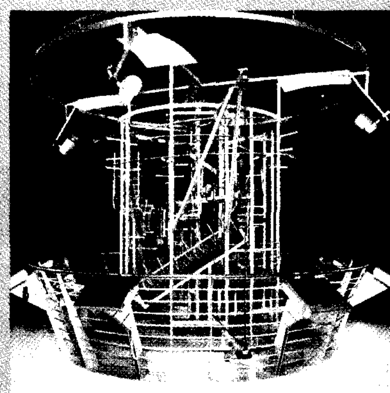

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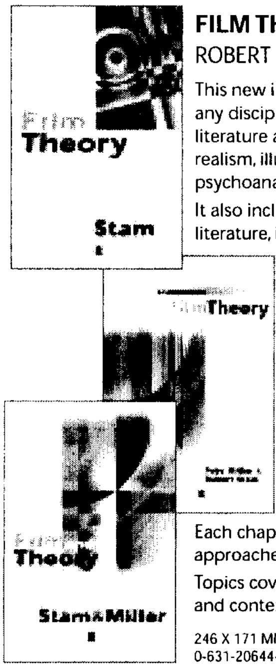

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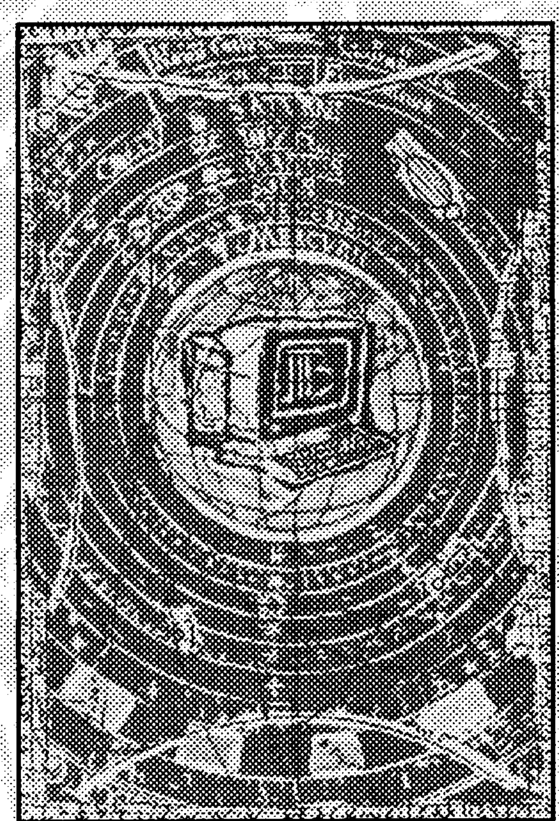

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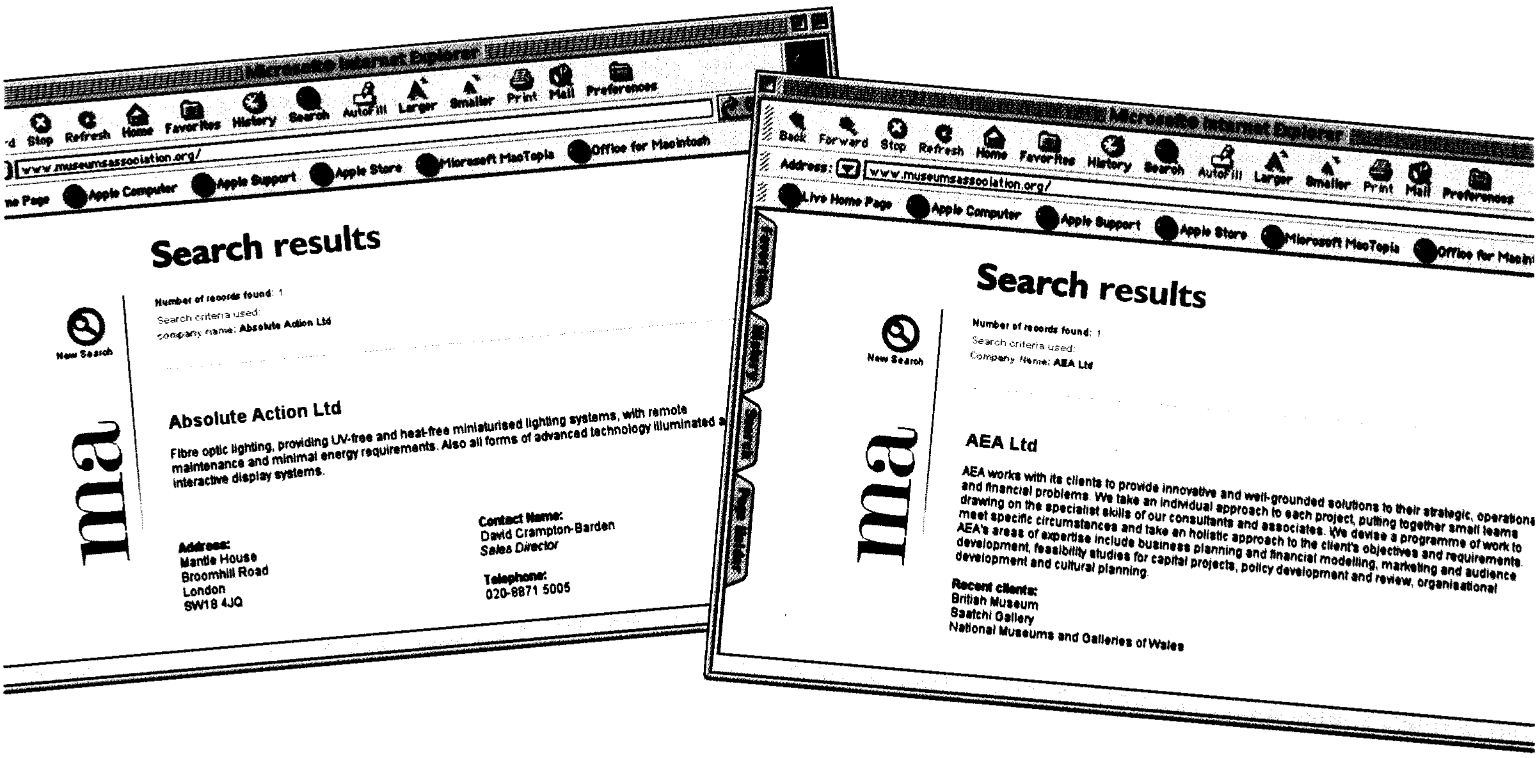

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