

Museum International

Museums of social history

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STOLEN

Oil painting on wood panel dating from 1876 by Maurice Leloir (1853–1940), entitled La Maison Fournaise. The words 'La Fournaise' can be seen on the front of the house. Dimensions: 25 × 30.5 cm.

Stolen from a museum in Chateau (Yvelines), France, on 13 February 1999. (Reference T 7479/FMD.)

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

Using the past to shape the future: new concepts for a historic site

Ruth J. Abram

Ruth J. Abram is the founder and president of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum in New York City. An activist turned historian, Ms Abram holds graduate degrees in social welfare and American history, and has done pioneering work in the use of history for social issues. Her landmark work at the Tenement Museum has been widely covered in the media in the United States, including the New York Times, World News Tonight with Peter Jennings and the Public Broadcasting System series on the history of New York. Her work indeed sheds light on history from the point of view of those who are often left out of the history books.

In a recent *New York Times* interview, Kewulay Kamara, from Sierra Leone, identified himself as a storyteller/history keeper and asked rhetorically, 'What is the use of telling a story if it doesn't help people transcend?' Like Mr Kamara, I view the roles of storyteller and historian as inextricably entwined. And I believe that history has the power to help people transcend. It has done that for me.

In the 1970s, I was organizing a National Women's Agenda. Things had been going very well. Group leaders from extremely diverse national women's organizations had actively participated in the formation of the Agenda's platform. But suddenly it was stuck. Casting about for a solution, I telephoned Gerda Lerner, then Chair of the Women's Studies Department at Sarah Lawrence College and founder of the modern women's history movement. Introducing myself, I explained my dilemma and asked if I could have a historical consultation. There was a long pause, and finally Dr Lerner said, 'No one has ever asked me, a historian, to help develop strategy for the present.' A few days later, Professor Lerner treated me to a personal lecture on the history of women's organizing efforts. Every successful national effort organized by women had been organized from the grass roots up. And from that encounter, I was able to see what I had been doing wrong. I had been organizing from the top down. I restructured the campaign, and finally, in 1975, on the steps of the United States Capitol building, women from over 100 national women's organizations announced the formation of a National Women Agenda. History had supplied a strategy.

Since then, history has also afforded me comfort, inspiration and 'role models'. It has offered me perspective. I have come to view history as a powerful tool for the

living. One question has always preoccupied me: How can we form one nation, yet still appreciate, enjoy and be unafraid of our differences? It seemed to me that history could supply the means to address this central challenge of American life.

In search of an answer, I decided to begin with what we have in common. Most Americans are descendants of people who came – willingly or not – from somewhere else. Many citizens trace the beginning of their families' American experience to an urban rather than rural environment. Most descend from working-class immigrants. All of us share the experience of dislocation, relocation and reinvention in our family histories. I thought it might be interesting to introduce Americans with 'long roots' to their family members before they had become 'acceptable', when they first arrived in the United States and did not know the language or the customs of their adopted land. I hoped that through confrontation with ancestors who are held to be dear, Americans might be moved to a kind of national conversation about contemporary immigrants. I further hoped that Americans might realize that today's 'strangers' hold something in common with the forebears we now admire. For those newly arrived, I hoped to offer comfort in the form of knowledge that, as immigrants, they are a vital part of the American tradition.

This idea became the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, located in a nineteenth-century tenement building at 97 Orchard Street and the first residence of urban working-class and poor immigrant people to be preserved and interpreted as a museum in the United States. Built in 1863, the five-storey brick structure occupies a lot measuring 25 × 87 ft (202 m²) and has four 320-sq.-ft (30 m²) apartments per floor. Originally constructed (as were most urban

buildings at that time) without indoor plumbing, ventilation systems or lighting, it nevertheless suited the owner and his family who moved right in. Before being condemned as a residence in 1935, the building had been home to an estimated 7,000 immigrants from over twenty countries; the museum has identified over 1,400 by name. In 1998, the Tenement Museum was declared an 'Affiliated Area' of the National Park Service and the building was designated a property of the National Historic Trust for Historic Preservation.

Today, four small, carefully restored and crowded apartments provide the surroundings for the guided tour of families who lived at 97 Orchard Street between 1863 and 1935. Stories have been selected to demonstrate the chronological span of the tenement and the national and religious diversity of tenants, to raise contemporary socio-political issues and to touch visitors in a more personal way, through their feelings and emotions. The story of German-born Natalie Gumpertz, who lived here in the 1870s, presents the first household headed by a woman to be exhibited in a National Historic Site. Visitors learn that Natalie Gumpertz's shoemaker husband disappeared, and that she established a dressmaking business to earn money to support herself and her children. Encountering the Sicilian Baldizzi family from the 1930s, visitors confront a family who were on welfare and illegal immigrants as well. The Baldizzi apartment has been set up as it was on the day they were evicted, decorated with the morning glories in a welfare-supplied cheese box, a small reminder of the family's intent to claim their right to the 'pursuit of happiness'. Entering the Rogarshevsky home in 1918, visitors confront death and the ever-present tendency to put the blame for an entire epidemic on its victims.



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Free English lessons from the past

The Tenement Museum has responded to recent calls from several American foundations for the revitalization of our democratic processes, principals and institutions by inaugurating a number of initiatives and projects. We have decided to put history to work.

Learning that area immigrants wait up to three years for places in free English classes, the museum initiated its own course, called the 'Usable Past Initiative'.

Exterior of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, New York City. Built in 1863 by a German-born tailor, 97 Orchard Street is the first tenement house to have been preserved and interpreted as a museum in the United States. From 1863 until 1935, when it was condemned, it was home to an estimated 7,000 people from over twenty countries.



The Baldizzi apartment restored to its 1935 condition. Sicilian-born Adolpho and Rosaria Baldizzi thought that their skills would bring them success in New York City.

Our curriculum uses the diaries, letters and memoirs of earlier immigrants. 'I not only learned English,' said a recent graduate, 'I learned I was not alone.'

Students also learned that charity workers who provided employment or housing advice often met nineteenth-century immigrants at Ellis Island. 'No one was there for us at Kennedy Airport!' exclaimed a participant. This began the idea for the *Immigrant Resource Guide*. To be published in several languages, the guide will contain stories of other immigrants from the past and the present, and answers to the most frequently asked questions. Thousands of copies, with lists of immigrant-assisting organizations and useful information, will be distributed free to immigrants throughout New York City.

Using history

A series of projects and initiatives are making it possible for us to use history in many more creative ways to explore what

have sometimes been considered difficult issues from a social or political point of view. A few examples are given to illustrate our work.

To test whether the experiences of immigration and migration were sufficiently powerful to serve as the basis for establishing 'common ground', the museum launched 'Kitchen Conversations'. Area residents from over twenty different countries and a wide range of ages, races, and educational backgrounds listen as each individual tells his or her story. Having originally assumed that they would have little in common, participants marvel at discovering so many similarities with one another and with the stories from immigrants who came before them.

The success of 'Kitchen Conversations' led staff to wonder whether a diverse community could be united through the process of preserving and interpreting a historic site. At about the same time, we were contacted by the largely African-American congregation of the 175-year-



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old St Augustine's Episcopal Church, which contains the only slave gallery (holding pen) known to exist in a New York City church. They asked the museum for help in preserving and interpreting the slave gallery. In February 2000, with over fifty community groups participating, the Slave Gallery Project was launched. The Episcopal Bishop sent an emissary with a formal apology for the Church's involvement in slavery. This action was seen as an important step in the healing process for the community.

Over two years of research on the garment industry went into the Sweatshop Project. Factory inspectors cited the Harris Levine sweatshop in the 1890s for employing its workers, including children, for more than sixty hours a week. Visitors to the re-created site consider the present labour situation with the help of historical

documents, and can ask, What has changed? What has not changed? Assisted by UNITE!, the garment workers' union, audiences will include not just the usual veteran museum visitors, but also factory workers, managers, buyers and union organizers.

The My Home Is Your Home project is also a direct result of the museum's work with immigrants. By highlighting New York City's newest immigrant communities, we seek to combat the anti-immigrant feelings frequently reported in the media. This year, we will identify and train immigrant residents of Chinatown to conduct tours of what are, after all, their own neighbourhoods, following a film on the history of immigration to the area.

Teaming up with public and private schools and with Lyndhurst, a National

The Harris Levine sweatshop re-created.

Trust site, the museum is developing a curriculum with a simple message: 'A person's worth cannot be measured by calculating his/her material wealth.' Nine-year-olds were invited to write down words they associated with the word 'poor' both before and after a visit to the Tenement Museum. The number of negative associations for the word 'poor' (including 'mean', 'dangerous', 'dishonest') plummeted from ninety (before the visit) to twenty (after the visit).

The Origins Theatre Project, in collaboration with City Lights Youth Theater, offers inner-city youth an opportunity to walk in the shoes of people from other cultures. Each summer, students discover the story of one of the immigrant families who lived at 97 Orchard Street. Professional writers and directors from City Lights Youth Theater help them write, produce and act in a musical about that family.

A distressingly large number of children visiting the museum live in very similar conditions. In the Housing Inspectors project, students are given the same check-lists supplied to housing inspectors in 1901 and 1910 to rate the conditions in their own homes. Written reports will be sent to the appropriate agencies.

Responding to the American Association of Museums' challenge to diversify the museum profession, the Tenement Museum joined the City College of the City University of New York to establish the nation's first Urban Museum Studies Program. Offering a graduate degree to students largely drawn from minority, immigrant and working-class families, the programme will train a new cadre of museum professionals reflecting the nation's diversity.

The Tenement Museum is committed to having all full-time staff members, regard-

less of education, prior training or position, take part in the teaching process. Interpreting the historic experience of working class and poor people, the museum has made itself available to their contemporary counterparts. Still largely poor and immigrant, the Lower East Side neighbourhood is a focus of the museum's work. A Good Neighbour project provides free programmes to associates of organizations who are restrained by finances or custom from visiting the museum. This year, the entire staff will focus on neighbouring Chinatown, visiting its institutions, leaders and historic sites. The museum has also actively assisted small merchants in the area in attracting business.

Establishing an international network

In December 1999, the Tenement Museum organized a conference attended by the directors of the Workhouse (United Kingdom), the Gulag Museum (Russian Federation), the Slave House (Senegal), District Six Museum (South Africa), the Project to Remember (Argentina), the Liberation War Museum (Bangladesh), Terezín (Czech Republic) and National Park Service sites including the Women's Rights Historic District, Manzanar and the Underground Railroad. The group formulated the International Coalition of Historic Site Museums of Conscience and issued this statement:

We hold in common the belief that it is the obligation of historic sites to assist the public in drawing connections between the history of our sites and its contemporary implications. We view stimulating dialogue on pressing social issues and promoting humanitarian and democratic values as a primary function.

Historic sites as places of engagement

A new role for historic sites is emerging. We are working towards the day when historic sites will offer not only a deep sense of the aspects of history, but also a connection between the past and the implications for the present. We see historic sites as places of engagement, where visitors motivated in finding sol-

utions to chronic social, economic and political questions will find guidance. We hope to make explicit what has been merely implicit: our sites are important, not because of the stories they tell, but rather because they hold lessons so powerful that they could improve our lives if we would just listen. Such is the power of history. We invite the museum community to respond to Mr Kamara's challenge, and help people transcend. ■

Museums of 'human suffering' and the struggle for human rights

Terence M. Duffy

Following the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Terence M. Duffy describes museum exhibits of 'human suffering' and the struggle for human rights, particularly recent museums and proposals for museums in places where genocide has occurred, or where human beings were held in bondage. Human rights issues constitute important subjects for museums, from concentration camps to museums of slavery. Professor Duffy teaches Peace Studies at the University of Ulster and directs the Irish Peace Museum Project.

Museums of 'human suffering' and human rights cover a broad field, and 'suffering' is, moreover, a relative concept, ranging from the poverty of arriving immigrants at Ellis Island or the cramped apartments of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum (both in New York City), to the mass violence of genocide museums like the one at Tuol Sleng in Cambodia. This article concentrates on museums and projects whose exhibitions make a resounding appeal for the protection of human rights. Many of these exhibitions are implicitly controversial, since human rights cannot easily be separated from the political domain. National tragedies loom large in the permanent collections of museums throughout the world – from war museums to national galleries, from natural disasters to diaspora. And remembrance is certainly an emotive issue, fraught with socio-political implications, as was seen in Northern Ireland during the discussion process to create a Memorial Museum to the victims of conflict.¹ We look at different types of museums that commemorate human suffering and tragedies, and discuss the emergence of distinct 'human rights museums' as related to the concept of creating a human rights culture – the very antithesis of 'human suffering'.

Museums of remembrance

The Palestinian Life and Remembrance Museum will be located in Jerusalem, and already possesses an embryonic exhibition in the Palestinian Authority. The project has received funding from Palestinian donors, the European Union and the World Bank for a programme devoted to Palestinian history in the context of what Palestinians see as their *Nakba*, or 'national catastrophe of exile'. The museum defines its primary role as exhibiting the Palestinian struggle for political and human

rights, and completion is important for the Palestinian sense of national identity.

The 'Deir Yassin Remembered' Information Centre shows the events of 9 April 1948, when commandos of the Israeli Irgun attacked Deir Yassin, a Palestinian village. Over 100 Palestinians were killed and the village was destroyed. The project has a virtual programme on the Internet and envisages a museum on the site. There are at present no plaques or exhibits at Deir Yassin itself. Yet its task is to perform the same role for the Palestinian people as Yad Vashem does for Jewish citizens: to act as a memorial for suffering. For Palestinians, it is a chilling fact that the Deir Yassin massacre took place within sight of Yad Vashem. The subject-matter is impassioned and reveals the continued stark political divisions in Arab–Israeli relations.

The Museum of the Nanjing Massacre in Tokyo presents Nanjing as a symbol of Japanese atrocities committed during the war against China. The founder, Guo Peiyu, a Chinese artist, exhibits some 3,000 'faces' in clay, to 'express the souls of the 3,000 victims of the Nanjing massacre'. The museum is a powerful statement against war and violence, and an articulate protest against Japan's imperialist adventuring as well as a statement to those who deny that Nanjing ever happened. It is a unique museum offering a presentation of Chinese suffering in a gallery located in the Japanese capital.

Holocaust and genocide museums

Holocaust museums exist throughout the world. These include the above-mentioned Yad Vashem in Israel, the national Holocaust Museum in the United States, and interpretative centres at many former concentration camps. New initiatives



© US Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C.

include the Holocaust Education Center in Tokyo; and the Lithuanian Museum of Victims of Genocide in Vilnius, complemented by the exhibitions of the Lithuanian State Jewish Museum and the Jewish Memorial. An innovative new programme is the New York Holocaust and Genocide Project (HOP). In 1998, a Jewish museum dedicated to the Holocaust opened in Berlin, and it hopes to acquire Steven Spielberg's Shoah Archive of interviews of Holocaust survivors. Other museums on genocide worldwide are as follows:

- On 24 April 1915, hundreds of Armenian leaders were massacred by Turkish police; hundreds of thousands of Armenian civilians were 'escorted' away from their homes and across the borders

in what amounted to death marches. This date is still commemorated by Armenians worldwide as Genocide Memorial Day. After the First World War, the Turkish government held 'genocide trials' during its investigation into the fate of the Armenian minority, but the episode still remains one of considerable sensitivity in Turkish and Armenian history. The Vatan Armenian Research Center at the University of Michigan exhibits these events. In recent years international attention has focused on the Armenian tragedy and the importance of its remembrance. This genocide was carried out by the Central Committee of the Young Turk Party and directed by a special organization, the Teshkilati Mahsusa. In recent years,

A railway box car of the type used to deport prisoners, among them Jewish citizens, to Nazi concentration camps. This is one of the permanent exhibitions at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. (United States).



The Memorial Stupa at Choeung Ek, which marks the location of one of Cambodia's genocide sites, approximately 15 km from Phnom Penh. Here, the victims of the Khmer Rouge interrogation centres, such as the Tuol Sleng (now a genocide museum) were murdered and then buried in mass graves.

international attention has been drawn to this tragic event, and, on 18 June 1987, the European Parliament voted to recognize the Armenian Genocide. American President Bill Clinton, among other national leaders, has commemorated the 'tragedy'. There are plans for the creation of a Genocide Museum in Yerevan.

- A proposal has been made to establish a Museum of the Genocide of Gypsies in Bucharest, Romania. Some 250,000 gypsies perished in Second World War concentration camps (Dachau, Belsen and Buchenwald; 16,000 were held at Auschwitz). There is comparatively limited coverage of their extermination in the Holocaust, because the diasporic nature of gypsy communities has miti-

gated against any comprehensive collection of their wartime heritage. There are a number of Holocaust memorials to gypsies, especially in the Netherlands, but the Romanian project appears to be the first tangible step towards the creation of a distinct museum exhibiting the genocide of European gypsies.

- The Nigerian peace activist Prince Samuel Adebowale has written of the importance of creating an Ogoni genocide museum to record the events that took place in Ogoniland between 1993 and 1995, which he describes as a 'systematic annihilation' of the Ogonis. During these years MOSOP (the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People) confronted Nigeria's military dictatorship through non-violent struggle. The present Nigerian political situation would now seem to be more favourable for the establishment of the genocide museum envisaged by the prince.
- During the Spring of 1994 at Ntarama, south of Kigali, Rwanda, followers of the Hutu-led Rwandan government massacred approximately 5,000 ethnic Tutsis inside the Ntarama Catholic Church. Today a sign on the road announces the site. Ntarama, like hundreds of churches, stadiums and gathering places around the country, is a place of genocide, where civilians were slaughtered in a genocidal campaign organized by Hutu hardliners. This place constitutes a frightening indictment of human suffering and the violation of human rights.
- The Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh, documents the history of the S-21 interrogation compound set up by the Khmer Rouge in April 1975. In 1979, Tuol Sleng became a museum documenting those tragic years and contrib-

uted to the process in which Cambodian people have confronted their history. At the Choeung Ek 'killing field' where the victims of Tuol Sleng were murdered and buried, a memorial stupa was erected in 1988 in the form of a traditional Cambodian pagoda. Tuol Sleng and Choeung Ek have been exploited by successive Cambodian governments in their manipulations against the Khmer Rouge. Somehow Cambodians must extricate themselves from the 'ghosts of history' so that these sites may one day contribute to a culture of peace and human rights.²

- The Concentration Camp Museum at Jasenovac, Croatia, stands as witness to one of the most tragic of the many Second World War concentration camp museums. Immediately after occupying Yugoslavia, the Nazis organized a system of concentration camps under the command of the Ustasha Supervision Service, of which Jasenovac was the largest. In Croatia during this period, Orthodox Serbs, Jews and gypsies, and pro-Yugoslav Croats were systematically massacred. It would seem that in an effort to 'erase' the events of these years the Jasenovac Memorial Museum was targeted by Croatian artillery during the recent conflict in the Balkan region. In September 1991 Croatian paramilitary formations occupied the memorial grounds for one month before the area was taken by Serbian forces. Before leaving, Croat forces blew up the bridge on the Sava River which unites the two parts of the memorial grounds. Archives concerning the history of the genocide, the museum and the exhibition premises were demolished. Most of the 8,000 exhibits were destroyed or removed as Croatian troops retreated. Jewish war veterans and Jasenovac survivors appealed to the international community,

reporting that 'the execution grounds of Jews, Serbs and Romany ... with the documentation about the genocide, have been devastated'. However, two months later on 22 December 1991, Croatian armed formations, disregarding a cease-fire, once more fired on the Jasenovac Memorial Grounds for several hours. The museum and cemeteries at Donja Gradina were further damaged. In January 1992, the Yugoslav Government submitted a 'Memorandum on the Crimes of Genocide in Croatia in 1991 and 1992, and the Outrages Committed against the Jasenovac Memorial-Grounds' to the United Nations. This document stated that Jasenovac was the only war monument in Europe which has been subjected to ruthless outrages since the Second World War, and that the Croatian Ministry of Education, Culture and Religion had previously abolished the Jasenovac Memorial Grounds, 'to erase the scene of the worst crime of genocide from the historical memory'. Today the entire Jasenovac site, battle-scarred and disused, constitutes a compelling reminder of the power of history and of how important it is for certain dominant regimes to erase and rewrite history. And this sobering fact alone calls for constant vigilance in the face of forgetting and denial of the past.

Museums of slavery and the 'slave trade'

Americans need national sites to record the legacy of slavery. By 1820 some 10 million Africans had been transported across the Atlantic to the Americas. Most slaves lived on small farms and so their experiences are poorly documented. Nevertheless, some progress towards exhibiting the lives of slaves has been made, and there are proposals for creating museums



The heavily damaged façade of the public library in Sarajevo. The destruction of the library is a form of what may be termed 'cultural genocide'.

on the sites of the 'Underground Railroad' that operated from 1830 to 1865 to help slaves escape from the South to the non-slave states.

There is also a 'slave ship' museum in Florida. In 1972 the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society discovered the wreck of the *Henrietta Marie*, which sank in 1701. Despite nearly three centuries of seaborne encrustation, divers identified the ominous shapes of iron shackles. The Mel Fisher Society meticulously prepared the remains from the ship for a touring

exhibition, and the *Henrietta Marie* made her true entry into American (and international) consciousness. Her sparse but history-laden artefacts confront us squarely with the tangible evidence of a past that can be neither changed nor denied.

An African 'slave museum' has opened at Gorée, off the coast of Senegal, near Dakar. This was the largest slave-trading centre on the African coast from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, and was ruled by the Portuguese, Dutch, English and French respectively. The museum site juxtaposes bleak slave quarters with the elegant houses of the slave-traders. Today it continues to serve as a reminder of human exploitation. The Gorée Museum of Slavery is a powerful indictment of the exploitation of the Senegalese and the human legacy of the 'slave trade'.

A comparable European museum is William Wilberforce House in Hull. The United Kingdom's first slavery museum, it opened in 1906. It illustrates the campaigns of the famous anti-slavery campaigner and the history of the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, formed in 1787. As a result of Wilberforce's efforts, slave trading was abolished by the English Parliament in 1807.

Museums of African-American civil rights

In recent years, more museums on African-American Civil Rights have been set up, in Birmingham (Alabama), Memphis (Tennessee), and Atlanta (Georgia); and there are collections in the Museum of African American History in Detroit, the Museum of Afro-American History in Boston, The Museum of Slavery in the Atlantic, Maine, and the Slave Voices Library at Duke University.

New York's Afro-American Black History Museum offers interactive exhibits on the history of slavery; the Tuskegee Airmen, the first Black American combat pilots; the Black Panther Party; and the 'Million Man March' of the Nation of Islam which has vigorously opposed racial inequalities in the United States. These museums share the common theme of defining the struggle of African-Americans for human rights seen through African-American eyes and show the continued concern with 'Sankofa' – the search for roots.

Prison museums and museums of torture

Prison and torture museums present a somewhat difficult subject; the serious study of human rights, and their abuse, is their primary *raison d'être*. Although varied in the quality of their collections, torture museums make an important contribution to our thinking about human rights. Evidence of the history of punishment from ancient times is archived in Rome's Museum of Criminology. Likewise, the Guillotine Museum at Liden, Sweden, holds an exhibition on the inhuman practices in prisons in the past. In France, Carcassonne's Museum of Torture presents a collection of medieval torture instruments.

The Salem Witch Trials of 1692 in New England are documented in the Peabody Essex Museum in the state of Massachusetts. Witch House, home of Judge Jonathan Corwin, who presided over the hearings which condemned twenty innocent people to death, contains other archives. The exhibits reveal much about the hysteria and brutality of colonial America, but are likely to interest a general rather than an academic audience.

Among the prison museums is Robbin Island in South Africa where President Mandela and his ANC comrades were incarcerated. The museum's austere courtyard and tiny cells speak of Nelson Mandela's decades of endurance and the brutality of South Africa's apartheid regime. Another equally bleak exhibition is offered by the notorious Alcatraz Prison in the United States, the remote maximum-security prison whose goal was punishment rather than rehabilitation. It was finally closed on 21 March 1963. Prison museums do, in fact, encourage a sense of empathy with prisoners and raise important questions concerning liberty and standards of custodial treatment.

Exhibiting human rights

All of these categories of museum, through their exhibitions and their presentation of human experience, make a significant contribution to the struggle for human rights. It is encouraging that recent years have seen the emergence of distinct 'museums of human rights' in various parts of the world:

- the World Centre for Peace, Freedom and Human Rights opened in Verdun (France) in 1994.
- Liberty Osaka, with a focus on civil and human rights, has been open in Osaka (Japan) since 1990.
- Sakai City opened a Human Rights Museum in 1994.
- The Kochi Liberty and Peoples's Rights Museum was founded in Japan, in 1994.

Human rights are also a concern of the burgeoning family of peace museums whose collections and exhibitions range

across the spectrum of peace, justice and human rights. In the exhibits of all of these institutions the personal impact of 'human suffering' is paramount. As Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, has recently said in respect of Kosovo, 'Every violence is a personal and family tragedy, regardless of the age, sex or nationality of the victim.'³

The museums discussed in this article envisage a genuine human rights culture and the extension of its protection for everyone. These museums exhibit historical and contemporary situations involving gross violations of these rights. It is encouraging that there is an emerging group of museums of human rights that might be custodians of what one could term a 'human rights culture'. UNESCO's programmes have made an enormous contribution to education for human rights and to their dissemination and protection. It is hoped that human rights

museums might also contribute to this process. It is certainly the privilege of these museums of 'human suffering' to show the worst moments in the experiences of peoples in the hope that such portrayals will contribute to the advancement of human rights worldwide. ■

Notes

1. T. M. Duffy, 'Towards a Peace Memorial in Northern Ireland', *Peace Museums Newsletter*, spring 1998, pp. 2-5.
2. S-21 is discussed in greater detail in T. M. Duffy, 'The Killing Fields Revisited: The Tuol Sleng Museum and the Memorial Stupa of Choeung Ek', *Museum International*, No. 177 (Vol. 46, No. 1, 1993), pp. 411.
3. Mary Robinson, 'Statements Regarding Developments in Kosovo', United Nations Human Rights Website, 11 February 1999.

The Terezín Memorial in the year 2000

Jan Munk

Jan Munk has twice been elected president of the Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic. He has been director of the Terezín Memorial since 1990. He holds a special interest in this memorial, since his parents were transported to the Terezín Ghetto in 1941 and later to Auschwitz-Birkenau and other concentration camps. He was born in Prague in 1946, where he studied sociology and philosophy at Charles University. He has devoted his professional career as a sociological researcher to the problems of students. His article discusses not only the physical aspects of the memorials to Jewish victims of the Holocaust in Czechoslovakia, but also touches on the museological problems encountered when a totalitarian regime rewrites history for the purposes of ideological deformation.

The years that have passed since the 'Velvet Revolution' – less than a decade – have radically changed the situation and prospects of the Terezín Memorial. All the exhibitions have been rebuilt and a certain political bias has been corrected. The Terezín Memorial has become one of the most important institutions in the Czech Republic, and its commemorative role is now accepted by the representatives of the government, who have provided a budget for its activities.

Some of the most significant changes include the opening of the Ghetto Museum in 1991 and the inauguration of the meeting centre in the newly reconstructed building that was, at one time, the seat of the Terezín ghetto's Jewish self-governing body. During this time many national leaders have visited these sites, and have come to remember the suffering of all who were imprisoned here. Vaclav Havel, president of the Czech Republic, Chaim Herzog and Ezer Weizmann, President of Israel, and two German presidents – Richard von Weizsäcker and Roman Herzog – have paid homage to the victims of Nazi persecution at this site. Others include Nobel Peace Prizewinner Elie Wiesel, the former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

About 250,000 people come here every year to visit the site and see the exhibits. Many of them also take part in the educational programmes organized for the young people who visit from around the world. In an effort to analyse the history of this institution within the context of the post-Second-World-War history of the country, we plan to make available our archives and collections to teachers and university students.

The Terezín Memorial was founded after

the Second World War, when the Czechoslovak Republic adopted a resolution in 1947 establishing the Memorial of National Suffering in the Small Fortress complex. In addition to the main museum building (today's Museum of the Small Fortress) for exhibitions and documentation, the project also anticipated using cells of the fourth yard of the Small Fortress, where exhibits presenting the Jewish ghetto and Nazi persecution in general were to be installed. The Museum of Oppression, as it was called, officially opened in June 1949. For years the first permanent exhibition remained exactly as designed by the Military Historical Institute, the museum's governing authority in professional terms. The memorial site on the bank of the Ohre River, where the ashes of some 22,000 victims from the Jewish ghetto were dumped on Nazi orders in 1944, was also attached. In the late 1960s an entrance part of an underground factory and a crematorium with adjacent premises at Litomerice were attached to the memorial.

The first decade and a half of the memorial's existence were marked by two major problems. The first was administrative. The governing authorities included the Interior Ministry, the Regional National Committee and the Local National Committee. As a matter of fact, these authorities had no idea what such a memorial should be doing and what material support its activities should obtain. Management by the Local National Committee caused the most serious problems, as the memorial was actually beyond the reach of local authorities.

The other problem was ideological, since the memorial was included in the regime's propaganda system, resulting in major deformations in the methods of presenting history. As early as 1952, a project to



The main entrance gate of the Small Fortress, Terezín Memorial.

build a permanent exposition commemorating the suffering of Jewish inmates of Terezín during the Second World War had been prepared and approved. But the subject of the Jewish ghetto did not fit into the ideological schemes of the time: it was difficult to show the complex reality of the ghetto as an expression of 'class struggle' or as a part of Communist anti-Nazi resistance. Foreign policy shifts (a rupture with Israel) as well as the altered situation in Czechoslovakia (political trials) eventually made any presentation of Jewish persecution undesirable.

The Terezín Memorial in the 1960s

The natural consequences of the incompetence of the memorial's supervising authorities were the unsatisfactory technical conditions and standards of professional museum work. The problems continued and did not improve until the second half of the 1960s when the memorial came under the control of the North Bohemian Regional National Com-

mittee and started to be managed as a museum-type institution. This change helped bring back professionalism and work of a conceptual nature. A systematic analysis of the Small Fortress's technical conditions, and the memorial's content and function later resulted in a new functional structure and helped launch the actual museum work. Foundations for documentary activity as well as historical research were laid. A library and documentary and photographic archives were put into operation and systematic work with guides began as well as a consistent presentation of collections and co-operation with artists dealing with the Second World War.

Naturally, these changes could not fully overcome the limitations imposed by the use of Terezín for propaganda purposes. And the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 temporarily crushed any plans for exposition of Jewish persecution in the Terezín ghetto, due to the well-hidden or, precisely, carefully disguised anti-Semitism practised by the Soviet Union and the Communist Party. One project that proved to be impossible called for the setting up of the Ghetto Museum in the former Jewish ghetto. The memorial management tried to enforce this project throughout the 1970s, without success. The authorities installed the so-called 'Permanent Exposition of a History of the National Security Forces and Revolutionary Tradition of North Bohemia', which, in reality, was meant to prevent the Museum of the Ghetto from being established at Terezín because the authorities did not want to ban it outright.

Nevertheless, it was no longer possible simply to ignore the past. Despite enormous political pressure from the Soviet Union and the demands of the political authorities to maintain the memorial in an

ideological struggle, the changes of the late 1960s bore positive fruit. The Museum of the Ghetto was not yet set up at Terezín, but the staff of the memorial collected documentary material about the Jewish ghetto, carried out historical research and co-operated not only with official artists but also with those who were 'inconvenient' for the regime. These were not illegal activities, since the management staff of the memorial knew about them; and it must be said that, without this work, the Museum of the Ghetto would not have been created in such a short time later on. All that was needed now was a radical change in the political situation.

The Terezín Memorial after 1989

November 1989 provided this radical turning point. It now became possible to set new priorities for the memorial. The most pressing task was to establish the Museum of the Ghetto at Terezín. The task was all the more urgent since the President of Israel, Chaim Herzog, was expected to visit in October 1991. It had been difficult to convince the political authorities on an ideological level, but now it was even more difficult to raise resources and, in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet empire, to maintain awareness of keeping track of expenses. The efforts were successful thanks to the personal commitment of former Terezín inmates and, in October 1991, the Museum of the Ghetto was opened as part of the fiftieth anniversary commemoration of the Terezín ghetto.

Following this, it was necessary to envisage the development of the institution, particularly in light of how it had been misused in the past. 'The Concept of Activity and Development of the Terezín Memorial in 1992–2000' was discussed by



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the Scientific Board and the final version was completed in July 1992.

The fourth courtyard of the Small Fortress, Terezín Memorial.

Important objectives included incorporation of the Jewish issues and more solid research into the history of other persecution facilities at Terezín and Litoměřice. These efforts also meant 'filling in the blanks' left in the political discourse on the memorial. The redressing of inherited problems included the technical administration of the Small Fortress. The main task, however, involved historical research in order to undo political bias and intentional distortion. This ambitious programme was followed by plans to publish books, and educational tasks were also redefined. It was important to organize annual international conferences to help overcome information barriers between local and foreign experts. In this respect, too, the co-operation with experts, who were the former inmates, was invaluable.

Today, all the 'old' exhibits have been replaced and our current activities are

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Permanent exhibition, Music at the Terezín Ghetto in the Magdeburg Barracks.

committed to what is new and based on development concepts. The exhibitions under preparation at the Magdeburg Barracks are expected to considerably improve a presentation of the history of Terezín. In 1997, a permanent exhibition entitled *Music at the Terezín Ghetto* was opened. Another exhibit, a replica of a typical collective dormitory from the ghetto times, was also opened. The following year we opened the exhibition called *Fine Art at the Terezín Ghetto*. The opening of the permanent exhibition entitled *Literature at the Terezín Ghetto* was held in April 1999, and the last permanent exhibition, called *Theatre at the Terezín Ghetto*, opened at the end of March 2000.

Conclusion

The Terezín Memorial represents the only institution of its kind in the Czech Republic. Originally an organization managing sites linked to the memory of victims of political and racial persecution in the years of Nazi occupation of the country,

the memorial's activities have involved and gradually given rise to a major centre of museum research and educational programmes, an institution which is an acknowledged partner to martyrological centres abroad. Especially in the past few years, its role as a meeting place for people of different nationalities, confessions and political views has been systematically emphasized. The establishment of the Terezín Memorial's meeting centre has created new opportunities for young people as well as for teachers, researchers and activists of different civic associations and unions from home and abroad.

The Terezín Memorial provides tours of the Small Fortress as well as objects and memorial sites in the former ghetto. Visitors can also tour the crematorium in the former concentration camp at Litomerice. Eleven permanent exhibitions can be visited in all our buildings, and every year many short-term documentary and art exhibitions are prepared. Researchers who have access to the funds of the Departments of Collections and Documentation can also use the services of the specialized library. The staff of the Terezín Memorial also provide consultations on matters of racial and political persecution in the Czech lands during the Second World War, supplying information on the fate of the former inmates of the repressive facilities at Terezín and Litomerice. ■

'Back to the Workhouse': poverty from the past serving the present

Susanna Smith

In 1997, The National Trust and the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England and Wales conducted a survey of surviving workhouses and identified the Workhouse, Southwell, as the best and most important surviving example. The National Trust acquired the building, and a project team from the East Midlands office are now working to reconstruct the site. The anticipated opening date will be Easter 2002. The story of this particular workhouse site will be told but, more importantly, the vision of a system that covered the United Kingdom will be provided as a national example. In this way, the property will become a national and international focus for Poor Law history. Susanna Smith is a qualified archivist and architectural historian in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British architecture and history. As a National Trust Project Researcher, and a member of the project team for the Workhouse, Mrs Smith carries out documentary and oral history research on the Workhouse and has already published several articles on this project.

Over 300 workhouses were built in the United Kingdom following the passage of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. The surviving buildings are a key not only to the design and history of poorhouses, but to a whole philosophy of care for the poor that still exerts a distant influence on public policies today. Their significance lies not only in the part they played in the nineteenth century but also in their continuing, unrecognized influence. The New Poor Law can still be detected as the background to many British policies in the twentieth century – policies on social security or welfare, as well as the basis of children's homes, residential homes for the elderly and the physically, visually or mentally impaired, and shelters for the homeless. The Workhouse, Southwell,¹ unlocks an area of history that has been little understood or publicized until now but is increasingly a topic for education and public interest.

The philosophy and policies for preservation and interpretation of the Workhouse are driven by the surviving building and by the history of the poor, but with an awareness of the relevance of the Workhouse to contemporary welfare issues. There is a strong focus on interpreting the building to provide education for all and particularly to enhance school visits, with an education co-ordinator involved in the development process.

The National Trust and its houses often seem to stand slightly apart from the museum world. The recent National Trust acquisition at Southwell follows, to some extent, in this tradition. The Workhouse is not a museum in the conventional sense of an institution valued as a repository for a collection, for it is an empty building. However, although the Workhouse had a traditional role in society and in British history, it is not a typical National Trust

house, created and presented as the 'home' of a family and household. The Workhouse is unconventional both as a building open to the public and as a museum.

This lack of convention has been the starting point for new methods and programmes to stimulate public participation and response. It also offers new opportunities for involvement from the local to the international community. At the Workhouse there will be two exhibits: first the site and then the people and their story. While drawing on the National Trust's rich tradition of preserving properties for public benefit, the project team developing the Workhouse Project are creating something new.

Workhouses and their place in British history

Workhouses are perhaps the most famous example in a long line of attempts to care for the poor in Great Britain. This line can be followed back to medieval times, when charities and monasteries fulfilled the needs of those who were poor and unable to work. The Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601 established that the poor were to be supported by a tax on landowners and renters. This system, with its inconsistencies and inadequacies, was superseded by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. It was this latter 'New Poor Law' that established the workhouse system in Great Britain. The New Poor Law imposed administrative areas, or 'unions', across the country to administer to the poor more effectively. It was intended to support the 'blameless' poor, that is, the 'old and infirm' who could not work, but not to indulge the 'idle and profligate' poor who were able but unemployed. By this means it was intended to reduce the



The Workhouse, Southwell. Façade showing the central supervision block for the master and the living quarters for men and women on either side.

financial burden of the poor and also to achieve their ‘moral improvement’.

The Union workhouse was the heart of the New Poor Law, providing a ‘test’ of genuine need. The workhouse (and not direct welfare payments) was intended to be offered to paupers as the only form of support or accommodation for those with nowhere else to turn. Those who could find other means of sustenance would do so, because workhouses soon came to be perceived with dread and their inmates with scorn or pity.

Inmates were kept separate from society and further segregated within specially designed buildings. Even family members were divided up and kept apart by sex and age. The ‘work’ imposed upon them was tedious and laborious: stone-breaking; digging; grinding; cleaning and washing. The diet was bland and sometimes meagre. However, should a job opportunity present itself, it was possible to leave the workhouse – and this differentiated the workhouse from prison.

Why save the Workhouse?

There are good reasons for saving an example of the workhouse buildings that once covered the country and also for choosing the particular building now at the

heart of the Workhouse Project. Being ‘sent to the workhouse’ has passed into our national memory as a serious threat. Today, however, very few intact buildings have survived without major alterations. Many workhouse buildings continued to fulfil similar functions as hospitals, orphanages, asylums and geriatric homes after the introduction of the Welfare State² in 1948 changed and improved care of the poor in the United Kingdom. However, recent changes within the National Health Service forced buildings on to the market to be demolished or converted to unsympathetic use while others were left to deteriorate.

Both the buildings and the system behind them were influenced by the prototype of the Workhouse, Southwell, which was built in 1824. This design was modelled upon prison and other institutional architecture, and was an example for the workhouses that followed. It was specially designed to implement a regime of segregation, work and supervision fully ten years before such a regime was introduced to the whole country. The building had survived remarkably well by 1997, with original walls and nineteenth-century paint and water closets still present with few modern additions.

The Workhouse was built of functional red brick with hardwood lime-ash floors. On first entering the property, National Trust staff were struck by the original nineteenth-century features such as fireplaces, stairways, hooks and even the paint-work. Even more important was the atmosphere in the silent, chilly bedrooms. It was agreed that if the property could be saved, the National Trust would conserve it with the principle of retaining as much as possible of the structure. The building would be allowed to speak for itself without the use of text, costumed models or reproduction furniture.

As well as its important historical role, this particular workhouse was chosen because its design was typical of workhouses across the country. This means that it can be used to explain the New Poor Law in Great Britain to a wide range of visitors, rather than just being of local interest. Indeed, researchers in Belgium and the Netherlands who have studied equivalent solutions for the poor of those countries have already contacted me. On the international stage, the growing popularity and number of 'historic site museums of conscience' is encouraging and presents many opportunities for co-operation in the future.

Conveying the story to visitors

The visitor will be introduced to the site with a short video. Sound, rather than physical objects, will furnish the building. A high quality audio tour will escort visitors round the property, avoiding the need for distracting signs. The lack of artefacts will allow visitors freedom to explore the rooms and discover the building for themselves. With the intention of reducing the need for modern intrusions and retaining the atmosphere, the building will be shown only during daylight on a seasonal basis. The tour should provide a thought-provoking experience during which the visitor will come to understand how and why a workhouse was run.

Returning to the more traditional sense of 'museum', a permanent exhibition will give more detail on the history and development of the building and the Poor Law than can be given during the tour. The museum may also display surviving workhouse artefacts that will be housed in the only rebuilt section of the building. This arrangement illustrates how the 'museum' concept is considered as an outside intru-



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sion into the authenticity of the remaining building and is to be kept separate.

Encouraging public dialogue through interpretation

Interpretation here should inspire an understanding of the sensations of those who lived and worked in workhouses. It should provide insight on those who made the decisions about their treatment while raising some of the Poor Law issues involved. Finally, it might relate these nineteenth-century issues to present-day problems and solutions of a similar nature. If this sounds rather ambitious, we have already been amazed at how visitors to the site naturally make such connections or ask such questions, with only the unprepared building as stimulus.

Visitors and students with a special interest will be able to use a study room at the Workhouse, with a Poor Law library and a database of archives related to the Workhouse. We hope to expand the

Women staff and inmates outside the Workhouse, circa 1927.

© Wendy Ryan



A second-floor men's dormitory showing original building materials and fittings.

current Workhouse web page³ so that students around the world will be able to use the database and participate. The Internet will be another way to link up with other museums tackling social issues.

A deeper involvement with the local and national community has come with the search for historical accuracy and human interest through oral history. In addition to using archive material or newspapers, I have conducted oral history interviews with those who remember the workhouse system, whether as inmates, staff, administrators or observers on the outside. Their modern counterparts, involved more recently with the care of disadvantaged sections of society, are also being interviewed. Interviewees have appreciated being involved with the project and have brought the story to life with their memories, some good and some not so good. One old man, born in the Workhouse, remembered, 'I used to see my mother, but only in the distance. . . . We used to be the other side of the railing, we could see them come out, shout to them. They used to wave back but . . . they weren't allowed to go across and talk to you.'

Testimonials like these are as important as an entire history of national policy on poor laws or public-welfare architecture. And public response to this project has already begun: a one-day conference on workhouse history, organized by Nottingham University, and the start of a multimedia project by artist Wendy Ryan, are just two examples. I am confident that when the building opens to the public, thoughtful and informed discussion will continue. ■

Notes

1. Southwell, in the county of Nottinghamshire in the East Midlands, is a historically important town, boasting its own magnificent minster church.
2. The Welfare State was so called because Acts of Parliament that year introduced sweeping social-security measures and a National Health Service to improve welfare nationally.
3. www.nationaltrust.org.uk

The Gulag Museum

Victor Shmyrov

In the final period of the communist regime, the Perm-36 Maximum Security Camp was the last and most dangerous prison in the former Soviet Union. One of the few gulag-era camps still standing, it has been used to house the Gulag Museum. As it exposes its story of repression, this museum is also intended to be a 'museum of tragedy': the tragedy of tens of millions who went through the political repression of the gulag system. But it is also the tragedy of the hundreds of millions of citizens of the former Soviet Union and socialist countries, who watched as the ideals of a just society were turned into one of the most anti-human regimes ever devised. Since December 1998, the Gulag Museum programme has acquired international status and has been accepted as a collaborative project of the Memorial Museum of the History of Political Repression and Totalitarianism at Perm-36. Victor Shmyrov is the director of the Memorial Museum.

The era of the gulag is still very close to us, and not so long ago, in some parts of Russia, there were more labour camps than villages. But today hardly any evidence of this vast system of repression can be found. Major camps were established only as temporary structures to carry out a certain type of work: lumbering, building roads, factories or dams. As soon as the work was completed, the prisoners were moved to another location, and the wooden camp structures were left to deteriorate. Moreover, the builders of these camps were prisoners forced to work quickly, and they did not care about quality. They had no intention of building something properly, and naturally the camps suffered under the harsh weather conditions.

A large number of camps were left after Stalin's death in 1953. Although the present-day Russian penitentiary system is organically connected with the gulag, it is none the less different. Even those camps established in Stalin's times, and are now used for criminals, that have very little in common with the camps that came before them. Having stood for several decades, they evolved and were completely transformed. Thus little evidence remains today of mass political terror in Russia, though there are fugitive traces, particularly in areas where the lack of forests meant that the structures were built of stone. On the deserted banks of the far-away Kolyma River, stone structures of former barracks can still be seen, and occasionally in Siberia the ruins of granite barrack walls and watchtowers may be found – all that remains from the 1950s.

Camp WS-389/36, or Perm-36, where the Gulag Museum is being developed, is a unique exception. It was established in 1946 and named the Wood Labour Colony of the labour camp and colony system of the Internal Affairs Public Committee in

the Molotov district (the former name of Perm City). As with most other postwar camps, it was not particularly large – built for only about 100 prisoners, who were to saw wood and send it down the Chusovaya River.

After Stalin's death, mass amnesties were granted and many camps were closed between 1953 and 1956. Perm-36 escaped destruction, as it was converted into a special camp for military criminals. Among the inmates were individuals of high military rank, such as KGB and prosecution officers. It was too dangerous to put them into ordinary camps where the other prisoners might kill them. After 1972, Perm-36 was known as one of the main political camps in Russia. This explains why it is still standing, and why, unmodified, it keeps the infamous memory of the gulag alive.

Almost all of the dissidents who opposed the Soviet regime until its collapse served sentences in three political camps: WS-389/35, WS-389/36 and WS-389/37. The sentence was always the same: ten years, since they were all considered dangerous recidivists in the category of offenders charged with political crimes. This meant that they had already been in prison for several years, but had received a new sentence for 'anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda'. Vladimir Bukovsky, Sergey Kovalyev, Yury Orlov, Nathan Sharansky, Gleb Yakunin and many other human rights activists spent years in these prisons. And they continued to resist even while imprisoned, regularly sending information to the outside about abuse of prisoners' rights, internal repression and the arbitrariness of the government. Through hunger strikes and other protest actions they forced the camp authorities to follow the normal rules and regulations for prisoners. Some of them continued to write anti-Soviet articles and essays, but

were constrained to hide their works to escape additional prison sentences, since literary work was completely forbidden. It was usually followed by months in solitary confinement. In spite of these restrictions, severe punishment, vigilant guards and informers, prisoners none the less managed to send information outside to be published in samizdat or abroad.

The special maximum-security part of the Perm-36 camp was built in 1980. The conditions of imprisonment in the maximum-security barrack were even harsher than in the main zone. Prisoners were kept in cramped cells that were unlocked only once a day so that they could walk around in a tiny exercise block. But unlike prisoners in an ordinary prison, they were forced to work. If a prisoner did not complete his work plan, he was put into solitary confinement and on an even more meagre diet.

One of the prisoners was Leonid Borodin, a Russian writer, now editor-in-chief of the popular literary magazine *Moscow*. Balis Gayauskas, a Lithuanian human-rights activist, did twenty-five years on one sentence and ten years on a second. The lawyer Levko Lukyanenko was sentenced to death in 1961. He managed to establish an 'anti-Soviet organization' to force the government to allow the Ukraine to define its position as stated in the constitution. Lukyanenko spent twenty-five years in prison, and after the Ukraine separated from the former Soviet Union, he became ambassador to Canada. Four human-rights activists died here. They included the worker, Yury Litvin; the poet and journalist Valery Marchenko; the philosopher Olexa Tikhiy; and the Ukrainian poet Vasil Stus, who was a candidate for the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1985, the year he died.

In 1987 most of the political prisoners were pardoned and released. The only

political prison camp left was Perm-35. Most of the structures deteriorated naturally and the camp authorities destroyed the rest. Local people took care of what little was left, stealing everything from the camp.

Work on conservation of this unique site was made possible only after the former USSR and the Communist Party collapsed in 1991. In 1992, the Perm chapter of the International Historical Educational Human Rights and Charitable Society Memorial was given the responsibility of preserving the camp. Real work on the reconstruction and preservation of the site began only in 1994 when the Memorial Museum was set up with provisions for funding. Significant restoration work had been completed by 1998.

Visitors come to the two separate sections of the site, the Maximum Security Camp and Strict Regiment Camp, where they can see the cells for sleeping and working, space for camp staff, exercise blocks, the intricate barricades, and the watch-towers and other camp structures. They can tread the same path as every newly arrived prisoner. They can feel the terrifying atmosphere of isolation which surrounded the prisoners for years. Finally, the maximum-security barrack contains an exhibit on the prisoners of this part of the camp dedicated to their struggle with the regime. The twenty-odd structures of the strict-regiment part of the camp, established in 1946, are being rebuilt, having fallen into complete ruin.

The museum staff have put much emphasis on historical research. There has been little relevant research on the problems of political repression, labour camps and the gulag at the time of the museum establishment, since such topics were forbidden until the mid 1980s, and most work was done by journalists rather than by his-

torians. Since 1992 the Memorial (in 1994 it was renamed the Museum) has held annual international scientific research conferences on the topics of totalitarian history, bringing together human-rights activists and historians from different regions of the country and from abroad. The Ural-Gulag museum research centre, established in 1992 as a part of Perm Memorial, has identified sources available in the Urals and in Moscow on the history of political repression.

The main topics of the museum research centre include political repression and the penitentiary system in the Urals since the early years of Soviet regime until the gulag establishment, the gulag camps and the colonies in the Urals from the 1930s to the 1950s. Staff are creating databases and collecting documents, artefacts and other materials. An Oral History Project has also been undertaken by the research centre. Moreover, in collaboration with historians from the International Memorial, the museum research group is developing a concept for the general exhibition, planned for the strict-regimen part of the camp after major work on restoration is completed.

This exhibition will occupy over 2,000 m² and will reflect the content of repressive politics in the country since 1917. It is planned to dedicate it to the people living in a totalitarian society, not just to individuals put into camps, badly treated or killed by the government, but also to the majority who kept silent. Although they managed to escape the machine of repression, they still sacrificed all their energy, enthusiasm and strength to a totalitarian state. As background material for this collective tragedy, part of the exhibition will be dedicated to the resistance that existed from the beginning, and which resulted in the ultimate collapse of Communist totalitarianism in the former USSR.

In developing programmes for the general public, much attention is being paid to the education of youth. The majority of the museum's publishing materials, exhibitions and excursions are designed for young people.

In 1999 the Memorial Park was established at the Perm-36 site. It will give visitors an opportunity to plant a tree in memory of their relatives who were victims of the gulag. Some large artefacts from other gulag regions such as Kolyma, Norilsk and Vorkuta will be also put into the park.

The Gulag Museum is a non-government institution. This means there are no stable and permanent sources of financial support. Since 1995, we have been receiving partial support from the Government of the Perm region. However, due to adverse conditions in the Russian economy, this financing is not large. Nor can local business provide significant support for the museum. However, many local factories have made contributions in kind to the museum, helping to set up woodcutting workshops, including a camp sawmill and several woodcutting machines. On-site production will lower reconstruction costs, and help to earn small amounts of cash for museum programmes.

Over the past several years, the museum has started receiving grants from foreign foundations, including the Open Society Institute, the TACIS Democracy Program, the American Jewish World Service, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Henry M. Jackson Foundation, the National Endowment for Democracy, and others. But the Moscow office of the Ford Foundation made the most significant contribution. These grants have been an invaluable support for the museum's development allowing us to carry out a number of varied programmes, especially public outreach. ■

The paradox of the Anne Frank House

Marja Verbraak

Anne Frank was 15 years old when she died in Bergen-Belsen in March 1945. The moving diary which she kept up to date during the period in hiding was published in 1947 in Dutch, and subsequently in over fifty-five languages worldwide, giving a voice to the 6 million Jews killed during the Second World War. Over 800,000 people come each year to visit the house located at Prinsengracht 263 in Amsterdam where she hid with her parents for two years and wrote her famous diary. The renovation and reopening of this site in 1999, made necessary by such a heavy volume of visitors, is described in this article by Marja Verbraak, a journalist who formerly worked in the public relations office of the Anne Frank House.

The Anne Frank House is located on one of the major canals in Amsterdam. Visitors come here to see where the Jewish girl Anne Frank lived in hiding with her family for more than two years during the Second World War and wrote her diary. In 1999, the Anne Frank House completed an extensive renovation project, aimed at improving information services and involving the public more actively in the history connected with this site.

The Anne Frank House, a non-profit organization, which operates nationally as well as internationally, has developed activities to fight racism and promote a multiform, more democratic society. One of the main activities here is the creation and promotion of programmes aimed at the participation of people from various backgrounds in the field of education and in the labour market; another is to follow the activities of right-wing extremist groups and political parties in Europe and the United States.¹

The museum emphasizes contemporary issues, especially by means of temporary exhibitions, to allow visitors to reflect on the relationship between the past and the present. In the words of the executive director, Hans Westra: 'On the basis of the life story of Anne Frank ... you can show that the exclusion of people takes place step by step. You can show the mechanisms behind it; how prejudices come into being and what options you have ... to do something about it.'

Soon after publication of the diary in 1947, readers were drawn to the Prinsengracht to see the hiding place. The first twelve months following the official opening of the museum in 1960 brought 9,000 visitors. In 1998, visitors numbered more than 800,000. The paradox of the Anne Frank House is that this tiny space, which was intended to remain secret, now attracts the attention of hundreds of thousands of people. It was at the end of the 1980s that it became apparent that, in the interest of the public, the museum itself had to be modified to cater for the increase in the number of visitors. Not only were the information facilities not optimal but the general public facilities were far below acceptable levels.

Visitors to the Anne Frank House have also changed in character during the past few years. Today the majority of visitors to the museum were born after the Second World War and need more detailed information about those who were in hiding, as well as those who helped them and the circumstances during the war. Every year, 800 school groups attend an educative programme in the Anne Frank House.

Toward the end of the 1980s, the Preservation and Future of the Anne Frank House project began; in September 1999, the results were officially presented to



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Anne Frank in 1942.



© Juul Hondius, AFF/AFS, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands and to the former German President, Richard von Weizsäcker. The route through the museum had changed radically, since the main objective was that visitors, while walking through the front part of the house and the Secret Annexe, would have a clearer picture of what happened here concerning the fate and final destiny of those who were in hiding. The personal story of the individuals who lived and worked in this house is told first, followed by the historical context.

In the 1930s, Otto and Edith Frank left their native Germany and moved to the Netherlands, together with their daughters Margot and Anne. They hoped to escape the anti-Jewish persecution at the hands of the Nazis. But in May 1940, the Netherlands were occupied by the Germans. On 20 June 1942 Anne Frank described in her diary the consequences of the occupation:

After May 1940 good times rapidly fled: first the war, then the capitulation, followed by the arrival of the Germans, which is when the sufferings of us Jews really began. Anti-Jewish decrees followed each other in quick succession. Jews must wear a yellow star, Jews must hand in their bicycles, Jews are banned from trams and are forbidden to drive . . . Jews may not visit Christians. Jews must go to Jewish schools, and many more restrictions of a similar kind. So we could not do this and were forbidden to do that.

In July 1942, Margot received a notice to report for transportation. The next day, the Frank family went into hiding on the Prinsengracht.

Like many other canalside houses in Amsterdam, this house consisted of a

Anne Frank's room in the Secret Annexe.

© Juul Hondius, AFD/AFS, Amsterdam, the Netherlands



Information about the Holocaust may be found in the front attic.

front part and an annexe. Otto Frank's business was set up in the front and the annexe, which could not be seen from the canal and was empty, was used as a hiding place in which the Frank family stayed more than two years; this is what is known as the Secret Annexe. They were joined by their friends Hermann and Auguste van Pels, their son Peter and Fritz Pfeffer. Otto Frank's staff provided food and clothing and brought news from the outside. Elsewhere in Amsterdam, Jews were taken from their homes and from the streets and were deported to the extermination camps in Germany and Poland. In August 1944, the group were betrayed and deported to the east. Of the entire group, only Otto Frank returned.

Visitors to the museum had not realized that the front of the house had played an important part in the history of the building. Without this façade and the compli-

cated construction of the canal house, it would have been even more difficult to keep the hiding-place secret. Without Otto Frank's business, where people who were faithful to him worked and who helped those in hiding, survival would have been impossible. Due to the reconstruction of the front part of the house, the visitors can now better imagine the history of what took place on this site. Based on historical photos, floor plans and the indications of Miep Gies, one of the helpers, the rooms where the family hid were restored to the style and atmosphere of the period. The front part of the house and the Secret Annexe are not furnished because the original furniture disappeared – all the possessions of deported Jews were taken away by the Nazis.

In the Anne Frank House, history is revived in a different way, with the use of quotations from the diary, historical documents, photos, video images, etc. The aim is to stay as close as possible to the reality of the period so that the public gets to see the personal effects of those in hiding and their benefactors. In the front part of the house, for instance, one sees the typewriter which the office assistants used and a note with errands which Mr Van Pels had written for Miep Gies; in the Secret Annexe, the movie pictures which Anne Frank cut out of magazines and put on the wall; Edith Frank's prayer book and the farewell letter that Fritz Pfeffer wrote to his fiancée. Further on, the cloth bag which Otto Frank took along from Auschwitz and Anne Frank's first diary are on display.

Possibilities for more insight are offered in the new building. With the help of an interactive CD-ROM, visitors can find out more about the history of the place and of the Holocaust. The new building will feature a constantly changing exhibition,

which in each case will be devoted to the influence of the Second World War on current discussions. In 1999/2000, the exhibition dealt with the difficult issue of the potential and ever-present dangers of nationalism. ■

Note

1. For more information on the Anne Frank House, visit the website www.annefrank.nl

Sister organizations are: The Anne Frank Center, 584 Broadway, suite 408, New York, NY 10012, USA. Tel: +1 (212) 431-7993, Fax: +1 (212) 431-8375 (www.annefrank.com), the Anne Frank Educational Trust UK, P.O. Box 11880, London N6 4LN, United Kingdom, Tel: +44 181 3409077, Fax: +44 181 3409088 (www.afet.org.uk); Anne Frank Zentrum, Oranienbrügerstraße 26, 10117 Berlin, Germany. Tel: +49 30 872988, Fax: +49 30 872989.

Women's Rights National Historical Park: where 'rights' are our mission

Vivien Ellen Rose

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Mary Ann M'Clintock, Martha Wright and Jane Hunt were no ordinary middle-class American housewives, and the Women's Rights National Historical Park in the United States commemorates their activism. Vivien Ellen Rose, historian at the park, is responsible for the historical content of exhibits and programmes. The stated goal of the park is to 'inspire and educate visitors about the struggle of women for their equal rights', and this article presents some of the recent activities aimed at attaining those ends.

In Seneca Falls, an industrial town in the Finger Lakes region of New York State, a determined group of women and men met in July 1848 to reconsider the Declaration of Independence, the founding document of the United States. Two days later, they had amended it into a 'Declaration of Sentiments', claiming that 'all men and women are created equal' and demanding for women 'immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of these United States'. The sixty-eight women and thirty-two men who signed intended to 'use every instrumentality within our power to effect our object', including employing agents, circulating tracts, petitioning state and national legislatures for changes in laws, and gaining support from the press and the pulpit.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton's home, the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, whose congregation hosted the 1848 convention, and the Mary Ann and Thomas M'Clintock Home, where the 1848 convention was planned, constitute the Women's Rights National Historical Park. Created by the US Congress in 1980 'to preserve for the inspiration and education of future generations the significant sites associated with the struggle of women for their equal rights', the park has developed over the past twenty years. Included is the restored home where Elizabeth Cady Stanton entertained husband, family, friends and reformers, raised children and laid plots for social change. It opened to the public in 1985, focusing the main message on Elizabeth Cady Stanton's remarkable leadership of a growing movement while she experimented with the co-educational rearing of her family of seven.

In 1993, the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel and adjacent visitor centre opened, adding the important national and international

contexts in which the American women's rights movement took shape and the impact of the women's rights movement on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The 1995 opening of the *Lily* printshop further enriched the park with a demonstration press and school programmes for 11- and 12-year-olds on the US constitutional guarantee of the freedom of the press, activists' actual access to the press, and the origins of a US women's press with the *Lily* in Seneca Falls in 1849.

Now the park is restoring the Mary Ann and Thomas M'Clintock House, where the main thrust will be to interpret the importance of Quaker reform efforts for the pre-American Civil War women's rights movement. Each park site allows an expansion of the central educational purpose of the park, as defined by Congress in legislation to inspire and educate visitors about 'the struggle of women for their equal rights'.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Mary Ann M'Clintock, Martha Wright and Jane Hunt understood fully the implications of their activism. Four were Quakers, leaders in Indian rights, poor relief, prison reform, and anti-slavery activism. Mott and M'Clintock, founding members of the first interracial women's anti-slavery association in the United States, had already confronted angry mobs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the newcomer to a hive of reform activity kept humming by the work of these women Quakers, had met Mott in London eight years before at the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention. In their anti-slavery efforts, the organizers encountered opposition and in some cases physical threats. Anticipating 'no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, and ridicule', they determined to put into action their plan for expansion of citizenship rights for women.

From this beginning, Elizabeth Cady Stanton developed the political acumen to become one of the most important leaders of the nineteenth-century movement for women's rights in the United States. Guided through the 1870s by Quaker activists, Stanton none the less developed her own brand of organizing. With her life-long friend and co-agitator, Susan B. Anthony, she created suffrage organizations, edited women's rights newspapers, petitioned the US Congress for an immediate end to slavery, challenged property laws denying married women access to land or to wages, demanded reform of marriage laws that allowed husbands to confine or chastise wives, and advocated women's equal access to education, the professions, the Church, and the state. In her final appearance before the US Congress, she argued that men assumed responsibility for the development of women's souls at their own peril, since no one could stand at the doors of death or judgement for another. Still later, convinced that religious intolerance limited women's own belief in their right to self-development, she wrote commentaries on the Bible. Her last letters, written shortly before her death in 1902, urged President Theodore Roosevelt and First Lady Edith Roosevelt to support the passage of an amendment to the US Constitution giving women the right to vote.

Programmed for social change

The restored buildings allow visitors to walk in the footsteps of giants and the interactive exhibits and programmes engage them in dialogue. *The First Wave*, a bronze statue grouping of nine known participants of the 1848 convention and thirteen unknowns (who represent the roughly 200 attendees who did not sign



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Elizabeth Cady Stanton Home.

the Declaration of Sentiments) greets visitors on their entrance to the visitor centre. Though some recognize Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Frederick Douglass or Lucretia Mott, few can identify all nine signatories of the Declaration of Sentiments. Visitors are introduced to each of the convention planners and important male supporters, and invited to think about whether, 150 years from now, they themselves will be known activists or unknown supporters of a current movement for social change. The statues are full of the details of everyday life: fans, purses, parasols, handkerchiefs, pockets and hats. The grouping is the favourite photo in the park: visitors delight in placing themselves among the figures and having photographs taken as they stand in the 'first wave' of the women's rights movement.

Running down the centre of the main exhibits is a timeline. Designed to include all the important facts of history, it also expands visitor knowledge by including the achievements of little known but

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The First Wave statue group, visitor centre.

nationally significant women. This timeline has been left unfinished. At the end, a blank bulletin board poses the question, 'What will it be like when men and women are truly equal?' Visitors respond with various visions. Some expect dystopias, where men and women war with each other, ignoring children, human relations, art, culture and society. Others believe equal rights will bring world peace, social justice and racial harmony. Still others argue that men and women have never been and never will be equal. Often, visitors respond to each others' comments with arrows and rebuttals or affirmations.

In 'Viewpoints', a series of interactive videos in each exhibit area, visitors express opinions about a current issue. In an education section, for instance, a teacher

and student disagree about whether same-sex schools provide a better education for girls and women than co-educational schools. At each interactive area, the debate stops suddenly with a request for the opinion of the bystander – the visitor. Whether a visitor agrees or not, the opposing point of view is immediately offered, with more information to buttress the argument. After a few rounds of argument, visitors are asked a final question, and then shown the percentage of visitors to date who agree with their perspective.

The printshop

At the *Lily* printshop, an early-twentieth-century platen press takes the place of the *Lily* press, run by Amelia Bloomer in the late 1840s and early 1850s. Bloomer,

whose husband Dexter edited the county newspaper, founded the *Lily* when the ladies' temperance society decided to publish a newspaper dedicated to ending alcoholism. The *Lily* swiftly attracted a national subscription base, and became Elizabeth Cady Stanton's outlet for opinion pieces, editorials and educational columns. In it, Bloomer published the pattern for an outfit credited to Stanton's cousin, Elizabeth Smith Miller, consisting of a knee-length skirt and long trousers. Named 'the Bloomer Costume' in the popular press, the outfit was worn by women's rights advocates in the early 1850s, earning them universal abuse.

The park's most popular educational programme is the printshop programme. The New York State curriculum requires fourth and fifth graders (children 11–12 years of age) to complete a local history course. In the printshop, students learn to apply lessons of the past to the present. They discuss issues that they face, decide on a message that they want to publicize, set type, and print a 'broadside' or a poster to take back to the classroom with them. As they learn to set type, they also learn about the US constitutional guarantee of freedom of the press. Students occasionally learn the history of the press itself: in the 1970s and 1980s, it was Helaine Victoria Press, a small concern that provided educational materials about the history of women in the United States when such materials were not commonly available.

The effectiveness of the printshop programme in provoking participation in current events can be judged by its impact on students. In the second year of the programme, a fourth-grade class applied the lesson of the printshop to a situation at school. Students wrote letters to the editor of the local paper, put posters around the



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school, and petitioned the school principal for equal access to playing fields dominated by older schoolchildren. Teachers reported that the skills used by the students in their successful attempt to gain access to playing fields were first introduced to them in the printshop.

At work in the Lily printshop.

Demand for programmes demonstrates a public desire for continued operational support, an important consideration for a historic site run by a federal agency. Educated and inspired by the historic sites and programmes associated with the struggle for equal rights for women, visitors are reminded of the contentious debates in which the country first took shape. Finally, they remember that the organizers of the 1848 convention exercised freedom of speech to take an unpopular position in defence of rights. This legacy is honoured in educational programmes that encourage visitors to stand among agitators, envision the future, choose sides in reasoned debates, and express views on current issues.

'Honor the Past, Imagine the Future'

1998 marked the sesquicentennial of the Seneca Falls women's rights convention and a year-long celebration at local, regional and national levels. The anniversary offered an important opportunity to explain the importance of the struggle of women for their equal rights to audiences far beyond Seneca Falls. New York State created a gubernatorial commission honouring the achievements of women, the United States Congress passed legislation instituting a congressional commission on women's rights history, and the President of the United States established the President's Commission on the Celebration of Women in American History.

Mrs Hillary Rodham Clinton gave the keynote address at the sesquicentennial observances in Seneca Falls, after meeting with descendants of the signers of the 1848 Declaration of Sentiments. In that address, she summed up the historical importance of the 1848 women's rights convention. A new 'Honor the Past, Imagine the Future' badge for the Girl Scouts [Girl Guides – Ed.] encoded the basic interpretive message of the park. The participants of the 1848 convention

had honoured the past by re-examining the 1776 Declaration of Independence, and had imagined a new future of equal rights for women in their own Declaration of Sentiments. Girl Scouts who earn the badge must honour the past and imagine a future that includes important historical lessons.

Effects of the sesquicentennial are still being felt. A presidential challenge grant to support the restoration of the M'Clintock House followed from Mrs Clinton's visit to their home. The number of visitors in 1999 equalled the 1998 crowds, up over 100 per cent from 1997. These facts indicate that the core educational mission of the park is important not only to women's rights activists, but is becoming increasingly important to other segments of society. This is good news for the programmes of the park, for the citizens of the nation, and for the organizers of the 1848 convention. ■

Note

The Women's Rights National Historical Park website is www.nps.gov/wori

The Ecomuseum in Fresnes: against exclusion

Coral Delgado

The working-class town of Fresnes, in the Paris suburbs, is the site of an ecomuseum founded with a view to conserving, presenting and explaining the specific territory of the town and problems related to urban development. But first and foremost, this museum was created to give a voice to those who have traditionally been unable to express themselves: women doing manual labour, prisoners, immigrants, the unemployed, and those living in housing projects. Born in Caracas, author of several articles on the relationship between cultural identity and museums, the sociologist Coral Delgado holds a Ph.D. in Latin American Studies from the University of Paris and a diploma in museology from the École du Louvre. She is currently a lecturer at the Simon Bolívar University in Caracas.

The structure of an ecomuseum such as that in the French suburban town of Fresnes is a political endeavour, in the most Platonic sense of the word. The museum itself and the exhibitions are a means of denouncing all forms of racism and exclusion. This ecomuseum decided to give a voice to minorities, to those who traditionally, through history and in museums, have had little opportunity to express themselves. It aims also to be a place of convergence in which the problems of today's society are shown to lie at the very heart of the concept of heritage.

Through its initiatives, the Fresnes Ecomuseum involves the public and gives it tools with which to understand the historical, geographical and cultural changes they have experienced. Because the problem of exclusion is spreading so rapidly, few solutions are apparent. But the fact that we see no solutions now does not mean that they do not exist. Neither does it mean that no action should be taken at all. Certain values must be rehabilitated as a matter of urgency and numerous prejudices eliminated. This does not mean merely finding economic solutions. It is a matter, first and foremost, of breaking down prejudices, racism and attitudes of contempt in order to forestall exclusion and to allow everyone to participate in seeking a society that is not only economically rich (because today's society is not poor), but richer in being happier and more balanced.

The Ecomuseum is housed in the manor house of Cottinville, which includes barns and farmyards adapted to accommodate its needs: a documentation centre on local and regional history, meeting rooms, an educational activities centre, offices for the administration, reception and information services, and auditoriums. There is a local history centre, and a multi-

disciplinary research programme has been in operation from the outset. The farmyard is used for open-air performances. There is also a 1,000 m² kitchen garden, in which extinct or virtually extinct market garden species are cultivated.

Since it was founded, the Ecomuseum has engaged in research with the aim of enabling the Fresnes community to understand the present and future of problems relating to urban development. The Fresnes Ecomuseum runs a permanent training programme, in the form either of practical courses of several days' duration or ad hoc activities. It publishes books and catalogues on its exhibitions, in which specialists in the subjects discussed sometimes collaborate. It also organizes symposia on cultural subjects involving experts in the subject area. The members of the scientific staff of the museum give conferences and participate in symposia, seminars and other activities. The publications service produces a collection of writings entitled 'History and Testimony'. From 1985 to 1998, a series of temporary exhibitions have made it possible to manifest these objectives to a broad public.

Laundress, washerwoman, ironing-woman (1986)

Women have been neglected in traditional museological discussion. There was a need to let them take their place in the study of occupations and traditional know-how and its transmission. Ethnohistoric research, an exhibition and a publication have been devoted to the so-called 'female' occupations. Local history ordained that priority should be given to 'laundresses' and 'ironing-women'.

The collection of objects, demonstrations of know-how such as the use of utensils, ▶

© Ecomusée de Fresnes



Laundress, washerwoman, ironing-woman: putting know-how on display.

comparison between past and present customs, the comparison between social mores, and the evocation of memories and the hardships of daily life gave the public an insight into these essentially female occupations and reminded women of the extent to which mechanized practices have replaced manual chores. The objective was to show flat irons, copper boilers and other collectors' items, not as 'fine pieces', but in real-life accounts of burns, endless working hours and endemic alcoholism, and to trace the technological development of the occupation and the history of trade-union struggles, all of which are reflected in songs of the period.

Fresnes, the prison (1990/91)

France's largest prison is situated in Fresnes. It houses up to 4,500 prisoners (when overcrowded) and 2,500 staff. This amounts to 7,000 people living or working in the 'prison realm', out of a total town population of 30,000. It was felt that the prison, from the point of view of both prisoners and warders, should be 're-

vealed' to the inhabitants of the town and of the Paris region, and indeed to the general public. Prisoners and guards were, each in their own way, economically and socially underprivileged. The Ecomuseum therefore asked the 'prison community' how it saw the situation. The prisoners wanted the museum to speak about the hell of confinement, while the guards wanted the difficulties of their occupation and private lives to be revealed.

The Ecomuseum did for them what they could not do for themselves, which was to organize an *Open House in Fresnes Prison* exhibition. The exhibition showed everything – the unknown, the fear – and endeavoured to communicate as much as possible: Fresnes as a German prison, as a resistance prison, as a political prison during the Algerian war. To do this, photographs from the nineteenth century, the 1930s and the present were used. A corridor of the prison with cells on either side and an individual cell were reconstructed to reveal what lies behind these immense walls, which the local people know only from the outside. The exhibi-



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tion has been a weapon with which to combat a form of exclusion.

Hip-Hop dixit: le mouv'au musée (contemporary music at the museum) (1991)

The political and economic issues raised by the phenomenon of immigration prompted the Ecomuseum to look at the difficulties of integration, racism directed towards immigrant workers, national and European policies in this regard and the history of France, which considers itself to be receptive to asylum-seekers.

Since the Ecomuseum's main function is to exhibit, it was inevitable that this phenomenon would sooner or later be reflected museographically. Those mounting the exhibition considered that, before embarking on such an endeavour, it would be appropriate to raise public

awareness of the problems of self-expression by minorities, beginning with those of the young suburban rappers and graffiti artists and reinforcing the cultural action policy relating to young people of the second generation of immigrants.

The first part of the exhibition was devoted to identifying the social problems that the Hip-Hop movement denounces and endeavours to resolve, including: racism; lack of recognition of the cultures of these young people; inhuman urban planning in the large housing estates that have turned into nothing short of social ghettos; violence; and problems of identity among young people who are second-generation immigrants, followed by the vicious circle of failure from which it is difficult to escape after leaving the school system. The second part presented the various forms of protest of racial and social minorities: Gandhi's pacifism, the marches of the North-American blacks

Rassemblement, a century of immigration in the Ile-de-France region, and an evocation of the architechtonic universe of the homeland.

which were suppressed in the 1960s and those of the North-African Beurs in 1983 which came to nothing. The third used photographs, paintings and videos to present the movement's peaceful slogans, its pattern of development, major figures, rap, dance and different styles of graffiti.

Rassemblement: a century of immigration in the Île-de-France region (1993)

How should we speak about, show and tell the story of immigration? Since museum staff wanted to give the floor to the immigrant communities and reflect their life stories and their history, they had to find interlocutors. So numerous immigrants' associations were contacted throughout the region. The Ecomuseum engaged in a multidisciplinary study within the foreign communities of the town and at the La Lutèce housing projects with some 400 inhabitants. The exhibition was staged in such a way as to highlight the intermingling of cultures through the symbolic evocation of the architecture of the countries of origin, old and recent photographs of those countries, personal accounts and literary texts referring to them. Emphasis was placed on the role of employment and on the demand for labour in the history of immigration.

The La Peupleraie housing estate in Fresnes (1997)

This exhibition was a tribute to those who resolved, fifty years ago, to obtain decent housing by taking part in the building of their future homes. Many homes in France had been destroyed in the Second World War and half the population was inadequately housed. A reconstruction policy was introduced to overcome the crisis.

Among other initiatives, priority was given to self-build organizations, including the Mouvement des Castors (Beaver Movement). In Fresnes, these new builders embarked on collective housing and participated in the construction of the Domaine de la Peupleraie, an estate of more than 800 dwellings constructed on a site of 12 hectares.

In the exhibition, period photographs, archive documents, architect's drawings, a construction workshop, workers' clothing and tools have brought to life the construction work and efforts of these pioneer-builders. The latter were actively involved in mounting the exhibition.

Unavoidable places, no-go areas, (1997/98)

This exhibition sought to throw light on the use and perception of the town by fifty young people, most of whom have left school, are without regular employment, have no activity to fill the greater part of their day and live in different urban contexts. It was the product of a cultural action project co-ordinated by the Artémisia Association and carried out in collaboration with three other French museums.

The first part of the exhibition, which was entitled *Maze*, used panels and texts to relate how the cultural action project was drawn up. This was followed by fifty definitions of the town by the young people, placed in a series of colonnades occupying the 'babel' space. The third part was placed in a 'cave' space with panels reflecting the young people's discussion on the specific details of their different itineraries through the town. The whole opened into the 'totem', with photographs, texts, illustrations and town plans

reflecting comments on the joint participation by the towns in question. Finally, the 'forum' provided new outlooks through a description of the places frequented by these young people. A description summarized the itineraries followed by these young people within their town, as follows:

- *Unavoidable places*: places where they must go, such as employment agencies, but also meeting-places and shops.
- *No-go areas*: places where young people do not go, and others where they prevent others from going (generally undesirable due to potential danger).
- *'Hijacked' places*: usually cellars, dark places under bridges, car parks, and so on, that are 'hijacked' by young people

as places to meet, to engage in leisure activities and, finally, to become places stamped with their own identity (they represent a form of resistance to social conventions).

- *Personal places*: places that are dreamed about, or places where they have spent holidays.
- *Places of entertainment*: funfairs, amusement parks, beaches, parks and gardens are 'spaces' for meeting, sharing as well as socialization.

This exhibition showed how young people use their towns. It explained the procedures whereby the similarities and differences between these towns could be identified and understood. ■

Virtual museums in Turkey

Tomur Atagok and Oguzhan Ozcan

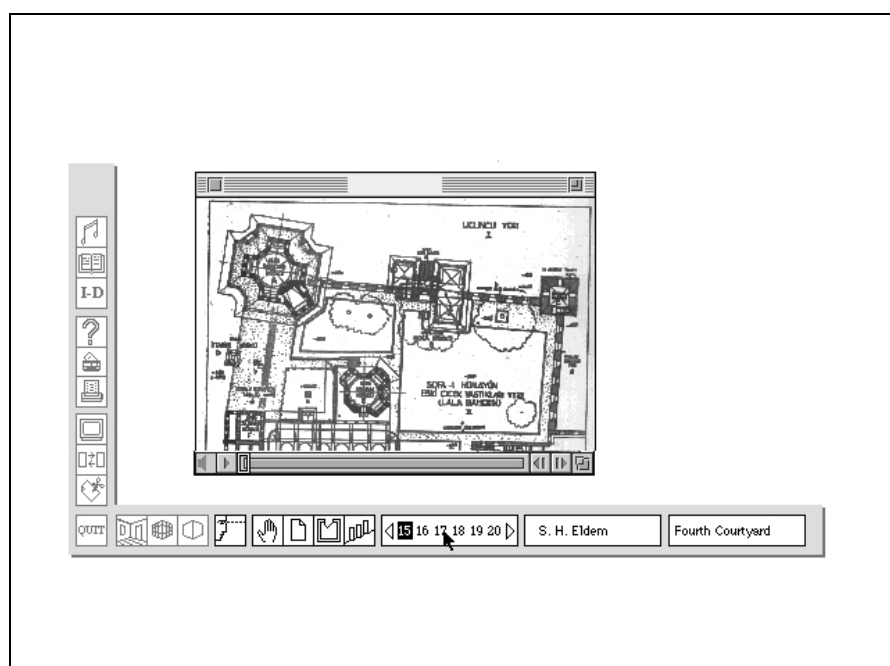
Turkey's Internet network is rapidly expanding and the number of Internet operators, currently estimated at 150,000, is constantly rising. This has had considerable impact on the museum sector, as described by two pioneering figures. Professor Tomur Atagok is chairperson and founder of the first Department of Museum Studies in Turkey. A vice-director of the Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture between 1980 and 1984 and the author of numerous articles on aspects of Turkish art and museums, she was also a Fulbright scholar working in a number of museums in the United States. Associate Professor Oguzhan Ozcan is vice-dean of the Faculty of Art and Design and chairman of the Department of Multimedia Design at Yildiz Technical University. He worked on various web museum projects for the Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture, the Topkapi Palace Museum, the Dolmabahce Palace, the Rahmi Koc Museum and the Interactive Museum of Turkey. He holds Turkey's first teaching professorship in multimedia design and has published a number of papers in this field.

The first virtual museum efforts in Turkey began in 1990 when the Topkapi Palace made an initial attempt to feature some of its collections in cyberspace. Known as the Topkapi Palace Project, the aim was to provide easy access to such disparate materials as photographs, engravings, orthographic drawings, animations, and so on, by means of a sophisticated interface design. However, since sponsors were not found, this multimedia system was not finalized and remained only as a CD title of twenty photographs and ten technical drawings.¹

In 1993 Internet use began in Turkey with the creation of the first art museum website for the Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture (IMPS), which had been founded by Kemal Atatürk in 1937 (mediaccess.msu.edu.tr/services/irhm-2.5/IRHM-2.5.html). The site was one of the first in the world to use an interactive panorama format (QuickTime Virtual Reality²) to show sixteen sculptures on

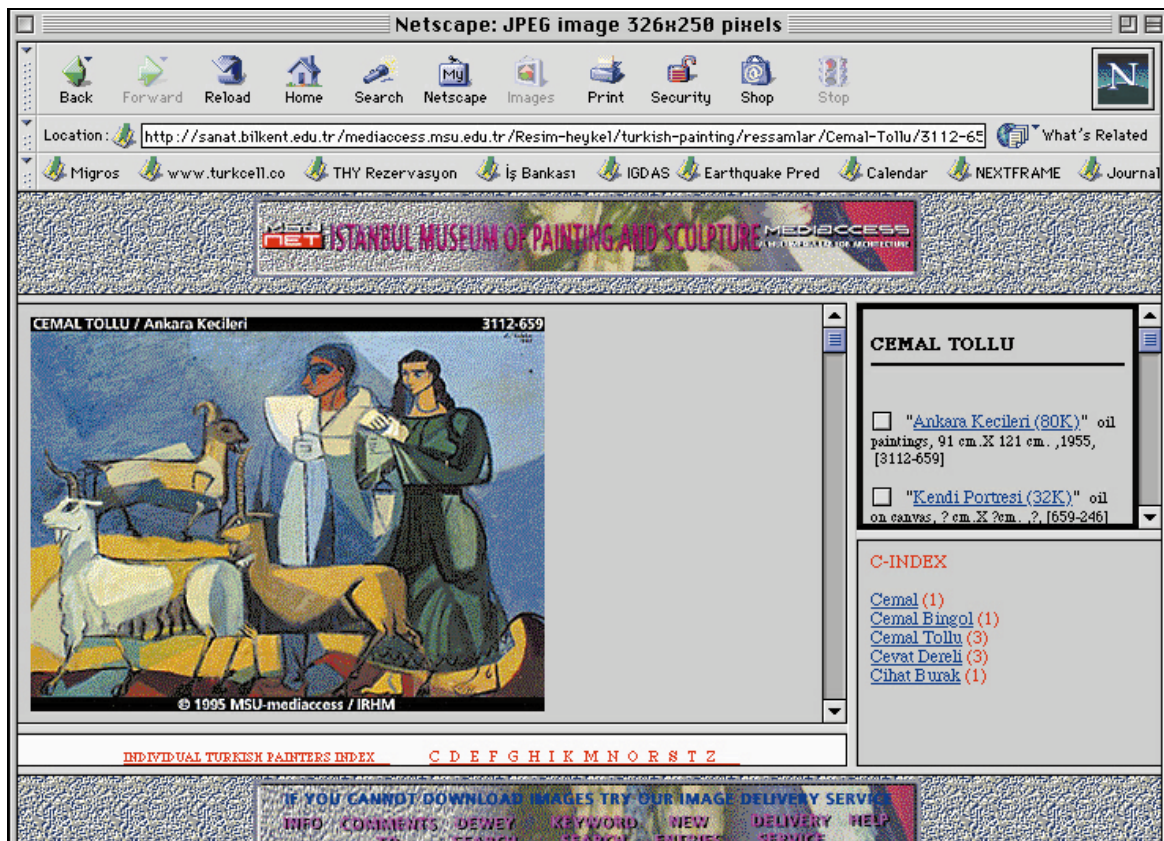
display and it also featured 269 paintings in picture format (JPEG). The launching of this site coincided with one of the first important virtual websites, the Web Museum Project created by the École Polytechnique in Paris (metalab.unc.edu/wm/).

In the IMPS project, research focused not only on how to present the museum to the world, but also on how to provide information in an Internet environment in the most effective way. Various documentation and data design models were studied. Finally, the Dewey Classification Standard was adopted as the most suitable system, particularly for academic use, though it proved to be less satisfactory for the general Internet user. The venture was a research project carried out at Mimar Sinan University, Istanbul, and was the first Turkish web museum and the first website created by Turkish professional graphic and multimedia designers. It captured the interest of both



A page from the Topkapi Palace project website (1990).

© Photo by courtesy of the author



© Photo by courtesy of the author

communication planners and the Turkish public, paving the way for art-targeted multimedia projects and professional website design in Turkey. During this period, a number of CDs became leading works in both interface design and content: *Habitat in Anatolia, from Past to Present* (in connection with the International Habitat II Conference); *100 Famous Turkish Films* (in celebration of the centenary of the cinema); *Turkish Painting*; and *Turkish Poetry*.

In 1996, the first body of privately held art went on the Internet with a site devoted to the Sabanci Painting and Sculpture Collection belonging to Sakip Sabanci, the chairman of the board of Sabanci Holding, one of the largest companies in Turkey (www.sabanci.com.tr/sergi/index_c.html). Although it is a simple interface design, and may be considered a web brochure of the book with the same name, it has received many hits and favourable reviews. It was followed in 1997 by two other private museums, Rahmi Koc (www.rmkmuseum.org.tr/english/index.htm) and

Sadberk Hanim (www.sadberkhanimmuzesi.org.tr/english/main/frame_corporate.html).

That same year, several Turkish art galleries began to show interest in the new medium. The Borusan Culture and Art Centre started to display and archive all its exhibitions on the Internet (www.borusansanat.com/e_tanitim.htm), thus enabling researchers to access the works of Turkish artists of the last decade. It was also a productive year for Turkish virtual museums, with in-depth studies on a database that could be accessed via the Internet. The most extensive one, called the TAY database, was begun in 1993 and was connected to the Internet in 1997 (tayproject.org/enghome.html). It displays some 2,000 artefacts found in Turkish archaeological sites in both two- and three-dimensional formats and allows users to search according to title, type, period and place.

The transformation of a simple web brochure into virtual museums came

A page from the Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture website (1995).



© Photo by courtesy of the author

A screen view of Kemal Atatürk's apartment on the Dolmabahçe Palace website (1998).

about with the aid of tools that made it easy to produce interactive, three-dimensional displays, and Turkish museums were quick to adopt them. The Department of Multimedia Design and the Department of Museum Studies of Yildiz Technical University initiated the research that made it possible to see the Harem Rooms in the Topkapi Palace (www.yildiz.edu.tr/Topkapi/), Atatürk's Room in the Dolmabahçe Palace (www.yildiz.edu.tr/dbahce/) and the Rahmi Koc Museum (www.yildiz.edu.tr/RKM) in QuickTime Virtual Reality format. The design incorporated orthographic drawings and interactive presentations, thus allowing the user to 'walk' through the museum easily by clicking on plan, section or elevation as well as on the interactive panorama.

Towards the end of 1998, the same team, working with the hypothesis that the concept of a virtual museum does not need to be associated with actual physical space, created the Interactive Museum of Turkey (interactive.m2.org). The project,

whose real purpose was to introduce Turkish art and culture within a historical process, set up virtual galleries and electronic libraries with original reference articles and published daily news about Turkish art. Exhibitions devoted to Anatolian civilization, contemporary Turkish artists and Turkish photography were displayed on the Internet along with fifty articles. The initiative received the support of many private corporations and the media and was warmly welcomed by the public and by specialists.

The Turkish virtual museum project has thus far completed a number of ventures in four main areas: Web brochures that encompass general information on actual museums; database, Web and CD versions of museums and galleries; virtual versions of museum spaces, and thematic virtual museums that do not exist in real life. Many of these undertakings, however, were experimental and individual attempts, conceived as university research projects or designed for the museums of private corporations and do not include

all of the state-run Turkish museums. The project named Kamu-Net, which is intended to cover all Turkish monuments and museums as well as public institutions, is still in its early stages and it is not yet possible to speak of an overall plan by the government to enable access to historical archives via the Internet.

Nevertheless, according to a 1998 report of the European Audiovisual Observatory, the public and private sectors in Turkey have shown a growing interest in multimedia projects, and the country is considered to have one of the fastest growing fields of media and communication technologies. For this reason, it is possible to believe that what has begun in the area of the Turkish virtual museum will continue

in the coming years. A plan to carry 50 million Ottoman documents to the electronic environment and the Internet early in the year 2000 was the strongest evidence of this development. ■

Notes

1. See A. Enis Cetin, Omer N. Gerek and Ahmed H. Tewfik, 'The Topkapi Palace Museum', *Museum International*, No. 205. – Ed.
2. QuickTime Virtual Reality is technology pioneered by Apple Computers that allows interaction with an image; the viewer can look up, down, right, left, even behind, and zoom in and out. – Ed.

The Vienna Kunsthalle – its future in the Museum Quarter

Gerald Matt

'The museum scene in Vienna will no longer be the same – instead, it will be more exciting, more attractive and more competitive by international standards,' states Gerald Matt, the artistic and managing director of the Vienna Kunsthalle in this article. He presents the architectural and artistic decisions that went into the conception of the Kunsthalle in the Museum Quarter, and he discusses the role it will play, particularly for modern art in Vienna, where, in 'an environment of Baroque tradition and historical grandeur, the new Kunsthalle has something of a meteorite' about it.

The Museum Quarter

A museum, even when it presents a change of exhibitions, is primarily a body for the administration of its own collection and archives, which a priori render it somewhat asynchronous with the present day. Cultivation, conservation and presentation are notions of, or tendencies in, art that inevitably represent an outdated state of social and artistic affairs. The museum is, as Hans Belting puts it, 'a symbol of unchanging place and suspended time'. However necessary and important this position may be for a Museum Quarter, it definitely needs to be complemented by what a Kunsthalle has to offer. For a Kunsthalle – as we understand it – is synchronized with its time; it represents and comments on what is going on, 'where it's at'. Mapping its epoch, a Kunsthalle puts things up for evaluation and discussion and deliberately provokes the clash of rival positions. It does not present art history, but contributes to it. Its main concern is not eternity and frozen unchangeability, but active participation in present-day cultural life. And that is the programmatic policy that the Kunsthalle will seek to pursue with even greater determination on its new location in the Museum Quarter, presenting an international, border-crossing programme, art between the 'demarcation lines of genres', as Adorno put it; a programme characterized by topicality and the inclusion of different spheres of life in an environment that is likely to attract the same young public as before.

Since April 1998, what had been a matter of conception, planning, debates, plans abandoned and plans revised over the past twenty-five years is finally becoming a reality in the midst of the machines and the construction workers. As one of the most important projects in the cultural policy of the Second Austrian Republic,

the Museum Quarter will, at the beginning of the new millennium, provide a venue for the presentation of modern art. There will be a special focus on Austrian contributions, from the historical beginnings up to contemporary trends in all the arts, visual, cinema and architecture as well as modern theatre, and new forms that are emerging from the crossing and dissolving of generic boundaries in art.

The Museum Quarter will not be run as centralized 'exhibition machinery', but rather as an active community or confederation of independent cultural institutions sharing a common purpose while entering into healthy competition with each other. The Museum of Modern Art (run by the state in co-operation with the Ludwig Foundation and presenting developments in modern art up to the present day) and the Leopold Museum (a foundation with a collection focusing on classical Austrian modern art) will primarily be showing established modern art from Austria and abroad, while the Vienna Kunsthalle will be entirely dedicated to the most recent contemporary art and culture. Neighbouring on the City Playhouse mainly used for the Vienna Festwochen, the Tanzwochen festival and the Viennale Film Festival, the Vienna Kunsthalle will offer a lively cross-disciplinary multimedia programme. The Centre of Architecture and the Children's Museum will add colour to this cultural mosaic.

The history of the Museum Quarter is not just the story of political polemics; it is not merely situation-comedy satire, with the usual obstructionism and dilatory manoeuvres. It is perhaps, first and foremost, a history of a sustained, persistent effort, a history of many good ideas, of great personal commitment and of carefully thought-out modifications in plans made necessary on multiple levels, and not just



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because this project has taken so long to develop.

As friend and advocate of the Museum Quarter, I count myself among those who, in the most difficult hours of the project, were sometimes on the verge of abandoning the whole thing. It is easy to forget that large-scale projects of such architectural dimensions and cultural significance take time and provoke friction. Discussion and controversy are a natural phase in the maturation of an idea or a project, and it is time that enables, and calls for, pragmatic and functional adaptations in order to develop a project from conceivability to feasibility. The ultimate purposes of the building and the infrastructural requirements could be defined more clearly only in the course of what was a long planning stage. If the architects of the Museum Quarter were criticized by some ‘friends’ of the project for their pragmatic and flexible reaction to planning directives (and to restrictions imposed by the Office for the Preservation of Historical Monuments), one might listen to the architectural critic Dietmar Steiner, who stated: ‘The architect does not have the task of making programmes; his task is to respond to them.’

A number of cultural activities took up temporary lodgings in the Museum Quarter while the endless debate was going on. Other cultural institutions, such as the Centre of Architecture, the Children’s Museum and the Kunsthalle with its second exhibition hall contributed to endowing the Messepalast, formerly the Imperial Stables, with a cultural imprint that seems to be lasting. In this way, it became established as the Museum Quarter in public awareness. For the transformation, the change of the functionality of a place is, as the history of the Museum Quarter clearly shows, closely linked with the transformation of public notions. Hence one of the main strategic goals I pursued for the Kunsthalle was to define the projected location of the ‘new Kunsthalle’ as a ‘real place’ in Foucault’s sense and to create de facto a provisional second exhibition venue for the Kunsthalle in the Museum Quarter in 1996. Or, to put it differently, who succeeds in investing notions with positive meanings eventually gains a reality. The cultural utilization of the former Messepalast bears evidence of this. The Museum Quarter is underway at last.

In this context one might quote Werner Hofmann who stated that the project of the Museum Quarter goes well beyond

View of the façade of the Kunsthalle, Vienna.



Reduced model of the interior of the Kunsthalle, Vienna.

the traditional Austrian museum philosophy that used to cultivate the rather 'academic, somewhat eccentric'. Instead, the Museum Quarter, Hofmann says, 'should indeed be a challenge, it should indeed be an irritation'. However, it should primarily provide an opportunity for an active confrontation with art in its time, an opportunity to respond to artistic developments on various different levels, doing so in constant interaction with the public, and perhaps a new kind of public. One thing is certain: the new Museum

Quarter will provide Vienna with a new cultural focus.

The architecture of the New Vienna Kunsthalle

'Forms just for their own sake that ignore function are ridiculous' – Donald Judd.

The architectural solution of establishing the Kunsthalle in a new building

separated from and neighbouring on the playhouse in the former indoor riding arena makes sense, both for the project as a whole and in the context of Vienna's cultural policy. The non-integration of the riding arena, which, according to earlier plans, should have been rebuilt into a lobby for the whole complex and which will now keep its successful function as a playhouse for the Vienna Festwochen, will greatly enhance serviceability (unlike a multifunctional hall which would not have worked). The architectural nexus of the two institutions (the Kunsthalle and the playhouse) will be defined by a common lobby and by facilities such as a Kunsthalle café and a museum shop, open to everyone. While keeping the individual identities and different characters of both institutions intact, the architectural overlapping is intended to produce maximum synergy. The overall objective remains the same: to establish Vienna's primary address in contemporary visual and performing arts in an architectural ambience of international renown.

The building of the new Kunsthalle implies moving from the provisional housing on the Karlsplatz and the temporary halls in the old Messepalast into permanent quarters that meet all technical and conservation requirements. This also marks the beginning of a 'lifelong' partnership between the Vienna Kunsthalle and the Museum Quarter. The primary consideration in the architectural planning was functionality. The point was not to create an architectural landmark or a spectacular sight – however justified this approach may have been in the case of the new museums of Bilbao and Rotterdam. Here in Vienna, the goal was to achieve integration in the historical substance of the building and a symbiosis with the other cultural institutions.

Hence the new Kunsthalle, designed by the architects Ortner and Ortner, has used the concept of a simple and functional art box, as it had previously been realized in the provisional quarters on the Karlsplatz. In an environment of Baroque tradition and historical grandeur, the new Kunsthalle is something like a meteorite – straight out of nature, luminous, outstanding. With its sienna-red brick façade, the main body of the building speaks, as noted by the architectural critic Walden, 'the language of industry', [but is] 'at the same time [all alone], indicating with its slightly shortened roof a tender gesture of reaching out for the historical riding arena'.

Previous experience with the programming, organization and implementation of exhibitions at the provisional venues on the Karlsplatz and in the Museum Quarter made it possible to develop, in dialogue with the architects, a tailor-made solution for the new Kunsthalle, based on our spatial and functional concept, in terms of room layout, programmes and budgeting. The simulation of the future makes the new Kunsthalle a calculable project for the Vienna municipality as regards organization, financing and programming.

The Programme

The museum needs to become a cultural subject representing various different viewpoints. Concentrating no longer on a singular, fetishized work of art, but rather on life-styles, taking a look into possible worlds heralded in the work of art, the museum ought to be a centre of manifold art-related activities, a *centro d'animazione culturale* (Gianni Vattimo).

Unlike a museum, a Kunsthalle does not have the burden of a permanent collec-

tion. It is not so much a depot as an agora, a place to negotiate present-day problems. If it falls back on retrospection, it is not in search of something better in the past, but to take a view of the present by looking behind it. Much of what artists experimented with in the 1960s – the confrontation with the human body, the metaphorical transformation of the world as in Archigram's architectural visions, the pop-art sanctification of the trivial, has returned in different contexts. Modernity casts its shadow on the (post-)postmodern experience of life. Today, the protagonists of such ideas are people like Matthew Barney (exhibited in the Kunsthalle in 1997/98), Rem Koolhaas *Space Writing* (exhibited in 1996), Pipilotti Rist (exhibited June–August 1998).

The only thing left after the dismissal of the metaphysical idea of positive momentum in history and after the universal challenge of traditional values is to outline perspectives of present-day human existence constantly anew. Thus a Kunsthalle also sets in motion a playful element: rules to be

changed again and again; art that goes beyond painting on panels and out into the networks, screens that light up only to disappear an instant later. Pop art has always played a major part in the presentations of the Kunsthalle. Here is pop as impatient interventionism with rapidly changing self-definitions, as a strategy of – delightful – changeability in contrast to the heavy-laden symbols of tradition.

The Kunsthalle in the Museum Quarter will continue to function as a seismograph of future developments in art or in arts institutions in the sense of Gianni Vattimo's idea of a 'cultural subject'; it will be a place of confrontation and evaluation, reflecting contemporary cultures of living. For one thing is certain: notions of art may change or altogether disappear, but art as such will continue. And as long as it continues, it will seek to communicate, to interact with the public, and need professional institutions to catalyse this interaction. The new Kunsthalle in the Museum Quarter will make a substantial contribution to this. ■

Ethnology: a science on display

Fabrice Grognet

'If ethnology has something to tell us, the ethnographic object remains, for its part, all too frequently silent.' So saying, Fabrice Grognet shows how, despite constant evolution and change, ethnographic museums are still far from having found a way to make their collections speak. The author is an assistant at the Musée de l'Homme in Paris. He holds a diploma of advanced studies in museology from the National Museum of Natural History in Paris and an M.A. in ethnology from the Sorbonne.

Does ethnology have something to tell us? The question may appear odd: ethnologists communicate publicly in symposia, radio broadcasts and television shows, they publish books and articles and – most of them – lecture. But what public do they really reach?

It has to be acknowledged that ethnologists' discourse and knowledge are usually intended for a small circle of individuals who share a particular level of education and culture (scientific 'peers', or trainees, cultural initiates, connoisseurs of 'primitive arts', college and university graduates who are consumers of 'culture'). What then becomes of the notion of popularizing ethnology among the 'general public', the lay public? Is such popularization even possible?

One place appears suited to achieving it: the museum, and in particular the Musée de l'Homme in Paris (which will serve as the reference point for these considerations), the only museum in France that presents human beings and their works throughout the world (whereas the Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires covers ethnology in France). The museum is open to all, admittance to the exhibition in the entrance hall even being free of charge. In addition, the Ministry of Education, which is responsible for the museum, arranges visits by school groups. In such circumstances, the museum, as a public educational facility, may be regarded as the ideal context for popularizing ethnology.

In France, ethnology, museums and popular science share a long history. Everything really began in 1880, when the then Ministry of Public Instruction decided to establish the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro (MET), using collections and a building that had

originally served for the Universal Exhibition of 1878. At that time ethnology had not yet become institutionalized in France, then a major colonial power that needed a museum that would serve as a 'showcase' for its expansionist policy, and would bring together, on a single site, the ethnographic objects in its possession. At the same time, the museum corresponded to the need felt by this fledgling science which, in France as elsewhere in Europe, required its own institution, one that the French capital lacked. From then on, the museum and ethnology had a shared destiny, thanks to the action of political forces, involving a proclaimed ambition to promote public education as a sort of social *raison d'être* for the new institution.

From artefact to showpiece

In a nutshell, three major periods may be identified as regards the changing manner in which ethnographic items are presented.

During the first period (from the end of the nineteenth century to the 1930s), museum practice was to display artefacts in exhibitions that gave prominence to arrays of particular objects (for example, sets of weapons or pottery). Such presentations were intended to be exhaustive, and followed a classification based on the level of industry of cultures (from the most 'archaic' or 'primitive' to the most 'developed' or 'evolved'). The halls and rooms thus became repositories for the objects as much as places for their display, as in a library. Associated with these arrays of objects were hyper-real wax models portraying 'the other': 'primitive man', clutching an assegai. Such displays, which owed a great deal to the colonial context of the time, as well as to evolutionist theories, made a visit to the museum akin to 'a trip into the heart of



The 1965 exhibition, Masterpieces from the Musée de l'Homme.

barbarism', as a journalist of the time pointed out.¹ While the initial ambition of the museum was to instruct, it must be acknowledged that it made a rather poor showing in this respect:

There is in Paris, in a wing of the Trocadéro, a museum that is little known and little frequented as a result of its remoteness. ... We regret that the spirit which informs the exhibition is not fuelled by the notion that a museum must instruct, that it is not enough to line up items in carefully dusted showcases; in short, that the public should carry away from its visit some lesson, and retain a lasting impression thereof.²

In point of fact, ethnology as a body of knowledge remained to be built. The 'study-bound ethnologist'³ was not in a position to supply information on an artefact that he had not himself collected. As a result of the gaps in a branch of science still in its infancy, particulars

concerning the objects displayed could be only minimal; such a situation, associated with a museum practice focused on spectacular, imposing displays of 'exotica' (models, reconstructions, arrays of 'trophies'), could arouse interest ultimately only in the aesthetic qualities of these objects, to the detriment of their cultural dimension. In many respects, humankind became a show, or more exactly, one part of humankind became a sort of attraction for the other. All these factors combine to make us see the MET, in retrospect, as a museum of 'exoticism', a 'quasi-art museum', since it had moreover 'played a role in the discovery of American art which in the 1880s enjoyed a vogue equivalent to the craze that arose for African art at the beginning of the century'.⁴

Subsequently, with the professionalization of ethnology (establishment of the Institut d'Ethnologie in 1925), the exhibition itself became more 'scientific', introducing an educational dimension, in order to make the sheer diversity of cultures more widely known to a public of inquiring spirits in whom the French colonies had already aroused a curiosity about all things exotic. To displays that aped or mimicked reality, Georges-Henri Rivière, who took over responsibility for museum practice at the MET in 1928, preferred a presentation that foreswore all staged effects and was illustrated rather by photographs taken in the field, supplemented by texts written by ethnologists. By splitting up its displays into geocultural areas, the museum illustrated and reflected the monographs being produced by scientists. It thus made the transition from exhibitions of ethnographic objects to the exhibition of the science of ethnology. This constituted a revolution in museum practice, museography becoming the visible part of current research undertakings.

More recently, as a result of two museographical trends developing from the 1960s on, the ethnographic exhibit has been presented as a showpiece and an art work in its own right. With the advent of these two trends, we can no longer claim to be dealing with exhibitions focused on ethnology as a science, even though the texts and, in a general manner, the ethnological discourse are produced by scientists.

The first trend effects a reconstruction of reality even more radical than that sought in the nineteenth century, putting the object back in context in a setting or 'atmosphere'. Such 'as-if-you-were-there' presentations rely, for example, on life-size re-creations of an actual street or house. Generally speaking, this approach tends not to involve a great deal of explanatory material. Moreover, the attempt to recreate a setting may give a confusing impression of being there without really being there. Can such a re-creation enable the museum visitor to gain greater insight into a culture than an ordinary tourist who has actually passed through the village? Furthermore, this type of approach tends to present large numbers of objects created specially for the exhibition, interspersing such items created for purely decorative or recontextualizing purposes with 'authentic' artefacts created for reasons quite remote from museum display. Indeed, it will be noted that this museographical trend is today frequently equated by the scientific community with the 'disneylandization' of museums.

The second trend aims to display ethnographic objects as a visual artistic experience (*Masterpieces from the Musée de l'Homme*, 1965; *Primitive Arts in the Artists' Workshop*, 1967). Such presentations of objects in isolation, accompanied by only minimal explanations, may be



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described as the 'aesthetic' approach. The visitor's interest is sustained by the display of isolated 'highlights', creating a sort of 'aesthetic shock', which is customarily justified by referring to the delight experienced by the beholder.

A New Caledonian gallery in the Trocadéro Museum, Paris, circa 1875.

Missions and professionalization

Leaving aside the ideological and political dimensions inherent in any attempt to create a new museum institution, these three museographical periods would seem to be akin to three stages in the life of the museum or, more precisely, to a sort of gradual maturing of the museum in its functions.

The Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro was initially established in order to bring together ethnographic items that had hitherto been dispersed. First and foremost, the museum sought to conserve series of artefacts that it did not fully understand (inadequacy of scientific

theory), just as the collectors had before it with their cabinets of curiosities.

Subsequently, ethnological science became institutional, the professional field ethnologist superseding the enlightened armchair amateur. A new understanding of the same ethnographic objects became possible. Museography thereupon proceeded to apply this new understanding, selecting objects on the basis of the theoretical divisions or breakdowns of the era. The 'laboratory-museum',⁵ a unique institution of ethnology, thus gave a high profile and cultural import to a new science that could not fail to prevail (in particular *vis-à-vis* physical anthropology), while at the same time displaying cultural realities that were doomed to become extinct as a result of colonialism.

Thereafter, ethnological research gradually lost interest in the artefacts themselves, and was thus able to establish itself and develop in institutions that lacked ethnographic collections. The museum thus ceased to present science in the making, and bore witness rather to 'traditional' and 'pre-industrial' ways of life, and hence to the past history of societies. In a way, the presentation was thus made for its own sake, since it was subject neither to the duty of conservation (existence of reserve collections) nor to the requirement to display a science (the shift of ethnological interest away from the artefacts as such towards a structuralist approach). The exhibition had acquired a measure of autonomy *vis-à-vis* conservation and research, and accordingly allowed itself to entertain, or to attend more closely to matters of layout.

This brief historical survey clearly reveals that the presentation of ethnographic objects is contingent upon museographical fashions, which are themselves

dictated by the links between museums and ethnological research. The one constant is the avowed goal, namely, to educate the public about alien cultures. But is this objective, however clearly proclaimed, always attained?

If ethnology has something to tell us, the ethnographic object remains, for its part, all too frequently silent. How then can it be made to communicate? 'First and foremost by ridding ourselves of the notion of art work. The object must shed its invasive aesthetic dimension!'⁶ Without rejecting the object's aesthetic nature, we can attempt to define it in terms of its use, its usefulness; for, before it ended up as a museum exhibit, it served a purpose, had a life of its own. However, in aesthetic displays, information concerning past use is generally limited and hazy. In such cases, the descriptive cards in fact usually have four headings (object identification, region or origin, collector, item number), of which only the first two are of any use to most of the museum's non-professional visitors. Attention may also be drawn to the uninformative nature of such formulae as 'anthropomorphic statuette', 'zoomorphic mask' or again 'small dish in semi-hard wood', which are all too frequently the sole particulars serving to identify the artefact.

Display is not enough

However, is an exhibition of ethnographic items, sustained by a scientific discourse, any better able to provide an understanding of the culture of other peoples, which is the purpose of a museum of ethnology such as the Musée de l'Homme? In point of fact, only an understanding of the ethnological discourse accompanying it enables an artefact to speak for itself. But what grasp do the different categories

of visitors have of ethnological concepts? How do visitors to the Musée de l'Homme represent, or perceive, such concepts as 'culture', 'ethnic group', 'religion', 'rites of passage', 'traditions', 'institution', 'identity', 'acculturation', 'kinship', 'family', and so on? These are so many terms, frequently used in their everyday sense, with which the visitor will be confronted. At a more fundamental level, what conception do visitors to the Musée de l'Homme have of ethnology *per se*? Do they see it as a science, or as an occupation that combines travel with adventure? Do they have the impression of being in a science museum or (already) in a museum of 'ethnographic arts'?

Here we touch upon the conceptions and preconceptions of the various sectors of the public. For, if there is one notion that deserves to be challenged, it is indeed that of the 'general public' or the 'public at large', expressions intended to characterize the average visitor. Visitors are not interchangeable 'empty boxes' that need only to be stuffed full of ethnological facts in order for understanding to dawn. On the contrary, each individual is the bearer of more or less precise, socially determined ideas and notions that define his or her vision of things, or 'representation of the world' (in which ethnocentrism is never very far away). However, such representations may very frequently be built up on the basis of outdated scientific concepts and data that have found their way into common parlance, as for example that of 'race'. As a result, a proper understanding of the message of an exhibition of ethnological artefacts can frequently be gained only by overcoming the stereotypes and notions entertained by visitors prior to their visit to the museum. To return to our example of the idea of 'race' as conceived by an 'imaginary visitor', it may be wondered



© Musée de l'Homme, Paris

what the impact must be of the sort of museum practice that presents cultures by geocultural areas and not in a thematic manner. Is this museographical approach, which has persisted since the earliest days of museum exhibitions of ethnographic artefacts, the one that is best suited to putting across the idea of the unity of humankind amid the diversity of cultures? Or, put more simply, why, in the final analysis, should two museographical principles that may prove to be complementary be pitted against one another: the geocultural approach being capable of arousing both wonder and curiosity; and the thematic approach replacing it in a more synoptic framework, one that can call into question the seeming singularity or exoticism of a particular practice?

Thus the aesthetic exhibition and the ill-focused educational exhibition could, paradoxically, have the same result: that of providing no further insight or knowledge about an alien culture, or of failing to alter a mistaken perception of the diver-

The Chaamba showcase from the Trocadéro Museum's 1934 exhibition on the Sahara, organized according to Georges-Henri Rivière's principles that foreswore all staged effects, preferring photographs taken in the field, supplemented by texts written by ethnologists.

sity of cultures. In the final analysis, there is thus no 'miracle' definition of what an exhibition of ethnographic artefacts should be. The debate that pits 'aesthetic' presentation against 'ethnological' presentation of the same collections must today be regarded as outmoded: neither can guarantee a better understanding of an alien culture.

The historical evolution of the museum's task structure, which has today led to the primacy of the exhibition and a concern to cater to the different sectors of the public, might well indeed trigger a metamorphosis of the museum as an institution, one in which we would see the emergence of occupations connected with cultural mediation (museum public monitors, museologists) alongside strictly ethnological occupations. Such a metamorphosis would lead to the development of two distinct yet complementary professions and practices: on the one hand, ethnologists and fieldwork undertaken through and for research; and, on the other, museologists and the practice of a discourse conducted in the field of activity of the former, through and for exhibitions. More than a division between research and the museum, the aim would be to professionalize the work of popularization in the same way as research work.

Yes, ethnology has something to say. But to whom and how? These are the questions to which a contemporary museum of ethnology must provide the answers. ■

Notes

1. N. Dias, *Le Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro (1878-1908)*. *Anthropologie et muséologie en France*, Paris, Éditions du CNRS, 1991.

2. *La Tribune des colonies*, 24 March 1898, archive of the Musée de l'Homme.

3. In the nineteenth century, the term 'field ethnographer' or 'field ethnologist' had yet to be coined; anthropologists and ethnologists remained confined to their studies, scholars theorizing in a museum context on the basis of travel tales and objects usually brought back from the colonies by missionaries, soldiers and travellers.

4. A. Dupuis, 'Anthropologie et muséologie, un aspect de l'histoire du regard anthropologique', *Œil anthropologique*, No. 8, 1997, pp. 43-57.

5. The idea of the laboratory-museum dates from the early 1930s, when the MET was reorganized; however, the idea would only be fully realized with the simultaneous creation in 1937 of the Musée de l'Homme and the Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires. This concept of the laboratory-museum boiled down to treating the museum and ethnology as equivalent by combining museum-based activities with research activities. In other words, a new structure intermeshing the activities of collection, research, conservation and display was set up, with the ethnologist as the central figure in its organization. In point of fact, the museum was defined more by its professional scientific dimension than by its cultural and educational dimension.

More than a 'laboratory-museum', the institution was a 'museum-laboratory'. See F. Grognet, 'Le "Musée-Laboratoire": un concept à réinventer?', *Musées et Collections Publiques de France*, No. 233, 1999, pp. 60-3.

6. A. Vitard-Fardoulis, 'L'objet interrogé ou comment faire parler une collection d'ethnographie', *Gradhiva*, No. 1, 1986.

Bridges: a museum for a globalizing world

Tomislav Šola

Tomislav Šola is professor of museology at the University of Zagreb and a member of the jury of the European Museum of the Year Award. Furthermore, he is a visionary, as this article so amply demonstrates. In his recent book Essays on Museums and their Theory: Towards a Cybernetic Museum¹ he set out his views that the museum must correspond to a humanist concept of the heritage and should serve as a tool of development and public service. For him, the museum exists not only to mirror our identity but also to provide the critical insight that enables us constantly to re-evaluate the past. The museum he imagines below has not yet been created, but Šola's dream is well worth sharing.

Museums are usually born out of the need to save vanishing values, to affirm and assist others, or to be the cultural expression of certain ambitions of a group or community. They are founded upon a collection, which is the result of a logical process of research and care for those values. However, museums are rarely the expression of the very social context that needs them most. This is why there is a century-long and still growing frustration about how to make museums useful for society at large. While most of them offer excellence and an abundance of knowledge, very few foster inspiration, hope and profound emotional experience. Being in the marketplace, museums realize that the goods they present may not correspond to the needs. Thus, the obligation they undertook to adopt the objective of serving development is an unkept promise (which results in diminishing credibility and an 'outsider' professional psychology). So, whether we need an 'integrated museum', a '*musée de société*', 'combating museum', 'cybernetic museum' or something else, the question remains of how to overcome the inaptitude to deliver a successful product. (At this point most conservatives get ready to shout out against 'disneyfication'; however, it was managers, who understand even less the true potential of museums, who led some astray.) The self-help author Dale Carnegie, probably oversimplifying, said about success: 'Find the need and fulfil it'. Let's find the need.

The tradition of the spontaneous creation of museums is instructive but not obligatory. A profession itself can create museums. We live in an engineered, managed world, and museums may be one among the mechanisms added to make it function safely or to attain qualities necessary for survival. Unlike business, we should not invent the needs, but rather follow the most noble aspira-

tions of human nature, and devise our action to serve them. If a profession claims the experience and insight and a full understanding of its mission, it should be, therefore, capable of proactive practice, inventing and installing museums when and where they are needed. This requires a high level of co-operation and innovation; it implies social responsibility and, above all, it requires creativeness.

What follows is a brief conceptualization of such a holistic, multidisciplinary institution conceived to merge in the most appropriate way science and art, scientific facts and creative deeds. This proposed institution, or better, permanent action in the complex field of heritage, is a museum constantly on the move, able to provoke contemplation as well as to entertain.

Why bridges? Why a museum?

The notion of a bridge is one of the most basic in the human spirit and mind, in any civilization and in any culture. It is a universal phenomenon. It has a fundamental meaning for human nature as a 'structure that surmounts an obstacle, such as a river or declivity' (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*). Bridges were among the first human inventions. They can hardly be regarded as simply a work of engineering as they inevitably bear a metaphorical value. A bridge, wherever and whenever erected, always means more than a mere structure. This is why, unlike any other human construction, a bridge is always a symbol whose existence equally changes the two sides it connects.

After the fall of some political barriers, we see the world more divided than ever. The globalization and internationalization of cultures threaten to diminish drastically the richness of the world we inherited. ▀

Guided by other than humanist principles, the present world is unable to respond to the threat except by schizophrenic clashes which are supposed to allow the fittest to survive. But this is not flourishing diversity founded upon tolerance and respect for the other, nor is it the undisturbed richness preserved and venerated. Building bridges is a vivid activity in communication, but its conceptual counterpart is even more important.

'Museum' is still the term used to encompass the set of ambitions concerning collecting, study, preservation and communication of a certain identity and human experience. It is an accepted medium in Western civilization and one increasingly familiar in others. It is by itself a cultural feature and in some former meanings it meant an overview of a particular subject, a notion never entirely lost. Today it is a name for many things, its fields and concerns growing explosively. Its role in developing a new consciousness of the wholeness and complexity of the environment, disregarding the boundaries between peoples and sciences, is now obvious and accepted. It becomes a specific form for popular scientific and artistic experience, as it employs many channels of sensory, emotional and intellectual communication.

The primary result of the initiative should be a unique, internationally prestigious museum project. The capacity of the idea is such that it might become an attraction by the content and the communication methods used (objects, constructions, design, architecture, creative use of the media). It would be a scientifically relevant institution, but offering all the advantages of relaxed, emotional experience.

This interdisciplinary, holistic and synoptic experience would appeal to the engineer

and the poet at the same time, to the intellectual and the layperson, to the adult and the child. In this way, the product would not become a nugget of specialist knowledge, fragmenting the experience beyond comprehension, but would demonstrate the richness of human nature and the boldness of human endeavour. There would be place and need in such an institution to exercise the synergetic capacity of art, together with extensive use of new technologies (from the Internet to interactive video and holography) in presenting all the dimensions of the notion of a bridge. As is nowadays welcome and expected, such a museum would be able to support itself substantially, being attractive both to the public and the media, on one hand, and to the sponsors and donors on the other. As to its infrastructure, this museum would not differ much from any typical, developed organizational scheme. The aim is always that the professional job be facilitated and the public well cared for and that the complex parts of the whole function properly together.

The museum of bridges should have a permanent exhibition, considerable in size, consisting of original plans, models, photographs, drawings, paintings, project documentation, audiovisual documents, film and video programmes, etc. Books, films, poems, songs, paintings – everything that was created to reflect the charm, beauty and fatality of bridges should be appropriately presented. An active temporary exhibition space would show exhibitions on individual objects, builders or technologies involved, or offer art interpretations, etc. Such a programme would cover broad subjects as it would treat all the phenomena that are understood or conveyed by the notion of a bridge.

As the museum should function as an active research centre open to any user, it

would contain a documentation centre, archive and library. A permanent workshop, auditorium for seminars and different gatherings should be also envisaged, as well as space for small events and current happenings. The character of the institution would necessarily comprise considerable public amenities, as in the many well-visited museums today.

A message, a symbol and a statement

Communication is building a bridge – crossing over, linking together, coming closer. In a world consisting of a myriad variety of people, understanding others and tolerating differences means building bridges. Whenever there is a destruction of relations, be it a war or a quarrel between individuals, cultural groups, ethnic groups or nations, it is the bridges in any form that fall first. Bridges are stages of history, as are town squares, where victories were gained and defeats suffered. They are, in a way, different from anything else, splendid and silent witnesses of hatreds and loves. And, indeed, love is but an absolute idea of a bridge, a bridge spanned by getting closer and by self-denial.

The message of the museum should be based upon an imaginative choice of engineering, literature, poetry, music, plastic arts, play and audiovisual materials. The museum should be the place of symbolic quality on an international scale, a permanent, unobtrusive festival of transcending the apparent and obvious, of seeing beyond the mere physicality of things. It should become a space for getting across, a meeting point of differences, a setting not only able to inform but, above all, to inspire. The place should speak for diversity and its preservation, for closeness and connections by building bridges,

which at the same time admit and deny separation.

Transcending itself as an institution, the International Museum of Bridges should be the site of a permanent peace festival, the centre of a worldwide network of people who understand the immense capacity of the symbol and who would spread the inspiration the museum offers. If understood properly in its powerful symbolism, it could be a meeting place of parties to a conflict, or the spot where ordinary people could gather and associate to prove that tolerance needs the constant effort of all, and that all are involved in building the same bridge. Using information technology, this could grow larger and faster than currently imaginable.

The question of logistics

The institution should be located in a place and circumstances carefully chosen to correspond with its rationale. It should be easily accessible and well supported by the local population. No serious cultural institution can survive uniquely through its visitors, and the estimate of its income should never be limited solely to what the ticket office brings in. So, the wise and rich would have the opportunity to gain from their involvement. The unification of Europe, to take one example, is just another way of building bridges and there is every reason to hope that this institution could be established there. Of course, the very potential of the proposal opens an enormous conceptual field and it would, indeed, be advisable to make the museum present elsewhere in many ways, one of them being the travelling exhibition to which each host country would add its own part.

This project proposal, however, is but a rough outline of what an experienced

international team could develop. If the barrier of the usual notions of what a museum should be like is overcome and surpassed, as has happened in some fortunate circumstances, there might be a city with an open-minded leadership that recognizes either its identity or its ambitions in the notion of bridges conceived or built, realizing also that a project of this sort could have considerable potential for tourism and cultural prestige. The powerful international bridge-building companies might even regard it as a mighty and yet untypical instrument of their public relations.

The museum could also have political implications if conceived with the presumption of its symbolic power. So planned, it could become a strong statement against the madness of destruction and division, wherever it takes place. The project was, indeed, conceived some ten years ago, and the author, coming from the south-east of Europe, was able to observe the advance and the retreat of war by the expeditious falling of bridges and their sluggish rebuilding. Since then, a

small, international group of professional friends has gathered around the initiative. Its potential seems to be growing after every exchange of ideas, but to proceed forward we need financial means and support. Influential organizations, prestigious institutions and important individuals were extremely encouraging, and many would support or join. Yet, no organization, institution or celebrity contacted so far has felt able to realize such an ambitious and untypical project. The constant call to all the bridge-builders of any sort that can advise, assist, suggest, in brief, understand and help towards its realization, is still open. If the project gets off the ground one day, it may well be by the virtue of the assistance of *Museum International*, itself a bridge linking the heritage professionals of the world. ■

Note

1. See the book review in *Museum International*, No. 205 (Vol. 52, No. 1, 2000) – Ed.

Museums and heritage: a major issue in the UNESCO *World Culture Report 2000*

Isabelle Vinson

Joining the so-called 'information society' is a critical issue for cultural institutions, perhaps especially for the institutions most concerned with tangible and monumental cultural heritage, such as museums. Since the dawn of public interest in Internet communication networks, museums have had a proactive role to play in cyberculture. The discussion on virtual museums has revolved principally around the question of the categories of sites over the past few years, but it will be essential in the future to include the role of virtual museums on cultural knowledge in a way that will encompass other types of cultural content.

UNESCO has recently published the *World Culture Report 2000*, which continues research initiated in the previous report (*World Culture Report 1998*). It provides a worldwide survey of major cultural trends on which new policies can be based. The sub-title, *Diversity, Conflicts and Pluralism*, clearly shows that it is oriented towards contemporary problematic analysis rather than thematic descriptive synthesis. Yet, while the world listens to a magnificent overture of cultural possibilities through communications, travel and networking, a large number of conflicts now arising within nation-states also involve cultural matters. People want to share and enjoy all kinds of world cultural creations, but also want to preserve their own identity and the symbols of their cultural differences. The way in which individual and cultural communities relate to their cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, mirrors this contradiction.

Cultural heritage and museum collections are therefore still at the core of the report, and are directly addressed in two separate sections, namely Part Three, entitled 'Cultural policies and cultural heritage', and Part Four, 'New media and cultural knowledge'. As work on the report advanced, it also became clear that it would be important to complement these parts with a concrete project focusing on cultural heritage and information and communication technologies that gave indications for 'best practices'.

Thus it was decided to include a CD-ROM entitled *Millennium Guide to Cultural Resources on the Web*, which contains direct links to two types of websites: **museum websites** and **heritage management websites**. The CD-ROM aims to facilitate and enhance the possibilities of access to a prime selection of heritage resources for every member of the global

community, while strengthening the potential of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to promote diversity, cultural contents and participation in the information society. The project has revealed the richness of the emerging cultural landscape on the web and the quality of knowledge that can be disseminated by means of virtual museums.

Selection of sites

Museums certainly are, together with libraries, the institutions most representative of cultural knowledge. Today it is therefore rare not to find quite a number of museums in every country. Moreover, curators and researchers in museums were among the first to develop cultural contents on the web. It is for these two reasons the global scope of museums and their early presence on the web that this particular category of sites was chosen to begin the inventory of cultural Internet sites.

The second category of websites presents resources related to the management of heritage, both cultural and natural. It incorporates training on conservation, restoration and museology as well as institutional resources considered important for the knowledge and the preservation of the heritage of each country. In some cases, such as the Caribbean, Latin America or the Pacific islands, the emphasis was on natural heritage, living arts, crafts and cultural festivities. Management resources for cultural or natural heritage have proved to be an indicator of the interaction between economic and social processes related to culture and local conditions. Moreover, this type of resource is often found mainly in regional networks, and these also give information about financing or legal aspects and are



therefore directly related to the role of heritage in the development of cultural communities, as shown by the Apsara and the LEAP on-line websites in Cambodia. By emphasizing local and global capacity-building in approaches and ways of intervening in the domain of culture, these networks strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of cultural policies.

Criteria and methods of research on cultural sites

The *Guide* is not a comprehensive inventory of websites in the categories chosen for all countries. That would have resulted in a certain statistical imbalance and, in

the end, would have mirrored only the statistics on numbers of Internet users, computers and telecommunications infrastructures.¹

Research for this Guide proceeded by systematically exploring the culture sites of developing countries and by qualitatively analysing the information presented in the sites. What emerges is a surprising, unforeseen, unimagined, unpredictable and virtual cultural landscape. It confirms trends that had already been identified but, more importantly, it brings to light exemplary initiatives of creativity. They show that cultural creativity flourishes independently of the availability of technological resources for example, the Fiji Islands museum, the Suriname gateway, Mongolian sites and the Myanmar Coin Museum. These initiatives can generate national or regional dynamics, which UNESCO has made clear by placing them on the same level of access as websites from developed countries. Priority was given to the quality of the information offered, followed by the representative and specific character of the resources in each country. For example, national virtual museums were given priority in selection.

In the same way, priority was given, whenever possible, to sites hosted in servers located in the countries concerned. In cases where no website could be found according to the criteria for selection, sites located in servers in other countries were also included. Many countries have national sites related to cultural resources, which are all inclusive. Some initiatives, such as the museosweb.ar in Argentina, present a large-scale international inventory of museums.

However, on the basis of this world inventory, the most immediate task for Member States will be to build national

sites that include the most important data on cultural heritage and that are monitored by national cultural institutions. One guarantee of equity in the information society will be that each country retain the mastery of its electronic cultural resources. Partnerships to provide less-endowed countries with the means to participate in the web must therefore be based on local capacity-building in the management of cultural resources.

To retrieve the sites and information deep inside the World Wide Web many partnerships were established. The UNESCO team in Paris co-operated with the team at the Centro Regional de Investigaciones Multidisciplinarias (CRIM) of the National University of Mexico. Other individuals were consulted from different regions of the world. In this way, institutional and scientific approaches were combined in the search of websites.

A glossary is included in the Guide to explain the different components of web addresses to help new users find and locate sites. The capacity to analyse the cultural landscape or **culturescape** in the words of Arjun Appadurai emerging on the web is indispensable for the formulation of policy recommendations. Needs and balances may then be identified in programmes for the development of cultural resources on the web.

Identifying information

Sometimes it was difficult to identify and select cultural websites, given the great diversity in the way information is classified and heritage images are used. In some countries, cultural content fills a whole website with a first level domain name such as **.org** or **.edu**; in others it occupies only one page in a larger

website and in still others it appears only as part of a website providing information on other topics. The analysis of the way cultural information is constructed, as viewed through the selection of sites in the Guide, led to an unexpected finding. The sites demonstrate very clearly that, contrary to the widely held belief that technology overrides all other factors, the influence of cultural, political and social factors is clearly visible in the construction of cultural websites.

The influence of such factors is particularly evident in the way government and private sector initiatives are distributed in each country. More significantly, such factors strongly influence the linguistic component of culture websites. For example, it is to be commended that all Danish sites are bilingual, Danish/English or Danish/German, and that all Icelandic sites are available in five languages. On the contrary, most of the sites of other highly technologically endowed countries, while rich in cultural content, are usually not available in other languages except that of their own country.

The *Millennium Guide to Cultural Resources on the Web* thus shows that cultural diversity may be displayed and reconstructed on the web in ways that allow historically unprecedented exchanges through multilingual practices. It is advisable that communication networks promote linguistic diversity through the promotion of national and vernacular languages while ensuring that cultural richness has the widest possible dissemination through languages understood by other international audiences. Cultural knowledge on the web must be made accessible in multilingual form.

Clearly, the usefulness of this Guide will depend on the evolution and reshaping of

the web culturescape. Given the rapidity with which it will no doubt change, a second step will be to make it available online in order to continue to update website addresses and to include other categories of cultural resources as part of the undertaking of a permanent Observatory of Cultural websites.

Making such virtual cultural resources available in worldwide networks is essential to highlighting culture in all spheres of the information society. Locating culture in virtual networks will ensure that all

cultural models be made present in the worldwide webs of information, as the World Commission on Culture and Development has stated, and that this commission's vision of development rooted in culture be disseminated in the broadest possible way.

Note

1. See the *World Communication and Information Report 19992000*, pp. 284296 ('Annexe', Section 3), Paris, UNESCO, 1999.

museum *international*

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