Kropper på utstilling – døde og levende – har fått en sentral plass i dette nummeret av Nordisk Museologi. Gjennom fire artikler kan vi følge hvordan kropp iscenesettes i utstillinger, og vi håper at våre lesere vil ta imot utfordringen fra våre gjesteredaktører Anne-Sofie Hjemdahl og Silje Opdahl Mathisen om å reflektere over hvilket arbeid kropper og kroppformer gjør i utstillinger. Hvorfor blir vi så fascinert av disse kroppene, og hvilken makt ligger det i framstille egne og andres kropper? Og hvordan har både fascinasjonen og makten endret seg historisk? De fire første artiklene tematiserer på både overraskende og urovekkende vis disse endringene.

Kropper er også viktige i de øvrige artiklene i dette nummeret, selv om det er andre temaer som er hovedfokus. Bjørn Sverre Hol Haugen tar for seg draktutstillings historie med tid som prisme. Der sted har vært utgangspunkt for fremvisning av drakt, har tid vært bestemmende for framvisning av mote. Disse logikkene har blitt utfordret av forskning og etter hvert også i utstillingsproduksjon, og draktens historie er ikke hva den en gang var, verken i forskning eller på utstilling.

Utgangspunktet for Peter van der Meijdens artikkel er kunst som først og fremst genererer kroppslige erfaringer. Gjennom å utforske denne kunstformen, primært gjennom FLUXUS-relatert kunst, utfordrer han tanken om at kunst alltid blir objektivert i utstillinger. Ved å stille ut også kunstverkens tilblivelse i møte med publikums reaksjoner – både som kunstverk og iscenesettelse – kan museene gi tilskuere en opplevelse av både verk og den prosessen den en gang satte i gang, hevder han.

For Theis Vallø Madsen er det nærværs-teori som settes på prøve i et eksperiment der museumskartet blir utgangspunkt i en søken etter hva nærvær er og kan være. Museeines oversiktskart er, som Vallø Madsen også påpeker, et av de minst sannsynlige steder å lete etter produksjonen av nærvær i museet. Så må leseren selv bestemme hva det egentlig er han finner gjennom sitt eksperiment.

Som vanlig har vi også prosjekter og anmeldelser. Vi tror stadig at disse bidrar til å vise bredden og ikke minst nærværet til museologien i de nordiske landene.

I redaksjonen har vi arbeidet intenst over det siste året for å gjøre tidskriftet mer tilgjengelig, og da først og fremst ved å publisere alt innhold

Brita Brenna
Introduction Bodyworks

Four of the contributions in this issue of the Journal of Nordic Museology are grouped together in a theme section called Bodyworks. This reflects a shared curiosity about, and interest in, exhibited bodies and what they do, their agency, in exhibitions. Museums and their exhibitions are normally seen as object-focused, where the objects on display – and the stories they tell – are the most important part of the exhibition. The four authors in this issue approach exhibition analysis from a different angle and focus on how museum bodies – whether human or animal – are present in exhibitions.

The classical art museums and galleries are full of bodies, depicted on canvases or in sculptural form, showing bodies processed into works of art. The essays in this special issue probe the fate of bodies on other arenas where natural and cultural histories are exhibited. Here bodies serve other functions, as signs, as evidence or as illustrations, to name but the most obvious. The bodies examined in Bodyworks can be real, living human bodies, as is the case in Anne Folke Henningsen’s article about a group of Namibians performing in the experimental archaeological park Lejre in Denmark in 2010, or they can be mannequins or hyper-real reproductions of human bodies, as in Marzia Varutti’s contribution about the role such bodies play in some museums in Eastern Asia. Mannequins of human bodies can also appear beside taxidermied animals, as in Silje Opdahl Mathisen’s text about Sámi exhibitions. Yet another version of exhibited bodies is the painstakingly scientific reconstruction based on ancient human remains, as Anne-Sofie Hjemdahl writes about in the article “Facing skeletons. Reflections on three Stone Age portraits”.

Bodyworks is an exploration of how bodies are used in exhibitions and the work these bodies are set to do. The authors ask why and how bodies have played a prominent role in exhibition-making in museums of natural and cultural history. The different case studies range from live exhibitions to ethnic groups, to forensic recreations, taxidermied animals and mannequins representing a social class or ethnicity. The motives and strategies for displaying bodies are varied. This again feeds into important questions about communication and the role of the museum in contemporary society. The questions concerning the exhibited bodies are ethical, political, economic and practical.

A core issue in the different articles is the question of authenticity and the real. Exhibition techniques in the second half of the nineteenth century were preoccupied with showing “the real”. Photography, wax dolls, etc. all made claims to realistic representations. These concerns were shared by exhibition organizers and museum people who believed in an object-based epistemology where knowledge would be garnered by seeing and handling the real object. The real object could be people who were presented as “themselves”. It could be mannequins that were realistically made, representing individuals. Or it could be animals crafted into taxidermic specimens that were arranged to make a perfect illusion of reality. Exhibitions with mannequins and live persons are historically connected to the folk museums, a Scandinavian invention from the latter part of the nineteenth century. Into the twentieth century, these forms of representation came under attack – the real, when it came to animals, were to be found in their cells, not in their skin, and laboratory biology
can tell us something about the agency of the living compared to the agency of the body form. Putting live bodies on display or exhibiting mannequins has traditionally been seen as an objectifying operation, as an action that turns subjects into objects. We seek to challenge and discuss the commonsensical divide between the agency of objects (no agency) and people (have agency). We seek to add nuances to this divide: there are differences other than the commonsensical distinction between having or not having agency. Bodies, and especially human bodies, in exhibitions are something more than an object. They occupy a space in between the categories objects and subjects, and appear as a form of subject–objects. This hybrid status is part of what makes the exhibited bodies both fascinating and hard to grasp analytically.

Bodies on display send a powerful invitation to the museum visitor. Our bodies are central to how we see ourselves both individually and collectively. We seek ourselves in others. The body is a site of communality and conflict, of belonging and of difference. The exhibited bodies speak both to our intellect and to our feelings. This ambiguity has intrigued us to investigate the work these bodies actually do in different settings in museum exhibitions. How bodies are used in exhibitions is a topic that deserves greater interest.

The exhibited body has fascinated audiences for more than 150 years. Part of this fascination is morbid, as the example from the travelling exhibition *Body Worlds* shows us in the extreme. There is a more subtle morbidity in that the exhibited bodies in the form of mannequins and stuffed animals are simultaneously lifeless and lifelike. There is also an element of recognition in seeing something that is almost like us, but not quite. Why are we still fascinated by the exhibited body? In what way has the nature of this fascination changed during the time such bodies have been on display?

What is the status of a mannequin representing a human or animal body? Should it be seen as an object or a subject, or both? It is difficult and problematic to compare live people on display with mannequins, but this can tell us something about the agency of the living compared to the agency of the body form.

1. **Body Worlds** is a travelling exhibition originally created by Gunther von Hagens. The exhibition shows skinned human bodies and body parts, preserved by a technique called plastination, which was invented by von Hagens. Body Worlds has, in various forms, toured since 1995, and can be seen in Trondheim, Norway, in 2017.
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Mannequins, history and memory in museums.
Insights from the Northern European and East-Asian contexts

Marzia Varutti

Abstract: What are the rationale, significance and implications of the use of reproductions of the human body in contemporary historical museums? This article probes this question through a critical analysis of diverse uses of body simulacra – specifically mannequins and life-size figures – in historical museums in Taiwan and China. The discussion of the East-Asian case study is set against examples from historical representations of the body in Northern Europe as a way to offer a comparative perspective that casts light on the uniqueness and similarities among these geo-cultural areas. This material enables me to reflect on the changing and diverse roles of mannequins in historical displays – in Western (North European) and non-Western contexts – ranging from materializations of the national past, its heroes and martyrs, aiming to canonize History as distant and authoritative, to display devices that strive to generate personal understandings of the past through memories and emotions.

Keywords: Past, memory, mannequins, museums, Taiwan.

The National Museum of Taiwan History opened in late 2011 in a magnificent, futuristic building in the city of Tainan, Southern Taiwan. The Museum is ground-breaking in many respects. It is the first and only devoted to the history of Taiwan and its people; it required twelve years of preparation and intense consultations with hundreds of experts (including historians, anthropologists and archaeologists) as well as community members. The latest technologies were deployed to enhance visitors’ experience. The most striking and visually impressive feature is the large number of life-size figures: over 200 hyper-real reproductions of historical and fictional personalities are to be found in the galleries.

Why has a twenty-first century, state-of-the-art national museum of history chosen to resort to mannequins and life-size figures as one of its main exhibition tools? More broadly, what are the rationale, significance and implications of such reproductions of the human body in contemporary historical museums?

This article endeavours to probe these questions through a critical analysis of diverse strategies of display and contextualization of body simulacra – specifically mannequins and life-size figures – in historical museums...
in Taiwan and, in a comparative perspective, in nineteenth century Northern Europe. This analysis suggests the sustained significance – across time and different geo-cultural contexts – of human figures as display techniques, notably in historical representations.

The study draws on case studies of historical exhibitions in Taiwan (including at the Shihshangan Archaeological Museum and the National Museum of Taiwan History), in China¹ (at the Site of the First Congress of the Communist Party of China), as well as in the Northern European context, in order to offer a contrasting comparative perspective.

The article opens with some preliminary theoretical considerations on the issues surrounding the public display of human bodies and body reproductions. I will then move on to consider the potentials and limits of mannequins and realistic wax figures as display techniques. These general considerations will be contextualized with reference to historical exhibitions (using examples from the Northern European context) and further grounded in concrete examples of displays through the case studies of museums in Taiwan and China. The article aims to show how – across different historical, cultural and museological contexts – human figures and reproductions have been a particularly efficient and consequential display technique, able to fascinate viewers across time and space, and uniquely apt to materialize national pasts and canonize History, but also able to engender more personal understandings of the past through individual and collective memories and emotions.

**DISPLAYING THE BODY AND ITS SUBSTITUTES: SOME THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES**

The human body is an object of knowledge as much as it is an instrument of knowledge, a tool through which knowledge about oneself and the world can be gained. One of the main interests of the human body for the social sciences resides in its intrinsic character of interface between the personal – the body as carrier of individual subjectivity – and the social – the body as a signifier of one's place in society, the core of the bundle of social relations in which one lives. In other words, the human body can be understood both as “what circumscribes the social person, the very site of the self” (Breton 2006:14, my translation) and as a catalyst for social relationships, whose nature is dependent on cultural and historical factors. Thanks to these prerogatives, the human body is evocative, symbolic and metaphoric; it can stand for other concepts, such as humanity, race or gender. As a result the body is a prime site of construction, contestation and negotiation of individual and collective identities.

These considerations apply not only to the human body as such, but also to its representations and simulacra – all the more if displayed in public venues such as museums. Museum depictions of bodies are constitutive and revelatory of specific view points and ways of envisioning the human body; American performance studies scholar Petra Kuppers (2004:125) aptly reminds us that “envisioning” entails “translation, interpretation, intervention”. Thus museum representations of the body are worthy of attention because they express a specific imaginary about those bodies’ identities. I am particularly concerned here with the potential of body representations in museums to convey cultural and racial difference. Museums are particularly meaningful sites in this respect since “if we are to understand how ethnicities and cultures are racialized we have to consider
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the ways in which they become visualized, not only as bodies but also within broader social contexts of cultural expression” (Ali 2008:83).

The ties between museums and bodies are long-standing and multifaceted. Science museums, ethnographic, art and antiquities museums have historically provided the main contexts for the display of the human body and its representations. Most museum visitors are accustomed to the sight of Egyptian mummified bodies in antiquities museums, and of body specimen in science museums. British visual and cultural studies scholars Mara Gladstone and Janet Catherine Berlo (2011:355) note that “[d]isplaying the bodies of cultural others for the entertainment and edification of European and American audiences long predates the institution of the modern museum, going back to sixteenth-century displays of Aztec and Brazilian Indians in Europe”. Moreover, since at least the eighteenth century, wax anatomical models have been used and displayed in anatomy and medical museums (Pirson 2009).

In context of nineteenth century human evolutionary theories, and in parallel with the development of biological anthropology, body features became prominent criteria for the study of ethnic groups. This provided legitimization for the display of human beings and human remains as curiosities and as “scientific” specimen of human “races” (Lynch & Alberti 2010:18). Eager to distance themselves from such past colonial practices, Western museums are increasingly reluctant to display and store human remains – a position that is matched by increasing requests of repatriation of these from source communities worldwide.

In natural history and ethnographic museums, the depiction of the anatomical and cultural differences among ethnic groups was eased by the use of life-size figures and mannequins as replacement for real human beings. The display of anatomical parts and realistic wax models in mainstream museums started to decline in the twentieth century as a result of changed sensitivities and approaches to the body, and the development of a collective understanding that such displays may be disrespectful for those displayed and for viewers. Significantly, in the United States museum mannequins are often featureless since a mannequin with features would be perceived as having racist connotations (Sabloff 2002:94).

Mannequins have however far from disappeared from ethnographic displays. The persistent use of mannequins in contemporary ethnographic exhibitions may in part be ascribed to the prominent role that they played in the past as a display technique. Commenting on a collaborative project of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) with source communities, Canada-based communication studies scholar Miranda Brady (2009:145) notes that

if consultants to the NMAI were concerned with the implications of dioramas and life-size, lifeless-looking mannequins, why does the museum continue to include them? One explanation for the persistence of the dioramas in the NMAI and other residual practices is that while community curators were given the opportunity to self-present, their understanding of such self-presentation comes from the traditional museum form with which they are accustomed.

This tendency may in some instances even denote a self-orientalizing approach, whereby the display curated (or informed) by source communities ends up by reinforcing the very stereotypes that post-colonial and new museological approaches attempt to displace.
Further evidence that the use of mannequins as a display technique is not necessarily perceived as problematic by source communities is provided by Canadian anthropologist Julia Harrison’s (2005:34) account of Blackfoot elders’ involvement in the making of the exhibition Nitsitapiisinni. Our Way of Life, held at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary in 2001. Blackfoot elders expressly requested mannequins to be a central element of the display. In the context of the exhibition-making, Blackfoot elders approached with “hilarity” the experience of posing as models for plaster casts, and seeing themselves reproduced as wax figures in the gallery’s diorama was “an experience of pride and honor” (Harrison 2005:34). Indeed – in stark contrast with the politically correct featureless mannequins in the United States (see Sabloff above) – the very fact that the mannequins were identifiable with living persons in the local Blackfoot community was key in framing the dioramas as “positive” display devices. In this respect, Canadian curator Alexandra Palmer (1988:9) notes that

the use of made-up faces, wigs and complete accessories leads one to explore social history, manners and custom. Abstract faces and minimal detailing tend to represent the costume as art object, the mannequin providing the frame. Realistic faces draw our attention as we tend to ‘read’ them before focusing on other details.

Bodies and body reproductions have also long been the subject of artistic production. For instance, during European Renaissance, wax effigies were considered high expressions of artistry, whilst in later periods they would be associated with lower forms of sculptural expression. Interestingly, the likeliness to life of wax sculptures (and the connected ability to deceive the viewer) were the main reasons for their low artistic recognition. As Italian art historian Roberta Panzanelli (2008:5) notes, “the very indexicality and mimetic powers of wax made its status in the canonical aesthetics of art even more uncertain”. Incidentally, it seems ironic that a few centuries later, that very likeliness to the real body would decree the international success of exhibitions such as Gunther von Hagen’s Body Worlds, where the notion of likeliness is indeed transcended by the use of real dead bodies treated through plastination.

Among museum professionals and academics, the use of wax figures, mannequins and dioramas in the context of exhibitions tends to be associated with outdated, problematic approaches to display that disregard the critique of museums’ modus operandi brought about by the post-colonial and new museology literature (Harrison 2005:35). Yet, the permanence of wax models and mannequins in museums bears witness to a lingering fascination for the body on display. Part of the reason for this might lie in the idea of immortality that the wax models suggest. Some scholars (Feigenbaum 2008:vi) draw emphasis on the paradoxical capacity of wax sculpture to be both fragile in its materiality and (semi-)permanent in its representation of the human body. Panzanelli (2008:2) also reminds us that the extreme realism of some wax models “transports the representation of life into the ‘realm of the immortal dead’”. The wax mannequin, paradoxically, may become an emblem of death (see Kendrick 1998).

In this vein, it has been noted that mannequins representing human beings defy the aim of dioramas to recreate a real-life situation, since the presence of mannequins is a forceful and inevitable reminder of the diorama’s artificiality. As American natural sciences scholar Karen Wonders (1993:17)
puts it, “attempts to create the human form fail to arouse the trompe l’œil effect that is the aim of the habitat diorama. No matter how realistic a human model may be, there is always an intuitive sense of its falseness […]”. American visual culture scholar Mark Sandberg (2002:1–2) corroborates this point by noticing that the presence of a mannequin requires viewers to negotiate its uncanny resemblance to a real person; conversely, the very absence of a body on display enables viewers’ imaginary engagement with it.

However, as Jane Insley (2008) points out, it is important to distinguish between habitat dioramas (which aim to reproduce a natural environment and to create an illusion of reality) and dioramas including life-size reproductions of human beings. The purpose of the latter “is not to deceive but to convince” (Insley 2008:27). In other words, human life figures in dioramas are believed to make an argument more persuasive, to make a point.

Regardless of curatorial intentions, the likeliness of human-like models blurs the boundaries between the “real” and the “fake”, creating a loss of certainty that may produce quite diverse responses in viewers. Some viewers may wish to move away from the uncomfortable zone of not knowing whether an object is animate or inanimate (what Sigmund Freud has labelled “the uncanny”). Conversely, other viewers may approach the model as a springboard for imaginative plots and may enjoy dwelling in what German curator Uta Kornmeier (2008:67) has labelled “the waxwork moment” that is “the time it takes the spectator to decide that a convincing human shape is, in fact, an artifact and not the ‘real thing’.”

In searching for explanations for the persistent fascination that human reproductions exert, one might also take into account the sheer spell they cast on viewers; the care and attention to the detail that has been put in the making of the wax figures is a central factor in their efficacy as tools of display. This might be explained through British anthropologist Alfred Gell’s (1994:45) concept of “the enchantment of technology”, referring to “the power that technical processes have of casting a spell over us so that we see the real world in an enchanted form”. This enchantment acts through the impressive verisimilitude of wax figures to real human bodies, together with the often considerable historical research that is put in the details of garments, accessories, and hairstyles of each single figure. The enchantment of mannequins’ technology can then account for yet another facet of their spell on audiences.

But do these considerations extend equally to any kind of display? What happens when the mannequin becomes a witness of the past, or when the reproduction of a body is framed as historical “evidence”? In what follows, I turn to examine the role of bodies – notably life-size figures and mannequins – in the context of historical exhibitions. I first consider the pioneering work of Artur Hazelius in nineteenth century Europe, and then set the Taiwanese and Chinese case studies against this background.

**Human figures in nineteenth century Northern European displays**

Reproductions of the body (or of body parts) can be frequently found in antiquities, medicine, or ethnographic museums; they are now relatively little used in the context of historical displays, at least in Western Europe. Mostly, life-size figures and mannequins are not perceived as historical artefacts; at best,
they are “interpretations” of historical figures, or material supports for historical items such as textile garments and body adornments. Thus widespread use of mannequins in contemporary historical displays may be perceived as an index of poor historical collections and research. Tellingly, over the twentieth century most mainstream Western European historical museums have gradually phased out mannequins and realistic figures, which were replaced by video and photographic documentation providing contextualization for the objects on display.

Yet it is worth pondering the specific context of Northern Europe as life-size figures, mannequins and body reproductions played a very special role in the development of historical displays and museum categories (specifically folk museums and open air museums) in nineteenth century Sweden, Norway and Denmark (see Sandberg 2002; DeGroff 2012). Consideration of the use of human figures in the nineteenth century Northern European historical displays offers an intriguing term of reference for the subsequent analysis of human figures in East-Asian museums.

In Europe, the use of wax dummies to display folk costumes dates back to the first world exhibitions; however, it was in the Paris World Exhibition, in 1867, that this display technique came to prominence. The Paris World Exhibition committee requested that all the participants send wax dummies with folk costumes to the planned exhibition. In this context, folk costumes were supposed to symbolize national cultural diversity. The Swedish and Norwegian costumes were the most popular among visitors, both for the realistic style of the figures and for the narrative arrangement that enabled visitors to grasp complete scenes of rural and peasant life. Allegedly, two visitors at the Paris Universal Exposition in 1867 commented on the human figures on display in this way: “To say of which substance these Danish, Swedish and Norwegian figures were made, that would be impossible: it is not wax, not plaster, not stone; it is a composition unknown to us, one which lends itself wonderfully to the representation of the human body” (Ducuing quoted in DeGroff 2012:232). It seems then plausible to think that even in this early date, the Nordic countries had already started to develop unique and innovative techniques for the reproduction of body features in forms of display.

But it would be with Artur Hazelius that the reproductions of human figures in displays would be elevated to a technical and artistic feat. Hazelius (1833–1901) is considered a pioneer figure in the realm of wax figures and tableaux vivants. The founder of the Nordic Museum, in the 1870s Hazelius exhibited in Stockholm his collection of Swedish peasant traditional costumes from the Dalecarlia region. Instead of wax mannequins, Hazelius and his collaborators experimented with plaster figures, paying unprecedented attention to the reproduction of human-like features. He would eventually go on to establish Skansen, the first open air museum in 1891. Skansen displayed “living scenes” including life-size costumed figures that were especially powerful in creating a very realistic setting, making this museum extremely popular to this date (see Berg 1980).

Human figures were a key feature in the tableaux vivants – realistic group life scenes – which in turn epitomize the Northern European folk museum and open air museum exhibitionary models, and set the Northern context apart in the European and international context. The development of such display techniques in late nineteenth century Northern Europe is better understood
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In the light of the political and ideological contexts of the time – a time when concepts of national identity, “Scandinavian” identity, as well as “modernity” were gradually coagulating (see Stoklund 1994, 1999; Sandberg 2002; Bäckström 2011; DeGroff 2012). Cultural displays, and their human figures, were part and parcel of these processes. Interestingly, in spite of contemporary associations of folk museums with rural, peasant, “traditional” lifestyles and cultures (and the nostalgic feelings that underscore these representations), in the second half of the nineteenth century Northern Europe, the depictions of folk life in folk museums actually operated as indexes of “visual modernity” (Sandberg 2002). Such representations were also directly linked to the coeval processes of nation-building in the Nordic countries. As Mattias Bäckström has argued, these representations can also be interpreted as vehicles of national ideologies and expression of patriotism (Bäckström 2011; cf. Stoklund 1994, 1999). At the same time Magdalena Hillström cautions against a reductionist interpretation of folk and open air museums in the nineteenth century as merely showcases for the nation. Rather, she argues, that pan-Nordic ideas of “Scandinavianism”, understood as referring to “a cultural community transcending politically defined territories” played a role in the development of Nordic museums at the time, and were specifically influential for pioneer figures such as Hazelius (Hillström 2010:604).

But what about the use of mannequins in historical exhibitions today – in Northern Europe and the Western world in general? Whilst until a few decades ago an historical costume might have been presented on a mannequin with realistic features, in a contemporary exhibition that same costume is more likely to be presented through display techniques that erase any reference to the human body, such as invisible suspending threads, or hidden hangers. These display techniques ease the transition of the costume from the status of personal belonging to that of a symbol, that is, an object that is made to stand for something else – an historical period, a trend in fashion, a social class (see also Varutti 2011). At the same time, the editing out of the human body draws attention on the costume's materiality (the fabric, the patterns, the colours, the tailoring etc.) which may be one of the goals of the display.2

In contrast to Western and Northern Europe today, in Taiwan and China mannequins and life-size figures are extensively deployed in historical exhibitions. These brief notes on the unique and visionary deployment of human figures and reproductions in displays pioneered by Hazelius act as a foil, an historical and ideological Northern European background which can be fruitfully contrasted with the East-Asian (Taiwanese and Chinese) case studies discussed below.

In what follows, I will draw on examples of historical exhibitions in Taiwan to suggest that the use of body reproductions is not perceived as problematic in that context, rather it has become a museological asset.

Human figures in historical exhibitions in Taiwan

In Taiwan both museums and their audiences appear to be relatively comfortable with the presence of human remains and reproductions of the human body in historical exhibitions; not only are they non-problematic, but indeed they are instrumental in conveying a sense of historical depth.3

Below I consider examples of bodies on display: the first concerns a display of human
remains at the National Taiwan Museum. The second pertains to a display of a hyper-realistic human mannequin at the Shihsanhang Museum of Archaeology in Bali, near Taipei, and the last ponders exhibitions in the National Museum of Taiwan History (NMTH) in Tainan.

Death is Just Another Beginning. Legend of the Taiwanese mummy: Ko Hsiang was a major exhibition held in Spring 2013 at the National Taiwan Museum in Taipei. In the exhibition, a mummified body becomes the catalyst for a range of historical, cultural and scientific narratives.

The exhibition tells the story of Ko Hsiang, a man living in Dapi village, in Southern Taiwan, in the second half of the nineteenth century, believed to have been a living Buddha. At his death, the body was allegedly found in a mummified state and became the object of veneration in a local temple. In 1912, the body was seized by Japanese police in occasion of an anti-Japanese movement that had developed among followers of the Ko Hsiang cult in Yunlin. The body was subsequently kept in Japanese police headquarters as “criminal evidence”. With the end of the Japanese colonial rule in 1945 and the subsequent establishment of the Chinese Kuomintang government in Taiwan, the Police offices in which the body of Ko Hsiang was kept were re-organized into the Taiwan Police Academy, and Ko Hsiang’s mummified body was used as specimen in criminal anatomy classes. In 1993 the body was accessed in the collections of the National Taiwan Museum, and in 2011 for the first time since 1912, it was displayed for six months in a temple in the village of Dapi, in Yunlin, where it re-ignited ancient legends and veneration practices.4

The reconstruction of the biography of the body of Ko Hsiang opens up a plurality of narrative lines in the exhibition, as the body transited across different realms of signification and was endowed with different status as a living person, an object of religious veneration, an item of scientific research and education, and a cultural and historical specimen in a museum. In particular, Ko Hsiang’s physical remains – defined in the exhibition as “material evidence of history” – provide the springboard for an exploration of the multiple historical accounts and interpretations of this character emerging from newspapers and interviews throughout the twentieth century and up to today. These historical documents offer unique insights on the layers of history unfolding in Taiwan, from the Qing Dynasty period (during which Ko Hsiang lived) to the Japanese colonisation (from 1895 to 1950, to which Ko Hsiang was allegedly opposed), the subsequent reinstatement of the Chinese rule (in 1949) and up to contemporary religious practices.

Furthermore, the body of Ko Hsiang enables the museum to engage with a range of anthropological and museological questions. These included the religious practices developed in different cultures and in different times around human bodies resisting decay; the scientific, cultural, historical and religious significance of a mummified body in a museum; as well as the techniques of textile conservation applied to Ko Hsiang’s original clothing items. At the same time, the agency of Ko Hsiang was powerfully actualized by the museum, as the exhibition contributed to engender cultural and religious activities in the local community in Ko Hsiang’s original village, thus reviving not only the ancient beliefs and religious practices fuelled by the human remains, but also the overall cultural identity of the village.

I now turn to my second example. The Shihsanhang Museum of Archaeology in Bali, near Taipei – a national level museum
Materializing the past found in the archaeological excavations. The resulting head reproduction blends scientific research – archaeological study of cranial structures and facial features – and speculation (about the clothing items, hairstyle and body adornments). Nevertheless, the museum panels conclude: “The final work is a wax reproduction of the head of a resident of Shihsanhang”. In this instance, it is not so much the historical and scientific accuracy of the mannequin that primes, as its ability to convey the image of an ancient inhabitant of the site. It is also interesting to note how the process of creation of a mannequin, usually confined to museum storages and laboratories, finds its way in the exhibition room and becomes part of the

inaugurated in 2003 displaying prehistoric finds of human settlements dating back to around 1,800 years ago – makes large use of mannequins and figurines in its exhibitions. The mannequins are meant to depict the ancient inhabitants of the Bali region, and to complement the display of the archaeological finds relating to the Shihsanhang prehistoric culture (mostly pottery items and iron tools and fragments, as well as human remains). The museum’s permanent exhibition describes in great detail the making of the wax head of an hyper-realistic mannequin; attention is drawn on the use of the latest technologies and on the scientific foundations of the reproduction, based on the study of skulls found in the archaeological excavations. The

Fig. 1. Stages in the making of the head reproduction. Shihsanhang Museum of Archaeology, Bali. Photo by the author.
explain, or to classify historical evidence in a painstaking way. Curators and artists conceive and curate them to tell a story, impress the senses and to persuade the mind. "Through the mannequin wax head and the small size figurines in dioramas, the visitors of the Shihsanhang Archaeological Museum are able to visualize and literally give a face to the ancient inhabitants of the area.

As mentioned, in nineteenth century ethnographic museums mannequins were usually reserved to the representation of the “Others”; this was not the case, however, in Northern European folk and open air museums, where life-size figures with detailed folk costumes were displayed in recreated settings. In this instance, the human figures were instead meant to display the cultural richness of the nation to its own citizens, as part and parcel of a process of nation-envisioning and nation-building.

In a similar way, the examples discussed above suggest that in contemporary Taiwanese museums mannequins are used in representations of Taiwanese themselves. This is all the more evident at the National Museum of Taiwan History (NMTH) in Tainan. Here dioramas, mannequins and wax figures are the centre-piece of the permanent display Our Land, Our People. The Story of Taiwan. Over two hundred life-size wax figures feature in dioramas depicting everyday life scenes, as they might have happened in the past – such as the boat journey to Taiwan of migrants from mainland China, the trade between Han settlers and indigenous peoples in Taiwan, the sawing of the rice, as well as annual rituals and celebrations. The mannequins in the museum gallery are not sealed in glass cases; their accessibility is further enhanced by their positioning (on the same level as the visitor), facial expressions (hieratic smiles) and body display. It could be said that this is a meta-display, that is, a display of the making of a technology of display. In the Shihsanhang exhibition, the mannequin head is no longer a sign – it does not reproduce something existing somewhere else – rather, it gains value in its own right, it becomes itself a specimen, an object worthy of attention, almost elevated to the status of historical artefact. The display of the making of the wax head also reveals a curatorial assumption about the visitors’ interest in such topic – suggesting that Alfred Gell’s “enchantment of technology” might be at play here.

Other displays at the Shihsanhang Museum use small size figurines in dioramas depicting the ancient indigenous inhabitants of the site; the figurines portray individuals intent in the extraction and melting of iron, and the making and firing of pottery items. Although they do not qualify as historical items per se, these small figurines fulfil the important function of evoking Shihsanhang’s ancient world and its inhabitants. The museum’s website corroborates this point:

On display are the results of archaeological research combined with reasoned hypotheses, which were used to recreate images of how the people of Shihsanhang probably lived […] The aim is to make the distant lives of these people seem as realistic as possible. […] As a result, this presentation of aboriginal life is particularly vivid making it all the easier to imagine oneself watching the past in motion.6

The purpose of dioramas at the Shihsanhang Archaeological Museum seems to comply with German museologist and historian Klaus Schreiner’s (1997:106) note that “dioramas as a specific medium of presentation are – by definition – not designed to analyze, to
Materializing the past

Lively depiction of the past through detailed reconstructions of real-life situations, but also provide a springboard for emplotment, discussions and personal recollections. For instance, at the inauguration of the NMTH, in October 2011, I could notice visitors closely inspecting the dioramas and lively discussing the scenes represented.

At the NMTH, the permanent exhibition on the history of Taiwan is structured in layers of information, whereby each layer is constituted of a different media: dioramas occupy the centre of the exhibition space, museum panels and objects are located along its edges, and historical photos, documents, maps and paintings provide backgrounds on the walls. This layout is meant to offer visitors different points of entry into the display and different degrees of depth and detail of historical

postures (often slightly opening their arms). Moreover, the wax figures are often positioned in ways that allow – and indeed invite – photo opportunities, whereby the visitor can take a photo next to the mannequin. Such physical proximity becomes the gateway to a kind of historical proximity.

This use of space – and the construction of vistas and points of view in and on the display – is reminiscent of Tony Bennett’s (1995) analysis of the exhibitionary complex and its role (through the politics of vision and visuality) in conveying a sense of belonging and citizenship. Yet in Taiwanese museums, those same goals of nation-building seem to be mediated by other aspects: a sense of light-heartedness and camaraderie in sharing a playful experience that has some binding force. Indeed, dioramas not only produce a lively depiction of the past through detailed reconstructions of real-life situations, but also provide a springboard for emplotment, discussions and personal recollections. For instance, at the inauguration of the NMTH, in October 2011, I could notice visitors closely inspecting the dioramas and lively discussing the scenes represented.

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Fig. 2. Mannequins staging a ritual procession. National Museum of Taiwan History, Tainan. Photo by the author.
information. In this layout, dioramas and wax figures do not detract from the capacity of the exhibition to convey detailed information, nor from the ability of visitors to closely observe “real” historical artefacts. Rather, dioramas, objects, texts and images complement each other providing a visually powerful representation of what the people of the past might have looked like, of what their lives might have been. The mannequin acts here as a link between the Taiwanese of today and those of the past; tellingly, the display is not so much about “History” as about “stories”, it aims to recall and trigger individual and collective memories, and to make them relevant to contemporary definitions of Taiwanese identity. The end result is an historical exhibition that succeeds in maintaining a sharp focus on the centrality of human beings in the historical narrative. Viewed from the museum’s top floor, the permanent gallery offers a unique scene whereby visitors mingle with wax figures creating an intriguing landscape of animate and inanimate bodies – the ultimate conflation of Taiwan’s past and present.

In a broader East-Asian perspective, it is interesting to consider how the significance and use of mannequins and wax figures in Taiwanese historical exhibitions contrasts with the use made of these same display
tools in Chinese museums. Mannequins and reproductions of historical figures are widely used in China. In particular, wax figures depicting key national political figures are prominently displayed in national museums such as the Military Museum and the National Museum of China in Beijing, as well as the Site of the First Congress of the Communist Party of China, in Shanghai. In these highly politicized contexts, the wax reproductions of major historical figures contribute to create an aura of charisma, instantiating and perpetuating a cult of personality that is central to Communist political ideology (see Wagner 1992; Watson 1995; Varutti 2014).

For instance, at the Site of the First Congress of the Communist Party of China, in Shanghai, visitors are presented with a diorama showing thirteen life-size wax reproductions of the founding members of the Communist Party – including Mao Zhe-Dong – discussing around a table. The scene is supposed to be observed at a distance; visitors cannot move close to the wax figures, which are positioned on a raised platform and protected by a glass barrier. The scene is self-contained, the wax figures do not address the viewer, who is merely a spectator. In this case, adding a fourteenth empty chair to the table for visitors to sit and take photos – as it might be done in the spirit of museums in Taiwan – might be perceived not only as historically inaccurate, but also as inappropriate. The wax figures play here the ever important role of creating the impression that the depicted persons and/or events are frozen in a permanent present. These display techniques, and by extension these national sites, enable generations of Chinese visitors to get themselves acquainted with, and pay homage to, the father-figures of the nation, and thus to implicitly subscribe to national narratives of heroism and sacrifice. These wax figures operate as metonyms for the national past: they represent key personalities in the official national narrative of China, their function is both didactic and charismatic. Little or no space is left to personal recollections or discussion: Chinese past has to be apprehended, more than shared.

Conversely, it is intriguing to notice that at the National Museum of Taiwan History, the wax figures are seldom reproductions of known personalities. Most often they represent anonymous individuals to which visitors can relate on an equal level. The wax figures are here pointers towards personal stories, they offer a bottom-up perspective on the national past, not seen through the official historical narrative, but emerging from the juxtaposition of personal and collective memories.

Conclusions: Bodies in museums across time and space

Human bodies and their substitutes (such as wax figures and mannequins) have long been objects of public display, in nineteenth century Northern Europe as in contemporary Taiwanese museums. As such, they have also long spurred contrasting feelings, ranging from fascination to concern, from discomfort to pride. Whilst since the eighteenth century, mannequins, wax figures and dioramas have been widely deployed in the context of medical and ethnographic exhibitions, they have been less prominent in historical exhibitions.

In this paper, I have used examples from historical exhibitions in Taiwan, Northern Europe, and to a lesser extent, China, to cast light on the different roles and impacts of human remains and reproductions of the human body in the form of wax figures and mannequins. I have shown how such remains and reproductions can uphold quite diverse
narratives of the past, ranging from narratives that focus on national heroes and martyrs and aim to canonize an authoritative and official historical account (as in the case of the Site of the First Congress of the Communist Party of China), to more open narrative lines that aim to convey and generate individual memories and emotions in visitors (as in the Taiwanese museums discussed, and to large extent, in nineteenth century Northern European folk and open air museums).

In the mentioned exhibition Body Worlds, human beings are reduced to bodies, they are made anonymous. Humanity, personality and subjectivity are erased in order to enable the viewers’ detached gaze (see also Linke 2005:18). I argue that what remains is the sheer materiality of the body, turned into an object of display – a “scientific” specimen and a “work of art”. In short, bodies are de-humanized and objectified.

A reverse process appears to be in place in historical exhibitions in the museums of Taiwan. Here human remains are being again endowed with an identity and agency (as in the case of Ko Hsiang’s mummy) and mannequins and wax figures are being humanized in ways that are intriguingly reminiscent of Artur Hazelius’ approach to human figures in nineteenth century Northern European folk and open air museums. In this sense, the role of mannequins and similar human figures in the Taiwanese historical displays can be seen as not too distant from Hazelius’ tableaux vivants, which would become one of the defining features of Northern European museological approaches. In contemporary Taiwanese historical museums, as in Scandinavian nineteenth century folk museums, the “humanization” of body reproductions presents a physical, aesthetic facet – the figures are worked in extreme detail to resemble a real human being – as well as an emotional and social dimension, as visitors are enabled and invited to relate to displays through the memories and personal recollections evoked by the reconstruction of historical scenes in dioramas, and the experience of being “in the picture”, of being part of the display, also literally through photo opportunities with mannequins. In this sense, mannequins and similar figures can be said to operate as effective materializations of the past. And this seems to be the case irrespective of the two temporal and cultural contexts in which we place ourselves: In both their historical, Scandinavian rendition, and their contemporary Taiwanese interpretation, body reproductions such as mannequins continue to facilitate the connection between the present and the past by endowing the past with physical features and by enabling the establishment of new, personal, and emotional relationships with a past no longer distant and authoritative, but approachable. In Hazelius’ work, as in the contemporary Taiwanese museums discussed in this paper, the use of mannequins and reproductions of the human body are not perceived as problematic, nor reductive nor deceptive, but rather as tools easing the imagination of a shared past and of more cohesive national and local identities.

Notes

1. Research in China was conducted between 2003 and 2008 (with a return visit in 2012), and in Taiwan since 2010, as part of doctoral and post-doctoral studies.

2. An exception is the exhibition The Power of Fashion, opened at the Nordic Museum, Stockholm, in 2010 (https://www.nordiskmuseet.se/en/utstallningar/power-fashion) and displaying Swedish clothing items from the 1780s to the 1960s. In this instance, the exhibition
curators decided to use specially commissioned mannequins as support for the clothes. I am grateful to Eva Silvén for this information.

3. I am not implying however that human remains in displays, nor museum audiences in Taiwan are dealt with nonchalance. For instance, in the exhibition of Ko Hsiang’s human remains at the National Taiwan Museum, at the exhibition entrance a panel cautioned: "Warning: The content of this exhibition involves display of corpse and the issue of death. Children under the age of 10 require adult escorts. Adult audience please consider before entering to visit (sic)." National Taiwan Museum, Taipei. Last visited 5 March 2013.

4. This information was presented in the exhibition at the National Taiwan Museum.


7. I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer for reminding me of this link with Bennett’s theory.

8. Interview with the NMTH director, Professor Lu Li-Cheng, 28 June 2010.


**Literature**


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Performance and politics of authenticity in live ethnographic exhibitions

Anne Folke Henningsen

Abstract: In the summer 2010 a small group of Namibians visited Denmark in order to present and disseminate knowledge of the so-called Bushman culture in an experimental archaeological park outside Copenhagen. The staging of the event was in many ways similar to the kind of display that has been termed “human zoo” or “live ethnographic exhibition”, so popular in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but there were also significant differences to be found. The discourse of cultural and racial authenticity that informed the live ethnographic exhibitions a hundred years ago was also called upon in the performances in 2010. However, the political and to a certain extent the exhibition contexts were different, as were the possibilities of appropriating long-lasting and pervasive ideas of “Bushman-ness” to various political ends. In this article, the effects of the recent recurrence of this practice of live ethnographic exhibitions are analysed through concepts such as authenticity and coevalness and their wider political potentialities are discussed.

Keywords: Live ethnographic exhibitions, authenticity, ethno-politics, San people, Sagnlandet Lejre.

In late July 2010 I was hiking in Norway when my vacation was interrupted by urgent messages from colleagues directing my attention to and asking my opinion on an event in the experimental archaeological park Lejre outside Copenhagen. At the time I was carrying out a collaborative research project on live ethnographic exhibitions of so-called exotic people in Copenhagen in the decades around 1900 (see Andreasssen & Henningsen 2011). The event at Lejre, which was centred upon the participation of three so-called Bushmen from Namibia in a Stone Age festival, seemed to somehow mimic some of the practices of old – as one colleague put it when forwarding me information about the event: “Look, displays of savages still exist.”

Intrigued, I cut my holiday short and made it to Lejre on the very last day of the event without opportunity for much preparation in terms of setting up interviews or contacting the organisers. The ensuing fieldwork was thus both spontaneous and heavily informed by my ongoing studies of historic configurations of exotic bodies put on display.

The following article is mainly based on my
field notes, observations and readings of the event in Lejre that had so upset my colleagues and me. It also contains a discussion of strategic and political potentials of putting one’s own body on display, which has resulted in a slight reconsideration on my part of both the historical and the recurrent spectacles. Thus, there is and has been an ongoing conversation between the two fields – the historical practice of putting bodies on display for ethnographic entertainment and education and the recurrent version in Lejre – which in turn have destabilised some of my previous assumptions and conclusions, if only to a certain extent, and provided me with a more nuanced view on the phenomenon at hand.

The venue for this visit from southern Africa to Denmark requires a few words of introduction. The experimental archaeological park at Lejre outside Copenhagen was established in the mid-1960s with the aim of creating a space in which the distant Danish and European past – what is often termed “prehistory” – could be brought to life through experiments and hands-on experiences for the visitors. As presented in the mission statement of the park: “The mission of Sagnlandet Lejre is to produce and disseminate knowledge and wonderment about the way of life in the past through experimental archaeological research, re-enactment and teaching based on active participation.” (Internet source 1) Thus, with its population of professionals and amateurs experimenting with and re-enacting the cultures of the European Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages, visitors will always be expecting something out of the ordinary twenty-first-century behaviour upon entering the park: Men, women and children donning animal skins, grinding flour on rocks, spinning and dyeing wool, cooking over an open fire, and shooting with bows and arrows are all partaking in the attempt to bring the past to life before the eyes of the public and create an atmosphere of authenticity and ancient times. But on these summer days in 2010 new types of bodies were participating in the spectacle. A small group – three men and a woman – from Namibia had come to display the ancient ways of the so-called “Bushmen”. One man was of German-Namibian descent, the rest of the group belonged to the San group Ju/'hoansi, and it was the culture of the latter that the visitors from far away had come to present to the Danes and the visiting tourists in the park at Lejre. The term “Bushman” is controversial due to its roots in colonial southern Africa, where so-called Bushmen were considered to be at the very bottom of the evolutionary hierarchy and not necessarily fully human; a hierarchical taxonomy with catastrophic consequences for the so-called Bushmen. In the mid-twentieth century the word San was coined by anthropologists to replace the tainted word Bushman, but this construct is also subject to controversy and there are differences in which group denominator individuals and sub-groups prefer; most use more specific terminology referring to the sub-group in question – in this case Ju/'hoansi. Using the term “Bushmen” rather than the more precise Ju/'hoansi can be argued to evoke certain pre-existing assumptions in the audience of encountering an exotic “natural” people, a point I shall return to later.

The group’s German-Namibian man with his long beard and heavy-set white body easily blended in with the regular European performers of distant European pasts at the Lejre park. The small, brown-bodied Ju/'hoansi, however, stood markedly out. The German-Namibian had donned a long leather shirt in the style of the European performers in the park, whereas the Ju/'hoansi all were
analytical part deals with the subject–object relations in the exhibitions, leading towards the concluding points about the ambiguous political potentials of the powerful invitation the staging of the living “Bushmen” bodies extended to the public at Lejre; an invitation to understand the performance and performers within what I have termed – in accordance with the terminology of, for example, Hylton White (1995) – the discourse of “The Eternal Bushman”.

Fig. 1. Namibian performance in Lejre 2010. The three Ju’Hoansi-San people /Aao Nlaici, Khaum Ilóce and Tciixo Carisa and the German-Namibian Werner Pfeifer receive a visit from the Danish explorer Jens Bjerre at their camp in the Stone Age section Athra in Lejre. Photo: Anne Folke Henningsen 2010.
Previous live ethnographic exhibitions in Denmark

The Zoological Garden and the amusement park Tivoli were the main venues for larger ethnographic exhibitions in Denmark from the 1870s until around 1905. Around 50 exhibitions of different so-called exotic people were organised in this period and they were hugely popular with the Danish public and press. Though apparently very similar, the event in Lejre was in many ways different from the earlier practices of live ethnographic exhibitions, as will be discussed later, but in order to fully grasp the implications of the Lejre event it is necessary to see it in the context of these earlier displays of “exotic” Others in Denmark. In such live ethnographic shows, the bodies of the exhibited people were central nodes of meaning production: In often elaborately staged settings they conveyed the sense of foreignness and difference that was the raison d’être of the exhibitions (Henningsen 2009).

The main figure in the European and American human exhibitions of this type in the late nineteenth century was the German Carl Hagenbeck, who used his worldwide networks in the exotic animal trade to put together interesting groups of exotic people for display in zoos, amusement parks and other similar venues. These troupes would often circulate in Europe and North America for several months or even years, and Copenhagen was a frequent stop on the circuit. A central feature of the Hagenbeck style of live ethnographic exhibitions was his claim to the supreme authenticity of his troupes, in stark and explicit contrast to, say, the self-professed master of “humbug” P.T. Barnum in America. The claim was backed by collaboration with leading anthropologists of the time as well as – somewhat paradoxically – the elaborate staging of the shows designed to provide the spectator with an experience of all-encompassing cultural and racial difference. Professor of German cultural studies Eric Ames, in his comprehensive study of Hagenbeck’s Empire of Entertainment, describes the exercise in the following terms:

Choreographing authenticity was of course a contradictory task, which called for discursive backup. However much native performers were trained on the job, however much they were perceived to be performing, Hagenbeck would predicate their “authenticity” on the assertion that they were untaught, and therefore perfectly qualified for ethnographic display. In order to situate them as part of a living habitat, Hagenbeck and his team used various techniques for coding performers both discursively and iconographically as living, breathing “signs of themselves” (Ames 2008:75).

Ames thus points to the centrality of the living bodies in the claim of authenticity carrying the attraction of live ethnographic exhibitions as well as legitimising them as a superior genre of popular education and instruction for the Europeans about peoples of the rest of the world. This is along the lines of what professor of performance studies Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett calls a foregrounding of presentation rather than representation, which in this case could be translated into claims of the exhibitions of showing real lived/embodied life rather than staged ethnographic theatre (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998) – even if the performances were heavily framed and choreographed.

In accordance with the Hagenbeck style of authenticity and the ethnographical popular education ensuing from it, the exhibitions sought to produce in the audience a sense of bodily difference from the people on display.
Performance and politics of authenticity in live ethnographic exhibitions

Problematic lack of convincing displays to back the claims to authenticity (cf. Henningsen 2009). Quite a few of these were directly linked to what was understood to be the authentic and immanent difference of the spectacular bodies to be seen in the shows. Two examples will suffice, both of which are focused on perceptions of inherent differences in bodily capability between the people on display and the Danish spectators.

In a leading Danish newspaper in which the different live ethnographic exhibitions enjoyed a fair amount of attention, the reporter Waldemar Dreyer, who reviewed many of the exhibitions at the Zoological Garden and later, in 1910, took up the position as director of the Zoo, explained what he understood to be the sensory deficiency of the central Asian which was similar to that of the related genre of freak shows (cf. Garland-Thompson 1996) but with a very important difference: whereas the so-called freaks were put on stage to present their deviance from the norm, the bodies performing difference in the ethnographic exhibitions were displayed in order to represent their typicality (Ames 2008:71), albeit precisely their different typicality.

The exhibitions in Copenhagen were also operated and organised along these lines of thinking, whether directly part of Hagenbeck's repertoire or not, and displays of embodied, racialised authenticity were in high demand with the Danish audiences. Many are the newspaper reports describing and evaluating the exhibitions in terms of the superior authenticity of the troupes on display – or the problematic lack of convincing displays to back the claims to authenticity (cf. Henningsen 2009). Quite a few of these were directly linked to what was understood to be the authentic and immanent difference of the spectacular bodies to be seen in the shows. Two examples will suffice, both of which are focused on perceptions of inherent differences in bodily capability between the people on display and the Danish spectators.

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Fig. 2. The Kirghiz exhibition in Copenhagen Zoological Garden 1900. Part of the spectacle was the nomadic lifestyle of the Kirghiz and thus the public was invited to witness the setting up of their large tents in the Zoo. Photo: Archive of the Copenhagen Zoological Garden.
Kirghiz, as represented by the troupe visiting Copenhagen Zoo in 1900:

Upon entering one of the Kibitkas and letting the curtain drop behind you, you have as vivid a picture of Kirghiz life as you can wish for. [...] The surroundings are loud and colourful in the cosy room, because strong colours, often harshly juxtaposed, appeal to the eyes of the less developed and less “cultivated” person. His nerves are not as susceptible as ours, so the influences must be strong to make an impression on him. [...] The same can be said of his music: thundering drums, screeching tambourines, jingling strings, and rattling nick-nack, that is as far as his wishes go. [...] the low, melodious [music], which appeals to our more finely-tuned ears, leaves him completely untouched (Dreyer 1900, my translation).

In the same newspaper, one year later, the pseudonym Moustache described the incredible acts of the performers of the Asian Indian exhibition at the Zoo:

Absolutely wonderful are the balancing acts shown by the Indians on the top of a swaying bamboo pole planted in the centre of the stage. A perfectly monkey-like agility, to which you would find no match in European acrobatics (“Moustache” 1901, my translation).

Again, the central feature is how the bodies of the performers differ from those of the European spectators – by being seen as either anatomically under-evolved or almost animal-like.

**AUTHENTICITY AND DENIAL OF COEVALNESS**

The concept of authenticity has been at the centre of anthropological research almost since its inception, albeit in different ways over time, and a recent publication entitled *Debating Authenticity* suggests that discussions of the concept are still very much alive in academia (Fillitz & Saris 2012). The early anthropologists were anxious to get a sense of the “real” culture of the people they studied, that is, a culture untainted by Western ideas and practices. The futility and not least the problematic effects of this search for the pure and untainted cultures of what was often at the time called primitive societies has in turn been criticised since at least the 1980s, when anthropologists Johannes Fabian (1983/2002) and James Clifford (1988) – to name but two influential scholars – published books deconstructing the practice of the anthropological communities with particular attention to the effects of notions of authenticity and stasis.

Thus, ideas such as those described above of authentic and essential bodily – as well as cultural – difference that was staged in live ethnographic exhibitions had consequences beyond the amusement parks. In her study of Aboriginal people in North America and Canada in the late nineteenth century historian Paige Raibmon states: “The notion of a singular Aboriginal culture – a culture that could be preserved in the static representations of ethnographic texts, museum cases, or stylized performances – held Aboriginal people to impossible standards of ahistorical cultural purity” (Raibmon 2005:9).

According to Raibmon the casting of people as “authentic”, for instance in live ethnographic exhibitions, has far-reaching effects in the understanding of such people as ahistorical and unchanging beings – always under threat from the imminent danger of losing their authenticity by not living up to the ethnographically prescribed features of their culture, from themselves: “The ideology of
authenticity held that for Aboriginal people, the changes that accompanied modernity took them further away from their ‘authentic’ selves. For Aboriginal people, modernity was cast as a process of distancing from their own culture” (Raibmon 2005:202).

The workings of such notions of authenticity were at play in connection with the exhibitions in Copenhagen in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as well. The praise of troupes considered to be magnificently authentic and untouched was only surpassed by the heavy critique of lost authenticity the troupes faced when not living up to such standards, and the organisers went to great lengths to try to secure performers for their shows who could pass as authentic and unspoiled (Henningsen 2010).

A central feature in the success of the live ethnographic exhibitions was thus their ability to provide shows which lived up to the expectations of the public, that is, shows of ethnographically interesting, radically different, unchanging people. Such a staging could then be utilised to illustrate what was seen as the distant past of the spectators. The aforementioned Johannes Fabian introduced in 1983 the term denial of coevalness to capture the process in which anthropologists placed the peoples of their studies in another – past – time than the observing anthropologist, thus denying them a place in his or her own present time (Fabian 1983/2002). This process of denial of coevalness was also functioning in the live ethnographical exhibitions in Copenhagen and elsewhere. The shows were informed by theories of evolution and of racial hierarchies, within which the different people on display were considered and placed to represent different stages of human evolution – stages on the way to the pinnacle of development: the contemporary European man (rather than woman) (Andreassen & Henningsen 2011). Above, we saw an example of such an evolutionarily informed understanding of the Kirghiz and their insufficiently developed ears and eyes. The importance placed on such examples of what was considered less developed and stagnated peoples can be seen in the following excerpt from the popular educational book Naturfolkernes Liv (Life of the Natural Peoples) written in the late nineteenth century by Waldemar Dreyer:

The significance of more thorough knowledge of the natural peoples is […] that through it we will be able to achieve a deeper insight into […] the evolutionary history of our own people. One can look outside the realm of our present civilisation to those peoples and tribes unaffected by it, whose life and thoughts can be used as mirror reflections of the evolutionary stages our own predecessors have run through (Dreyer 1898, my translation).

Due to their powerful claims of providing ethnographic authenticity, the live ethnographical exhibitions were well suited to popularise and visualise such ideas of human progression and evolution for a broader audience than the scientific community. As historian Pascal Blanchard states in his study of the phenomenon, which he calls “human zoos”:

Visitors to the exhibitions had little sophistication. […] They were encouraged to interpret what they saw as a demonstration of the progress of humanity from savagery to civilization. […] The entertainment value of the “savage” was increased by activities considered to be primitive in nature, such as dance, music, games and traditional physical pursuits, in which the body of the “savage” was the key element. This body was represented as the reflection of a universe far removed from the technological progress of the West and close to nature, where
man's survival depended on his physical prowess (Blanchard et al. 2008:24f.).

Again, the bodies of the members of the ethnographic troupes are at the centre of the narrative of radical difference and of temporal displacement offered to the public: A temporal displacement in which the living and very present bodies of different groups of people were considered remnants of the distant pasts, in which these groups were denied coevalness with the spectators and organisers. Within this logic of linear, temporal progress, the various peoples were seen as stagnating at a certain stage and thus exhibitions of examples of “stagnated” people were thought of as instructive in the study of human development. In the following we shall look closer at the somewhat surprising recurrence in Denmark in 2010 of the live exhibition seen as a direct window to our own distant past or “prehistory”.

**THE STAGING OF THE “BUSHMAN” EVENT AT LEJRE**

While the human exhibition exists in more benign forms today – that is, the people in them are not displayed against their will – the desire to look upon predictable forms of Otherness from a safe distance persists (Fusco 1994:154).

The Namibian group came to Denmark in connection with a small Stone Age festival in the experimental archaeological park at Lejre in 2010 to which the Ju/'hoansi were invited due to their knowledge and assumed first-hand experience of hunter-gatherer societies.

The site of the event was thus not a zoo or an amusement park but rather a place for popular instruction on the distant Danish and European past through experiments and re-enactment. This means that, in contrast to the nineteenth- and twentieth-century exhibitions, the “exotic” people were not the only ones performing – a range of performers and actors of European descent living “prehistoric lives” in the park during the summer were also on stage at Lejre, in attempts to bring selected pasts to life before the audience. The whiff of colonial exploitation and derision so connected with the exhibitions in zoos and amusement parks could thus be avoided by stressing the shared experience of re-enacting the past as a means of popular education and entertainment, rather than the popular education produced in earlier live ethnographic exhibitions which had the effect, in africanist Bernth Lindfors’ words, of “pushing whites and blacks further apart by placing them in closer proximity. Africans were put on stage in order to distance them from the rest of humanity” (1999:xii).

As a communications officer in the Lejre park explains it:

We are not a museum but a pedagogical activity centre, in which we aim to bring prehistoric man to life in as authentic surroundings as possible and as non-ethnocentric as possible. In that sense, the Ju/'hoansi Bushmen are neither more nor less on display than the rest of the prehistoric families and other historical groups staying in our iron-age, Viking and rural milieus. They are all modern communicators of historical knowledge.3

The organisers of the “Bushman” event had sent out separate press releases and invitations to the public and to archaeologists and historians beforehand, in which the intentions behind the event were explained and the daily programme listed, including the accompanying ethnographic lectures on “Bushman” issues by the German-Namibian Werner Pfeifer. The email forwarded to me, mentioned in the introduction, was sent to prehistory
archaeologists with the subject: “Ethnographic journey to Sagnlandet Lejre: from the Danish open air museums to Africa and back” and contained the following description of the event:

In connection with the Stone Age festival 4 Bushmen from Namibia will visit Sagnlandet Lejre [...] They will make camps the Bushman way, perform their traditional trance dances and songs, and will conduct exciting hands-on workshops e.g. on the making of beads from ostrich eggs. It is possible to walk up to them at any point and ask them about their way of life, their rituals and anything you might be interested in, not least academically.4

Nowhere in this material or the press release did the names of the Ju/'hoansi appear. In a newspaper report from the event it was, however, revealed that their names were: /Aao Nlaici, Khaum Ilóce and Tciixo Carisa (Information, 31 July 2010). It is telling that the Ju/'hoansi performers were rendered nameless while their companion of German descent was individualised by being named in the programme. This lack of individualisation underscored the logics of typicality prevalent in ethnographic exhibitions, particularly when the Namibian of European descent was being granted status as individual – and expert – by way of being named and given a platform for lecturing on the accompanying “Bushmen” and their way of life.

The Ju/'hoansi performers were not only rendered nameless in the material framing the event, but were also situated in the past – just as Johannes Fabian pointed out when coining the term denial of coevalness. In a television interview one of the organisers of the Stone Age festival stated that “[w]hen we think of our forefathers 6000–7000 years ago, who were hunter-gatherers as well, we have no faces so to speak. But by meeting the Bushmen we can relate to our past” (Matteo Pilati, TV2 Lorry, 27 July 2010, my translation). In the printed press material, the organisers did attempt to convey the message that the Ju/'hoansi were performers re-enacting a past just like the Europeans spending the summer in the park, but at the same time used the present tense (as in the email quoted above) when describing the features of the event, so that the planned activities appeared as if they were in fact ordinary everyday activities of San people rather than staged ones representing past practices. This added to the sense that the visitors from southern Africa were in Denmark not as communicators of historical knowledge, as the organisers otherwise emphasised, but as representatives of people who are living today in ways similar to the distant European past (that is, as hunter-gatherer). And even in a park dedicated to the re-enactment of these distant pasts – rife with people in fanciful leather garments and strange behaviour – the Ju/'hoansi stood out due to their very sparsely dressed and thus very visible brown and petite bodies.

The activities performed by the Ju/'hoansi ranged from jewellery making over skinning of animals and shooting with bows and arrows to song and dance. Not far from the supposedly everyday activities performed by the people on display in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century exhibitions, as described earlier by Blanchard. And not too far from the activities performed by the European re-enactors at the Lejre park in 2010 either. But something was different in the way the audience perceived what was displayed before them, according to my observations. Despite the scattered efforts of the organisers and the performers themselves to explain that the event was based on the same principles as the
rest of the park – popular communication of historical knowledge and practices by way of re-enactment – parts of the audience at least did not receive the message. Several outbursts along the lines of “it’s crazy that they still live like this!” (Field notes 2010) could be heard immediately after it had been explained that the performance was a re-enactment of former practices – the staging of the event as real life overshadowed the status of it as re-enactment.

A sense of foreignness and of lack of coevalness thus existed at Lejre just as in the old exhibitions: the framing in the television interview points to such an understanding of the logic of the event. Furthermore, based on my observations of the reactions of the visitors, the performance was perceived by parts of the audience as if they were presented with a view to the practices of a group of people who are still today organising their lives in ways similar to those of the Danish Stone Age, thus providing a rare peek into lived life in the distant past in what is now Denmark.

And this focus on creating a recognisable sense of foreignness and past-ness through the material staging of the event along the lines of what can be called a “Bushman discourse” seems to have trumped the message of re-enactment at times attempted conveyed orally by organisers and performers alike during the event itself, if not in the interview on local television and in the use of an ethnographic present tense in the material accompanying the event.

THE POWERFUL INVITATION OF LIVING BODIES IN THE EXHIBITION

As explained in the introductory parts of this article, both Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Eric Ames point to the particularity of living bodies on display: they are seen as “signs of themselves” (Ames) and are understood as “presenting rather than representing” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett). This is also seen in the Lejre event. When the organiser explains the attraction of the so-called Bushman visit in the television appearance quoted above he points to the meeting with the Ju/'hoansi as a direct way of relating to the Danish past – the audience see the faces and bodies of their supposed forefathers which presumably will enable them to relate to the prehistoric ancestors and their way of life. The logics of denial of coevalness mentioned earlier were thus alive and well with the organisers of the 2010 exhibition, who in the quotation present the living Ju/'hoansi almost as representatives of the prehistoric forefathers of the Danish Stone Age. In combination with what I call “the Bushman invitation” – that is, the framing and staging of the exhibition in terms of the unchanging, authentic, ancient, eternal Bushman – this functions to encourage the audience to understand the performers in the event in the same terms as those in the “exotic” exhibitions a hundred years ago: as radically different and out of (our) time. Again, the bodies of the so-called Bushmen play a significant role. As part of the event, an archery contest was arranged between one of the so-called Bushmen and one of the “regular” European re-enactors, in which they were to use their respective bows and arrows to shoot at a wild hog replica made of plastic. Neither performed particularly well in the shooting, but when the “Bushman” had made his shot a spectator next to me exclaimed with considerable admiration: “You can see that it is not an acquired skill!” – meaning, consequently, that the ability to shoot with bows and arrows is a natural, inherited capability for the Ju/'hoansi archer. The shooting by the European performer did not occasion such exclamations. Thus,
the “Bushman invitation” and the bodily difference of the performers encouraged particular readings of the event – readings in which a technical skill as refined as archery was translated into bodily capabilities, much like those presented earlier of the “monkey-like dexterity” of the Indian performers at the Zoo in 1901. This connection between the people on display in live ethnographic exhibitions and nature has been pointed to earlier (cf. Pascal Blanchard), and it is prevalent also in general discourses of Bushman-ness. As Steven Robins puts it: “Images of ‘bushmen’ living close to nature and animal-like, and as the bearers of a lost human essence have subsequently become deeply inscribed in the popular imagination” (Robins 2000:61–62).

And because the staging of the event, as mentioned, did nothing to nuance or destabilise this common perception of so-called Bushmen, it helped support a reading of the living bodies according to this established Bushman discourse. This is not an uncommon phenomenon with re-enactment, as anthropologist Mads Daugbjerg has shown in a study of another Danish open-air museum making use of re-enactment in its communication of historical knowledge through an edutainment practice. When the framing and staging of the exhibitions reaffirm the existing expectations of the audience it becomes difficult to communicate knowledge that could nuance the common perceptions – he calls it a “collaboration” of the organisers with the expectations of the audience (Daugbjerg 2005:10–12).

Aside from the point that the living bodies function as strong communicators of (assumed) authenticity due to their being “signs of themselves”, putting living bodies on display is often seen as controversial – given the historical connections to colonialism and creations of scientifically sanctioned racial hierarchies. Events similar to the one in Lejre organised in Germany in 2010 occasioned a critique from scholars and activists that was almost completely lacking in the Danish case. In the Danish and especially Norwegian public there was, however, widespread debate a few years later in 2014 when artists re-established the so-called Congo-village in Oslo – deliberately mimicking the Congo-village set up in connection with the centenary of the Norwegian constitution in 1914, though – importantly – the 2014 version did not contain exhibited living people.

While maintaining the critical attitudes towards some of the effects of such events, one could argue that exhibitions consisting of living human bodies, of persons, of subjects – presumably with specific agendas and reasons for participating – potentially can provide platforms for strategic manoeuvring for the people on display, now and in the past.

**Political agendas and discourses of indigeneity**

These tribal discourses can, of course, become powerful political and economic resources for subaltern people (Robins 2000:63).

As seen in the section above, many similarities with the old “exotic” exhibitions could be seen at Lejre in 2010 but some significant differences existed as well, having mainly to do with the venue – a park for archaeological instruction and re-enactment and not a zoo or an amusement park – but also with the performers. The group of Ju/'hoansi visiting Lejre were trained performers, who in Namibia are part of an organisation of so-called living museums, established in the mid-2000s with – suitably – considerable inspiration from the Danish experimental park at Lejre. At these
living museums, groups of indigenous peoples cater for, among other things, tourist demands of catching glimpses of to them unknown cultures and ways of living.

Tourism is a major income generator in southern Africa, and it is a political priority in both Namibia and South Africa to strengthen this sector, and cultural tourism in particular, because this form of tourism is regarded as one of the opportunities in which people lacking officially recognised skills, formal training and education may actually succeed in bettering their livelihood (Ministry of Environment and Tourism Namibia 2008; National Department of Tourism South Africa 2011). In Namibia – as in South Africa where initiatives similar to the Namibian living museums have been established – the apartheid system worked on several levels in keeping San peoples – and others – marginal politically and economically while simultaneously suppressing their cultural expressions (Gordon 1992, White 1995, Robins 2000). The hope of the post-apartheid governments is that this can be remedied through intensification of cultural tourism, while also facilitating income-generating initiatives.

The organisation The Living Culture Foundation, to which the group performing in Lejre is affiliated, stresses two main aims of the living museums endorsed by the foundation: strengthening of cultural identity and of earned income opportunities among marginalised people such as the San peoples of Namibia today. These aims are expressed explicitly at the official website of the Living Culture Foundation in the following manner:

The main aim of the Living Museum is to give members of a certain language group – and especially children – the possibility to deal with the origins of their culture and thus understand their cultural background. This may contribute to regain of cultural identity. It may help to understand the complicated situation in modern Namibia and could finally help to find solutions for social problems. Another aim of the Living Museum is the creation of an income for poor communities in Namibia. This can be achieved through the tourism industry in Namibia. But not only tourists, also pupils, students and every Namibian can support a Living Museum and learn interactively about the fascinating traditions of the presented culture (Internet source 2).

At the website the Living Culture Foundation provides potentially interested communities with a handbook explaining the aims and methods of setting up a living museum under the auspices of the foundation:

Most of our projects live off the representation of realistic and traditional cultures of Namibian cultures and language groups. The authenticity and credibility of the presentation are of vital importance.

We only support projects, which are – according to research of the specific cultural group – accepted as being authentic. Given that the presented parts of the culture are in fact showing the traditional culture of a certain time and group, the project group will be able to establish a new income opportunity and at the same time prohibit a further loss of their culture. Especially the regain of a new cultural identity can only be achieved if the original culture is presented as authentic as possible (Internet source 3).

This “Bushman discourse” of the cultural tourism business, including the living museums and similar enterprises, is informed by the pre-existing assumptions and notions of “Bushman-ness” that over the last decade have been heavily criticised by scholars and activists.
How to handle this uncomfortable situation as a critical academic? As Steven Robins asks:

…how should anthropologists respond when tribal histories and fantasies are no longer manufactured by anthropologists and colonial administrators, but rather by “the natives” themselves? How should anthropologists respond to re-inventions and re-appropriations of colonial discourses on African tribes and traditions by subaltern people in pursuit of their own self-defined political objectives and agendas? What if the traditions that are being invented “from below” end up replicating and mimicking the very anthropological traditions and colonial discourses that [academics and activists] have so vigorously attacked? (Robins 2000:59).

Robins further suggests that the narrow scholarly focus on critical deconstructions of the colonial discourses miss important insights into the social and political manoeuvring of the San people, that the anti-essentialist stance of the academics fails to grasp the political strategies of the San people which can be strengthened by invocation of “Bushman” myths (Robins 2000:66). In accordance with the logics of community building behind enterprises such as the living museums in Namibia, Robins states that such manoeuvrings should not be seen as necessarily only strategic and instrumental in political struggles for recognition and rights but also in recovering social memory previously suppressed (Robins 2000:73).

There is a strict code of conduct connected to the living museums, which the communities must live up to in order to be affiliated with the larger organisation behind. But this practice of performing according to an established “Bushman discourse” or of extending a stereotypical “Bushman invitation” to the audience can potentially be valuable in the (identity-)political projects of the participating San communities.

**Subjects turned objects – while (re)claiming subjectivity**

Revisionist critics have argued that the primordialist discourse represents the distortion and consumption of Bushman culture by the Western metropole. Yet, if the icon of the original forager is at least partially a Western construct, as has been argued so forcefully, then ironically it would appear as if it is the Bushmen who are doing the consuming here, in appropriating a Western trope as the organising principle of their own rhetoric of identity (White 1995:55).

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett points to the particular feature of living human bodies on display that they are seen by audiences to present rather than represent, and Eric Ames writes about the bodies seen as “living breathing signs of themselves”. This is – besides all forms of coercion, maltreatment and affiliations with colonialism – part of what makes living human bodies on display controversial through the powerful message sent to their audiences. But it might also be the reason why these practices can contain the double move of subjectivation through objectivation described above in connection with the political projects of the participating marginalised groups, because they are centred on living bodies cast as inherently different from the audiences. Paige Raibmon has shown how Native Americans in the nineteenth century used the live ethnographic exhibitions as platforms for claiming (political) subjectivity in a system of marginalisation and colonial exploitation (Raibmon 2005) and Cathrine Baglo’s studies of exhibitions of Sami people (see for example Baglo 2014) have also contributed to creating a more nuanced
understanding of the agendas of the people on display. Likewise it was an ambition from the beginning of the collaborative research project on the exhibitions in Copenhagen around the end of the nineteenth century that we would look for the agency of the people on display even within the coercive power structures of the exhibitions and despite the scarcity of written sources from the exhibited people themselves (Henningsen 2010, Andreassen & Henningsen 2011). In the same way, the Lejre event and the tourist sites and living museums can provide an arena for subjectivation through objectivation for marginalised people with limited political and economic possibilities, even if it does come at a price due to the narrow discursive field of “authentic” operation activated by and through the performances.

And perhaps this is one of the reasons why the cultural tourism business is also a powerful political strategy for what is now often called “first nation peoples”? Their abstract claims to special rights based on their status as endangered cultures/peoples becomes concrete and tangible through visualisation practices, often with heavy emphasis on bodily differences and features. They are seen as having special access to the practices about to disappear, and this special access can be translated into special rights and resources.

**Powerful strategic re-appropriation with multiple and ambivalent effects**

The re-appropriation of colonial discourses in cultural tourism does, however, come at a price according to anthropologist Hylton White:

If [the “Bushman”] identity strategy is based on the market value of the heritage they claim as their own, then this has three related implications. Firstly, the market value of this heritage and thus of the Bushmen themselves is derived from the popular authority of the Bushman discourse […]. They have no means of controlling that discourse and are thus bound to its representations. Secondly, and in consequence of this parameter, they are unable to introduce political or economic considerations into the public realm since these are dissonant with the Bushman icon. Hence the Kagga Kamma [a “Bushman” tourism site] management’s assertion that if they wish to live like Bushmen they should have no consumer goods. Thirdly, and also as a result of the same discursive limitation, they find it extremely difficult to generate the appearance of seamless authenticity in what is an essentially impossible mould (White 1995:55).

The Ju/'hoansi trip to Denmark can thus be seen as part of a political strategy, in which external acknowledgement of the value and significance of their culture plays a significant role, but through the mimicking of the existing perceptions of authentic “Bushman-ness”, the cultural performers at such tourist sites and living museums reproduce and maintain an understanding of indigeneity with a very limited room for manoeuvring. And this combined with the lack of recognition of the similarities with the previous live ethnographic exhibitions is why, despite the above assertion of political potentiality connected to events such as the one at Lejre, I still remain critical towards it. My scepticism stems largely from the staging of the event and its reception in the Danish public. The powerful invitation of the living bodies – supported by the staging according to the pristine-and- eternal-hunter-and-gatherer discourse – seemed to be trumping the spoken and written words of the organisers pointing to the Ju/'hoansi as communicators of historical knowledge just like the other performers at Lejre.
Stereotypes are powerful and can thus be used by the Ju/'hoansi as well as by the organisers at Lejre in order to attract an audience, but they are also limiting and can thus send a message of lack of coevalness of the Ju/'hoansi performers and keep them within a narrow field of discursive practice that is then seen as the proper way to be Ju/'hoansi. Alongside critical academics and activists, I may feel uncomfortable when living humans are put on stage as “signs of themselves” in accordance with stereotypical understandings of their authentic nature and practices and not as actors or artists or the like – but in the case of the Ju/'hoansi at Lejre, they are re-enacting. Due to the framing and staging of the event, which has been criticised above, the audience may have a hard time grasping this, which is unfortunate in terms of the event being part of a popular education scheme, but seen from the Ju/'hoansi side that might not be the prime concern. Survival, income, rights, resources and rebuilding of a cultural identity suppressed during the apartheid years might weigh heavier. It is after all precisely the living bodies of the Ju/'hoansi that are on stage – and at stake.

Notes
1. This work was supported by The Danish Research Council for Culture and Communication.
2. Private correspondence, 23 July 2010, my translation.
3. Private correspondence, 12 October 2010, my translation.

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Facing skeletons

Reflections on three Stone Age portraits

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Abstract: The discussions in this article relate to the already existing literature about bodies in museum exhibitions and the tension between humanization and dehumanization, individualization and objectification. It approaches the archaeological exhibition practice called “forensic art”. Forensic art means giving a face and identity to human skeletons through specific methods. The point of departure is three different reconstructions based on the remains of two Stone Age women presented at two different museums, one in Norway and one in Sweden, from the beginning of the 1990s until 2006. These reconstructions are highlighted here as entangled and related objects. The article explores the tensions that arise between bodies as scientific objects and as individualized subjects and the tensions that occur between bodies as facts and as fiction. In addition, it examines the work of faces in museum exhibitions and discusses how race seems to be an issue, albeit not communicated nor discussed with the audience. At the same time, race is narrated into the reconstructed faces and becomes a bodily fact the audience meets physically.

Keywords: Reconstructions, faces, forensic art, knowledge production, human remains, museum facts.

What does it mean to have a face or being faceless? Put it in another way: What is the function, the work of faces? To have a face is often understood in terms of being an individual, to be unique and distinct from others. To have a face might be understood as the very core of our understanding of “identity”, “personhood”, of “personality” and then: our “humanity”. On the other side, to be robbed of our faces is like being robbed of our identity marker, it would be like lacking a personality and being anonymous (Sanders 2009:197). Having or not having a face is as such considered a main concept of what a human being is (Sanders 2009:197).

Within museums the question of having a face or not becomes significant because it opens up a core discussion about humanization and dehumanization, about individualisation and objectification. Such discussions are to be found in the growing corpus of literature on the presence and effect of bodies in museums. To a large extent this research unfolds the relations between bodily representations and museological knowledge regimes. This research has also produced interesting discussions on
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individualized subjects, the tensions that occur between bodies as facts and as fiction. These reconstructions are often put on display together with the skeletal remains. In other words, museums often enact these skeletons as multiple bodies. The question is thus how this is done: What kind of status are the different versions given and how are they related? In addition, I am also intrigued by the question of who has the right to make a tangible and concrete materialization of the past.

I am inspired by Science and Technology Studies (STS) in this exploration. A direction within STS allows for approaching entities and objects in terms of fluidity, mutability and multiplicity (Laet & Mol 2000, Mol 2002, Law 2004). The Dutch philosopher Annemarie Mol’s concept of the “the body multiple” where she sees the body as “more than one, but less than many” (Mol 2002:55), offers a way to approach this multiplicity. Mol talks about bodies in different versions without one version being more genuine or authentic than another. Employment both critical museology (McDonald 2011:8, Brenna 2014:6) and materiality studies inspired by actor–network theory (Asdal, Brenna & Moser 2001, Damsholt, Mordhorst & Simonsen 2009, Hauan & Maurstad 2012), I wish to study the practice of how these bodies are enacted. The concept of enactment as developed by Mol is connected to performance theory and emphasizes both the social and material aspects of a performance (Mol 2002:5). As such, it allows us to see these reconstruction practices as material and social.

By studying three different reconstructions made in the period from the beginning of the 1990s until 2006, I will highlight both the network and the actors that make the different versions stable. As such, I let myself be inspired by material semiotics, the term used to describe actor–network theory (Haraway
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1997, Law 1999, Brenna 2002:47). Material semiotics "takes the semiotic insight, that of the relationality of entities, the notion that they are produced in relation, and applies this ruthlessly to all materials – and not simply to those that are linguistic", the British sociologist John Law explains (Law 1999:4).

On the following pages, I will examine and discuss the three reconstructions, their materiality, how they are staged and the status they are given in the museums’ exhibitions. As such, I hope to contribute to the debate on the effects of the physical presence of bodies in museum exhibitions and of how humanity is enacted. In addition, this examination also contributes with empirical knowledge of what happens to human remains when they become part of archaeological reconstruction practices and offer a basis for reflection for museums.

**Enacting bodies as science and as humanities**

During the last few years, there have been ethical discussions on how human remains should be displayed and whether they should be displayed at all (Curtis 2003, Alberti et al. 2009, Giesen 2013, Svanberg 2014). "A primary reason for displaying human remains is to educate and inform, either about past cultures or the human species," British science historian Samuel Alberti and his co-authors claim in the article “Should we display the dead?” (2009:143). They underline the inherent tension in human remains; they are both people and things (Geary 1986:169, Alberti et al. 2009:143). In the same way as philosophers and theorists have emphasized how the body is both subject and object, culture and biology (Merleau-Ponty 1994, Engelstad 2006), so has Alberti et al. Therefore, when we look at a human body on display, it is the enactment of the remains that determines whether they appear as objects, as individuals or both.

By the eighteenth century, museums had come to display the dead by accentuating anatomical peculiarities. These objects were viewed primarily as a testimony to the rich diversity of the chain of universal being. At the end of the nineteenth century, human remains were typically displayed as parts of an evolutionary series (Bennett 1995:79). Human remains were therefore exhibited within a zoological context together with animals and presented as objects and as species (Alberti et al. 2009:142). This was a period in time when archaeology had a strong link to the natural sciences (geology and zoology especially). In the middle of the 1980s a turn towards the humanities, towards cultural history, contextual archaeology and post-processual archaeology took place (Kristiansen 1996, Olsen 1997). A critical attitude towards archaeology’s use of the past in the present was furthermore reintroduced (Kristiansen 1996:109, Olsen et al. 2012). This shift could be seen in archaeological museums in the way they focused on individuals and according to the Swedish archaeologist Nina Nordström there has been a clear transition from a predominantly scientific attitude towards human remains in exhibitions to a heightened sensitivity towards the display of such remains (Nordström 2007:18). As such, the story of how bodies have been displayed in museums is also a story of how ancient bodies have been produced in museums, either as object or subject, as species or as individuals that we should care for and get to know.

As mentioned above, the natural sciences have been an important contributor to the formation of archaeology as a scientific discipline, and the contribution from natural science have grown both in scale and number of subjects.
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since the nineteenth century (Kristiansen 1996:107). Archaeology today would be unthinkable without the assistance of natural sciences such as zoology, environmental studies, technology, physics, medicine and age determination technology (Kristiansen 1996:107). DNA-analyses should also be added to this cluster of science affiliations. In addition, new digital technology has made it possible to reconstruct and communicate archaeological material, human remains included, in new ways. According to Danish archaeologist Kristian Kristiansen, archaeology today does not use one shared nor one mainstream theoretical framework but has dissolved into a multitude of methodological and theoretical approaches (Kristiansen 2014:15). Archaeology therefore finds itself in a position between the natural sciences on the one hand and the humanities on the other. The implementation of forensic art practices in archaeological museums could be seen as part of this tension.

Forensic art, the practice in focus in this article, is claimed to be a blend of art and science because it presents scientific information in a visual form rather than a verbal one (Taylor 2010:6). Therefore, within forensic art there is an inherent tension between science and interpretation. This was a topic for debate already in the beginning of the twentieth century when it appeared in its simplest form (Vanezis et al. 1989, Wilkinson 2010) and is still being discussed among practitioners as well in museums using the method (Wilkinson 2010). Today, this practice is claimed to be based both on a profound anatomical knowledge and on some artistic interpretation (Wilkinson 2010). The question is thus how any artistic freedom is expressed and intertwined in the final object. While the scientific ideal within contemporary forensic reconstruction is accuracy, the British forensic anthropologist Caroline Wilkinson claims that more artistic licence is appropriate in archaeological reconstructions because she believes that “recognition of the face is rarely the primary objective and producing the most likely depiction may be more important than individual identity” (Wilkinson 2010:247). As such, it seems to be more important to make a general characterization and humanize the old skeletons, turning them into representations that we can identify with rather than to give them accurate identities. In other words, the face itself is an “unreliable document”, both malleable and changeable, according to Danish professor of Scandinavian literature Karin Sanders (Sanders 2009:198).

Another question that arises is who is in the position to or has the right to create faces based on old bones and to give ancient people a voice and a story, as Sanders claims face-making is about (Sanders 2009:198). The practice of forensic art gives museums a transformative power that makes a discussion on museums as laboratories highly relevant. STS-scholars have taught us that laboratories, by changing the relationship between things and changing the relationship between things and humans, have the capacity to produce reality and therefore change society. This is the political impact of the laboratory (Latour & Woolgar 1979) and several museologists (Bennett 2005, Grahn 2006) have discussed in what sense the museum as a knowledge-producing institution has that same capacity. In the article “Civic laboratories” (2005), Tony Bennett claims that museums tend to work as laboratories in the way that they bring objects into new configurations and new relations. Museums do not relate to the object “as it is”, he says. However, Bennett is reluctant to draw this parallel to the laboratory too far primarily because the object in the laboratory is a complex and unfinished structure which
In 1943, four years after it was first discovered, the skeleton was put on display for the first time in a new permanent exhibition, *Tiotusen år i Sverige* (*Ten Thousand Years in Sweden*). The remains were here presented to the audience in the context of the grave (Nerman 1943). The skeleton was sitting in the same body position as the archaeologists believed it had been buried in, with the knees drawn up towards the chest. The skeleton was mounted by the well-known zoologist and osteologist Elias Dahr and surrounded by objects such as tools and was displayed in a glass case. The remains were presented as a purely factual object, set apart from any interpretation and from any of the other objects on display. It was of great importance to the museum to present these remains as authentic and as accurate as possible – with the correct and still quite vivid body position. (Fig. 1–2.) For a long time, the remains were presented to the public in the context of that separate glass case – which came to be both its dwelling and grave. Occasionally, the remains were taken out to be studied and consequently new findings were done. In the 1970s the osteologist Nils-Gustaf Gejvall claimed that the remains had to belong to a woman and not a man as originally stated and that she had given birth to several children (Gejvall 1970, Nordström 2007:104).

At the beginning of the 1970s, changes of this exhibition’s Antiquity part, *Forntiden*, were planned (Hejll 2007:11) and museum carpenter and doll-maker Jan Kloboucek saw the female skeleton for the first time. In a short retrospective article, Kloboucek describes this first meeting and how he later came to make a reconstruction based on these remains (Kloboucek 2000). He claims that the remains have been exhibited several times; as a skeleton, as a pictorial display and as a reconstruction. The remains have as such really been enacted as a multiple body in accordance with Mol’s theory (2002).

**Example No.1: The life-size woman in the diorama**

The Swedish History Museum (Historiska Museet) in Stockholm holds a nine thousand year old skeleton found by a farmer in Skåne in 1939. During the excavation the archaeologists noticed its special position – the skeleton was placed seated in the grave with its legs drawn up to its chest. Since then, an interesting scientific biography attached to the remains has developed as described by Nina Nordström (2007), Eva Insulander (2010) and Björn Wallebom (2015). The remains have been exhibited several times; as a skeleton, as a pictorial display and as a reconstruction. The remains have as such really been enacted as a life-size woman in the diorama.
using methods developed and used by Scotland Yard and the Russian palaeontologist and pioneer in this field, Mikhail Gerasimov (1907–1970), who developed his own reconstruction techniques in the early 1920s. Today, Gerasimov’s technique is termed the “Russian method” where the development of the skull and neck musculature is regarded of fundamental importance. In the article, Kloboucek carefully describes how he worked, reconstructing a life size woman who was given a naturalistic head with hair, and hands, feet, clothes, jewellery, shoes and weapons. The
material description shows how Kloboucek adopted two different practices when constructing his representation of the Stone Age woman. The reconstructed face was made using forensic art practices. The construction of the rest of the body, which was claimed to be of the same size as the skeleton, seemed thus to follow ethnographic museums’ traditional practice of making bodies by adding padding to a core consisting of a round piece of wood and then attaching mimetic casts of real people’s limbs (Sandberg 2003, Hjemdahl 2013).

My main point here is to show how this reconstruction became a *collage* of different scientific and didactic practices. The Russian method of forensic art, which emphasizes the musculature on the skull and neck in the construction process, was used to reconstruct this three-dimensional mimetic face. The reconstruction also came about as a result of ethnographic exhibition practices and was directly linked to contemporary women’s bodies through the use of casts of limbs of living women. This Stone Age female representation was first and foremost a hand crafted reconstruction. Also, by making this reconstruction, the narrative aspects of this particular female individual was emphasized. The ending sentence of Kloboucek’s article reads: “This is how a middle-aged woman of hunters from ancient times was reborn in the summer of 1991” (Kloboucek 2000:85f.), which tells us how he in retrospect saw himself and his hand crafted work as a way of giving life to a woman that lived nine thousand years ago. By giving her a face, skin and a body, she became something more than a universal skull and a skeleton. She became an individual with a voice and a story as seen through Kloboucek’s eyes and born through the work of his hands.

In her famous essay “Modest witness. Feminist diffractions in science studies”, feminist theorist Donna Haraway emphasizes how the process of making knowledge produces both objects and subjects and that this process also generates a set of cultural values and characteristics. Hence, gender, race and class are being co-produced in the process of making knowledge (Haraway 1996). Viewed as a representation, both gender and race was co-produced when this Stone Age woman was reconstructed. She was clearly gendered in accordance with its time; she was for instance given medium length blond hair. In addition, she was given a European appearance with a narrow face, white skin and blue eyes. In other words, the Swedish public met a face they could recognize. Sanders claims that face-to-face encounters are a variant of the “face recognition practice” in the same way Italian semiotician Patrizia Magli describes it. The face, she writes, “has a fluctuating and unstructured...
logic but also a sort of perceptual perseverance that allows us to recognize each other” (Magli 1989, in Sanders 2009:199). The reconstruction of the Stone Age woman and especially of her face became someone the mainstream Swedish public could recognize and identify with as a Swedish woman belonging to the Swedish tribe, so to speak: she became a pretty and “neutral” white woman dressed in leather clothes. The Stone Age woman thus became a figure linking Sweden’s historical past with its presence and future. Knowing that her remains actually belong to the Swedish History Museum it almost seems like a necessity that she was enacted as a Swede. Subsequently, we see the significance of her social body and person connected to both museum ownership and power relations. This also highlights how the body becomes a prime site of construction, of contestation and negotiation of individual and collective identities, as museologist Marzia Varutti emphasizes in her article “Materializing the past. Mannequins, history and memory in museums”, in this issue (Varutti 2017). (Fig. 3.)

In the exhibition, the reconstructed female was located in a big glass case together with her remains. She was displayed as a life size woman in a diorama with a weapon or a tool in her hand and situated in an environment that looked like a forest. As the American film- and media historian Mark Sandberg have emphasized in his study about how peasants were exhibited in Scandinavian museums at the time around 1900, the constructed figure can simulate more easily both agency and consciousness when given props and context (Sandberg 2003:198). In addition, the head of the Stone Age woman was placed so that visitors met her face in such a way that she seemed both to be aware of and also could meet the public’s gaze. The glass case she was presented in was lifted slightly up from the floor.

In other words, this Stone Age woman was presented as a diorama enacting the past in the present in two versions: as a mimetic three-dimensional “live” individual from the Stone Age and as a skeleton, sitting in her grave. The skeleton was located in the corner of that same showcase, facing away from the reconstructed figure. Subsequently, these two versions of the woman was staged as separate representations, yet connected through the display case. In terms of an archaeological perspective, this diorama could be seen as a staging of two different archaeological approaches to the same woman: First, the archaeological discovery and source,
that is the skeleton sitting in her grave in the same way the archaeologists found her in 1939. Second, the archaeological interpretation of the individual, the living hunter woman with her weapons as archaeologists believed her to look like when she was alive nine thousand years ago. Nevertheless, there were no differences in how these representations were enacted according to the factual aspects of the two representations; they were both displayed as separate museums and bodily facts.

**Example No. 2: The abstract sculptural woman from Søgne**

In 1994, cottage owner Helge Bentsen was dredging a piece of the seabed close to the shore in Søgne in the south of Norway. Suddenly human remains appeared. The authorities were contacted and it was soon determined that the findings were of great archaeological interest. The findings included an almost complete skull but without the lower jaw, a large fragment of the frontal bone from another skull, a nearly intact left femur and a broken left leg bone. It was unclear how many people these bones represented but they came from at least two different persons, both female it was assumed, one of them 35–40 years old at the time of death. The C14-analysis of the remains showed them to be around 8 600 years old. It was also established that this was the oldest discovery of human remains in Norway up till then. In addition, C-13-analysis of the bones revealed that 86 per cent of their diet was protein based seafood. The researchers involved, archaeologist Birgitte Skar and physical anthropologist Berit Sellevold, assumed that the remains belonged to a grave which back then was land based, but was swallowed by the sea due to raising shore levels (Sellevold & Skar 1996b).

It was especially the well-preserved skull that received archaeological attention. Even if it was robust, investigations determined it to be a woman. It was claimed that “at the time women had heavy and robust skulls similar to younger bygone period male skulls” (Sellevold & Skar 1996a: 24–25).

Soon after the find, the Museum of Cultural History in Oslo (Kulturhistorisk Museum) decided to put together an exhibition about this presumed woman and the archaeological findings. Archaeologist Kathy Elliot curated the exhibition together with the culture historian Bjørn Vidar Johansen. According to Elliot, it was her own idea to make a reconstruction of the skull for the exhibition which they intended to work as an “attention grabber” in the exhibition.8

However, it proved difficult to find an expert the museum could bring in to do the reconstruction work. The reconstruction process became instead part of a wider international network of scientists, institutions and curators. The museum started by contacting Past Forward in York, UK, which passed them on to Robin Hennesey at University College Hospital in London. It became clear that the lab at University College Hospital could make a reconstruction for the exhibition if provided with the right sort of data. Hennesey says that they needed to digitize the skull.

This can be done via a laser surface scanner (which would need to be done in the UK) or via CT scanning (which you could probably arrange to have done in an Oslo hospital). You can have the skull CT scanned while it sits in its box – you simply put the box on the patient couch. If you do this, we need to discuss which scanner is being used so that we can make sure we can read the data, and how many slices will be acquired.9
of the data and also establishing what type of data that could be used for communicating with University College Hospital's computer system. To do this, the museum contacted a Dutch expert, Dr. Arthur Voorpool, who was working at the Toshiba Medical System Headquarters in the Netherlands. He was able to design a program for the scanning of the remains. Berit Sellevold from the Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research (NIKU) was responsible for the scanning of the skull in Norway.\textsuperscript{10} Then Dr. Lars Garberg at Sentrum Røntgeninstitutt A/S in Oslo did the actual scanning of the skull and made a series of sectional images of it with a special X-ray apparatus while Dr. Arthur Voorpool was responsible for the transferring of data into the right digital format. These data constituted the basis for the three-dimensional reconstruction and were then sent to the laboratory staff at University College London who in collaboration with Sellevold made the reconstructed face. The process did not, however, run quite as smoothly as expected. A set of data for the top of the skull went missing somewhere in the transferring process but it was restored and transferred so that the reconstruction process could proceed in London.

Nevertheless, the scanned data alone was not enough to make a reconstruction of the face. Additional information about gender, race and age was sent by fax to professor Dominic Tweddle at University College London. Sellevold writes:

The skull is 8600 years old, and even though the sex of the skull is female, it is very heavily built compared to more recent crania. In particular, the glabellar and temporal regions are markedly developed, having an appearance we associate with modern male skulls. The age of death is estimated to be ab. 35–40 years, but the teeth are heavily worn, compared to more recent finds... As for racial origin, we do not know, but the skull looks mostly European or Caucasoid (Fax to Dominic Tweedle from Berit Sellevold 3 February 1997).

This information was also included and highlighted in the form sent over that contained drawings of the skull. (Fig. 4.)

Another aspect of this process was that the curators at the museum did not exactly know how the reconstruction was to be made, of which material or form it would take.\textsuperscript{11} Nevertheless, at the end of July it became clear that the reconstruction would appear as a three-dimensional physical reconstruction (e-mail 29 July 1997). The sources do not say anything about the material used for the reconstruction but when it was completed and curator Bjørn Vidar Olsen could bring her home from London to Oslo in his luggage, he carried a head made of foam and no effort had yet been made to construct a naturalistic face.\textsuperscript{12}

My objective of recounting how the Søgne woman's reconstructed face came into being in the summer and autumn of 1997, is simply to emphasize that the reconstruction is an *entangled object*. The reconstructed face was intertwined in an international network of things (computers, X-ray machines, boxes and airplanes), inscriptions (digitized data files, pictures and descriptions), institutions (Sentrum Røntgen, Toshiba Medical Service, Museum of Cultural History, University College London) and people (researchers, engineers, medical experts and curators). The museum was even dependent on an expert who could transform data from Norwegian computers to English ones. It also meant that they had to establish a network for just this purpose. In addition, I want to underline how the different types of information was
Facing skeletons

Fig. 4. Scan made of fax to Dominice Tweedle from Berit Sellevold 3 February 1997, Kulturhistorisk Museums arkiv: Fruen fra havet (Museum of Cultural History, Archive: The Lady from the Sea).
communicated and made relevant within this network. Whereas the measureable X-ray data was communicated through digital means, any information that helps to identify a person such as gender, race and age and that inscribes a person into the culture was communicated verbally, or through text and pictures.

Let us follow the reconstruction further into the exhibition: On 9 October 1997 the Museum of Cultural History could present their first exhibition about the discovery of the oldest human remains in Norway.13 The temporal exhibition presenting the astonishing archaeological discovery was named Fruen fra havet (The Lady from the Sea). Based on presenting archaeological science as well as this sensational new discovery, the exhibition was scientific in its basic attitude and divided into two sections: the discovery and the woman herself. The first section told the visitors about the circumstances related to the object, the discovery and the research process, while the second section approached the woman herself and presented knowledge, narratives and sceneries about her and her life: how she lived, what she ate, and who she was. Furthermore, the preserved skull was made the focal point in the exhibition together with the abstract reconstruction of the face. Both skull and reconstructed head were exhibited together, placed on a shelf and displayed in a glass-case as an installation in the middle of the room.

Skeletons might be viewed as trophies, as “scalps” in a sense but they might also be viewed as “an uncritical, unvarnished truth of what lies beneath all of the things that seem so important in life: skin colour, fat, scars, beauty, ugliness, difference. The skeleton represents human life at its most universal, stripped of the apparent differences that can divide the living”, say Alberti et al. (2009:135). Opposite the skull, which could be seen as both a “trophy” and as universally representing all humans, the reconstructed face was placed. The face was made of white foam and was subtle in the way that it only gave the viewer an impression of facial features.

In fact, the face was almost presented as an individual piece of art – as a white marble sculpture – belonging to the Western cultural canon. The ideal when making this face was that of a likely depiction and not an accurate naturalistic face (see Wilkinson 2010). As such, the sculptural impression of the woman became significant. Simultaneously, the whiteness and the physical features of the face made her into a European woman the audience could both recognize and identify with, and thus easily include into the “Norwegian tribe” – even if she was made a bit abstract.

The museum presented the white reconstructed head in front of the original skull. (Fig. 5.) The Søgne woman was displayed as a multiple woman where the skull and
Facing skeletons

In my third example following below, I go back to the Swedish History Museum in Stockholm and to the Stone Age skeleton that was found in Skåne in 1939.

Example No. 3: The naturalistic woman within a Stone Age home

The Swedish History Museum presented another exhibition on prehistory in 2005. A new reconstruction of the remains found in Skåne was done using the same method: forensic art. This time, the Swedish artist and archaeologist Oscar Nilsson was now the sculptor and model maker. This was Nilsson’s profession and he had already supplied museums in Sweden with several reconstructions: “The Vasa Museum and The Swedish History Museum contacted me simultaneously, around 2004–2005. They wanted to highlight their findings, get closer to the individuals and use osteological knowledge about their lives and fates to get visitors more engaged and eager to learn more”, Nilsson explains in an e-mail correspondence. According to head curator Lena Hejll, the Swedish History Museum wanted to focus on human beings’ existential situation in Antiquity in this exhibition; “This gives us a perspective on the human situation then and now”, Hejll claims. The museum wanted to focus on the real life people lived back then and not the artefacts (Hejll 2007:11). Focusing on the diversity of the past, the exhibition was titled Forntider (Prehistories).

It was within this context that the new reconstruction was done. A number of new scientific findings had been made examining the Skåne remains in 1996 (see Steen 1990:76). The museum was therefore eager to present these findings and do so in a more individualized and expressive form (also making the 1991 reconstruction obsolete).
However it was only the female skeleton from Skåne and the Bronze age remains named “the Man from Granhammar” that was given three-dimensional faces, even though the exhibition presented several skeletons. The exhibition entrance displays a film where eight different life stories are told. Then – as the visitors enter the exhibition itself – the Stone Age woman is the first person they meet when they step into the exhibition room which is designed as a house placed in a forest.

Centrally located in the Stone Age house is an open hearth while the house is surrounded by glass cases displaying different tools. Both in the entrance to as well as in the background of the house, the audience can see an image of a forest and a full size female figure – the same figure they encountered in the film at the beginning of the exhibition (Insulander 2010:81). When the visitors are standing in the middle of the house, they encounter the reconstruction of the Skåne woman as a bust with white skin, a mane of brown grey long hair and grey-blue eyes. Her face is finely modelled with visible wrinkles and veins. She is enacted as a head with a hyper-naturalistic appearance presented in a separate glass case on the wall. She is placed at the height of an adult visitor who will meet her gaze when looking at her face. Next to the reconstructed head is her skeleton displayed as it was presented in the first exhibition described in example one: seated in her grave with only a few minor changes in posture and within a somewhat less naturalistic grave (fig. 6).

The museum presents the Skåne woman as a multiple body in three different physical versions: as a skeleton, as a hyper-realistic head and as pictures. In addition, the curators have set up a monitor where the model maker Nilsson himself explains the reconstruction process and the methods in use. This acts as an intermediary between the finished reconstructed face and the skeleton, between what seems to be the subject and the object.

This documentary film tells us about how the natural sciences and its accurate digital methods makes it possible to actually reconstruct people and then about the technical procedure for the modelling of the face. It also emphasizes the interpretation process and the uncertainties about the appearance of the reconstruction such as the design of the mouth, the ears and teeth, the skin and eye colour. The film subsequently highlights the role of the interpreter (both Nilsson and the museum) and also the enacting of the past done by the museum. The colour of the skin and the eye colour are difficult to know, Nilsson admits. They have therefore given the Stone Age woman a Nordic complexion and blue eyes “to make her come across as neutrally as possible”, he says. Towards the end of the video, Nilsson evaluates the results and concludes by saying that “the woman would not recognize herself if she could see the reconstruction but she would understand that someone had tried to portray her”.

As such, Nilsson becomes significant as an interpreter and as an artist in collaboration with the museum. Through the use of the video, he sets the female skeleton in motion for the visitor. Simultaneously, the museum creates a dialogue between the two body versions, between the skeleton and the reconstructed face by explaining how this skeleton became the physical woman the audience meet in the exhibition.

At the same time, there are factual aspects regarding the reconstruction that are neither discussed nor questioned in front of the audience. Questions of racial belonging and discussions around the reconstruction’s facial expressions are omitted from the exhibition. In the same way as with the reconstructions
Facing skeletons

I have analysed above, this reconstruction is enacted as woman of today’s European origin with “neutral colours” as Nilsson puts it. In an e-mail correspondence, Nilsson expands on this by saying that it is hard to know the remains’ racial origin and that race is a difficult issue. In relation to the Stone Age woman, he claims that the museum staff decided that it felt less controversial to adopt a common European origin while this decision at the same time opens up for a pretty interesting discussion because there is no such thing as a right result or a fact – but many.\textsuperscript{16} Also, we see here the importance of creating a figure the audience can relate to and meet as a part of the “Swedish tribe”.

Another important aspect of facial reconstruction is that it is hard to make a human face without also giving that face a particular expression when attempting to make it appear vivid and life-like. Nilsson describes how he tries to convey neutral in the construction process while he also has to make the face come alive. He does this by using as few resources as possible and explains how he achieves this by concentrating his work on the

Fig. 6. The way the Stone Age woman from Skåne was staged at the Swedish History Museum for the new exhibit Forntider (Prehistories) in 2006: as a hyper realistic facial reconstruction, as remains and as a picture of the life-size woman. Photo: Anne-Sofie Hjemdahl.
expression around the eyes which gives both life and expression to the entire reconstruction: “I try to obtain an ambiguous expression as possible; the optimal thing would be if different visitors see different types of expressions.”\(^{17}\)

The process is, in other words, about creating faces that connect with the visitors, creates an interest and gives visitors an opportunity to make their own impression of the people that inhabited Swedish land in Antiquity.

The process of making museum facts is explained to the visitors while they at the same time are invited into the reconstruction process. In other words, there seems to be an opening process and not a black box process going on here. This means that no attempts are made to turn the reconstruction into hard facts by separating the facts or knowledge from the actual process of creating them – as Latour has pointed out is a characteristic of the production of hard facts (Latour 1987). Instead the opposite seems to happen. The laboratory is taken into the museum exhibition with its stories about science and artistic skills and becomes a part of the bodies on display. The parallel to this can be seen in the concept of public archaeology where the discipline of archaeology becomes part of a wider public culture and where contestation and dissonance are inevitable. Public archaeology seems to attempt to open up a space where both products and the process by which meaning is created from archaeological material in the public realm, is discussed (Merriman 2004:5).

**Facing scientific and didactic bodies: Concluding remarks**

By transforming human remains into reconstructed faces, museums change the epistemological status of the remains. They become humanized individuals with a story and a voice and appear as pictures of the past. The question is thus: What kind of individuality and what kind of faces do we meet? The examples given in this article show us that the process of giving faces to these old skeletons are complex and have been done through different procedures within Scandinavian museums through the 1990s and 2000s.

The reconstructed life-size woman made at the Swedish History Museum in Stockholm in 1991 appeared as a collage of forensic and ethnographic practices, which also included casts of contemporary women’s bodies. No specialist was invited into the process in 1991 and the construction of the entire body was located at the museum. The result of the mimetic reconstruction presented within the ethnographic tradition of dioramas, seemed to be an authoritative body-representation where the audience was kept outside the reconstruction process.

In the second example from Oslo in 1997, a scientific network was established to reconstruct the face of the Søgne woman that appeared as an abstract almost sculptural and art-like reconstruction. The laboratories in Oslo and London were also present even in the communication with the visitors; the scientific narrative of the reconstruction was told through words in the exhibition.

In the third example, from 2006, we once again find ourselves at the Swedish History Museum where the reconstructed face of the Stone Age woman was made with the help of a professional and local model maker. Here, we meet a hyper-realistic version of the Stone Age woman. In addition, the laboratory is brought into the exhibition space where the whole face making procedure is presented and where the model maker and artist himself is present as an interpreter and as a subject in the exhibition.

In contrast to the other examples, he is here...
himself responsible for communicating the reconstruction process to the audience. The archaeology enacted invites the public into the process.

These three chronologically presented examples might be seen as parts of a history of knowledge, of how the practice of forensic art have developed as a profession and has been implemented in archaeological museum exhibitions over the last two decades. Having both educational and research opportunities, forensic art has become a profession which has manifested itself in archaeological exhibitions.

Even more interesting is the relationship between the remains, the reconstructions and the work that these are intended to do in the museum exhibitions. The relation between the remains and the reconstructions seem to be enacted both as symmetry and hierarchy. In the first reconstruction of the Skåne woman described in example one above, both the remains and the reconstruction seemed to be enacted as undiscutable museum facts. In the second and third example the relation seemed to be enacted as a hierarchy where the skeleton was enacted as an indisputable original object and the factual basis for the reconstruction, while the reconstructions themselves told narratives about science, knowledge production and interpretation.

How were these reconstructions inscribed with stated and non-stated facts about the individuals? My aim has been to highlight the co-production of scientific narratives and explore the position the reconstructions are afforded in the museums’ communication. The women were humanized and individualized in diverse ways – as ethnographic bodies, as sculptures and as hyper-realistic faces. What they had in common was that they all were physically enacted as women belonging to the European race – even though the museums did not know the racial origin of these women. I have also highlighted how the issue of racial origin was discussed and emphasized in the reconstruction process by drawings and texts as “uncertain facts”, while the “facts” on race was simultaneously physically narrated into the women faces. In other words, questions of racial affiliation were not incorporated into the verbal discussions with the audience. Instead, the museums enacted the reconstructed faces as museum facts which further means that the political aspect of the bodies was not made relevant or discussed. Information about racial origin is a type of information that could challenge the grand narratives about the nation and its inhabitants. Knowing that Stone Age often is interpreted as a pre-; i.e. before the real history of civilized human beings begins, a period seemed to start with the discovery of literal sources around 4 000 B.C. (Smail 2008), it seems to be of great importance to translate these remains into faces which looked like contemporary Scandinavians to link them to the Swedish and Norwegian past. In addition, questions about race could also open up a debate about the concept of race and whether it belongs to biology or constructivism (M’charek 2013), which is highly complicated.

By not inviting the audience into discussions about the skeletons’ race and racial origin, the museums did not challenge the grand narratives of the nations in question. Instead the museums and the model-makers enacted the skeletons by giving them similar facial appearance as themselves, which made these faces uncontroversial, apolitical while they simultaneously seems to confirm already established relations of power.

As such, issues about racial origin seemed to be a fact the public should encounter physically and engage with. As mentioned,
Anne-Sofie Hjemdahl

Sanders sees face-to-face encounters as a variant of the “face recognition practice” which allows us to recognize each other. In addition, she claims that “when we have the opportunity to observe faces from a distant, even ancient past, we seem to instinctually place ourselves in relation to these strangers, as if to make ourselves contemporaries with them” (Sanders 2009:199). Facing these women, the Swedish and Norwegian audiences were supposed to meet and recognize faces that appeared similar to themselves: white and European. As such, the museum facilitated a meeting between the audiences and their European ancestors, a meeting where the visitors would relate to these individuals from a distant past and see them as forbearers. We see here the real work of the faces and notice that encountering the past face-to-face, is not after all just an innocent meeting.

Notes

1. I would like to thank the reviewers and editors of the journal for the good comments and input on this article, as well as Mette Irene Dahl for great help with the language.

2. Be it taxidermy practices and the presentation of animals in natural history museums and research (see Wonders 1993, Poliquin 2014, Thorsen 2014) or representation practices connected to ethnic, social and historical groups of people in ethnographic and historical museums (see Sandberg 2003, Varutti 2011, Opdahl Mathisen 2014). It might also be scientific collections of medicine and reproductions and collections of human remains (see Hurst 2001, Åhrén 2002, Fabian 2010, Alberti & Hallam 2013, Svanberg 2015, Redman 2016), that have discussed issues such as racial doctrine and problematized how people are made into scientific objects (Svanberg 2015).

3. Except for professor in Scandinavian literature Karin Sanders (2009) and science anthropologist Amade Mcharek (2013) who have done interesting studies about how museums have engaged with human remains and reconstructions.

4. In addition, actor–network theory has taught us that only practice or “science in the making” gives an opportunity to grasp how scientific knowledge is enacted and made into scientific facts (Latour & Woolgar 1979).

5. The practice of forensic art can be traced back to the beginning of the twentieth century in its simplest form. At this time it focused on presenting the appearance of Neanderthals, people from the Stone Age as well as Egyptian Pharaohs (Prag & Neave 1997:16, Wilkinson 2010).


7. At this time the museum was called Department of the University Museum of National Antiquities.

8. It was the researcher Birgitte Skar from NIKU who came up with the idea for the exhibition. Conversation with Elliot 16 November 2016.


11. Museum Archive: e-mail, 4 and 7 July 1997.


13. This exhibition was open until April 1998.


17. Oscar Nilsson, e-mail 18 November 2016.

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On the use of dioramas and mannequins in Sámi exhibitions

Silje Opdahl Mathisen

Abstract: This article is about the use of dioramas in Sámi exhibitions. The author discusses the use of a specific exhibition technique where a mannequin and a taxidermied reindeer are grouped together, and often placed in an illusionary winter landscape. She has named this the Lappish Equipage. This form of representation has a long history both inside and outside museums, and it can be found in both Sámi and ethnic Norwegian and Swedish museums. The author discusses how this diorama works, and how its chequered past through appearances in various types of exhibitions makes it problematic to use in contemporary museum exhibitions about the Sámi. On the other hand, the author also points out that if the Lappish Equipage is re-framed and re-contextualized, and its exhibition history is consciously activated, the Lappish Equipage has a potential to work as a contact point between Sámi history and visitors in the museums today.

Keywords: Dioramas, mannequins, taxidermy, representations of the Sámi, indigenous museums.

Different types of bodily representations are present in exhibitions at museums of cultural history and ethnography. It can be bodies in human form, in the shape of drawings, photographs, dolls or mannequins, or in non-human, animal form, often as taxidermied animals. This article examines how bodies of humans and animals are used in Sámi exhibitions in Norway and Sweden today. Mannequins, taxidermied animals and dioramas are a prominent feature in many of these exhibitions.

Representations of Sámi culture and history have been present in exhibitions at venues as various as world fairs, zoos, museums of ethnography and museums of cultural history, and, for the past thirty years or so, in Sámi museums. Today, Sámi exhibitions can be found in both Sámi museums and majority museums. A recurring motif in these exhibitions is what I call the Lappish Equipage. This is a representation that consists of a mannequin wearing a traditional Sámi costume, placed together with a life-like stuffed reindeer. The reindeer can often be seen pulling a sledge, and the whole scene can be surrounded by an illusionary winter landscape. Over time, this has become an almost iconic depiction of Sámi culture. Below, I will look at how this motif is used in museums today. In discussing how and
why this diorama is so widely used in Sámi exhibitions, I will also discuss how a diorama like the Lappish Equipage works, and how it might be used in the future.

This article is based on a material collected from fourteen Sámi exhibitions in six museums in Norway and Sweden over a period of five years. I visited two Sámi museums in Norway: RDM-Sámiid Vuorká-Dávvirat (De Samiske Samlinger) in Karasjok and Várjjat Sámi Musea (Varanger Samiske Museum) in Varanger, and one Sámi museum in Sweden: Ætte Museum in Jokkmokk. In addition I also visited majority museums with exhibitions dedicated to Sámi history at Norsk Folkemuseum in Oslo and Tromsø Museum – Universitetsmuseet in Norway, and Nordiska Museet in Stockholm, Sweden. My analysis is based on notes, photos and observations I did during my visits and on interviews with museum staff and reviews of the exhibitions in the press.

In some exhibitions, the Lappish Equipage is still standing but in other exhibitions it has been replaced by other forms of representations of the human body. This article examines the ways the body is staged in the exhibitions and I will argue that in the so-called majority museums, the three-dimensional Lappish Equipage is being replaced by two-dimensional photos, and that this change relates to a shift from a timeless, de-personalized representation of the Sámi as a type or a specimen, to a representation of Sámi identity through individual, portrait-like photos with an emphasis on the present.

Fig. 1. From the exhibition Samekulturen (The Sami Culture) which opened in 1973 at Tromsø Museum – Universitetsmuseet. Photo: Silje Opdahl Mathisen.
Exhibitions of Sámi Culture

During the past half century the Sámi have experienced an ethno-political awakening. Parallel to the Sámi political movement there has also been a revitalization of Sámi culture (Eidheim 1997; Stordahl 2000). The right to self-representation has been an important part of the ethno-political struggle. Several Sámi-governed museums have been created since the 1970s across Sápmi: in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia (see for example Amundsen 2011; Pareli et al. 2012). The emergence of the first Sámi museums can be seen as a reaction to the stereotypical way the Sámi were represented at the majority museums. Europe’s representation of other cultures has been the subject of critical debate since the end of the 1970s. European museums contributed to a stereotypical view of other cultures, including the Sámi, where conceptions of race, mentality and culture were essentialized, and this ultimately served to legitimize Western hegemony. Over approximately the last thirty years there has been an increase in the cultural, social and economic rights of indigenous people. The development of the Alta-Kautokeino hydroelectric power plant in Northern Norway and the protests against this development in the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s was a turning point in the Sámi ethno-political movement. The creation of a number of Sámi museums since the 1970s can be seen in relation to such ethno-political processes, together with an emergence of new theoretical frameworks for understanding ethnicity and cultural variation within the disciplines of anthropology and sociology. These changes must also be seen in connection with the emergence of post-colonial theory and its emphasis on the cultural and political rights of minorities.

The Sámi museums were created out of a need to preserve the Sámi heritage, to make Sámi culture more visible, and to strengthen Sámi identity. Since the 1970s, the Sámi museums have played an important role in creating and strengthening Sámi identity. There is a growing body of museological research on Sámi museums. Some have criticized the exhibitions at the Sámi museums for being very much like the older exhibitions of Sámi culture at the majority museums in Scandinavia, and for showing a timeless and static picture of Sámi culture (Olsen 2000; Mathisen, S.R. 2004). This critique also points out that in so doing the Sámi museums are in danger of reproducing old ethnographic stereotypes. Partly, the reason for this critique can be found in the paradox that Sámi museums use some of the same “icons” or material representations that were used in the older exhibitions of Sámi culture at the various majority museums. The representation I call the Lappish Equipage seems to have an especially long life. The Lappish Equipage is not only a thing of the past. It still stands in several museum exhibitions today, as well as in several exhibitions outside the museum world.

The equipage has, of course, its origin in Sápmi and how it was used in everyday life by Sámi reindeer herders. In this article, I focus on how the equipage has been used to symbolize what is Sámi, and what this “Sámi” entails. This means that I look chiefly at versions of the equipage made and used by someone other than the Sámi themselves, in exhibitions inside and outside museums. In these, the Lappish Equipage has been part of a broader discourse about human evolution. Over time, the Lappish Equipage has travelled through several changing master narratives, from the conception of the Sámi as the original inhabitants of the North and a “noble savage”, through a period where the Sámi were seen...
Still standing

map Carta Marina, dated 1539. The same motif is repeated in Olaus Magnus’ The History of the Nordic People, published in 1555. Lindin and Svanberg reckon that it was Johannes Schefferus’ Lapponia (1673) that made the image of the Lappish Equipage well known and contributed to its broad circulation. Schefferus’ version of the Lappish Equipage was used in a wide range of publications in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Among these was Carl Linnaeus’ Flora Lapponica (1737), where the Lappish Equipage was used on the flyleaf. According to Lindin and Svanberg, Schefferus’ Lapponia was distributed widely and internationally, and this contributed to giving Schefferus’ version of the

Fig. 2. From the exhibition at Skandinavisk-Etnografiska samlingen, later Nordiska Museet, in Stockholm. This exhibition opened in 1873. Photo: Axel Lindahl 1874.

as belonging to a primitive and inferior race that had immigrated from the East, and up till today when the Sámi and other indigenous peoples are seen as equal, although with some special rights connected to their indigeneity (though these rights are a source of constant debates).

The Lappish Equipage has a long history, both inside and outside of the museum, both as a two-dimensional image and as a three-dimensional diorama. The Swedish researchers Leif Lindin and Ingvar Svanberg have examined the origins and distribution of this image (Lindin & Svanberg 1990). They trace the oldest version of this image back to the sixteenth century and Olaus Magnus’ famous
Cathrine Baglo has examined the Sami participation in live exhibitions. Performing with reindeer and sledge was a central part of these exhibitions. According to Baglo, the museums adapted this way of portraying the Sami from the live exhibitions, with some important adjustments. The museums

The Norwegian archaeologist Cathrine Baglo sees these exhibitions as a visual technology which was given meaning by and at the same time gave meaning to a particular view of human cultures and races. Abstract categories such as evolution, prehistory, biology and race were visualized and materialized through these exhibitions (Baglo 2006, 2011).

Mr. Bullock's *Exhibition of Laplanders* at the Egyptian Hall in London in 1822 is an early example of a live exhibition, where a Sámi family from Røros in Norway performed with authentic reindeer (Mathisen, S.R. 2007; Pearce 2008; Andersson Burnett 2013). Mr. Bullock was influenced by Carl Linnaeus and portrayed the Sámi family from Røros as peaceful children of nature. The Swedish researcher in the history of ideas Linda Andersson Burnett compares Mr. Bullock's exhibition and advertising with the reception the exhibition got in the press at that time, and she sees an ambiguity in how the audience and the press experienced it (Andersson Burnett 2013).

While the press partly accepted Mr. Bullock's version of the Sámi family as the noble savage and children of nature to be admired and from whom the British “civilized” audiences could learn a thing or two, there were also a growing choir of voices that saw the Sámi family in this exhibition as belonging to another and inferior race. According to Andersson Burnett, Mr. Bullock's exhibition of Laplanders “illustrates the demotion of the trope ‘noble Savage’ to that of a mere savage during the 1820s” (Andersson Burnett 2013:190).

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Still standing

replaced live people with mannequins, and living reindeer with stuffed animals (Baglo 2011). The Lappish Equipage was present in some of the earliest museum exhibitions in both Oslo and Stockholm: in Stockholm at the Nordic Museum (Nordiska Museet, then called Skandinavisk-etnografiska samlingen), and in Oslo at the Ethnographic Museum (Mathisen, S.O. 2014:214–217). Even though the background for the first exhibitions of Sámi culture at the majority museums is different in Norway and Sweden, and even though these exhibitions took place in different types of museums, they still show a remarkable likeness. Centrally staged in all the exhibitions about Sámi culture we find the Lappish Equipage. This material representation shows a remarkable persistence in time and space, and can be found in both majority museums and in some of the later Sámi museums. Whilst some of the material representations of Sámi culture remain much the same at both majority museums and Sámi museums, the significance of this representation changes as the context and narrative change.

At the Sámi museums, the Lappish Equipage has been a part of a discourse concerning Sámi identity and ethno-politics. As mentioned, the first Sámi museums were criticized for relying on the same material expressions as the majority museums. But these material expressions can here be interpreted as an attempt to rebuild and reinforce Sámi identity. The Sámi museums were trying to strengthen Sámi cultural identity by focusing on objects and traits that set it apart from the majority culture. This approach can be seen as a kind of strategic essentialism (Hodgson 2002:1040). The Sámi museums have thus played an active role in negotiating and creating what is perceived as essentially Sámi. From a post-colonial perspective, the Lappish Equipage at the Sámi museums can be seen as a moment of confrontation, whereby the Scandinavian discourse is being challenged because “the Other” that previously has been represented as an object now acts as the subject and is answering back.

The Lappish Equipage as an exhibition technique

The Lappish Equipage is a form of museum display that is usually composed of three parts: one part is realist taxidermy in the form of a reindeer, the second part is a mannequin, usually a man, dressed in a traditional Sámi costume, and the third part of the display is the surroundings or the stage that the mannequin and the reindeer are placed on. This often takes the form of a winter scene. One could add a fourth part to this scheme, which actually was the reason for the whole display, and that is the objects on display. In the museum, the Lappish Equipage is a device to show off or present authentic objects like the harness, the sledge and the traditional costume. The first three parts – the reindeer, the mannequin and the surroundings – can be seen as props or contextualization tools to show off the authentic objects. This form of representation was part of a new development in museums of the late nineteenth century, where taxonomic display principles were rejected in favour of living, contextualized scenes. To quote the American media historian Mark Sandberg: “it is a compensatory mise-en-scène that gave displaced objects and bodies a new kind of scenic home” (Sandberg 2003:8).

The Lappish Equipage is a form of exhibition technique that is often referred to as a diorama. A diorama is a model representing a scene with three-dimensional figures, either in miniature or as a large-scale museum exhibit (Oxford
Silje Opdahl Mathisen

Dioramas became popular in the early stages of the nineteenth century as a new theatrical form of visual art, patented by J. L. M. Daguerre in 1822. Such dioramas, like their predecessors the panorama, became a popular entertainment throughout Europe until photography proliferated in the mid-1880s. The word “diorama” virtually disappeared until the 1930s and the 1940s when it was applied in natural history museums habitat displays (Wonders 1993). As defined in a museum setting, a diorama is “a display consisting of a constructed foreground with fabricated or preserved elements (plants, rocks, water etc.) and (usually) stuffed (or modelled) fauna. The constructed foreground is blended seamlessly into a realistically painted background, which then extends the vision to the horizon” (Whitson 1996:202). Today, “diorama” is a multi-purpose label for a variety of simulated environments, either life-size or in miniature.

During the same period the diorama evolved, taxidermy techniques were developed almost into an art form. Taxidermy is the art of mounting or reproducing dead animals for display or study. According to American feminist theorist Donna Haraway, taxidermy became the art most suited to the epistemological and aesthetic stance of realism. The power of this stance is its magical effects: what appears so effortlessly, spontaneously found, or discovered, is actually painfully constructed (Haraway 1985).

The Lappish Equipage belongs to a category of dioramas that are realistic and life-size museum displays. This kind of museum display can again be divided in two main categories, depending on whether they display animals or humans. Dioramas containing stuffed animals are usually found in displays of natural history, and are also called habitat groups or habitat dioramas. According to the German historian of science Karen Wonders, a habitat diorama is a natural history scenario which typically contains mounted zoological specimens arranged in a foreground that replicates their native surroundings in the wild (Wonders 1993:9). Dioramas with human subjects can also be called life groups. A life group diorama is an arrangement of costumed mannequins, often arranged in a dramatic tableau. Life group dioramas are (or were) usually found in displays of anthropology, and to some extent in displays of cultural history.

The Lappish Equipage is a diorama but it is hard to classify as either a habitat group or a life group. The Lappish Equipage places itself somewhere in the middle: between the habitat group and the life group, between nature and culture. It consists of nature in the form of a life-like stuffed reindeer, and culture in the form of authentic objects like the sledge and the harness and of the costumed mannequin. The Lappish Equipage is both nature and culture: it is an anthropologic-zoological representation, and it links Sámi culture to nature.

In natural history museums the diorama combines illusionistic background paintings with lifelike stuffed animals. The diorama appeals to emotions. The earliest dioramas at the natural history museums in Sweden expressed a connection between wilderness and national identity. By appealing to emotions and by the combination of extreme illusionism and romantic symbolism, the diorama produced a sense that the cultural meanings attached to nature are innate, meanings that are felt rather than read (Henning 2006:51).

The body problem

The Lappish Equipage is also a body, or actually two bodies: the Sámi and the reindeer, one human and one animal. I will focus on the
human body in the form of the mannequin in this article and from now on, when I refer to “the body”, I refer to the mannequin: the representation of the human body.

The use of mannequins in exhibitions is an integrated part of the diorama tradition. As opposed to, for example, a sculpture of the human body, a mannequin is not the end product in itself. The mannequin is made to be dressed in clothes and/or accessories. Though not an invention from this period, mannequins in the form of lifelike wax and plaster figures proliferated from about 1880 to the time of World War I and could be found in storefront windows, at international exhibitions and in several different forms of museum displays (Sandberg 2003:4–5).

There is an uneasiness in the meeting with the Lappish Equipage. This is connected to the juxtaposition of a taxidermy animal and a mannequin representing a human body. But it also connected to the representation of the human body itself and this again is connected to what has been named “The Lost Body Problem”. The American cultural anthropologist Jeffery David Feldman has addressed the problem with the lost bodies in an article where he considers what is lost by a museum paradigm that emphasizes visual display over other embodied experiences (Feldman 2006). Feldman examines a category of objects in museum exhibitions that he calls “contact points”. These contact points are the results of physical contact with the body, and the subsequent removal or destruction of the body. Seen as such a contact point, the Lappish Equipage is an inherited legacy from colonialism, a legacy of material objects and materializing practices that are the products of unequal encounters between colonizers and colonized. Feldman criticizes the conventional museum display for not fully exploiting the potential in such contact points, for not realizing the potential for embodied memories that these contact points contain. He claims that further theorizing of these objects has the potential to make the museum visitor more open to the sensory agenda of the museum space (Feldman 2006:247).

There has been an increased interest in the body in the humanities and social sciences since the late 1970s. This renewed interest in the body stems from an acknowledgement of how fundamentally disembodied earlier social theory had been. There has been a long-standing bias against the body in Western academic tradition. This bias is usually explained as a result of a Platonic legacy and of Descartes’ radical separation of mind and body and that this is some of the reasons why we today have the well-known dualisms of mind/body, reason/emotion, and objective/subjective (Farnell 2011:136–137). What is a body and what kind of bodies do we find in the Lappish Equipage? Generally and for analytical purposes the concept of “the body” can be divided into three parts: the body as a biological organism, the body as a subjective experience, and the body as a cultural product and as an expression of a culture. The body in the Lappish Equipage is modelled on a biological organism – the human body – but it is not meant to present an individual or convey any form of subjective experience. This body, in the form of a mannequin, is a cultural product and a legacy of a colonial and racial past. Even though the face of the mannequin can have portrait-like features, it is not meant to show an individual. It is a type, a specimen. The mannequin is often dressed in a costume typical of a particular area, for example the Lule Sámi area, thus the mannequin is a representation of a typical man from the Lule Sámi area and thus it shows a particular type of Sámi.
The human body as a type or a specimen is particularly unnerving when linked to the tradition of exhibiting live indigenous people and to the anthropometric examinations of Sámi people that were often linked to the live exhibitions (Baglo 2011). The body as a type or specimen is even more chilling when one considers the Sámi human remains that were collected and stored in public collections. In the Schreiner Collection at the Anatomical Institute, University of Oslo, there are human remains from approximately 1,000 Sámi individuals (Sellevold 2009). Since the 1970s demands have been made to repatriate these bones to their descendants and the places of origin.

The juxtaposition of the taxidermied reindeer and the Sámi mannequin emphasizes a feeling of cultural taxidermy – the word “taxidermy” used metaphorically to describe the process of objectifying indigenous people and their objects in an a-temporal exhibition scheme like the diorama. The American art historians Mara Gladstone and Janet Catherine Berlo point out how the traditional museum representation of bodies of cultural others in the form of mannequins have “deadened” rather than enlivened the presence of this body (Gladstone & Berlo 2011:354ff.). The concept of cultural taxidermy can be traced to Donna Haraway’s seminal essay “Teddy bear patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908–1936”, where she describes the formation of the Akeley Hall of African Mammals at the American Museum of Natural History (Haraway 1985). Haraway suggests that these dioramas do not give an exact imitation of nature, but rather present an idealized, concentrated view. Haraway suggests that Akeley’s animal families reflect his generation’s view of race, gender and class. In this way, dioramas tell as much about the society that created them as they do about the natural worlds they represent. Dioramas as an exhibition technology are not “neutral” nor innocent, but latent political statements.

A solution: From three-dimensional types to two-dimensional individuals

The Lappish Equipage is a part of Sámi history, a way to represent parts of Sámi history and, at the same time, it is also a legacy from a colonial past. At majority museums like Tromsø Museum – Universitetsmuseet and Norsk Folkemuseum in Norway, and Nordiska Museet in Sweden, the Lappish Equipage is gradually being replaced by other forms of representations of Sámi people and bodies, first and foremost by the use of contemporary portrait photography. So, the solution to “the body problem” in this case seems to be a transition from a three-dimensional diorama to two-dimensional photographs. However, this “new” way of representing bodies raises some new questions. One of these is the question of timelessness versus presentism. In the older exhibitions of Sámi culture, the Sámi were presented in an “ethnographic present”, as a timeless culture, a traditional culture without possibilities for survival in a modern society. It is all about what it means to be a Sámi today, about identity. “The past” is mostly about the ethno-political struggle in the latter half of the twentieth century.

This shift in historical emphasis also reflects differences in representation versus presentation, and types versus individuals. In the “timeless” exhibitions, I found ethnographic representations of peoples and types of people.
In exhibitions with a focus on the present, I found individual testimonies about what it means to be a Sámi today. In timeless museum representations, the Sámi are represented as “the other”. In museum exhibitions with a focus on the present, the emphasis is on showing that “they” are “just like us” but with the added extra dimension of another ethnic identity.

The shift from timelessness to presentism coincides with the disappearance of the Lappish Equipage. The three-dimensional body representation in the form of mannequins disappears, and is replaced by body representations in other media such as two-dimensional photographs and videos and personal testimonials that can be listened to on audiotapes. These representations give a more personalized and individual account. Sometimes these bodily representations act as witnesses, testifying to what it means to be a Sámi today or things that happened in the near past. The Lappish Equipage as an exhibition device was developed to simulate reality and was appreciated for its realistic effects. Later bodily appearances in exhibitions of Sámi culture, such as photos, videos and audiotapes, are also constructed to appear real and authentic. The witness approach gives authenticity to the stories told in the exhibitions. Cathrine Baglo describes what happened when the Lappish Equipage was moved from the live exhibitions to the museum: live Sámi were replaced with mute mannequins and museums achieved full control of the representation (Baglo 2011:300). The “witness approach” and growing awareness of the importance of making exhibitions in collaboration with Sámi groups and individuals can be seen as ways of giving the Sámi their voice back. However, this is always a voice that is framed within the confines of a museum and an exhibition.

**Lost in translation?**

According to the German-American anthropologist Franz Boas, life group dioramas were nothing more than glorified stop signs, whose aim was to direct audiences’ attention to more didactic parts of the exhibition. This must obviously have worked as in 1895 he initiated the installation of no less than 28 such life group dioramas at the American Museum of Natural History (Wonders 1993:17). How do these dioramas and life groups work? What is their effect on us? And what is lost when dioramas go out of use?

The American art historian Toby Kamps has written an essay on the different uses of dioramas in modern art (Kamps 2000). According to Kamps, dioramas challenge our perceptual skills. They activate a physical response that flat images, isolated sculptures and objects cannot. They engage our sense of depth perception and, with it, a bodily awareness of space which encourages us to make the imaginary leaps into their constructs (Kamps 2000:9). The illusionistic diorama with a life-size mannequin has a certain effect; it works on us, it affects us in a way, and how this works has something to do with its three-dimensionality. The mere body and the physicality of the diorama create an intuitive response with great power which can be likened to the response to an artwork. The American researchers Mara Gladstone and Janet Catherine Berlo quote the artist Fred Wilson and how he in his art is “really interested in surprise and how one reacts on an emotional and intuitive level before the intellectual self kicks in” (Fred Wilson as quoted in Gladstone & Berlo 2011:366). According to Gladstone and Berlo, there is a bodily moment of confrontation, the moment before the mind corrects an intuitive response. This moment is crucial and is where the artwork, or in this case the diorama, has its greatest power.
According to Mieke Bal, close-ups create a relationship between viewer and object that is pure affect. This affect emerges between a perception that troubles us and an action we are hesitating about (Bal 2008:35). Mieke Bal uses the concepts of “close-ups” and “affect-images” to describe objects and images that are very different from the Lappish Equipage. But still, I find these concepts useful in describing how the Lappish Equipage works. The Lappish Equipage is a stop-sign, it arrests the flow of time in the exhibition. It does not only show frozen images from the past, it also freezes the unfolding of time and narrative in the exhibition. It works on the viewer through affect, on an emotional and intuitive level, in the...
moment before the mind corrects the intuitive response. As such, the Lappish Equipage is a powerful exhibition device which works on a more affective and intuitive level than, for example, single objects and photography do. The power of an exhibition device like the Lappish Equipage unfolds in the meeting of two bodies: the body of the mannequin and the body of the spectator.

**Still standing**

The Lappish Equipage has travelled through several different master narratives: universalistic, racist/colonialist, post-colonialist and ethnic revivalist. The Lappish Equipage is given new meaning from new contexts, but at the same time it also carries with it meaning from older contexts. The Lappish Equipage relates to a traditional Sámi way of life but it also refers to descriptions of the Sámi by early ethnographers and to exhibitions in national museums of ethnography and cultural history from the nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is therefore not unproblematic to use the Lappish Equipage in modern museum exhibitions. Indeed, from the 1990s, the strategy of some museums has been to avoid the Lappish Equipage altogether.

Some of the same development can be found in Sámi museums: Symbols that are uniquely Sámi and that set the Sámi apart from majority culture can work as border markers, and the Lappish Equipage is such a border marker. There was a tendency that the first exhibitions at the Sámi museums adopted these symbols but Sámi museums are increasingly trying to broaden the image of Sámi culture and as a result, they try to avoid the use of typical border markers.

On the other hand, a larger number of native museums do employ mannequins in their exhibits; in some cases these are cast from living community members and identified as such. The American cultural anthropologist Aaron Glass argues that rather than assuming this to be a simple appropriation of dominant and perhaps even racist paradigms, we need to recognize the “unique discursive contours of this framing” (Glass 2009:77). There can be different motives underlying the need for indigenous people to adopt mannequins as a mode of self-representation. It can be seen as a cultural expression of alterity, as a wish to articulate a specific connection to animals or “nature” or as a strategic accommodation to visitor expectation. Anyhow, it is important to take into consideration indigenous agency, or the agency of Indigenous Nations, as historical and contemporary actors in the contested field of representation.

The Lappish Equipage is still standing both in Sámi museums and in majority museums today, but the Lappish Equipage provides different meanings in these different contexts. The Lappish Equipage in the majority museums is a thing of the past, and is being gradually replaced by other forms of representations, such as photographs. Where the Lappish Equipage can be found in Sámi museums, it is now being self-consciously reframed. The Lappish Equipage is present in the permanent exhibition of Sámi culture and history at the Sámi Collection in Karasjok. Here, the Lappish Equipage is placed directly on the floor, and not on a podium that elevates it from the viewer’s standpoint, as is the case in majority museums. Also, there are no barriers between the viewer and the equipage, visitors – if they dare to break the unwritten museum laws of “do not touch!” – can touch the reindeer and the mannequin. There is no illusionary landscape either, nor any dramatic lightning. Here the Lappish Equipage has been stripped down and
downsized in a way. It has been placed directly on the carpeted floor in front of a concrete wall. In addition, the mannequin has a recognizable face. It has the character of a middle-aged man. Instead of using an illusionary landscape, the Lappish Equipage is placed in front of symbols from Sámi mythology. Sámi mythology frames the whole exhibition, and indeed the whole museum building (Lien & Nielssen 2011).

The Lappish Equipage has become an iconic picture of a culture. The biography of the Lappish Equipage, which I have barely touched upon in this paper, has the potential to illustrate “some of the mechanics of ethnographic meditation and anthropological knowledge production, the role of recursivity and reiteration in generating iconic cultural objectifications, and the historical entanglement of professional anthropology, public museums, commercial enterprises, and indigenous people” according to Glass (2009:113).

The Lappish Equipage can be seen as a stop sign (Boas), as a close-up (Bal) and as a contact point (Feldman). Even though dioramas or life groups like these are considered by many as an outdated mode of representation, it works. And it works on us in a certain way, on an affective level, a level that pictures, objects and photographs cannot reach so easily. The diorama I call the Lappish Equipage has a chequered history that travels with it, a history of colonialism and anthropometric “science” where humans were classified within a hierarchy of mankind. However and maybe it is precisely because of this history, combined with the diorama’s affect-effect, that the Lappish Equipage has a potential to work as a contact point between Sámi history and visitors to the museums. The Lappish Equipage is both a dilemma and a potentially dynamic force in museum exhibitions. Some of its potential lies in showing some of its history. One way of doing this is to reframe or recontextualize the equipage. Instead of throwing the diorama out of the exhibitions, maybe museums should try to consciously reframe the Lappish Equipage?

Notes
1. When I use the term “Sámi exhibition”, I refer to an exhibition where the topic is Sámi culture and history. In so far as the exhibition also represents and describes other cultures, this is done in relation to Sámi culture. A Sámi exhibition can be located in a Sámi museum or in a majority museum.
3. According to the Norwegian Sámi Council, a Sámi museum should be associated with the Sámi Council and the Sámi Council sets the agenda for the political and academic content. A Sámi museum must be located in a Sámi community and must have the history of Sámi culture and nature as its main topic and focus (Sametingsrådets melding om samiske museer 2004). I use the term “majority museums” for the museums that represent the history and culture of the majority of the population, in this case the ethnic Swedish and Norwegian population.
4. I have borrowed the term “Lappish Equipage” from texts from the nineteenth century. At that time, the Sámi were referred to as “Lapps”.
5. In Norway, Sámi culture was exhibited at the Ethnographic Museum in Oslo until 1951, when the Sámi collection was transferred to Norsk Folkemuseum, a national museum for cultural history. In Sweden, Sámi culture was collected
and exhibited mainly at Nordiska museet, a national museum for cultural history, from the start (1874). Sámi culture was also part of the exhibitions at Etnografiska museet (Museum of Ethnography) and Historiska museet in Stockholm.

6. The first repatriation of Sámi human remains in Norway was made in 1997 when the skulls of Mons Aslaksen Somby and Aslak Jakobsen Hætta, who were executed/decapitated after their participation in the Kautokeino uprising in 1854, were repatriated. Up until 1997 their skulls had been stored in the Schreiner Collection at the Anatomical Institute of the University of Oslo. The Schreiner Collection initially refused to part with the skulls.

INTERNET SOURCES


LITERATURE


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Museer, drakt og tid

Bjørn Sverre Hol Haugen

Title: Museums, dress and time

Abstract: This article presents work on dress-related time perspectives in a number of museums. First, a couple of Scandinavian museums are scrutinized. Catalogues, research and exhibitions show how the issue of dress is handled along two parallel lines. The understanding of folk connects dress to place, and the understanding of fashion connects dress to temporality. Over the last few years, dress research has challenged this paradigm. The exhibition Power of Fashion at Nordiska Museet exemplifies how new ideas are transferred from research to exhibition. The second part of this article presents some alternative discussions of museums, dress and time, supported by the concept of multiple temporalities. Based on this discussion, the article looks at exhibitions of historic dress in some European and American museums. Finally, the article suggests how inspiration from fashion exhibitions and the concepts of multiple temporalities can be useful when exhibiting historic dress.

Keywords: Museums, dress, folk dress, fashion, costume and multiple temporalities.

Tidens tøj heter en nettutstilling ved Nasjonalmuseet i København. Den presenterer draktplagg i museets samlinger, sortert i grupper som alle inneholder tidsmessige avgrensninger. Den første strekker seg over nesten et hundreår, fra 1700 til 1790, det påfølgende århundre deles i to, 1790–1840 og 1840–1890, mens 1900-tallet deles inn tiår for tiår. Jeg vender stadig tilbake til denne nettutstillingen, for å se eksempler fra ulike perioder, for å hente lett tilgjengelige digitale fotografier av pent monterte historiske drakter. Men først og fremst for å søke støtte hos mine pålitelige danske museumskollega, i et vedvarende arbeid med å tidfeste draktplass.

For bak den tilsynelatende enkle og kanskje grove inndelina i til dels lange tidsperioder, ligger et møysommelig og nokså usynlig arbeid fra museumsansatte. Svært få av draktene har kommet inn til museet med en merkelapp om halsen som fortalte om opprinnelsesår, tilbivelsettid eller bruksperiode. Dette er del av det arbeidet som gjøres i museer, slik at publikum kan finne sine ferdig sorterte og lett tilgjengelige drakter. Samtidig er museers arbeid med tid relatert til drakt så mye mer.
Bjørn Sverre Hol Haugen


Primærmaterialet jeg jobber med, er draktdrag og drakttøy som en del av museumsutstillinger og draktsamlingene. Dette materialet bryter jeg mot mitt eget arbeid med et mangslungent draktmateriale i Norge.

To arbeidsfelt – to tidsperspektiver


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Museer, drakt og tid

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Museer, drakt og tid


FORSKNING OG FORMIDLING

Det andre skilllet som kommer til syne ved en gjennomgang av draktarbeidet ved museene i Skandinavia, er at det har vært problematisk å formidle forskningens nyanser i utstillinger og publikasjoner for et breiere publikum enn forskningslitteraturens. Anna-Maja Nyléns publikasjoner om norske folkedrakter er nyanserte og framstiller tydelig hvordan tid og rom er to dimensjoner som begge påvirker


Disse folkedraktutstillingene ble umåtelig populære, både ved Nordiska Museet i Stockholm og Nasjonalmuseet i København. Og de førte til at det befestet seg et syn på de utstilte draktene som en slags sannhet for hver region. For det store publikum hjalp det ikke at forskerne formidlet nyansene, motepåvirkningen eller at ikke alle områder har hatt regionalt særpregede drakter (Kildegaard 1995; Liby 2010).

**Folkelig motedrakt på utstilling**

Først da Nordiska Museet i 2010 åpnet utstillingen Modemakt – 300 år av kläder, lå et nytt tidsperspektiv til grunn. For første gang i en basisutstilling ved Nordiska Museet ble folkedrakt og motedrakt vist sammen – basert på et nyanserende begrep, folkelig motedrakt, som her for første gang ble akseptert som en kategorii og innlemmet i en slik utstilling. Det nye begrepet er etablert av etnologen Håkan Liby, som tok tak i sjuårige begrepspatter folkedrakt/motedrakt, og har lansert begrepet folklig modedrakt om landsbygdas historiske drakter som ikke har det lokale særpreget. I hans definisjon står tidsbegrepet sentralt, og det er
nettøpp forholdet mellom tid og rom som skaper nyansen mellom folkedrakt og folkelig møtedrakt etter hans inndeling (Liby 1997; 2006; 2010; 2011).


Med denne utstillingen har Nordiska Museet tatt draktforskningens resultater med seg fra museets innside til dens mest utadvendte side. Etnologen Marie Riegels Melchior har i flere år vært interessert i hvordan motebehandles i museer, og i sin anmeldelse av Modemakt framhever hun nettopp museets evne til å diskutere tidligere utstillingspraksiser (Melchior 2012).

**Motemakt**

Jeg vil legge til at disse refleksjonene over egen praksis har fått konsekvenser også for andre deler av Nordiska Museets draktarbeid – og ikke minst forholdet til tid. Jeg vender tilbake til museets gjenstand nummer 1, skjørtet fra Stora Tuna i Dalarna. I museets digitale database, tilgjengelig gjennom internettstedet www.digitaltmuseum.se har nye opplysninger kommet til fra hovedprotokollens beskjedne beskrivelse. Skjørtet har fått ei tid, det er datert til 1840-åra. Metoden er sammenligning med et annet skjørt i museets samlinger, som er fra samme sted, men som også har kjent datering. Dateringsarbeidet er utført av den nylige pensjonerte intendenten Berit Eldvik, som også har ansvarlig for utstillingen Modemakt. Og i 2014 kom hun ut med boka Møte med mode. Folkliga kläder 1750–1900 i Nordiska Museet. Eldviks arbeid blir på denne måten et godt eksempel på hvordan et nytt perspektiv på drakt langsomt får innpass i museet, hvordan det tas i bruk i museets indre arbeid med katalogisering så vel som i de ansattes vitenskape-
Bjørn Sverre Hol Haugen

Den langsomme implementeringen av begrepet "folkelig motedrakt" og en forståelse av at europeisk motedrakt også er relevant for diskusjonen av bøndenes drakthistorie, har ført til at perspektiver på tid som kronologi og kunsthistoriens epoker, har fått større plass i museenes draktarbeid. Nordiska Museets draktutstilling Modemakt gir med sin titel et tydeligere signal enn det som kanskje var tilsvarende: moten tar også makt over en større del av draktfeltet.

Fig. 2. I utstillingen Modemakt ved Nordiska Museet er tre hovedmontre midtstilt i rommet, med gruppe-, ringer av kledde draktfigurer. De er bestemt til hver sin tid, som tre punktive nedslag på ei tidslinje. Bildet viser den midterste gruppa, et torgmiljø fra 1860-åra. På torget møtes bønder i folkelig motedrakt, bønder i folkkelig motedrakt, motekledde byborgere og arbeidskledde arbeidere. Foto: Mats Landin, Nordiska Museet.
Tid for norske bønders drakthistorie
Denne situasjonen har jeg hatt med meg inn i mitt museumsarbeid, hvor tidfesting og periodisering, datering og stilrelatering har vært viktig. Jeg har sjøl vært en del av det draktfaglige miljøet som har arbeidet med forholdet mellom folkedrakt, motedrakt og folkelig motedrakt. Begrepene kollegene mine har utviklet er fortsatt sentrale. I diskusjoner av tid og drakt har det likevel vært viktig å bringe inn noen nyanser og alternative perspektiver. Hvordan framstår alminnelige folkes historiske draktpraksiser og relasjonene til tid, blir det neste spørsålet i denne artikkelen.


Gjenstandene jeg studerer er uten tvil til stede for meg i dag, og de er dermed samtidige med meg. Like fullt kan de samme gjenstandene dateres til tider over 200 år forut for dags dato, de kan relateres til kunsthistoriske stilepoker valgt ut som representativer for 1700-tallet, og jeg kan plassere gjenstandene i et tidsspass fra 1750 til 1800. Serres hevder at så fort vi sier at noe er samtidig har vi allerede tenkt på både ei bestemt tid og på tid på en bestemt måte. Den bestemte tida er den målbar, kronologiske, delt inn i timer, dager og år. Et fenomen, mener Serres, er likevel bare samtidig i egenskap av sin sammensetning, gjennom sin design eller overflate. I denne sammensetningen er mange ulike tider samlet sammen. Han bruker en bil som et eksempel, hvor de enkelte delene kan dateres til ulike tidspunkter alt etter når de først ble oppfunnet, med hjulet som den eldste bestanddelen. Jeg forsøker å nyansere Serres’ argument om gjenstandenes design eller overflate ved å bringe relasjonene mellom gjenstander og mennesker tydeligere inn, og legger vekt på at disse relasjonene går begge veier, ikke bare fra mennesket som betrakter gjenstanden. Gjenstandene er på den måten ikke bare materielle, løsrevet fra menneskene som lever med dem. Og menneskene er heller ikke bare sosiale, men de uløselig sammensetningene av mennesker og gjenstander er sosio-materielle.

til en livssyklus som ei sløyfe i generasjoners foregående og påfølgende livssykler.

Lommene har vært del av mange ulike praksiser, til bryllup, som gave eller til oppbevaring av gaver. Ei lomme fra 1700-tallet kunne godt være i bruk midt på 1800-tallet, og ettersom lommelåsene av metall er holdbare, har mange også fått stadig nye bruksområder, for eksempel til dagens bunader.

Jeg hevder at relasjonene mellom gjenstandene og menneskene er i stadig endring, og at gjenstandene dermed aldri er helt like seg sjøl i de praksisene de er del av, enten praksisene er samtidige eller kommer etter hverandre i et lineært tidsløp. Men gjenstandenes varighet bærer også med seg noen tidligere tider inn i enhver ny sammenheng, enhver ny samtid. Når ei lomme fra 1700-tallet brukes til en brudekjole med preg av 1830-åras møte, argumenterer jeg med støtte hos den tyske historikeren Reinhart Koselleck at sammensetningen byr på en usamtidig samtidighet (Koselleck 2004). Slik han definerer det er det også mange tider samlet sammen i en gjenstand, et konsept eller en praksis, og de kan ofte leses av som skikt eller lag av tid. De er likevel utvilsomt til stede i sin tid – de er samtidige.

**Tid for silkekep**


Likevel er kepens tid mer sammensatt enn dette, vil jeg hevde. Og nå er jeg i dette eksempel mest interessert i hvordan tid materialiserer seg i dette plagget i Lisbeths bruksperioden på 17- og 1800-tallet.

Kepen er laget av rød silkedamask. Dette

Dette føyte et nytt lag av tid til plagget, som allerede var der mens Lisbeth brukte kepen; den bærer med seg en usamtidig samtidighet. Likevel blir ikke konklusjonen at plagget uten videre ble oppfattet som gammeldags fordi stoffet hadde denne mønstringa. Silke var et så eksklusivt materiale at verdien av plummet designernes skifte var større enn de samme og lignende mønster i prøvebøkene fra både 1760 og 1790. Kepe er absolutt en del av den tid da den ble brukt i, men like fullstår den gjennom sin sammensetning av flere lag av tid.


Det er velkjent at klær blir brukt over lange tidsrom, og at de kan bli sydd om for å passe til nye ønsker og behov. Slike kepers tilknytning til eiernes livsløp er faktisk del av diskusjonen østnorske bønder fører med myndighetene i 1780-åra, da de kjemper for å få beholde silketekstilene som kongen forbød gjennom sine overdådighetsforordninger. Bøndene argumenterer for "at en Silkekaabe, som ikke kan anvendes til andet Brug, kan en Kone ha sin Livstid". En silkekep kan ei bondekone ha på levetida, hevder bøndene, og flere av klærne "som ere forbudne, ere av det Slags, som sielden bruges, og følgelig i mange Aar kan benytes" (Fogtman 1795:495).

Omsømmen gjorde kepen i fasong og uttrykk mer i takt med tida, den ble mer moderne, eller den hentet inn igjen det forsprang det tid av hadt mens den var i bruk – for å nevne noen av alle disse ulike uttrykkene vi har for tid. Men jeg vil legge til at den også fikk et nytt lag av usamtidighet, ettersom relasjonen mellom stoffets mønstring og plaggets snitt nå ble endret. Stoffet ble et eldre lag av tid som allerede var der mens Lisbeth brukte kepen; den bærer med seg en usamtidig samtidighet.

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Lisbeths kep står her som et eksempel på hvordan et historisk draktmateriale kan analyseres. I stedet for å tolke plagget inn i et folke- eller motedraktregime hvor sted ekskluderer tid, eller å tolke det inn i et motedraktregime hvor kronologisk tid og stilperioder dominerer, eller nyansert gjennom begrepet folkkelig motedrakt – har jeg heller vist hvor komplekse forbindelser det er mellom gjenstanden, menneskene som omgir den, og de mange tidene hvor en gjenstand opptrer i multiple sosiomaterielle konstellasjoner. Gjenstandens varighet strekker i seg sjøl tidsperspektivet og gjør absolutte avgrensninger vanskelige. Gjenstandene kobles videre til de første brukerne og deres levetid, som også skaper et større tidsrom enn tilbli-
velsестidpunkt eller stilperiode. Enda lenger fram i vår kronologiske tid målt ut i minutter, timer og år, inngår de samme gjenstandene i nye praksiser. Kepen som ble sydd i 1785 har etter sin opprinnelige praksis vært del av ei privat samling eldre gjenstander, før den kom inn til Norsk Folkemuseum og i dag er del av en museumspraksis. Der kan den også komme til å bli del av framtidige utstillingspraksiser, hvor tidsperspektiver settes i spill.

Katalogiseringsystemene som museene bruker legger godt til rette for å registrere multiple tider. Det er egne rubrikker for hendelser som er knyttet til gjenstanden, både de som skjedde i gjenstandens bruksperiode og de som skjer i museet. En gjenstand kan ha ulike dateringer knyttet til stiltrekk på materialer og design. Og emneord som motedrakt og folkedrakt kan utfylle hverandre og ytterligere nyanseres ved innførsel av begrepet folkelig motedrakt. I museenes samlingsverftning er det kunnskapsregimene som råder i institusjonene og hos de ansatte som i størst grad styrer hvordan gjenstandene blir kategorisert.

Forskningshistoria viser at draktforskerne lenge har vært oppptatt av å nyansere og håndtere draktmateriale med flere ulike tidsperspektiver. Likevel har det oppstått et problem når disse nyansene skal formidles i utstillinger og populære publikasjoner. Jeg vil i siste del av denne artikkelen forsøke å skissere noen forslag til hvordan de multiple tidene jeg finner i gjenstandsmateriale kan overføres til utstillingsmediet. Jeg tar med meg den vellykkede utstillingen Modemakt fra Nordiska Museet og kaster blikket ut i europeiske og amerikanske motehistoriske utstillinger for å undersøke hvordan tid problematiseres og nyanseres der. Mitt inntrykk er at det eksperimenteres mer med utstillinger av motedrakt enn av folkedrakt; kanske kan noe overføres fra det ene utstillingsemnet til det andre?

**PÅ MOTE MED MOTE**


Det tredje forholdet er et ytterligere forsterket samtidsperspektiv og stadig hyppigere utstillingskriterier, som rokker ved museumsinstitusjonenes grunnvoller. Motefeltet, bestående av designere, industri og medier interagerer nå med motemuseene. Dette gir seg utslag som at motedesignerinnes inviteres inn i museene for å kreere museumsutstillinger, slik ModeMuseum i Antwerpen ved flere tilfeller har gjort, og
Mange tider på utstilling


Fig. 4. ”The pleasure garden” i utstillingen AngloMania ved Metropolitan museum i New York brukte tydelige kontraster mellom nåtid og fortid som virkemiddel. Samtidig bygger blomsternotivene fellesskap over lange tidspenn. Foto: Metropolitan Museum.

Likevel er det avholdt mange drakthistoriske utstillinger. Mange beholder det kronologiske perspektivet, som i for eksempel V&As nylig avsluttede utstilling om undertøy. Men andre har tenkt annerledes. Nå bringer jeg disse forholdene med meg videre, til noen korte beskrivelser av utstillinger hvor tidsperspektivet ikke bare er det velkjent kronologiske og lineære.
Bjørn Sverre Hol Haugen


På spørsmål om hun tar avstand fra den kronologiske framstillingen av motehistorie, svarer hun at kronologien bare er en av flere måter å forstå tidsaspektene som er relevante for mote. Og med referanse til Caroline Evans framhever hun labyrint og tigersprang som alternative metaforer til de lineære når det gjelder designeres inspirasjon. I tillegg fyller hun ut tidsmetaforene med alternativer til den rette


Solør-hijab

Dette problemet – hvordan overføre forskningslitteraturens todimensjonale bokform til utstillingsmediets tredimensjonale – det var også et av utgangspunktene for utstillingen Solør-hijab som jeg sjøl var kurator for ved Anno museum, Kongsvinger, i 2016.

Utstillingen viser historiske kvinnehodeplagg fra et avgrenset geografisk område i Norge, sett i lys av dagens hijab-debatt. Utstil-
modernisering, frigjøring og avskauing (Fabian 1983)?

Jeg opplever at vi greide å unngå dette problemet. Og løsningen var å la de historiske gjenstandene framstå med hele sin kompleksitet i felleskap med tekster og illustrasjoner. 1800-tallets skautekvinner levde side om side med 1800-tallets kvinner uten skaut. De uten skaut hadde kanske den regionalt særpregede lua og var slik like sine skautesøstre. Men de hadde like gjerne den internasjonalt pregede hodekappa av blondestoff i svart eller hvitt. Og en del kvinner opptrådte barhodet. Alle disse grupperingene fantes i det samme lokalsamfunnet på samme tid. Og alle disse variantene av hodebekledning ble stilt ut sammen, i motsetning til hva som har vært tilfelle i tidligere draktutstillinger, hvor de regionalt pregede hoddeplaggene har fått representerer både (for)tid og sted alene.

I den samme utstillingen hadde vi også et behov for å vise hvordan de regionalt pregede hoddeplaggene utviklet seg over tid, altså ei nokså alminnelig kronologisk framstilling. Men kronologien ble bare presentert som ulike begynnelsespunkter, ikke som avgrensede perioder eller etterfølgende punkter i et lineært tidsløp. Så ble kronologien diskutert i tekst ved bruk av et generasjonsperspektiv (Mannheim 2012), der motsetninger mellom yngre og eldre kvinner fikk spille hovedrollen. I disse tekstene ble det framhevet hvordan unge muslimske kvinner i dag både skauter seg og avskauter seg i opposisjon til foreldregenerasjonen. Vi har ikke like ekspisititte uttalelser fra 1800-tallets kvinner, men viser i utstillingen bilder av to søstre som vokste opp i et lokalmiljø uten hoddeplagg, men begynte å bruke det da de giftet seg til Solør hvor mange gikk med lue og skaut. Disse ble igjen kontrastert med fortellinger om de unge kvinnene i Stange som omkring 1840 kollektivt tok av lua i et selskap og "vakte strax adskillig kritikk" hos de eldre kvinnene (Ringnæs 1909).

Gjenstandene har en avgjørende posisjon i denne utstillingen. Det er de som får fortelle om likheten mellom hijab og skaut, det er den materielle oppbygningen av hode, hår, ekstra fyll, luer og skaut som bærer budskapet om likhet på tvers av tid og rom. Samtidig får suppulerende gjenstander, bilder og tekst vise at de lokalt særpregede høge luene var et alternativ blant flere for de historiske kvinnene, slik den høge hijabben er et alternativ blant flere for muslimske kvinner i dag. Gjenstandene, bildekollasjene og tekstene slipper dermed til flere tider på en gang, både historisk og i dag.

**Materialisert tid – en konklusjon**

i en og samme gjenstand eller en og samme situasjon optrer ulike tider, og de er både samtidige og usamtidige. Dette blir særlig tydelig i museene fordi tider materialiserer seg i historiske gjenstander. Sammensetningen av samlinger, forskning og formidling er nettopp museenes styrke, og da bør effekten av slike komplekse institusjoner utnyttes. Ved å holde fast ved gjenstandene som museenes viktigste pre, kan kronologier så vel som stedshegemonier utfordres, og resultatene oversettes fra tekst til tekst til utstilling.

**Noter**

1. Sitat fra hovedprotokoll ved Nordiska Museet. ”Jämte 2” betyr at gjenstand nummer en og to ble innkjøpt for til sammen 15 riksdaler.

**Litteratur**

Haugen, Bjørn Sverre Hol 2009a. ”Folkelig motedrakt i Solør-Odal.” I Lisbeth Andreassen Chumak et al. (red.). *Skoglandet. Solør-Odal.* [Kongsvinger]:
Koselleck’s theory of multiple temporalities.”
*History and Theory*, 51:2, 151–171. DOI:
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53:4, 498–518. DOI: http://dx.doi.org10.1111/
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Fluxus art amusement and the museum of gags

Objectification and bafflement, encounter and engagement at the museum

Peter van der Meijden

Abstract: When museums are mentioned in connection with art that as a critical strategy generates primary bodily experience, it is usually to claim that they are incompatible. However, both museums and artists have developed new strategies to deal with the changing times. This article seeks to re-evaluate the claim that museums will always treat works as objects by comparing Fluxus works and their staging by Fluxus organiser George Maciunas to examples of newer work that seeks a similar kind of interaction with the viewer. The solution they suggest is documentation of the way a primary audience interacted with the work in order to make it available to the (secondary) museum audience. Current models of museum viewing tend to be oriented towards experience or data retrieval. The alternative, it is argued, is a museum that draws attention to the historicity, specificity and authoredness of the viewing situation. A museum that no longer distinguishes between artwork and mise-en-scène, but wants to document both. A museum that bridges the gap between the professional roles it performs and uses all the physical and communicative spaces at its disposal to make available the type of communication that the artwork originally sought to establish to a contemporary audience.

Keywords: Fluxus, museums, bodily knowledge, experience, George Brecht, Tim Etchells, George Maciunas, Carsten Höller, Henry Flynt, experience economy, web 2.0.

Fluxus was one of many movements to emerge during the sixties that looked to primary bodily experience to avoid commercialisation. Fluxus’ characteristic shape is the event, a simple everyday occurrence framed ever so slightly as art by means of an instruction or suggestion to the reader or performer. Fluxus was mostly performed live or sold in the shape of cheap multiples, but not displayed in the shape of a precious and unique art object. Now it has ended up in the museum, often displayed in ways that, as German art historian Dorothea von Hantelmann puts it, effect “a return to the very conventions that had originally been
negated, the material object and the fact that it remains throughout history” (Hantelmann 2010:12). Art that was conceived as key to an event is preserved and displayed as an object. But what can museums and exhibition venues do about this? Conservation considerations render it impossible to make the material available for handling, as it was originally intended to.

The Dutch art historian Vivian van Saaze, in her book Installation Art and the Museum (2013) agrees with von Hantelmann on the undesirability of “freezing” the work. She argues that artworks do not have an identity, but acquire one during the course of what she calls their “career”, both before and after their acquisition. The museum professionals who engage with the work all create their own version of it: as an object for display or for keeping, as a document or as starting point for a verbal explication. That a work is nevertheless perceived as a single, unique object is due to the fact that their versions are compatible (Saaze 2013:100). Only if it circulates in incompatible versions is the object perceived as multiple. As long as everyone involved creates it as an original and authentic work, no multiplicity will be experienced (Saaze 2013:101).

Van Saaze does not mention the audience, even though the visitor is a stakeholder in this game of identities as well. Ever since museums’ embrace of constructivist learning strategies, it is understood that different visitors will understand a work differently. As the Australian educator Jane Deeth writes in an article called “Engaging Strangeness in the Art Museum” (2012), they often find modern and contemporary art baffling, if for different reasons. The usual solution is to add text, but that, Deeth points out, brings neither the work itself nor the visitor’s experience into play. Discursive explication needs the work as a point of departure but does not require it to be present in order to produce learning. In fact, because aesthetic judgement can never be instrumental and interpretation is always instrumental, experience and interpretation must be seen as mutually exclusive (Deeth 2012:1–2).

Deeth’s solution is experience-based mediation that explicitly addresses the visitor’s questions and uncertainties, but visitors never arrive as blank slates. Their viewing habits and expectations are conditioned by a whole range of socially and historically determined values and conventions. During the sixties, art museums presented themselves as “White Cubes”. Fluxus was a critique of the values underlying the White Cube: the unique work of art, the artist-genius, the artwork as the perfect embodiment of the author’s intentions, passive contemplation as the only correct viewing mode. But the museum has changed beyond recognition, now mirroring itself in the experience economy or Web 2.0. If the museum could pass itself off as an ivory tower back then, no matter how ideological this claim was later shown to be, it now competes with other providers of experience-as-commodity or emulates the way the internet provides information; and either way, it is a provider on a market it has little possibility to steer.

Any exhibition that wants to do justice to Fluxus has to have primary bodily experience and the questioning of conventions in focus. As Fluxus scholar Hannah Higgins writes, Fluxus aimed to “generate primary knowledge and multisensory experience through exploration of prosaic things and experiences” within the context of an event that generates a temporary subject/object out of the act of handling something and thus “situates people radically within their corporal, sensory worlds” (Higgins 2002:67). In the new constellation, it is difficult
to have a truly primary experience because that territory is progressively colonised by the experience economy, while at the same time it becomes ever harder to see how Fluxus questioned conventions because they are no longer our conventions; and what makes it doubly difficult to experience the breach of conventions in a primary, physical manner is the barrier that is created between the work and the visitor by the new stress on experience.

So how can museums and exhibition venues best help their audience to navigate between instrumented experience and out-of-date critique? The solution chosen here is to seek help with artworks created after the 1960s that attempt something similar. This article is neither an in-depth reading of a limited number of artworks nor an exhaustive survey of all the ways in which primary bodily experience has been dealt with by artists and curators, but an argument that is helped along by a limited number of hand-picked works and strategies. Extending Hal Foster’s argument from The Return of the Real (1996), that the post-war neo-avant-gardes used different means than the pre-war avant-gardes to the same ends or the same means to different ends, to the post-war period, it is here assumed that artists who (often implicitly) inherited Fluxus’ goals and means have used them differently in response to changing circumstances. What makes their work especially relevant is that art has moved ever further into the domain of the curator and the mediator, thus highlighting the curatorial and educational dimension.

As the subject of a gallery display, Fluxus is, at the same time, a corpus of (original) works, a set of criteria for their selection, a way of mediating them that is significant in itself and an idea that motivates the selection and the mediation. The name refers to event-based works by a more or less defined group of artists who were active from the late 1950s until the present, to a body of works selected by Fluxus’ namer and organiser George Maciunas, to Maciunas’ way of staging and producing Fluxus works and to his and other Fluxus organisers’ reasons for selecting particular works for Fluxus and staging or producing them in a particular way. These aspects are reflected in the sections that this article consists of. The first section deals with a single work, the second with a curatorial format and the third with significant use of the gallery space. Fluxus works and activities are coupled with things as different as a work for cellphone, an exhibition in a suitcase and an exhibition of funfair attractions. The examples are not chosen because of a direct connection with Fluxus, but because they shed light on aspects of museum work which are relevant for displays of Fluxus in the present. A final section discusses them in the light of current ideas about the nature of the museum, its relationship with the object and its communication with the audience. It ends with a description of the museum restyled as a space of encounter, not just with works, but with viewing habits and expectations, both then and now.

**The artwork as a personal experience**

In 1961, George Brecht, an artist whose name is intimately connected with Fluxus, sent out letters containing what he called “events.” One of them was **Lucifer Event**, a matchbook with the event title printed on it. One of the recipients, the dancer and choreographer James Waring, wrote back: “Thank you for Lucifer event. It happened very beautifully” (Robinson 2008:272). Brecht describes his event works as “very private little enlightenments” that he simply “waited to notice occurring” (Brecht...
Like Brecht’s events, Etchells’ project addresses participants “in real time as they go about their lives and work […] in a ‘place’ most commonly occupied by friends, family or lovers” (Etchells n.d.: n.p.). The 75th instruction even explicitly secures the privacy of the experience. Nevertheless, Etchells is willing to consider the possibility of representation. As text messages received by an individual, the instructions cause the work to unfold itself, but printed on cards together with the time and date of their sending, he writes, they document it. Documentation is an acceptable solution so long as it allows people to “consider the entire frame of the piece and to imagine what it might have been like to receive messages of that kind at the times specified” (Etchells 2014: n.p.).

Etchells’ solution is to show the work as part of its own documentation. This is also seen as a way forward in conservational and curatorial circles. Tate conservator Pip Laurenson, for example, holds that in some cases it is more important to preserve a work’s “identity” than its “state”. The word “state” refers to an art object’s intrinsic, objective and impersonal properties. Identity, by contrast, is a “cluster of work-defining properties which will include the artist’s instructions, artist approved installations intended to act as models, an understanding of the context in which they were made and the willingness and ability of those acting as custodians of the work to be sensitive in the realisation of a good installation” (Laurenson 2006:11). A work’s state is what it is, its identity what it does. Preserving it means documenting how the artist meant to show it and what the museum can do to reproduce those conditions. Etchells’ proposal does exactly that.

Identity materialises itself at the meeting point of artistic intentions, expert knowledge and institutional resources and attitudes. The idea also features under the name of...
“behaviour”, for example in the contexts of the Variable Media Initiative (1999–2004) and the Inside Installations programme (2004–2007) or in British media scholar Beryl Graham and curator Sarah Cook’s book Rethinking Curating (2010). Following the latter’s misleadingly simple definition as “the ways in which the processes behind the production and the distribution of the artwork function” (Graham & Cook 2010:5), the behaviour of Brecht’s and Etchells’ works is their ability to transport a suggestion directly to the receiver, on a one-on-one basis, within his or her own environment. In order to preserve and show it, documentary material is essential, even if this goes against the artist’s wishes or intentions. The approach means rethinking it in terms of performance and performance documentation; rethinking Brecht’s work as an offer of communication that is not embodied in the matchbook but only takes it as its point of departure and as a work with a career that involves both a primary audience of participants and a secondary one of spectators.

Curating experience

Brecht’s and Etchells’ works are art, but with a clear curatorial dimension. They do not depend on convention to tell the audience what to see and do, but actively try to orchestrate their behaviour. However, their works have been curated as well. Curators create meaningful frameworks for the works to appear in, and since the 1960s they increasingly do so in collaboration or competition with the artist. Surrender Control was commissioned by curator Matt Locke of The Media Centre in Huddersfield (UK), and he had his own practical and curatorial reasons to engage with the text messaging as medium. On the one hand, he noticed that locals hardly visited his facility devoted to the promotion of digital art, but used text messaging all the time. On the other hand, he became intrigued by the idea of not knowing beforehand where and when a work would be experienced (Locke 2014:n.p.). Such contextual information is vital for the understanding of Etchells’ work, but the same can be said about Fluxus.

It is impossible to speak of Fluxus without mentioning George Maciunas (1931–1978), the Lithuanian-American designer, architect, artist and all-round organiser who coined the name, organised most Fluxus festivals and edited and produced most Fluxus publications and multiples. As the German curator and art historian Dorothee Richter points out, Maciunas’ organisational activities resembled those of a curator. Acting as a “meta-artist”, he produced meaning and exercised power as a contemporary curator might (Richter 2013:52–53). He developed presentational strategies for Fluxus that had meaning in themselves, included artists and works he found to embody the idea of Fluxus and excluded people he saw as a threat to the project.

However, he never developed a Fluxus exhibition format. What comes closest are Maciunas’ Fluxkits, suitcases containing Fluxus publications and multiples, or Fluxboxes (fig. 1). His decision to mass-produce Fluxus works, to collect them in Fluxkits and to make them available by mail-order was a curatorial one. In a well-known manifesto from 1965 he wrote: “Fluxus art amusement must be simple, amusing, unpretentious, concerned with insignificances, require no skill or countless rehearsals, have no commodity or institutional value. The value of art-amusement must be lowered by making it unlimited, mass produced, obtainable by all and eventually produced by all” (Hendricks 1981:260). In an all-out revolt against the art world and
Fluxus art amusement and the museum of gags

its conventions, Maciunas advocated a form that could no longer be produced, sold and consumed as art, but existed as a daily necessity or a leisure-time activity. In the extended use of the notion of the curatorial as employed by Richter, this is, indeed, a form of curation. It presents the museum with the challenge of finding a way to exhibit an exhibition.

In 2004, the Chinese artists Xu Zhen, Yang Zhenzhong, Jin Feng sr. and jr., Tang Maohong, Huang Kui, Shao Yi and Yu Li, in collaboration with BizArt in Shanghai, organised Dial 62761232, also known as Kuaidi (“Delivery”). Dial 62761232 was another exhibition in a suitcase, although in this case it was ordered by telephone and delivered by fifteen specially trained couriers. Art journalist Chen Xhingyu describes the reaction of one caller: “David Chitayat, who works in a sourcing company, was curious about such an exhibition but was skeptical about calling, as were most of his colleagues. But in the end everyone in his office enjoyed it; he believes it was the experience rather than the art itself that people were really keen on” (Chen 2014:n.p.). For the organisers, the project was an answer to the problem signalled at the start of this article, that contemporary art tends to be seen as “inaccessible and obscure, something for scholars to analyse and institutions to revere”. To judge by Chitayat’s reaction, they succeeded. However, the project was more than that. It

Fig. 1. Larry Miller, Orifice Flux Plugs, 1974. Fluxbox with plugs in various sizes, 22.2 × 33.3 × 6.5 cm. Ken Friedman Fluxus Collection, Henie Onstad Kunstsenter.
work’s setting. Installation shots tend not to show any visitors, so Graham urges museums to document their audience’s interaction with the works on display and even to employ crowd-sourced documentation in order to capture the behaviour of the work and its installation (Graham 2013:253). Once again, documentation is seen as an answer to the problem of objectification. Confronting a secondary audience of viewers with images of a primary audience of participants is a documentary gesture, but one in which Graham sees further potential. The question is whether such documentation differs significantly from a wall panel; whether it is capable of overcoming the divide between experience and interpretation.

was also intended to make people “walk away thinking that there are alternative ways to present art aside from exhibiting in museums or galleries” (Chen:n.p.). Although much less radical than Maciunas’ project, Dial 62761232 embodied reflection about the conventions of art mediation and consumption.

In contrast to Fluxus, exhibition was always a possibility for Dial 62761232. Displays featured one of the fifteen suitcases and its contents, all laid out in glass cases, accompanied by photographs that documented the performance of the couriers and the reactions of the audience (fig. 2). This is exactly what British media art scholar Beryl Graham, in an article on behaviour and curation, offers as a way of capturing the performativity of the

Fig. 2. DIAL 62761232. A Document On A Contemporary Art Event, ShanghART, October 2010–June 2011. Installation view. Photo: ShanghART.
Experience and facilities

Apart from documentation, Graham also speaks of the possibility of making more active use of museum facilities that display the same behaviour as the work. The interactivity of a museum’s educational activities, for example, matches that of much new media art. The computers employed by both form an obvious link, but as a comparison between a Flux-Labyrinth designed by Maciunas and a number of works by Belgian artist Carsten Höller that employ funfair attractions will show, there are other ways in which museum facilities can be engaged to support artworks.

Fluxus artist Larry Miller, who helped to build the Flux-Labyrinth at the Akademie der Künste in Berlin in 1976, has described it as “a walk-in Fluxbox funhouse” (Williams & Noël 1997:252–253). It contained doors that had to be opened in various ways, rubber bands at knee height that the visitor had to step over, a smell room, an inverted room, foam steps, shoe steps and much, much more. Unimpeded progress from work to work is essential to support the creation of the visitor as the disembodied eye of White Cube viewing, but the Flux-Labyrinth turns the very act of propelling oneself through space into an experience. It functions as an extra corridor that offers the experience of walking corridors as an event in itself.

Reflecting on the project, Maciunas said in 1977 that Fluxus objects and activities were generally meant to be “funny things”. “Usually kids like our thing”, he added, “or just people that don’t expect art”. He held this to be essential for Fluxus: the Fluxshop never sold a thing, he said, but visitors always had a lot of fun. Museums never bought Fluxus, but “[i]f there was a museum of gags, then we would probably be represented”. No doubt he spoke against the background of his own anti-institutional agenda, but his statements also illustrate the kind of behaviour he meant to build into Fluxus: a directness of address that is alien to the cerebral world of the museum but inherent in games and gags. His proposed and realised environments illustrate equally clearly how this was to be brought about: by letting Fluxus hitch a ride with an everyday act that is disqualified as art and/or hidden from sight at the art institution.

If the Flux-Labyrinth constituted a world of its own, Carsten Höller’s slides, such as the five that comprised the exhibition Test Site at Tate Modern in 2006, adopt an altogether more hybrid position, sometimes cutting through the walls, floors and ceilings of exhibition spaces, playing havoc with their internal organisation, mixing exhibition spaces and service areas and confusing the spaces of art and daily life. Visitors who had climbed the staircases, walked the corridors and rooms and filed past the art on display, were sent corkscrewing down, whooping and screaming, by an entirely different and much faster route. Höller described the experience of sliding by means of a phrase by the French author Roger Caillois as a “voluptuous panic upon an otherwise lucid mind” (Caillois 2006:77).

The Flux-Labyrinth tried to speak via experience alone, but Höller supplemented the experience of sliding with another typical museum product: a catalogue. In two volumes, it adds new incarnations to the work that was physically present at the Tate. The first features a short history of the slide, a feasibility study by General Public Agency for the installation of slides in the area of London where the 2012 Summer Olympics were due to take place and a plan for a hypothetical slide house by Foreign Office Architects. The second, a collection of literary, philosophical and scientific texts selected by Höller, emulates the experience of
sliding in words. They contextualise the pure experience of sliding by means of documents that invite introspection and reflection. The measured pace of the museum visit is broken by the exhilaration of the slide, which in turn is broken by the measured pace of reflection—all within the museum repertoire, but in a way that sheds a new and unexpected light on museum viewing.

Two years later, Höller exhibited a number of slowed-down funfair rides at the exhibition _Carrousel_ at Kunsthaus Bregenz. Under the pseudonym Carl Roitmeister, he contributed two articles to the catalogue in which he reflects on his means and aims. He starts by describing the rides as mere rotating devices and the experience on offer as so slight that it does not justify the effort of installing and de-installing them (Roitmeister 2008:15), but this objective critique is followed by an argument in favour of subjective assessment of “desirability”. The first step towards this is to eliminate the undesirable. The resulting maybe-desirables, ranging from leisure activities with a clear social function to “pure research”, is then assessed by addressing the memory of one’s personal engagement with them (Roitmeister 2008:45). As a third step, one can survey the desirables that remain by taking into account both desirability and engagement. Höller underlines the importance of subjective assessment and its event character by adding a DVD insert in the catalogue that, contrary to conventional practice, shows visitors interacting with the various works.

Compared to Höller’s constructivist appreciation scheme that distinguishes between the known and the sensed, the experienced and the remembered, Maciunas’ concept of “fun” sounds decidedly essentialist. Based on artist/philosopher Henry Flynt’s concept of the “just-liked”, it covers all activities that in the words of the latter are “not biologically or socially necessary, do not have cognitive value and have no sophistication-proving significance” (Flynt 1963:n.p.). The just-liked comes close to what Höller calls “pure research”, but whereas Maciunas saw it as the opposite of that particular socially productive leisure activity that is art appreciation, Höller places them on the same scale.

The crucial difference is that Höller does not offer the experience for its own sake, but as a thing to be remembered and assessed, and that he supports this by drawing text and images into the sphere of the work. To him, aesthetics and interpretation are not as mutually exclusive as Deeth claims they are, experience being only worthwhile if it is followed by reflection. As generators of experience, his slides and funfair rides are not worth the effort of installing and de-installing, but as generators of an experience that is then analysed and contextualised, they are. As he said about _Test Site_, “you read [the experience] according to who you are”. However, he acknowledges the effect of museum performativity as well, stating that understanding is context-dependent and that in a museum, understanding of work as sculpture should also be possible (Zahm 2013:n.p.). He provides footage of people interacting with his works to point out that the material components are invitations to interact, just as he provides supplementary texts to identify other possible contexts. Photographs and text no longer serve as documentation, but as essential elements of the work itself, co-productive of its behaviour.

**Experience, data and encounter**

Discursive interpretation may need neither the object nor the experience of interacting with it, but the works discussed above suggest
that added text and documentation can speak to experience in a different manner. For Etchells, this is done by inviting a secondary audience to speculate about what it had been like to experience the actual work, for Höller by providing enjoyment under circumstances that underline the importance of reflection and by supplying a record of visitor interaction. Etchells’ example rolls the work and the wall panel into one, Höller’s activates the spaces of the museum in a different manner and makes the catalogue an integral part of the work. Moreover, the example of Dial 62761232 suggests that such solutions do not have to be sanctioned by an artist/creator, but can also be purely curatorial.

Displaying work in this manner requires an awareness of the kind of communication that is on offer, of the intentions behind the work, of the behaviours inherent in the medium and of the implications of its choice. It requires an awareness of the identity of the sender (artist, curator or both) and the receiver (primary or secondary audience). It requires a shift of focus from what the work is to what it does. It requires knowledge of the work’s career, of the guises it has appeared in and the circumstances that govern its manifestation in the present. It requires a willingness to see the unique art object transformed into an assemblage of material that can only refer to the work, authority no longer residing in the object but in research and documentation.

However, current viewing conditions play a role as well, and these require an entirely different form of professionalism. It is essential for museums to be aware of them, both because they are likely to be different from those implied in older works and because they condition the sort of experience the museum can offer; and to complicate things further, they are not entirely within the museum’s control. In her book *Museum Bodies* (2012), British gallery studies scholar Helen Rees Leahy argues that visitors, apart from following written and spoken instructions issued by the institution, are also governed by techniques that they have already mastered and conventions that they have already internalised (Rees Leahy 2012:9). Visitors not only react, but act as well.

At present, at least two basic sets of rules and conventions are in operation, relative to the experience economy and web 2.0. The first model was described in 2001 by James Cuno, president and CEO of the J. Paul Getty Trust, when he spoke of the “new and spectacular, bright and shiny, fun and exciting museums” that offer the “multiplex excitement” that the “new economy” demands (Cuno 2001:45). He equates the experience economy with the constructivist museum and its constructivist learning strategies that reduce complexity to “soundbite-sized explanations” (Cuno 2001:52). Therefore, he sees a new focus on authenticity and aesthetic appreciation as a way out, either by drawing attention to the material characteristics of the work or by creating intimate spaces containing only a few works (Cuno 2001:52–53).

The American economists Joseph Pine and James Gilmore, inventors of the term “experience economy”, also see authenticity as the museum’s most important asset, but for them, authenticity is discursive instead of work-intrinsic. Based on an opposition between “natural” and “man-made”, they judge both art and the museum to be artificial and therefore inauthentic. Artworks, they say, are rendered authentic; authenticity is a performance, and its effectiveness depends upon museums’ success in presenting themselves as coherent wholes and ensuring that everything they say and do fits what they say they are (Pine & Gilmore 2007:3–4).
Whether they adopt an essentialist or a constructivist attitude towards authenticity, both Cuno and Pine & Gilmore take the museum as their point of departure. In the catalogue of *Test Site*, Tate curator Jessica Morgan addresses the issue from the point of view of the audience. She points out that museums have always existed for their audiences and that huge crowds can therefore only be a good thing. Maybe they prevent contemplation, but “though we may occasionally lose one form of artistic experience, surely there is the potential for others” (Morgan 2006:12). Experience comes in many guises, and one is as good as the other. If people flock to the museum, the experience on offer must be a good one, even if we do not yet know what it is.

This view is contradicted by Rees Leahy, who claims that the Unilever series, of which *Test Site* was a part, has created “a flow of leisureed, entertainment-seeking and self-conscious bodies” who “consume the Turbine Hall as playground and photo opportunity” (Rees Leahy 2012:111). What contemplation is replaced with is a focus on the self, either having fun or capturing it for sharing on the social media. Graham signals that more and more museums lift the ban on photography so that people can share their experiences on the social media and thinks positively about the development because it ensures that people’s way of interacting with the work is documented (Graham 2013:252). Following Rees Leahy, what is documented may well be the behaviour that belongs to the experience economy, not the behaviour that belongs to the work or its curation. She does not draw this conclusion herself, but a museum that turns itself over to the experience economy might, despite its best curatorial and educational efforts, do no more than put itself at the audience’s disposal to enjoy itself as it knows best.

Something similar can be said of the museum that mirrors itself in Web 2.0. According to American art historian, critic and theorist Mike Pepi, museums, fearful of being left behind by the information age, start to treat their collections as structured data sets or sets of relations among data (Pepi 2014:n.p.). While this may keep the crowds coming, it also means that the institution is converted into “a market-ready form” which can only establish a relationship with the visitor that is “entrepreneurial, self-directed and deterritorialised”. Collections and displays are thus reduced to “one’s personal toy box” and museums shift the focus of their professional engagement with art from contextualisation to “ordered, efficient, end-user retrieval”.

Pepi speaks of imitation, the Russian philosopher and art theorist Boris Groys of parallel evolution. What the internet, the artwork and the museum have in common, Groys argues in an article called “Entering the Flow” (2013), is that they are all spaces where the flow of time is enacted and experienced (Groys 2013:[7]). In modernist times, the museum and the artist embraced similar ideals of timelessness, the artist setting out to embody eternal ideals of beauty, the museum to select works with universal relevance and preserve them unchanged (Groys 2013:[1]). Artists’ embrace of change and eventness during the 1960s, a development that Fluxus is a prominent exponent of, initially led to conflict, but when the museum abandoned its dream of universality and eternal relevance, and even more so when the curated exhibition became the standard mode of display, the two were harmonised (Groys 2013:[3+6]). From a depot for immobilised things, the museum became a stage for the flow of art events.

The argument becomes particularly relevant when Groys turns to reproduction and
documentation. Authentic works of art, he argues, can be reproduced, but event-based works, and by extension curated exhibitions, can only be documented. The idea of artworks with universal relevance implies an absolute gaze, while an event-based artwork can only be observed in a fragmented, partial manner. This is automatically true of event-based works, but after the museum’s embrace of historical time and space, older artworks are affected as well. In the museum-as-stage, all works become events, and therefore documentable rather than reproducible (Groys 2013:[11]). This, in turn has implications for the status of documentation. If reproduction destroys the authentic work’s aura by duplicating it, documentation gives the artwork a new aura, not derived from an opposition between original and unoriginal but between “now and here” and “then and there”. The artwork-as-event and the museum-as-stage offer the possibility of assessing the temporality of art (Groys 2013:[11–12]).

Together, these positions can be used to draw a semiotic square in which the first position is the idea of the museum as created by the work, the second the idea of the museum as created by the visitor, the third the idea of the museum as created by its staff on the basis of their assessment of the audience’s likes and dislikes and the fourth an as yet untouched-upon understanding of the institution as encounter

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**Fig. 3. Semiotic square indicating the relationship between four ideas of the nature of the museum in relation to its understanding of the objects on display and the expectations of the audience. Peter van der Meijden, 2016.**
that follows logically from the other three (Fig. 3). The museum as created by the work comes first because it is the conventional view: work that claims eternal relevance creates a museum that collects on the same basis and aims to preserve for eternity. The model that is most directly opposed to it is the museum created by the visitor as a consumer of experiences. The third position, which is implied by the second but contradicts the first, is the museum created by museum professionals in order to accommodate the audience's wishes by making the works on display available for enjoyment or browsing. It contradicts a focus on the work, while being implied by audience behaviour. The fourth position has to be one that is implied by the first, the idea of the museum as shaped by the work, but contradicts the second and third, the museum as shaped by the audience or shaped by its staff purely on the basis of what it knows or expects that the audience wants.

A hint as to its identity is given by an example used by Rees Leahy. During an exhibition called “Art On the Line” at the Courtauld Institute in 2002, Canadian art historian David Solkin supplemented a recreation of a nineteenth-century academic hanging with a screen in an adjoining gallery that provided closed circuit video footage of the audience in the exhibition (Rees Leahy 2012:116–117). The intervention made an older mode of viewing visible to a contemporary audience and sensitised it by implication to its own. An expert’s reconstruction of a historical set of expectations and their embodiment was confronted with the viewers’ expectations in order to highlight both. The setup departs from a focus on the individual object as the default option and recreates the exhibition space as a stage, but does not give up the expert role in favour of an audience-oriented one.

Something similar is suggested in more general terms by Spanish anthropologist Roger Sansi in a discussion of the exhibition politics of the Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona (MACBA), which under Manuel Borja-Villell (director 1998–2008) turned its focus to conceptual art, presenting its collection not as works, but as documents and developing itself into a space for public debate (Sansi 2012:220). The ephemeral remains that take pride of place in the museum’s collection are not particularly interesting as images, but important as traces of past events. This demands another way of presenting them. Sansi quotes Borja as saying that “a true collection is not just the mere accumulation of souvenirs and ‘dead materials’, but it can constitute an immense reservoir of experiences and images, open and polymorphous” (Sansi 2012:223). While lacking in aesthetic appeal, a collection of documentary material has the potential to generate endless meanings and experiences. (Sansi 2012:224). This may sound like the museum as modelled on web 2.0, but in fact what Sansi defines is a position that allows museum professionals and other experts to continue to play a role. His solution is a fusion of the artwork as spectacle and the artwork as data that turns the museum into a “good, cultural shopping mall”; not just another provider of experiences or data, but of archives transformed into a “lively experience” or spectacles supplemented with “encounters” (Sansi 2012:228).

The word “encounter” sums up much what is said here. It describes the difference between Brecht’s Lucifer Event and a matchbook. The conventional idea of the work as a unique object may make it hard to see a matchbook as an initiator of encounters when presented on its own, but together with Waring’s letter it creates an assemblage that facilitates such
a perception. Similarly, Etchells’ instructions for *Surrender Control* may resemble a work too much to be able to illustrate the way in which they create an encounter in isolation, but combined with the dates and times of their sending, they can. Experientiality is not just something physical, but something imagined as well, and objects and documents on display can do much to engage the visitor’s imagination.

Whether it is the artist, the curator or both who frame the encounter, the framework is essential for the way in which the work generates meaning and has to be mediated along with the work. Maciunas, to return to the starting point of this article, created Fluxus both as a dissemination platform that suits the work – his *Fluxkits* communicate in the same way as Brecht’s postal works – and as a statement about the art world. The work meets its primary audience in a curated encounter that is essential for an understanding of both the work and Fluxus. Therefore, if a museum display is to do them justice, the curated encounter has to be part of the presentation. The secondary audience of viewers has to be confronted with the work and its curation, in a manner that represents the form of communication it invites to. It does not have to duplicate it, but it has to invite to speculation about what it was like to interact with the work and the framework for its meeting with its primary audience of participants.

In each of the examples discussed here, the art object is replaced with an ensemble of materials that point towards the work without presenting themselves as the work’s single and unique embodiment. The work is made multiple and the viewer is invited to create an image of it as s/he considers each item in turn as if visiting an exhibition instead of viewing a work. The relationship between the items on display is different from that between the art object and the wall panel. All of them are on display, so all of them partake of the work’s authenticity. As with the holdings of MACBA, the material, artworks and examples of their use, becomes a reservoir of experiences and images. Encountering it invites visitors to engage with it in their own way; to imagine earlier encounters and compare them with their own response.

Displays built up along these lines cannot be reduced to the insights of art professionals or to the uses it is put to by an audience alone. The former will have to meet the latter, both in the museum’s reconstruction of the artwork’s past career and in its engagement with it in the present. This means that more material is needed to show fewer works. It also means that the museum professionals that create the work in multiple incarnations during the course of their professional engagement with them, have to collaborate. Ensembles consisting of works and documentation involve the curator and the conservator as well as the archivist, while the educator/mediator contributes knowledge about audience behaviour and expectations. Between them, they create a space where the visitor can experience the work and reflect on his/her experience in an encounter that necessarily involves both the insights of the expert and the lived reality of the museum visit; a visit to the museum in the widest possible sense, its display areas as well as its service areas, its physical as well as its discursive and digital spaces.

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Notes


2. Dial 6276 has been exhibited twice, once as on its own, under the title DIAL 62761232, A Document On A Contemporary Art Event (ShanghArt, Shanghai, October 2010–June 2011) and once as a part of the exhibition Dai Hanzhi: 5 000 Artists at Witte de With Contemporary Art, Rotterdam, 4 September 2014–4 January 2015.

3. That Roitmeister is in fact Höller is revealed in the article in a roundabout way. To start with, “Carl Roitmeister” writes about a classmate called Karl with a “K”. Next, he mentions Höller’s contribution to the exhibition Wrong at Galerie Klosterfelde in Berlin in 2006, which consisted of the artist spelling his name “Karsten”. Once the connection between Karl and Karsten is established, he begins mentioning them together in the same sentence. It is never Carl Roitmeister and Carsten Höller that are equated, but only their negatives, Karl and Karsten.

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Museets nærvær

Et forsøg på at kortlægge dét, der ikke kan kortlægges

Theis Vallø Madsen

Title: Museum presence. An attempt to map what cannot be mapped

Abstract: Presence has become a new object of study within architecture, literature, art, anthropology, and museology. Theorists have described presence as a state of being lost in focused intensity, an attitude towards history as an ongoing process, and as a newfound interest in the materiality of collections and the museum space. In this article, the work on mapping a small historical museum in Denmark makes use of presence theory in a(n) (futile) attempt to represent the embodied experience of museum space including time, movements, atmosphere, and presence effects. This article introduces a provisional counterintuitive method – in this case mapping presence – in order to point to those qualities of the museum which are often overlooked. The cumbersome presence is here considered to be a logical, predictable and static object of study. In this specific case, the counterintuitive method will attempt to get a hold of presence using one of the most uncreative and conventional parts of the museum institution: the museum map. The article’s map draws on Merleau-Ponty, Deleuze and Guattari’s mapping, Gumbrecht’s descriptions of presence, Böhme’s distinction between Realität and Wirklichkeit, and Ingold’s meshwork, lines, and knots in order to point to potential zones of presence in the museum.

Keywords: Presence, atmosphere, mapping, milieu, museum map, counterintuitive method, materiality, phenomenology, meshwork.


the state of being lost in focused intensity […]” i Production of Presence. What Meaning Cannot Convey (2004:104)

Denne selvforglemmende opmærksomhed kræver, at vi slukker analyseapparatet for et kort øjeblik. Det virker derfor paradoksalt, at et nyt forskningsprojekt ved Faaborg Museum og Syddansk Universitet skal undersøge begreberne i kunsthistorisk og museologisk sammen-
hæng. Dette arbejde kræver, at analyseapparatet bliver rettet mod døt, der ifølge teoriens egne tekster vil undslippe et analytisk blik.

Et forskningsprojekt om nærvær skal bag om førnævnte intuition. Denne artikel foreslår en kontra-intuitiv metode, hvilket i dette tilfælde vil sige at behandle nærvær som en fornuftsbestemt, forudsigelig og uforandrerlig genstand. I *Production of Presence* retter Gumbricht sit fokus mod alle de fænomener og forhold, som er med til at skabe mening uden at være meningsgivende i sig selv (2004:8). Disse ikke-meningsgivende forhold er per definition svære at definere, og det er vanskeligt at afgrænse og katalogisere en tilstand af focused intensity eller fortættet opmærksomhed mod en genstand eller et rum. Den kontra-intuitiv metode skal her benyttes til at beskrive og begribe nærværet og dens betingelser ved hjælp af museumsinstitutionens mest konkrete og fantasiforladte dele, nemlig billetsalgets kort over museet.

Denne artikel vil demonstere, hvordan nærværs-kortlægning af Faaborg Museum kan fremhæve aspekter ved museet, som fagfolk og forskere ofte enten overser eller tager for givet. Tingenes thingness og nærværets betydning er ifølge de tre danske museumsforskere Thomas Söderqvist, Adam Bencard og Camilla Mordhorst en overset del af museologien: "Scholars who write about artefacts often do not even seem to miss the sensation of holding the objects, of touching them, smelling them, inspecting them closely [...]" (Söderqvist et al. 2009:434). Det er denne sensation, som nærværskortet retter sin opmærksomhed mod. Kortet retter kortlæserens opmærksomhed væk fra væggene og ned mod gulvene – et af få steder i et museum, hvor gæsterne (gennem sko- eller)-kommer i fysisk berøring med stedet.

Fra en lille forskningsenhed på Faaborg Museum begyndte en nærværskorsfer, under-

Nærværsforskeren kan forsigtigt spørge, om tingene kan gå konstruktivt galt på museet. Nærværskortet og andre interventioner som f.eks. nærværspjentlige installationer kan vise sig at være metoder til at tvinge opmærksomheden væk fra de ting, der forudsætter nærværet. Kortet kan ikke vise vej til nærvær, men muligvis tjene til at reflektere over museet som et sted, som fremmer nærvær og videbegær.

**Museumskortet**


Museumskortene forestiller museet fra oven, hvor farvekoder fungerer som netop koder, dvs. en kode for specifikke kuratoriske eller (kunst-)historiske inddelinger af materialer, perioder og kulturer. Museumskortet over f.eks. The Metropolitan Museum of Art i New York viser, at sådanne farvekoder kan have dekorative såvel som praktiske formål (fig. 3). Farvekoderne viser perioderne og kulturernes placering og størrelse, hvilket giver en indikation for, hvordan samlingen er hierarkiseret. Kortet viser, hvordan museets fagfolk ordner viden.


Kartografi er en uadskillet del af det moderne oplysningsprojekt. Den britiske museolog Christopher Whitehead beskriver museet som et klinisk renset rum, der fremhæver og kon-
Theis Vallo Madsen


Tilfældighedstopografi


Museumskortlæggeren på Faaborg Museum må låne fra tilfældighedstopografi for at lave et kort, som indbefatter nærvær og atmosfæren på stedet. Ved at skrave potentielle nærværzoner kan museets forsker påpege nærværets flygtige og utilregnelige karakter, mens museets rumlige forløb og små, udvalgte detaljer bliver fremhævet og beskrevet som uforanderlige størrelser på linje med vægge og døre. Museumskortet skal dog samtidig give et overblik over den i forvejen labyrintiske, lille bygning, så gæsterne kan finde frem til særudstillinger og toiletter fra museumsbutikken ved indgangen. Nærværzonerne forsøger at vise, at den samlede museumsoplevelse inklusive

Fig. 4. Køkkenkortet fra Daniel Spoerris Anecdoted Topography of Chance. Foto: Theis Vallo Madsen.
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Sidstnævnte, Wirklichkeit, bliver derimod bestemt af rummet og vores brug og tilstedeværelse i rummet. Det er, ifølge Böhme, hvad vi først påvirker personer, som bevæger sig gennem bygningen, herunder sænkeindtryk, overraskelser og potentielle zoninger for øjeblikke af nærvær netop ikke lader sig fastholde i billeder eller tekster (fig. 5–6).

Fra de beslægtede atmosfærerstuder vil nærværskontakten forsøge at kombinere to forskellige former for virkelighed. Den tyske filosof Gernot Böhme beskriver atmosfære ved at differentiere mellem Realität og Wirklichkeit. Forstnævnte består af øjensynligt objektive og nogenlunde håndgribelige ting såsom materialer, farver og alder. Realität er, i denne sammenhæng, det vi ved eller mener at vide.

Fig. 5. 3. udkast til nærværskort af Oliver Streich på baggrund af samtaler om museet, kunst og nærvær. Foto: Oliver Streich.

Fig. 6. 4. udkast til nærværskort. Kortet blev udgangspunkt i en "grafisk dialog" mellem illustrator Oliver Streich og undersøgende. Hvor Streichs udkast (3. skitse) blev tegnet ud fra 2. skitse, er 4. udkast udarbejdet af undersøgende oven på Streichs 3. skitse og flere samtaler med museets ph.d.-studenter, inspektør og direktør. Det endelige kort har således flere kartografer i teoretisk og praktisk forstand. Foto: Theis Vallø Madsen.
nærvær. Nærværskortet er et omsønt forsøg på at bringe begge virkelighedsplaner sammen i én plantegning. Kortets skraverede nærværszoner forsøger at påpege museet som en *Wirklichkeit* – velvivende at museet og virkeligheden i øvrigt altid er en blanding af begge dele.


**NÆRVÆR SOM TEORI**


Den nærværende museumsgæst vil forsøge at relatere til værket eller fortiden snarere end at fortolke. På museet skal nærværsoplevelsen ifølge Gumbrecht få museumsgæsterne til at relaterer "[…] intellectually and with our bodies, to certain objects (rather than ask what those objects 'mean') if we had encountered them in their own historical everyday worlds […]" (2004:124). Vi møder en lignende nærværstilgang til museum i litteraturen, nærmere bestemt hos den norske forfatter Karl Ove Knausgård fra *Min Kamp* fra 2009, hvor forfatteren besøger Biologiska Museet i Stockholm. Han går rundt mellem ”museer over museer”, som står tilbage som levn fra en periode, hvor nationalromantik, sundhedsfanatisme og dekadencedyrkning var optaget af det enestående:

Den gangen fante det fortsatt enorme områder med liv som var upåvirket af mennesker, så gjenkapselsen var ikke begrunnet af noen nødvendighet, annet enn at den ga kunnskap, og det blikket det ga på vår sivilisasjon, at alt skulle hentes inn i det menneskelige, ikke av nød, men av lyst, tørst, og at denne kundskapslysten og kundskapstørsten, som
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Museets nærvær er ikke et billede


Billeder som pictures bliver tydeliggjort i salongophængninger, hvor billedrammerne ofte hænger klods op og ned ad hinanden. I Retro, en samlingsophængning på Faaborg Museum, hvor malerierne var hængt op i den oprindelige ophængning ved åbningen i 1915, blev det tydeligt, at museets værker er egentlige genstande (fig. 7). Billeder er kilet ind, og nogle støtter hinanden, mens andre hænger en smule ud og skygger for det tilstødende billede. De vejer noget, og de fylder noget. Deres fylde og picture’ske karakter blev særlig tydeligt i museets syv, små køjer, hvor ophængningen var tætt.


Fig. 7. Fra køje 2 i Retro 1915 – Gensyn med Fynboernes egen ophængning med 366 malerier, skulpturer og tegninger. 2015. Fotokreditering: Hélène Binet.

Fig. 11. Udkast til farvekort over Faaborg Museum. Formålet med farvesnittet er at vise farvernes rytme og museumshusegens forholdvis store, men knap mærkbare hældning. Foto: Theis Vallø Madsen.

Fig. 8. 2. udkast til nærværskort med bl.a. Peter Hansens Pløjemanden vender fra 1900–1902. (detalje). Alle værk-udvalg blev senere skåret væk eller flyttet til kortets bagside. Foto: Theis Vallø Madsen.

Vandretur


Denne bevægelse langs terrænet står i modsætning til gennemfarten, hvor den gående har et endemål og en afstand, der skal tilbageægges. På gennemfart går vi med et formål og en forudbestemt mening. Vi har en destination. På Faaborg Museum er man skiftevis slentren-
de og på gennemfart. Rummene har dog en særøgedenhet, som på forskellige måder lægger hindringer i vejen for hurtig og lineær gennemfart. Der er lommer, hvor tingene samler sig, og der er større, lyse rum, hvor malerier trækker vores blikke til sig. Man bevæger sig skiftevis transitivt, f.eks. hen over gulvene, og intransitivt ind i lommer, hvor ruten samler sig i knuder.

**Museets linjer**


**Tidsknuder**

Nærver hedder presence på engelsk, hvilket peger på tid såvel som sted. Det må ikke forveksles med det, den britiske kunsthistoriker Claire Bishop i Radical Museology har beskrevet som presentism, hvilket henviser til tendensen til at være nutidige uden blik for nutidens rod i fortiden. På dansk lægger nærvær vægt på det rumlige, hvilket er tydeligt i den hollandske historiker Eelco Runias beskrivelse af nærvær som rumlig erfaring af historien som fortløbende: ”[…] to focus not on the past but on the present, not on history as what is irremediably gone, but on history as ongoing process” (2006:8).

Inden for kunsthistorien finder vi forestillingen om sammensetningen tid hos den franske kunsthistoriker Georges Didi-Huberman og hans begreb om kunstværker som tempora-
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le knuder. Kunstværket er her en stratificeret tidsknude, hvor forskellige tider flottes sammen i ét værk eller ét udtvivl (Didi-Huberman 2003). Det er nærliggende at betragte selve museet som sådan en stratificeret tidsknude, hvor tiderne lår sammen. Forskellige arkitektoniske og designmæssige stilarter, skilte, mobler, m.m. er alle en del af museet sammen med det slitage og ødelæggelse, der sker i løbet af tiden. I den forstand er museet en tidslomme, hvor tiden ikke står stille, men tværtimod bliver rumliggjort og tydeliggjort. Man kan se, at fortiden ikke er overstået, men fortsætter ind i nutiden.


Det er tværtimod en vigtig pointe i nærværsteorien såvel som på nærværskortet, at museumsgæsterne veksler mellem nærstudier og browsing – og at det ene opmærksomhedsmodus er forudsat af den anden. De vil uundgåeligt skride hen over gulvene og forbi store dele af museet, og forhåbentlig også stoppe op nu og da, skærpe opmærksomheden mod en detalje eller en genstand, før de atter fortsætter ad linjer længere ind i museet.


Museet som milieu


Idéen om milieu som middles eller mellemrum er forbundet med nærværsteorien såvel som den franske filosof Henri Bergsens flydende materialitet: “[…] [M]aterial, so far as extended in space, is to be defined (as we believe it must) as a present which is always beginning again […]” (1929:178). Det knytter også an til en anden filosof, den tyske filosof Martin Heidegger og hans forestilling om, at verden altid er ved at blive til (2010:102–110). Vi begynder altid i midten, og vi begynder altid igen og igen i et fortømende øjeblik. Det er også forudsætningen for Tim Ingold og Eelco Runias forestilling om ongoing eller fortløben-
de historiske linjer. Vores kort kan forsøge at vise verden som et sted for færdige ting, eller kortet kan fejle i sit forsøg på at vise vores ting og omgivelser som et sted i bevægelse.


Det er et indbygget paradoksligt i den deleuzianske kortlægning, at kortet nødvendigvis vil vise sin egen utilstrækkelighed. Det kan kun vise et stykke af verden i et midlertidigt, ufuldstændigt, fejlbevævet og ikke-objektivt perspektiv. Til gengæld kan denne korttype pege på andre og væsentlige ting i et terræn, som kalkeringen ikke kan vise – i dette tilfælde atmosfære eller forskellige nærværss-effekter. På Faaborg Museum er sandet mellem gulvmosaikernes teglsten, lyset fra bygningens sadeltag med råglas, og terrænets svage hældning af lige så stor betydning for gæsternes færd gennem museet som placeringen af bærende vægge (fig. 9). Kortets signaturer med små sandkort, knuder og lysstråler refererer således både til køkkenbordskortet i Daniel Spoerris An Anecdoted Topography of Chance, til Deleuze og Guattaris udfoldede kortlægning, Böhmes Wirklichkeit, Bergsoms forestilling om materialer og steder som ”[…] at present which is always beginning again” (Bergson 1929:178).


**Ufærdige kort**


Skitsen er en arbejdsmetode, men også en æstetisk pointe. I Lines differentierer Tim Ingold mellem et skitseret kort og et moderne kartografisk kort. Sidstnævnte består af linjer, der forbinder punkter for at markere et ydre og et indre. Det moderne kort trækker grænser som en forsøg på at underlægge og kontrollere
et territorium snarere end en kortlægger, der bor og færdes i terrænet. Ingold beskriver flere ikke-vestlige kulturers praksis med skitserede ruter som en del af en måde at fortælle på. Skitsen "[…] grows line by line as the conversation proceeds, and there is no point at which it can ever be said to be truly complete" (2007:85). Selve skitsen er en form for fortælling, som forbindes trådene: "$\text{To tell a story, then, is to relate},\text{ in narrative, the occurrences of the past, retracing a path through the world that others, recursively picking up the threads of past lives, can follow in the process of spinning out their own}" (2007:90).


Falske modsætninger

Nærvær har tendenser mod nostalgji og ublu autenticitetsdyrkelse i den bredere kulturdebatt, hvor begrebet ofte kendteger alt det, der bliver taget i nutidens accelererende præsentationskultur. Selvom nærværet ovenfor er beskrevet som en modsætning til netværket og til modernitetens altid fremadskridende bevægelse mod et næste punkt, mod endnu en mening, og mod et forudbestemt mål, skal nærværskortet også vise, at museets formidle-


Nærværende modernitetskritik kan også selv kritiseres for at være et institutionelt overgreb som et oversvundet og endnu frit område uden for magten. Det er en tanke værd, om nærværsteorien er endnu et forsøg på at overvinde og kontrollere endnu en del af vores kulturelle og sociale sfære i sit stadige forsøg på at effektivisere alle områder af vores liv – her vores flygtige oplevelse af at fortabe os i en ting, en historie eller et rum. I sit udgangspunkt er nærværsteorien kritisk over formålsrettetheden, dvs. idéen om al tings omsættelighed og nytteværdi.

Men som bl.a. den tysk-russiske filosof Boris Groys påpeger i Samlingens logik fra 1997, har museumssystemet – især kunstinstitutionen – effektivt formået at indoptage og indpasse ethvert forsøg på at bryde traditionen (Groys 1997). Det bør forblive et uløseligt paradoks, at/om nærværsteori over-

Noter

1. Nærværsteori er desuden udgangspunktet for et nyt forskningssamarbejde mellem Syddansk Universitet og Faaborg Museum, hvor en

2. "Micro shocks" er den canadiske filosof Brian Massumis begreb for små sanselige forstyrrelser, som vores intellekt ikke opfanger: "Something as simple as a shift in attention, even a blink, is a kind of micro-shock that forces us to re-establish focus, rejig our potential actions, refresh our relational field – re-chunk. We’re constantly re-generating experience out of these interruptions, big and small." (Massumi 2015:129).


4. I denne forstand er "mening" hos Gumbrecht ikke en positiv størrelse, men en overgribende praksis, hvor en fortolkere leder efter forskelle og valg: "[...] [T]he awareness of a choice that has been taken place(or the awareness of possible alternatives to what has been chosen) [...]" (2004:105).

5. Postkolonialistisk kritik ville sandsynligvis også gå i rette med Knausgårds beskrivelse af oplysningsstidens kortlægninger som et projekt med det eneste formål at indsamle viden.


**LITTERATUR**


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Mindretal og minoriteter på museum – en museologisk konstruktion

Peter Dragsbo

Title: National and ethnic minorities in museums

Abstract: In the discussions of the representation of the numerous “new” ethnic, religious, gender and cultural minorities, the “old” national and ethnic minorities sometimes seem to be a little forgotten. Thus, some of the crucial questions of these minorities in relation to museums are rarely discussed. One of these is the tendency of many minority museums to formalize stereotypes of the minority, a so-to-say self- “folklorization”. At the same time respecting the importance of a minority to master its self-presentation through museums, the museums have a common challenge to include the outside world, being aware that every minority is also a product of historical processes, short and long distance influences, meeting and mixture of cultures, changing identities and shifts in self-symbolization. Also, the minorities must accept that majority museums have a right and duty to tell the history of the minorities, thus cooperating with the minority in reducing the “othering” on both sides, accepting that both sides, freed from any bias, can communicate also the “unpleasant” stories of the other part.

Keywords: National and ethnic minority, minority museums, self-representation, borderlands, Schleswig, Bohemia, Jewish museums.

I disse år er repræsentationen af forskellige mindretal og minoritetsgrupper blevet et af de væsentligste temaer i den museologiske diskussion. Der har særligt været fokus på repræsentationen af de ”indfødte” eller koloniserede folk, men også på Vestens egne ”nye” mindretal, hvad enten er der tale om efterkrigstidens etniske minoriteter eller de seksuelle, kulturelle eller religiøse minoriteter. Gennem Europas historie har ikke mindst de ”gamle” mindretal – hvad enten vi taler om nationale mindretal i grænselandene eller jøder og romaer – spillet en central rolle, hvor de på grund af den manglende evne og vilje til at inkludere mindreallene i de nationalstatslige projekter har haft ofte skæbesvangre følger. Men bortset fra de mange jodiske museer, der er voilet frem i Europa som led i den tyske Vergangenheitsbewältigung, har de ”gamle” mindretal i museal sammenhæng spillet en overraskende beskeden rolle.
Ganske vist har de skabt eller fået givet et stort antal museer – men de er ofte blevet opbygget som en form for folkloristiske reservater, der har dyrket et fastlåst og stereotypt selvbillede, som regel med fokus på tiden for de store katastrofer i det 20. århundrede.


**Mindretal som historisk konstruktion**

De centrale spørgsmål, der blev rejst på de to seminarer, handler om, hvor mindretalsmuseerne står i dag med et det at være ’’hjemstavnsmuseer’’ for en befolkningsgruppe med primært internt perspektiv og at være moderne kulturmuseer med både interne og eksterne perspektiver. Hvordan kan eller bør mindretalsmuseer eller -udstillinger forholde sig til henholdsvis flertallet, mindretallet selv, den omgivende verden og andre mindretal? I denne sammenhæng trænger spørgsmålet sig på, om det kun er museumsetisk tilladt for mindretal og minoriteter selv at formidle sig på museer – eller om det også er en legitim opgave for museer, stiftet eller drevet af ’’flertalsbefolkningen’’ eller ’’overetniske’’ museer? Og sidst, men ikke mindst: Skal mindretalsmuseer kun handle om mindretallene i moderne forstand, skabt af det 19. og 20. århundredes nationalstatsprojekter – eller er det også deres opgave at formidle den berørte befolkningsgruppes sprog, kultur og socioøkonomiske eksistens så langt tilbage i historien, som det kan konstateres relevant?

ske nationalstat som princip gik sin sejrsgang i Europa med gennemførelsen af præsident Wilsons idé om "nationernes selvbestemmelse" i Versailles-traktaten efter Første Verdenskrig, blev det logiske resultat, at en lang række etniske grupper i de nye stater skulle finde en ny rolle som mindretal.


nalismen, der især er i vækst i Østeuropa, men også præger debatten i mange andre lande.

**Mindretalsmuseet som idé og udfordring**


Til enhver tid skal vi anerkende, at museer skabt af nationale mindretal og andre særlige folkegrupper har en vigtig rolle som knager for identitet. Men ved siden af rollen som identitetskabere har mindretals- og minoritetsmuseerne også en vigtig rolle som fortællinger om et Europa, der især før de etniske udrensninger under og efter Anden Verdenskrig i lige høj grad bestod både af relativt monokulturelle og etnoprogede områder og af store områder, hvor det flersprogede, flerkulturelle, fleretniske eller fleridentitiske var det normale gennem mange hundrede år. Det gjaldt ikke blot de traditionelle kulturlandingområder, grænselandene, men også invandringsområder og storbyer. Denne fortælling om et andet Europa før nationalstaternes enseretning er en vigtig opgave i et Europa, som i dag oplever nye former for vandringer og kulturlanding. Som udtrykt af Petr Lozoviuk er mindretalsmuseer også et oplysningsprojekt for alle (Lozoviuk 2012:9ff.).

I dette perspektiv ser jeg i hvert fald to udfordringer for fremtidens mindretals- og folkegruppemuseer: Den ene er at frigøre sig fra at være bundet alene til begrebet ”mindretal” i moderne forstand. For eksempel kan danmarksgræske folkehistorie indbygges i folkekulturen eller etnologiske folkegrupper kan karakteriseres som multikulturelle, multietniske og multidentitære. Den anden udfordring er at ikke renske museerne af sin historie, men at indgå i interdisiplinære samarbejder og støtte dem til at fortælle det komplekse og multifakte historiske og kulturelle fortælling, som de er hjemmehørende til.
snart museer der ikke mindst fortæller flertallet om en del af deres egen historie med integration, antisemitisme og fordrivelse/udrydelse (Deme 2010, Carl 2013:28ff.).


En anden opgave for museer for mindretal og folkegrupper bør i forlængelse heraf bestå i at nuancere og variere billedet af gruppen og tillade at vise det brede spektrum af tilhøringsforhold, kulturbæring og identiteter, der altid rummes i en folkegruppe. Som direktøren for Dansk Jødisk Museum, Janne Laursen, har understreget, må hun hele tiden bestæbe sig på ikke at lade nogen gruppe inden for gruppen monopolisere billedet af den "rette jøde", men netop vise, at der mange slags jøder – også med forskellig grad af jødisk kultur og tradition (Laursen 2013:13ff.). Dette memento er ikke mindst aktuelt for de danske og tyske mindretal, der som indelagsmindretal hele tiden har oplevet strømme fra og til flertalsbefolkningen, og i deres sproglige og kulturelle signaler bestandig i en dynamisk proces udvælger, hvad de vil anvende fra det omgivende flertal eller det nationale hjemland. Også for de tyske og danske mindretal i grænselandet gælder, at sprogene som vigtige identitetsmarkører har fungeret på helt andre præmisser i den før-nationale periode og fortsat har et dynamisk egetliv, der ikke altid svarer til mindrettalenes officielle selvbilleder.


Ved siden af disse mere konkrete eksempler på kulturmøde og kulturblænding står også, at mange europæiske mindretals eksistens og
Peter Dragsbo


**Mindretalsmuseet og nutid og fremtid**

Umiddelbart burde det være en selvfølge, at opgaven med at fortælle i historisk perspektiv om det ”andet” Europa, det flerkulturelle, flerspråkede eller fleretniske Europa, skal løftes af både mindretals- og folkegruppemuseerne og af ”flertallenes” museer, hvad enten de ligger i grænseegnene eller i nationens centrum. Men ser man ud over verden, er der talrige eksempler på befolkninger, der f.eks. føler sig som ”oprindelige folkeslag”, eller som på den ene eller anden måde har været undertrykt og koloniseret, og stiller sig skeptiske eller direkte fjendtlige over for, at deres befolkningsgruppenes historie og kultur tages op af flertalsbefolkningens eller herbergsstatens museer. Der er af naturlige grunde en frygt for en fortsættelse af tidligere – måske ikke så fjerne – tiders paternalisering eller eksotisering, men der kan også være tilfælde, hvor et ”flertalsmuseums” seriose fremstilling blot ikke svarer til mindretallet eller minoritetens selvforståelse.


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Mindretal og minoriteter på museum – en museologisk konstruktion


Afslutningsvis vil jeg således konkludere, at der i fremtiden ikke bør være nogen monopol på at formidle mindretal og minoritets historie og kultur. Nogleordet er her gensidig respekt og ligeværdighed – hvilket ikke er det samme som, at formidlingen ikke må inddrage kritiske vinkler, eller at gruppen som kollektiv skal godkende formidlingernes temaer og synspunkter. Museerne for mindretal og minoriteter skal på en gang opretholde deres naturlige funktion som samlingspunkter og symboler for gruppen og samtidig "sprænge" gruppens evt. fastløste eller alment vedtagne selv billeder. Dette kan ske ved at fremdrage de længere linjer i det historiske perspektiv, men også ved at disse museer tør nuancere billedet og vise gruppens variation af kultur og identitet i dens fulde bredde og ikke mindst inddrage det eksterne perspektiv og vise gruppen som en del af et større samfund.

Litteratur


Mindretal og minoriteter på museum – en museologisk konstruktion


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Deaccessioning and collections development in Finnish museums

MINNA SARANTOLA-WIESS & EMILIA VÄSTI

Abstract: In 2014–16, six Finnish museums carried out a project to investigate how deaccessioning is practised in Finnish museums and how the related process could be developed. The Finnish Museums Association published two reports in Finnish on the results of the project, Kokoelmapoistojen hyvät käytännöt (2015) and Kokoelmapoistojen yhteiset käytännöt (2016), and Deaccessioning: Sharing Experiences from Finland in English in 2016. The reports discuss issues of deaccessioning and present a proposed procedure that museums can apply when considering their own deaccessioning practices. The first-mentioned publication Kokoelmapoistojen hyvät käytännöt, on good deaccessioning practice, also contains a model process. The following text is a presentation of the project and its main results.

Keywords: Collections management, deaccessioning, disposal, division of tasks in collecting, significance analysis.

The breakthrough of the “new museology” has led museums to pose fundamental questions regarding the significance of object collections in general, and in particular the communities whose identity the collections are regarded as reflecting or who own the collections, for example in the role of taxpayers. At the same time, the operating environment has led to considering collections from the perspectives of economy and, for example, usability and collections logistics, since issues of money and management of premises and property have become prominent aspects of everyday life in the professional running of museums. Internet-based collections management systems have, in turn, clearly improved opportunities to manage the collections of individual museums and to share information on collections among museums. For these reasons, collections management is undergoing change in the 2010s not only in terms of content and relations with users, but also, and fundamentally, with regard to the upkeep and logistics of collections. Developments in public finances are also leading in this direction. In many countries, they have caused the deterioration and even crises of the economic basis of museums. These developments and their impact on everyday collections work formed the background when the Helsinki City Museum, the Historical Collections of the Tampere Museums and the Museum of Technology launched their deaccessioning project in 2014. We aimed at the first Finnish overview
of how material is deaccessioned in Finnish museums of cultural history and how this process could be developed on the basis of the ICOM Code of Ethics. We wanted to discuss the philosophy of deaccessioning and the various processes associated with it. We soon noticed that many questions were worth considering together with art museums. As a result, a further project was launched in 2015 involving three art museums, HAM – Helsinki Art Museum, the Tampere Art Museum and the Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova Museum of history and contemporary art in Turku. This second stage of the project included discussions on the special features of deaccessioning from art collections and whether they have any need in general to deaccession material. A particular distinction between cultural-historical collections and art collections concerns issues of copyright, while there are of course other differences as well. Although at present the size of art museum collections and their need for space cannot be compared to the problems faced by museums of cultural history, they, too, will pose a challenge to museum resources before long.¹

Our deaccessioning project was launched at a stage when collections-related work has been developed in highly active ways in Finnish museums. Various procedures and tools have been developed in recent years that will also be useful for developing deaccessioning practices. During the 2010s museums of cultural history have created a network for collections management collaboration (the TAKO network), within which museums agree to a nationwide division of tasks in collecting. The related agreement with the National Board of Antiquities on collecting and documentation has been signed by more than a hundred professionally managed Finnish museums. There are some 150 professionally managed museums that are (partly) funded by the state, which means that the network can truly coordinate accessions in professionally run museums.² The division of collecting tasks can increase knowledge of the contents of collections and of the ways in which the museums wish to develop them. These aims are also served by the FINNA portal of all Finish memory organisations, through which both the public and museum professionals can study the cultural heritage collected and stored by museums, archives and libraries.³ A checklist for museum collections management policy (Ekosaari et al.) was published in 2013 (2014 in English) with the aim of supporting museums in preparing collections management policies. The significance analysis tool published in 2015 by the Metropolia University of Applied Sciences and Lusto – The Finnish Forest Museum is, in turn, an aid for museums for assessing and evaluating individual objects and whole collections (Häyhä et al. 2015) in general, but also with regard to deaccessions.⁴

We wanted the issues of deaccessioning to be widely visible and discussed in the museums sector in Finland. An essential aspect was therefore a survey on deaccessioning procedures and their main problems that was carried out at the beginning of our project in 2014. Issues of deaccessioning were also addressed in some twenty seminars and training events.

The initiative was funded by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, and the Finnish Museums Association included our publications in its web publications series. We are also grateful to the National Museum of Finland, the Finnish National Gallery and to the National Board of Antiquities for participating in our work and for providing their support in the steering group of our project.
We want to emphasise that considerations of deaccessioning should already be present when accessioning decisions are made. The related process should take into account the lifespan of the items in the museum's collections. What does this specific example of the cultural heritage require in terms of collections management and care, not only at the time of acquisition but also in the future? And in particular, what significance and meanings are collected for the future along with the object and how is this knowledge transmitted to the next generations of museum professionals?

In a considerable number of cases, deaccessions proceed from the needs of storage facilities: relocation, unsuitable ambient...
Deaccessioning and collections development in Finnish museums

conditions or the need for more space. These grounds with reference to facilities are almost always also of an economic nature. The importance of economic considerations in deaccessioning decisions is difficult from an ethical point of view, but needs nonetheless to be explicitly discussed.

The updating and changes of collections management policy are another important point of departure. The aim of a functioning deaccessioning policy must be to permit acquisitions and the allocation of resources in accordance with collections management policy. Above all, however, the goal should be a developing museum collection of high quality and easy accessibility that will serve both its users and its owners well.

Deaccessioning in Finnish museums

Attitudes to deaccessioning are indicated in the collections policies of the museums. Our study of the documents, however, did not directly answer the question of how and where deaccessioning was actually carried out. Part of our project was therefore a web-based survey announced on the nationwide Museoposti (Museum Post) email list in June 2014. The survey charted what was felt to function well in deaccessioning, what was found to be problematic, what was felt to require solutions, and how our project could provide help in these matters. A total of 65 replies to the survey were received, and 59 persons noted that deaccessioning had been carried out in their museums during their careers there.

Our work took as its point of departure the ICOM Code of Ethics. The code provides a good starting point for considering deaccession. At the same time, however, it is of general scope and does not consider matters such as copyright issues or the need for museums to engage their communities.

Our most important practical model was the Disposal Toolkit web publication of the Museums Association of Great Britain (2008, revised version 2014). In the project, we also studied the British Find an Object and the Dutch herplaatsingdatabase collections transfer forums to investigate opportunities and the need to develop a similar Finnish service.

The practical basis for our work consisted of 14 case studies carried out by the participating museums with a wide range of different questions on deaccessioning and methods of disposal. After these analyses, we prepared a process framework that museums can apply to their own needs. An integral part of the framework consists of the criteria for assessing the museum value, ethical aspects and legality of suggested deaccessioning and for planning deaccessioning processes. All the case studies included an inventory of the collections or part of them. After the deaccessioning process, we have a better understanding of the significance and value of the remaining objects and collections.

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The respondents gave various arguments that were used in deaccessioning evaluation (Table 1), emphasising the importance of an overall assessment. A single reason, such as museum-educational needs or the existence of similar objects in other collections, was rarely regarded as sufficient grounds for such action. The national division of tasks in collecting and documenting had less influence than expected on the collections policies and deaccessioning decisions of museums in 2014, but the situation might have changed in 2016.

The methods of disposal applied in museums were similarly surveyed. The method that was mentioned most often, by over 90 per cent of
Minna Sarantola-Weiss & Emilia Västi

Veneration of the cultural heritage as the task of museums, and noted as a risk of deaccessioning that the work of museums is turning into “short-term one-off activity”. We have sought to take these risks into account. The assessment criteria of deaccessioning procedures that we have compiled urges a total assessment and also takes into account the criteria of the significance analysis method. Our aim is that the assessment should describe what an object contains and not only what it lacks.

The replies indicated concern that pressure from outside parties lacking knowledge of the principles and stages of collections management could lead to wrong decisions and skewed collections. “Cutbacks are made to the funding. In strained situations orders concerning deaccessioning or receiving collections can come from surprising parties, and the museum can be at a loss as to what to do when, for example, the top-level leadership of the municipality demands something that is against the museum’s regulations.”

We wish to stress that deaccessioning should be understood above all as a means of collections management and care (Vilkuna 2000:92, Kostet 2007:157–160, Pulkkinen 2013:129). Transferring an object to another collection can ensure better opportunities for it to be on

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**Table 1. What grounds for deaccessioning have been applied at your museum?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grounds</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Condition and/or incomplete state of the object</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not included in the museum's collecting task (TAKO)</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk to other items in the collection</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete provenance and contextual information</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duplicates or corresponding items in the museum's own collection</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The needs of the educational collection/hands-on collection</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health or safety hazards</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object is better suited to another museum's collecting task (TAKO)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be replaced by a better object</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unreasonable storage and/or maintenance costs for the object</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duplicates or corresponding items in other museums</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reasons</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approximately half (48 per cent) of the responding museums had practical experience of transferring deaccessioned objects to another professionally run museum. The transfer of items to a non-professional museum was considerably rarer (9 per cent). Our interpretation of the phenomenon is that it is regarded as unethical to solve deaccession problems of a professionally run museum by transferring objects to a non-professional museum.

**ATTITUDES TO DEACCESSIONING**

The survey underlined the fact that attitudes to deaccessioning were felt to be a generation issue. It appears that the younger generation of museum professionals more readily accepted deaccessioning, regarding it as part of collections management.

Critical views are also important. The replies expressed wishes for discussion on the preservation of the cultural heritage as the task of museums, and noted as a risk of deaccessioning that the work of museums is turning into “short-term one-off activity”. We have sought to take these risks into account. The assessment criteria of deaccessioning procedures that we have compiled urges a total assessment and also takes into account the criteria of the significance analysis method. Our aim is that the assessment should describe what an object contains and not only what it lacks.

The replies indicated concern that pressure from outside parties lacking knowledge of the principles and stages of collections management could lead to wrong decisions and skewed collections. “Cutbacks are made to the funding. In strained situations orders concerning deaccessioning or receiving collections can come from surprising parties, and the museum can be at a loss as to what to do when, for example, the top-level leadership of the municipality demands something that is against the museum’s regulations.”

We wish to stress that deaccessioning should be understood above all as a means of collections management and care (Vilkuna 2000:92, Kostet 2007:157–160, Pulkkinen 2013:129). Transferring an object to another collection can ensure better opportunities for it to be on
display and better conditions than previously for its preservation. When objects prone to risk are removed, resources can be focused on accessions for the museum’s core collection and the remaining collection can be ensured better care and secure conditions. The safety of the museum staff and museum visitors will also improve. It is also worth bearing in mind that the cultural lifespan of a deaccessioned object will not end with its physical removal. According to Peter van Mensch, objects will remain remembered or documented past their physical lifespan (van Mensch 1992, Häyhä et al. 2015, Robbins 2016:98–101).

DOES DEACCESSIONING WORK?

Many respondents consider deaccessioning to be a useful tool. Cases where the keeping of objects involved risks for other items and health were mentioned as the simplest for deaccession, as well as objects in unequivocally poor condition.

Freening up storage space in concrete terms was an impetus for deaccessioning to make work more efficient and safer for both objects and personnel. The respondents also recognised the benefits for the quality of the remaining collection. “When the objects of the thematic area in question are properly studied as the basis of a deaccession proposal, the situation for the whole group of objects is better.”

Transferring objects to another museum as a means of disposal was commended in the survey. The positive effects of the TAKO network were particularly noted: “I have donated material that does not belong to our division of collecting tasks to a museum where it would belong according to TAKO. The parties involved have been very satisfied.”

The respondents urged their colleagues to apply effort to jointly develop the deaccessioning process and practices of their own museum and to make active use of them. Comparisons of the deaccessioning process with the museum’s other processes, the acquisition of material in particular, were regarded as important. The respondents stated that problems arising in deaccessioning had been a practical reminder of an increasingly critical attitude to accessions to the collection.

THE ETHICS OF DEACCESSIONING AND THE FINALITY OF DECISIONS

The ethical and moral aspects of deaccessions were considered to a great extent in the replies. It was asked whether museums are entitled to deaccess, what grounds are valid, and who is entitled to make these decisions in museums.

Particular causes of uncertainty were: the finality of deaccessions, promises given to...

Fig. 2. Building conservator Petra Heinonen and museum technician Jonas Haili repacking an inventoried tiled stove. The Helsinki City Museum’s deaccessioning policy was amended in 2015 to permit the recycling or sales of donations from other parties than private individuals. Photo: Helsinki City Museum/Jaana Maijala 2014.
donors to keep the material, and the fear of losing the trust of the public, of future generations. The fear of losing trust and the desire to avoid conflicts emerged particularly in local museums where donors or their family are well known. As a result, “there is no courage to make deaccessions that would lead to altercations”.

Problems of donation terms were also mentioned. The older accession forms do not necessarily mention the museum’s right to deaccess the material or to pass it on to third parties. The replies show that museums do not have any definite arguments for a situation in which donors or their heirs might enquire about a deaccessioned donation. On the other hand, we may ask how much respect for the opinions of earlier owners/donors is an obligation created within the field itself.

Some museum professionals were afraid of being marked in professional circles or in their own working community: “Deaccession has to be argued for much more than acquisition, even to one’s own colleagues. It is still regarded as a failure, loss or unprofessionalism.”

**The challenges of the deaccessioning process**

Some respondents felt that the deaccessioning process was hindered and slowed by the difficulties of obtaining information on the collections of other museums. Problems of acquiring information concerned situations where the transfer of an object to another museum was considered, but also cases where the mutual correspondence of collections was to be ensured at the national level. This may reflect the fact that the FINNA information search service and the division of tasks in collecting and documenting between museums are both relatively new tools and processes and have not yet become established in all museums.

Several respondents mentioned deaccessions being made difficult or directly prevented by the lack of available working hours and funds. “A thorough deaccessioning process will have the result that deaccessioning needs will be recorded but there will be no time to carry out deaccessioning. The deaccessioning decision can require much more time than cataloguing an object.” It is essential that the museum personnel, management and funding parties understand that the appropriate deaccessioning process will require resources and that there are no free quick solutions. The survey showed the lack of contextual information to be both a reason for deaccessioning and an obstacle to it. *The ICOM Code of Ethics* calls for full understanding of the significance of an object. It is important for each museum to define what this means, with its own starting points in mind. Investigations, however, do not always lead to results and the significance of an object can change over time. We find it crucial to keep the extent of investigation in relation to available resources and to define what information is essential for the object in question. As a solution, the *Disposal Toolkit* (2008 & 2014) suggests assessing the risks of disposal or deaccessioning (ethical issues, negative publicity etc.), which we regard as an excellent idea.

Emphasised in the replies was concern over how museum audiences, future generations, colleagues, donors and their heirs will react to deaccessioning. We believe that up-to-date collections policies and deaccessioning processes are the tools for responding to these questions. They give us the arguments, and in this connection they help museums take the expert role in the management of collections and deaccessioning.
What did we learn?
We believe we succeeded well in our central goal of implementing and enhancing analytical professional discussion on deaccessioning. The concrete result of the project is the process framework. The framework mainly discusses the deaccessioning of physical museum objects and is adapted to the needs of museums of cultural history, but it can be equally applied to the needs of other types of museums and collections.

Replies to our survey and the experiences from our own case studies point to five themes in particular that should be taken into account when a museum assesses the realistic possibilities of deaccessioning. They are the museum’s collections management policy, existing agreements and legal considerations, the motives for deaccessioning, and decision-makers and resources. Internalising these principles and establishing processes within the museum organisation as a whole are preconditions for successful deaccessioning.

There is a difference between the ways in which cultural history museums and art museums deaccession objects. An item deaccessioned from a cultural-historical collection can be used, for example, for museum-educational purposes or as a prop in an exhibition. Parts or samples can be taken for conservation needs or material studies. Otherwise, the object is removed from the museum premises. Our discussions show that in art museums, pieces that can no longer be displayed because of their poor condition or for instance suspected forgery are often still kept in the collection. The destruction of a piece or other means of disposal are avoided, and the deaccessioned work or parts of it are often stored in the museum even after it has been decided to deaccession it and the destruction of works has been recorded as a possible method of disposal in the collections management policy.

We want to challenge art museums to consider why deaccessioned objects are kept in museums. What are the grounds for keeping works, and for whom or what are they kept?

In art museums, the deaccessioning cases that were regarded as most acceptable and most likely were those in which the artworks were assumed to have a short lifespan, for example because of their materials. Museums of cultural history are also increasingly required to consider the lifespan of objects. The experiences of keeping modern materials, rubber and plastics, have shown that it is necessary to accept the limits of an object’s lifespan also in museums of cultural history. There are things to be jointly learned in procedures and models for solutions.

Experiences of the sale of collection items in Finland
Attitudes to the ethical nature of various means of disposal vary in different countries. In Finland, a fairly common method of disposal is to destroy deaccessioned objects and to recycle them as material. The Disposal Toolkit publication, however, states that only hazardous objects should be removed by destroying them. An alternative is to sell items, which for the time being has been regarded in much more negative terms in Finland. The replies to our survey on disposal show, however, that Finnish museums have also begun to discuss whether the sale of an object would be a more ethical means of disposal in a situation where it has reached the end of its lifespan in a museum, but could still have other value for use with regard to its condition.

In our project, we discussed the sale of objects mainly from the perspective of museums of cultural history. In our case studies, the items on sale were mass-produced everyday objects,
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For the time being, there are no jointly accepted instructions for deaccessioning in the Finnish museums community, nor is there a body that would monitor the ethical nature of deaccessioning in general, and through sales from collections in particular. As there are no detailed nationally approved instructions, particular responsibility and

cars and tiled stoves, not unique works of art. In both cases, there were reasons of collections management policy and the use of storage space behind deaccessioning.

As far as we know, works of art have not been sold from the collections of Finnish art museums. Sale as a form of deaccessioning was an alien concept for the art museums participating in our project as well, for the very reason that they did not regard deaccessioning for reasons of collections management policy as timely measures for their own collections. Before engaging in sales, they should carefully consider the consequences from the perspective of the artists, the art field and the museum collection.

There is obviously need for discussion on the ethics of selling objects, elucidation of related contractual rights and the sharing of practical experiences of selling museums objects. In our project, we were not able to formulate a recommendation, nor did we have authorisation for it.

**Conclusion**

For the time being, there are no jointly accepted instructions for deaccessioning in the Finnish museums community, nor is there a body that would monitor the ethical nature of deaccessioning in general, and through sales from collections in particular. As there are no detailed nationally approved instructions, particular responsibility and

Fig. 3. Works of contemporary art are often doomed to disintegrate owing to the obsolescence of techniques or the incompatibility of materials. Jan-Erik Andersson’s (b. 1954) installation The Romantic Painter Caspar David Friedrich’s The Wreck of the Ship Called Hope 1821, in Ice-Cold Water (1986). The materials of the work consist of, at least, plywood, chipboard, steel tubing, chicken wire, rope, glass, artificial fur, wire, foam rubber, cotton fabric and acrylic paint. Photo: Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova Museum/Jari Nieminen 2015.
Deaccessioning and collections development in Finnish museums

The case studies carried out in the project:

Justifications for deaccessioning of tiled stoves with reference to collections management policy (The Helsinki City Museum)

Practical issues in emptying storage facilities (The Museum of Technology)

Participatory involvement of tram enthusiasts in a significance analysis of the tram collection (The Helsinki City Museum)

Assessment criteria in the deaccessioning process of utility textiles (The Historical Collections of the Tampere Museums)

The use of deaccessioned utility textiles in museum pedagogy (The Historical Collections of the Tampere Museums)

The joint evaluation of art by an art museum and a historical museum (The Historical Collections of the Tampere Museums and the Tampere Art Museum)

Donation terms as thresholds in deaccessioning (The Museum of Technology)

Modern materials and the lifespan concept of objects (The Historical Collections of the Tampere Museums)

The disposal and documentation of a concrete sculpture in public space (HAM – Helsinki Art Museum)

The effects of choices of material and lifespan on the deaccessioning process in the context of contemporary art (Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova)

Transfer to another museum as a method of disposal (The Museum of Technology)

The problems and assessed practices of selling motor vehicles from museum collections (The Historical Collections of the Tampere Museums)

Selling of tiled stoves (The Kuopio Museums)

careful consideration are required from museum professionals. Responsibility, however, should not be avoided. Although deaccessions are not necessary for developing all museum collections, this does not mean that deaccessioning policy, including the sale of objects, should not be addressed and developed. What, for example, should be done if a museum faces outside pressure to deaccession for economic reasons? The critical questions of decision-makers need to be answered, and museums must be able to present coherent arguments for their core operations in order to safeguard their collections.

Notes

1. In her recent doctoral dissertation, the art historian Nina Robbins (2016) discusses deaccessioning from Finnish art museums with particular reference to museum value.


4. For more discussion see Russell et al. 2009 and Versloot 2014.

Literature


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The doctoral dissertation in archaeology of Staffan Lundén at Gothenburg University analyzes and discusses the contexts of the so-called Benin objects. These are a variety of museum objects of which a number of famous bronzes are the most well-known. The objects originally came from present Nigeria but are for the most part currently kept in European museums and particularly in the British Museum in London. The objects were looted from Benin City by British armed forces in a punitive expedition in 1897. The research questions regard how the British Museum has used the objects over time, or, more precisely, how the museum has “made” and “makes” the objects in its public galleries, its published texts and in its general argumentation and self-understanding.

Wider issues that the dissertation manages to discuss through working with these questions are, first of all, the issues around repatriation. There have been demands for a long time from Nigeria for the repatriation of the Benin objects, while the British Museum has developed a counter argumentation for why it does not. The museum has claimed, furthermore, that the long-term benefits of keeping these objects provides a *key argument* for why it is not, generally, a good idea to repatriate museum objects. Needless to say, this situation makes it particularly interesting and meaningful to investigate the circumstances around the museum history of the Benin objects.

Secondly, through investigating these conditions, the dissertation manages to discuss wider issues of how the British Museum itself as an institution, as well as concepts such as “British”, “Edo” (the group of people who made and first owned the Benin objects), “Western” and “African” are filled with cultural meaning.

The dissertation consists of thirteen chapters, a foreword and a bibliography. It is written in English and the text parts comprise 516 pages. It is thus a voluminous work when it comes to text, while it contains comparatively few images, 36 to be precise and mostly photographs. The book has been given an excellent layout which, combined with an easy flowing language, has resulted in a very comprehensible content, though the work is not so easy to navigate due to a lack of sub-headings below chapter level.

The methods applied can be described as discourse-analytical and constructivist. Lundén works his way through literature and exhibitions, analysing what is said and interpreting what meaning is created.

A foreword introduces the reader to the field of study. Lundén starts with an elegant example of the concept of “trophy”. The British Museum is using the term about a Benin bronze head on exhibit, which, in Lundén’s perspective, displays an unintended second dimension of meaning. The intention is to describe how the head was used before 1897, but the object
Chapter 2 sketches the starting points for the following investigations and concerns the themes of modernity, museums, exhibitions and material objects. The main framework is to understand the phenomenon “museum” and its relations to and impact on society. Lundén’s perspectives are, most importantly, based on works by Donna Haraway, Michel Foucault and Edward Said. The chapter discusses what museums are and their history as institutions. A relatively large space is given to a long discussion of the gradual rise of modernity, where the reader is introduced to the thinking of David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Georges Cuvier and Carl von Linné, as well as to the nature of racial science during the 19th century. Lundén argues that there has been a dominant Western intellectual culture around white, male influence since at least the 16th century. But there were also less powerful, “deviant”, traditions which continuously challenged it.

The main point of the dissertation is the possibility to turn the perspective on its head and use museum objects not just to tell stories and history about others, which was more or less what was generally done throughout the 20th century, but to use them also to investigate both others and us, in this case the British Museum, Britishness, Westernness, as well as the cultural making of and relations between perceived others and us.

A first, introductory chapter provides a general background about the 1897 military expedition and how the Benin objects have been and are used by the British Museum. It introduces the main subject of the dissertation: how the museum in its general use and ways of writing about and staging these objects is “making” them and in a wider sense British and Edo ethnicities as well. The chapter also contains a discussion of the central concept of representation and the motivation for the choice of subject for the study. This choice was guided by the role and influence of the British Museum, as it keeps the most numerous collection of Benin objects. It was also guided by that the museum, or at least some former directors, considered the keeping and use over time of the Benin objects at the museum a key argument for the continued possession of contested museum objects in general. Directors have also argued for a role of the British Museum as a universal Enlightenment museum.

Chapter 2 also describes the literature on Benin objects and the questions about the ownership of cultural objects in general. Regarding the literature on Benin
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objects, the most important issue to Lundén is that most of it locates these objects in time before 1897 and ends their stories there, while Lundén wants to discuss their history as a whole and in particular their reception in the Western world as museum objects. The chapter also introduces an interesting discussion about the museum as institution as similar to an “imagined community” in the sense of Benedict Anderson. Chapter 4 is a relation of the events during the Edo–British war of 1897 and of what the looting of Benin City looked like. The narrative is based on original sources from the time. The events in the punitive expedition are closely described as expressions of the strongly hierarchic ideology of Western people involved and the constructions of race and masculinity underpinning the expedition as a whole.

Chapter 5 is about how the Benin objects have been named, categorized and valued in different contexts since 1897. This is the first major analytical chapter and it demonstrates how the objects do not have any inner essence to be discovered but how they, instead, have been categorized and valued quite differently over time and in various circumstances. The chapter starts by contrasting how British Museum director Neil MacGregor and the Oba of Benin Omo N’Oba Erediauwa have spoken about the Benin objects in distinct contemporary situations. They did so very differently, each in a very specific way. The chapter discusses the objects in the context of the British military expedition and how plunder was part of imperialistic warfare. Not the least, it is interesting to note how the contexts of the objects were not documented by the conquerors; they seem to have been regarded fully as objects of economic value, not as bearers of knowledge. The volume, variety and heterogeneity of objects are also elucidated, their then role in Edo society before 1897 and finally their dispersal in 1897 and their later museum histories. The chapter is a fine illustration of the overwhelming richness of stories and meanings of the Benin objects and also of the obvious changes over time in how they have been perceived and valued. In particular an early shift from “war booty” to “fine art” is strikingly related. The objects had, literally, to be cleaned of blood in order to be born again as “masterpieces” in a museum. In later years, they have become contested cultural objects. An earlier Oba of Benin raised a million signatures in 1991 for demanding repatriation.

A short sixth chapter is about the Ife objects. These are also from present Nigeria and of the same kinds as some of those from Benin. They were found in the early 20th century but not plundered and they provide a complement and comparative case to the Benin objects.

Chapters 7 and 8 relate and discuss the two main lines of argumentation of the British Museum for the keeping of the Benin objects. The first is a series of points concerning the founding of the museum. These arguments hold that it is a universal museum working for the good of all humanity and this reasoning has got a clear expression from the 1980s onwards in books and articles by the directors. The museum was supposedly founded as a universal museum, and the keeping of objects such as the Parthenon sculptures and the Benin objects has been seen as for the best of humanity. The weakness of this universalism is that it comes out as quite particular and situated when examined closer by Lundén. The founding documents of the museum say little or nothing about tolerance, while national glory is mentioned. Lundén finds the first real ties between the museum and the Enlightenment not in its period of foundation
but in its argumentation in the early 21st century.

The second line of argumentation concerns the history of the museum. In this case, Lundén’s investigation shows that instead of tolerance and the equal value of all people, the history of the museum has been more about the creation and maintenance of hierarchies between peoples and about British national pride. Some cultures and peoples have obviously been valued higher than others, and in some periods in the past this was supported by arguments from racial science. These points are supported by Lundén’s examination of older guide books and publications.

Chapter 9 is the largest and discusses the Western “discovery” of the fact that the Benin objects and in particular the artistically amazing cast bronzes were actually indigenous, that is made in Benin and not by or directly inspired by people from Europe. Concerning this issue there is also a long and manifold history. The British Museum has claimed that researchers at the museum were early on arguing for the African origins of the objects and that this reception also had an important influence on the debunking of prejudicial Western images of Africa. In short, Lundén demonstrates these claims to be weak. Examples show, instead, how curators at the British Museum were, in a number of cases, rather creating and maintaining prejudicial images than revealing them.

The discovery of “African” art in the Western world through the reception of the Benin objects, or, to be more precise, how this has been claimed but was not really the case, is the theme of chapter 10. Also on this point arguments have been put forward by the British Museum claiming not the least that the presence of the objects in its galleries has had an important influence. Also here, the close examination of Lundén suggests something different and no direct connection seems to exist on this point. Chapter 11, the last extensive chapter, is an investigation of how the Benin objects are presently displayed in the British Museum and of the meaning created there. Lundén examines the exhibition, mainly focusing texts and some key objects. The exhibition has an aesthetic approach and the chosen objects seem also to correspond primarily to aesthetic ideals. The galleries say little (though some) about the histories of the objects after 1897. Most importantly, Lundén demonstrates how the Edo, in the galleries, are connected much more to traditions and myths than is the Western world, which is rather associated with progress and innovation.

Chapter 12 discusses alternative museum representations. Lundén interestingly points to the exhibition Världen i kappsäcken at the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm for alternative strategies of representation. This exhibition also looks closely at Western travelers and collectors and with a wider range of perspectives than the British Museum galleries. Lundén connects these differences to how the two museums look differently at the question of repatriation. He argues that without a dogmatic approach to keeping, the possibilities for exhibiting different perspectives are less limited.

The last text chapter, number 13, is supposed to summarize the main results of the investigations in the book. It does so to a certain extent but also widens the discussion. The chapter discusses how the British Museum is creating its own history and in particular the claimed connections to the Enlightenment. The museum makes its history as nations make theirs, with the help of invented traditions. The chapter summarizes the findings concerning the argumentation
of the museum about its founding and about its relation to tolerance. The Benin objects are primarily regarded, in the museum, as Edo-objects, not as the Edo–British hybrid objects that they most reasonably should be seen as. Lundén concludes that a range of arguments put forward by representatives of the British Museum about the foresightedness of its earlier curators, about the importance of and its role in the Western reception of the Benin objects as art made in Africa, and about the founding and history of the museum, cannot be validated when closely examined.

Lundén also discusses how the conviction not to return objects influences how the museum understands and presents itself and its history. It seems paradoxical that the museum claims that its impartiality is a reason for not returning anything when it now looks like it is rather this position that leads to a selective and incomplete history being written and presented.

To summarize, the doctoral dissertation Displaying Loot is a rich academic work when it comes to both its range of contents and its wealth of ideas. The subject and the material studied are very well chosen. Through focusing on the relatively comprehensive material from Benin and on how it has been treated in museums it becomes possible for Lundén to discuss several wider and supremely relevant issues about museums and their making of history.

The reader, and especially someone wanting to grasp only a part of the contents or the main conclusions, may find the work difficult to navigate. In a classical academic structure research questions are formulated, methods and materials described, then the investigations are performed and finally the findings summarized and discussed. Lundén rather describes a field of study at the start and then presents a series of investigations. Though there is certainly an introduction in the beginning and a summing up in the end, many questions, methods and materials are gradually introduced and answers appear along the way. This partial lack of structure in combination with the absence of sub-headings and an index create some difficulties. Unfortunately, it may also make the work more open for questioning. The argumentation would have been stronger if more structured and concentrated.

As a museum study, the starting point of the work is to turn the reader’s eye towards the museum itself and what it presents. This is, for the most part, well done. In some respects the study could have gone further, for example regarding the agency of objects. Lundén concerns himself mostly with how objects have been selected, handled and framed by texts, while many current museum studies put more emphasis on the actorship of objects themselves. The historical parts are lacking references to some major museum works, for example those by Tony Bennett. Another critical point is that, in my opinion, the dissertation takes on too dichotomistic views on Us and Them, British and Edo, the West and the Rest. The postcolonial perspective, here mainly inspired by Edward Said, has been further developed by theorists such as Homi Bhabha, who have complicated earlier perspectives.

In the end, and despite some critical points, I find the dissertation a valuable work. Most of Lundén’s arguments about how the British Museum constructs a selective history of itself and about how it has managed the Benin objects in the long term seem to me to be validated by the material presented. These arguments should have a high degree of relevance for and impact on ongoing debates about repatriation in general, since the case of the Benin objects
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has been put forward as something of a key argument in this discussion. The dissertation also demonstrates the high relevance for current issues of various kinds of closer studies of the 19th and 20th century history of museums. Contemporary arguments are often based on reasoning about such histories, which may, however, look quite different when scrutinized by new research.

As a whole, Displaying Loot is a rich new study in the museum field. It will, hopefully, be a work that lives long, sparks further debates and has a lasting influence in fields such as museology, archaeology and critical heritage studies.

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Denna doktorsavhandling i museologi tar sig an den mångfacetterade och aktuella frågan om samlingshantering och gallring i museisamlingar, i detta fall konstmuseer i Finland. Ett av syftena har varit att med denna vetenskapliga undersökning starta en samlingsorienterad diskussion om gallring i samlingar på konstmuseer, vilket kräver en museologisk bedömning av museernas värdegrunder (assessment values) för att lyckas, konstaterar författaren. Nina Robbins undersöker således värdegrunder och värdenätverk i anknytning till gallring, hur en värdegrund påverkar samlingshanteringen och hur de professionella förhåller sig till gallring. Hon frågar också huruvida dessa värden är gemensamma för (de flesta) konstmuseer. Avsikten är att hennes forskningsresultat ska kunna utnyttjas/tillämpas vid planeringen av kommande gallring.

I museerna har det blivit allt vanligare att göra samlingspolitiska ställningstaganden och program och att utveckla elektroniska samlingsförvaltningssystem där objektens status också framgår. Även gallringsprogram formuleras i allt fler museer idag, eftersom man insett att det inte är ett hållbart alternativ för framtiden att vare sig samla fler eller fler föremål eller ens behålla alla dem man har i sina överfulla magasin. Professorn i museologi Janne Vilkuna har konstaterat att ”objektbulimi” bör förhindras (s. 29), dvs. man får inte samla in mer än man avyttrar. Det finns också något man kallar ”proaktiv gallring”, vilket betyder att man redan i insamlingsskedet funderar på föremålets livscykel och livslängd samt plats och roll i samlingarna.

Robbins går grundligt tillväga: förutom en viktig teoretisk del med museologiska infallsvinklar behandlas här samlingsars och insamlingens historia i Europa och gallring som en principiell del av samlingshantering, innan hon kommer till själva den omfattande undersökningen av gallringar på finska konstmuseer. Den museologiska infallsvinkeln redogörs för i ett förtälat avsnitt som går igenom museologisk teori och litteratur, relevant för just denna undersökning. Mest verk om just gallringsfrågor har publicerats i Storbritannien och USA (s. 28). Robbins uppfattar museologin som en ”vetenskaplig bro som förenar teori och praktik” och citerar också den kroatiske museolo-
gen Tomislav Sola som sagt att "the meaning of museums is not to study the past, but how we relate to it" (s. 25). Detsamma kunde man säga om museologin – ämnet handlar om hur vi förhåller oss till museer, insamling, magasinering, gallring, utställningar etc.

Som huvudverktyg på vägen nyttjar Robbins två teoretiska fält: det ena omfattar "institutionell konstteori" och det andra "tyst kunskap" (innefattande också praktisk kunskap). På 1970-talet lanserade Georges Dickies sin institutionella konstteori, som gjorde upp med en tidigare idealistisk syn på betydelsen av den "estetiska blicken" och konstens egenvärde, och förde som bedömningsgrund också in omvärldsanalys; all konst skulle betraktas i sitt sociala och kulturella sammanhang. Han anamnade begreppet "konstvärld" (artworld) som amerikanen Arthur Danton myntat 1964: "To see something as art requires something the eye cannot decry – an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art; an artworld" (s. 61). Det är just konstvärlden, där en mängd aktörer agerar från en gemensam grund, som ger ett föremål dess status av konstverk. Kärnan, the essential core, består av tre parter: konstnärerna, presentatörerna (t.ex. gallerister, museer) och åskådarna, som ska förstå det de ser. Först därefter kommer kritikerna, historikerna och filosoferna med sitt (s. 59ff.). Alla dessa roller är "institutionaliserade" (befästa av och i kulturen/samhället) och alla vet sin egen plats och roll i systemet. Konstvärlden är en "etablerad praktik": "when I call an artworld an institution I am saying that it is an established practice (not an established society or corporation)" (s. 62).


Enligt den institutionella konsteorin upprätthålls den inom gemenskapen rådande värdegrunden således av intern kommunikation, av gemenskapens egen historia samt av vissa yttre faktorer (som t.ex. konstvärlden utanför museet). Gemenskapens medlemmar utför ständiga värderingar av företeelser och föremål och grupperar dem i kategorier på en värdeskala från värdelösa till värdefulla. I värdegemenskapen föds olika "värdepreferenser", som filosofen Arto Haapala konstaterar (s. 67).

Robbins delar upp museernas värdegrunder i tre grova kategorier: immateriella, materiella och instrumentella (s. 67). Det immateriella värde, är oegennyttigt och filosofiskt till sin natur (t.ex. estetik). De materiella värdena är knutna direkt till föremålets materiella egenskaper, samt funktion, användbarhet och funktionsduglighet. De immateriella i sin tur ser objektet som medel för att uppnå något mål, t.ex. samhällelig status, höjning av folkets bildningsnivå och liknande. I konstvärlden och museerna siktar en del värden på framtiden, andra är förankrade här och nu (t.ex. "chockvärde"). Sist men inte minst är det en fråga om pengar. Även om museerna inte vill värdera sina samlingar ekonomiskt, kvarstår faktum att pengar hela tiden spelar roll: bara att uppskatta beloppen för inköp, magasinering och konservering utgör ju en sådan värdering. Kneipig blir det sedan när man räknar in värdegrundernas förändringar över tid. Sådant som vid en viss tidpunkt togs in i samlingen skulle kan-
ske aldrig ha tagits in trettio år senare, och vice versa. Hur ska man veta vad ett konstverk är värt om hundra eller tvåhundra år?

Sedan har vi då termen *connoisseur* som dök upp i Frankrike på 1600-talet (s. 73), och som bottenade i Roger de Piles (1635–1709) bedömningsmetoder. Han hade en 18-gradig skala som börjar med komposition, teckningsskicklighet, färg, form etc. Den som värderar har skolats in i detta sätt att tänka. Man blir en sakkunnig som besitter en skolad ”god smak” och kändedom om konstens historia och teori.


En av Robbins huvudpoängar är att lyfta fram just den tysta kunskapen då det gäller gallring på museer. Tyst kunskap ackumuleras av erfarenheter och utbildning och utgör ett slags ”kognitiv färdighet” i form av föreställningar, sinnebilder och olika slags ”mentala modeller” enligt vilka man agerar (s. 145). Mycket av den tysta kunskapen i det här fallet har samband med just ”konstvärlden” med allt vad det innebär (se ovan). Det är oftast också ”tysta” överenskommelser, kommunicerade inom ramen för den sakkunskap som de museianställda besitter, som styr värdering av föremål/konstverk och huruvida dessa ska/kan gallras eller inte. Det är den tysta kunskapen, i det här fallet den tysta värdegrunden, som också gör gallring så svår och motbjudande och utgör en kraftig, osynlig broms så fort någonting ska gallras, vilket avhandlingens resultat också visar. Det kräver för mycket utrymme att här redogöra noggrannare för den tysta kunskapens teori, men det är uppenbart relevant och träffsäkert att tillämpa den just i denna undersökning.

Så till själva undersökningen, som utgör merparten av avhandlingen. Den påbörjades våren 2012 då 50 frågor, som krävde rejält med tid att besvara, skickades ut till 56 finska konstmuseer, både små och stora. 37 museer svarade, vilket gör 66 %. Frågorna var grupperade i tre större block, av vilka det första handlade om insamling/inköp, det andra om gallring och de tredje om värdegrunder i förhållande till samlingarna. Frågorna i det andra blocket, om gallring, var rätt långt uppbyggda i enlighet med det brittiska Museum Associations välkända *Disposal Tool Kit*. Intressant är att då frågan ställdes om konstverk som aldrig visas eller är marginaliserade i samlingen var svaren till en stor del överensstämmande med de motiv som ges som grund för gallring också i *Tool Kit*: verkets dåliga konstnärliga kvalitet, dåligt skick, ej relevant för museets profil, upphovsmans okänd och vidare punkterna brist på utställningsrum eller förbud att visas. Till saken hör att många av dessa punkter också kan hänföras till den ”institutionella” tysta kunskapens område.

Då museerna tillfrågades huruvida de kan tänka sig att gallra, svarede 27 ja, det vill säga 73 % (s. 166). De ombads också att fritt beskriva situationer då de kunde tänka sig att göra sig av med föremål. Här räknades upp (förutom ovannämnda skäl) sådana motiv som okatalo-

Det flesta objekt i samlingarna kunde tänkas vara svåra att gallra för att de förmodligen kunde hänföras till något av de fem värden som museerna ansåg vara viktigast: konstvärde, estetiskt värde, värde knuten till ort eller plats, museivärde och forskningsvärde (s. 178). Det man värderade lägst var sådant som politiskt värde, institutionellt värde, nyhetsvärde, socialt värde och minnesvärde. Dessa värderingar var mycket samstämmiga i alla undersökningens museer, vilket återigen vittnar om det starka inflytandet från professionalismens ”konstvärld” och en gemensam ”tyst” kunskap.

Varför är det då så svårt att göra sig av med museiföremål? Robbins undersökning tar upp också sådant som oreda i samlingarna – föremål kan vara registrerade men ändå sakna inventarienummer på objektet, eller tvärtom, en fastsatt nummerlapp kan ha fallit av eller objektet kan ha noterats som gallrat men finns ännu kvar i samlingarna. En större och viktigare faktor är att det ifråga om gallring borde råda full konsensus t.ex. om ett konstverks kvalitet och värde, vilket det självklart ingalunda alltid gör, samt rädsla att begå något irreversibelt fel. Historien har också visat att ett stegvist avlägsnande av objekt är den minst smärtsamma vägen; att avregistrera föremålet men inte göra sig av med det utan placera det utanför själva magasinet, t.ex. på en vind. Decennier senare har verken i vissa fall återfått ett värde och plockats in i samlingarna igen. Men detta är ändå inte heller ett hållbart sätt att förhålla sig till gallring idag. Robbins konstaterar att samma rädsla för att göra fel kan finnas i samband med inköp av konstverk till samlingarna. Det bör alltid finnas en dynamik mellan inköp och utgallring. Robbins citerar museologen Simon Knell som avrundar det hela: ”Material can flow in, but it can also flow out. It is not two processes, but a single dynamic act of balance” (s. 102).

Gallringsfrågan är viktig. Att få igång mer forskning om samlingar och gallring är helt centrat. Den här avhandlingen, trots att den är på finska, är en bra start i de nordiska länderna, där gallring så vitt jag vet inte just beforskats.

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Remediering, litteratur som film og maleri som fotografi

Åtte videoinstallasjoner og syttifem av Munchs malerier, litografer og tresnitt fyller alle Munchmuseets utstillingsflater spredt over syp rom. Veggene har en lys grå farge og rommene er inn delt i syp temaer, henholdsvis "Filmatiske virkemidler og ensomhet", "Fostring og dannelse", "Fantasier", "Ensomhet", "Opprør", "På dypt" og "Slutt". Tematikken i det første rommet inviterer besøkende til å se på Munchs malerier som fotografer, som stillbilder og dermed hendelser fanget i øyeblikk som egentlig er i bevegelse og på vei ut av bildeflaten. Her er det ingen videoinstallasjoner og for besøkende kan rommet fungere som en introduksjon til hvordan vi skal se Munchs malerier i møte
Fig. 1. Bilde fra utstillingens tredje rom "Fantasier". Foto: Ove Kvavik, 2017, Munchmuseet.
oppvokst i et vestlig kapitalistisk samfunn lever med en forventning om å ha en konstant lykkefølelse som man prøver å opprettholde ved å kjøpe ting. Kjøpegleden er kortvarig og fører til et større forbruk hvor man bruker penger over evne og havner i gjeld. Flaubert skrev romanen som en kommentar til datidens samfunn, mens Bal og Gamaker har valgt å plassere historien om Emma i vår egen samtid. At Madame M ikke er omgjort til et kostymedrama fra 1800-tallet gjør Flauberts kritikk av datidens kapitalistiske fremmedgjøring relevant i dag.


**En ny fortolkningssamme**

Fortellingen om Emma i videoinstallasjonene gir Munchs arbeider en ny konteks. Bal har valgt ut maleriene etter sentrale temaer i videoinstallasjonene, det er også direkte sammenlignbare koplinger mellom billedmotivene og filmscenene. Monteringen av utstillingen er gjort slik at flere av verkene snakker til hverandre, for eksempel er Emmas bryllupsscene og maleriet Bohemens bryllup (fig. 3) plassert på motstående vegger i samme rom.


I utstillingens tittel er det lett å associere

**Flaubert+Munch**

Som enda et forslag kunne utstillingen i forlengelse av de forrige årenes tematiske utstillinger fått navnet Flaubert+Munch. Bal fører sammen maler og forfatter i en felles tematikk om ensomhet. Mediebruken og hvordan verkene står i forhold til hverandre gjør at de snakker sammen. Vi ser klare og subtile sam-

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*Fig. 3. Bohemens bryllup, maleri av Edvard Munch fra 1925–1926. Foto: Ove Kvavik, Munchmuseet.*
mehenger mellom Emma og Edvard, som åpner opp for å stille nye spørsmål til Munchs motiv og som menneske, men også til Emma. Filmen Madame M gjenintroduserer romanen Madame Bovary, eller Emma, i en moderne drakt og gir den klassiske romen fra midten av 1800-tallet aktualitet for et nytt publikum. Om fortellingen vekker mer interesse etter at utstillingsbesøket er over, finner man romanen som en del av museumsbutikkens sortiment.


**Litteratur**


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Det fremgår at det særregent kunstneriske er de problemstillinger som er knyttet til kunstens form og kunstens tekniske nivå. Ferland krever at verket både i sin form og sin tekniske utførelse må være på høyde med sin tid for å være av betydning også i dag. I tillegg må verket ha en relevans for vår kunstforståelse slik den blir formulert i dag. Kunstmuseet skiller seg gjennom disse kravene til verket fra det kulturhistoriske museum og arkivet. Gjenstander som inngår i slike typer av institusjoner kan være kunst, men det er ikke et ubetinget krav for at de binner seg der. At verket er kunst inngår ikke som del av disse institusjonenes essens.

Ferland knytter sin vesensbestemmelse av museet til en historisk begrunnet bestemmelse av institusjonen ut fra forestillingen om museet som musenes tempel. I dag er det ikke noe gudommelig som utfolder seg i tempelet, men en sekulær avledning av det gudommelige i form av hva Ferland betegner som ”det andet” eller ”det mulig utopiske”. Museets potensial for å formulere en overskridelse av det foreliggende og med det øve en kritisk refleksjon, blir forløst av at museets opprinnelige rolle som et sted for noe gudommelig og er en frukt av en forestilling om sammenheng mellom det gudommelige og det skapende. I et sekularisert samfunn erstatte kunstneren og det skapende individ forestillingen om Gud som opphav til Skaperverket.

Samtidsorienteringen gir som konsekvens at kunstverket som en gjenstand for erkjennelse – også av hva som måtte knytte seg til verket av historie – blir satt i sammenheng med en
forestilling om relevans for vår aktuelle erkjennelse av kunst. For fortsatt å være kunstverk og ikke f.eks. et kulturhistorisk objekt eller et dokument som primært er bærer av informasjon om dette og hint i fortiden, må verket ha erkjennelsesverdi, i kraft av sin kunstneriske form og teknikk, for dagen i dag. Det er en verdi, som ifølge forfatteren, avdekkes gjennom forskning på det enkelte verket og verkets relevante relasjoner. Vi får utgå fra at til de relevante relasjoner hører blant annet de sosiale praksiser og funksjoner, som for eksempel rollen som budbærer av symbolsystemer, som er knyttet til kunst. På dette punkt kunne Ferland med fordel ha utdypet sitt essay.

Ferland tar avstand fra en forestilling om at et kunstverk kan være identisk med noe allerede foreliggende, eller noe som ikke går ut over en konvensjon. I så måte hviler han på den kanske mest utbredte konvensjon i moderniteten, nemlig at for å være et kunstverk må det bringe noe originalt og nyskapende. Han underskriver også på den konvensjon at originalitet knyttes til det subjektive bidrag. Et unikt subjektivt bidrag blir en forutsetning for å fremstille nyskapende kunst og peker på opphavsmannen som en etterkommende av en skapende Gud. Ferland stiller også som et krav til at det ikke bare representerer noe annerledes, men også noe bedre enn det allerede foreliggende. Det at det er noe "bedre" ligger i at det tar opp i seg en kritisk refleksjon over det allerede foreliggende og dermed også er en kritikk som åpner opp for å løfte forståelsen til et høyere og bedre nivå.

Hva ligger så i det å begripe verket som et enkeltverk, belyst gjennom sine relevante relasjoner? Det enkelte kunstverket hevdes å være noe unikt og opplevelsen av verket munner ut i en erkjennelse som er ulik all annen erkjennelse og kan kun skje gjennom kunstverket. Enkeltverket kan settes opp mot, men aldri reduseres til å være identisk med gruppen av verker det settes opp mot. Enkeltverket kan heller aldri være identisk med samlingen det ingår i. Forskningen på kunstverket kan altså ikke begrense seg til å peke på likheter mellom grupper av verker eller et slektskap med alle andre verker i en kunstsamling, bortsett fra i ett henseende: Alle verkene er kunstverker og oppfyller vesensbestemmelsen av hva som er et kunstverk.

Forskningen gir seg utslag i utsagn om kunstverkene, altså en transformasjon fra det å se bilder til det å skrive og lese om bilder. Av disse ulike typer av utsagn, er det noen som ut fra Ferlands essay å dømme har et fortrinn. Det dreier seg om de utsagn som er knyttet til kunstverk som kjennetegnes av en refleksjon over seg selv som kunst. Den selvrefleksjon som kommer til uttrykk i verket utgjør en kritisk dimensjon som blir forløst av de utsagn forskeren kommer med, som poengterer forskjellen mellom dette ene verk og de øvrige verkene. Jeg oppfatter det slik at når Ferland krever av forskeren i museet, at hun er "lojal" overfor kunstverket, ligger i dette nettopp en vilje fra forskerens side til å forløse det kritiske potensial i verket. Kritisk refleksjon inngår som del av hva som bør være vesensbestemende for kunstmuseet av i dag.

Vekten på at kunst skal ha et aspekt av nyskapelse og relevans i dag og at forskningen på kunst har en spesiell skyldighet overfor kravet om å gjøre den relevant for et nåtidig publikum også der den er historisk, har i Danmark en forankring i en museumslov, som fremhever disse punktene. Dette er punkter som utgjør det vesentlige grunnlag for legitimering av kunstmuseet ut fra det perspektiv på museet Ferland legger an. Det samme kravet om forskning har vi for eksempel ikke i Norge, og det har åpenbare konsekvenser for hvordan norske kunstmuseer prioriterer.
Siden begrepet om kunst er integrert i begrepet om kunstmuseet og Ferland setter estetikken i førersetet når museet skal vesensbestemmes og hevder at tenkningen om den estetiske erfaringen bør være dialektisk og selvkritisk, bør det resultere i et begrep om forskningen som innebærer at den primært har en nyskapende karakter. Kunstmuseets faglige virksomhet bør i tråd med dette være eksperimentell og basere seg på prøving og feiling og slett ikke primært registrere den foreliggende kunstverdi.

Mye av det arbeid som blir gjort i museene er knyttet til registreringer og beskrivelser av materialet og bfinner seg på et forskningsforberedende stadium. Mange av de produkter, i form av kataloger og annet skriftlig materiale, som utarbeides i forbindelse med utstillinger, bfinner seg gjerne i et mellomstadium mellom populærvitenskap, kunstkritikk og forskningsartikkel, noe det vel er berettiget å hevde gjelder det meste av hva som publiseres i forbindelse med kunst. Følger vi Ferlands resonnement og vektkjennelse av kritikk som er knyttet til den som sosial praksis, symbolisk form eller problemstilling knyttet til relasjoner til kjønn, identitet, geografi plassering og proveniens.

Det kan også etterlyses at forfatteren drøfter spørsmålet om veien inn i kunstmuseet fra atelieret og de vurderinger som ligger til grunn. Ferlands forståelse av et kunstmuseum av i dag, hviler på en kunstforståelse som ikke tar hensyn verken til dimensjoner ved billedkunsten som er knyttet til den som sosial praksis, symbolsk form eller problemstilling knyttet til relasjoner til kjønn, identitet, geografi plassering og proveniens.

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Mer enn jeg oppfatter denne boken som et fasitsvar på spørsmålet den stiller, oppfatter jeg essayet som et bud på et svar. Et svar som har sine store begrensninger i at forfatteren i liten grad trekker inn annen litteratur eksplisitt, verken den etter hvert omfattende forskning på nær sagt alle aspekter av museet, eller filosofisk og estetisk litteratur som kunne vært av relevans. Det er kanske å stille et krav som faller på siden av denne bokens hovedanliggende. Det sympatiske med Ferlands essay er at det ikke er påståelig, men opererer med en forståelse av at begreper bør ha en åpen karakter og er plastiske. Det fremgår av teksten at Ferland oppfatter kunstmuseet som et historisk fенomen som ikke foreligger en gang for alle, som en avsluttet fortelling, men er noe vi kommer til forståelse av gjennom det perspektiv og den optikk vi anlegger på fortiden.

For oss som har arbeidet i museer med både innsamling og det å forme utstillinger, er det en erfaring at det enkelte verket kanskje ikke kan settes som omdreiningspunktet for en bestemmelse av kunstmuseets ontologi, men nettopp samlingen av verker og den såregne profil dette skaper for det individuelle museum. Museets identitet er sjelden knyttet til enkeltverk, men til grupperinger av verk og til sammenstillingen av dem. Grupperinger av verk og sammenstillingen av dem, er i seg selv en skapende innsats, og det er ikke gitt at det er kunstnerens subjekt som er det sentrale i dannelsen av det enkelte museums identitet og værensbestemmelse, men sammenstillingen av verkerne innenfor rammen samlingen representerer.


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