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# The Transcultural Presentation - A presentation of "foreign" cultures<sup>1</sup>

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## *The transcultural presentation – A presentation of "foreign" cultures*

The work explores how museum can present Other's cultures and their objects, and tries to find out what are purposes and goals of this type of the museum presentation. Also, the work focuses on how museum communicates with members of different cultures regarding intercultural and social relations. A meaning of the term „transcultural presentation“ refers to a type of a museum presentation which aims to provide and translate various complex aspects of particular cultures which are considerably dissimilar to culture of the local audience. The paper use a term „Other's cultures“ or „different cultures“ instead of words like „foreign“ or „alien“ which people may perceive as something hostile or dangerous in association with unknown. The goal of the work is to find out what are purposes and goals of the transcultural presentation, its meaning and mission, methods of presentation and interpretation Other's cultures and possible issues with transcultural presentation. The paper also tries to map out attempts and methods of transcultural presentation in different museums.

Keywords: museum presentation, multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, transculturation, globalism, cultural diversity, Otherness, ethnic minorities, decolonisation.

Nowadays our society more and more meets with different and unfamiliar phenomena of various cultures. Everyday reality of current society is quite multicultural, it consists of many different elements from various cultures. In global society is hard to say that our perception of reality is defined by homogenous nationalistic terms without any "foreign" components. Even from historical perspective we can observe that even „pure“ national cultures have been developing in interaction with another cultures and shares many ideas and cultural concepts with them. People today experience different cultures by eating "foreign" cuisines, watching and reading content of "foreign" authors, and by meeting people from all the world not only in their countries, but also on the social medias. From this perspective, an identity of each civilian and entire society is often not represented by one nation, but rather it is transcultural, which can combine different cultural ideas and values based on personal life experiences of each individual. Museum,

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<sup>1</sup> Specifický výzkum MUNI/A/1329/2022 "Muzejní prezentace II - moderní přístupy a trendy v muzejní prezentaci".

as a social institution, has to react on such social trend in order to reflect current multicultural society and provide them knowledge and space in order to bridge members of different cultures and build an intercultural dialogue between them. Such attitude also could be beneficial from educational perspective, since society would be able to use universal knowledge from the entire world which could widen our framework and perspective on different sciences. The work will try to answer questions regarding this problematic.

## Historical context of the transcultural presentation

Before we start to think about methods of presenting foreign objects and communicating them to the public, we need to go back in time. In order to understand a context of museum's approach towards various cultures in different periods of history, so we can figure out what we could do in our current times and in the near future.

### 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries

During colonial period museum served as an institution which had to reflect successes of imperial powers and show supremacy of the European world. The goal of museums was to convince the society that European civilisation is more advanced thanks to its technical and industrial achievements. Object of Others on the contrary had to reflect underdevelopment and lack of innovations. Knowledge of non-European cultures were also gathered in order to prove a contemporary interpretation of human evolution theory where European race considered as a higher level of evolution, when on the other hand Other's cultures stood on a lower stage.<sup>2</sup> A consequence of such museum communication was public belief that they are representatives of the superior and more intelligent culture. This belief also shaped a relationship between European and Others where non-Europeans were treated more like primitive exotic beings. Museum also aimed to define what is our "own" which is associated with all good and known, and what is "foreign" which arouses people's curiosity, but simultaneously evokes feeling of prejudice and antipathy because did not meet European ideas of culture and refinement.<sup>3</sup> Museum was carrying out this task by creating a stereotypical image of Others through objects which were obtained from colonial expeditions.

Even though Europeans mutually interacted with Others and gained a lot of knowledge about them, a relationship between "us" and "them" was depicted in accordance with nationalistic rhetoric and with effort to find what makes our own culture more unique and better in contrast to cultures of Others.<sup>4</sup> Thus, in this period of history there were not major attempts to build bridges between cultures and museum's presentation did not aim to establish their stronger integration and mutual understanding.

Furthermore, the communication of the museum at this time was influenced by

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<sup>2</sup> DOLZ, Silvia. The Foreign in the Familiar, or The Other in the Own: Africa and Images of the Other in the Dresden State Art Collection. In: *Boletín de Arte*, 2017, vol. 38, p. 26. ISSN 02118483.

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem, p. 28.

the idea of acculturation, the basis of which was that European civilization is the one that “cultivates” and “civilises” others. In other words, other cultures are able to achieve greater progress only through interaction with Europe and the subsequent adoption of Western culture according to this idea. As a result, the museum had to represent European culture as the one that bestows all others with its intelligence and technical innovations. Colonial expansions thus were legitimised as a certain exercise of this idea. Another aspect of the idea of acculturation is that museum plays a role of an authority which decides what society should consider as its cultural ideals and what values it should respect.

As Ien Ang states: “In the past, when entering the museum, the people were supposed to leave their lives, habits and interests - that is to say, their own cultures and identities - behind, outside the refined and civilizing space of the museum.”<sup>5</sup> Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris and Carl Grodach even claim that the museum at that time performed the function of a temple that verified and confirmed bourgeois and nationalistic values, which it presented as an objective reality that everyone should adopt. They also emphasize that on the one hand the museum represented and applied the interests of a certain social group or race, but on the other hand it excluded other segments of society and other cultures by not representing them and not giving them chance to tell their own interpretation of the same story.<sup>6</sup>

If we look for examples of how overseas objects were presented with a more objective approach and fair representation of Other’s cultures, one of them could be the Chinese Museum founded by Nathan Dunn in 1838. This museum tried to present an image of the Chinese culture with the help of its objects that should convey the atmosphere of China.<sup>7</sup> Advantage of such attitude was that visitors could get to know Chinese culture directly and build their relationship with it based on their own experiences, rather than on the narratives of authorities. However, we should bear in mind that such method can also lead to a misunderstanding and misconceptions. Frank Leslie came to such a conclusion while observing Japanese art.<sup>8</sup> He believed that grotesqueness was the main characteristic of all Japanese paintings, which was of course a great exaggeration, and only „misemono“ (見世物) paintings represent such type of art. It is an example of where some of misconceptions and stereotypes could be originated from and subsequently could be associated with a certain culture.

## Current trends

Since emergence of a movement of the New Museology, the previous thinking about the role of the museum has changed, and thus also the museum’s approach to the presentation of Other’s cultures. There were calls for finding new approaches

<sup>5</sup> ANG, Ien. The predicament of diversity: Multiculturalism in practice at the art museum. In: *Ethnicities*, 2005, vol. 5, No. 3, s. 308. ISSN 14687968.

<sup>6</sup> LOUKAITOU-SIDERIS, Anastasia a Carl GRODACH. Displaying and Celebrating the „Other“: A Study of the Mission, Scope, and Roles of Ethnic Museums in Los Angeles. In: *The Public Historian*, 2004, vol. 26, No. 4, s. 52. ISSN 02723433.

<sup>7</sup> CONN, Steven. *Where Is the East?: Asian Objects in American Museums, from Nathan Dunn to Charles Freer*, 2000, vol. 35, No. 2, s. 160.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 164.



of how museum could communicate with ethnic minorities and how it could tell their stories to the majority. During this period, we can see that some museums position themselves as certain platforms for the presentation of different identities and different points of view.<sup>9</sup> In these museums, attention was paid to current social and cultural issues, and the museum environment became a space for discussion and debate between different social groups, including ethnic minorities. This trend was also opposed to the previous Eurocentric attitude of museums and from now on it was directed towards such a type of museum where every culture gets its representation and will be represented from objective and fair positions.

A globalisation is the one of the major factors which has also significantly changed the way of thinking about museum presentation. It created a situation where was a greater demand for learning about new and unknown cultures, people came more often into contact with people from other countries, which required a solid amount of mutual tolerance and understanding, but at the same time could arouse a significant desire to learn about a new culture. Furthermore, there are questions whether it is possible to capture and interpret the history behind different objects of human cultures only within the framework of a homogeneous nation-state, when it is not able to cover all the diversity and complexity of global human society including various coherences and external influences which could also have an impact on historical development of each culture. Other thing is that today's diverse multicultural society could not be perceived and interpreted only within the framework of one culture and language. This fact also raises a question what we could regard as "our" culture and what as "foreign".<sup>10</sup> These are the questions that museum faces in current time and it should find solutions and methods for presentation of minorities whose voice was silenced in the past and give them fair access and representation.

## Purposes and goals of the transcultural presentation

This part will address the questions of why we need to present Other's cultures, what is a mission of the transcultural presentation, what content of the transcultural presentation should be, and what result this type of museum communication must achieve.

First of all, the museum should make efforts to provide a platform for cultural and ethnical minorities. It should give them a space for expressing their viewpoint on history and the world. Transcultural presentation should depict human history not only through prism of the majority ethnic group, but also through the prism of Others. The museum should become a space where universal and different points of view are represented. At the same time, it also should focus on those cultures and stories that have been excluded and neglected from the Western perspective for a long time.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the museum should no longer present interests, cultural

<sup>9</sup> LOUKAITOU-SIDERIS, Anastasia a Carl GRODACH. *Displaying and Celebrating...*, p. 53.

<sup>10</sup> BHAGWATI, Annette. Representation of Culture(s): Articulations of the De/Post-Colonial at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin. In: OSWALD, Margareta (ed.). *Across Anthropology: Troubling Colonial Legacies, Museums, and the Curatorial*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2020, p. 352. ISBN 978-94-6270-218-9.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 360.

values, and experiences of one particular nation, but rather of all communities of the particular state. Such an approach will allow us to tell human stories in all their complexities and with wider context. As Tracy Jean Rosenberg states, if the majority group unfairly portrays or erases certain groups from national history, it could harm their coexistence and create greater gaps in their relationships.<sup>12</sup> Other importance of the transcultural presentation is that it could also satisfy the needs of today's diverse and colourful society, in which representatives of various ethnicities are represented and we cannot neglect their historical and cultural experiences. There is also an interesting question whether the National Museum has to present the culture of only majority ethnic group which represented by Czechs or the culture of every Czech citizen, which could reflect Czech society in its wider integrity and also allow the public to understand history not only through the eyes of ethnic Czechs, but also through the eyes of Germans, Slovaks, Romani and Vietnamese people.

Another purpose of the transcultural presentation is that it should present and promote non-European cultures. A museum should not only offer the public depiction of their own culture and look only at themselves, but also present and bring closer to the public the world from the outside and the reality of Others. In this way, the local public would be able to broaden their horizons, and a possible meeting with a foreigner would not have to look like a meeting with someone completely foreign or completely unknown. If museum would present not only European material culture and art it could change public way of thinking about history and art in more broader way as society would perceive history and art not only through lenses of European context. It also allow us to use different interpretations of the same particular objects and events, but from the perspective of other cultures. Furthermore, the transcultural presentation should propagate cultures and life situations of Others which are not publicly known, but are important for understanding interpersonal and transcultural relations, as well as for achieving mutual understanding and harmonious coexistence between people from different countries. For example, the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles offers visitors the chance to discover how Jews had to deal with the challenges of moving across Europe and adapting to new cultures, as well as how ancestral traditions and cultural values were preserved.<sup>13</sup> The museum can also bring closer the fate of migrants, who often have to deal with non-acceptance and problems associated with adaptation in a new environment. That's why we should promote their culture and inform about their life situation so that the local population can more easily make contacts with migrants and relate to their stories. In this way, the migrants themselves will not feel excluded and realize that the local public does care about them and that they are also a part of the society. The multicultural city of Leicester found itself in a similar situation decades ago, where a large number of cultures were marginalised and did not have enough interaction with the majority

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<sup>12</sup> ROSENBERG, Tracy Jean. History Museums and Social Cohesion: Building Identity, Bridging Communities, and Addressing Difficult Issues. In: *Peabody Journal of Education*, 2011, vol. 86, No. 2, p. 116. ISSN 0161956X.

<sup>13</sup> LOUKAITOU-SIDERIS, Anastasia a Carl GRODACH. Displaying and Celebrating..., p. 63.

population.<sup>14</sup> This challenge was taken up by Emma Martin, who believed that the museum as a social institution should involve these communities in its activities. That's why she organized the „Elements of Asia“ program and the „Meeting God“ exhibition to tell the stories of the city's diverse communities. This not only made the migrant communities more visible and increased popular awareness about them, it also gave them more confidence in their new area and helped to pass on traditions that might otherwise be lost forever.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, with use of material culture and art, the museum can create an image of a certain country and can significantly influence society's current perception of a particular culture or ethnicity. We could say without exaggeration that museum communication has a solid influence on how the public sets up and judges its relationship and approach to individual communities. We can even add that the presentation of non-European cultures should create a certain feeling of respect towards each culture and recognition of their contribution to human society. As an example, the Museum in Black in Los Angeles seeks to create a sense of appreciation in its visitors towards the merits of African Americans through the stories of black investors, abolitionists, civil rights activists, and African art.

Another purpose of the transcultural presentation is to create intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding between different cultures, to integrate and bring cultures together. The museum should translate cultures from the „outside“ to the „inside“.<sup>16</sup> In another words, it should comprehensibly explain cultural background of „outsiders“ to majority group and reach a mutual respect and understanding between them. As museum present „foreign and „unfamiliar“ cultures more and more, then less „foreign“ and „unfamiliar“ these cultures will seem to the local society. For achieving this, a special platform is needed where different communities can discuss common problems and issues, which could lead to a common consensus and exchange of ideas on what future our global society wants to establish.

As already mentioned above, the museum presentation has a great influence on the current perception of different cultures by locals. A great example of rethinking the attitude towards „others“ is the project „Black Atlantic“ (2004) in Germany. This program fundamentally transformed the behaviour of German society towards the black community and raised awareness of German colonialism along with the contribution of black people to German history and culture.<sup>17</sup> According to Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris and Carl Grodach, museums can represent themselves as „zones of contact,“ engaging in dialog the wide range of communities and cultures that comprise a city, a state, or the world. These zones once again serves for the exchange and sharing information about one's own and other cultures, which bridge different groups and develops mutual understanding between these cultures. They also display cultural heritage of Other's as a means of recognising the existing cultural diversity and represent the experiences of their

<sup>14</sup> MARTIN, Emma. Elements of Asia: An Events Programme. In: *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, 2003, No. 16, p. 48. ISSN 09547169.

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem, p. 51.

<sup>16</sup> BHAGWATI, Annette. Representation of Culture(s)..., p. 344.

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem, pp. 352-353.

group as one of many forces that shape both local and global culture.<sup>18</sup> For example, the Korean American Museum aspires to serve as force which bridging different generations and ethnic communities. The Japanese American National Museum strives to provide a voice for Japanese Americans and a platform that allows everyone to discover their ancestral heritage and their own culture.<sup>19</sup> This reflects how interconnected our society is and can serve as a good means of its integration. Another example is the Museum in Black, which uses collection items to inform police officers about how history shapes race relations today and provides tools to improve interactions between police officers and the black community.<sup>20</sup> These examples demonstrate how museum presentation can lead to transcultural and interpersonal understanding.

Furthermore, in order to bridge different cultures together and bring them to mutual interactions, the transcultural presentation should not attract only members of some particular culture or community which is presented at museum, but also it should strive to attract people who may not be a part of this particular culture and may not have any knowledge of it, but still are interested in it and have a desire and curiosity to learn something new about global human cultures and lives. As an example of such attitude we can mention the Museum of Latin American Art, which targets its expositions and exhibitions not only for Latin American visitors, but also for the general American population.<sup>21</sup>

As another aspect of the transcultural presentation we can determine is that it should not present the fate of a particular nation-state, but rather depict the history and culture of the entire world and humanity, which transcends beyond all the borders of our known space. And by using world's cultural to show examples from history how interconnected human societies have been since then and how they have been influencing each other up to the present days. For example, the director of the British Museum, Hartwig Fischer, believes that we need to present and interpret objects based not only on the object's place of origin, but also on the context of cultural exchange across regions through which the object may have travelled to its current place of preservation.<sup>22</sup> These very objects which have taken a part of the intercultural exchanges can be used to inform and explain origins of the present cross-cultural connections and show how many identities they could have gained during its travels. Eventually, this way we could present and talk about modern transcultural relations based on objects which have transcultural histories and identities behind them.

Finally, the last purpose of transcultural presentation is an effort of decolonising of museums and a participation in coming to terms with the past. As stated before, museums were a place where non-European cultures were presented as primitive and inferior. However, the museum's transcultural presentation should communicate with non-European cultures in such a way, so it could gain back their

<sup>18</sup> LOUKAITOU-SIDERIS, Anastasia a Carl GRODACH. *Displaying and Celebrating...*, p. 60.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 61.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 65.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 68.

<sup>22</sup> YANG, Pao-Yi. The Trans-Border Arrangement of Ming Pilgrim Flasks and the Narrative of Transculturation in the British Museum. In: *Museum & Society*, vol. 19, No. 1, p. 32. ISSN 1479-8360.

trust and confirm its reliability. Therefore museum should vigorously anticipate and reject any form of racism, prejudice against all minorities and bigotry. Museum presentations must defend and support every individual culture against past and present prejudice and unfair treatment. And museum's reputation could be rectified and purified by fair and objective reevaluation of its action in the past. Furthermore, the museum should inform the public itself with the painful injustices and offences that have been perpetrated on minority groups.<sup>23</sup> The transcultural presentation should strive to increase an awareness of how the reality of representatives of different cultures looked like, so that society can reevaluate its past attitude towards them and find a common paths with representatives of these cultures. For example, the Japanese American National Museum believes that it is important to remember history in order to better guard against the prejudice that threatens liberty and equality in a democratic society. The Museum of the Holocaust strives to make history come alive for visitors so that society does not forget the events that led to the tragedy of the Holocaust. The Chinese American Museum is looking for ways to bring to the public the hardships and complexities that the first Chinese Americans had to experience.<sup>24</sup>

In conclusion, on the basis of purposes of the transcultural presentation, we can introduce goals of the transcultural presentation.

1) Achieving mutual understanding between cultures where the museum will provide a platform for a discussion.

2) Implementation of fair and objective representation and promotion of Others cultures, so visitors subsequently can learn about them and more easily establish relationships with representatives of these cultures with the help of their new acquired knowledge.

3) Integration of other cultures into society with the help of presentation of their history, material culture and art.

4) Achievement of a public awareness that all material culture is human and therefore everyone can relate to it. Therefore it makes no sense to divide objects into "own" and "foreign".

5) To satisfy the need of today's diverse multicultural society.

6) Promote a such image of the region, the state and the city, which quite often consists of many different cultures, rather than only homogeneous one.

7) To challenge and reject past Eurocentric and colonial forms of presentation.

8) Celebrate and appreciate the tangible and intangible objects of every culture.

9) To show how interconnected the world is and to show that every culture develops in constant interaction with other cultures, regardless of contemporary borders.

## Methods of the transcultural presentation

In this part, we will focus on the issue of "how" to put the transcultural presentation into practice in order to fulfil the above-mentioned goals and purposes.

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<sup>23</sup> LOUKAITOU-SIDERIS, Anastasia a Carl GRODACH. *Displaying and Celebrating...*, p. 61.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 62.

One of the way how museum could help different cultures to understand better each other and and establish between close relationships between them is by providing them a space for mutual dialogue. To make such dialogue possible, a topic of the transcultural presentation should be interesting both for locals and for members of newly arrived cultures, as well as for natives of these cultures and for those who are not members of these communities.<sup>25</sup> Another important aspect is that a presentation takes into account both European and non-European perspectives and contexts. Thanks to it, we can ensure that no group is being excluded from the dialogue and encourage all communities to discuss common issues and actively take part in the formation of the transcultural presentation. The museum should not be the only authority which creates narratives and interpretations of the objects, but it should also give a voice today's diverse society in how they see the same historical events and objects, which afterwards could lead to a wider and more fruitful debate. Moreover, the museum should create such conditions which would encourage visitors with different background to talk with each other about common issues and topics. As an example, we can mention the video *Hamletmachine* (2000), which was presented at the exhibition „Subterrain“ (2003) at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt.<sup>26</sup> The video addressed the issue of fascism in light of the Gujarat Massacre. This work spoke to both the Germans and the Indians, whose culture and art the exhibition was dedicated to. It also was able to find and provide a certain common issue on which representatives of both cultures could discuss and think about how to deal with this legacy of the past in the present and in the future. Another example of such approach is the previously mentioned project „Black Atlantic“ (2004), but now we will focus more on organisational activities. The program of the project consisted of lectures, performances, interviews, musical performances, films and visual art, the common topics of which were issues of racism, colonialism, slavery, identity politics, collective memory, and rewriting history.<sup>27</sup> We can also see from this example that the presentation was able to engage representatives of different cultures and offer them enough space and opportunities to reevaluate their previous relationship and attitude towards another group and listen to its positions and points of view. From these examples we can learn that it is crucial for the transcultural presentation to provide both European and non-European perspectives. Such approach can ensure that representatives of all cultures will better understand each other's situation and more easily establish mutual relationships. Furthermore, in order to achieve mutual understanding, it is crucial for the museum to present different cultures accurately and fairly, to respect cultural differences and their opinions, especially regarding sensitive topics, and also to be open to their possible recommendations and suggestions.<sup>28</sup> This way we

<sup>25</sup> TAYLOR, Anne-Christine. On Decolonising Anthropological Museums: Curators Need to Take 'Indigenous' Forms of Knowledge More Seriously. In: OSWALD, Margareta (ed.). *Across Anthropology: Troubling Colonial Legacies, Museums, and the Curatorial*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2020, s. 100. ISBN 978-94-6270-218-9.

<sup>26</sup> BHAGWATI, Annette. Representation of Culture(s)...p. 349.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, p. 353.

<sup>28</sup> ROSENBERG, Tracy Jean. History Museums and Social Cohesion: Building Identity, Bridging Communities, and Addressing Difficult Issues. In: *Peabody Journal of Education*, 2011, vol. 86, No. 2, p. 115.

achieve bigger trust from minority groups and thanks to it they will be able to express themselves much more freely because they feel in an environment where they are treated equally, and their culture is presented accurately.

Now we will try to find solutions of how to ensure a fair and an objective representation, as well as propagation of different cultures. A serious aspect of such presentation is the re-evaluation of the current narratives about the past and the effort to present it also from the perspective of minority cultures. Once again, it is important to stress out that we should present their culture truthfully, fairly, and objectively. Anne-Christine Taylor points out on another important aspect of museum communication with ethnic minorities. According to her, museum should not let some communities to use sacredness of objects as an argument to hide them from public's eyes. Instead, she suggests that we should ask these communities why it is sacred for them and how they understand its sacredness.<sup>29</sup> In this way we will be able to gaining greater knowledge about their culture, learn their perception of their material heritage and understand what value it has for them. In shorter, it gives us richer context and more coherences for our presentation.

Another important aspect is to focus on one particular topic in order to make clear to the public what the presentation is about. That way a visitor will have bigger overall impression from the exhibition, and it will be easier to deliver museum's message to the public. In such conditions it is easier for a visitor to get the point of the exhibition when he is not overwhelmed by lots of new and various information.

One of the good ways to organise the transcultural presentation is to put in charge of a curation a person whose culture is presented at the museum. This method reduces the risk of misinterpretation and can also portray a true picture of a given culture based on local knowledge and traditions, which can diversify the current Western perception and interpretations of other cultures. In this situation, it is also important to entrust this task to the right person who would be able to connect both the European audience and the members of their own culture. It should be a person who is familiar with mentality, interest and behaviour of European and their own society, a person with multicultural outlook. An example of such a person is Geeta Kapur and her exhibition "SubTerrain", which presented works from young to world-renowned artists.<sup>30</sup> Kapur had experience organizing projects in different countries and was also active at home. She also had a good range of knowledge of both European and Indian art. Keeping in mind her abilities, her exhibition aimed to show works of artists who navigated between an Indian and a global context.<sup>31</sup> Once again we could see here how important is for the transcultural presentation to be able to appeal every culture which may come to museum.

Another method how to present Other's cultures is to invite the local community of that culture to the museum and offer them to demonstrate their traditions and cultural activities. This approach was used in "Meeting God" exhibition at the Leicester City Museum, where a group of local Hindu monks were invited to demonstrate Bhajan songs (devotional songs) and perform the act of pujas (act of

<sup>29</sup> TAYLOR, Anne-Christine. On Decolonising Anthropological Museums..., p. 100.

<sup>30</sup> BHAGWATI, Annette. Representation of Culture(s)..., p. 349.

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem.

devotions).<sup>32</sup> It is important to add that the visitors had the opportunity not only learn about Hindu monks and their spiritual practices, but also to participate in their activities. In addition, the exhibition offered meditation sessions, spiritual lessons, and family events, which were provided by the world spiritual movement Brahma Kumaris. Emma Martin, the author of the exhibition also noted that consultation with academics specializing in South Asian culture also played a key role in the preparation of the exhibition, which gave it a theoretical basis.<sup>33</sup>

Another aspect which is important for realization of the transcultural presentations is to make exhibition accessible as possible to the public. In sense that the audience can understand the topic of the presentation as easily as possible and attract the widest possible number of potential visitors. It was the goal of Jackie Menzie and her Buddha exhibition at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney.<sup>34</sup> The subject and title of the exhibition itself – Buddha – was chosen for this reason because it is well known figure among general audience and relatively easy to understand for everyone. From this we can conclude that for the transcultural presentation it is crucial to find a topic and title of the presentation that will be known and understood by the widest possible public. In this way, we would be able gradually to contextualise the general topic of our presentation into more complex and broader issues, through more simple and broader facts we can get to more specific and detailed context and coherences. In this case, the Buddha can serve as a bridge from general knowledge about Buddha to more specific and complex issues of Asian mentality and spirituality. Furthermore, it is important to choose a topic and subject that characterises a presented culture and that is easy to identify this culture with the topic and to make common connections between them. By doing so, we could lead the audience in the right direction in learning about other cultures and countries. For example, using the same example of Buddha, we can present Zen Buddhism in Japan and show the influence of this form of Buddhism on Japanese culture and mentality. This kind of museum communication can lead a visitor to a path to better understanding of the roots of Japanese society. It is also important to remember that an advertisement of the exhibition should be shown in relevant places. In a case of the Buddha exhibition, a curator Jackie Menzie used the current Western popularity of Buddhism and therefore the exhibition was promoted at yoga and meditation centres.<sup>35</sup> The exhibition also invited local Buddhist communities. In the so-called „Wisdom Room“ local Buddhist communities presented their wares every week and where the audience had an opportunity to witness the living Buddhist culture.<sup>36</sup> Activities such as tea ceremonies, mandala making, chants and prayers were also presented. All this in overall certainly improved an image of the Buddhist culture in audience's eyes. According to Jackie Menzie, the audience mostly wanted to hear the stories of individual groups and individuals in as much context as possible: the life story of the Buddha, the meaning of Buddhist symbols,

<sup>32</sup> MARTIN, Emma. *Elements of Asia...*, p. 51.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 52.

<sup>34</sup> ANG, Ien. The predicament of diversity: Multiculturalism in practice at the art museum. In: *Ethnicities*, 2005, vol. 5, No. 3, p. 309.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 311.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 312.



how Buddhism has influenced different countries. From this we can evaluate that if we want to depict a certain culture with the greatest clarity and spread, it will be better to interpret it through fascinating stories of its individual components or figures.

Entertainments such as comedy, games and theatre performances can serve as a good tool how increase an accessibility of an exhibition and attract general public's attention even more. Humour is a great way how to capture the visitor's attention, but at the same time it helps us to reveal certain forms of individual culture such as holiday traditions, feast, carnivals and fun games. Special workshops and programs can make it even more accessible and at the same time allow people to experience a presented culture. For example, the Museum of Latin American Art offers tango lessons, tequila tasting and Latin American cooking, as well as Latin American fashion shows.<sup>37</sup> The museum even has a special department for cultural travel that organizes trips to Latin America and a restaurant that serves Latin American food.

Another purpose of the transcultural museum presentation is the integration of other cultures into a new society. We can achieve it by convincing new settlers that there is also an interest about them and by raising awareness of their nature and culture across society. This way we ensure that the newly arriving cultures will not feel excluded and help them to establish relationships in new environment more easily. These aims were realized in the "Glasgow Asians" exhibition curated by Antonia Lovelace who aimed to reflect the contemporary cultural activity of local Asian communities.<sup>38</sup> The exhibition also included the experiences and stories of past European migrants such as Irish, Jews, Poles and Italians who settled in Glasgow. New residents could identify with these stories and use their experiences into their own life situations. The exhibition itself was primarily consisted of photographs depicting contemporary Asian places such as temples, mosques and cultural institutions. The photographs also documented the lives of individual Asian residents of the city like politicians, businessmen and ordinary people, reflecting their life experiences and memories. For example, the politician Bashir Maan (1926-2019)<sup>39</sup> lent 3 photo albums documenting his political career for the exhibition.<sup>40</sup> Citizen of Indian origin Subash Singh Pal provided photos of him riding a horse at a Sikh wedding. Other citizen, Mandir Sabha provided photographs of her Brahmin wedding with detailed commentary on each part of the ceremony.<sup>41</sup> Alongside the photographs, there were interviews with the owners of the photographs about their daily lives, careers, traditions and cultural activities, life experiences and experiences in Glasgow as members of the Asian and Indian community. In addition to the fate of Indian citizens, the exhibition also brought closer the life of Hong Kong Chinese, presenting and depicting Lunar New Year celebrations, festive red money envelopes and decorated postcards, the Phoenix Bird Chinese Takeaway book, which tells the story of a Hong Kong

<sup>37</sup> LOUKAITOU-SIDERIS, Anastasia a Carl GRODACH. *Displaying and Celebrating...*, p. 68.

<sup>38</sup> LOVELACE, Antonia. *Making Local Connections: Collecting in the Context of a Multicultural Exhibition. Journal of Museum Ethnography*, 1991, č. 3, s. 90. ISSN 09547169.

<sup>39</sup> Bashir Maan was a first Muslim who was elected to a public office in the United Kingdom in 1970.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 92.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*.

migrant family in Glasgow.<sup>42</sup> As a result, the exhibition represented members of the Asian community as part of local society, even though their roots came from elsewhere. The exhibition may have had the effect of making other members of the Asian community feel more confident and aware that they are not alone in their life situations, which is important for adapting in a new environment. In terms of organisation, the key was again to find a relevant topic and the appropriate objects that could convey that topic in the best possible way, in this case, it were primarily photographs. Furthermore, the exhibition was prepared in consultation with local representatives of Asian cultures, and the curator tried to learn as much as possible about their culture and immersed herself into reality of local Asian communities. For example, she visited local Asian businesses and organisations, where she learned about the production methods and significance of various traditional commodities. She also worked with such organizations as the Scottish Asian Women's Group and the local Minority organization. From the exhibition, we could conclude that we can integrate new cultures with the help of the transcultural presentations in such a way that we popularise life situation of contemporary minority communities and tell life stories of different people who also had to deal with difficulties associated with moving to new cultural conditions and environment.

Furthermore, we will try to find ways in which a transcultural presentation can present the fact that the world has always been multiculturally connected and influenced by each other. In this issue, it is important to recognise that each individual object has several different meanings and values that were perceived differently in each individual location where the object was used. Furthermore, we can present such historical events and objects that testify the interconnectedness between cultures as examples of global relations. Using these examples, we can observe how cultures interacted with each other and shaped their present form. In order to express the interconnectedness of cultures, we need to base our presentation and interpretation not only on the place of origin of the subject, but also on the context of cultural exchanges.<sup>43</sup> This will help us to reevaluate our perception of objects where the place of origin is a major value for determining an identity and an ownership of particular artefact. However, we should also focus on the process of relocation and incorporation of objects from old to new cultural environments.<sup>44</sup> It is important for the transcultural presentation to consider whether it is still relevant to present stories of objects only within the framework of a nation-state, or to focus on stories of objects that moved from place to place and to describe their different meanings and identities that objects acquired during their journeys in individual regions. That way we can better describe and understand our global relationships.

Pao-Yi Yang paid close attention to the transcultural stories of objects in her work on Ming pilgrim flasks in the British Museum. Ming flasks are presented in the sections „Gallery 57, Ancient Levant“, „Galleries 42-43, The Islamic World“ and in „Gallery 33, China and South Asia“. „Gallery 33“ is divided into two parts, one dedicated to China, the other to South Asia. One of the showcases of the Chinese

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<sup>42</sup> Ibidem, p. 96.

<sup>43</sup> YANG, Pao-Yi. *The Trans-Border Arrangement...*, p. 32.

<sup>44</sup> Ibidem, p. 33.

section is dedicated to trade and diplomacy, which focuses on the Ming trade expeditions to Japan, Vietnam and India, where Ming porcelain is found everywhere and represents trade relations between China and South Asia.<sup>45</sup> Showcase of the South Asia section captures the close relationship between China and Mughal India.<sup>46</sup> Here we can also find Ming porcelain, which, however, acquires certain Indian motifs and forms. One of remarkable objects here is the lunar porcelain of Emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707) where is written: "This Chinese porcelain belongs to the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb." We can see here how the identity of the object is transformed, from now on it is no longer a regular Chinese porcelain, but to some extent a part of Indian history in the Mughal period and it is a witness of the contacts between China and India. Further, in the sections „Galleries 42-43, The Islamic World“ there are replicas of the paintings "Horse with Chinese Grooms" (1418) and "Royal Feast in a Garden" (c. 1444)<sup>47</sup>. Both paintings also represent trade and global relations between the two civilisations. The first image shows a horse from the Middle East, which were key to the Ming army. The second painting reveals is a Ming flask, which was very popular among the Persian sultans. This can convince us once again of how interconnected and interdependent the world has been. Furthermore, in this section we can find a Persian porcelain, which was created according to Chinese designs, and the original Ming porcelain was displayed next to it, which allows us to compare them and find out how much the two cultures influenced each other. In the section „Gallery 46, Europe 1400-1800“ the main topic was the age of overseas discoveries where the global influence of European voyages was mapped.<sup>48</sup> Here, Ming porcelain not only reaches European markets, but travels around the world, depicting the interconnected global trade and relations of the time. The porcelain reveals us how and where European sailors established new relationships and what significance these relationships had in their commercial interests. From these exhibitions, we can conclude that it is important for the transcultural presentation to find such objects that were part of global relations and had a key role in them. Using these examples, we can illustrate mutual influences and dependences between certain cultures and regions. Another example is the exhibition „Connecting Continents: Indian Ocean Trade and Exchange“ (2014), which presented its topic through maritime space, which is ideal for reflection and interpretation of global relations.<sup>49</sup> Those objects that played a certain role in transcultural trade relations were chosen as objects of the exhibition. If we would try to determine what is most crucial to the interpretation of global relations, then Pao-Yi Yang believes that it is important to present a topic through objects with global biographies such as Ming porcelains, which can act as "gateways" to a culturally entangled world.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ibidem, p. 36.

<sup>46</sup> Ibidem, p. 36.

<sup>47</sup> Ibidem, p. 36.

<sup>48</sup> Ibidem, p. 37.

<sup>49</sup> Ibidem, p. 41.

<sup>50</sup> Ibidem, p. 41.

## Issues connected with the transcultural presentation

Museums can face many questions and problems when presenting different cultures. In this section, we will try to clarify a certain part of them.

### Presentation of non-European cultures by Western perception

Museums can sometimes face the problem of presenting non-European cultures in a Western framework of thought, which may not completely fit and reflect the way of thinking of other cultures. Sometimes there are situations where even the representatives of these cultures themselves present their own cultures from a Western point of view, or at least they are influenced by a Western way of thinking, which they can consider as a model or ideal.<sup>51</sup> If an exhibition depicts a certain culture only from a Western perspective, there is a risk that a presented culture could be distorted, and an exhibition might not fully reflect an actual reality and a mentality of those who we are presenting.

### Risk of distortion of other cultures and incompleteness of their interpretation

Here the question arises, is it possible to depict a certain culture in such a way that it reflects its traditions, thinking and everyday reality as much as possible, at least in a thumbnail which could capture the most basic and important elements of that culture. If so, then we should further ask whether we can prevent the possible distortion of the presented culture and the incompleteness of the interpretation, which may not capture all the essential elements of the history, traditions, spirituality and mentality of the individual culture. To what extent is the transcultural presentation able to convey a different culture to us in all its completeness and complexity? In this matter, we should also reckon that the lack of accuracy and completeness of the interpretation can lead to the presentation of stereotypes about a certain culture, or even create them. For example, one of the anonymous curators at the Latino-American Museum in Los-Angeles complained that instead of eliminating and refuting stereotypes, the museum supports and reinforces them. For example, museum portrayed Latin American art as very colourful and showy, and that only the paintings of landscapes and surrealism are major part of it. And the museum's collections do not represent the diversity of Latin American culture and identity, but rather support the stereotypical image of a touristic or romantic Latin America.<sup>52</sup>

### Misunderstanding and misinterpretation of cultures by the audience

Another problem during the presentation of Other's cultures can be that the audience is not always able to correctly and accurately understand what is being presented to them. There is a risk that the cultures presented will be so unfamiliar and incomprehensible to the visitor that they cannot understand them. Or an exhibition will not have enough descriptions and explanations that the audience will misinterpret certain aspects of a particular culture. Which again can create false

<sup>51</sup> TAYLOR, Anne-Christine. *On Decolonising Anthropological Museums...*, p. 100.

<sup>52</sup> LOUKAITOU-SIDERIS, Anastasia a Carl GRODACH. *Displaying and Celebrating...*, p. 69.

assumptions or stereotypes about these cultures. The roots of the issue may lie in the dissimilarities in the way of thinking, the perception of reality and the value system between European and other cultures, because of which such problems can occur. Furthermore, European society may not understand the traditions, social norms, and historical context of other cultures, so we should not expect the audience to be able to accurately understand all of them on their own. As an example, Edmund Capon, director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, said at an exhibition of Asian art: „All the visitors thought it was the most beautiful object they had ever seen, but because there was no historical or ideological context, people saw only as a collection of objects and the exhibition did not capture the cultural ideas hidden behind the paintings.“<sup>53</sup> Or when Ernst Ludwig Kirchner interpreted Benin art, he paid more attention to the cross in the painting because this symbol was close to him, but it did not necessarily reflect the value system of Benin culture.<sup>54</sup> In this matter, it is necessary to find such a way and terms, which help us to interpret complex parts for the European audience, but at the same time will not create inaccuracies and will take into account all the complexities of the presented culture. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Buddha was used as a good medium for presenting Asian culture, because it reveals some parts of various Asian cultures to a certain degree, and simultaneously it is quite comprehensible to the European public. That's why we need to look for those cultural topics and subjects that are more or less easy to convey, but at the same time give enough information to create a aptly depiction of that culture.

### Marginal role of Other's cultures in museums

Museums often do not pay much attention to cultures unless they are local, because of that Other's cultures not always have enough place in some museums. Museums and society often care about „themselves“ and do not care about what is happening around them in the world. This may be related to the 19th century belief that museums should reflect the culture and pride of a particular nation, which is why society may still perceive museums in this way today. Therefore, I suppose that Other's cultures have a rather marginal significance in large museums and do not always get enough attention. However, the transcultural presentation should point out on the importance of global relations in history and in today's everyday life, it also should show how much even „our own“ culture is influenced by someone „Other's“.

### Possible lack of interest about Other's cultures among a local public

We touched on this issue a bit previously that society doesn't necessarily show interest in the „Other“ when society rather expects to see local culture in museums. This fact could make the transcultural presentation not attractive enough to the local public, which would mean that the museum would not be able to speak to them and address its ideas about the relations between different cultures. There could be a risk that the transcultural presentation would only serve for non-European

<sup>53</sup> ANG, Ien. *The predicament of diversity...*, p. 309.

<sup>54</sup> DOLZ, Silvia. *The Foreign in the Familiar...*, p. 27.

audience, which could create greater gaps and misunderstandings between local and Other's cultures. Transcultural presentations, on the other hand, must explain differences and bring people to mutual understanding. That is why we need to look for such topics and methods of presentation that would be able to interest both the locals and the representatives of the presented cultures.

### Possible negative reaction from the local public

Transcultural presentation should also reckon that the local population may not agree to the exposure and promotion of Other's cultures. The reasons could be dissimilarities and differences in contrast to a local culture and a feeling that the museum is not fulfilling its purpose when it does not pay enough attention to the local culture. Even in this situation, we should explain why the transcultural presentation is important and how relevant it is for today's society. Furthermore, we could also deal with the resistance of nationalists, who would not be happy with the promotion and bridging with Other's cultures, they would rather push for a state of matters where only their culture will be celebrated everywhere. However, in today's diverse and colourful society, it is very difficult to determine which nation's culture reflects the behaviour and the way of thinking of all citizens within one state. Promotion of only one nation's culture will exclude others and will focus on only one group, but the transcultural presentation cannot allow that.

### Issues with nationalism

Not only could nationalists protest against the presentation of Other's cultures, but also against the presentation of their own culture in a „foreign“ museums. For this reason, they could try to prevent the borrowing of objects of their culture and they could accuse a museum of „stealing“ their culture and claiming that it does not have a „right“ to do so, they could also argue that it reduces the specialness and exclusivity of their society. For them, of course, integration and bridging with others is not a delightful message, but the museum should reckon with them and find means to convince representatives from different countries that their culture will be presented fairly, accurately and objectively as possible. Furthermore, we should realise that an individual or a certain group cannot own an entire culture and claim a monopoly on it since throughout the history we can see that human culture is much more universal, mutually influenced and interconnected. It has also always been historically natural for different cultures to exchange thoughts and ideas with each other. Therefore there is no reason against exchanging and promoting cultures with the help of the transcultural presentation.

### Issues with borrowing Other's objects

Objects from Other's cultures are necessary for the transcultural presentation, but there may not be enough of them in local circumstances, and therefore it would be necessary to negotiate the borrowing of Other's objects. However, it can bring with it certain problems. Firstly, as stated earlier, the country of origin may not accept a lending because it would not want its objects to be displayed in „foreign“ museums for nationalistic or political reasons. Secondly, there could be different

laws of the preservation of cultural heritage which can cause some complications for the loan. An example is the loan of Japanese objects in the mid-20th century for an exhibition of Japanese culture in the United States, when American museums had to do their best to comply with Japanese cultural heritage laws in order to obtain a loan permit.<sup>55</sup> Thirdly, there could be a lack of trust of the country of origin and a fear that the borrowed objects will not be presented objectively and fairly but will be served for political purposes and for the representation of this culture in a bad light.

### Issue of achieving mutual trust between representatives of cultures and the museum

Taken into account the colonial past of museums and their objects, a large number of non-European communities may understandably mistrust museums and all that they produce. Museums need to talk to these communities and convince them that museums have really changed since and reassure them that their cultures and objects will be presented fairly, accurately, and objectively. Therefore, the transcultural presentations should also aim at non-European communities to show them that museums are changing their narratives and that they are a place where they can get their representation and voice to express their views and opinions on certain issues and events. However, a lack of trust could cause communities to be reluctant and unwilling to have their culture and objects presented in a museum, for fear that they could be deliberately misinterpreted and misused for certain political or nationalistic goals. The museum should therefore sooth their concern and convince that their communities will get an equal and a fair attitude.

### Conclusion

Nowadays society more often encounters with dissimilar cultures and deal with various intercultural questions therefore museum should react on this social trend and could adress it by transcultural presentation. Purposes of the transcultural presentation are fair presentation and publicity of particular cultures, providing a representation for Other's cultures, reflection of past and current global transcultural relationships, and decolonisation of the colonial narrative about Others. Also, the paper registered some issues with transcultural presentation like misunderstanding and misinterpretation of cultures by audience, risk of incomplete and inaccurate display of cultural life of Others, trust issues with communities of particular cultures, negative response of locals etc. Since these questions are still relevant for today and for a coming future, transcultural presentation will need more rethinking and improvements.

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<sup>55</sup> SHIMIZU, Yoshiaki. Japan in American Museums: But Which Japan? In: *The Art Bulletin*, 2001, vol. 83, No. 1, p. 131. ISSN 00043079.

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# The challenges and possibilities of caricature in museum communication using the example of Erich Sokol

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*The challenges and possibilities of caricature in museum communication using the example of Erich Sokol*

The article will examine the question of the extent to which caricatures can communicate independently with the audience and what challenges arise in museum presentation. A caricature by the Austrian artist Erich Sokol serves as an example.

Keywords: Museum communication, caricatures, Erich Sokol, possibilities of communication in museum spaces, challenges in the museum space

In post-war Vienna, many young people raved about the American lifestyle. Erich Sokol also began to be enthusiastic about America while still at school and increasingly familiarised himself with the English language by listening to the *American Forces Network (AFN)* radio station.<sup>1</sup> In the course of his studies, he had the opportunity to gain a personal impression of the dream destination of many young Austrians. Erich Sokol, who travelled to America on July 2, 1957 to study for two semesters at the *Illinois Institute of Technology* in Chicago, used his time in America for his studies and recorded his perceptions of the country in a socially critical manner in his drawings. With the title *American Natives*, Erich Sokol published these drawings, which depict the events and characters of everyday life in America. After the young artist's studies ended in May 1958, he extended his stay in the USA and began to work intensively on his first independent publication. Erich Sokol satirises the characters of his host country, thereby expanding not only his personal horizons but also his artistic skills.<sup>2</sup>

Both his studies and his professional experiences in the USA fundamentally changed Sokol's view of fine art and commercial art, resulting in an increasingly critical view of the situation in Austria.<sup>3</sup>

Erich Sokol succeeded in working as a freelancer for *Playboy* and *The Lion Magazine*, thus financing his stay in America. The publication entitled *American*

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<sup>1</sup> KRUG, Wolfgang. *Erich Sokol. American Natives*. Wien: Brandstätter, 2012, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> KRUG, Wolfgang and Jutta M. PICHLER. *Erich Sokol. AZ-Karikaturen. Werke aus den Landessammlungen Niederösterreich*. Salzburg/Wien: Residenz, 2018, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 29.

*Natives* was published in 1960 by Harper & Brothers in New York.<sup>4</sup> He knew and appreciated the English artist Ronald Searle, who made drawings for the London Punch, as Erich Sokol as well. The caricaturists *Modern Types*, created in 1955, which present grotesque impressions of the USA, are likely to have inspired Erich Sokol for *American Natives*.<sup>5</sup> London's Punch also became aware of Sokol's *American Natives* and found the following words: "Sixty marvellous drawings of representative North American types, seen with merciless insight and depicted with unflinching skill. [...] The influence of Ronald Searle is evident."<sup>6</sup> In the German-language edition of *American Natives*, the drawings are illustrated with subsequent captions, photographs and documentary elements, which are very revealing when looking at the individual characters. The German edition begins with a translated manuscript from 1959, in which the artist defines his motives for publishing *American Natives*. "This book is not dedicated to laughter, but to the ridiculous."<sup>7</sup> Erich Sokol addresses the constant pursuit of happiness, the lack of contentment of people and sees Americans as suitable models for the presentation of human shortcomings.

The intention of this book is to show that normal people in their normal environment with their normal daily routines are unintentionally tragically ridiculous and ridiculously tragic. This truth is the simple 'gag' in all my pictures.<sup>8</sup>

Sokol emphasises that amusing physical features are based on his artistic inability and are in no way intended to be discriminatory. Furthermore, there is no intention to offend American citizens, to question or attack the "American way of life, the free market economy, moral concepts or the United States of America in general"<sup>9</sup>. He goes on to write, "I call this book a non-objective commentary because I am biased. I am for America and for the people and against idealising them."<sup>10</sup> A caricature of this work will be analysed. In a first step, the work data is briefly discussed and a detailed image description including an interpretation of what is depicted is provided. Finally, the possibilities and challenges that can arise within an exhibition of American Native artwork are discussed. The *American Natives* are characterised by a drawing technique that differs significantly from the working methods of the other genres in Sokol's oeuvre. In this series of works, he completely dispenses with colour and creates the drawings in a rather sketchy, yet very expressive manner. Pencil, ink, opaque white, paper and cardboard are his preferred materials. It gives the impression that the depictions were created on the spot from a spontaneous event and the process of quick drawing seems to be

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<sup>4</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>5</sup> KRUG, Erich Sokol. *American...*, p. 41.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>7</sup> SOKOL, Erich. Manuskript von 1959, aus dem Englischen von Gudrun Likar. In: Wolfgang KRUG (ed). *Erich Sokol. American Natives*. Wien: Brandstätter, 2012, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem.

reflected in the dynamics of each individual picture. The figures notice apparently do not realise that they are being immortalised in drawings, which underlines the authenticity of the supposed everyday situation and is another distinguishing feature of the caricatures of the *American Natives*. The German edition of the publication is supplemented with photographs taken by the artist himself at the time.

The photographs make the depictions appear more credible and on the one hand appear as a colourful counterpart to the drawings and have an evidential character. In addition, the German edition contains personal commentaries such as lines from the artist's personal letters to his family, transcriptions of tape recordings, excerpts from manuscripts or passages from planned reports, which serve as an explanation of why Erich Sokol considered the scene worthy of depiction or as a personal statement concerning the situation depicted.

### *Emancipation*

The drawing entitled *Emancipation* (Fig. 1)<sup>11</sup> is selected as an example from the *American Natives* series. In the original English version of the publication from 1960, the pictures do not have a title. The German version with the photographs, additions and titles serves as the basis for these considerations. The title of the work



**Fig. 1:** *Emancipation*  
Erich Sokol, 1958/1959  
Tusche, laviert, Deckweiß, Bleistift  
auf Karton  
47.1 x 35.6 cm  
Quelle: Landessammlungen  
Niederösterreich  
[www.online.landessammlungen-noe.at](http://www.online.landessammlungen-noe.at)

already precisely names the story that this illustration wants to tell us. At first glance, a harmless everyday situation is depicted, but on closer inspection, hidden conventions and themes are revealed to the audience, drawing the viewer directly into the action and allowing them to participate from various perspectives. The title clearly defines the subject of the work, but the story behind it, or the story that viewers read behind it, can vary greatly.

### The dates and description of the artwork *Emancipation*

The caricature entitled *Emancipation* was created between 1958 and 1959 in ink wash with opaque white and pencil on cardboard and measures 47.1 cm x 35.6 cm.<sup>12</sup> In the foreground, the lower edge of the picture, the counter of a bar, restaurant or café can be seen. On this counter is a small handbag, an open packet of cigarettes, a lighter and an ashtray as well as a few small objects that cannot be identified - it could be a napkin

<sup>11</sup> KRUG, Erich Sokol. *American...*, p. 101.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*.

dispenser and cruets - and a coffee saucer. Immediately behind her in the central middle ground is the upper body of a slender woman, who is obviously sitting on a bar stool. The woman has shoulder-length, light-coloured hair and a few strands of hair are sticking out of her forehead. The lady's gaze is directed downwards towards the bar and therefore only her almost closed eyelids and mascara-covered eyelashes can be seen. A pearl earring adorns her right ear, the left ear is not visible due to the three-quarter view. She is holding a cigarette in her left hand and is taking a puff. Her fingers are also slender, her fingernails are painted, a ring sparkles on her left hand and a bracelet encircles her left wrist. She appears to be wearing a shirt and a waistcoat under her thin coat or jacket with a collar, and in her right hand, which is adorned with a watch or another accessory, she is holding a coffee cup that appears to be filled to the brim with black coffee. A plain wall or curtain can be made out in the right background and a coffee house table with two upholstered chairs, an ashtray and possibly a napkin stand can be seen in the left background. Directly behind it is the entrance door of the pub, which is open and the word 'Jack's' are clearly visible on a sign. A man in a hat is standing in front of the bar, turning away from it and bowing his head to the ground. Silhouettes are reflected in the window of the entrance behind the drawing is lost in the architecture opposite.

### The interpretation of the artwork *Emancipation*

In this drawing, Erich Sokol presents a self-confident, independent and almost indifferent-looking woman who, apparently unaccompanied by a man, is having a coffee and a cigarette in a public pub, even though she seems to be married, as indicated by the ring on her finger. Nevertheless, she is clearly not taking care of the household or bringing up the children at this moment. A woman who happens to give a face to the contested field of equality or the ideal personification of an important achievement? In any case, the sight of this independent woman seems to have inspired the young artist to depict her. The clear title of the drawing leaves no doubt as to the content of the narrative. However, it is up to the viewer to decide from which perspective the story of emancipation is read. In this context, today's audience should consider the time span from the creation of this picture to its reception today and take into account the changes in society and the different national developments.

### The possibilities of caricature in museum communication

The fact that a work of art has a title makes it easier to communicate in the museum space. There is no need to provide a comprehensive written explanation of what is depicted, as the subject of emancipation is so popular in our culture that a basic definition is not necessary. The addition of the personal commentary and the photo to the drawing *Emancipation* is a nice addition and has a certain amount of probative value. In an *American-Natives* exhibition, it is possible to access the German edition, a comprehensive publication by Wolfgang Krug, which not only presents the young artist's drawings in a bundled form, but also conveys biographical details.<sup>13</sup> Of particular interest are the original photos of Erich Sokol from the time,

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<sup>13</sup> Ibidem.

the letters to his family back home, the transcribed tape recordings and the personal commentaries on the individual drawings. These personal insights and historical retrospectives appear to be a unique opportunity to immerse oneself completely in the period and accompany the artist on his foray through the USA. The technical possibilities offered by new media and virtual reality, coupled with the nostalgic presentation of some letters from 1958 and 1959, seem ideal for tracing an arc from 1958 to the present day. The extension of the exhibition space seems particularly attractive, as these additional platforms allow both a historical retrospective and a futuristic outlook, and the technical possibilities allow excursions to take place in virtual exhibition spaces, the visit to which can be customised, thus involving the public on the one hand and allowing them to experience the exhibition in a self-determined way on the other. It should be borne in mind, however, that these virtual possibilities serve as a supplement to the physical exhibition space and the viewing of the original drawings and cannot replace them. According to Stefan Paul, “in the field of virtual worlds, space is only interesting as a shell for installations, less as a dramaturgical element”<sup>14</sup>. The example of *Emancipation* can stand for itself with little text and thus offers space for an empty room that can be filled by the audience itself or used for playful elements that approach the complex topic in a completely differentiated way. The artist’s personal impressions could be accompanied by historical facts or national differentiations. Communication between the object and the audience appears to be unproblematic, although the exact dialogue between the individual viewer and the artwork can be completely different. The drawing is able to communicate with the audience and manages on the stage of the museum with discreet scenery.

### The challenges of caricature in museum communication

Probably the greatest challenge in the presentation of this drawing lies in focussing on the respective artwork, while still giving space to the comprehensive theme of emancipation. A fundamental explanation of emancipation does not appear to be necessary at present, although background information on the state of emancipation in 1958 and 1959 could be very interesting. Innovative ways must therefore be found to provide the audience with comprehensive information while still allowing them to determine the level of engagement with the individual topics themselves. The selection of additional information, including the choice of media to be used, poses a particular challenge. Even if what is depicted appears to be unambiguous, it cannot be assumed that the caricature communicates fully with the viewer, says Beate Hobein.

Nevertheless, even the similar way of thinking of exhibition organisers and visitors does not enable a congruent decoding of museum presentations. Differences between the museum’s message and the visitor’s perception arise from the audience’s prior knowledge and experience; they determine, for

<sup>14</sup> PAUL, Stefan. Kommunizierende Räume. Das Museum. In: Alexander C. T. GEPPERT, Uffa JENSEN and Jörn WEINHOLD (eds.). *Ortsgespräche. Raum und Kommunikation im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2005, pp. 341-357, here p. 346.

example, the visitor's lingering behaviour and the selection of the exhibits they choose perceived objects and the intensity of perception of the individual objects.<sup>15</sup>

The choice of medium for presenting necessary additional content can be varied. Exhibitions and museums are increasingly coming to terms with increasing digitalisation and, on the one hand, can make use of the innovative possibilities in mediation and, on the other, are confronted with new challenges. Thanks to new technologies, the internet and social media, museums and exhibition spaces are gaining additional mediation spaces and active dialogue partners through visitors. The role of visitors is increasingly changing from that of mediators or passive recipients of information to digitally networked partners who contribute to the visibility and reach of the museum or exhibition through their active participation.<sup>16</sup>

The development of media and information strategies is one of the fundamental areas of museum work, alongside the creation of didactic and educational concepts. As a rule, these concepts not only include considerations regarding the external impact of the museum, but also deal with how the museum conveys the meaning and content of the collections or exhibitions and the objects they contain in different situations. This does not necessarily involve completely new concepts – rather, the digital media should be selected according to the museum's own room for manoeuvre (often dictated by the sponsor, for example), used strategically and repeatedly evaluated in terms of success.<sup>17</sup>

Even if communication between the individual work and the public is possible independently, it is the task of those responsible for the museum to provide an appropriate communication platform. It is obvious that these communication spaces are changing and expanding with increasing digitalisation, and finding an adequate solution in the presentation for the visitors actually in the museum, which also proves to be promising in the field of digital media, is a further challenge in the communication of caricature in the museum space. According to Stefan Paul, the space can only be experienced through the physical experience and all solutions in cyberspace leave the audience in a passive role, he quotes Boris Groys and speaks of “an incapacitation of the visitor, who is subjected to an alien figure of light”<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> HOBEIN, Beate. Partnerschaft mit dem Besucher als strukturelles Element der Museumsarbeit. In: Bernd GÜNTER and Hartmut JOHN (eds.). *Besucher zu Stammgästen machen. Neue und kreative Wege zur Besucherbindung*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2000, pp. 107-128, here p. 109.

<sup>16</sup> FRANKEN-WENDELSORF, Regina, Sybille GREISINGER, Christian GRIES and Astrid PELLENGAHR (ed). *Das erweiterte Museum. Medien, Technologien und Internet*. Berlin/München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2019, p. 14.

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem, pp. 16-17.

<sup>18</sup> PAUL, Kommunizierende Räume..., p. 356.

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# The application of digital technologies: virtual and augmented reality in museums<sup>1</sup>

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## *The application of technologies: virtual and augmented reality in museums*

In the rapidly advancing digital era, museums are exploring new ways to engage visitors and enhance their experiences. This paper delves into the increasing utilization of Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality within museum settings. VR immerses visitors in a simulated environment, while AR enhances real-world perceptions with virtual elements. As digital technologies pervade modern life, cultural institutions like museums seek ways to remain relevant and engaging. This paper explores the adoption of Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality within the museum context, considering both the advantages and potential drawbacks.

Keywords: virtual reality, augmented reality, digital technologies in museums

## Introduction

The world is evolving rapidly, and digital technologies have become an inherent part of our lives. Museums, esteemed as cultural repositories, significantly contribute to both education and recreational pursuits. Consequently, it is imperative for them to continually enhance their services and remain abreast of contemporary inclinations. A prevailing trend is the integration of digital innovations to captivate audiences during exhibits. This approach is beneficial as the modern populace is technologically inclined and demonstrates a preference for exhibitions reflective of current trends. Virtual and augmented realities emerge as prominent tools to entice museum visitors and offer a unique experience.

## Virtual and Augmented Reality

Virtual Reality (VR) is a simulated environment that an individual can explore and interact with. To create a sense of presence and immersion in the created environment, either head-mounted displays or special glasses are used, immersing the visitor in a three-dimensional virtual world. In the VR environment, users can move and manipulate objects using controllers. The virtual reality environment

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<sup>1</sup> Specifický výzkum MUNI/A/1329/2022 "Muzejní prezentace II - moderní přístupy a trendy v muzejní prezentaci".

can simulate not only those locations that exist in the real world but also can create fictional and fantasy settings.<sup>2</sup>

In contrast to virtual reality, Augmented Reality (AR) adds virtual elements or information to the real world, enhancing the user's perception and interaction with their environment. AR typically involves the use of devices with camera support, such as mobile phones, tablets, or special glasses. Virtual elements in augmented reality can take various forms—3D models, text, images, videos, and interactive elements, making it appear as if the virtual content is part of the real world.<sup>3</sup>

## Advantages of Using VR and AR in Museums

Escalating number of museums are integrating digital technologies, but why? Technologies offer immense possibilities in museums on many levels—providing alternative ways of interacting for visitors. Traditionally, a person in a museum is isolated: they usually get a ticket, walk through the exhibition, and leave. But with the use of VR technologies, the visitor is in contact with the museum staff, thereby gaining more information, immersing themselves in the museum's atmosphere, and the staff receive feedback, knowing how to improve their work, what the visitor likes and does not like. The increasing engagement of visitors in the exhibition strengthens the authority of the museum and places it above its competitors.<sup>4</sup>

Another significant advantage is the possibility of time travel, for instance, the reconstruction and visualization of ancient ruins—visitors can walk through and explore the virtual environment and learn about the historical context.<sup>5</sup> It offers an engaging and educational experience, a deeper understanding, and appreciation of our heritage. Above all, visitors feel as if they are witnessing crucial historical events. Imagination and fantasy play a vital role in the museum and positively influence the learning experience, fostering a deeper connection with the exhibits.

VR and AR can improve accessibility in museums by satisfying visitors with disabilities or limitations. These technologies can provide audio descriptions, visual enhancements, or alternative ways of engagement to satisfy various needs, ensuring that everyone can enjoy and learn from museum exhibits.

VR and AR technologies are actively used in cultural settings due to their ability to acquaint visitors with what is not accessible in everyday life. Digital technologies allow a unique experience to look at either items that are fragile and cannot be displayed or exhibits that have not survived to this day. Similarly, AR and VR allow the exploration of artifacts from various angles, compare, zoom in, move,

<sup>2</sup> Virtual Reality. In: Britannica.com: všeobecná encyklopedia [online]. Henry E. Lowood, 2023. [cit. 17.6.2023]. Dostupné z [www: <https://www.britannica.com/technology/virtual-reality>](https://www.britannica.com/technology/virtual-reality)

<sup>3</sup> Augmented Reality. In: Britannica.com: všeobecná encyklopedia [online]. William L. Hosch, 2023. [cit. 17.6.2023]. Dostupné z [www <https://www.britannica.com/technology/augmented-reality>](https://www.britannica.com/technology/augmented-reality)

<sup>4</sup> SHEHADE, Marie a Theopisti STYLIANOU-LAMBERT. Virtual Reality in Museums: Exploring the Experiences of Museum Professionals. *Applied Sciences* [Online]. 2020, vol. 10, No. 11. [cit. 18.6.2023]. Dostupný z [www: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Virtual-Reality-in-Museums%3A-Exploring-the-of-Museum-Shehade-Stylianou-Lambert/49e0354b2078945a71f505cc4593466466716b8c>](https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Virtual-Reality-in-Museums%3A-Exploring-the-of-Museum-Shehade-Stylianou-Lambert/49e0354b2078945a71f505cc4593466466716b8c).

<sup>5</sup> PUIG, Anna a kol. Lessons learned from supplementing archaeological museum exhibitions with virtual reality. In: *Virtual Reality* [Online]. 2020, č. 24, 343–358. [cit. 18.6.2023]. Dostupný z [www: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10055-019-00391-z>](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10055-019-00391-z).

and manipulate them as desired. Technologies assist in contextualizing objects and showing their actual dimension.<sup>6</sup>

All these aspects play a significant role in promoting museum activities. They primarily show that the museum is expanding its boundaries. These technologies offer a unique and modern way to captivate visitors, potentially increase attendance, and interest in the museum. The symbiosis of entertainment and education brings the highest number of satisfied customers, who not only return but also bring in more visitors. Overall, it can be said that VR and AR technologies offer numerous benefits to museums by increasing engagement, expanding educational opportunities, preserving cultural heritage, and providing visitors with unique and personalized experiences.

### Drawbacks of Using VR and AR

An essential point is the correct application of digital technologies in the museum. What problems can arise when using AR and VR to engage visitors in the exhibition? An essential part of the visit is social contact among people. When using AR and VR, individual attention is often needed, which can make the visitor feel isolated and reduce interaction between people. This is not always a negative; everyone has their requirements, and for some visitors, this might be one of the best options, but genuine experience and knowledge are typically shared with someone. Another significant drawback of AR and VR is that they can be physically uncomfortable, potentially causing headaches and nausea. This type of attraction may not be suitable for people with anxiety disorders since they cannot see their surroundings. Furthermore, these technologies are among the latest innovations, meaning they are expensive, require constant updates and maintenance, demanding significant investments both financially and in staff.<sup>7</sup>

Research results from Suroto Peni and Dewantara Made indicate that visitors are losing interest in museums due to a feeling of boredom. Another reason is that individuals do not feel entertained or educated. Primarily for this reason, museums frequently integrate technologies in their presentations to engage visitors on a cognitive level.<sup>8</sup> However, cognitive overload is a genuine concern, potentially leading to sensory saturation and reduced absorption of information.

Another issue described by Suroto Peni and Dewantara Made is the lack of innovation. Not all curators are familiar with the latest technological developments, which means they might use outdated techniques that will not make a strong impression and, furthermore, cannot be fixed due to the non-existence of the necessary technical parts. Such elements might repel rather than attract, especially

<sup>6</sup> RICHARDSON, Jim. Virtual reality is a big trend in museums, but what are the best examples of museum using VR? *MuseumNext* [Online]. 2023. [cit. 18.6.2023]. Dostupný z www: <<https://www.museumnext.com/article/how-museums-are-using-virtual-reality/>>.

<sup>7</sup> SHEHADE, Marie a Theopisti STYLIANOU-LAMBERT. Virtual Reality in Museums...

<sup>8</sup> DEWANTARA, Made H., Peni Z. SUROTO a Aulia A. WIRADARMO. The Application of Technology in Museums. *International Journal of Applied Sciences in Tourism and Events* [Online]. 2020, vol. 4, No. 1, p. 2, Dostupný z www: <[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Peni-Suroto/publication/348594272\\_THE\\_APPLICATION\\_OF\\_TECHNOLOGY\\_IN\\_MUSEUMS/links/60b352f592851cd0d985e8fd/THE-APPLICATION-OF-TECHNOLOGY-IN-MUSEUMS.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Peni-Suroto/publication/348594272_THE_APPLICATION_OF_TECHNOLOGY_IN_MUSEUMS/links/60b352f592851cd0d985e8fd/THE-APPLICATION-OF-TECHNOLOGY-IN-MUSEUMS.pdf)>.

the youth.<sup>9</sup> A similar problem arises if a curator or custodian cannot help a visitor or explain how to use VR glasses correctly or set up an AR application. The visitor will likely wonder why they should use it if the museum staff cannot show how. This highlights a crucial aspect: museum staff should undergo regular training related to using modern technologies in the museum environment.

## Conclusion

The deployment of digital innovations within museums possesses inherent merits and challenges. One of the essential tasks for curators when they are creating an exhibition is to ensure that the visitor is engaged, does not lose focus during the visit, and does not feel fatigued. The use of modern technologies should help with these tasks, but a responsible approach is always required. If a museum has the means and opportunity to provide various technologies like VR, AR, robots, interactive surfaces, etc., it is always necessary to develop audio and visual accompaniment to immerse the visitor entirely in the exhibition's atmosphere. One way to avoid the above-mentioned problems is to analyze the regular visitors and the museum's overall audience: with technologies, new visitors can be attracted or the old ones lost. A collaborative approach, factoring in visitor feedback, remains instrumental in ensuring optimal visitor experiences.

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<sup>9</sup> DEWANTARA, Made H., Peni Z. SUROTO a Aulia A. WIRADARMO. The Application of Technology in Museums..., p. 2.

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# Art education and its theoretical models for the field of (contemporary) art

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## *Art education and its theoretical models for the field of (contemporary) art*

The focus of this article is on the questions which theoretical models are important for *museum education* in the art sector and whether these theoretical models are also used in practice using the case study *millstART*. In addition, the questions will be examined as to how the term *art education* can be defined (especially in German-speaking countries) and how it differs from *museum didactics/museum pedagogy*, and which education methods and formats are required for high-quality *art education*.

Keywords: art education, museum education, museum pedagogy

## Introduction

*Art education* is an important area of museum work through contact and communication with visitors. However, the application in museums and exhibitions and the approaches required to achieve high-quality educational work are of relevance. The focus of this article is on the questions which theoretical models are important for *museum education* in the art sector and whether these theoretical models are also used in practice. The first part of the article focuses on the theoretical state of research regarding educational models while the second part deals with the case study *millstART*, an art association located in Austria.

## Short Overview of the theoretical state of research

Basically, the definition of the term itself represents a major challenge in the German-speaking countries, because the terms *museum pedagogy*, *museum didactics* and *art and culture education* are used as synonyms in the literature, even though they often do not describe the same area of activity. Since the 1960s, with the birth of modern *art education*, museum education has been seen primarily as work with children and young people. In this initial phase of the discipline, the term *museum pedagogy* was associated with it, and through the work with school classes it was viewed as a branch of educational science.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, the term *museum didactics* was added in order to be able to define the area more clearly, which, however,

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<sup>1</sup> SPANIER, Lisa. *Kunst- und Kulturvermittlung im Museum: Historie – Bestandsaufnahme – Perspektiven*. Andrea v. Hülsen-Esch and Ulli Seegers (eds.). Düsseldorf: düsseldorf university press, 2014 (= kunstmarkt\_vermittlung, 1), p. 70.



led to some researchers understanding *museum pedagogy* as a sub-area of *museum didactics* and others to understand it exactly the other way around.<sup>2</sup> In the 1990s it was recognized that the concept of *museum pedagogy* was too narrow, as since then the focus of museum work was no longer on the learning character, but on the experience. In Austria, this reorientation of the professional field also recognized the opportunity to give museum education a new face from now on under the name *cultural education*. In Germany, people stuck to the term *museum pedagogy* because they saw the term as established there, even if the term was henceforth thought to be more all-encompassing. To this day, the synonymous use of the terms has been maintained, which usually proves to be a difficulty at the transnational level.<sup>3</sup>

While in the early phase of the discipline there was research in the theoretical scientific area, especially in the field of educational science, since the turn of the millennium there has also been an increase in museological research, but *art education* is still assigned a subordinate role in the museological field. Today there are several umbrella organizations and committees that deal with museum education at a national and transnational level. Examples of these include ICOM CECA and the Bundesverband Museumspädagogik.

ICOM CECA, the Committee for education and cultural action, was founded in 1948 by ICOM, the International Council of Museums, to promote professional exchange between educators at national and international levels. The Bundesverband Museumspädagogik was founded in Germany in 1991 and aims to support and coordinate the work of regional associations. In addition, it advocates for the continued existence and development of the *museum education* and initiates further training and research so that professional exchange takes place. Since the beginning of the 1990s, the journal "Standbein Spielbein"<sup>4</sup> is published by the Bundesverband Museumspädagogik which publishes twice a year and forms a forum for theory development and professional exchange of museum education.

Standards are important to ensure quality in museum operations. The pioneers, especially regarding *art education*, are countries such as Great Britain and the USA. In the last fifteen years there have also been significant attempts in Germany to professionalize *art education* and set standards for museums. One of the most important guideline in this context is the "Qualitätskriterien für Museen: Bildung- und Vermittlungsarbeit" which was published in 2008 by the Bundesverband Museumspädagogik e.V. and the Deutscher Museumsbund e.V. in cooperation with the Austrian and Swiss associations regarding museum education. The "Qualitätskriterien", which can be translated to *quality criteria*, name the subject areas of content, target groups and methods of communication as well as qualifications

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<sup>2</sup> Ibidem, p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> STÖGER, Gabriele. Was ist „Museumspädagogik“? In: *Standbein Spielbein* 43 (1995), pp. 10-11; BUNDESVERBAND MUSEUMSPÄDAGOGIK E.V. (ed). *Positionspapier Museumspädagogik: Stellungnahme des Bundesverbandes Museumspädagogik e.V.* Saarbrücken, 2006, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> BUNDESVERBAND MUSEUMSPÄDAGOGIK E.V. (ed). *Standbein Spielbein: Museumspädagogik aktuell.* Hamburg: 1982-.

of the staff, partners and necessary framework conditions.<sup>5</sup> In Austria, there is not yet any equivalent guideline. Only the “Österreichische Museumsgütesiegel” by ICOM Austria can be mentioned. It is a catalogue of criteria that can be used as a guideline for Austrian museums, whereby the Austrian museums receive recognition for their work. The catalogue of criteria is based on the “ICOM code of Ethics” and has been adapted for the Austrian museum system. It deals with all aspects of the museum’s work, meaning that only a short chapter deals specifically with *art education*.<sup>6</sup>

In order to meet the needs of visitors, a variety of methods are required, which can only be achieved through tailor-made communication formats. The insights for high-quality *art education* can be gained from audience research on the one hand and from learning theories on the other. The following examples are the result of both learning theories and audience research.

*Free-choice-learning* describes that the learning activity is a side effect that occurs in social life, i.e. it can happen at home, at work or in leisure time, where museum work can intervene.<sup>7</sup> Adults learn in non-formal or informal contexts. The acquisition of knowledge serves much more new ideas and connections and is therefore self-determined, but it should also bring pleasure and ambitions and interests should be satisfied. But acquiring knowledge is never just about acquiring information. Adults have a desire for emotional enrichment and new insights. Only if you know how adults learn and know their needs, this can be properly incorporated into the educational work. The museum is seen as an ideal place for *free-choice-learning*, as visitors often leave the museum with increased knowledge, new skills, new understanding and new inspiration.<sup>8</sup> As the name *lifelong learning* suggests, this model focuses on learning that lasts a lifetime. The model focuses on the learners and can take place voluntarily and informally in everyday life through interpersonal relationships or through cultural exchange.<sup>9</sup> For the art historical context, the model of *aesthetic-cultural education* can also be mentioned at this point, in which visitors deal with the aesthetic quality of objects and phenomena.<sup>10</sup> Finally, *cognitive science* must be mentioned as well, which deals with people’s

<sup>5</sup> DEUTSCHER MUSEUMSBUND E.V. and BUNDESVERBAND MUSEUMSPÄDAGOGIK E. V. (ed). *Qualitätskriterien für Museen: Bildungs- und Vermittlungsarbeit*. In Zusammenarbeit mit dem Österreichischen Verband der KulturvermittlerInnen im Museums- und Ausstellungswesen und Mediamus – Schweizerischer Verband der Fachleute für Bildung und Vermittlung im Museum. Berlin, 2008, pp. 8-21.

<sup>6</sup> ICOM ÖSTERREICH (ed). *Österreichisches Museumsgütesiegel: Kriterienkatalog*, 2021, pp. 60-63.

<sup>7</sup> DEUTSCHER MUSEUMSBUND E.V. (ed). *Museen und Lebenslanges Lernen: Ein europäisches Handbuch*. Berlin, 2010, p. 8; HAASE, Ellinor. *Lebenslanges Lernen als neuer gesellschaftlicher Imperativ und der Beitrag der Museen*. In: Hartmut JOHN and Anja DAUSCHEK (eds.). *Museen neu denken: Perspektiven der Kulturvermittlung und Zielgruppenarbeit*. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2008, (= Publikation der Abteilung Museumsberatung, 26), pp. 88-89.

<sup>8</sup> HAMANN, Matthias. *Lebenslanges Lernen in Museen*. In: Beatrix COMMANDEUR, Hannelore KUNZ-OTT and Karin SCHAD (eds.). *Handbuch Museumspädagogik: Kulturelle Bildung in Museen*. München: kopaed, 2016 (= Kulturelle Bildung, 51), p. 235; *Museen und Lebenslanges Lernen...*, pp. 11-14.

<sup>9</sup> *Museen und Lebenslanges Lernen...*, pp. 8-11.

<sup>10</sup> BRAUN, Tom and Brigitte SCHORN. *Ästhetisch-kulturelles Lernen und kulturpädagogische Bildungspraxis*. In: Beatrix COMMANDEUR, Hannelore KUNZ-OTT and Karin SCHAD (eds.). *Handbuch Museumspädagogik: Kulturelle Bildung in Museen*. München: kopaed, 2016 (= Kulturelle Bildung, 51), pp. 115-118.

psychological processes and their perception. Particular attention can be paid here to *attention* and *flow*, which can create more intensive communication between the art exhibition, objects and visitors.<sup>11</sup>

The methodological pluralism can only be achieved through a variety of communication formats. Basically, the three major areas are personal, media and action-oriented educational formats, which are supplemented by the museum presentation. In the following there are a couple of examples of these formats.

The museum presentation is important because *art education* is not only communicated *in* the exhibition, but also *through* the exhibition.<sup>12</sup> The most important elements of a successful museum presentation are room layout, arrangement of exhibits, routing and guidance system, lighting as well as materials and colours. How an exhibition is conceived and designed influences visitors' perception of the content and objects on offer.<sup>13</sup>

Personal formats include all formats that can be carried out by individuals. One of the most important forms of personal *art education* are *guided tours*. It can be distinguished from *guided conversations*. While the guided tour takes place in a larger heterogeneous group, in which the guide monologues the contents of the exhibition to the visitors, the *guided conversations*, on the other hand, takes place in smaller groups. Because the groups are usually more homogeneous, this format allows the visitors' interests and needs to be addressed more and the content and exhibits can also be adapted to them. During a *guided conversation*, the language can be much better adapted to the group which is an important topic in the field of museum education. In the *guided conversations* there is a higher degree of participation and dialogue.<sup>14</sup> Finally, in the literature, *events* are also seen as personal formats because they require museum employees. This form of *art education* focuses on entertainment and sociability as well as *free-choice-learning*.<sup>15</sup>

The biggest advantage of media formats is that it can meet the needs of an increasingly heterogeneous audience through the variation and combination of different media elements. Through the media, the audience can acquire knowledge independently and engage with subjects and content that interest them personally.<sup>16</sup> Basically, a distinction can be made between written and technical media. In the literature, the use of *exhibition texts* is often included in the area of media

<sup>11</sup> MONTI, Francesca and Suzanne KEENE. *Museums and Silent Objects: Designing Effective Exhibitions*. Farnham/Burlington: Ashgate, 2013, pp. 55-69.

<sup>12</sup> KESSELHEIM, Wolfgang. Wie kann man Ausstellungenkommunikation analysieren? Ein Vorschlag aus der Sprachwissenschaft. In: *Standbein Spielbein* 89 (2011), p. 51.

<sup>13</sup> Qualitätskriterien für Museen..., p. 15; MONTI/KEENE, *Museums and Silent Objects ...*, pp. 35-47; WAIDACHER, Friedrich. *Handbuch der Allgemeinen Museologie*. Wien/Köln/Weimar: Böhlau, 1999, pp. 434-442; DEUTSCHER MUSEUMSBUND E.V. and BUNDESVERBAND MUSEUMSPÄDAGOGIK E.V. (ed). *Leitfaden: Bildung und Vermittlung im Museum gestalten*. In Kooperation mit lab.bode – Initiative zur Stärkung der Vermittlungsarbeit in Museen. Berlin, 2020, p. 31.

<sup>14</sup> SPANIER, Kunst- und Kunstvermittlung im Museum..., pp. 172-174.

<sup>15</sup> NETTKE, Tobias. Personale Vermittlung in Museen: Merkmale, Ansätze, Formate und Methoden. In: Beatrix COMMANDEUR, Hannelore KUNZ-OTT and Karin SCHAD (eds.). *Handbuch Museumspädagogik: Kulturelle Bildung in Museen*. München: kopaed, 2016 (= Kulturelle Bildung, 51), p. 179.

<sup>16</sup> Leitfaden..., p. 46; MERGEN, Simone. Mediale Vermittlung in Museen. In: Beatrix COMMANDEUR, Hannelore KUNZ-OTT and Karin SCHAD (eds.). *Handbuch Museumspädagogik: Kulturelle Bildung in Museen*. München: kopaed, 2016 (= Kulturelle Bildung, 51), pp. 194-196.

communication. *Exhibition texts* can be an aid to orientation if they are formulated correctly. The texts must be designed in such a way that they lead through the exhibition, but at the same time also create connections between the information if not all of the texts are read. Key requirements for texts are therefore a clear structure, simple language, brevity and conciseness as well as stimulation.<sup>17</sup> There are also *worksheets*, especially in the area with children and young people. They arise from the requirement to enable children to have a minimum amount of independent activity. The *worksheets* are filled with tasks through which learning goals are to be achieved and secured.<sup>18</sup> The *self-guide/brochure* serves to provide orientation within the exhibition and should briefly and concisely reflect the topic and content of the exhibition. The advantage of *self-guides/brochures* is that they are cost-effective and can significantly extend the total time visitors spend in the museum or exhibition because they are more engaged.<sup>19</sup> Finally, *publications* can be mentioned as written media through which visitors can engage intensively with museum topics even after visiting the museum.<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand, there are technical media formats. *Audio guides* and *multimedia guides* can be mentioned as one of the most common technical media. The advantage of such guides is that visitors can move through the exhibition individually and only receive the information in which they are interested. *Terminals* and *smartphone apps* in exhibitions can ensure more individualized use but also playful access; the auditory conveyance of information can also be supplemented by images and videos. In addition to personal comments, visitors can also intervene interactively in the museum's work and thereby help shape the ongoing exhibitions and projects.<sup>21</sup> The use of *social media* and online communities can be used as multipliers and catalysts for *art education*. In this way, additional information can be added online when visiting the museum, which enables further engagement with the topics and offers and leads to an individual expansion of knowledge.<sup>22</sup>

In action-oriented formats, the audience becomes active. Through information, presentations and communication, visitors can be activated and motivated to take their own actions. So-called *information and action rooms* can be helpful. These places of cultural exchange are located away from the exhibition area and are filled with multimedia interaction and research options. In such rooms, different information services and interaction services can be made available to meet the different needs of the people. *Hands-on* are action objects, tangible replicas or artifacts that become visible when a button is pressed. Through one's own sensing and feeling, the

<sup>17</sup> BITGOOD, Stephen. *Attention and Value: Keys to Understanding Museum Visitors*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2013, pp. 83-102; NOSCHKA-ROOS, Annette. Bausteine eines besucherorientierten Informationskonzepts. In: Ulrich SCHWARZ and Philipp TEUFEL (eds.). *Handbuch Museografie und Ausstellungsgestaltung*. Ludwigsburg: av-Edition, 2001, p. 99.

<sup>18</sup> WESCHENFELDER, Klaus and Wolfgang ZACHARIAS. *Handbuch Museumspädagogik: Orientierung und Methoden für die Praxis*. Düsseldorf: Pädagogischer Verlag Swann, 1988, pp. 211-219.

<sup>19</sup> BITGOOD, Attention and Value ..., pp. 112-120.

<sup>20</sup> SPANIER, Kunst- und Kunstvermittlung im Museum..., pp. 168-170.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 189-192.

<sup>22</sup> GEBHARDT, Martin. Digitale Medien außerhalb des Museums. In: Beatrix COMMANDEUR, Hannelore KUNZ-OTT and Karin SCHAD (eds.). *Handbuch Museumspädagogik: Kulturelle Bildung in Museen*. München: kopaed, 2016 (= Kulturelle Bildung, 51), pp. 214-215.

art and museum experience can be intensified, authenticated and supported for the subjective appropriation process. The action-oriented methods, which are an interaction of the previously mentioned formats, have their effects particularly on children and young people. Another form of action-oriented formats can be guest books, questionnaires and online options. In these, visitors can comment on the exhibition, information and service of the museums and also leave their impressions. This enables visitors to have a social exchange, and they also have an indirect influence on the museum's work through their evaluative feedback. But they can also (inter)actively help design exhibitions.<sup>23</sup>

As this brief explanation of various communication methods shows, there is a variety of formats and methods that must be chosen appropriately depending on the exhibition and museum. There is no general formula that can be applied equally to all institutions.

### The case study millstART

In order to show to what extent the theoretical models are implemented in practice, the *millstART* case study could be used. The art association *millstART* was founded in 2018 and has since then made it its mission to exhibit and communicate contemporary art. *millstART* is suitable as a case study because through personal work experience at the exhibition<sup>24</sup> and direct contact with the visitors, it was also possible to gain an impression of how the different educational formats and methods were accepted by the audience.

For *millstART*, it is important to reach its target groups through adapted *art education*, which at the same time must also be adapted to location, staff and requirements. The fundamental consideration of the communication concept at *millstART* begins in the exhibition design phase. In this process phase, the question is, among other things, the extent to which the possible artists and their works of art can be integrated into the association's concept and what education methods and formats are required.

At *millstART*, this premise is pursued primarily through personal formats, but the visitors should also be able to interact with the exhibition independently. The exhibition at *millstART* is designed in such a way that there is a possible route, which is communicated to visitors through the site plan and information signs. At the same time, the individual rooms also form self-contained units that can be viewed on their own, so that visitors can decide on their own what and how much of the exhibition they want to see.

The biggest focus at *millstART* is on personal formats. Visitors are welcomed to the exhibition and, if desired, accompanied through the exhibition by the educational team. In addition to these *guided conversations*, *guided tours* are also offered twice a day. They are usually in small groups that are led through the exhibition through a dialogue with the respective staff member. The big advantage of this format is that the visitors have a greater right to have a say in which works of art are going to be viewed, and it is possible to respond to visitors more individually. At *millstART*,

<sup>23</sup> SPANIER, Kunst- und Kunstvermittlung im Museum..., pp. 180f. 404-406, 429-431.

<sup>24</sup> The author of this article was part of the educational team between 2021 and 2022.

the needs and interests of visitors are in the foreground. With this opportunity to react to the situation, the educators can build a more personal relationship with their audience, which can enrich the museum experience.

At *millstART* the focus of media formats is on the *texts*. On the one hand, the exhibition rooms are equipped with *texts* that can also be read digitally in a hybrid form using QR codes; on the other hand, there are *brochures* in the exhibition that deal with the respective exhibition theme, artists and works of art, so that visitors can go through the exhibition independently, but they can also obtain further information after the exhibition. In this way, visitors can independently acquire knowledge that is tailored to their personal interests.

To this day *millstART* consists mainly of volunteers who make it their mission to exhibit and communicate contemporary art. With the plurality of methods shown, it is possible to reach a heterogeneous target group and incorporate their needs into the *art education*. The selected methods enable visitors to choose, according to their needs and wishes, how the exhibition should be structured for them. Every year the association asks itself how they can further optimize the *art education* for their visitors and those who are not yet visitors.

The results of the analysis of the case study *millstART* showed that practice does reflect the concepts of theory and appropriates the individual elements that are important for one's own use, but this does not always happen on a conscious level. There is a tendency that there is an intrinsic development from the interaction with the visitors, since on the one hand the theoretical models are implemented, but in practice the knowledge of the theories and theoretical models is not always known, but that knowledge is drawn from the experiences with the visitors as well as through a 'gut feeling'.

## Conclusions

Learning theory models and art educational concepts depend on each other and the findings of the learning theories can be generally applied to different formats, but at the same time it must be taken into account that the subjective perspectives of the visitors cannot always be translated into adequate communication concepts.

Finally, it can be mentioned that there are theoretical models that are also of importance for the development of *art education*, but at the same time a discrepancy can be recognized between theoretical foundations and practical implementation. This discrepancy is recognized less in the type of the formats, but rather in the approach. *Art education* concepts can also be transferred into practice, but these are usually not based on theoretical foundations, but are based on the practical experiences of the educators involved.

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# Taxidermy and Dermoplastic Exhibits in the Context of Museum Presentation<sup>1</sup>

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## *Taxidermy and Dermoplastic Exhibits in the Context of Museum Presentation*

In this work, we would like to present taxidermy in the context of museum presentation, its history, present, and possible future – with an emphasis on the ethical question of this craft. Taxidermy has a specific position in museums, for its educational and emotional potential, which we discuss in this article. Besides theoretical and historical information, we also present a practical method of creating taxidermy specimens and a brief overview of how to properly care for them.

Keywords: Dermoplastic specimens, Taxidermy, Museum Presentation

## General Introduction

This work aims to provide a complete explanation of the phenomena of taxidermy in close connection to the museum as an institution, for which it is an important aspect of presentation. In our written contribution to the conference, we would like to first shine light on the historical nuances that different disciplines of preparation went through in their long-standing history.

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<sup>1</sup> Specifický výzkum MUNI/A/1329/2022 “Muzejní prezentace II – moderní přístupy a trendy v muzejní prezentaci”.

In the following chapter, we pay attention to taxidermy today, and its practice. We also highlight the figure of a taxidermist as a keeper of the practice.

In the next chapter *The Method of Dermoplastic Preparation* we introduce the general method of the practice. The theoretical and practical use of taxidermy in the context of museum presentation is discussed in the following chapter.

In the conclusion, we examine the current status of taxidermy in museum presentation. We also consider the possible future of the practice, based on the study of expert monographs, anthologies, graduate theses, and professional journals.

## Historical Introduction

The history of preparation can be without a doubt called age-old. The beginnings of preparation in connection with presentation can be traced to the first half of the 3rd millennium BC when specially trained preparators produced preserved animals for Egyptian tombs. Mummifications of human remains can also be considered a pre-taxidermy preparation. This tradition can be observed as a type of presentation because these naturfacts increased the prestige of the deceased and their family (in cases of multi-generational tombs). The more numerous and higher quality the articles were, the more their prestige rose. Collection and preservation of animal remains also had an important religious aspect – the souls of these animals were supposed to accompany the deceased to the afterlife. In ancient Egypt, the most preserved animals were cats, dogs, and birds, but also crocodiles.

In the Middle Ages, we can see a notable attenuation of animal preparation, which was heavily connected to pagan polytheistic cults. The modern history of dermoplastic preparation is dated to the 17th century when hunting trophies became an integral part of the decor of noble residencies. Just as in the ancient tombs, these preserved animals added prestige to the owners.<sup>2</sup>

The following 18th and 19th century can be considered a period of rapid development for commercial taxidermy. New, highly specialised associations began to appear, followed by specialised firms, like studio Rowland Ward in London (examples can be found in Powell-Cotton Museum, including the renowned exhibit of a taxidermied elephant)<sup>3</sup>

This development of taxidermy is heavily influenced by naturalist Carl E. Akeley (1864–1926), who is considered a pioneer of new preparation methods. C. E. Akeley applied completely new technological procedures based on less aggressive, but still highly effective chemical compounds. Akeley and his artistic colleagues also evolved the mechanical method of taxidermy – he no longer „stuffs“ the animal, but he stretches the skin on a wire model. This model is however no longer used today<sup>4</sup>, the model is now created from clay or polyurethane.

Akeley's legacy is without a doubt embedded in American museology. His creations remained in a well-preserved state and are on display for visitors at The American Museum of Natural History in New York.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> ŠTĚPÁNEK, Otakar. *Moderní preparace přírodnin*. Praha, 1999, pp. 40-53.

<sup>3</sup> FROST, Christopher. *History of British Taxidermy*. Long Melford, 1987, p. 125-148.

<sup>4</sup> SANDERS, Penelope. *Carl Akeley: Africa's Collector, Africa's Savior*. Paragon House, 1991, pp. 15-40.

<sup>5</sup> SANDERS, Penelope. *African Obsession, The Life and Legacy of Carl Akeley*. Jacksonville, 1998, pp. 35-43.

Akeley's work was partially based on the work of 18th-century researchers, who experimented with the body remains of small animals and submitted most of their creations to museum collections. In this regard was also active the Czech region. Most notable pioneers of taxidermy of small animals, especially rodents, were naturalists Vilém Borůvka (1932 – 2014), Václav Frič (1839 – 1916), Jan Jindra, Josef Matouš (1904 – 1943), Bohumil Pražan, Karel Táboršý (1906 – 1988), Josef Tesař (1914 – 1993), Jiří Tůma (1905 – 1958), Zdeněk Uchytíl a Václav Urban. Most of them worked in the National Museum as conservators, but often they were also very close to the academic environment or were veterinarians (Urban and Uchytíl).<sup>6</sup>

The taxidermy tradition in the Czech Republic is still alive, partly through specialised firms or private preparators. Significant names in today's Czech taxidermy are Pavel Višňák, Pavel Zugar, Radomír Franc, Jaroslav Pekař, Miloš Malucha, Vladimír Čech nebo Václav Tlapák. Czech taxidermists regularly attend prestigious exhibitions and competitions, like the European Taxidermy Championship.<sup>7</sup> The continuation of this craft is secured by the Bachelor's degree program Conservation of Natural Materials and Taxidermy at the Czech University of Life Sciences, under the guide of Ing. Ondřej Salaba Ph.D.

## The Method of Dermoplastic Preparation

The method of dermoplastic preparation described below is based on lectures by Ing. Ondřej Salaba, Ph.D. This method is generally applicable only in its basic elements – different taxidermists use different methods, so materials and chemical compounds vary.

### Skinning and Fleshing

Before the work starts, the final form and look of the mount needs to be considered – what will be the animal's position, and what parts of the animal will be exchanged for artificial components? Subsequently, it is appropriate to prepare a reference material (photograph and measure the cadaver). After that, the skinning can begin. The incision can be dorsal or ventral, small and medium-sized (squirrel, hare, raccoon) can be case skinned (the skin is peeled like a sock). In this method, the incision is led under the tail from one ankle to the other. To make the incision, a scalpel, and a bigger curved knife are used. To separate firm connections of tissue, it is advised to use bone saw and cutting pliers. Special attention should be paid to the skinning of the head – there should be conjunctival sacs and entire lips attached to the skin.

After skinning follows fleshing, the purpose of which is to remove subcutaneous layers. The skin is stretched on a tanner's log or a plank. The layers of fat and subcutaneous tissue are removed by a tannery knife or a scalpel. Fleshing may be made easier by curing the skin with NaCl and subsequent rehydration, this makes the unwanted layers easier to separate. During this step, it is crucial to cut through

<sup>6</sup> FRIŠHONS, Jan; KOČÍ, Tomáš; VIŠŇÁK, Pavel. *Zoologické preparáty pro výuku přírodovědy, přírodopisu a biologie II. Dermoplastické preparáty a jiné*. Praha, 2018, pp. 62-65.

<sup>7</sup> HARAWAY, Jeanne. *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science*. New York, 1989, pp. 23-45.

the lips, turn the ears inside out, and cut into thick areas of skin, so the chemicals used in the following steps can seep through the skin. This also eliminates autolysis, which leads to the fall-out of fur/feathers.

### Soaking

The main purpose of the soaking is to flush out nonstructural proteins from the skin, degreasing, and removal of parasites and impurities. The soaking solution contains water, a non-aggressive disinfectant (f.e. Sanytol), a wetting agent (f.e. Supralan), and NaCl in a ratio of 9 grams to 1 liter of water. The temperature should not exceed 30 °C. The skin stays in this solution for half an hour to three hours, based on the size. If the soaking is too long, it can lead to autolysis, continuous checking of the skin is advised.

### Pickling

This step further decomposes nonstructural proteins and after this step, only collagen and small amounts of fat particles should stay in the skin. The purpose of this step is to increase the acidity of the skin, which helps with the bonding of the tanning chemicals. The pickling solution consists of water, 80 grams of NaCl, and 5–6 grams of formic acid to 1 liter of water. It is important to add, however, that birds should be pickled in a less acidic solution. The skin stays in the solution for half of a day to three days and is frequently stirred. Pickled trough skin is white, and nicely wrinkles when squeezed.

### Thinning and de-pickling

The skin is thinned on a circular saw. Over the spinning blade of the saw the skin is run. In the end, the skin should be evenly thick and colored. Then comes the de-pickling. This step leads to even better purification of the skin and is used f.e. for sheep or moufflon (these species have lanolin in their fur, which is very hard to clear out). For de-pickling, a solution of wetting agents, water, and NaCl in a ratio of 40 grams to 1 liter of water is used. The temperature can rise to 38°C. Higher temperature leads to better activation of the wetting agents and better degreasing. After de-pickling, the skin must be pickled again, this time half of a day in a new solution is sufficient.

### Tanning

The solution used for tanning consists of NaCl, water (ratio 30–40 grams to one liter), and a tanning agent of choice (f.e. Novaltán). The skin stays in this solution for one to three days and must be stirred. During tanning, the collagen is flooded with aluminum ions from the agent. These ions replace the missing nonstructural proteins. A fat emulsion can be added to the tanning solution, which oils the skin and makes it smoother.

### Tumbling

The purpose of tumbling is to „Break the skin“, make it smoother, and degrease it. The skin is put into a spinning drum with perchloroethylene or naphtha.

### Stretching on the model

Tanned skin is ready for assembly. It is usually stretched over a model made out of polyurethane. These can be ordered ready-made or be made by hand. Smaller species may be stretched on a handmade model from wooden wool – this method is mostly used for birds. Polyurethane models can be cut and re-assembled as needed, the final position is completely up to the taxidermist, but should always look natural. The anatomy of the taxidermied species must be adhered to.

The eyes are exchanged for artificial ones, and the ears are reinforced with firm liners. Small subcutaneous muscle, which was removed during fleshing, is replaced by clay, especially in the face and around the ears.

A dextrin glue is applied to the model – this bonds the skin with the polyurethane. It is applied bit by bit the skin is stretched on gradually. To hold the skin in place, preparation needles are used. After the skin is on completely and is sown close, the expression is created. The animal's expression should be natural, and to achieve it, using reference material is advised. The expression is fixated with delicate needles, which stay in during the drying. As the creation dries, the taxidermist checks it regularly and fixes any mistakes that originate from the movement of the skin as it dries. The dry mount is ready for finishing.

First, all material used to fix the skin is removed. Holes made by the needles, are filled with epoxy sculpt (self-drying modeling clay). This clay is also used to sculpt the details, especially around the eyes and mouth. After sculpting, the mount is set to dry for 24 hours. After drying, the fur is refined. It should be blown out with an air compressor and brushed with a brass brush. Then the fur is polished with alcohol or acetone-soaked cotton – this adds shine and removes grease.

The next step is to add color. When choosing which colors to use, it is advised to look at the reference material – realistic and natural colors should be used. The best type of paint for taxidermy finishing is acrylic ink, applied in light layers with an airbrush gun. Too thick of a layer erases the original structures of the skin/fur and appears artificial. After the painting is done, a layer of protective lacquer is added. A high-shine lacquer is also added on the eyes, to make the mount appear more life-like. A finished taxidermy specimen is placed in a habitat, in a diorama or it can be placed on its own.

### Potential of Dermoplastic Taxidermy in Museum Presentation

Taxidermy in museum presentation has two main potentials: educational and emotional.

#### Educational potential

Taxidermy, especially modern-day taxidermy, is a realistic image of a species. In contrast with other media, like photography or film, which can also realistically capture the species, taxidermy is material, takes up space, is three-dimensional, and so it can bring the animal much closer. A great advantage of taxidermy is

its longevity – the oldest taxidermied specimens are dated to the 16th century.<sup>8</sup> Taxidermy also preserves the real size of the animal, which makes it easier for people to understand the scale of nature. Placing the specimen into a diorama with other species and habitats creates an extremely realistic image of the species' ecology. These dioramas are for example exhibited at The American Museum of Natural History in New York, where they display buffalos, bears, wolves, and many more species in their natural habitat.<sup>9</sup> Taxidermy shows both local and world biodiversity.<sup>10</sup> Some species are already extinct, and their likeness is kept only thanks to the few taxidermied specimens in museums. This applies to Tasmanian marsupial, which has gone extinct in 1936<sup>11</sup>, but is preserved and taxidermied in the National Museum in Prague.<sup>12</sup>

### Emotional potential

Taxidermy is specific thanks to its „in-between“ position. This exhibit is not perceived as an object, but also not as a living being. It is not alive, but still, it comes to life in front of the spectator. This borderline position tends to lead to a strong emotional experience for the onlooker.<sup>13</sup> Taxidermy opens up a debate, especially for families with young children, about finality and passing, it becomes a first impulse to the awareness of one's finitude.<sup>14</sup>

The aesthetic value should also not be forgotten. The observer usually isn't admiring the work of a taxidermist, but a creation of nature. Taxidermy becomes an inspiration and medium for art. For example, Walter Potter, who became famous for his anthropomorphic taxidermy, Deborah Sengl, whose sculpture „Killed to be

<sup>8</sup> BAUER, Aaron M., Alessandro CEREGATO a Massimo DELFINO, leden 2013. The oldest herpetological collection in the world: the surviving amphibian and reptile specimens of the Museum of Ulisse Aldrovandi. *Amphibia-Reptilia* [online]. Dostupné z: doi:<https://doi.org/10.1163/15685381-00002894>

<sup>9</sup> African and North American Diorama Halls. *Natural History Museum* [online]. Los Angeles: The Natural History Museum [cit. 2023-06-20]. Dostupné z: <https://nhm.org/experience-nhm/exhibitions-natural-history-museum/african-and-north-american-diorama-halls>

<sup>10</sup> PAVID, Katie. Why is taxidermy still valuable?. *Natural History Museum* [online]. London: The Natural History Museum [cit. 2023-06-20]. Dostupné z: <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/why-is-taxidermy-still-valuable.html>

<sup>11</sup> MENZIES, Brandon R., Marilyn B. RENFREE, Thomas HEIDER, Frieder MAYER, Thomas B. HIL-DEBRANDT a Andrew J. PASK. *Limited Genetic Diversity Preceded Extinction of the Tasmanian Tiger*. Plos One [online]. 2012, 7(4), pp. 1-7 [cit. 2023-06-20]. Dostupné z: doi:<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0035433>

<sup>12</sup> Vyhynulý vakovlk patřil mezi unikáty tasmánské přírody. *Muzeum 3000* [online]. Praha: Národní muzeum, 2012 [cit. 2023-06-20]. Dostupné z: <http://muzeum3000.nm.cz/clanek/vyhynuly-vakovlk-patril-mezi-unikaty-tasmanske-prirody>

<sup>13</sup> POLIQUIN, Rachel. The matter and meaning of museum taxidermy. *Museum and Society* [online]. 2008, 6(2) [cit. 2023-06-20]. ISSN 1479-8360. Dostupné z: <https://journals.le.ac.uk/ojs1/index.php/mas/article/view/118?acceptCookies=1>

<sup>14</sup> BUNCE, Louise. „Still life? Children's understanding of the reality status of museum taxidermy.“ In: *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 177 (2019), pp. 197-210.

Dressed“ comments on the issue of using fur for dress-making, or Kate Clark and her uncanny valley creations.<sup>15</sup>

## Practical Use of Taxidermy in Museums and Its Conservation

As stated above, taxidermied animals are used in the museum for the education of the visitors and for intensifying the experience of museum visits. For those purposes, for example, exhibited skin which is allowed to be touched, can be used. This engages the visitor. The next example is the size of the specimens – as they are exhibited at their natural scale, they inspire wonder and help contextualize the scale of the animal kingdom.

There are several responsibilities tied to the displaying of taxidermy. Their purpose is to preserve the longevity of the specimen. These responsibilities include proper storage, manipulation, maintenance, and construction, which ensure a proper appearance and functionality of the specimen.<sup>16</sup> Specifically in the Czech Republic, taxidermists must follow CITES guidelines and the guidelines of the Ministry of the Environment. These guidelines ensure the protection of animals, proper use of taxidermy specimens in museum collections, and safe and ethical manipulation.<sup>17</sup> Besides these guidelines, many more exist and are issued by ICOM.<sup>18</sup>

The specimens must be stored in places with optimal conditions. Depositories should have proper, nonfluctuating temperature and humidity. Taxidermy specimens should not be exposed to direct sunlight or dust. The museum employees working with these specimens should use proper tools (gloves, tweezers) and should be mindful of their fragility, to minimize damage.<sup>19</sup>

The presentation itself should follow certain rules. Specimens must be arranged attractively for the visitor but should follow the proper safety protocol. That means putting up barriers, like glass cases. Lighting of the displayed specimen must be artificial and shouldn't disturb the realness and life-like appearance. Part of the care is also regular checking of the display.

Animal preparations are an important part of the museum, and constant care is necessary for their well-being. The lifespan of taxidermied animals is constantly growing longer, thanks to the development of new methods and technology. Modern findings make it possible and easier to care for these specimens.

<sup>15</sup> COOK, Greg. Reckoning With ‘The Curious Occurrence Of Taxidermy In Contemporary Art’. *Wbur* [online]. Boston: wbur, 2016 [cit. 2023-06-20]. Dostupné z: <https://www.wbur.org/news/2016/03/25/taxidermy-in-contemporary-art>

<sup>16</sup> Looking after taxidermy: how to protect natural history. *Fine Art Restoration* [online]. Cumbria: Fine Art Restoration, 2021 [cit. 2023-06-21]. Dostupné z: <https://fineart-restoration.co.uk/news/looking-after-taxidermy-how-to-protect-natural-history/>

<sup>17</sup> ADAMCZYKOVÁ, Sylvie. *Taxidermie v kulturní instituci – fenomén vyčpaného zvířete*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, Filozofická fakulta, Ústav hudební vědy, 2020, 115 p. Magisterská diplomová práce. Vedoucí práce PhDr. Dagmar Koudelková.

<sup>18</sup> ICOM *Code of Ethics for Natural History Museums* [online]. Paris: ICOM, 2013, 4-8 [cit. 2023-06-21]. Dostupné z: [https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/nathcode\\_ethics\\_en.pdf](https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/nathcode_ethics_en.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Looking after taxidermy: how to protect natural history. *Fine Art Restoration* [online]. Cumbria: Fine Art Restoration, 2021 [cit. 2023-06-21]. Dostupné z: <https://fineart-restoration.co.uk/news/looking-after-taxidermy-how-to-protect-natural-history/>



## Future of Taxidermy in Museums

The presence of taxidermy in museums has and will probably have a privileged position, due to the (current) impossibility of a replacement. But it is appropriate to ask the question of how this practice will evolve.

Technology is swiftly moving forward, and newly developed methods can be carried through into taxidermy and its presentation. One of these newer technologies is 3D printing. By using synthetic polymers, it is possible to „print“ quite realistic and detailed specimens. These synthetic models can be an attractive novelty for visitors. This method also makes it easier to present species on the brink of extinction, or in general species protected by law.<sup>20</sup> A great downside of this is the loss of genetic material, which is preserved in taxidermy specimens. These exhibits would be attractive to the visitor, but their value for research would significantly decrease.

The traditional method of taxidermy (made from animal remains) will, however, evolve too. With time, taxidermists tend to specialize in certain types of animals, which leads to an improvement of the method and a higher quality of the final result.<sup>21</sup>

Currently, the big question surrounding taxidermy is its legality and ethics. Since the 19th century, society has gone through a certain development, which made this issue an important question for both the general and professional public. Many organizations today, that protect animal rights (like PETA), strongly voice their disagreement with the taxidermy practice, and the general public sometimes voices its contempt for taxidermy as well – like the demonstration in front of the Guggenheim Museum in New York.<sup>22</sup>

The protestors mostly demonstrate against the perceived unethicity of the whole process – hunting animals specifically for taxidermy, possible traumatization of visitors by exhibiting the specimen, and misusing taxidermy for „fun“ and commerce.<sup>23</sup> It should be stated, however, that today, hunting for museum taxidermy is pretty much unheard of. Museums use a process of „ethical taxidermy“ – preservation of animals that passed naturally, due to age or illness, or animals put down for a different reason, such as aggression, genetic mutation, illness, etc.

The future of taxidermy probably lies in innovation, specialization, and intertwining the latest findings from different scientific fields into taxidermy practice. Following the legislature and the most ethical route will also be of the

<sup>20</sup> COATES, Charlotte. How are some of the world's best known Museums doing amazing things with 3D Printing?. *Museum Next* [online]. Whitley Bay: Museum Next, 2020 [cit. 2023-06-21]. Dostupné z: <https://www.museumnext.com/article/how-museums-are-using-3d-printing/>

<sup>21</sup> FREMLING, Calvin R. a Donald L. HEMMING. A New Method of Taxidermy Using Polyethylene Glycol as an Impregnation Medium. *The American Biology Teacher* [online]. 1965, 27(9), 697-701 [cit. 2023-06-21]. ISSN 0002-7685. Dostupné z: doi:10.2307/4441144

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<sup>23</sup> LAWSON, Sirrus. Taxidermy: The Most Disturbing 'Decoration'. *Peta* [online]. Norfolk: Peta, 2017 [cit. 2023-06-21]. Dostupné z: <https://www.peta.org/living/humane-home/people-hanging-body-parts-walls/>

utmost importance. It is possible, that in the future, the dermoplastic method will be overcome completely. Even today, many of the museum specimens are created by lyophilization or plastination, especially in the case of anatomy collections.<sup>24</sup>

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# Preserving the Unpreservable? The Challenges of Ephemeral Art in Museums

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## *Preserving the Unpreservable? The Challenges of Ephemeral Art in Museums*

Ephemeral art is an omnipresent phenomenon in the art world. Ephemeral artworks differ from 'traditional' artworks in many aspects: In production, reception, and especially when it comes to preserving or displaying them in a later context. So how should ephemeral art be treated in the museological context? How can such artworks be preserved to put them in a museum? And how can they then be presented in exhibitions? Should they even be documented and preserved? Should they be displayed? These are some of the questions which are discussed in this paper. In the first part of the paper, the focus is on the theoretical approach to this question, with a short insight on the discussion on the question of the documentation of ephemeral art. The second part is then a more practical approach, focusing on a case study on Marina Abramović.

Keywords: ephemeral art, preserving, Marina Abramović

## The Challenges of Ephemeral Art in Museums

According to ICOM "Museums are responsible for the tangible and intangible natural and cultural heritage."<sup>1</sup> As well they "have the duty to acquire, preserve and promote their collections as a contribution to safeguarding the natural, cultural and scientific heritage"<sup>2</sup> But how can such be done with ephemeral artworks? And what precisely are ephemeral Artworks?

According to different dictionaries 'ephemeral' is something that lasts for a short time only. 'Ephemeral art' can be understood as an umbrella term for artforms like Installation Art, Body Art, Land Art, Performance Art, and so on. To summarize, under the term ephemeral art one can find different time-based artforms. Ephemeral art is not something that is, but rather something that happens. On the other hand 'traditional' art or 'Things in Museums' are usually static, material things, or as said just now 'things that are'.

So how can something ephemeral, something often non-material be preserved if one of their key concepts is to alter over time, or as Peggy Phelan states it for performance "Performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved,

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<sup>1</sup> ICOM Code of ETHICS For Museums, accessed October 10, 2023, <https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ICOM-code-En-web.pdf>, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem, p. 8.

recorded, documented”<sup>3</sup>? On the other hand, some people see the documentation of such works as a way to preserve them, as Katy O’Dell, states, that “performance art is the virtual equivalent of its representations”<sup>4</sup> or as Phillip Auslander who sees “The purpose of most performance art documentation [...] to make the artist’s work available to a larger audience.”<sup>5</sup>

If one wants to talk about such artworks later on, or if one wants to study them profoundly, or if someone couldn’t have been present when they were first presented, when the ‘original’ work happened but still wants to experience it, you need documentation. At this point Amelia Jones can be mentioned, who as well states, that such works are not only for live-reception but “either for an audience present at the time (‘live art’) or for audiences who engage the work through representational modes such as video installation”<sup>6</sup>. So, towards the opinion of Phelan who sees the essence of such works that they can’t be documented nor reproduced, they cannot be preserved but rather disappear in the memories of the recipients, according to Jones, it is very well possible to access such works through documents, so that it’s not necessary to be present at the time the work happens. As one can see, the opinions on documenting or preserving ephemeral art vary. But all in all, must be said, that either art history as well as the museological field are reliant on such documentation.<sup>7</sup> Or as Susanne Neubauer states it, documentation is essential for the ‘survival’ of an ephemeral work.<sup>8</sup> But how can such art be documented – technically speaking?

By photographing it? By writing about it? There are many ways to document something. But, if you document ephemeral art, you can never document all aspects of such an artwork. Ephemeral art works with time, but also with interaction and immersiveness. Such things cannot be documented. They can be mentioned in documentation, but what the artwork does with individuals, and how they interact and influence one another simply cannot be captured. So, as already seen in Phelan’s argument, documentation material is always something different from the artwork. The artwork per se cannot be captured, or fixed. So how can such ephemeral artworks, such documentations be preserved in museums, even though they are fragmentary?

Before being able to preserve such works on a technical level, it must first be acknowledged, that such documentations are references to the matter they are documenting, to the actual works, not the work, the thing, per se. So, with such documentations, not the actual ephemeral work is preserved, but rather access is

<sup>3</sup> PHELAN, Peggy. *Unmarked. The Politics of Performance*. First published 1993, reprinted 1996, 1998, 2001, Transferred to Digital Printing 2006, London, 2006, p. 146.

<sup>4</sup> O’DELL, Kathy. Displacing the Haptic: Performance Art, the Photographic Document, and the 1970s. In: *Performance Research* 2 (1) (1997), pp. 73-81, here p. 77.

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<sup>7</sup> NEUBAUER, Susanne. *Paul Thek Reproduced, 1969-1977: Dokumentation, Publikation und Historisierung räumlicher ephemerer Kunstwerke*. München, 2011, p. 22.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 39.

granted to the idea of the work, to its meaning and its form. But how can such access be granted? Is there a right way to document ephemeral art?

There are different strategies on how ephemeral art could or should be documented. The 'esc', a 'media-art lab', located in Graz understands the documentation practice as very extensive. They say that "Projects should be accompanied by theorists throughout their entire duration, from the initial idea to realization, with theorists actively involved in the implementation process."<sup>9</sup>

Other institutions, as for example the Zurich University of the Arts, have also developed guidelines for the documentation of ephemeral art. They define performance documentation as "The sum of all documentation materials, including those used or created for the preparation of a performance, materials, and media used during a performance, and all media recordings made during the performance, allowing for reception and further interpretations."<sup>10</sup> And last but not least, there are institutions such as the Tate Gallery in London, who see the way to preserve ephemeral art – more specifically Performance Art – not by documenting it, but rather by re-enacting it, or as they call it 'activating' it.<sup>11</sup>

But can you present such works by re-enacting them? Can other people, another artist, who are not the original authors of the work re-enact them? Or can the documentation as such be presented? How would such a presentation alter the 'original' artwork? Can one use the documentation material even as the base of a completely new mise-en-scene? These questions of course are not exclusively theoretical, but rather questions one encounters when practically working with ephemeral art.

## Case study

Marina Abramović is a performance artist whose works are inherently ephemeral. Nevertheless, most of her performances, even those she made a while ago, are still accessible today in form of different documentation material through documents. Without such documentation, they would no longer be accessible – or at least not in the form which they are. So it shows, that a way of preserving such ephemeral artworks, a way of granting access, is by documenting them. But how could these works now be presented in exhibitions?

In 2010, from March 14 until May 31, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York there was a retrospective on the works of Abramović. In the performance retrospective, among other, there was shown a chronological installation of Abramović's work, revealing different modes of representing, documenting, and exhibiting her ephemeral, time-based, and media-based works. The exhibition also included the first live re-performances of Abramović's works by other people. During this period Abramović herself was at the museum presenting a new piece,

<sup>9</sup> Translated from German, Original: *esc Medien Kunst Labor: Über uns*, accessed October 10, 2023, <https://esc.mur.at/de/content/die-programmatik-der-esc>.

<sup>10</sup> Translated from German, Original: *Züricher Hochschule der Künste, Das Dokumentarische im Feld der Performancekunst*, accessed on October 25, 2023, <http://archivperformativ.zhdk.ch/index.php%3Fid=39347.html>.

<sup>11</sup> LAWSON, Louise, Acatia FINBOW and Helia MARÇAL. Developing a strategy for the conservation of performance-based artworks at Tate. In: *Journal of the Institute of Conservation*. 42 (2) (2019), p. 8.

a performance called 'The Artist is Present'. Of course, next to the presentation-forms just mentioned in this example, there are many more possibilities to (re-) present such works (just think about the possibilities of AR, VR or similar). But which presentation-form is the 'right' way to present ephemeral art? Is there a right way?

As most of these questions are highly philosophical it is – of course – not possible to find 'the one right answer' to all these questions. The approach presented in the following paper should therefore be seen more as a suggestion, a base for more discussion, of questions to think about. But they also show, that to include ephemeral art in the musicological context, many (and many more) aspects have to be considered.

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# Ships as Museums (Museum Ships, Memory Ships)<sup>1</sup>

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*Studia Museologica Slovaca, 2023,7:63-69*

## *Ships as Museums (Museum Ships, Memory Ships)*

Ships have long played an important role in society, starting with ancient battles of conquest, overseas discovery voyages on the threshold of the modern age, to the transportation of trade commodities and transoceanic “journeys for a better life”. But only a small part of the vessels has survived to this day. The aim of this contribution is primarily to present them from a museum point of view, to define the terminological differences and, using the example of the most famous museum ships, to point out different forms of use of such a specific space both for exhibitions and for other activities. Another intention was to briefly outline the differences in approach to decommissioned ships between the American and European environments. The goal of this contribution is also to spread awareness about museum ships as a special kind of museum.

Keywords: ships as museums, museum ship, memory ship, surface vessels, historic ship, Historic Naval Ships Association, Šturec, USA, Europe, maritime museum, originally preserved ship, decommissioned ship

Maritime transport has long been an important part of society, and famous vessels that contributed to significant moments in human history are still remembered today. A number of monuments connected with maritime activity has been preserved around the world. Undoubtedly, the most sought-after of them are historic ships. This contribution aims to present them from a museum point of view, taking into account those that have the status of a museum.

It is necessary to first familiarize yourself with at least some basic terminology, and this is naturally most developed in countries with the longest maritime history. The concept of ships as museums includes two terms – museum ships and memory ships, which are generally considered synonymous. In practice, a museum ship represents a ship as a museum building and at the same time the main exhibit, and its essence is in a certain sense similar to an open-air museum, as the most authentic preservation of the original, specific environment (and architecture) for future generations. Memory ship, on the other hand, refers to a memorial ship, or

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<sup>1</sup> Specifický výzkum MUNI/A/1329/2022 “Muzejní prezentace II - moderní přístupy a trendy v muzejní prezentaci”.



a symbol of a memorable event. Thus, the meaning is slightly different, but from a practical point of view, it is necessary to work with both terms because they complement each other.

By the term museum ship, we mean an original, authentically preserved ship converted into a museum open to the public for educational, training or commemorative purposes.<sup>2</sup>

In the world, we can meet two types of coexistence of such museum ships. Either they function independently – vessel = museum – or they form part of a maritime museum, and here we have to distinguish whether it is only an exposed fragment that visitors can only look at, or if the ship has been preserved in such integrity and condition that it allows to treat it as a decommissioned means of transport, then it mostly functions as a subunit of the museum – protected by it as a superior institution with which it is connected by some historical or cultural relationship – for example retired ships of the British Royal Navy under the National Museum of the Royal Navy<sup>3</sup> or Vasamuseet (the Swedish Royal Navy's ship *Vasa's* own warship museum), which falls under the Swedish National Maritime Museum.<sup>4</sup>

A museum ship represents a specific museum relationship because by its essence, its own construction (skeleton), is a collection object, an artefact, and at the same time it has its own thesaurus, which represents both the accessories and the equipment itself, usually supplemented by personal items of the passengers or crew, and also contemporary products of external activity, such as accompanying photographic documentation (progress of construction work during construction, launching, maiden voyage, life on board, changes in the interior, deployment in combat and military operations, ...).

Several hundreds of museum ships have been preserved around the world, and about 175 of them are listed in the Historic Naval Ships Association. Due to the high costs of maintenance and the necessary restoration and conservation interventions, it is difficult to keep the vessels in service life, i.e., able to operate, for example. Some ships were exposed to such long-term decay that today they are on the complete borderline between authenticity and replica, because it was necessary to proceed with a massive, 85-90% exchange of material, which mainly concerns wooden parts or organic material subject to rapid degradation like sails, also being exposed to the influence of weather.

The basic classification is offered as follows – military and civilian (merchant) ships, raised wrecks and war memorials over (partially) sunken ships, ships in operation and immovable or fragmentary; training and recruitment ships; authentic and replicas; rowing boats, sailing boats, steamers and diesel boats; marine and riverine; ships welded and riveted, wooden and steel; liners and private passenger transport, and many other categories. Submarines and bathyscaphes represent

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<sup>2</sup> *Museum ship* [online]. 28 May 2023 [Accessed 25 June 2023]. Available from www: <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Museum\\_ship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Museum_ship)>.

<sup>3</sup> *Collections* [online]. The National Museum of Royal Navy, c. 2023 [Accessed 25 June 2023]. Available from www: <<https://www.nmrn.org.uk/collections>>.

<sup>4</sup> *Muzeum Vasa* [online]. 8 April 2023 [Accessed 25 June 2023]. Available from www: <[https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muzeum\\_Vasa](https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muzeum_Vasa)>.

their own group – as special crafts, they are excluded<sup>5</sup> from the lists of museum ships (surface vessels).

Most often we can meet military vessels that served in World War I and World War II, then with tugs and other auxiliary vessels, cargo and patrol ships, line mail steamers of the Industrial Revolution period, commercial, merchant and military sailing ships of the 18th and 19th centuries, technical and research vessels or small fishing boats. In a narrower construction typology (naval terminology), these ships are further divided into battleships, aircraft carriers, cruisers, light cruisers, armored cruisers, destroyers, corvettes, frigates, barques, shallops, clippers, schooners, carracks, brigs, xebecs (zebecs), caravels, galleons, pinnaces, ships of the line, escort convoys, tank landing ships, ocean liners, paddle steamers, steamships, lightships, tugboats, towboats, icebreakers, cable layer ships, minesweepers, gunboats, armored yachts, royal/imperial yachts, ferries, coast guard patrols, fire boats, river boats, tugs, brigs, jolly boats, rowing boats or triremes.

Type of visitors – since the museum ship represents a special, uniquely preserved museum collection, it attracts a slightly different composition of visitors than ordinary museums. And I would also add that this picture also differs geographically, especially with regard to America and Europe.

In the USA, ships from the military conflicts of the 20th century, war memorials – rather the term memory ship – are prevalent, and national pride and patriotism are related to this, which, together with mandatory school excursions, create a literal need to visit such ships-museums – as an example, we could have listed the USS Arizona Memorial or the USS Missouri Memorial (both related to the attack on Pearl Harbor). Decommissioned ships of the US Navy also appeal to fans of action-adventure films popularizing service at sea, so essentially a lay public of all ages.

Europe has a much more diverse range of preserved ships, so the specifics matter here, but as far as historical vessels are concerned, they certainly attract the professional public, historians, perhaps even more than classical museums, and of course tourists. Belle époque steamers, ocean liners and merchant ships, on the other hand, are specifically sought after by Titanic enthusiasts. And sailing ships and ships referring to corsair (pirate) activity are generally very popular among visitors of younger age groups.

The use, or therefore purpose, of museum ships is closely related to their former role. First of all, it is educational<sup>6</sup>, further commemorative / reminder, training / recruiting (in the case of naval school cadets), and sometimes even offers the possibility of accommodation as in a hotel (RMS Queen Mary).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *List of museum ships* [online]. 9 June 2023 [Accessed 25 June 2023]. Available from www: <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_museum\\_ships](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_museum_ships)>.

<sup>6</sup> The Australian National Maritime Museum took an innovative approach when it developed an extensive curriculum-linked educational resource about *Endeavour's* East Coast voyage for Australian primary school teachers and students as part of the Encounters 2020 program. This is a cycle of excursions and activities realized partly on board the replica of the ship *HMB Endeavour* and partly from the shore. *Education: Encounters 2020* [online]. Australian National Maritime Museum, c2023 [Accessed 1 October 2023]. Available from www: <<https://www.sea.museum/whats-on/encounters-2020/education>>.

<sup>7</sup> *Queen Mary* [online]. Visit California, c. 2023 [Accessed 25 June 2023]. Available from www: <<https://www.visitcalifornia.com/experience/queen-mary/>>.



**Museum ship example:** *RHN Georgios Averof, Athens, Greece*  
Photo: Author

Since the ship has its equipment and facilities fixed, it is like a permanent exhibition, and the possibilities of changing, or in other words manipulating, the collection items are very limited, but there are still ways to deal with it. The most popular way consists of a special tour, exhibition, etc. organized on the occasion of some significant date in the history of its service – this is mainly about introducing interactive elements, so that for that given moment the ship seems to “come alive” again, which is achieved, for example, by historical performances with the help of period costumes or allowing visitors to enter the normal locked areas of the ship – and in the case of operational capable ships, then there is usually an annual commemorative cruise or it goes “on air”, meaning that wireless communication, which is usually disabled on museum ships, is made available.

In addition to the ship itself, during the presentation we can often come across accompanying additional items, such as model collections (maquettes), menus, crew uniforms, ship logs and passenger diaries, maps and cartographic-navigational matters, personal items of passengers, aids to the performance of services from crews (guns, whistles, flashlights, binoculars), instructions for the ship’s operation (schedule of services, etc.), sound effects, photographic and film records... Some museum ships also offer virtual tours – for example, the USS Missouri.

On the other hand, the unique environment of the museum ship offers space for temporary exhibitions of art<sup>8</sup>, photography or textile character, such as a display of naval uniforms and accoutrements or an exhibition for the jubilee of a personality connected with the history of the ship or an exhibition of maritime themed paintings, i.e., scenes from battles in which the ship participated, etc. A certain specificity, or potential, is the fact that as a decommissioned vessel it can move as a travelling exhibition, but of course, this depends on the specific situation and conditions.

The most iconic examples of museum ships are undoubtedly: Vasa, HMS Victory, SS Great Britain, Cutty Sark, USS Constellation, USS Midway, RHN Georgios Averoff, HMS Belfast, SS Nomadic, Mary Rose, Kossuth, Aurora, Dom Fernando II e Glória, HDMS Jylland, Duchesse Anne (Großherzogin Elisabeth), ORP Błyskawica, Dar Młodzieży, Dar Pomorza and many others. We should also not exclude the now destroyed Nemi Ships (“Prima nave”, “Seconda nave”) and Tver, which once also carried the status of museum ships.

As an example from the domestic environment, I will mention the tugboat Šturec from 1937. Only relatively recently (in August of this year) it was presented to the public after the completion of over 10 years of renovation work, and it is possible to see it in the Winter Harbor in Bratislava. It is the oldest still preserved ship in Slovakia and a technical unique<sup>9</sup>, also declared a national cultural monument. It was built in the Komárno shipyards in 1937 under the name Štúr. In June 1944, it was sunk during the bombarding of the Apollo Refinery, and since the beginning of the 1950s, when it was raised and restored, it again served as a tugboat on the Danube. It was decommissioned in 1984 and has been falling into disrepair ever since. In 2013, it became the 1st acquisition of the Slovak Technical Museum in Košice as part of its new policy of documentation of water transport in Slovakia and is managed by its branch - the Museum of Transport in Bratislava. The intention of the museum is to present the tugboat Šturec as a Museum of Water Transport, or to create a Museum of Shipping in the area of the Winter Harbor, which would also include the tugboat Zvolen (built in 1946 in the Prague shipyard Antropius) or the legendary speedboat “Rocket”, which until recently operated between Vienna and Bratislava.<sup>10</sup> The greatest damage to the museologicalization (musealisation) of ship heritage in Slovakia was the careless scrapping of historical vessels during the height of socialism - in the years 1974-1975, for example, the steamer Orava

<sup>8</sup> An example can be the fine art exhibition that took place in 2021 on board the museum ship *Soldek* in Gdańsk, Poland. „Impresje - niebieski” - wystawa czasowa na „Sółdku” [online]. Narodowe Muzeum Morskie w Gdańsku, 16 October 2021 [Accessed 1 October 2023]. Available from www: <<https://nmm.pl/2021/10/16/impresje-niebieski-wystawa-czasowa-na-soldku/>>.

<sup>9</sup> *Najstarsia zachovaná loď na Slovensku. Remorkér Šturec v Zimnom prístave je technický unikát* [online]. Bratislavský samosprávny kraj, 9 August 2023 [Accessed 1 October 2023]. Available from www: <<https://bratislavskykraj.sk/najstarsia-zachovana-lod-na-slovensku-remorker-sturec-v-zimnom-pristave-je-technicky-unikat/>>.

<sup>10</sup> *Múzeum dopravy v Bratislave* [online]. Slovenské technické múzeum, c.2023 [Accessed 1 October 2023]. Available from www: <<https://stm-ke.sk/sk/pobocky/muzeum-dopravy-v-bratislave/zakladne-informacie>>.

(Svatopluk), the pride of the Czechoslovak joint-stock steamship company, built in 1916, was gradually dismantled and finally detonated.<sup>11</sup>

This work dealt mainly with the European continent/environment – the USA use a completely different methodological approach, at least in the concept of the museum, but mainly in the way of dealing with “inactive” ships – they have a special government program for this, called The Navy Inactive Ships Office (SEA21I), involving dismantling, storage, donation and disposal of conventionally powered U.S. Navy ships and crafts.<sup>12</sup>

It is not for nothing that it is said that a ship represents the whole world to a person at sea. The development of ships also followed from this, linked to the contemporary development of society, and each ship is a unique artefact. With the exception of archaeological discoveries, their fate depended primarily on luck and chance – what environment and decisions of the competent they were exposed to from the time of decommissioning – and declaration as a museum was often their last hope for survival.

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# Kresťanská cirkev a zbierky ľudských pozostatkov (relikvie)

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## *Roman Catholic Church and Collections of Human Remains (Relics)*

The article examines the topic of human remains in museum collections. Its aim is to bring a brief overview of current issues surrounding Roman Catholic Church and collections of human cadavers. Attention is paid to relics, as the main direction of church's interest. Current issues can be divided into four basic sections: authenticity, owners' rivalry, commercialization, and theological criticism. These four sections are researched in the second part of the article.

Keywords: Human remains, relics, Roman Catholic Church, ethics, authenticity, commercialization, theology

Ľudské pozostatky sú vo forme relikvií dôležité pre kresťanstvo približne od druhej polovice 2. storočia. Postupným vývojom prechádzalo ich zhromažďovanie a presúvanie. Hlavne po vydaní Milánskeho ediktu boli chrámy budované na kryptách a hrobch svätcov alebo „zdobené“ relikviami a relikviármi. Samotné relikvie boli ukladané do relikviárov, ktoré slúžili ako schránky pre ich ochranu a prezentáciu. Uchovávali sa na oltároch, v oltároch alebo rakvových schránkach, ktoré boli uložené v kryptách. Často boli vystavované pri zvláštnych príležitostiach alebo sviatkoch. Neskôr ich zberateľstvo prešlo k záujmu aristokracie, ktorá ich taktiež začala zbierať. Prepojila ich s katedrálami a vytvorila nové miesta pre upevnenie viery. Z mnohých príkladov uvediem Sainte Chapelle. Gotická kaplnka, ktorú nechal vybudovať Ľudovít IX., mala pôvodne slúžiť, ako miesto pre uloženie trňovej koruny. Neskôr bola zaplnená aj inými relikviami a dnes funguje ako múzeum.<sup>1</sup> Ďalší príklad už v našom prostredí predstavuje český kráľ Karol IV., ktorý sa počas štúdií na francúzskom kráľovskom dvore dozvedel o zbierke v Sainte Chapelle a sám si začal budovať po svojom návrate podobnú zbierku. Ako vášnivý zberateľ vytvoril jednu z najvýznamnejších mocensko-reprezentatívnych zbierok. Počas jeho ciest hlavne po Nemecku, Francúzsku a Taliansku, skupoval alebo dostával množstvo relikvií, ktoré mali pre jeho duchovný život veľký význam. Zbierky umiestnil v chráme sv. Víta, na hrade Karlštejn a čiastočne nimi ozdobil

<sup>1</sup> HOLMAN, Pavel, Petra LUNIACZKOVÁ. *Kapitoly z obecných dějin sběratelství a muzejnictví*. Brno: Filozofická fakulta Masarykovy univerzity. 1996.



rišsky poklad. Rôzne časti mumifikované a kostrové patrili svätcom, mučeníkom alebo apoštolom.<sup>2</sup>

Chápanie relikvií nezmenilo svoju podstatu od raného kresťanstva. Podľa vnímania veriaceho nejde o symbol, ale o priamy doklad<sup>3</sup> existencie zázraku. Boh koná svoje skutky pomocou svätcov, a teda držanie relikvií, dotýkanie alebo vzývanie malo veriacemu priniesť možné vyliečenie alebo odpustky. Hlavným dôvodom držania relikvie mala byť spása, ktorú mali zaručiť. Mimo to boli relikvie využívané napríklad aj pri cestách, kedy mali zaručiť bezpečný návrat. Táto tzv. psychóza relikviami pretrváva od počiatku, napríklad už v polovici 4. storočia bolo možné nájsť časti kríža po celom svete.<sup>4</sup> Jedným príkladom zo súčasnosti je článok antropologického žurnálu, ktorý prezentoval autorove rozhovory s veriacimi, ktorí potvrdili svoje osobné „zázraky“ v mnohých podobách. Jednotliví respondenti po modlení k relikviám zažívali príchod pomoci, a tak verili v ich magickú moc.<sup>5</sup> Vo svojej podstate teda ide o symbolickú hodnotu, ktorú veriaci prikladajú ľudským pozostatkom. Nejde však o priamy doklad ich nadprirodzenosti. Skôr o presvedčenie veriacich založené na ich domnienkach. V súčasnosti by sa vzťah cirkvi a relikvií dal poňať v štyroch smeroch: autenticita relikvií, boj medzi majiteľmi relikvií, komercializácia a teologická kritika.

Autenticita relikvií je vskutku pochopiteľná. Ako môže Nemecko vlastniť až 26 apoštolov, keď ich v realite toľko ani neexistovalo?<sup>6</sup> Dychtivosť po vlastnení relikvií vytvorila hlavne v stredoveku obchod s falšovaním relikvií. Popisky, ktoré spájali autentické relikvie častokrát vybledli, a teda aj samotný svätec, ktorému relikvie patrili prišiel o svoju identitu. Dá sa povedať, že množstvo dnešných relikvií v zbierkach nie je autentických, pokiaľ ide o múzejné inštitúcie alebo nepatria jednotlivým svätcom podľa pôvodných popiskov, ktoré ako bolo spomenuté vybledli alebo úplne zanikli.<sup>7</sup>

S autenticitou súvisí aj boj medzi majiteľmi relikvií. Po spomínanom rozšírení budovania kostolov v stredoveku množstvo z nich dostalo do majetku niekoľko rôznych druhov relikvií svätcov. Síce po väčšine bolo telo svätca rozdelené na niekoľko častí aj tak dnes množstvo chrámov vlastní rovnaké relikvie. Jedným z príkladov sú pozostatky sv. Mikuláša. Medzinárodná rivalita vznikla po údajnom objavení pozostatkov sv. Mikuláša na juhu Turecka v antickom meste Myra. Problémom bol fakt, že údajné pozostatky už ležia v talianskom meste

<sup>2</sup> KUTHAN, Jiří a Jan ROYT. *Karel IV.: císař a český král - vizionář a zakladatel*. Praha: NLN, Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2016. s. 581-603. ISBN 978-80-7422-460-7.

<sup>3</sup> CASSANDRA, Brittany Rose. Human bodies and reliquaries on display: The tension between education and spectacle in museum and religious spaces. In: *Senior Honors Projects*. James Madison University, 2010. Dostupný z [www:<https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/honors201019>](https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/honors201019).

<sup>4</sup> KLEIN, Holger A. (ed.). *Sacred Things and Holy Bodies. Collecting Relics from Late Antiquity to the Early Renaissance*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010. ISBN 978-0-911886-74-0.

<sup>5</sup> PINCKNEY, Darell. *Relics and Icons: Their Role in Healing, Conversions, and Miracles*. OKH Journal Anthropological Ethnography and Analysis Through the Eyes of Christian Faith [online]. 2022. Dostupný z [www:<DOI 10.18251/okh.v6i2.170>](http://www.<DOI 10.18251/okh.v6i2.170>). [cit. 2023-11-02].

<sup>6</sup> Relics. In: *Catholic Answers* [online], 2004. Dostupný z [www:< https://www.catholic.com/tract/relics>](https://www.catholic.com/tract/relics).

<sup>7</sup> HOLMAN, LUNIAČKOVÁ. Kapitoly z obecných dějin...

Bari, ktorého je Mikuláš patrónom.<sup>8</sup> Ide o nekončiace súperenie o pravdu medzi autenticitou vlastníkov.

Teologická kritika patrí medzi možno najrozšírenejšie koncepty akceptovania relikvií a ich uctievania. Samotná cirkev neuznáva mágiu avšak pôsobenie relikvií, ako nástrojov pre vykonávanie zázrakov používa základné koncepty mágie a to využitie hmoty pre spirituálne konanie. Boh samotný stvoril hmotu, ale nepotrebuje skrz ňu pracovať, aby utvrdil vieru veriacich. Relikvie by sa podľa dnešného chápania cirkvi mali ctíť a vážiť. Michael Henlein vo svojom článku prirovnáva túto rovinnu k rodine.<sup>9</sup> My všetci uchováваме nejaké osobné predmety, ktoré patrili našim predkom. Alebo ponechávame napríklad prvé zuby našich detí, aby sme si pomocou nich pripomínali minulosť alebo pripomínali našich príbuzných. Táto koncepcia by sa mala aplikovať aj na vieru v relikvie. Mali by sme ich vnímať ako pozostatky našej cirkevnej rodiny a srdcom si ich vážiť a ctíť. Ide teda skôr o symbolickú rovinnu upevnenia viery a spomienky na svätca.

Ďalším teologickým problémom je zameranie relikvie viac na danú osobu, ako na uctievanie svätej trojice. Ide o podobný koncept, kedy hlavnou podstatou má byť viera v Boha. Zdroje sú rôzne a aj ich interpretácia môže byť pre každého iná. Príklad zmienok o relikviách sa nachádza aj v Biblii.. Bývalý kňaz Bart Brewer<sup>10</sup> vo svojej autobiografii spomína, že v Biblii zmienky o relikviách neexistujú. Avšak priamy doklad o relikviách je hneď v 2. knihe kráľov 13 20-21:

„20 Potom Elizeus zomrel a pochovali ho. V tom roku však prichádzali do krajiny moabskí lupiči. 21 Keď raz pochovávali akéhosi muža, zazreli lupičskú bandu a hodili toho muža do Elizeovho hrobu. Len čo sa ten muž dotkol Elizeových kostí, ožil a stal si na nohy.“

Opäť ide o zmienku zázraku. Síce cirkev priamo nepridáva magické schopnosti relikviám, uznáva ich význam. Zaprieť zázraky vykonané relikviami by sa dalo označiť aj ako ignorovanie alebo obchádzanie priameho učenia Biblie.

Posledným smerom je komercializácia. Myslí sa hlavne využitie relikvií ku komerčným účelom v podobe výstav a expozícií, ktoré lákajú turistov a vzniká z nich zisk. V tomto prípade cirkev využíva etické stanovisko, ktoré sama aplikuje. Vatikánske múzeá len minulý rok vrátili posledné 3 múmie Inkov, ktoré dovtedy prezentovali v expozícii etnológie svetových kultúr. Dodnes aktívne pracuje na vrátení ľudských pozostatkov v globálnom probléme repatriácií.<sup>11</sup> Iným príkladom komercializácie je vyššie spomenutá rivalita nad pozostatkami sv. Mikuláša. Obe

<sup>8</sup> Samotným problémom je fakt, že chrám v Bari odmieta navrátenie pozostatkov sv. Mikuláša naspäť do jeho miesta posledného odpočinku v Myre. CASTELLANO, Piero. An International fight over the bones of Santa Claus. In: *St. Nicholas Center* [online]. 2017. Dostupný z [www:< https:// www.stnicholascenter.org/around-the-world/customs/turkey/international-fight>](https://www.stnicholascenter.org/around-the-world/customs/turkey/international-fight). [cit. 2023-11-02].

<sup>9</sup> HEINLEIN, Michael R. Why do Catholics Venerate Relics? In: *Simply Catholic* [online]. Dostupný z [www:< https:// www.simplycatholic.com/why-do-catholics-venerate-relics/>](https://www.simplycatholic.com/why-do-catholics-venerate-relics/). [cit. 2023-11-02].

<sup>10</sup> Relics. In: *Catholic Answers* [online], 2004. Dostupný z [www:< https:// www.catholic.com/tract/relics>](https://www.catholic.com/tract/relics).

<sup>11</sup> WOODEN, Cindy. Vatican Museum Repatriates Mummies to Peru. In: *Catholic Review* [online]. 2022. Dostupný z [www:< https:// catholicreview.org/vatican-museums-repatriates-mummies-to-peru/>](https://catholicreview.org/vatican-museums-repatriates-mummies-to-peru/). [cit. 2023-11-02].

mestá, Myra aj Bari, založili miestny cestovný ruch nad týmto sviätcom. Práve originalita pozostatkov dokáže prilákať väčšie množstvo turistov čím zvýši prosperitu zisku na turizme a pomôže rozvoju lokality.

## Súčasný postoj na ľudské pozostatky v múzeách

Ako bolo vyššie spomenuté, cirkev aktívne pracuje na procese repatriácií z ich múzeí a slovenská cirkev je v otázke prezentácie ľudských pozostatkov veľmi konzervatívna. Príklad vidíme hneď v nedávnom uvedení putovnej komerčnej výstavy *Body Worlds* v Bratislave. Kresťanská únia označila výstavu, ako vysoko neetickú a nevhodnú pre návštevníkov. Uberá ľudskú bytosť o úctu a rešpekt voči zosnulým. Vedeckú a náučnú hodnotu plne ignoruje. Odvoláva sa na zákon o pohrebníctve, ktorý vyslovene možnosť prezentácie anatomických exemplárov nedefinuje. Zákon tiež spomína možnosť prezentácie relikvií, ktoré sú v tomto prípade plne akceptované k prezentácii.<sup>12</sup> Je to úplný opak toho, ako sa k tejto výstave stavia cirkev vo svete.<sup>13</sup> Napríklad doktor April Lind<sup>14</sup> označuje výstavu pozitívne. Podľa neho výstava privedie návštevníkov k lepšiemu chápaniu fungovania ľudského tela. Ďalším príkladom je diecéza v meste Fall River na čele s kňazom, doktorom neurovedy, označuje výstavu ako prínos určitej osvety o pochopení a pripomenutí ľudských procesov.<sup>15</sup> Aj oficiálne periodikum Vatikánu - *L'Osservatore Romano*, vyzdvihuje výstavu ako „ódu rešpektu k ľudskému telu“. Už v 18. storočí totiž pápež Benedikt XIV. založil prvé anatomické múzeum v Bologni.<sup>16</sup> Jedinou pochybnosťou v tomto chápaní je komercializácia. Biskup Frederick Henry, z diecézy v Calgary, sa k tejto forme prezentácie vyjadril, ako o strate vzdelávacej funkcie a presune k zábave a komerčnému profitu z výstavy.<sup>17</sup>

Ľudské telo ako také vidí cirkev ako schránku, ktorej by sme mali venovať rešpekt a rovnako aj rešpektovať komunity pozostalých. Ide o spojenie medzi zaobchádzaním s pozostatkami v múzeách, ako bolo vyššie spomenuté. Cirkev

<sup>12</sup> Výstava mŕtvov v rozpore so zákonom. Je to v poriadku, pán minister? In: *Kresťanská únia* [online]. 2023. Dostupný z <https://krestanskaunia.sk/vystava-mrtvol-v-rozpore-so-zakonom-je-to-v-poriadku-pan-minister/>. [cit. 2023-11-02]; zákon č. 131/2010 Z. z. zo dňa 02. apríla 2010 o pohrebníctve.

<sup>13</sup> Pochopiteľne svetový pohľad nie je 100% pozitívny. Ide len o povznesenie pozitívnych reakcií zo sveta k tejto forme výstavy.

<sup>14</sup> Doktor April Lind je členom Arcidiecéznej komisie pre biomedicínsku etiku a člen predstavenstva Asociácie katolíckych lekárov za štát Minneapolis (USA). LIND, April. *Museum exhibit calls attention to treatment of bodies after death*. In: *The Catholic Spirit* [online]. 2013. Dostupný z <https://thecatholicspirit.com/commentary/museum-exhibit-calls-attention-to-treatment-of-bodies-after-death/>. [cit. 2023-11-14].

<sup>15</sup> V tomto smere sa vyjadrujú hlavne na tému pro-life, ktorá zastáva stanovisko o zrušení interrupcií tehotných žien. Diecéza sa nachádza v štáte Massachusetts v Spojených štátoch amerických. PACHOLCZYK, Tadeusz. *Bodies in Plastic*. In: *Catholic Education Resource center* [online]. 2006. Dostupný z [www://www.catholiceducation.org/en/science/ethical-issues/bodies-in-plastic.html](https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/science/ethical-issues/bodies-in-plastic.html). [cit. 2023-11-14].

<sup>16</sup> GLATZ, Carol. *Cutting-edge science: the church and the study of human anatomy*. In: *The Catholic Register* [online]. 2012. Dostupný z <https://www.catholicregister.org/item/13706-cutting-edge-science-the-church-and-the-study-of-human-anatomy>. [cit. 2023-11-14].

<sup>17</sup> Bishop questions dignity of *Body Worlds*. In: *CBC News* [online]. 2010. Dostupný z [www://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/bishop-questions-dignity-of-body-worlds-1.889832](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/bishop-questions-dignity-of-body-worlds-1.889832). [cit. 2023-11-14].

požaduje a sama venuje úctu zbierkam ľudských pozostatkov. V Biblii neexistuje doklad, kde by Ježiš spomínal hodnotu ľudského tela po smrti. Hmotné telo je uložené k pokoji, čo znamená, že by nemalo byť vyrušované. Takisto nemá telo ani významnú úlohu pre posmrtný život z pohľadu kresťanského učenia.<sup>18</sup> Morálny teológ Christian E. Brugger pripomína, že cirkev navrhuje, aby všetky telá zosnulých boli pochované na cintorínoch alebo na posvätnnej pôde. Rovnako pripomína dôležitosť výskumu na ľudských pozostatkoch pre rozvoj vedy a medicíny. A taktiež na archeológiu, ako dôležitý odbor poznania histórie.<sup>19</sup>

V závere teda môžeme chápať konanie cirkvi nasledovne: Cirkev venuje rešpekt a úctu ľudským pozostatkom a pozostalým jednotlivcom a komunitám. Rešpektuje priania zosnulých a rôznych iných kultúrnych zvyklostí. Navrhuje spätné uloženie pozostatkov do miesta posledného odpočinku alebo možnosť ľudské hroby ani nenarušovať. Avšak akceptuje potrebný výskum a jeho možný rozvoj pre vedu. Čo sa týka relikvií, tak tie akceptuje, ako symbolickú hodnotu upevnenia viery, ale magické hodnoty jej nepriznáva.

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<sup>18</sup> *Advisory Panel on the Archaeology of Burials in England: Guidance for Best Practice for the Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England* [online]. Dostupný z [www:<https://apabe.archaeologyuk.org/pdf/APABE\\_ToHREfCBG\\_FINAL\\_WEB.pdf >](https://apabe.archaeologyuk.org/pdf/APABE_ToHREfCBG_FINAL_WEB.pdf). [cit. 2023-11-02].

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