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**Original, Copy, Fake, On the significance of the
object in History and Archaeology Museums**

**You can always get what you want.
History, the original, and the endless opportunities of the copy**

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This introduction aims to sketch the varied history of the relation between original and copy within the larger context of cultural history up to the present. Are we really living in the age of the “culture of the copy”, as so many claim?

The copy is like Cinderella in the fairy tale, cowering silently in the kitchen over the stove while her radiant step-sisters bask in the brilliance of the ceremonial ball. Is the copy the “poor sister” of the resplendent original? It often seems to be. For example, when an exhibition presents a reproduction instead of the original, colleagues from other museums wonder: was the museum not considered trustworthy enough to be given the original? Does it not meet the essential global conditions for getting items on loan? Do people here confuse the exhibition with the gift shop? And visitors might wonder: do they count on having immature visitors who won’t notice the difference between the original and the copy?

So the copy seems to leave a bad aftertaste. There are various reasons for this, two of which seem central to me: one specific to museums and the other to cultural history. The first reason stems from the very nature of the museum. The museum is the site of material transmission, thus the site of originals. Where in a society are the remains, the relics, the authentic material culture preserved if not in the museum? This is reflected in ICOM’s ethical guidelines. Collecting and preserving are two of the pillars of museum work (alongside researching, exhibiting and communicating). And the ICOM Code of Ethics says explicitly: Museums should respect the integrity of the original when replicas, reproductions, or copies of items in the collection are made. All such copies should be permanently marked as facsimiles. No-one will have any objection to this good practice, and none of us wish to have depositories where we can no longer distinguish originals and copies.

But let us look closer to history, to cultural history, in order to better understand the relation between original and copy. And at this point I would like to note that my view of cultural history is predominantly Western, and Western European. Whether the story I am about to sketch has any validity for Asian cultures as well is an open question for me, one that I would be happy to discuss with you, my colleagues, afterwards.

In his international bestseller *The Name of the Rose* (1980), the Italian philosopher and writer Umberto Eco provides a lovely description of the copyists in a mediaeval monastic library, bent over their work with ink-stained fingers and the utmost concentration: the reproduction of precious handwritten manuscripts and rare books. The works to be reproduced were not copyright-protected originals as we would understand them today, but rather the material manifestation of a divinely-ordered universe. They cried out to be copied in order to bring this manifestation into the world; in this sense, the work of copying was a revered craft.

Since the Renaissance, artists who lived in the posterity of the classical world and perfectly imitated these models tended to see themselves as godlike. What we are used to calling “modern age thought” interprets an original work as the creation of an individual genius. Artists began signing their works to protect their style from imitation. Driven by an increasingly secular art market that demanded more and more works of the same type and thus increased artists’ fame, the artists used techniques and technologies to quickly reproduce their art to increase distribution of their original style: workshops with students, and copper engravings and etchings that reproduced the original. Each new step on the ladder of reproduction was accompanied by louder cries for the originality of true art and more drastic measures against “counterfeits”, which themselves first made possible the demand for originals. Then the figure of the connoisseur emerged, who embodied the aesthetic function of proclaiming the non-reproducibility of great art. Economically, however, the connoisseur functioned as a double-check, distinguishing copies or counterfeits from the works of the artist, distinguishing better or worse originals, and driving up the price and prestige of the favored works.

Thus original and copy still belonged together. The copy became the discount version, the poor man's substitute for all those for whom the original was unobtainable. People who couldn't acquire an original Rubens bought the copper etching of it or – with the new reproduction techniques of the 19th century – the collotype or phototype.

And yet around the turn of the 19th century – at precisely that moment when historical museums first arose in large numbers – one also finds representatives of the Enlightenment commending the copy as a means of aesthetic appreciation and education. Museums acquired plaster reproductions of ancient models for the collections such as the Venus de Milo, Hercules or Diana. Some museums in the early 19th century were founded entirely on such copies. They were not concerned with the original, with its aura – a concept we will certainly be talking about often enough in the coming days – but rather with the appreciation of the object and what it attests to; and thus it was of secondary importance whether it was original or a copy. Of course this is an attitude that has maintained its validity through the ages and we have since come to make use of in museums and exhibitions.

But do we still have any use for the original at all today? If we believe the American cultural historian Hillel Schwartz, not anymore. Schwartz looks at the relation between original and copy, the authentic and the fake, truth and lie, and shows that man cannot live from the original alone and has been unable to for a long time. Instead human originality consists, for him, in the unceasing invention of new copying techniques. In his book *The culture of the copy* (1996) Schwartz sketches an abundant universe of replicas, teeming with miniatures and portrait photographs, mannequins, sex dolls, marionettes, ventriloquists, vending machines, robots, androids, letter copies, documentaries, artificial insemination, surrogate motherhood, etc. It is only the production of copies, the creation of a life from decals and imitated feelings that makes us what we are – at least according to Schwartz. It is the duplicity of the event, the replicability of the world (the Eiffel Tower in Las Vegas, the evening news or the clothes we wear) that seems to give things their credibility

and thus to suggest precisely that which the things seem to have least of: authenticity.

Our search for authenticity, in Schwartz' view, stems from a longing for truth, self-knowledge, and a more secure identity; but how can we satisfy this longing in a time of the bio-energetic omnipotence or omnipresence of continually new media? The more the original eludes us, the more we come to accept the counterfeit until we finally give ourselves over to it entirely. This is what Schwartz calls the "culture of the copy". Like all large theses, this one has something charming and yet disconcerting about it.

But do we really live in the age of the "culture of the copy", as so many claim? If so, why do people still aspire to visit museums, why does everyone want to see the Mona Lisa in the original? Perhaps, just because it is ubiquitous as reproduction? Might not the reproduction pave the way for the original? I think there is a good deal of truth in this: the copy leads us to the real. The real, the original, remains. Just as we want to see a city or a landscape with our own eyes precisely because we know it as a reproduction, a postcard, museum visitors want to see the original precisely because they have an idea, a image of it, because they are already familiar with the reproduction, the copy.

And we curators always have the option, in our exhibitions, of deciding between original and reproduction. The decision can be made anew every time, and for different reasons. Thus in the German Historical Museum, in an exhibition on *Hitler and the Germans* (October 15, 2010- February 27, 2011), we decided against using originals and used reproductions of posters, photos, documents, etc. – although we have the originals and could have shown them. But we opted to show the reproductions simply because we didn't wish to give any space to the "aura" of the original objects.

In this sense the "culture of the copy" gives us exhibition-designers an opportunity; in this sense we have all the opportunities at our disposal and, contrary to the Rolling Stones, we can always get what we want.

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Significance of Originals and Replicas in Archaeological Site Museums

With a Case Study of the Han Dynasty Site Museums in China

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Included amongst the wide variety of site museums,¹ are archaeological site museums, which are, as the name suggests, museums built on or around archaeological sites. The site itself and the original relics unearthed constitute the main body of the museum. In practice, replicas are often used in place of the fragile original artifacts as teaching aids in exhibits. To date, there have been few professional studies conducted on the subject of the use of replicas at museums, particularly site museums. This paper is a tentative investigation of the use of replicas in site museums and the determinants in achieving a responsible balance between the use of replicas and originals; one that takes into account a myriad of issues including the need to protect and preserve original artifacts, the authenticity lost through the use of replicas, and the use of replicas as teaching tools.²

I. Protecting Archaeological Sites and Exhibiting at Archaeological Site Museums

In China, a large number of Han Dynasty (206BC-220AD) sites are discovered each year, including tombs, city sites, palaces, residential sites, sections of the Great Wall, beacons, kilns, smelting and minting sites, wells, and pits. Tombs comprise the largest proportion of Han Dynasty sites excavated; however, few of them are preserved and ultimately housed in site museums. More likely to be preserved are

¹ The word 'sites' in this paper broadly refers to all the remains from human activities for various purposes. For more information, please refer to: Bai Yan, 'On Existence Value and Development of Site Museums in China', *Papers of the 3rd Academic Conference of Beijing Museum Association*, Beijing: Beijing Yanshan Press, 2000.

² For the sake of convenience, typical site museums covering other historical periods are also referenced in this paper.

large Han tombs of important persons, kings or emperors, which tend to yield an abundance of relics, many of which have great historical and cultural significance and are instructive as part of archaeological investigations. Most small- and medium-sized Han tombs have been backfilled after excavation.

Palace sites tend to be restored, protected and exhibited in a prominent way because of their importance. Examples include the Gui Palace Site, one of the five former Han Dynasty palaces in Chang'an, (present-day Xi'an, in Shaanxi Province).³ In contrast, most other types of sites, such as ordinary residential sites, smelting and minting sites, wells and pits are backfilled after archaeological excavation. Because of limited financial resources, only a few sites can be preserved for exhibition. Among those preserved is the Han Dynasty field and courtyard site in Sanyangzhuang, Neihuang County, Henan Province.⁴

Although most city sites as well as the Great Wall beacon towers have been listed as cultural relic protection units at different levels, there have been few official archaeological excavations of them or investigations about them. The sites have been exposed to the natural environment and damaged by human activity, particularly those sites located in remote areas. This takes us to our next topic: the challenge of protecting archaeological sites once they have been located. By far, the most effective way is to build museums around excavations.

³ One of the five large Han palaces, Gui Palace, was the residence of the concubines constructed in the mid-Han Dynasty by Emperor Hanwudi.

⁴ From June 2003 till the present, many Han Dynasty sites have been discovered in Sanyangzhuang, Neihuang County, Henan Province. Fourteen building sites connected by roads were excavated. Seven Han Dynasty courtyard sites were discovered, as were some houses, tile roofs, walls, wells, toilets, pools, fields and wood articles. Some cultural relics reflecting Han production methods and indicative of the Han culture and lifestyle were unearthed. These sites had to be accessed by drilling as they had been buried deep under layers of silt from the former watercourse of the Yellow River. The effect was to preserve the site: the overall arrangement of courtyards and field ribbings were left virtually unchanged, and the roofs and walls were in their original state.

Amongst the variety of methods archaeological site museums use to protect and exhibit unearthed sites and relics, the most frequently employed are: (1) constructing museums on or around the sites of archaeological relics; (2) restoration and exhibition of original sites following excavation; (3) exhibition of original sites at the same site where the archaeological excavations took place; and (4) relocating tombs for exhibition.

1. The construction of museums on or around the site of archaeological relics

Most archaeological museums in China have been constructed at the site where the original excavation took place. Some are exhibited in their original state, some after restoration, and some are propped up on elevated sites directly above the original site, oriented according to the original. Some cultural relics are displayed at the sites where they were unearthed, while others are added to collections of the excavating organizations or other museums. The following are different examples of this practice.

- Some sites/tombs remain *in situ*, while the exhibition of those sites is achieved through the use of imitations, as is the case at the Mancheng Han Dynasty Tomb in Hebei Province.
- Some sites/tombs remain *in situ*, but the exhibition of the original (unrestored) cultural relics occurs in newly built exhibition halls. This is the case at the Guangdong Nanyue King Tomb.
- Unlike the previous example of a tomb being exhibited just as it appeared post excavation, in other cases, a tomb will be restored according to the archaeologist's inferences based on historical documents.
- Some sites, such as the Hanyang Tomb Nanque Gate Site in Yangling Mausoleum (Garden) in Shaanxi Province, are preserved and exhibited in

situ.⁵

2. Restoration and exhibition of the original site following excavation

In cases where the site is elevated above its original position for better viewing, the underground site is normally sealed for safekeeping; while the excavated artifacts are removed and restored for exhibition. Both the Han Dynasty Chang'an Gui Palace Site in Shaanxi Province⁶ and the Ancestral Temple Site in Hanyang Tomb, Shaanxi province, are examples of this practice.⁷

3. Exhibition of original site during the archaeological excavation

⁵ Nanque Gate, also known as the Zhuque Gate, is the southernmost gate of the four gates of the Emperor Tomb. Composed of two sets of connected structures from the 'Three Gates' (que), it was the earliest, largest and highest level imperial tomb site. Outside the Nanque Gate Site Protection and Exhibition Hall is a gate constructed (simulated) in the Han Dynasty style.

⁶ After being backfilled and covered with a 1.5-meter layer of soil, the original site was restored on the same scale using scientific measuring techniques. Surrounded by fences, the restored site encloses over 6,000 square meters, with a court platform of 80 meters long by 60 meters wide housing over 200 column holes. The steps, wells, seepage pits, and watercourse are arranged in precise accordance with the alignments at the original site. The drainage under the roof is constructed of cobblestones and pebbles, and the corridor is paved with bricks in the Han Dynasty style. Indeed, the entire arrangement is a classic representation of a Han Dynasty courtyard.

⁷ The Ancestral Temple Site of the Hanyang Mausoleum is an important architectural site of the Yangling Mausoleum. Covering 60,000 square meters, it is a double-cloistered structure shaped like the Chinese character '𠂇'. Of orderly arrangement and tremendous size, its attributes are comparable to the ritual architecture found in Chang'an, the capital of the Han Dynasty. It is the best preserved of the imperial tombs and temple sites. To protect and better exhibit the site, part of the site was restored and elevated.

At the Guangdong Nanyue Palace Site and at the Shaanxi Emperor Qinshihuang Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum, the site is open to the public during the excavation.

4. Relocating tombs for exhibition

In some instances, often because of the potential for water damage, sites are relocated. Examples include (1) the King Guangling Tomb, which was moved from Gaoyou to the Han Dynasty Guangling Garden in Yangzhou, and (2) the Luoyang Ancient Tombs Museum, which was moved to Luoyang, Henan Province.

The principal aims of site protection are to preserve the historical information embodied in the sites as faithfully and comprehensively as possible. This is a precept of the protection of cultural relics as laid out in the *Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China*, which are to be followed by Chinese archeological site museums. The aim of cultural relic conservation is to achieve authenticity, integrity and continuity. Authenticity suggests that all cultural relics must be preserved in their original shape, frame, structure, and material. Integrity suggests that both the parts and the whole of the site should be protected; in other words, individual items should be protected as should the area and environment where these items were unearthed so that the spirit of the place is preserved (Secretariat of the China Ancient Sites Protection Association 2008: 6). A basic tenet is that every effort should be made to protect relics at their original sites and in their original state. It follows that cultural relics should be displayed at their original sites to meet the standards of ‘authenticity’ and ‘integrity’ in cultural relic protection.

A great advantage of having access to an original archaeological site is the strong sense of locale (Swain 2007: 39)⁸ that the locations together with the original objects impart to visitors. Many describe the experience as having a dialogue with history.

⁸ Original text: ‘The site museums have the great advantage of being locked into a strong “sense of place”’.

That said, the act of moving artefacts to new sites for exhibition, the fourth item on our list of methods used to protect archaeological relics, does not adhere to the principle of ‘authenticity’ (Ibid.: 213),⁹ because ‘after being moved, the artefacts have collectively lost their nature as a site, and become simply a collection of cultural relics.’ (Yongqi 1999: 233).

It is also important to exhibit the original site after restoration. Consider, for example, the restoration of Beijing Dabaotai No.1 Tomb. Two tentative plans were proposed. The first was to restore the tomb excavation site, that is, to protect the excavation site as an archaeological site after excavation. A model of the tomb could be made after restoration. This plan allowed for further study as modifications and certain studies and experiments could be conducted on the models without having to touch the originals. The second plan was to restore the tomb to its original state in conformity with associated archaeological documents. In other words: ‘to restore the site to its original state when it was originally constructed.’ (Qi 1985: 1),

The second proposal was adopted. As one scholar observed:

the restoration and exhibition of tombs combines the restoration of original archaeological excavation sites, which in the case of the current example included burial horses, carts within the tunnel, and fragments of Huang Chang Ti Cou [A Structure inside the Han Dynasty Tomb made of Yellow Cypress], with replicated historical reality (including the wall, coffin, and roof). It may have certain weaknesses, but can be an effective method overall. (Yongqi et al. 1999: 236),

⁹ Original text: ‘For archaeology the question “of authenticity” can be asked at a series of different levels. There is the question of whether artifacts are “authentic”, whether interpretations of primary data are authentic, and whether the museum interpretations give an authentic window into the past. Here what we refer to belongs to the first level.’

However, according to modern precepts of restoration and the latest techniques for the protection of cultural relics, the first plan would have been preferable in that, with deeper investigation and discoveries, the matter of whether the site could ‘be restored to its original state when it was originally constructed’ turned out to be very uncertain (Zhanyue 2009). Moreover, during the restoration some of the historical information in the excavation site was destroyed. ‘In terms of authenticity, only as rare exceptions should the restoration of archaeological sites, historic structures and land be considered. Restoration should be undertaken only when complete and detailed historical records are available.’¹⁰

Archaeological sites, their contents, and their surroundings constitute their authenticity and integrity. Consideration of the original features of the landscape calls for a change in the practice of fabricating cultural landscapes by constructing numerous ‘antique buildings,’ a practice that has prevailed in China in recent decades. Questions must be considered carefully. Take for example, Han Que, which was restored as a typical example of Han Dynasty architecture. Does it really reflect historical authenticity? Did the restorers get it wrong? Is it misleading to visitors insofar as it risks distorting their understanding of the artefact or site environment as a an authentic reflection of the actual item or site as it existed hundreds or thousands of years ago.

II. Value Cognition of Archaeological Site Originals on Exhibition

Any intrusion by humans will unavoidably alter the integrity or “truth” of a historical site. However, there are different degrees of manipulation. A site that is merely “dug up” offers a more authentic presentation than one that is reconstructed. Only when

¹⁰ For further details, refer to: *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, II.E Integrity and/or Authenticity 86, UNESCO, Paris: In relation to authenticity, the reconstruction of archaeological remains or historic buildings or districts is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances. Reconstruction is acceptable only on the basis of complete and detailed documentation and to no extent on conjecture.

originals are exhibited in excavated archaeological sites do they represent history accurately. Originals make for a better appreciation of the true historical value of the site and at the same time serve as an effective educational tool.

Due to the limitations often imposed by site conditions (factors including accessibility and weather) and the need to exhibit the artefacts of a site to a wide audience, few archaeological sites can follow the example of the Hanyang Imperial Tomb Burial Pit and exhibit at the original site. Most sites are moved to museum exhibitions, such as the Beijing Dabaotai Han Dynasty Tomb Museum and the Guangdong Nanyue King Tomb Museum.

Many excavated originals were either collected by the excavating units for various reasons or relocated to state and provincial museums. The Mancheng Han Dynasty Tomb and the Beijing Western Zhou Dynasty Yan Capital Site do not house the originals on site. The reason for relocating items to major museums is that many local museums in remote areas have only rudimentary facilities and are unable to provide the protection warranted by items of great cultural significance. China's larger museums tend to offer better conditions for the protection and exhibition of original artifacts. Moreover, they attract more visitors.

However, a problem arises. Moving sites from their original resting places to larger museums works against the site's cultural integrity insofar as such a practice fails to protect the 'authenticity' and 'integrity' of the sites, and undermines the importance of 'site value' and the important function of museums as institutions of educational significance. It can be argued that any time a museum is constructed – be it at the original site or at a remote locale – some authenticity is lost as the museum itself creates its own context. But again, it must be emphasized that absolute historical integrity is very elusive in archaeological museums. The best that can be hoped for is a high degree of authenticity. And along the spectrum of what is authentic and what is not, it must be conceded that originals kept in their original locations will yield a more authentic presentation than those same relics removed to another location. Once originals are removed from the locations where they were found, they in effect

deviate from their space-time associations. Historical information and cultural value embodied in the originals are lost once these items are taken from remote locations and placed in comprehensive museums as ‘specimens’ of certain civilizations.

Often visitors to the large museums find it difficult to associate the originals with their corresponding cultural context and site ambiance. For instance, looking at the silk Han Dynasty suit and the golden coronet and boots of the Liao Dynasty in the showcase in the comprehensive museums, the visitors may rightly ask, ‘Wouldn’t it have been highly inconvenient for the ancients to wear such heavy articles of clothing?’ However, if these items were exhibited in their relevant site museums, it would be obvious that these items were used in burial rites, not as everyday clothing. And the problem cannot be resolved with better labels. Any casual observer of museum visitors will attest to the fact that most visitors do not take the time to read the written material included in exhibits. The onus is on curators to make the nature of the objects on display clear from a visual standpoint. In other words, the function of a particular object should be obvious from the way it is displayed.

Like a string of pearls, archaeological sites constitute a sequence of historical evolution. With the dual coordinates of time and space, an experience inside these sites cannot be replaced by a visit to a museum. For example, in the Capital Museum, a permanent exhibition entitled ‘History and Culture of the Ancient Capital of Beijing’, shows the development of Beijing from its settlement, to its development as a major city, and then to its transformation into the nation’s capital. All items on display have been excavated from various archaeological sites in Beijing. Examples include the Shangzhai Cultural Site, Shanrong Cultural Site, Western Zhou Yan Capital Site, and Dabaotai Han Dynasty Tomb. Although most of the items are ‘originals’ from the various sites, their removal from their cultural environments makes it difficult for visitors to appreciate their original historical ambiance.

III. Significance and Function of Replicas in Exhibitions

Replicas, widely used in archaeological site exhibitions fall into several general categories.

1. If a local museum does not have the means to protect important artefacts, unearthed originals will often be removed to another museum. In such cases, local site museums are obliged to use replicas in their exhibits as substitutes for the originals. As a result, a large number of reproductions are often exhibited at excavation sites.

2. The originals may have been transferred to other exhibition halls in museums for display, while replicas are used to ‘restore’ the original state of the excavation.

3. Often there are cases where originals have been seriously damaged, or tombs carelessly opened. In such instances, replicas may be employed to make the exhibition more intelligible.

4. If the exhibition environment cannot meet the originals’ preservation demands, replicas may be used in place of the originals, especially in the case of silks and murals. With technological improvements in exhibition methodologies and equipment, such instances should become less frequent.

5. Use of replicas in restoration of historical sites.

Replicas should be used carefully. According to Section 4.7 Reproductions, *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*, ‘Museums should respect the integrity of the original when replicas, reproductions, or copies of items in the collection are made. All such copies should be permanently marked as facsimiles.’¹¹In a positive way, replicas in museums can have a complementary role in exhibitions. In some remote

¹¹ *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums* (ICOM, 2006), 4.7 Reproductions: Museums should respect the integrity of the original when replicas, reproductions, or copies of items in the collection are made. All such copies should be permanently marked as facsimiles.

archaeological site museums, such as Beijing Museum of Western Zhou Dynasty Yan Capital Site and Shanghai Site Museum, the most important and exquisite collections have been moved to provincial museums. In these instances the use of replicas may help visitors gain a basic understanding of the site as it appeared before the original artifacts were removed. But, from another point of view, it is easy to imagine the disappointment of visitors upon seeing the ‘replica’ tag everywhere they look.

Replicas as ‘restoration’ of originals in site exhibitions, or replicas used as substitutes for damaged originals may be of some use in an exhibition, as they close certain gaps in knowledge that may arise due to missing or damaged originals. As such, replicas can help visitors understand an exhibition. However, inappropriate use of replicas and reproduction methods may mislead visitors.

Visitors may develop an incorrect understanding if the replicas are not accurately reproduced and used carefully. For instance, some large artefacts such as the Changxin Palace Lantern¹² (Gilt Bronze Human-Shaped Lantern) and Ma Ta Fei Yan¹³ (Gallop Horse Treading on a Swallow) must be scaled down in simulated archaeological pits or in molding activities, because of the large size of the originals. Every effort is made to replicate objects at their original size; sometimes visitors mistake them for originals. Sometimes it is difficult to restore extremely complex objects; in these instances visitors may not appreciate the subtle exquisiteness of the original objects.

¹² The Changxin Palace Lantern is a gold-plated bronze lantern dating back to the Han Dynasty. In 1968 it was unearthed in Mancheng County, Hebei Province in the Tomb of Dou Guan, the wife of Liu Sheng, King of Zhongshan. It is currently exhibited at Hebei Museum. The lantern is 48cm high, and weighs 15.85kg.

¹³ Ma Ta Fei Yan (Gallop Horse Treading on a Swallow) is an example of East Han Dynasty Bronze-ware unearthed in 1969 from the Leitai Tomb, Wuwei County, Gansu Province. It is now exhibited at the Gansu Museum. The gallop horse is 34.5cm high, 45cm long and 13cm wide.

First, there is the question of whether the replicas can be made identical to the originals in form, material, texture, and craftsmanship. Take, for example, the replicated part of the five-set coffin in Dabaotai No.1 Tomb. To the well-trained eye, the replica is considerably different from the original in color and texture.

Second, whether the replicas can achieve the effect which meets the designer's intention is of great importance. For example, the *Dabaotai Han Dynasty Tomb Unearthed Cultural Relics Exhibition* contains a replica of a lacquered table with horse-leg-shaped table legs. After being much scaled down, the table in the exhibit does not replicate the original lacquer bronze horse-leg making it difficult for visitors to understand the meaning of the exhibit. It is doubtful whether incomplete relics can be 'restored' to their 'original state'. Consider, for example, the bronze dragon-head pillow inlaid with jade, which was unearthed at the Dabaotai No.1 Tomb. The dragon is squatting with its mouth open and tongue protruding in a vivid fashion, with round jade eyes, and blue jade teeth, tongue and horns. The excavators deduced that the dragon was one end of a dragon-head pillow with the other end missing. For the purposes of exhibiting the pillow, it was restored with a piece of square wood substituting for the missing part. The dragon head and bronze base were embedded with four jade tablets, and judging from other jade pillows unearthed in tombs of nobles and kings, 'this pillow could possibly be either bronze-framed and jade-embedded, or wood-cored and jade-affixed.' (Yongbo and Xiaoyan 1998: 4) Therefore, the current restoration of the pillow with the square piece of wood may mislead visitors since it probably does not represent the original dragon-head pillow.

The reason for the above-mentioned negative effect in the use of replicas stems from the loss of authenticity that unavoidably occurs whenever replicas are used – a fact worthy of serious reflection whenever the decision is made to employ replicas.

IV. Replicas and Imitations in Museum Educational Programs

Typically, museums reserve originals for appreciation and study, not as teaching aids or props in museum educational programs. Therefore, in some interactive activities

provided in some archaeological site museums, an abundance of replicas and are used as teaching aids. What role do replicas and imitations play in these activities? What lessons can we learn from the use of replicas in museum education?

On the whole, replicas and imitations play a very positive role in museum educational programs, helping children understand cultural relics and ancient production technologies. In the case of museum juvenile education programs, transmission of knowledge is of minimal importance; the fostering of interest and curiosity is the larger goal. The idea is not to force feed students information but to get them interested in the subject matter and motivated to acquire further knowledge. In modern times, with numerous museums and accessible networks, general knowledge concerning cultural relics and history is easily accessible. Therefore, there should be a shift in focus for museum educational programs from knowledge transmission to the fostering of a spirit of exploration and innovation.

Good examples of public archaeology are the so-called simulated archaeological activities¹⁴, directed at young visitors. Because of the special attributes of cultural relics, only a few coins and broken pottery pieces can be buried in the pit as simulated originals for archaeological ‘excavation.’ Children cannot get to know the process of ancient civilization merely through several barely distinguishable broken pottery shards. Therefore, it is necessary to use replicas and imitations, which the student can more easily identify.

¹⁴ As part of a range of simulated archaeological activities, simulated archaeological excavations provide visitors the opportunity to feel what it is like to participate in an excavation. The first simulated archaeological activities were introduced to China through the Beijing Dabaotai Han Dynasty Tomb Museum in 1994. Today they are also carried out at other prominent Chinese museums, including the Beijing Zhoukoudian Peking Man Site Museum and the Shaanxi Hanyang Mausoleum Museum.

Take ‘cultural relics molding’ as another example; it is a participatory program through which visitors not only learn the ‘molding method’ of the ancient utensils, but also take home the pottery or gesso work they have made. There are other programs such as ‘restoration of cultural relics’ and ‘handwriting in bamboo books’. Replicas and imitations employed as teaching aids, to a large degree, make museum educational programs more visual and participatory, and, as a result, attract more visitors to the museum. Because exhibitions at archaeological museums do not change resulting in most visitors coming only once, the introduction of a variety of participatory programs may attract repeat visitation.

V. Museum Souvenirs: Replicas as Transmitters of Culture

It is common for archaeological site museums to reproduce unearthed originals, or to make rubbings from originals or imitations such as carved stones and Han steles. Despite their cost, high quality, replicas and rubbings are very popular with visitors. Because of the advanced nature of the civilization of the Han Dynasty and the prevalence of luxury items in the burial rites of the time, a large quantity of exquisite cultural relics were found in Han Tombs in China, including the Ma Ta Fei Yan (Gallop Horse Treading on a Swallow) and the Changxin Palace Lantern (Gilt Bronze Human-Shaped Lantern). Replicas of these artefacts are very popular with tourists.

Site museums may lend their original artefacts for temporary exhibitions. High-quality replicas offered as souvenirs can give visitors a better understanding of the unity and variety of Han Dynasty culture through the comparison of cultural elements excavated in different regions. In this way, high quality replicas contribute to the visitors’ understanding of the past.

Other types of souvenirs are everyday articles, office supplies or artworks designed with cultural elements drawn from original cultural relics. For example, museums make silk fabrics with Han Dynasty silk designs, or card-cases, scarves, ties, and

pajamas. They can also make souvenirs that replicate the shape of original objects such as jade-ware in other media such as metal.

Museum souvenirs, often derived from the finer examples of a museum's collections and including everything from presswork, replicas, and artwork, may be considered extensions of collections. The souvenirs on sale in museums should be of high quality because they serve as cultural transmitters and educational tools.

For those who travel abroad and wish to communicate their experience to others, the items sold in museum shops become good teaching aids. Many primary schools in North America have an activity called 'show and tell' following the students' return from their summer vacations. One can only wonder how many replicas of the Xi'an terra cotta warriors and horses are brought back to American classrooms each year to be studied by curious students. Moreover, children who have had an opportunity to view the terra cotta warriors and horses, first-hand, and have acquired souvenirs at the site will talk about their experience after returning to their home countries and encourage their families to make another trip to Xi'an. Such aspirations may not be realized the next summer, but these families are very likely to visit China again. For the sake of China's reputation, Chinese museums should sell only high-quality items. (Tool 2004: 2)

Poor replicas of culturally significant items do not fulfil the role of cultural transmission. What is more, they harm the reputation of museums. Many people who buy reproductions acquire them for their aesthetic qualities and as collectibles. Poor quality reproductions, which do not accurately represent the originals, often have low aesthetic quality and have no value as collectibles.

Archaeological site museums, linking reality and history, serve as a window through which we can travel across time and space to experience ancient civilizations. It is our responsibility to protect and utilize our archaeological sites and recovered artefacts and to produce replicas in ways that respect the cultural and educational value of the remains of the ancient world.

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Heroes don't cry. Examining exhibitions and myths of origin in the National Museum of Colombia

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History is the fruit of power, but power itself is never so transparent that its analysis becomes superfluous. The ultimate mark of power may be its invisibility; the ultimate challenge, the exposition of its roots.

(Trouillot 1995: xix)



National museums generate our ideas about the nation and simultaneously they are manifestations of how we think about the nation. These institutions embody narratives of national identity and are the places where exhibition of material heritage becomes a manner in which to confirm a particular origin of the nation's past and present. Visitors to exhibitions of national history expect to be in the presence of the "real" past because the objects that are exhibited are fragments that apparently represent an authentic history. They visit because museums are sources of reliable knowledge and information, a notion affirmed when children are sent to do their schoolwork here. Audiences also visit exhibitions to find "original" art pieces and can often feel cheated when museums don't deliver. In a 2009 visitors' study, conducted at the National Museum of Colombia during a modern Mexican painting show, responses alluded to these expectations. People came to see works by Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. One response to audio-visual materials, with images of mural painting included in one of the galleries on the third floor, summarizes this view: "Videos have too many images, and they are copies. One comes to the museum to see real paintings."

Objects are to be read under a specific, and often unified sense, not to be questioned. How can national museums exhibit their collections in ways that interrogate these objects and the construction of history and art history? In order to approach possible answers to this broad question, this paper will describe the intentions of the Bicentennial of Independence exhibition at the National Museum of Colombia (2010) and look at visitors' experiences in order to examine the ways in which museums can use their collections and "copies" to promote critical ways of looking at art, history and museum discourses.

The Problem of Aura

On a Friday afternoon, a member of the conservation staff approached me. She was with a woman in her early forties who presented herself as a researcher and expert in matters of the history of clothing, and she was notably upset. "You are tricking people," she told me, "What I saw in the exhibition was NOT the wardrobe used

during the Independence period. We asked two children in the gallery about the ways in which people dress and they now have this false reference.”



In fact, the dresses are identified in the exhibition as those used in a television series (based on a story during Independence) that aired a couple of decades ago. We used the empty dresses and names to point to voids in the representation of women and their more political roles during this period. I had to explain the difference between exhibitions and collections, and about the objectives of our exhibition; which were not to portray how people lived two hundred years ago, but rather to expose the ways, the intentions and the producers of representations of Independence in the last 200 years. After my explanation she told me she truly disliked the exhibition. She was clearly looking for something the museum was not providing and was upset about this “loss.” She was looking for the unique objects that survived the passage of time and are therefore not ‘ordinary,’ in the words of Andreas Huyssen (1995), but rather embody an authentic past and thus could provoke a transcendent experience. I was looking for quite the opposite. I was not looking for the truth, but rather how “truth” has been elaborated. I was interested in how aura and authenticity are not

means in themselves; they are part of the process of nation formation, myths and tales of greatness. Other researchers in the team agreed that our task was related to the unmasking of the power that lies in the construction of historical accounts.

The Problem of Commemoration

In 2010 Colombia (as well as other Latin American countries) celebrated 200 years of Independence from Spanish reign. 1810 was not really the year of Independence, it was merely the beginning of a two decade, for some yet unfinished process.

The process of independence from the Spanish Empire gave way to nation building processes. Despite the great changes in legislation and promotion of equality for all, the white Creoles formed their identity by excluding and “othering” different social groups. The legacies of this hierarchical society survive today in the discrimination faced by Afro Colombian indigenous communities.

The foundation of what was to become the National Museum occurred during this early period (1823), responding to a belief in progress and in the advantages of science in a region that was considered rich in natural resources but poorly administered by the Spanish crown. The museum played a part in the elaboration of a national narrative in the aftermath of independence and therefore in the process of political unification and construction of the nation-state.

Regardless of an early emphasis on education as part of the nation-making process, the elite’s project was patriarchy and elitist excluding not only women, but also indigenous peoples, blacks, enslaved people, illiterates, and in most cases, people without property (Achugar 2002: 78). A *citizen* was then the person who adhered to their ideological project and a means to exclude any reference to race (Melo 1992). Merging contradictory memories was seen as a necessity to create an official memory, because contesting these memories would constitute a threat to the survival of the young and frail nation (Roldán 2000:104). This was also the moment when ordinary people appropriated their rights and defended them against the colonial

mental structures that were still in place (Lasso 2002), but little of that early agency of common people is discussed in textbooks or other media.

In 2005 I began thinking about the problem of commemoration, based on reading of publications of Tzvetan Todorov. In his words:

Commemoration –the discourse of celebrants- can be found in obvious places: schools impart a common image of the past to children; historical movies and television documentaries offer images of the past to a broader public...In politics, commemorative discourse can be found in speeches made at every level (Todorov 2000: 132).

Todorov reminds us that the discourse of celebration is not neutral, or objective: “While history makes the past more complicated, commemoration makes it simpler, since it seeks most often to supply us with heroes to worship or with enemies to detest; it deals in desecration and consecration” (Ibid. 133). For Todorov, commemoration sanctifies history and adapts the past to the present.

How then to commemorate 200 years of Independence?

In response to this challenge, in 2007, we created a team of eight historians and art historians and started to elaborate the idea of an exhibition that would critically explore the ways in which Colombians have constructed and narrated their own history¹⁵. Initially, this research was conducted by looking at dominant modes of production and circulation of representations in chronological periods. Three axes were drawn to organize the information we found: 1. the process of fabrication of historical actors; 2. the creation of national scenes and sceneries; 3. the present-day commemoration in festivals and civic acts.

¹⁵ Amada Carolina Pérez, Antonio Ochoa, Carolina Vanegas Carrasco, Cristina Lleras Figueroa, Juan Ricardo Rey Márquez, Maite Yie, Yobenj Chicagana and Olga Acosta Luna.

First Try: To Give is to Give

In 2009 we¹⁶ attempted to juxtapose a large collection of images, related to the Independence and donated in 1959 by the Ex-President Eduardo Santos, to a series of texts that questioned these images.



These texts were quotes and ironies, such as calling Bolívar the greatest South American hero, the liberator of five republics, the second Jesus Christ, and critically pointing at those who are in earnest following the aspirations of such images. The texts also criticise the notion of heroes as “mirrors of virtue.” Do they stimulate those who are looking, are they ideal portraits or impossible goals? Can we conceive of societies without ideal protagonists? How does the State and society establish the cannons of admirable men? Are these cannons the same?

In spite of our efforts the result might be closer to Gauvin Bailey, as described in an article in the Apollo magazine:

¹⁶ The curator was part of the Art and History Department at the time, Juan Dario Restrepo.

Dar es Dar ultimately leaves us wanting more. Patriotic collecting and the unqualified presentation of national heroes no longer hold water with audiences and the exhibition could have done more to show how attitudes have changes. The curators have tried, with giant Soviet-style wall panels quoting progressive writers such as Jorge Orlando Melo and Carlos Monsiváis. But they do no do so in the individual labels and its too easy to come away with the message Santos intended in 1959.

(Bailey 2010: 79)

Our conclusion was that images reiterate and legitimate wide accepted notions of heroes as mechanisms to emulate, especially in their “sacrifice” for the nation. Texts along the walls seemed insufficient to propose the unmasking of power and a different stance towards glorification of certain historical actors. We had to create a more effective strategy.

Second Try: Las Historias de un Grito. The Histories of the Cry of Independence

In the research conducted for the exhibition and other products we were developing, we elaborated a series of inventories of objects, paintings, allegories, coins, bills, engravings, schoolbooks, as well as radio and television programs and festivities by which the story of Independence has been told. We realized that the very objects and images should direct our concerns and therefore wanted to offer a reflection on the process of production and circulation of these representations. Representations were understood as those symbol that incarnate concepts and feelings, and which give meaning to cultural production according to Hall (1997).

At the entrance of the first of the three galleries, or stations as we called them, we exhibited a copy of a painting that depicted the Spanish King Fernando VII, whom the visitors would encounter further in the exhibition. The copy was hung upside-down, accompanied by a brief explanation how the people in the town of Honda decided to destroy his in 1819. Symbolically the portrait of a King *was* the presence of his majesty in American reigns; hence destroying his picture was also an act of

claiming autonomy and independence. With this introduction we wanted to say that “images do matter”, and to stimulate discussions about them.



Representation enables exchange of meanings and is related to identity processes. These representations of history are not only questioned and discussed in museums

and universities. Producers of representations are multiple, as well as the ways and the moments in which they circulate. Various actors intervene, not only as passive consumers, but also actively appropriating and using history.

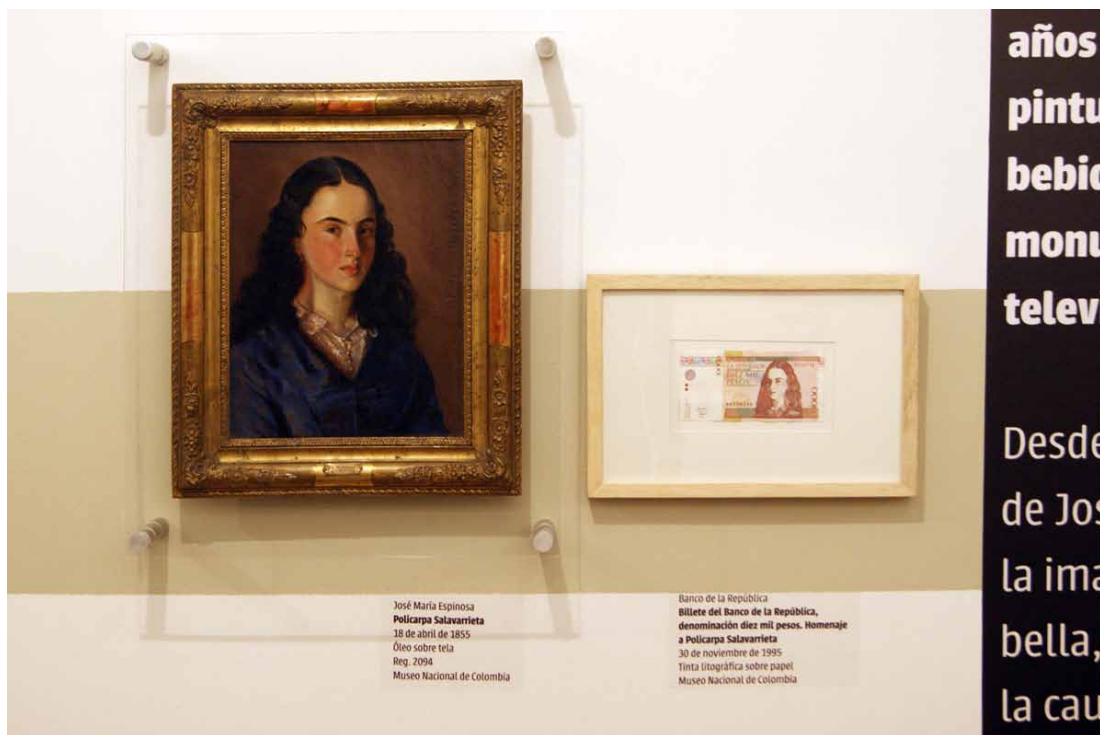
We were interested in interrogating those images that are widely circulated according to their contexts of production and to what they tell us about different social groups. Our concept was that these memories of the events, places and actors that played a role in the Independence, respond to long term processes, and therefore cannot be thought of as the only “truth.” In fact, histories of nations are constructed and transformed through time in the midst of different conflicts and social negotiations. The way this past is remembered is closely related to how we understand the present and imagine the future. For almost 200 years the myth of the origin of the nation excluded everyone except for a number of heroes and sometimes-regional elites. This is significant because it builds a notion of the citizen as a passive spectator.



In the exhibition we included pieces of art and historical objects, because both categories have determined the ways we understand our past. Can both be submitted to the same questions? Our underlying thesis claimed that they could be. While history has been picked and written on the basis of a vast inventory of possible objects and events, artistic expressions kept in museum collections have also been a

product of historical and political circumstances. These creations are not usually questioned, nor are the conditions of their production analysed. Bourdieu (1996) reminds us that so called “pure” artworks depend on the production value of such objects, their symbolic capital, which distinguishes a craft from a masterpiece. However, this value is not inherent in an art piece itself, but is rather the result of the intervention of agents and the market (even when the artist claims total independence or hatred of such circuits). Artists sign their pieces and consecrate them. Bourdieu (1996) has also connected his pioneer visitors studies to the comprehension of art, when he acknowledged that different social variables determine categories of perception, meaning that these are socially and historically constructed, not universal, pure and eternal.

We were determined to invite visitors, spectators and readers to question these representations of art and history, and to think about the ways in which their “value” has been elaborated. We live in a world permeated by images and history travels fast by means of mass media, but still we are poorly prepared to face and interrogate the images we consume. Hence our idea was to promote a sort of “pedagogy of images” (Balandier 1994), that could allow citizens to learn how to ask questions of producers, intentions, contexts, and to revise them critically with appropriate suspicion at all times. In order to promote this idea, we knew we could not solely rely on the objects of the past, but also on how the past has been reinterpreted in different media. Therefore the status that differentiates the “real” past and the past that has been constructed, was diffused and the copy acquired new value in deconsecrating original objects. Our intention was to show that production is important, but so are the ways in which images circulate by means of reproduction and copying.



We elaborated a non-chronological exhibition organized by three axes:

1. Historical actors: heroes, heroines and in contraposition popular leaders, social groups and silenced protagonists.

2. Happenings: which register the fight between center (the capital) and periphery (the regions), and the imposition of certain dates against others as well as the tension between civic and military memory.

3. Commemorations: which show how history is read from the present and through political power, which is not a simple exercise of bringing the past into the present.

Additionally we included a rereading of the first symbols of liberty, sovereignty and territory.



Phantoms and silences

When going through the difficult process of elaborating this narrative, we realized that we also had to represent silences and phantoms of history that are determined not to go away. The past returns and perturbs (Ortega 2009: 517). How to represent injustices of the past that continue to have echoes in the present?



It was crucial for this research to make the emphasis visible that was put on certain actors and events, as well as showing the process of making others invisible, such as Black or Afro descendent soldiers, women, the masses, and the silences that have hidden the complexity of an unfinished process. Following Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995), silences are produced in creating and elaborating sources, archives and narratives as well as history itself. This is why the traces of different actors are unequal and intentional and are manifested as such in evoking the past.

For the research team it was of great importance to show that there are still pending issues, that Independence did not just happen 200 years ago because there are individuals and groups that are still fighting for their rights, holding of land, and justice. But this thought was not only reserved for different ethnic groups. When reading a translation of the Rights of Man that circulated in Venezuela and the Caribbean in 1813, they seem terribly up-to-date. The same *dejavú* feeling I got from reading an anonymous pamphlet that criticises discrimination and for which the writer was forced out of his city: Cartagena. He talked about race and difference and this was not popular with authorities that claimed equality amongst citizens.

It was an artist's intervention on the representation of Afro Colombians in history which caused a series of critiques and debates. People who were in disagreement argued that we were making fun of the great heroes, though this was not the the artist's intention; it was to highlight the fact that few heroes of African descent have been represented or acknowledged in historical narratives.

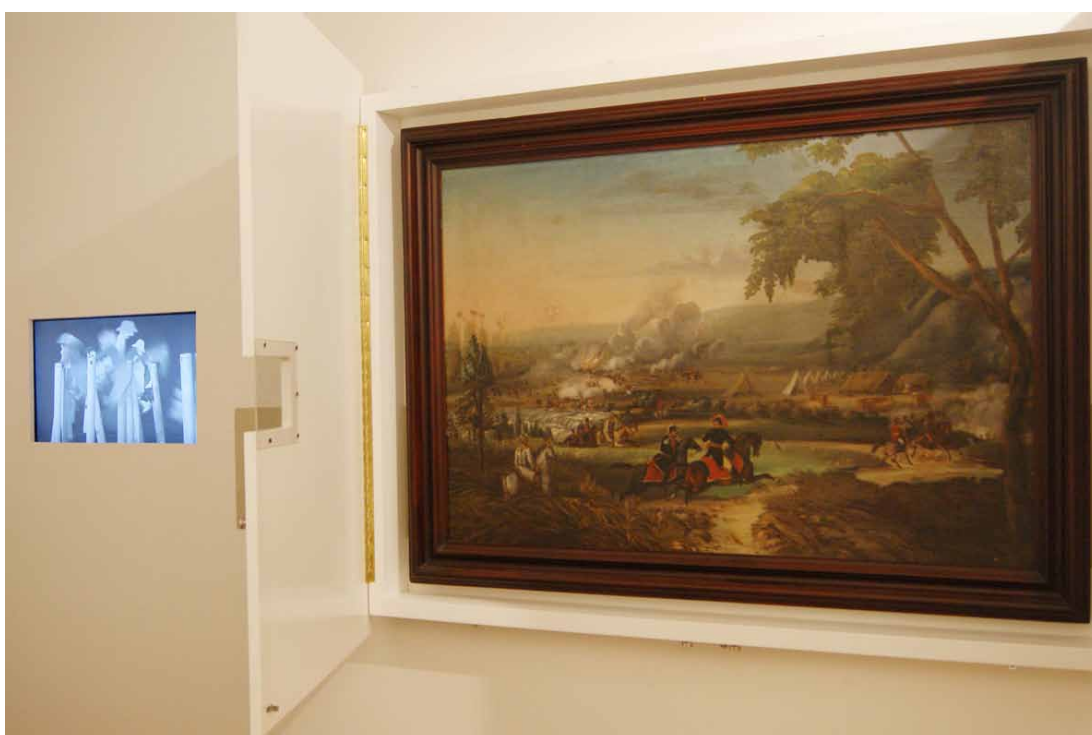


Strategies for Making Objects Speak

For Hooper- Greenhill (2000), objects do not speak for themselves. Rather, meaning is constructed by the encounter between the object and the person observing. For Susan Pearce (1992), objects give us clues about people's behaviour and their ways of constructing identities. Ideas need a physical context, ideas and objects are simultaneous. Every object, even a copy, has the power to bring the past into the present because of the relationship it has had with events.

There are strategies to make use of copies and "intrusions" in the immaculate space of the museum in order to make objects and images "speak" to visitors. So for instance, we placed paintings of battles behind wooden doors, in order to make people look through the windows. The scenes highlighted the death of the soldiers in order to criticise the way in which our memory has been dominated by dates of battles, without really thinking of the consequences of a long lasting war. People can

then look at the whole painting and read an extract of the way the soldier-artist recalled the deaths of his companions. While the heroic death of a martyr is glorified, the horror of violence and death of the soldiers is not an account that is included in narratives of Independence. This is of special importance in a country that has known an on-going internal conflict for more than forty five years. Next to these paintings was a video, created for the exhibition by the artist Libia Posada. In it she adopts the aesthetic of the toy soldiers to engage different groups in a conflict that becomes real.



The use of the copy in this context helped us to make objects ‘speak’ of certain things. We wanted to blur the line between good and evil by trying to clarify that the patriots were many times bloodthirsty and that the realists sometimes contributed to the cause of Independence. Can we simply divide history between good and bad actors? Do the goals justify the means?

Hooper-Greenhill reminds us that objects are no longer defined by their morphology but by the ways they relate to human beings: “Material things are now constituted as objects through organic and historic links, through stories, and through

people”(2000: 204). Objects are part of a human story. With this mindset, we also equated 19th century paintings of a popular heroine with the way she has been represented in 2010 in a local soap opera that raised much debate due to the “historical liberties” the scriptwriter has taken in order to elaborate the drama.

Our intention was not so much to give way to a new history, but rather to interrogate the images that construct our history. “As long as museums and galleries remain the repositories of artefacts and specimens, new relationships can always be built, new meanings can always be discovered, new interpretations with new relevancies can be found, new codes and new rules can be written” says Hooper-Greenhill (2000: 215). Possibilities to re-read and make our own meaning are at hand.

Audiences and the Construction of History

Diversifying Audiences

The diversity of the visitors of the exhibition (134.472 visitors) has been a success. Though people still might cling to the idea of the museum as temple, at the same time daily life has entered the museum and so does the notion that everyone can in some way take part in musealisation. Along the same lines, anyone can be a historian today, just a look at Wikipedia can corroborate this assertion. Video cameras, literature about the self, all these strategies defies the concept of uniqueness and original, though essential to the character of the museum. But this surge of memories that Huyssen has analysed does not automatically mean more critical ways of engaging with history. For him, “It seems that audiences are craving instant gratification, macro-exhibitions, instantaneous illuminations rather than more serious appropriations” (1995: 43)

While museums historically have fostered both sentiments of belonging for some and for others a sentiment of exclusion, Huyssen seems to think this is no longer so because museums have turned into hybrid spaces, half department stores, half grand fairs. For Huyssen, the museum is not simply the guardian of treasures and artefacts of the past, discretely exhibited for a select group of experts and connoisseurs. It is very ironical that while the museum enters the capitalist culture of spectacle, it also

works to rehabilitate the sub- represented past, the repressed and that which was made invisible.

So, What Did People Take Away from the Exhibition?

In order to answer this question we conducted a survey and short interviews. 400 surveys have been executed by a master student of communications and have given us important information on the ways that visitors have interpreted the exhibition. I'm concentrating in my analysis on the responses to question eight: "Did you discover something new or different on the history of Colombia? If so, which theme?"

Of the 400 people surveyed, 35% answered "no" while 65% answered positively. Regarding some of the particular themes they pointed as follows:

- For twenty-five persons the exhibition reinforced the importance of Bolívar, or the place of martyrs and heroes.
- The answers of eleven visitors related to the history of battles, though it was not clear whether they were exalting or simply describing what had the greatest impact on them.
- Nineteen persons thought that they had learned about how people dressed during Independence.
- Fifty-one persons centred their answers on specific objects, such as bills and the crown awarded to Bolívar in Peru. This made it difficult to know whether these objects were related to concepts as well.

The most interesting set of answers have to do with widening the notion of historical actors. 30% of the people who answered positively to the question of discovering something new directed their answers to the participation of different social groups.

Seventy-two visitors people talked about the role of women and some mentioned the political processes in the present; fifteen mentioned the role of Afro Descendants or Blacks, eight about indigenous people and eight about children. Twenty-four people

talked about anonymous leaders of people from the masses, participating in the Independence process.

Learning it was not only the hero Bolívar, or that not all has been told about our history, or how the participation of the masses has been told in a derogatory or negative manner, or that there are those who are unknown protagonists has been an important success of the exhibition.

What this means is that we partially succeeded in our endeavour. But we can't be too optimistic about our impact. What kind of experience did the visitors have who did not acknowledge learning something new or those that confirmed more traditional historical narratives?

Perhaps this is a first step in transforming the ways visitors perceive and use museums. How to deal with the desire for instantaneous experiences without totally giving in to entertainment remains a pressing question? In a sense we were playing by the same logic of the mass media in order to "fit" into the ways that people use images today (zapping, multiple and simultaneous images) but looking for a different result, that is, to engage people in questioning images, something television and other media are keen to avoid.

Conclusion: The Idea or the Object

It seems that we continue to grapple with the idea of museums as places to venerate "things" or as forums for debate and discussion. There are still radical sides and we can see this in museums that base their success on numbers, due to their collections and the emphasis they put on the experience with the "real thing." Then there are other museums that try to grapple with different questions related to problems societies face today: discrimination, injustice, etc. that have roots in our past.

For Huyssen the main question for the survival of museums in the 21st century is whether they can open up to other representations and the problems of representation. One way of judging museums in this setting will be if they are able to

stage the problems of representation, narration and memory in programs and exhibitions. Can museums favour recognition of *others* in their being different, with their histories, aspirations and worlds? (*Ibid*).

The Bicentennial exhibition taught us that we are not condemned to the past, the past can be elaborated upon to fairly represent the diversity of actors, tensions and intensions behind political processes and the construction of representations. But, it also told us that much more work has to be done on the elaboration of more critical meta-histories, and historiographies in order that the museum can stage reflexive concerns. We certainly have to create new avenues of dialogue that may “upset” visitors who come for “the real thing” in order to satisfy their needs, but also make them think about power structures and its roots that lie not only in history and its narratives, but in the way that history is read and elaborated on today.

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Images

Lleras_ Image 1

Las historias de un grito. 200 años de ser colombianos. Photo María José Echeverri.

Lleras_ Image 2

In this space we discuss the lack of representation of women. In the back the dresses used for the series *Las Ibáñez*, 1989, reg. 6810, Museo Nacional de Colombia. Photo Juan Dario Restrepo.

Lleras_ Image 3

Dar es dar. 50 años de la donación de Eduardo Santos al Museo Nacional de Colombia. April 23, 2009 to January 30, 2010.

Lleras_ Image 4

Copy of a painting of Ferdinand VII hung upside down. Photo Juan Dario Restrepo.

Lleras_ Image 5

The image of the “Minga” or meeting of Indigenous groups in Bogotá with the statue of Simón Bolívar reminded visitors that different social groups use history in ways that help them promote certain messages and rights (Milton Díaz, *El Tiempo*, 2008). Photo Juan Dario Restrepo.

Lleras_ Image 6

José María Espinosa. *Policarpa Salavarrieta*, 1855, oil on canvas, Museo Nacional de Colombia. On the right the 10.000 Colombian pesos bill that currently circulates. Photo Juan Darío Restrepo.

Lleras_ Image 7

Since we could not have the “real” image of Santa Librada, we exhibited a white copy which people could touch. The original was a protagonist in many processions on National Day. Photo Juan Dario Restrepo.

Lleras_ Image 8

Here we highlight the fact that very few images of Afro Descendents exist, but we acknowledge their names and their acts. Photo Juan Dario Restrepo.

Lleras_ Image 9

Nelson Fory, *¡La historia nuestra, caballero!*, 2010. Photo María José Echeverri.

Lleras_ Image 10

José María Espinosa, *Batalla del Río Palo*, oil on canvas, Museo Nacional de Colombia. Libia Posada's video on the left. Photo María José Echeverri.

Window brothels in the Amsterdam Museum-Art and history, reconstruction and reality.

Annemarie de Wildt

If the world could be understood art would not exist – Albert Camus

Museums and red light districts share some characteristics: they are all about gazing and about how a person or subject changes by framing, be it in a picture or window frame¹⁷. In both cases it is the surroundings that determine value. Works of art gain value in the context of the museum. While many may believe that a woman loses moral value when presenting herself in a window in a Red Light District, it is in these surroundings in which she can capitalize-most on her body, adding to her own financial value.

What happens when prostitution and prostitutes become the subjects of an exhibition? Prostitution is a subject fraught with taboos. Most museum directors would shy away from such a subject. This has not been the case at the Amsterdam Museum¹⁸, which, during the last decade, has presented two exhibitions focusing on prostitution.

¹⁷ Thanks to Roosmarij Deenik, Renée Kistemaker and Susan Legêne for their comments on the paper I presented at the ICMAH conference on the occasion of the International Council of Museums Conference in Shanghai, November 2010

¹⁸ In January 2011 the Amsterdam Historical Museum changed its name to Amsterdam Museum. In this article I refer to the museum as the Amsterdam Historical Museum as this name framed the expectations of visitors.



Prostitution exhibited

Amsterdam is renowned worldwide for its Red Light District. Even though prostitution has been legal in Holland since 2000, selling and buying sex have remained social taboos. For most visitors the first sight of women sitting in windows comes as a shock, even if they have seen the pictures of the Red Light District before. Scantily dressed, the women pose provocatively. Behind them one may catch a glimpse of- a bed. The prostitutes often tempt their potential customers with a glance, a smile, sometimes calling out or tapping on the window. Through a half-open door they negotiate their price. This is basic commerce: sex for money.

In 2002, two years after the legalization of prostitution in Holland, the Amsterdam Historical Museum opened a cultural-historical exhibition called *Love for Sale*, which presented an overview of 400 years of history of prostitution in the Dutch capital. The exhibition was a mix of 17th century paintings of brothel scenes, photographs, multimedia, archival material, wax models of women suffering of venereal diseases, reconstructions of the working spaces of prostitutes, and

interviews of the women and some male prostitutes and their clients. It showed the shifting attitudes of allowing and forbidding prostitution over the past four centuries.



The Hoerengracht

In 2010 the Museum had the opportunity to exhibit *The Hoerengracht*, an immense work measuring about 4 by 14 meters by American artists Edward and Nancy Kienholz. On another floor contemporary artwork, also attending to the topic of prostitution, was shown.

Literally translated, Hoerengracht means Whores' Canal. It also refers ironically to Herengracht (Gentlemen's Canal), a prestigious address in Amsterdam. Seeing a photograph of the work pales in comparison to experiencing the original work of art. For many visitors, viewing *The Hoerengracht* is a unique experience that allows them to peek into windows without feeling the kind of embarrassment many people feel when gazing at real women behind windows.¹⁹

¹⁹ During the exhibition *The Hoerengracht* a visitor research was conducted in cooperation with Amee Barber, who was doing PhD research in Amsterdam on the politics of sex work regulation.



Philosophers like Baudrillard and cultural studies scholars such as Hillel Schwartz have made it increasingly complicated to talk about reality versus imitation, about originals as opposed to copies. This, however, is a challenge I would like to address. Specifically, I will discuss various representations of prostitution and Amsterdam's Red Light District. After that, I will consider the museum as the stage for representation and elaborate on the reaction of visitors.

In the early 1980's the American artists Edward and Nancy Kienholz visited Amsterdam. Ed, at that time, was in his fifties and had been to Amsterdam before. Edward Kienholz, who died in 1994, was an American artist who made controversial installations based on the cast-always of consumer society. His subjects are the taboos of society, such as prostitution, racism and mental illness.²⁰ He referred to his installations as tableaux. They are detailed, three-dimensional assemblages that invite the viewer to become a voyeur, or perhaps some kind of participant.

²⁰ Wiggins, C. (2010), 'Ed Kienholz and Nancy Reddin Kienholz. From 'Roxys' to 'The Hoerengracht' ', in: *The Hoerengracht, Kienholz at the National Gallery, London*, p. 9, London: Yale University Press

Kienholz's works have prompted engaging discussions about the nature of copies. He is close to, and sometimes considered as a part of, the American Pop Art movement, which for Baudrillard constituted a turning point in art history. In his opinion, after this movement art became quite simply the reproduction of signs of the world and, in particular, the signs of the consumer society. To Baudrillard pop represents the end of representational art and the beginning of a new form of art, which he refers to as "simulation". From this perspective, art becomes the mere simulation of the images and objects of the contemporary world.²¹

Making of *The Hoerengracht*

The installation *The Hoerengracht* was based on the artists' extensive field research in the area. Nancy Reddin Kienholz, an experienced photographer, took photos of the sex workers' rooms. The couple searched demolition yards outside Amsterdam for doors, window frames and other furnishings, which they took to Berlin where they constructed *The Hoerengracht* between 1983 and 1988. The artists invited female friends to their studio to have casts made of their bodies, which the artists then used as mannequins to represent the residents of *The Hoerengracht*. The painted faces, with their empty gazes, had originally stood on shop-window dummies. The glazed, metal-framed boxes had been used to display cookies on a Berlin baker's counter. In *The Hoerengracht* these boxes display the prostitutes' faces and occasionally their breasts.²²

²¹ Kellner, D. (2008), Baudrillard and the Art Conspiracy, p. 6,7
<http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/>

²² Wildt, A. de (2010), 'The Hoerengracht and the Amsterdam Red Light District', in: Kienholz at the National Gallery, London, 27-33 London: Yale University Press



In the mid 1980s, when *The Hoerengracht* was made, it was illegal to run a brothel in the Netherlands, although one might not guess this by looking at the open way in which the City of Amsterdam allowed prostitution to flourish. In “The Fine Art of Regulated Tolerance” Chrisje Brants details the idiosyncrasies of Dutch policy with regard to prostitution.²³ Like many foreigners, the Kienholzes thought that prostitution was completely legal in the Netherlands.

Visually, this was an interesting period. The light of the Red Light District was changing. The cozy reddish-pink lampshades were being replaced by red and ultraviolet neon light. When asked what his fascination with the subject and the area was, Edward Kienholz answered; “It’s all about the light”.

Art and reality

²³ Brants, C. (1998), ‘The Fine Art of Regulated Tolerance: Prostitution in Amsterdam’ in: *Journal of Law and Society*, 25: 621–635.

The Hoerengracht – while not a photographic document – captures the spirit and essence of a particular world in a particular moment in time that has vanished. In that sense, it bears resemblance to the practice of ethnographic and historical museums that collect clusters of objects. Museologist Peter van Mensch calls this a synecological approach, referring to the ecological method in biology education and diorama exhibits in natural history museums.²⁴

To take sets of artifacts out of the real world, instead of single objects, can be a remedy against the alienation and decontextualization that inevitably takes place when objects enter a collection. But it also freezes a situation in time. In that sense one could consider *The Hoerengracht* as a replica or copy of the Amsterdam Red Light District in the 1980's. In Baudrillard's words, *The Hoerengracht* is a simulacrum, a simulation of reality.

At first glance, *The Hoerengracht* looks almost real. But the comparison with objects collected by anthropologists as slices of life, can only be extended so far. The *Hoerengracht* is not the work of anthropologists or ethnologists, but a work by artists who wanted their art to function as a social conscience. The artists wanted to create art that would make people reconsider the role of 'throw-away people' in modern culture.²⁵ Ed and Nancy Kienholz did not create this work in order to capture a situation in the present for future use. Today, however, the historical reality is captured in objects such as chairs, magazines, a radio, ultraviolet light tubes, washbasins, ashtrays full of cigarette stubs and the mirrors on the windows that are known in Dutch as 'little spy's'. *The Hoerengracht* has also become a monument of the Red Light District in what some people perceive as the 'good old days' when there was not so much trafficking of women as in later years.

Artists and the changing Red Light District

The Amsterdam Red Light district has changed considerably since the mid 1980's. One of the consequences of lifting the brothel ban was the thorough overhaul of the

²⁴ Mensch, P. van (1999), 'Context en authenticiteit', in: Jaarboek Nederlands Openluchtmuseum, 1999 pp.78-101

²⁵ Couvrette, S., 'Edward Kienholz: The State Hospital' <http://cat-sidh.net/Writing/Kienholz.html>

old brothel rooms because of new regulations regarding hygiene and fire hazards. Almost all the rooms are now completely tiled from the floor to the ceiling. The rooms are less sleazy, but are also less romantic.

In 2007, the Amsterdam municipality introduced policies aimed at reducing the number of window prostitutes. This so-called 'project 1012' hoped to fight the trafficking of women and the whitewashing of money, in the sex business as well as in shops selling soft drugs. The City acquired around 110 of the 480 windows and workplaces and has temporarily lent them to fashion and jewelry designers and artists. A gentrification process has started, as is often the case with the involvement of artists. But not all brothels will disappear. They will be more concentrated on the Oudezijds Achterburgwal and side streets.



The 2010 exhibition in the Amsterdam Museum dedicated two spaces to inform visitors of the recent changes in the Red Light District and the controversies surrounding them. The museum, in collaboration with the National Gallery, made a documentary that explored the changes in the Red Light District that featured Nancy

Kienholz speaking with a former sex worker, a local politician, the curator of an art project, a brothel owner and the manager of the 1012 project.

The contemporary artists, whose work was shown in another space of the exhibition, all view prostitution and sex workers from different perspectives.

Amsterdam photographer Tess Jungblut captured the reality of the modern brothels in harsh morning light. In 2008/9 she took over 6000 photos of brothel interiors. Her photographs illuminate objects like security alarms and S&M tools.



The installation *Red Light* was made by Marieken Verheyen in 1990. Ms. Verheyen filmed men who were walking past a window brothel. The images are rather vague as she filmed with a hidden camera and natural light. Inside this installation is a typical prostitute's stool for the visitor to sit and watch the images (transferred to video) projected on screens. Even though one of the main characteristics of the

situation is missing – there is only a one sided gaze without interaction – watching the men passing by and hearing them ask ‘how much?’ can be rather uncomfortable for some people. Brothel rooms are spaces only the women, the clients and the cleaners enter. In a sense, this work is a reverse of the Kienholz installation: one can have the illusion of entering the territory of a prostitute, whereas *The Hoerengracht* is, as Edward Kienholz described it: “A piece for voyeurs.”



In 1975, the artist Marina Abramovic chose a very radical way to explore prostitution. As her contribution to the exhibition entitled *Body Art in The Appel*, an important Amsterdam art center, Ms. Abramovic exchanged roles with a prostitute. For several hours, she sat behind the window, while the prostitute visited the opening of the exhibition. Her work *Role Exchange* investigates the role of spaces in determining identities.

Photographer Philippe Vogelenzang and Majid Karrouch also looked at the impact of spaces on the way we view a person in a photo. Their work *In & Out* is a series of photographs of prostitutes in their workroom and then these same women photographed in the studio.

One of the artworks in the exhibition reflected on the changes going on in the Amsterdam Red Light District. French Amsterdam-based artist Laurence Aëgerter was part of RED A.I.R. / Redlight Art Amsterdam, an artists-in-residence program in former brothels in the centre of Amsterdam in 2008/9. She made a video of a performance in which a group of black cleaning ladies scrubbed the interior of the brothel before she installed herself in this temporary studio. It produced a strong association with that other age-old Dutch image: women cleaning the house and pavement. In a series of staged photographs she investigated the – often absurd – possible uses of the former brothel as a swimming pool, a snack bar and even as the new wing of the (nearby) Anne Frank House.

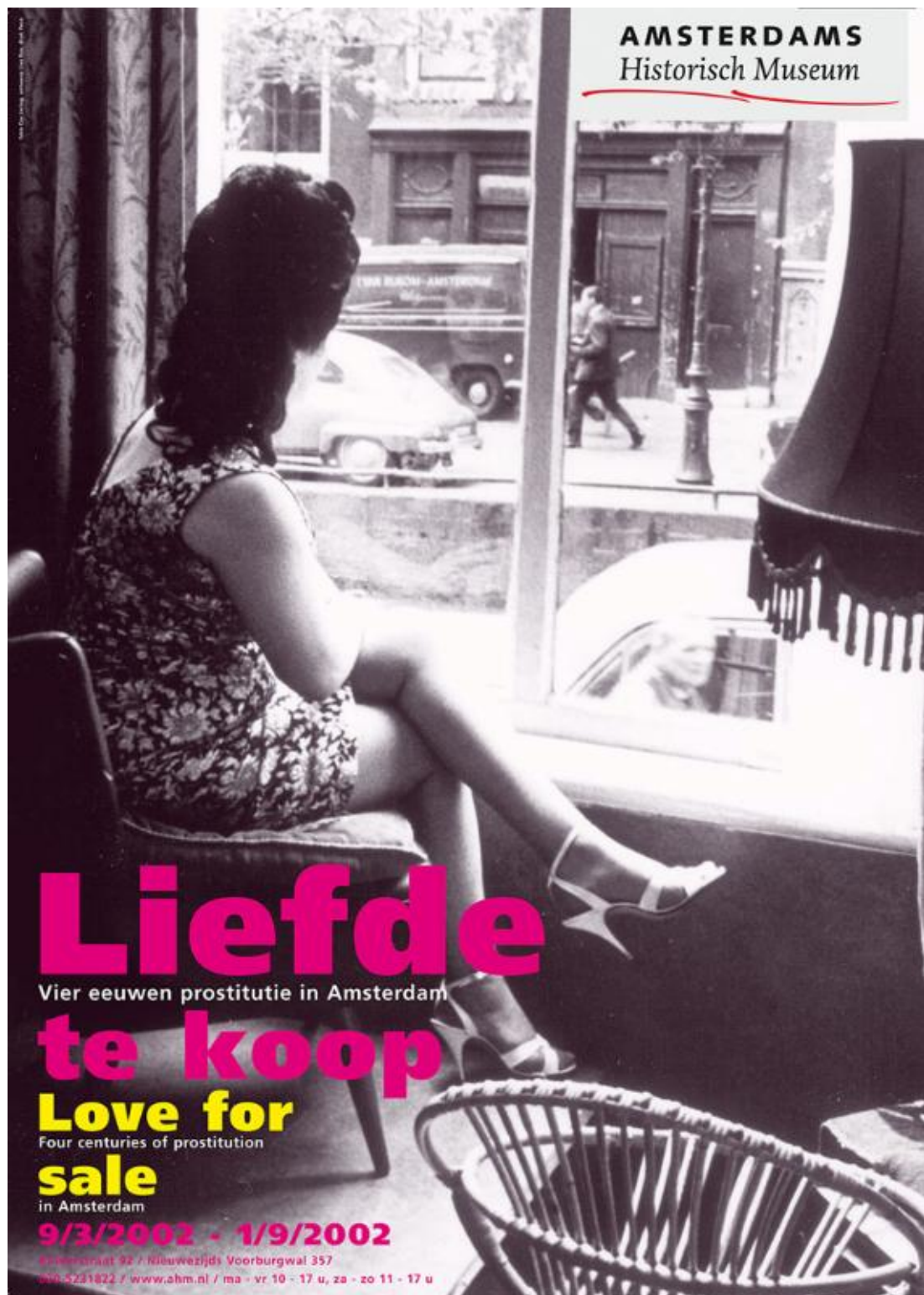


Some of the brothels have been rented temporarily to fashion designers, as a part of the Red Light Fashion Project. The museum showed some of their creations that were inspired by the area. For many years, designer Ted Noten occupied one of the Red Light Design ateliers. The museum showed the public art he created: a vending machine with rings that he placed on the outside wall of his studio. The rings were cheap Chinese rings, painted red in the designers' atelier. Noten hoped customers would offer a ring to the prostitute they visited.

The finale of the exhibition *The Hoerengracht* was an audio-visual installation, created by trendforecaster Lidewij Edelkoort, in which she visualized the future of prostitution.

Prostitutes' views on prostitution

Before discussing the reactions of the public to *The Hoerengracht*, I will return to the exhibition *Love for Sale* (2002), which had a very different approach. The 2010 exhibition presented artists' views on prostitution. *Love for Sale* was a cultural historical exhibition that explored the ways in which the city has dealt with prostitution over the centuries. One of the curatorial choices was to give voice to the prostitutes themselves. A popular installation in the exhibition was a reconstruction of a brothel window, based on photographs of the room of an Amsterdam prostitute in the 1960's. The photo was also used for the poster of the exhibition. On a monitor we showed the testimony of an Amsterdam prostitute who worked in the Red Light District from the 1950's until the 1970's. Visitors could sit on 'her' bed to watch the video. The intimacy of the space in combination with the story was uncomfortable for some visitors, but most liked the strong impact of this room.



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Love for sale

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It was more difficult to give voice to prostitutes from earlier periods. Visitors could listen to recordings of court cases and enter the reconstructed ante chamber of a posh 19th century brothel, to look around or even sit down and read a novel describing a visit to this very same brothel. Visitors were most impressed by these parts of the

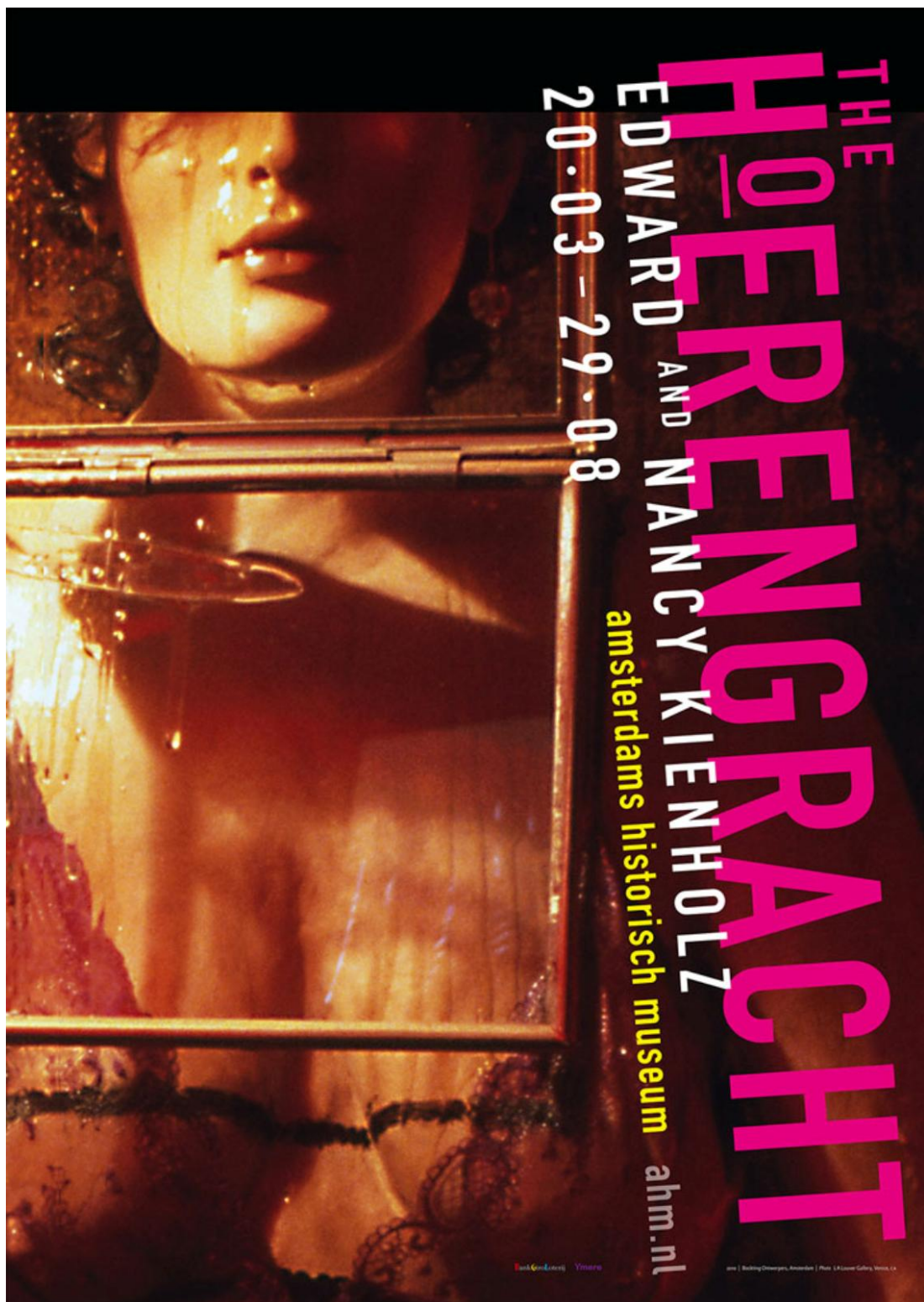
presentation, and also by Marieken Verheyen's installation, which was presented in both exhibitions.

In all of these installations museum visitors could enter the space of a prostitute, and in a way almost feel like a prostitute, as many of them described it. Not surprisingly maybe, the emotional reactions of women were stronger than those of men.

Visitors' opinions

Now let us return to questions of art and reality, copies and fakes in relation to the reactions of the public to *The Hoerengracht*. Most visitors to the Amsterdam Museum are not familiar with Baudrillard. They have a tendency, probably even more than in a museum of modern art, to look for relations between art and reality. Some visitors even asked whether *The Hoerengracht* was actually a work of art or if it was 'just' a registration or copy of real-life. The fact that the work was created out of artistic ideas and involved artistic choices was often overlooked. Umberto Eco, in the essays later compiled in *Travels in Hyperreality*, was one of the first to investigate the effect of American creations of hyper real places like Disney World and wax museums. Eco states that in the average American imagination and taste, obsessed as it is with realism, the past must be preserved in full-scale authentic copies that are even more polished and shinier than the original.²⁶

²⁶ Eco, U. (1983), *Travels in Hyperreality*, San Diego 1983. p. 6,7 San Diego HBJ



When *The Hoerengracht* came to the Dutch capital in March 2010 the Amsterdam magazine *Time Out* even questioned: why go and see this work of art when the real thing is just around the corner?

For the Dutch, but especially for

foreign visitors, the possibility to make the comparison was one of the attractions. “The voyeuristic delight of the Kienholz’s work was made visceral by the side-by-side comparison that I had in Amsterdam” wrote art historian Rachel Felderman, who is doing research on Edward Kienholz. The comparison is even more interesting, because the artwork hasn’t changed, but the reality has.

In both exhibitions discussed in this paper there was a connection between the way visitors felt about prostitution and their feelings about the exhibits. “Realistic but sad” was an often heard comment. Prostitutes themselves on the other hand, were proud that their work, often looked down upon, was now on display in a museum. Visitors commented on the material aspects of *The Hoerengracht*. Policeman Joep de Groot, who worked in the area in the mid 1980’s remarked, “There were no street lamps like those in Amsterdam in the 1980’s, that’s really American.”

The Kienholzes sprayed their work all over with resin, creating a surreal effect, which may suggest natural phenomena such as rain, tears or even sperm as some visitors remarked. It is one of the hints that we are looking at something that was created by someone with intention, rather than a mere ‘neutral’ reproduction. The resin also makes it the contrary of Eco’s reproductions: the Kienholz’ window brothels are not more polished and shinier than the original. Many visitors, especially women, interpreted the resin as tears.

Boxed-in heads

The cookie boxes enclosing female heads are the most surreal element of the Kienholz work. To Nancy Kienholz, the boxes signify that only the bodies of the women are for sale, not their souls. When asked for their reactions to the boxed-in heads, visitors offered many associations through which they attempted to connect art with reality.

Ex policeman Joep de Groot, a confidant of many of the prostitutes, associated what he saw as the sadness and despair of the boxed-in heads with the harsh reality of the women’s lives. A former prostitute who actually liked her job, did not like the heads. In her opinion prostitutes do not make a separation between head and body. Many female visitors, more often than men, interpreted the boxes as a barrier between the prostitute and the man to whom she sells her body. A regular client of prostitutes

told me: “they (Kienholz’ prostitutes adw) all look so cold, bleak and hard, it would kill my envy to visit them, if I wouldn’t know personally that one can have a warm, intimate, passionate and funny relation with a prostitute.”

The art critic of the Amsterdam newspaper *Het Parool* called the Kienholz prostitutes “attractive chickies in all sorts and shapes”.²⁷ A young man of 18 had a similarly positive reaction connecting the cookie boxes to prostitutes “because the women are tasty”.

Natasha Ginwala, a critic and curator from India, remarked that the boxes commoditize the women.

The connection between art and reality is a layered and transformative process. In a sense the Kienholz work *turned* the women into something sweet and attractive by placing cookie boxes around their heads, just like Abramovic *became* a whore because she sat behind the window.

But is it art?

Many foreign tourists were shocked—to encounter prostitution as a subject in a museum. A female Chinese visitor regarded the exhibition as revealing. She was struck by what she interpreted as an open-minded and humanistic view and representation of prostitutes, as normal persons with dignity. Some visitors regarded *The Hoerengracht* as an old fashioned diorama. Others compared the work more irreverently to the Efteling, a famous Dutch attraction park with the House of Hansel and Grethel and other representations of fairy tales, the Dutch forerunner of Disney Land. Some older visitors who had once lived in the Red Light District, which was and is also a residential area for people not connected to the sex business, felt nostalgia for a lost space and way of life.

To some art critics *The Hoerengracht* felt outdated because of its romantic view reminiscent of the old days of the Red Light District. The *Parool* critic said that it was rightly on show in the Amsterdam *Historical Museum* as the work represents a world long gone and because the kitschy but cosy atmosphere with paintings and a tiger print wall is replaced by the present day commercial approach in white tiled spaces.

²⁷ Keijer, K. (2010), ‘De tijd haalde *The Hoerengracht* al snel in, in *Het Parool* 24-3-2010

Historical museums recreate spaces and fill them with objects and media in order to deepen the understanding of the visitors. In this museological and virtual tour through the Amsterdam Red Light district it has become clear that these spaces, created by artists as well as those created by museums, all are in some way copies of the original and at the same time reconstructions that bear resemblances to the original but can never be the original.

Again: art and reality

Historical and city museums are becoming increasingly hybrid, mixing contemporary art with historical artifacts and, as a result, are sometimes confusing to visitors. The combination of art, history and information in *The Hoerengracht* exhibition was very attractive to some visitors. For others, the spheres were not separate enough. Contemporary art lovers were especially sensitive to the hybrid character of *The Hoerengracht* exhibition, which included information about the political controversies alongside the art. For these visitors, art takes the viewer on an inward journey, and too much reality may interfere with this experience.

The fact that these artworks were shown in a historical museum created different expectations. Many people expect to find ‘the truth’ in a historical museum. Some visitors even thought that the museum had created *The Hoerengracht* as an imitation of the area. They did not perceive it as a work of art, that needs to be carefully looked at, experienced and analysed, inviting many possible interpretations.

Is there something that a museum can or should do to address this confusion of art and reality? Should the museum provide more information or place works of art in a white cube, in a context that informs viewers that works of art are not reconstructions of the real world? Does it matter whether visitors understand this distinction? Is it the responsibility of the artists or the museum to clarify this distinction? In general, shouldn't there be more focus in museums on the fact that all objects on show and stories told are actually constructs (and not copies of reality) and do not represent one singular truth?

The Copy as an exhibit: “representative” or “educational tool?”

Introduction by Nina Archabal
Director, Minnesota Historical Society
President of ICOM-USA

The copy on exhibition is a subject that remains unsettled in our history and archaeology museums. As I visit museums around the world, I see different approaches represented in our work. Put simply, there is no prevailing standard.

I think that the root of our differences is embedded in our understandings of the mission of museums. Are they, first and foremost, educational institutions? If so, our primary focus is on the stories our museums tell, on the questions they raise in the minds of our visitors and on the answers they find.

Or, are they, first and foremost curatorial institutions? If so, our primary focus is on the objects we exhibit. Our goal is to provide access to objects.

Balancing these two points of view is an everyday challenge in museums of history and archaeology. The lines between them need not be sharply drawn. A museum may pursue both paths at different times and in different situations.

For example, a museum may mount an exhibition to showcase a particular collection. One that comes to mind is the Minnesota Historical Society’s exhibition entitled *Red Wing Retro*, which showcased the museum’s collection of pottery made by a local company whose products were on the shelves in most kitchen cupboards across the United States during the 1940s and ‘50s.

At the other end of the spectrum was an exhibition entitled *Native Words, Native Warriors*, a traveling exhibition circulated by the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian. This exhibition told the story of several American Indian tribes and the roles their particular language skills played in passing secret information during World Wars I and II. There were no objects in this exhibition, which was comprised solely of photographs and text panels.

The American Association of Museums, the national organization serving a broad spectrum of U.S. museums and museum professionals, had traditionally held the view that, by definition, a museum is an institution that holds, cares for and exhibits collections. But, over the last 25 years, the emphasis in American museology has shifted toward the museum’s role in education and its engagement with its

community. This shift has opened the door to increasing use of reproductions. Sometimes the original is considered too fragile to be exhibited. And, sometimes the exhibition developers think that the value of the object is the content it conveys, more than any intrinsic value it may have as an original.

What is the answer to our dilemma?

I do know that museum visitors will line up to see “the original.” I observed this phenomenon in the long queues of visitors waiting to see *The Declaration of Independence*, one of the nation’s founding documents. No matter that inexpensive copies are available in museum gift stores and that you can print a copy from the Internet. In this case, a copy, no matter how meticulously made, is no substitute for the original. Clearly, the original document has intrinsic value.

The word “copy” has an aura all its own. When I was in south-western France several years ago I chose not to visit Lascaux II, which houses a replica of two cave halls from the original Lascaux Cave. Instead, I visited another lesser-known cave in the area where I could see original Palaeolithic wall paintings. Here in China, would we have the same sense of anticipation about visiting the Xi’an site if the tomb were full of reproduced terracotta figures?

Finally as we think about the use of copies, we must consider our responsibility to our audience. We are known as places where people come to learn about human cultures. Traditionally, we have held a culture’s treasures. Ours is a public trust responsibility. Do we break the trust or compromise it when we show copies? Is the problem even more vexing when we show both original material and copies in the same exhibition? Is it enough to include a label to inform our visitors that they are looking at a copy?

I hope that our speakers will help us to think more clearly about these questions.

The Role of Authentic Objects in Science Museums

Constanze Hampp, Daniela Bauer, Stephan Schwan

I. Introduction

It is indisputable that many museum objects give off a kind of aura. In this sense the term aura means a distinctive but intangible quality that seems to surround a person or thing. The German philosopher Walter Benjamin characterized aura as “the unique phenomenon of a distance, however close it may be” (Benjamin, 1977). Even in science museums, where the focus is more on technology or functionality than in history or archaeology museums, there are objects with an aura. In the majority of cases, these are authentic objects.

But, how does this aura come into being? Why do authentic objects have such an effect on visitors? Researchers who approach this question from a psychological perspective, respectively from the angle of a field of research that is concerned with mental processes and the behavior of human beings, do not try to find the aura within the museum object. They rather find it in the perception of the viewers. Since August 2009 our research group has been pursuing several approaches to make the concept of the aura concrete, and to understand and explain the impact of authentic objects on visitors. In this article, two approaches are presented: the first one investigates authentic objects in comparison to other forms of presentation, such as photographic reproductions; the second approach contrasts the different effects of originals and copies. Both approaches take different definitions of authentic objects as a basis. The first one defines authentic objects as functional, three-dimensional and material things in contrast to media representations. The second, concentrates on the subset of material objects that “have a historical link to a person, event, time, or place of some significance (Frazier, Gelman, Wilson & Hood, 2009).

II. Authentic objects and their photographic reproductions

In general museum studies assume that objects, especially authentic objects, have specific advantages compared to other exhibition elements. Scholze (2004) formulated four advantages that authentic objects have:

1. Objects are more credible than other exhibition elements.

2. Objects are more fascinating compared to other elements.
3. Objects are easier to connect with stories and history.
4. Objects have a higher persuasive power than other elements such as texts, pictures, etc.

However, until now, there has been no systematic empirical evidence for these assumptions.

Part of our project focuses on the question of whether, in an exhibition of new controversial technologies, authentic objects are perceived differently in terms of credibility, fascination and argumentative power than their pictorial substitutes. The multiple documents model of Rouet was an important basis for our research.

Objects as “primary documents”

In the context of his multiple documents model, Rouet (2006) investigated how multiple documents (eyewitness reports, official documents, etc.) are utilized to discuss historical issues within the scope of teaching history. One result was that primary documents play a central role for the consideration of historical problems. Compared to texts from text books, for example, they were quoted more often (Britt, Rouet, Georgi & Perfetti, 1994).

It is interesting to transfer this model to exhibitions in museums. In museums, objects are typically embedded in an ensemble of texts, pictures, and diagrams. The exhibition ensemble can therefore be viewed as a composition of multiple documents. The underlying assumption of our study is that objects act as primary documents and have a stronger impact on the visitors than other representations. To test this empirically, objects and their photographic reproductions are systematically varied within an exhibition ensemble. The objects are presented to one half of the test subjects while the photos of the objects are presented to the other half.

Tested material

For the experiments, different exhibits (and their photographic reproductions) for three conflicting scientific issues were developed. The conflicts were presented via

object pairs – one object standing for a pro argument in favour of a new technology, and the other, standing for a con argument against a new technology.

For the issue “body enhancement”, for example, a futuristic artificial leg was presented as a useful intervention on the human body, whereas an assembly of silicone breast implants was represented as an inadequate intervention on the human body (see pictures 1 and 2).





Assumptions

When transferred to psychological concepts, the four assumptions of this study correspond to Scholze's (2004) four assumptions comparing authentic objects to pictorial substitutes:

1. Authentic objects are assessed as more credible by the visitors.
2. Authentic objects activate memory contents more extensively.
3. Authentic objects attract higher attention.
4. Authentic objects lead to a more differentiated mental representation.

To test these assumptions four experiments were conducted, each corresponding to one of the assumptions. Two were conducted in the laboratory and two, in a museum.

The laboratory experiments

In the laboratory experiments, the first two assumptions were tested. The object pairs were presented very simply on a table in a seminar room and were systematically replaced by photographs.





In the first experiment that dealt with the credibility of objects, subjects had to complete three tasks: The first task was writing a short essay expressing the subject's opinion about the controversial issue displayed in the exhibition. They were then asked to slip into the role of an exhibition designer, choosing three out of six available exhibition elements one would use to create a small presentation concerning the given issue. At the end, they had to rank the six displayed exhibition elements according to their perceived credibility. The results of the ranking task especially revealed that objects scored significantly higher than photographs.

The field experiments

In the field experiments, assumptions 3 and 4 were tested. The object pairs were presented within an exhibition ensemble. The experimental show case is framed by two other show cases that also refer to the conflicting issue – for example, they give a historical perspective on the issue. The object pairs are embedded within other exhibition elements including texts, pictures, and diagrams. Similar to the laboratory experiments, photographs are substituted for the objects.



To examine the attention processes of the visitors, we worked with a mobile eye-tracker. This instrument consists of glasses that are connected to a portable computer that records the eye-movements of the participants while they are looking at the exhibition cases. The focus of the data analysis lies on the length and frequency of the participants' focus on the objects and on their photographic substitutes. Corresponding to our assumption the objects were examined longer and more often than the photographs. The statistical analysis of the data demonstrates that objects tend to draw more attention than their photographic counterparts

Challenging aspects

There are several challenging aspects of the study described above. One difficulty is that, in the field of new technologies, in most cases, you can hardly speak of objects with an aura. To find authentic objects, or even any object, turns out to be very complicated because often the scale is very small, as in the case of nanotechnology. Therefore, it is often only possible to display objects that visualize the technology (e.g. microscopes) or products in which the technology is applied (e.g. handlebars or lunchboxes made of carbon nanotubes).

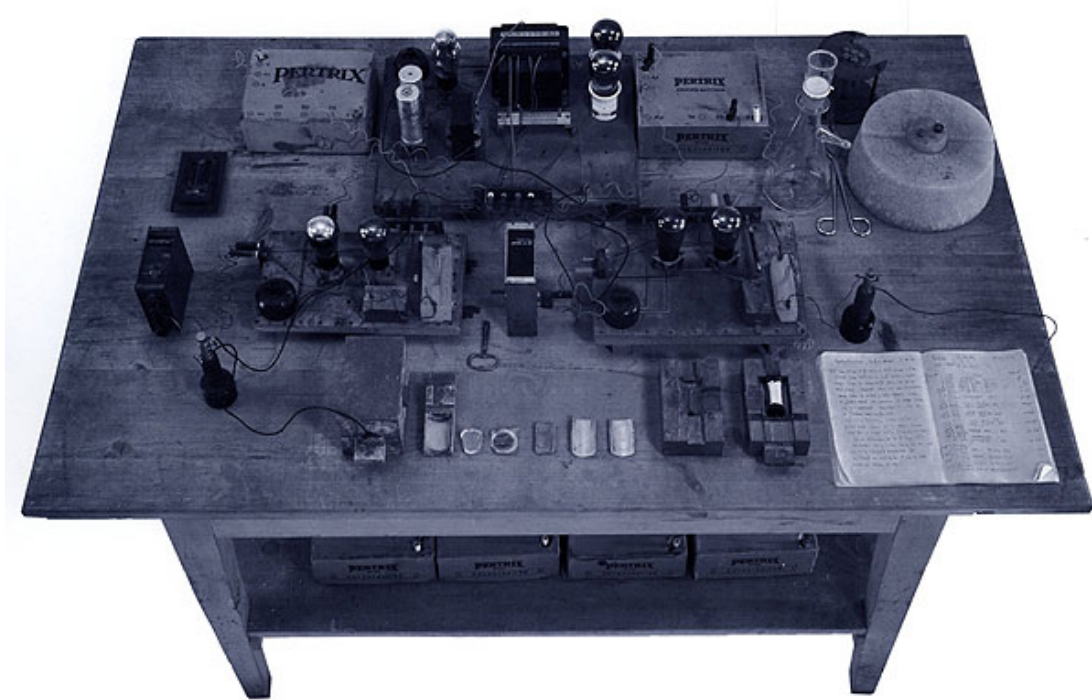
Another aspect is that the conflicting issues tend to lead the visitor into a specific processing mode. It might happen that the visitor starts to think about the object against the backdrop of the conflicting issue before they have explored the object itself. Moreover, apart from the distinction between object and photographic reproduction, there are certainly many other factors that also constitute “aura” – for example the three-dimensional extension or the staging (e.g. illumination) of objects. In addition to the aforementioned factors that are all “visible qualities”, it is also important to keep the “invisible qualities” in mind. An important aspect in this context is the history of the object, the knowledge of its origin.

III. Original and copy

The “invisible qualities” of objects are the focus of another approach we are pursuing. The assumption is that the effect of an exhibition on the visitor does not depend on the object itself but on the story that is linked with this object. According to this assumption, the appearance of a museum object can be quite unspectacular, but it can, nevertheless, have a strong effect provided that the visitor knows or is told the history of the object.

A good example is the original worktable of Otto Hahn, Lise Meitner, and Fritz Strassmann where they discovered and demonstrated nuclear fission in 1938. An arrangement of primitive and unspectacular instruments, used during their experiments is displayed on this table. The entire exhibit is displayed in the Deutsches Museum in Munich. What constitutes the aura in this case is the meaning and the consequences of the experiments executed on the table. Exploring the table, visitors see the origin of nuclear development and are inspired to imagine how the

Nobel laureates stood in front of the table, changing the arrangement again and again, assaying different adjustments until they were successful. It would be very easy to replace the table, but in this case, to quote Walter Benjamin (1977), a reproduction would not have the aura of the original.



To give another example: imagine a moon rock in a showcase. If the museum visitors are not aware that the rock comes from the moon, they probably would think that it is just an ordinary piece of rock that can be found on a hike in the mountains. The effect only occurs if the visitor knows the origin of the rock. But does this imply that you can give an ordinary, unauthentic object an aura if you attach a spectacular story to it?

The law of contagion

The described effect of authentic objects, in relation to their history, can be explained by the “law of contagion,” first formulated by the anthropologists Frazer (1890/1959) and Mauss (1902/1972) in their concept of “sympathetic magic”. As Frazer stated, “the ‘law of contagion holds that people, objects, and so forth, that come into contact with each other may influence each other through the transfer of some or all of their properties. The influence continues after the physical contact has ended and may be permanent” (Frazer 1890/1959). More specifically, causal powers of an object or a person can be transmitted to an object or a person with which the first object or person has been in contact.

A series of studies carried out by Nemeroff, Rozin, and colleagues showed that the behavior and judgments of participants are influenced by thoughts of “magical contagion”. Rozin et al. (1986), for example, found evidence for some kinds of negative contagion, including a participant’s reluctance to consume a drink that had been briefly contacted by a dead but sterilized cockroach. Similarly, participants were reluctant to wear a clean shirt they liked if it had previously been worn by someone whom the participant did not like. However, those findings do not prove that belief in “magical” contagion was at work. The participants might have believed that cleaning operations were not perfect. The critical study in this respect was carried out by Nemeroff and Rozin (1994). Participants were asked to rate how they would feel about wearing an attractive sweater that had had a number of possible back stories to it, such as having been worn by someone the participants thought of as the personification of evil. In this study, Nemeroff and Rozin found evidence for several different theories of contamination. The most interesting theory of contamination in this context was contamination by spiritual essence, in which the sweater embodies or retained some nonmaterial essence of the person who wore it.

Assumptions

It can be assumed that certain original museum objects have such a strong effect on the visitors because they were in contact with famous people or distant locations or times. While they were in contact, according to the law of contagion, a contamination in a positive sense took place and the knowledge of these contact

charges the objects with a kind of aura. According to this assumption, visitors should dedicate more attention to the exhibit when they believe it to be an original rather than a copy (1). Furthermore, originals should establish a stronger linkage between the visitors and the origin of the object than copies (2). Therefore, visitors should rather ascribe properties of the origin of the exhibit to the original than to a copy (2a). Second, originals should provoke a stronger change in the visitors that is associated with their origin than with copies (2b). Moreover, originals should be ranked higher concerning their material and non-material value (3). And, in the truest sense of the word, respectively the law of contagion, the desire for touching the exhibit should be stronger if the visitors think they have an original in front of them than a copy (4).

François Le Clerc's wooden leg and Vivien Leigh's corset

To test these assumptions empirically, several showcases were presented. In the centre of each showcase, an object was displayed, embedded with other exhibition elements such as texts, pictures, and diagrams. During the experiment the display of the original and the copy was systematically varied, therefore the object remained the same and only the label was changed.

One experimental showcase, for example, illustrated early prosthetic devices used by pirates. A wooden leg was displayed, with one half of the participants being able to read the following on the label: "Famous 16th century pirate François Le Clercs wooden leg (original)". The other half of the participants saw a label that said "Famous 16th century pirate François Le Clercs wooden leg (replica)". In another showcase, a corset was displayed that – according to its label – was presented as "Vivien Leigh's corset, worn in the movie 'Gone with the wind' (original)" to one group of the test subjects and as "Vivien Leigh's corset, worn in the movie 'Gone with the wind' (replica)" to the other group of the test persons.



Kapitan mit Holzbein im 16. Jahrhundert

geprägt. Verwundungen waren unvermeidlich. An Bord war, konnten die Verletzten auf dem Deck liegen. Bei schweren Verletzungen an Beinen mussten sie mit einer Säge amputiert werden. Oftmals kamen viele Seefahrer ein Holzbein.

Anders führten Amputationen sehr häufig zu Wunden der hohen Blutverlust, die Schmerzen verursachten und die Wundinfektionen, die wegen



Hausenmeister
Zeichnung eines
Bräutigams



Original-Holzbein des Bremer Kaufmanns v. d. B.
v. d. B.
In der Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts war das Holzbein ein sehr verbreitetes Hilfsmittel. Es wurde aus einem Stück Holz gefertigt und hatte eine Länge von etwa 1,50 m. Das Holzbein wurde mit einem Band umwickelt und mit einem Ring am Ende versehen. Der Ring diente dazu, das Holzbein an einem Stützpunkt zu befestigen. Das Holzbein wurde in der Regel aus Eiche oder Buche gefertigt.



Dreispitz, langer Bart und ausgezeichnete Schwärze waren die Kennzeichen der 16.-18. Jahrhunderte. Auf der Zeichnung ist »Blackbeard« zu sehen.



Piraten besaßen ein eigenes Tarnung. So konnten sie sich an falscher Flagge nähern und diese

Piraten – »Made in J«

Im Film, in der Literatur, die unser Bild des typischen Piraten neben dem Holzbein beip



Mit Holzkopf: Thurstin Hoffman als Captain Jack in der Hollywood-Verfilmung von Peter Pan



Mit Augen: Patrick Swayze als »Jaws« und



In so doing, the effects of the originals and copies can be compared. The visible qualities of the original and the copy are the same as they are, in fact, the same object. The only difference is that the originals, according to their labels, have a historical link to a famous person, event, a distant time or place as they were in physical contact with them.

Quantitative and qualitative assessment

To test the assumption that visitors dedicate more attention to the exhibit when they consider the object to be an original rather than a copy, the attention processes of the visitors are examined via mobile eye tracking. According to the assumption, the originals should be explored longer than the copies.



To test the rest of the assumptions listed above, participants are interviewed after the eye-tracking session. In this guided interview, the test persons are asked to talk about their opinion and impressions of the showcases first; then the focus turns to the objects, which they have to rank according to various criteria such as appreciation, value, etc. While up to this point the distinction between original and copy is only covered indirectly, in the final section of the interview, the distinction between original and copy is directly addressed and, at the end, the participants are confronted with the true status (original vs. copy) of the objects.

The analysis of the eye-tracking data shows the supposed effect for only some of the tested objects. Vivien Leigh's corset or Nobel Prize medals, for example, were

explored longer and more often when they were labelled as originals than as replicas. For other, more technical objects like a scanning tunnelling microscope (STM) or the pirate's wooden leg, data showed no obvious difference between original and replica. The interviews provide explanations for these effects. The effect of objects depends not only on authenticity but also on many other factors like prior knowledge, interests or the expectations in respect of an exhibition. More detailed results will be published later.

IV. Conclusion

The studies described above are the first attempts to understand from an experimental psychological perspective the effect of authentic or museum objects with a supposed aura. While the first study focuses on visible qualities of museum objects by examining the effect of an object in comparison to its photographic reproduction, the second study starts from the premise that the stories or history of an object is responsible for its effects on the visitors. A series of further studies will be necessary to define the new field of authenticity research and to gain insight into the perception and processing of museum objects.

V. Images

- champp_image1: Futuristic artificial leg. Photo: Hans-Joachim Becker. Deutsches Museum München.
- champp_image2: Silicone breast implants. Photo: Hans-Joachim Becker. Deutsches Museum München.
- champp_image3: Presentation of objects in laboratory. Photo: Constanze Hampp. Deutsches Museum München.
- champp_image4: Presentation of photographs in laboratory. Photo: Constanze Hampp. Deutsches Museum München.
- champp_image5: Presentation of objects in field. Photo: Hans-Joachim Becker. Deutsches Museum München.
- champp_image6: Presentation of photographs in field. Photo: Hans-Joachim Becker. Deutsches Museum München.

- champp_image7: Original worktable on nuclear fission of Hahn, Meitner, and Strassmann. Photo: Deutsches Museum München
- champp_image8: Wooden leg. Photo: Hans-Joachim Becker. Deutsches Museum München.
- champp_image9: Corsage. Photo: Hans-Joachim Becker. Deutsches Museum München.
- champp_image10: Analysis of eye-movements via mobile eye-tracking. Photo: Hans-Joachim Becker. Deutsches Museum München.

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The potential of museum artifacts: Meta-historical art in the museum world

Jennifer Restauri,

Imagine on the first day of your college career, you step into your university's library and find yourself confronted with an academic exhibition. Now, for your entire life you have regarded the library as a place of truths as you have completed book reports and term papers. But on this very day, your perception of the library is going to change – because on this day, you have stepped into the Hodges Library at the University of Tennessee. Here, you find yourself confronted with a skeleton of a centaur [Figure 1].



Your intuition tells you that it is impossible, that centaurs are mythical creatures, perhaps found in your secret stash of fantasy fiction books, but certainly not on the first floor of the central library of your college. But, as you examine the skeleton, you find no signs of this work being a fake. This skeleton and several associated

burial artefacts appear to be real. And at last, your eyes catch the panel text on the exhibition case, which reads, “Do You Believe in Centaurs?”²⁸

For 4,000 entering freshmen students at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville each year, this scenario plays out. Students examine the exhibition and come to their own conclusions regarding their beliefs in the reality of the centaur, but the exhibition is a prime example of a genre of art that has developed over the past 40 years.²⁹ First developing under the name “archaeological fiction,” the genre now known as artefactual fiction employs a variety of artistic processes to create the appearance of authentic artefacts with fabricated, but apparently plausible provenance. These works are installed using contemporary museum practices and aesthetics, including interpretive curatorial narrative, to simulate authenticity.

Perhaps at this point, you might be considering the long history of forgers who have created fakes for financial gain or you might think of the art historical developments of trompe l’oeil [Figure 2].

²⁸ Beauvais Lyons. “Subversive Public Art.” *Number* 64 (Summer 2009): 8-9.

²⁹ Beauvais Lyons. “Subversive Public Art.” 8-9; Beauvais Lyons. “The Association for Creative Zoology and the 20th Scopes Trial Reenactment.” *The Journal of the Mid America Print Council* 15, no. 2 (Fall 2007): 8-12.



While you are certainly right to consider this history, the genre of artefactual fiction does not aspire to fool for financial gain or for amusement and aesthetics, but instead to induce scepticism and deeper levels of critical thinking about authenticity and presentation of objects. By examining the history, methodology, and selected works by artists within and related to this genre, museum professionals may gain valuable

insight on the pedagogical possibilities of the “aura” of objects, regarding objects’ ability to provide experience-based learning while exciting the imagination.

Establishing the Importance of the “Aura”

Beauvais Lyons (1958) Professor of Art and artist at the University of Tennessee, has defined artefactual fiction as “...the allusion to any conceivable culture through the fabrication of artefacts which reflect the values of such a culture.”³⁰ This definition reflects Lyons’ personal interest in archaeological fiction, as he himself has fabricated at least three ancient civilizations [Figure 3], but it also leaves room for the expansion of the genre as seen through publications on works of paleontological fiction and meta-historical art, as well as Lyons’ more recent works addressing the disciplines of art, medicine, and zoology.³¹ A common approach that unifies these various disciplines represented in artefactual fiction is the requirement that works be presented, or documented, as factual. Lyons argues, “Whether the documentation takes form of an illustration, a photograph, a film, a video, a bound octavo volume or museological display, various components of text and display can make the work of fiction appear to be real.”³²

³⁰ Behrens Roy R. “Making History: The Art of Mock-Documentation.” *The North American Review* 267, no. 1 (March 1982): 37-40, 38.

³¹ For more information on Paleontological fiction, please refer to Adrienne Mayor. “Centaur Bones: Paleontological Fiction,” in *The First Fossil Hunters: Paleontology in Greek and Roman Times*, 228-253. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000; and Linda Hutcheon. “Frame-Ups and Their Marks: The Recognition of Attribution of Irony,” in *Irony’s Edge*, 141-159. New York: Routledge, 1994; The civilizations Lyons has created include the *Arenot*, *Apasht*, and *Aazudian*.

³² Beauvais Lyons. “The Excavation of the Apasht: Artifacts from an Imaginary Past.” *Leonardo* 18, no. 2 (1985): 81-89; 81.



This presents a seeming conundrum regarding “aura of the real.” Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) clearly states, “Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be.”³³ Benjamin’s argument is clearly relevant for artefactual fiction. The underlying principle of artefactual fiction is the fabrication of a

³³ Walter Benjamin. “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Post-Impressionism to World War II*, edited by Debbie Lewer, 174-187. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2006, 176.

provenance and history of the artefact. Without this, artists working in the genre cannot create the experience, which they wish to provide. For Benjamin, provenance and history of the object provide a significant portion of the object's aura.

This can be visually illustrated by works by Donald Evans (1945-1977) and Norman Daly (1911-2008). Donald Evans, an artist and architectural draftsman who studied at Cornell University, developed an interest in stamps during his childhood making miniature paintings of stamps. Before his untimely death in 1977, Evans had issued approximately four hundred stamps. These stamps drew from his interest in creating a world, which included 42 imaginary countries – that were “...innocent, peaceful, and composed.”³⁴

Evans' stamps were similar to postage stamps in size and in having cancellation marks. Applying the method of philately, Evans went on to catalogue his stamps of imaginary countries in his “Catalogue of the World,” a complete catalogue of his works. Through this catalogue Evans established context for his work giving it history and provenance, as each catalogue entry recorded country and date of issuance as well as currency conversions. This information provided an apparent reality to the work, one that Evans believed to be important to the work's plausibility.³⁵

Daly, an emeritus professor of art at Cornell University, had a different approach. While Evans tried to present a plausible history to accompany his body of work, Daly took this concept to a new level.³⁶ In 1971, Daly created what is regarded as the first work of archaeological fiction “*The Civilization of Llhuros*,”³⁷ Exhibited at the Andrew Dickson White Museum at Cornell University as “An Exhibition of

³⁴ Eisenhart, Willy. *The World of Donald Evans*. 2nd ed. New York: Abbeville Press, 1994, 9.

³⁵ ³⁵ Eisenhart, 11-21.

³⁶ It is of note that Donald Evans was a student at the same time that Norman Daly was teaching at Cornell University and possibly took Daly's popular freshman course on art and ideas. Evans' enrollment predates Daly's exhibition of “The Civilization of Llhuros” though.

³⁷ Norman Daly and Beauvais Lyons, “The Civilization of Llhuros”: The First Multimedia Exhibition in the Genre of Archaeological Fiction.” *Leonardo* 24, no. 3 (1991): 265-271; “It is the first conceptualization of an entire civilization presented as an archaeological discovery and installed as an anthropological study.”

Artifacts from the Recent Excavations of Vanibo, Houndee, Draikum, and other sites,” Daly’s work was comprised of over 150 objects in a variety of media that documented the fictional culture of Llhuros.³⁸

Daly aspired not only to create a fictional culture, but to provide the physical evidence and narrative to verify its existence..³⁹ Employing a variety of methods, including the production of a 55 page catalogue complete with essays, interviews, and images, Daly laid the foundation for the plausibility of “The Civilization of Llhuros.” Daly and Lyons have argued that, “The catalogue is of major importance to the exhibition, for while the stratagem of archaeological fiction involves the fabrication of Llhuroscian artifacts, it is the ‘documentation’ of Llhuros that is central to heightening the exhibition’s authenticity.”⁴⁰ Daly further authenticated “The Civilization of Llhuros” through the inclusion of written interpretations of fabricated folk tales and prayers and visual narratives, through the use of maps, a history of Llhuros, and documentary images of the excavation. As a result, those who encountered his work could be convinced that Llhuros had actually existed.

Artifactual fiction relies upon the establishment of academic authority. In addition to the limited examples presented here, other works of artifactual fiction may be found in the work of a number of other artists including Beauvais Lyons, William Willers, Rodger Lang, and David Wilson. It is academic authority that persuades audiences to step into the experience of the fiction. Academic authority established through supplemental exhibition materials illustrates the role that aura plays in our perception of a work of art. To understand the aura generated by artifactual fiction and gain

³⁸ Norman Daly. *The Civilization of Llhuros: an exhibition of artifacts from the recent excavations of Vanibo, Houndee, Draikum, and other sites*. Edited by Nita Jager. Ithaca, N.Y.: Office of University Publications, Cornell University, 1972.

³⁹ Norman Daly and Beauvais Lyons. 267; Daly wrote on his inspirations and the creation process of *The Civilization of Llhuros* in 1991 with the help of Beauvais Lyons for the journal, *Leonardo*. In this article, Daly cites J.R.R. Tolkien, Jonathan Swift, and Jorge Luis Borges as inspirations for the creations of fictional cultures in the realm of literature.

⁴⁰ Norman Daly and Beauvais Lyons. 267.

insight into the pedagogical implications of both the continuance and loss of aura, we might examine the educational techniques employed by these artists.

“Aura” and Educational Pedagogy

Consider again, “The Centaur Excavations at Volos.” From its faux-marble base to the sixteenth century woodcut depiction of a centaur, students are provided with academic assurance that the remains are real [Figures 4 and 5].⁴¹ The exhibition allows for a momentary suspension of disbelief; students have the opportunity to open their imagination and to explore the possibility that centaurs are part of our world’s natural history. This type of imaginative response is exactly what the work’s creator, William B. Willers, Professor Emeritus of Biology at the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, desired as a reaction when he created the skeleton in the 1980s.⁴²



⁴¹ Beauvais Lyons. “Subversive Public Art,” 8.

⁴² Beauvais Lyons. “Subversive Public Art,” 8, Adrienne Mayor; 241-243.



Willers was aware that viewers go through what he calls a “fleshing-out process” when encountering skeletal remains [Figure 6].⁴³ By creating the skeleton of the centaur, Willers hoped to provide insight into the ancient psyche regarding the experience of viewing apparently real remains. Adrienne Mayor, author of *The First Fossil Hunters* (Princeton University Press, 2001), has argued that this type of imaginative exercise is beneficial for the advancement of scientific thought; she has written, “If science makes major advances only when evidence is contradictory, and if flights of imagination are necessary to good science, then the creation of paradoxical, contradictory evidence is not only always perverse but potentially useful. It taps into the kind of mythic imagination that, if integrated with scientific inquiry, could point to new levels of understanding the unknown.”⁴⁴ From this

⁴³ Adrienne Mayor, 243.

⁴⁴ Adrienne Mayor, 246.

perspective, imaginative exploration, as exemplified by artefactual fiction, can be seen as a catalyst for progress rather than an indulgence of fantasy.



Norman Daly referred to this type of imaginative exercise as mental reconstruction. An ardent believer in mental reconstruction Daly had witnessed the impact of this exercise on his students when he provided them with the opportunity to view works of similar size in close proximity but in different media and scale. He noted that the students consistently engaged in much livelier discussions when given the opportunity for comparative viewing.⁴⁵ He employed the technique in “Civilization of Llhuros.” His work included what he described as “...a scaled down facsimile of a wall painting, which is a reconstruction based on an accompanying mural fragment. The fragment is relatively large in scale compared to the facsimile reconstruction. This discrepancy is designed to invite a mental reconstruction by which the original mural is envisioned as monumental.”⁴⁶ By providing two distinct images in different media and at different scales along with a written description, he intended that the

⁴⁵ Adrienne Mayor, 267.

⁴⁶ Norman Daly and Beauvais Lyons; 268.

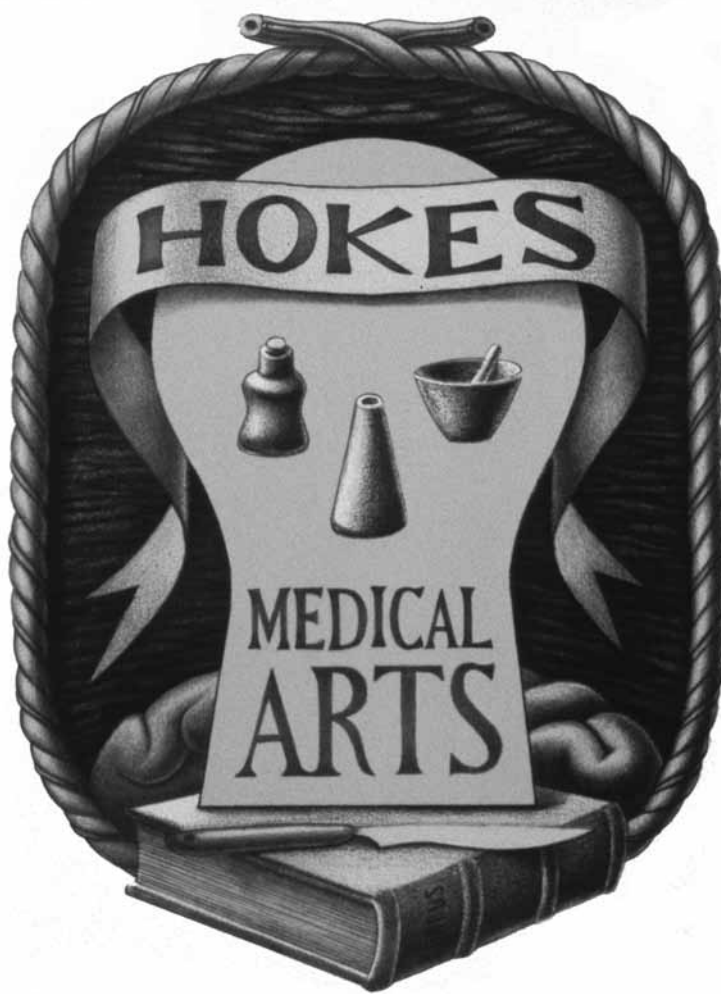
viewer would have the opportunity to see the artefact both comparatively and creatively.

The experience of mental reconstruction and comparative viewing of images depends upon the assurance of an aura, which is created in both “The Centaur Excavation at Volos” and “The Civilization of Llhuros.” In both examples the aura to enables the viewer to suspend disbelief. Aura, as seen through the Volos and Llhuros examples, plays an essential role in the viewer’s understanding of the work. But these examples of artefactual fiction were created more than 30 years ago. What about the role of the aura in contemporary artefactual fiction?

Contemporary Artifactual Fiction and Its Implications for the Future

Beauvais Lyons is the most notable artist currently working within the genre of artifactual fiction. A teacher of print-making with an extensive background in ceramics, Lyons often describes himself as a “mock-academic” and, more specifically, a “mock-archaeologist.”⁴⁷ He presents his work as part of what he calls the “Hokes Archives.” Over the past decade Lyons has expanded the genre of artifactual fiction through his creation of “The George and Helen Spelvin Folk Art Collection,” [Figures 7]

⁴⁷ Roy R Behrens. “History in the mocking,” *Print* 51, no. 3 (May 1997): 70-77, 70.



Lyons has been working in the genre of artifactual fiction since 1980 when he exhibited prints and ceramics from the “Arenot Noawa River Ceremonial Complex” at the Center Gallery in Madison, Wisconsin. His work has been discussed in a number of publications including *Irony’s Edge* (Routledge, 1994) by Linda Hutcheon and *Mr. Wilson’s Cabinet of Wonders* (Pantheon, 1995) by Lawrence Weschler.⁴⁸ Lyons played an important role in the design of the installation of the “Centaur Excavation at Volos” and has presented his work and concepts in numerous lectures and professional conferences.

⁴⁸ Roy R. Behrens, “History in the mocking,” 70-77.

Lyons' artistic practice, both visually and academically, brings a new dimension to the discussion regarding the importance of aura. Drawing upon his extensive knowledge of print, Lyons contends that "science and technology as we know it would not be possible without repeatable images."⁴⁹ Lyons intends that his work be shown in museums of history and archaeology. It might be beneficial to consider his creations within the framework of cultural historian Hillel Schwartz's thoughts regarding the history of museums. He has noted that, "when private galleries became public, noble sponsors did not hesitate to commission copies of works they coveted. Passions for true-blue originals overtook the con-assured museum."⁵⁰ In this sense, the museum, much as the print, serves as a disseminating vehicle of information. Indeed, museums have incorporated print as a vehicle since the issuance of the first catalogues, which added aura to the objects they illustrated.

This final discussion of the contemporary understanding of aura leads to the discussion of the work of the sculptor Patrick Dougherty. Known for his "stick work," Dougherty has worked with environmental materials to create large architectural forms.⁵¹ A broad range of museums from art to natural history, along with parks and botanical gardens have commissioned his works.⁵² Dougherty incorporates ancient methods in creating his works and allows for the possibility that audiences will fabricate an imaginary history and provenance. In this sense his work is an extension of the genre of artifactual fiction. Dougherty's sister, the writer Kate Farrell, has described his work as inspiring "by being radically participatory. With its natural materials and ancient methods, it evokes the mindscape of a time when nature was sacred, when humanity and the natural world were twins joined at the soul – the sort of 'oneness' relived by a child perched in a tree house or roaming a

⁴⁹ Beauvais Lyons. "The Object and the Encyclopedic Image." *Contemporary impressions; the journal of the American Print Alliance* 4, no. 6 (1996): 6-9, 7.

⁵⁰ Hillel Schwartz. *The Culture of the Copy: Striking Likenesses, Unreasonable Facsimiles*. New York City: Zone Books, 1996; 251.

⁵¹ Patrick Dougherty, "Patrick Dougherty – Bibliography," Patrick Dougherty, <http://www.stickwork.net> (accessed 6 August 2010).

⁵² Patrick Dougherty. *Patrick Dougherty*. United States: P. Dougherty, 2008; A full list of exhibitions is available in this publication on pages 60-63.

forest.”⁵³ This description heralds the demands of the genre of artifactual fiction for suspension of disbelief and the creation of an aura for an object that may otherwise have never been experienced.

Conclusion

Artifactual fiction not only illustrates the importance of the aura of the object, but also indicates that objects can have a simulated aura as well, such is the case with the works of Donald Evans, Norman Daly, William Willers, Beauvais Lyons, and Patrick Dougherty. This simulated aura can be used as a pedagogical tool to stimulate imaginative thought. It may also provide a new way for museums to exhibit the objects they hold. In considering the possibilities, it is worth noting that there is much still to be discussed regarding the ethics of simulation and presentation of fiction as fact within the museum context.

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IMAGE LIST

Jennifer_Restauri_Figure1

Centaur Excavations at Volos, Hodges Library, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee. Photograph courtesy of Hokes Archives.

Jennifer_Restauri_Figure2

Charles Willson Peale, *The Artist in his Museum*, 1822. Oil on canvas. Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia. Gift of Mrs. Sarah Harrison (The Joseph Harrison, Jr. Collection).

Jennifer_Restauri_Figure3

Beauvais Lyons, *The Aazudian Divination Beads*, plate 68, lithograph. Photograph courtesy of Hokes Archives.

Jennifer_Restauri_Figure4

Front view of *The Centaur Excavation at Volos*, Hodges Library, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee. Photographs courtesy of Hokes Archives.

Jennifer_Restauri_Figure5

Back view of *The Centaur Excavation at Volos*, Hodges Library, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee. Photographs courtesy of Hokes Archives

Jennifer_Restauri_Figure6

Professor William Willers with the centaur in his studio. Photograph courtesy of Hokes Archives.

Jennifer_Restauri_Figure7

Hokes Medical Arts, Hokes Archive. Image courtesy of Hokes Archives.

“The object in history museums, mediator for the invisible”

Adeline Rispal , Architect

Translation Pamela Hargreaves . (the English editing: Nina Archibal)

“A poet should leave traces of the path he has trodden, not evidence.
Only traces inspire dreams.”

René Char

Introduction

My point of view is that of an architect and exhibition designer who has run a Parisian agency specialized in projects related to national heritage and culture for the past 20 years.

We have just completed the renovation of the Modern Department at the Army Museum (from Louis XIV to Napoleon III) housed in Les Invalides, Paris. We have designed museums and temporary exhibitions in France and other European countries and are currently working in the Arabian Gulf (Saudi Arabia and Qatar).

My experience is primarily European.

Recently, we have been working on a competition for the *Musée-Cité* of Economy and Currency for the Bank of France in Paris. In this project, as in our others, we are trying to highlight the complexity of human mechanics in the museum spaces. We are working with economists, semiologists, museologists, historians and researchers – even engineers of all kinds, sound effects specialists, and designers of multimedia games and educational aids. As architects, our approach to projects draws upon expertise from many disciplines.

Trust

Historically, the global economic system has been based on confidence in the value of market exchange. Until World War I public confidence was founded on gold bullion stored in state depositories. Today it is based on economic growth and the balance in national budgets. One could say that the heritage and museum system –

particularly in the West – is based on trust in the authenticity of the architectural or art works and artefacts housed in museums and monuments.

In 1929, we saw what loss of confidence in the Western economic system could mean. More recently, we have seen European and other world states and institutions attempting to guarantee the economic system so as to avoid a similar catastrophe. What would happen if museum collections were discovered not to be entirely authentic? If some of their artefacts were discovered to be fakes or copies? The owners of public collections, the nation's citizens, would surely be alarmed to see their treasures vanish into thin air, their beliefs in the greatness of their culture assailed by doubt. Would visitors continue to queue up outside the world's greatest museums or would they desert monuments and museums? Would the market for fakes flourish? Would the market for fakes become more profitable than the market for originals? Would curators recycle themselves into captains of the culture industry? Or would their role be limited to conserving a few original pieces excluded from the market system and stored in "museums of originals"? Would countries and local authorities be able to avoid the domino effect? Would the public criticize them for having invested vast amounts of money in building sanctuaries for fakes? Or would they receive praise for having spent less on preventive conservation and security for objects that did not need such care.

Should European and worldwide institutions demand that non-authentic collections be destroyed and protect only authentic objects? Or should they stand by and witness the total redistribution of genuine and counterfeit heritage on a global scale, to the great satisfaction of countries stripped of their own cultural heritage? And what would become of humanity's symbolic relationship with these objects?

How would we remain linked to our ancestors, our predecessors?

How would we obtain proof of their experience that fosters ours?

How would we have access to the artistic expression of their doubts and suffering that help us endure ours?

How would we gain access to the expressions of other civilizations, of other forms of thought and relationships with the world?

Could we live without the symbolic – emotional – impact attributed to objects that mean something to us? Or would we adapt to this new order by attaching no more importance to a recently purchased pipe than to one belonging to our recently deceased husband?

How would our emotions find their way in this true-and-false maze?

What would we invent to catalyse a feeling of belonging to our culture, to sustain the social cohesion of our communities?

Authenticity

Similar to the banking system, value is calibrated. In museums, value is based on the *authenticity* of the objects.

Webster's International Dictionary explains the origins of this notion.

AUTHENTIC adj. From the Latin *authenticus*, influenced by the Greek *authentikos*, "possessing an authority not open to challenge", derived from the French *authentês*, "acting on its own authority".

When speaking of a work or a document:

"Of an origin that cannot be questioned. Indisputably proceeding from a given source that is avowed or implied."

AUTHENTICITY n.

"The quality of being authentic: the quality of being authoritative, valid, true, real; or genuine."

So, Authoritative, Attribution, Tradition, Origin, Truth, Genuine are therefore the key words to the notion of Authenticity.

The guarantees

As in the banking system, cultural institutions have drawn up rules that guarantee the authenticity of their works. The protection of architectural heritage is governed by a series of charters, notably those drawn up in Athens (1931), Venice (1964) and Toledo, U.S.A. (2001), which require any new restoration to show exactly what was

done and when. So, changes are apparent when preserving the authenticity of the object is clear.

National and international museum organizations have established similar guidelines to protect the authenticity of artefacts when being collected (authentication tests), restored (restoration committees), housed and transported (protection of works against all forms of assault, including their substitution) and exhibited (identification of copies).

Value

Once the object's authenticity has been confirmed, the question of value then arises.

But what is value?

The young French economist Frédéric Lordon⁵⁴ (2009), heir to the Dutch philosopher Spinoza, has argued, "Value is no longer intrinsic to things, but always comes from outside, a social exterior that is essentially emotional. There is no objective value, only a process of an increased sense of value engendered by our bodily experiences".

In his view, there is no difference between aesthetic value, economic value and moral value. In each of these domains, *value stems from the same process of harnessing a collective emotion*, and is thus totally subjective.

For him, a museum is an "institution that crystallizes shared stabilized, pre-formed affects, constituting a symbolic capital". The very nature of symbolic capital relies on collective emotion that confers power. The holder of symbolic capital can increase the value and power of the objects.

Amongst other things, this explains how museums can manipulate our emotions just as the market value of objects may affect us.

Social cohesion

⁵⁴ Lordon, F. (2009), *Ce que la valeur esthétique fait à la valeur économique 2*
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=50NipMFEtOU>

Yet, emotions can have anxiety-provoking consequences. They may intensify our feeling of solitude. People need to communicate their emotions, to share them with their family or close friends, creating what is known as social cohesion.

If one returns to the world of museums, the emotion that an object stirs within us may be related to our individual feelings, but it may also affect us through the power it holds in our collective affect. The greater the recognition an object enjoys, the greater the emotion it is likely to stir within us, which may not necessarily be linked to our innermost feelings. The more we talk about an object to other people, the more acclaim it attracts. This pattern of human behaviour is the basis for the “star system” in the world of objects.

But humans consider their emotions to be theirs and theirs alone, not to be *mixed* with collective affects... What we seek in a museum is something that touches us as individuals. Before listening to critics or guides, we may let the objector “speak” to us directly.

But how do they speak to us?

The object as a currency

In his book *The Enigma of the Gift*, the French anthropologist Maurice Godelier⁵⁵ re-examines Jean-Joseph Goux’s reading of the ethnologist Marcel Mauss’ distinction between alienable and inalienable goods. He reminds us that in the midst of the market economy, universal currency and generalized competition, we realize that there must be something that does not circulate, something that is “beyond the sphere of exchange,” when the mass market and banking exchanges collapse, and everything that can be bought and sold begins to circulate. He goes on to say:

The paradox is that this thing that thus finds itself beyond the sphere of exchange... is also the instrument of exchange, the means of this circulation, currency. One must therefore conclude that the existence of a currency is not

⁵⁵ Godelier, M. (1996), *L’énigme du don*, Paris: Fayard / 2008, Paris: Champs Essai

enough for market exchange to develop and invade the whole sphere of exchange. This currency (whatever form it may take) must also simultaneously assume two functions, occupy two places at the same time, one in the very heart of exchange where it acts as a means of payment, the other beyond of this side of exchange where it constitutes a fixed point serving as a reference to measure the value of what circulates within it. The currency thus finds itself both swept along by the movement of all the goods and immobilized at a point around which all this machinery rolls into action (Godelier 2008: 43-44).

Mauss thus demonstrates that two spheres of wealth exist: alienable and inalienable goods. The former opens onto the immense, frenetic field of gifts, the return of gifts and other forms of exchange, while the latter follows the path of transferral and being rooted in time (Ibid.: 48)

The symbolic aspect of the object

This is where we come to the symbolic aspect of a museum exhibit, to the role played by handing down an object from generation to generation (*sacrifice*, as described by Krzysztof Pomian⁵⁶), to the real – spiritual – reasons why visitors flock to museums.

The item in the collection – the work of art, object and relic – attests to the time man spends on earth, to his deeds and actions, to his presence here and now, to his involvement in human society, to his debt towards the Creator in whatever way he may choose to express it.

Like architecture, literature and all artistic genres, the object in a museum is the proof of man's creativity and the passing on of this creativity, the guarantee of a

⁵⁶ Pomian, K. (2003), *Des saintes reliques à l'art moderne : Venise-Chicago, XIIIe-XXe siècle*, Paris: Gallimard

form of immortality. The incompleteness of a museum, the fact that only the production of some human beings can be preserved recalls the entire output.

In history and archaeology museums in particular, non-religious or non-artistic productions may enter the symbolic field of objects derived from the market economy. This is true of the majority of collections in history museums.

The social role of the object preserved, hence of the museum

To paraphrase Maurice Godelier (2008) again:

Human society could not exist without two fields: the field of exchange, whatever is exchanged and whatever form this exchange may take, from the ...sacrifice to the sale, purchase and market; and the field where individuals and groups carefully keep things, stories, names and ways of thinking for themselves, then hand them down to their descendants or those that share the same faith. For what we keep always constitutes “realities” that take individuals and groups back to another time that places them face to face with their roots. Individual and collective identities grow and expand from these anchor points, these realities “fixed in the nature of things”. These are what ensure that there is a continuance in time.

Godelier then adds what seems to me to have resonance in this part of the world: “One can measure the force needed to destroy these anchor points, either gradually by slowly gnawing away at them, or by chopping them down in a single brutal blow. For the future of a society, it is not insignificant that the forces which destroyed these anchor points surged from within the ways of living and thinking that they had fixed, or came from outside, compelled by pressures, deliberate or unintentional attacks from societies anchored elsewhere” (Ibid.: 281-282).

These *things* that are kept to be handed down are in *houses*, on sites, in *museums*, *libraries* and *film archives*... They are the *crucibles* of life, for they contain everything that nourishes our spirit, knowledge, experiences, thoughts, suffering and what men and women have created, thanks to which we are alive today, which forms invisible links between us and them, dead or alive, here or elsewhere. These objects

are thus the mediators between us and that invisible human immensity whose origin escapes us.

Sensory mediation⁵⁷

But visitors are not told that that is why they go to museums in the first place. Today, visitors are told that they should go to museums to have cultural experiences, or simply “do” museums.

So visitors become consumers of museums, wall texts, labels, audioguides, guides, lectures, monuments, reproductions, excursions, hotels, restaurants... And all this has to be done quickly because other consumers are waiting behind them ...

They are not told about the pleasure of a silent encounter with an object, about its random nature or the importance of their subjectivity during this encounter, because they themselves are the yardstick by which the value of the object is measured, the product of a specific history and culture. They are not told that society has its own standardized value system, one that is perpetually changing, but that alongside this collective system, their value systems exist in their own right. They are not told that they approach an exhibit equipped with their own value systems, with their own subjectivity, that the emotion the object will arouse in them (pleasure, indifference, disgust...) will engender a feeling that will inform them and that they will want to share with others, whether they come to the museum with them or not.

Visitors are not told that frenzied consumerism and education are contradictory. Neuroscience has taught us that learning takes time, for moving from emotion to feeling takes time. The intellect moves quickly, but the duration of a feeling cannot be cut short.

The pressure on time is constantly increasing. So say goodbye to emotion; let's go straight to the consumption of educational products that only concern the intellect and do not build the foundations of our apprenticeship, of our culture.

⁵⁷ Rispa, A. (2009), 'La médiation sensible', *Muséologies*, 3 (2) 90-101

There's no time then for what I call sensory mediation, which takes into account the complex process of moving from emotion to cognition, to the innate pleasure of acquiring knowledge. There is not time for the process that takes visitors into account all along their journey through the urban space, the architecture and the exhibition, each person finding his or her place within a larger context, before arriving at the objects that have found their rightful place in a meaningful space.

The object in history museums

In history museums, as in any museum, the authentic object is central to the identification process.⁵⁸ Copies or facsimiles open the doors to all sorts of potential misuse.

Let's take an extreme example: history museums that specialize in war history generally take one of three approaches. Some assemble relics, the very powerful objects that have accompanied man's ultimate sacrifice in war. Others describe the context of war and conditions of life during hostilities. And, a few convey war through artworks. Whether made by those who have not experienced the hostilities or by those who were there and felt a need to leave a trace of the suffering they had endured, artworks serve as mediators of the war experience and shape our gaze of the events from the artist's point of view.

The layout – exhibition design – of these types of collection should be informed by the diverse levels of meaning for the visitors, who, without perhaps being able to put it into words, are well aware of the difference between the shabby uniform of a First World War veteran, the headlines of a newspaper and a soldier's drawing of the front, whether his name is Otto Dix or he is one of the many anonymous men who

⁵⁸ Rispa, A. (2006), 'La muséographie des musées d'histoire, un "art de la mémoire"', in Marie-Hélène Joly *Histoire d'objets, objets d'histoire*, 67-81, Lyon: Les rencontres de Gadagne

resorted to one form or another of creative expression in order to transcend the hardships of their daily lives.

How can one even think of replacing these objects by copies?

Still more important, in whatever region of the world it may be, undertaking museum projects that deal with such sensitive subjects, we must consider how we can avoid the manipulation of our individual and collective emotions in speeches that I can only describe as “closed”, be they political, religious or pseudo-scientific?

The answer is by the combination of several fundamental principles:

- Trust in the objectives set by those who have commissioned the project,
- The authenticity of the scientific data and collections forming the corpus of the museum,
- Guaranteed freedom of expertise for the consultants involved in the design,
- Ongoing debate about the value attributed to objects, which is the only way of ensuring intellectual rigor and dynamics without which the museum could not play its role as a laboratory investigating our collective and individual identities,
- The creation of a civil space, facilitating social cohesion.

Nowadays, when the world is interconnected in real time and when people can communicate so easily with strangers on the other side of the globe, surely museums should at last be recognized as privileged spaces acting as crossroads between the real and virtual, visible and invisible, in five different dimensions:

Between ego and origin,

Between present, past and future,

Between here and elsewhere,

Between same and other,

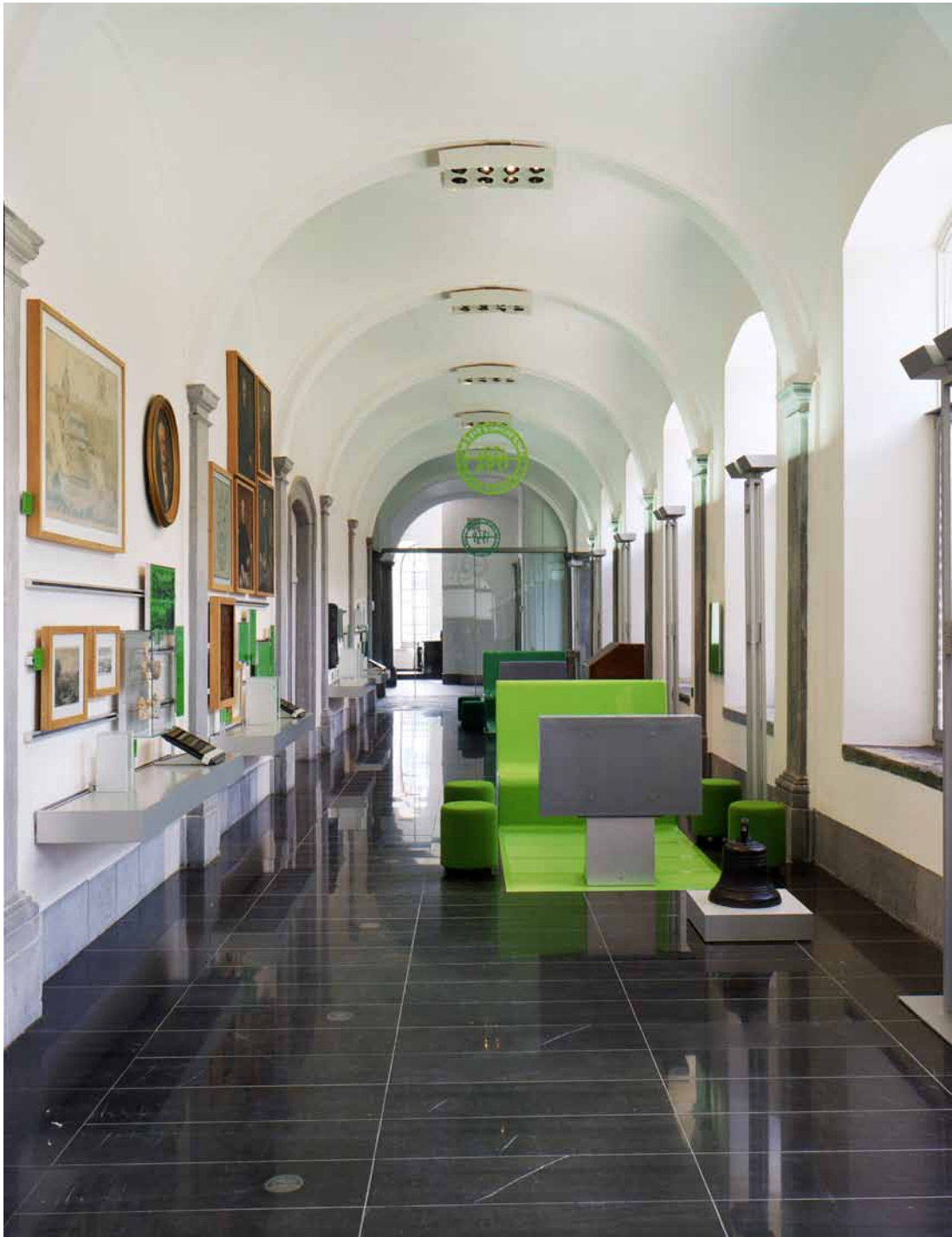
Between citizen and society

... more than enough to rival the most popular social networks!

Photos (Adeline Rispal's realizations and projects)



Historial de la Grande Guerre, Péronne – France (1992)
Photo: Luc Boegly for Adeline Rispal / Repérages



Stavelot Abbey Museum, Savelot – Belgium (2002)
Photo: Olivier Wogenscky for Adeline Rispal / Repérages

Exhibition “Le



Grand Atelier ; Chemins de l'Art en Europe (Ve - XVIIIe siècle) (2008)

Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels – Belgium

Photo: Jean-Pierre Cousin for Adeline Rispal / Repérages



Musée de l'Armée – Département moderne

Hôtel national des Invalides, Paris – France (2010)

Photo: Luc Boegly for Adeline Rispal / Repérages



Competition: Odyssey 21, Cité des océans et du développement durable (2010)
 Le Havre – France
 Image: Ginger for Studio Adeline Rispal



National Museum of Qatar, Doha – Qatar (in progress)
 With Jean Nouvel architect
 Image: Studio Adeline Rispal



Addiriyah Museum at Salwa Palace - Saudi Arabia (in progress)
With Ayers Saint Gross architects
Image: Studio Adeline Rispal

Archaeological copies: a scientific aid, a visual reminder or a contradiction in terms?

Philippos Mazarakis-Ainian
Senior Curator, National Historical Museum, Athens

Session Introduction

Museums, an invention of the Enlightenment, were created as depositories of valuable or rare things, in order to ensure their preservation, but also to be contemplated or used as prototypes for modern creation. They were obviously intended as places to keep originals.

Over time, copies were nevertheless admitted in museum exhibitions, as a means for better understanding. The copy was generally a cheaper, expendable or replaceable item, shown instead of a difficult to handle original object, to take the place of a missing or fragmented original, or instead of a particularly rare, valuable, or faraway original object.

In archaeology the situation tends to be particularly subtle in this respect. As there is a general acceptance that age and rarity both provide added value to an object, archaeological objects are treated with more reverence and awe than their more recent counterparts. At the same time though, precisely due to their old age and bad state of conservation, antiquities in museums often need to be completed for the sake of their readability by the public, or even removed from exhibition spaces and replaced by copies.

On the other hand, for archeologists, preserving the original objects from decay is a primary target. The focus of archaeology on material remains makes this science's methodology very strict when dealing with issues of authenticity. Archaeological museums often choose a slightly different approach to this problem than other

museums. Although the tension between authenticity and readability is common to all museums, in the archaeological ones the point of balance is often closer to the former and farther from the latter criteria.

We present a few case studies, in order to demonstrate the multiplicity and complexity of issues arising with regard to the relationships and constraints of authentic archaeological objects and copies within museums.

Take, for example, the wood from old shipwrecks lying in the depths of the sea. These pieces, when excavated, are lifted to the surface with enormous care, but if left untreated they will turn into dust the moment they are dry. So how do you preserve them? The basic method is to sink them into chemical solutions and let them soak long enough, so that the water within the water-clogged wood tissue is replaced by artificial material (siliconates etc), which will have the capacity of retaining its form after dryingⁱ. After this tedious procedure (which is of course here only briefly outlined) the objects are ready to be placed in the museum, retaining their form but only a very small percentage of their original material contents. The rest is pure chemistry.

Ironically by the way, this procedure resembles the situation in sites destroyed by volcanoes, like Roman Pompeii or the Minoan settlement of Thira Island, where volcanic material has sealed and preserved the form of organic objects. When we find such remains, fossilized or re-casted, it is possible today to contemplate wooden furniture, utensils, seeds, entire human bodies, which in reality are little more than pictures in stone, copies of the original, replacements made by nature instead of by human hand.

In archeological site restoration nowadays you need to cover the findings in order to prevent the natural elements damaging a newly excavated site, as is the case with Emperor Qin Shihuang's Terracotta Army Museum in China. Often though, there is need for much more than that: you may opt for rebuilding part of the antique structure itself, to reconstruct, that is, the object in its original form for the sake of its

preservation, but also in order to make it more comprehensible or esthetically pleasing.

The Vergina tumulus in the Greek province of Macedoniaⁱⁱ was found to contain royal tombs from Alexander the Great's lineage. But the tumulus itself was considered essential to keep, at least in its shape. This represented the outward sign of the tomb and at the same time it was a significant landmark of the site. That is why, after it was destroyed during the excavation, it was rebuilt in its exact shape as a shell museum, a dome housing the antiquities in situ. It is today a grass-covered site museum, but at the same time a museum-object itself, albeit a copied one.

A very complicated, slow and costly, restoration project is taking place in Athens, which lasts already over thirty years now. It is the gradual restoration of the Acropolis monuments, in which the basic need of strengthening the structure of the buildings and of removing the damaging metal parts that were added a century ago, has been combined with a major research program, leading also to the identification of thousands of architectural fragments lying all around the site. This leads, unavoidably, to the important question whether these should be reincorporated in the monuments, a process called 'anastylosis'.

There are many parameters to take into account when making such a decision: first of all, an important consideration is what will be the best condition for the archaeological ruin to survive in the future; secondly, what will it look like if we add parts that for generations have been missing? Will its "authentic image" be damaged if we intervene by changing the visible remains of a building, which is also a major landmark, with a present-day appearance that directly reflects the sequence of historic events to which it has been exposed? And once the decision has been made to restore it by bringing back old fragments, how much new material will also have to be added in order to put the fragment firmly in position? And will this new material cause maybe further change on the monument?

In the case of the Acropolis monuments – the Parthenon being paramount among them – the multidisciplinary teams working on the restoration projects, after consultation with the scientific community worldwide through a series of international conferencesⁱⁱⁱ, have taken the stance that we cannot avoid that we ourselves are part of the history of the monuments. Therefore, making some changes is not to be excluded, as long as some basic criteria are being met. Additions have to be well defined, negligible on the whole, reversible if need be in the future, and carried out following the best available professional practices. We cannot stop time, that is, and we cannot avoid being ourselves part of the history of the building.

In practical terms, original material fragments are installed in the Parthenon and the other Acropolis monuments, as long as the new material needed in the process does not exceed a small percentage of the overall structure. This way, we know for sure that the aesthetic change, applied to the entire structure, while clearly visible, will not be too intrusive.

The discussions concerning the Acropolis could not of course ignore the famous sculptures it contains. And this brings this introduction closer to the museum work *per se*. Paradoxically, at the same time as the Acropolis buildings were being restored; most of their sculptures were removed to the safety of the air conditioned Acropolis Museum. Air pollution was the reason behind this, and the need to stop the marble from being transformed into gypsum. They were replaced by copies. The assumption was that the attack upon the authenticity of the building was nevertheless smaller that way.

Within the same complex of arguments, it is unavoidable to also refer to the Acropolis sculptures, which were removed in the early 19th c. by Lord Elgin^{iv}. Today they are in the British Museum, which considers that removing them to British safety was what preserved them from further vandalism in the 19th century. It is an argument that retains some value, but has also proved its limits for two reasons: for one, the removal itself was a major act of vandalism, when we consider the methods used and the damage it led to; secondly, the harsh cleaning treatments used in the

past by the museum have also led to a general degradation of the sculptures' surface, including the loss of traces of the original color.

On the other hand, the Greeks keep pressing at the highest political level for the return of these sculptures, on the grounds that they form an integral part of the building and also that they were illicitly taken in the first place. They have recently built a new and very emblematic Acropolis museum^v, which is intended partly as an answer to the accusation that they do not possess the means to correctly preserve the sculptures. Of course nobody would consider re-installing the Elgin Marbles on the monuments again, in case they would return to Greece. Instead, the new museum has been designed to arrange the disposition and orientation of the sculptures as close to their original as possible. The lighting is based upon filtered natural sunshine to give the same luminosity and color hue to them. And there is a direct and unobstructed view of the monument through the large glass panes of the museum, to enable visitors to contemplate it and to extrapolate in the future upon the monument (which is bearing the copies) the returned original objects in the museum. In the meantime, the British Museum sculptures are presented in the Acropolis Museum as copies, alongside the remaining originals. Without these copies, the prestigious Greek museum itself would be half-empty.

I have chosen to present just a few of the contradictions and possible difficulties when talking about original objects and their copies in archaeology. Let me stress too that I have deliberately left out any discussion about fakes, which comprise an entire separate chapter, and which are increasingly important in the modern world. They are from the material point of view, not much more than copies, despite having been made illicitly or for an unethical use.

In the Eastern part of the world, some notions around authenticity and originality possess different meanings than in the West. This conference is an exciting occasion to discover differences and similarities and it is most valuable that we have in this session speakers from both parts of the world. This makes the discussion of

similarities and dissimilarities possible, thus providing us with a more comprehensive understanding of these issues.

THE COPY AS AN EXHIBIT

Myriame MOREL-DELEDALLE

Throughout my professional experience working in history museums and exhibitions, I have used copies, reproductions, casts or models etc., either because I had no other way of illustrating the past or by choice – scientific choice. I will explain myself.

Looking back to those experiences, some reflections can be proposed about the basic – fundamental – function of copies (reproductions etc...) as authentic items of knowledge and as parts of the historic discourse of museums.

The prevailing opinion about copies – of whichever sort they may be – is related to the fact that they are not «originals», they are reproductions, supposedly lacking the «aura» of authenticity.

The question in this paper is: why and when do we choose to show casts, copies, replicas etc...? An immediate answer would be that no easy generalisations can be offered in this matter.

This issue needs, therefore, to be nuanced and examined case by case, depending upon the context of museum displays:

1) Mainly, when we want to prevent monuments and objects from destruction and/or disappearance, this means that the casts keep the traces of the monuments or archaeological non removable remains, which happen to be destroyed or which cannot be preserved in situ. An example is Angkor -Vat in Cambodia.

2) For educational and pedagogic purposes.

Historically speaking: let us go back to the first known uses of reproductions in museums. The first museum of monuments using both originals and casts was created during the French Revolution (1789) by André Lenoir, with the intention of

preventing the destruction of the monuments. This first use was followed by Viollet-le-Duc, Napoléon III's architect, who in 1878 wrote a report for the creation of the Museum for Sculpture Comparison at the Trocadero galleries which included models and casts. In 1937, this developed into the Musée des Monuments Français, during the International Exhibition of Paris, which is today part of the Cité de l'Architecture & du Patrimoine (Paris).

The Musée des Monuments Français serves a wide spectrum of functions: to preserve the historical memory of French monuments, to create a permanent exhibition of history and sculpture, to provide an exhibition space for architecture (ancient and contemporary), and to develop a forum for debates, conferences, films, work-shops for the young, and meetings about architecture and urbanism.

If we consider the recent history of casts, we notice that because people had to travel long distances to see the originals, a great number of museums of casts were created during the 19th century in several major universities in Europe for the purpose of education in the history of art and archaeology:

- In Berlin, Wilhem von Humbolt (1767-1835) created and developed a museum concept based on casts of antique statues.
- The Strasbourg University Gypsothèque, realised in 1872 by Adolf Michaelis, was a setting for teaching in the midst of casts, which had been made in German workshops (Berlin, Dresden, Frankfurt etc) from antique originals recovered from archaeological excavations in Greece and Turkey. With 35,000 casts, this is today the second largest collection in France.
- Other examples include the Royal Museum of Art and History in Brussels, the Casts Museum of the University of Montpellier, the Versailles Gypsothèque and the Art and Archaeology Institute in Paris, just to cite the main ones.

In other cases, casts may serve different purposes, for example related to the study of the physical characteristics of the human body.

Examples:

- The Musée des Moulages of the Hôpital Saint-Louis in Paris, is the major 'lieu de memoire' or 'memory place' for the study of French dermatology. Wax casts were made on the patients themselves in order to medically document their skin diseases for medical purposes. In this case, the casts were sources of medical knowledge.
- Casts were also used to create dioramas for exhibitions and museum displays, a technique which was in fashion during the 19th century, especially in anthropology museums.(often called «museums of popular arts and traditions»). The casts were usually made on living beings.
- Casts were also made on deceased people in order to produce death masks, a very old tradition dating back to Antiquity.
- Casts have also been used for a very unusual case. When the Pompeii excavations began in 1860, the shapes of dead people were discovered under the volcanic ashes. In 1863, Giuseppe Fiorelli, the brilliant director of the excavations, had the inspired idea of injecting liquid plaster into the cavities left by the decayed corpses. This resulted in casts of real people immortalised in the position where death found them while they were trying to escape. This plaster effect not only recreates the exact moment of the event, but also reveals the extraordinary emotion of these tragic victims. The tourist websites of Pompeii assert that, «The reconstituted evidence of the victims' agony presents a tragic dimension to the event and fascinates the visitors»!

So when we hear the argument that plaster is a material which cannot convey emotion, we should remember Pompeii.

Casts, reproductions and models are also used when the originals are inaccessible:

Just a word about models: quite a few have been created in the Museum of the History of Marseilles, with the aim of providing an image of the evolution of the

town. Each model tries to recreate the city at a specific moment in time, as documented by archaeological excavations. Given that archaeological work is essentially we use models to rebuild the city, its quarters, specific monuments and houses.

These are marvellous tools that have been used for a long time to portray the past. Today, 3D projections are enhancing public understanding as visitors are able to see the construction, strata after strata etc. These digital reconstructions are now a part of museum display

Moving on to the subject of inaccessible objects, let us consider two cases: the caves of Lascaux and Cosquer, both in the South of France:

The Lascaux cave was discovered in 1940; it is one of the most ancient and decorated caves of the Paleolithic period (17.000 BP). After its discovery in 1940, Lascaux became a very popular tourist destination. However, the large number of visitors exposed the paintings to several bacteriums and fungus (green and white fungi), which presented a serious threat to the paintings. This led to the closing of the cave to the public in 1963.

The site was so famous and popular with tourists, and such an important source of income, that the officials decided to make an exact copy – or facsimile, which was named Lascaux 2. It was reproduced at a scale of 1 to 1 and was opened to the public in 1983.

The technique used was a photogrammetric survey applied on exact casts of the cave walls. Not the entire cave was reproduced, only the main paintings. Nevertheless, the cave reproduction gave the illusion of being «in situ». Lascaux 2 was located in the same landscape and near the entrance of Lascaux 1.

Lascaux 2 was visited so often (250.000 visitors/year, 7.5 millions from 1983 to 2008) that even this reproduction suffered from degradation and had to be closed for restoration. It currently closes for several months a year, a practice that will continue until at least 2014.

This situation led to the creation of Lascaux 3 or «Lascaux-on-wheels»: a mobile version containing separate frames of parts of the paintings. One of these copies is located on the site and a travelling version has also been prepared.

This third version is for teaching purposes and probably has less emotional impact.

But the public is asking for more: Lascaux 4 is currently being prepared and should become an international centre for the study of prehistoric mural painting. A Lascaux 5 project is also being considered: a numeric version of the cave, which is another means of reproduction, which is beyond the scope of this paper.

La Grotte Cosquer is another case : Cosquer Cave, which is located near Marseilles, was discovered by a diver at 37 m. under water. It is also a painted cave, but much older than Lascaux (27.000 Years and 19.000 BP respectively). Access to the cave is very dangerous and several people have drowned trying to reach it. It is now closed and no means have been found yet to allow visitors to enter the cave.

A stereo-photogrammetric survey was done and from it a very good movie was produced. It has been shown for years every day, free of charge, in the Museum of the History of Marseilles. Plans are being developed to build a replica at a scale of 1 to 1.

Underwater and submarine wrecks

Interesting examples are wrecks from Neuchâtel, Switzerland and Marseilles: these are tentative answers to the visitors' demands.

The choice made by our Swiss colleague was to excavate the Bevaix boat in the lake, cast it and leave the original wreck under water. The cast is presented in the archaeological parc and museum Laténium in Neuchâtel. . Visitors who do not read the label may not even realise it is a cast. The choice to leave the wreck underwater was a scientific one, after the archaeologists concluded that water-logged wood treatment was not safe enough for the conservation of this boat.

In the Museum of the History of Marseilles, we decided to take several Greek and Roman wrecks out of the water. At the same time, we decided to make models, museum replicas, technical pieces and sailing replicas. Through the process of making the models and replicas, we did research into the technology of building boats, of cutting wood, or using specific tools.

Another value of casts is their use as archaeological evidence:

Two examples:



The Angkor-Vat Temples, in Cambodia, where, the first casts were made during the 19th and 20th centuries for the Universal and Colonial Exhibitions of Paris and Marseilles, in order to show the rest of the world the original civilisations of the French colonies.

Abandoned after the exhibitions, the casts degraded and were forgotten until the beginning of the UNESCO restoration campaigns. Discovering that nature and war had destroyed a great number of the temple decorations and sculptures, the scholars remembered the existence of the casts. Those casts have now essentially acquired the authority of «originals», as they are sometimes the only evidence of the remains.

The same paradoxical situation exists with **the casts taken by Lord Elgin in Athens**. We are all aware of the Elgin Marbles and the Greek claim for their return from the British Museum to the Acropolis Museum. The value of the Elgin casts is worth considering. In addition to the many marbles Lord Elgin took from Greece, he also made hundreds of casts on Greek monuments and sculptures. Marbles and casts were exhibited in the British Museum, side by side, until 1920. This practice changed when Beazley and Ashmole recommended that the Parthenon display should include «originals only,” and that the plaster casts should be kept separately, reserved for study purposes. Here we find the common view concerning the «nobility» of marble versus cast.

But, what is the prevailing opinion today? The effect of air pollution in Athens has degraded the Parthenon marbles to the extent that much of the decoration is no longer visible or has largely disappeared «in situ». Only the Lord Elgin casts have kept intact the touch of the original sculpture of Phidias...

The debate amongst art historians is:

«Which would we rather lose?»,
«Which gives the most accurate impression of Greek sculpture?»
«Which are the authentic pieces?»

Casts can be ideal substitutes when original pieces are lacking: consider again the example of the casts made by Lord Elgin. The British Museum has made the argument: «What is the use of sending the Elgin marbles from a museum in London to a museum in Athens?».

The Skulpturhalle in Basel is the only place in the world where the Parthenon has been entirely rebuilt from casts of all the elements kept in different places in the world: Athens, Paris, Palermo, London, Rome, Copenhagen, Vienna, Würzburg, Munich, etc...

In my professional experience, as a director of the Museum of the History of Marseilles, I have encountered several situations in which I have chosen to use casts.

A good example having to illustrate one of the most important facts leading to the establishment of the city of Marseilles: the founders were under the protection of the Ephesian Artemis and under obligation to build her a temple in the VIth c. B.C. Neither the temple nor the tiniest piece of a sculpture of Artemis has ever been discovered in Marseilles. Faced with this situation I chose to commission a cast of the most representative Ephesos Artemis, a sculpture in the Seljuk-Efes Museum. This was done and exhibited in my museum.



Because this cast is pedagogically essential to explaining the establishment of Marseilles, it is one of the first pieces one encounters upon entering the museum. Of course, if we ever discover an original marble, we would prefer it to the cast, as it would express the first evidence of the Phocian presence in Marseilles.

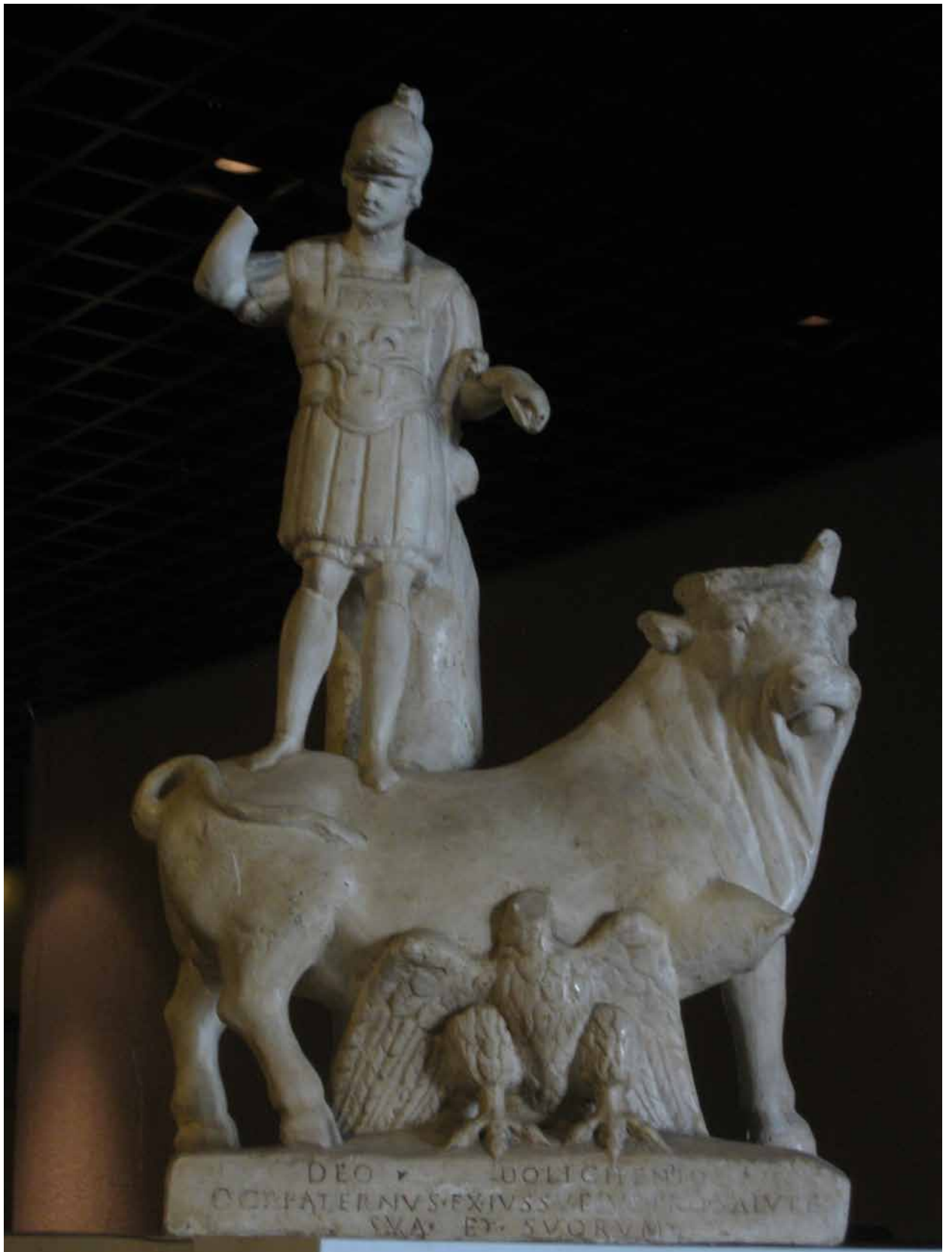
There were other considerations related to the use of this cast. For instance, we gave it an inventory number. In hindsight, I think this was a mistake; instead, I should have given it a study collection number, but that disposition did not exist in the French law in at the time. Despite its important role in the museum, it is not a piece of the collection, but rather an item for study and discourse. I maintain, nevertheless, that this cast is an essential element of the museum.

Another example. To illustrate the Greek religion in Marseilles, I used casts to evoke other gods and goddesses: Apollo, Zeus, Athena. Because our museum does not have any originals of these deities we bought classical casts from the Louvre's collection of Greek marbles. However, after careful consideration, I removed these casts from our exhibition, as they had no connection to our local history.

But there was another possibility. During the 17th century a marble statue of Jupiter Dolichenus was discovered in the harbour of Marseilles. It had been given to a collector, who passed it on to the Count of Württemberg, who then presented it to the Limes Museum in Aalen near Stuttgart. Today this statue is a central piece in this museum. It is a marvellous group comprised of a massive bull with an eagle between its legs and a Roman Legionary representing the Limes soldiers' religion on its back.



I tried to reclaim this remarkable marble for Marseilles (as we have so few remarkable pieces in our museum), but I understood very easily that, from one point of view, the statue was legitimately in a German museum, and that it was a major item in this museum.. A very good cast was constructed during the 19 th C. and its quality is such that it gives much of the impression of strength associated with the original marble.



For me, this cast has the aura of an original, because of the well-known story around it. Because the original was not supposed to come back to Marseilles, we have given the 19th C. cast an inventory collection number.

The Museum of the History of Marseilles has used casts extensively. When we were preparing the opening of a new history museum in this city, the ancient collections were supposed to move to the new museum building. However, some colleagues did not want to move them. Because of municipal elections, the new museum was supposed to open at the beginning of 1983. We moved quickly to create casts of several pieces, including the Greek stadium inscription and the monumental ionic capital, which are essential to support and illustrate the museum's historical discourse.





The municipality asked us to create a museum of the city's history. Without these casts, we would have had only text on our walls to tell the city's history.

Marseilles' importance in the Greek Mediterranean world is revealed by "the Marseilles Treasury," a temple in Delphi. Its foundation is preserved, but the structure itself is totally collapsed. We chose to illustrate this temple with three different kinds of reproductions: a cast of a capital of the temple made for us by the Delphi museum, a scientific model based on the archaeological remains, and photos of the foundations preserved «in situ».



In our archaeological displays, we use casts either because the originals were to be destroyed or cannot be taken inside the museum for other reasons. This was the case with kilns from the Greek, Roman and medieval periods, which were too fragile to remove. We chose to cast them before they were destroyed. Now, our casts are the only originals.



It is my opinion that reproductions which are used to tell a story have the value and the virtue of originals. I have no problem using copies in exhibitions of historical museum, as long as we make it clear to our visitors that they are not looking at originals.

We might have a different view within the context of an art museum. Would we accept a Mona Lisa reproduction in an art museum other than on an umbrella or a T-shirt at the museum shop? This raises other questions. Pollution and other kinds of degradation are changing attitudes about the use of reproductions in the art museum context. For example, the curator of the sculptures at the Versailles Gardens has decided to have casts made of all the statues for use in the garden. The originals will be restored and moved to the Louvre for their long-term preservation.

Whatever the context, we cannot avoid the question of the «emotion-excitement-thrill» that comes from seeing originals.

Why do they «provide emotion»? Does our excitement come from the antiquity of the original? Or, does it come from our realization that the ancients knew about and could make many objects that are familiar to us today such as baskets, combs, toilets boxes, and leather shoes? We can admire these everyday objects in statues from the Greek and Roman periods. Or, does our amazement come from our seeing that these everyday items have not changed much since ancient times? We simply do not know the answer. There may be other sources for our emotions. It may be music, or it may be the visual environment, or the impact of other factors. This is a subjective concept.

To conclude:

Our debate is in fact not about the value of reproductions. It is about what makes sense in a specific context.

Today, our experience of a virtual world introduces new considerations to our debate about authenticity.

What is the value of a virtual projection of the original items we represent by the casts our cases?
What is seen as an original?

Up until now, we have been preoccupied with the ethical and philosophical questions surrounding the use of reproductions in museums. Perhaps we should change our point of view and ask: «Would the substitute have a stronger value than the original? (...) and are Museums Tabernacles or Medias» (Bernard Delaroche, in *Du moulage au fac-similé*).

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Images/Legends:

Myriame_Deledalle_image1bis: Angkor-Vat, Cambodge, temple decoration. Cast realised in 1920 for Marseilles colonial exhibition, 1922. Collection MAAO. Photo: History Museum, Marseille.

Myriame_Deledalle_image2 bis: Artemis from Seljuk museum, Turkey. Cast, 1990, Collection History Museum, Marseille, France. Photo: S. Rizoulières

Myriame_Deledalle_image3bis: Original marble statue of Jupiter Dolichenus discovered in Marseille's harbour during the 17th century. Collection Limesmuseum, Aalen Germany. Photo: Limesmuseum.

Myriame_Deledalle-image4bis: Cast of Jupiter Dolichenus statue, 19th century. Collection History Museum, Marseille. Photo: History Museum

Myriame_Deledalle_image5bis: Greek inscription of the stadium, 6th century B.C. Collection History Museum, Marseille. Photo: M. Morel-Deledalle

Myriame_Deledalle_image6bis: Ionic capital, 6th century B.C. Collection History Museum, Marseille. Photo: M. Morel-Deledalle

Myriame_Deledalle_image7bis: Delphi Marseilles Treasury, cast, model and photography. Collection History Museum, Marseille. Photo M. Morel-Deledalle

Myriame_Deledalle_image8bis: Cast of a roman kiln. Collection History Museum, Marseille. Photo M. Morel-Deledalle.

Reconstructed objects in prehistoric museums; *Creative Originals* **A case of the Field Museum at the Chongokni Paleolithic site**

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Introduction

Museums are made for collecting. However, the size of some important prehistory museums' collections is not sufficient for their fruitful use in scientific research. It is very common for prehistory museums to use many kinds of substitutes, casts, copies, and photos etc., i.e. not 'real things', authentic objects. Reconstruction is a different kind of substitute material for exhibition purposes at prehistory museums. Some reconstructions are hyper-expensive, but are becoming common because of their efficiency in popularizing exhibitions and in promoting the educational role of museums. These reconstructions are in some sense reflections of scientific research in prehistoric archaeology and Paleo- anthropology. Therefore, a new revised definition of museum collections or of museum objects needs to include them. Describing, classifying and preserving these reconstructions will be necessary, as they provide evidence of current museological practice and of scientific achievements.

Reconstructions for exhibitions at prehistory museums

In the paleo-anthropological endeavor into human evolutionary studies, the reconstruction of fossil men has been a very disputable issue, as to whether it may be considered scientific or false. However, in most prehistoric exhibitions in modern museums, there are many objects reconstructed in order to help visitors understand the contents of the intended topics of the museum. In fact, there are two different kinds of reconstruction in exhibitions of prehistory: one is the completely fictional

reconstruction of prehistoric man on the basis of the creator's imagination, while another one is a partial reconstruction or copy of archaeological objects. These two kinds of reconstructed objects are very often used for exhibitions, in particular within museums of the Paleolithic era or dealing with human evolution. Most of their collections consist of stone artifacts and fossils, usually in a fragmented state. In order to exhibit them in a way that makes them understandable and interesting for the public, it is crucial to curate these archaeological collections and to recreate the original form of the artifacts. Otherwise, it becomes extremely challenging for the public to understand what the exhibited objects may tell us about the past. Some fossils are very significant and particularly rare in the world of science, in a few cases even unique in the world, and it is generally risky to move these fragile objects from the safe storage rooms to display them in public. Therefore, academic societies of these fields do not recommend moving these valuable objects for exhibition, which may expose them to possible deterioration, damage and even loss. More or less, many prehistory museums face problems in coordinating exhibitions due to the lack of original objects.

Because of this rarity of valuable archaeological objects relevant to the Paleolithic era and to human evolution, the use of reconstructed objects and replicas for exhibits of prehistory becomes inevitable. Therefore, many prehistoric museums are attempting to produce fine and realistic reconstructions on the basis of scientific research. Some of them are not considered as temporary or disposable objects, not only because of their high cost, but also because they are the result of creative efforts, based on scientific study. Many of them are produced by artists on the basis of scientific analysis of the original objects, even though there may exist many variations in the raw materials used, and in the expressions of shapes depending upon the artist.

How do we deal with these reconstructed objects with reference to original collections in archaeology museums? It is the time to change the rules of collections concerning the concept of "originality", in order to include materials or "creative originals".

In this article, we will discuss the case of the reconstructed objects at the Chongok prehistory museum, with a view to developing this new proposed concept of the “creative original” in museum collections, particularly in prehistory museums. This concept should be defined in terms of artistic creation, which is based upon genuine archaeological interpretation. It should also be defined in terms of the rich contents regarding education on archaeological topics that are incorporated through the curator’s research within the reproduction.

Chongok Prehistory Museum

Archaeological significance and museum site

The Chongokni site is well known in the field of international Palaeolithic archaeology since the first Acheulean-type hand axes were found here in 1978, for the first time in East Asia. It was designated a national monument in 1979 for the preservation of the site. Almost twenty campaigns were carried out for the excavation of the site during the last thirty years, and huge collections of stone artefacts were formed, including various types of hand axes, as a result of these archaeological excavations. It is one of the most investigated Palaeolithic sites ever in East Asia, along with the famous Zhoukoudian site in Beijing, China. Extensive scientific research, not only by Korean scientists but also by Japanese and French, was carried out for understanding the sediment formation processes and the Stone Age industries of each layer of the site. Today the Chongokni site is one of the most studied Palaeolithic sites in the world and clearly the most important one for the understanding of human cultural evolution during the Pleistocene in East Asia.

The Chongok Prehistory Museum was very recently established by the central and provincial governments for three purposes: to provide an educational institution on prehistoric culture and human evolution; to manage and preserve the national monument; and to form a regional symbol of historic identity. It is specialized in prehistoric archaeology, but it also needs to be a multi-functional cultural institute

for public and local government. The decision to establish the museum took some years because, according to the majority of decision makers such as statesmen and government officers, its Palaeolithic contents were not well known and very popular among the public. However, the vast crowds of participants at the Prehistoric Festival of Chongok, which is held on May 5th every year at the site, made a great impression on these decision makers and eventually this museum was actually built.

The museum building is constructed at the edge of the basalt cliff of the site facing south to the Hantan River. The museum is situated on a hanging valley formed on the basalt cliff as if an oval metallic spaceship is coming out of earth. The building's architectural design concept is eco-friendly, and gives an image of prehistoric life in an ancient nature at the site. To harmonize with the basalt plateau landscape, it is designed flat and with a rounded shape. It is accessible from the ground and also from the roof of the building, which is connected to the top of the basalt cliff. Visitors can observe and enjoy the geological landscape from any part of the building. It is a very special artificial structure in nature, but people may feel like being in a part of nature.

One major function of the Chongok museum is educating the public in archaeology and nature, with special attention to children and students. As a field museum of a Palaeolithic site, the main objective of the exhibition is to provide archaeological and anthropological information about the Chongokni Palaeolithic culture, within the framework of global human evolution. As it is not a particularly popular theme for the public, many fancy technologies have been applied in the exhibition, in order to attract visitors to the various topics: interactive systems, 4-dimensional exhibition techniques, 3-D and magic visions etc. The exhibition has been designed especially to cater for children and students studying prehistory and nature as part of their curriculum.

Exhibition

The two main objectives of the permanent exhibition were, firstly, to show human evolution from the beginning to modern Korea and, secondly, to show where the

Chongok culture should be placed in this evolutionary process and what it could have looked like. It is very unique for a prehistory museum that the entire permanent exhibition is in one single space. It consists of three parts: the main exhibition hall, the hall for special exhibitions and the educational exhibitions for children.

The exhibition in the main hall consists of three zones.

At the core zone, an evolutionary parade of hominines is constructed on an oval stage. The most realistic reconstructions of hominines, most of them done by Mrs. Daynes, as well as of quaternary animals, are shown in an order of evolutionary process, from the Toumai, *Sahelanthropus* in the Sahara to Mandal Man, modern *Homo sapiens* found in Korea. This zone is expected to be the major attraction for visitors, because of the lively reconstruction of hominines and the clear view of evolutionary stages of all forms of hominines at a single sight. The hominines' activities will be explained with appropriate cultural objects and replicas of human fossils, displayed in low showcases along the oval stage, in connection with the main reconstructed hominines. Most of these objects are replicas, which have been made at European archaeology museums by special order.

The outer circle surrounding the core zone forms the second zone. In this second zone reconstructions of prehistoric habitats in different ecological environments are presented, from early hominines in the African savannah up to the Homo Sapiens in the Siberian plains. It is intended as a means to understand the hominines' adaptation process in each specific environment and the hominines' expansion over the earth, during the evolutionary process of the last seven million years. The most important part of this zone is the exhibition of a reconstructed part of the Chongokni site, with exposed stone artefacts in an excavation pit. In addition to archaeological objects, all types of fauna and flora from the Hantan-Imjin river basin are exhibited in a section of ecological reconstruction of the temperate environment of the Chugaryong Valley, where the Chongokni site is situated. This exhibition of natural history of a Korean temperate environment will give some ideas about how the fossil man lived and coped with the stone tools shown at the corner of the Chongokni site.

The third zone is the most fanciful part of the exhibition. It consists of a reconstructed prehistoric cave with artworks, mostly various cave paintings from different prehistoric caves. In this zone, the religious and artistic activities of the modern man are presented alongside the exhibition of brain development. In addition to cave arts, a musical instrument, the lithopone, is displayed on the floor for children to play by steps.

In the educational exhibition, young visitors can learn about the entire process of archaeological research, from excavation to scientific analysis of finds, in an entertaining way, appropriately called 'Kid's Archaeo-Lab'. Children can learn how to excavate a site by playing with dirt and to collect artefacts at a simulated excavation ground. The famous 'Ozzy man' is reconstructed for explaining the processes of scientific analysis of the human body and of archaeological artefacts. Various kinds of archaeological artefacts are shown in drawers for comparative study. More educational programs can be presented at the eco-garden in front of the museum building, for example dealing with prehistoric cooking, tanning, hunting etc.

Not many original Palaeolithic stone artefacts from the Chongokni site are exhibited, except hand axes and a small number of others. Even though they are a very essential part of the exhibition, it is unlikely that any information and significance of stone artefacts can be understood by visitors. As in most Palaeolithic sites, no hominine fossil has been found at the Chongokni site; only stone artefacts. As it is hardly possible for ordinary visitors to understand prehistoric life from stone artefacts only, it is necessary to create some reconstruction of most common hominines. Visitors are thus guided into understanding how ancient humans developed stone artefacts and what the meaning of those would have been in their daily life in a prehistoric world.

The meaning of the collections for the Chongok prehistory museum

To provide objects for the Chongok museum, a small collection of stone artefacts from the Chongokni site as well as articles associated with the excavation of the site were given by the Office of Prehistoric Parks, Yeonchon County. Most of the stone artefacts excavated from Chongok are stored at many different university museums

and at the National Museum. During the process of preparation for the opening of the exhibition, replicas of stone artefacts, human fossils, animal bones and silicon images of archaeological features of Upper Palaeolithic burial sites in Europe were purchased from the Prehistoric Museum in Tautavel and other archaeological institutes. Some excavated stone artefacts from many Palaeolithic sites will be given by archaeological institutes for permanent storage and will form the major collection of archaeological materials. As most archaeological objects retrieved from surveys or excavations should be Government properties, it is quite unlikely to be able to constitute a large museum collection for exhibition and research of stone artefacts.

Reconstructions of fossil men are one of the most popular parts of the exhibition in the Chongok museum, like they are in other major museums of prehistory or of nature. They provide visitors with models of explanations of prehistoric men and their life; what did they look like? how did they live? Visitors enjoy watching them and are surprised at the very elaborate reconstruction of lively faces. However, they may convey fixed images or unintentionally incorrect information of prehistoric men to visitors, who may not realize what's what otherwise. In this regard, elaborate reconstruction should be a basic element for exhibition of a prehistory museum, not a supplement.

Another aspect in relation with the concept of the “creative original” collection discussed above should be the “creativity” of any reconstruction. Half of the reconstruction work of fossil men was done by Mrs. Daynes, well known for her very elaborate works on the basis of scientific analysis of human fossils. These reconstructions can be considered very scientific in their process and show great artistic craftsmanship. They should as such be considered as authentic collection items of this museum. Reconstructions by different organizations and different artists show varying levels of dimension and expression qualities. The Daynes reconstruction of Mandal Man, which was excavated from the Mandal cave site in Korea, is quite different from the one done by North Korean archaeologists. The reconstruction of the fossil boy from the Nariokotome site in East Africa by Daynes, is different from other reconstructions of same fossil. However, each piece is a very

authentic creation with different interpretations by each museum and the specialists involved. These reconstructions are not just copies of others, and they may be only partially exact in reflecting true ancient men and their life. They could be seen as artistic results from the current understanding of our past. In the future they may be seen as representative of some aspects of scientific development in Paleo-anthropology and Paleolithic archaeology. In this regard, they should be considered valuable collections for science museums for representing the development of scientific understanding and its artistic presentation in each period of research history.

Concluding remarks

Prehistory museums use many different types of objects and graphic images for enhancing the comprehension of their contents, in addition to genuine collections, mostly stone artefacts and fossil bones. Among them, some reconstructions, for example hominines, should be considered as distinct from other types of exhibition objects and also from fakes. The use of reconstructed material is unavoidable due to the nature of collections of prehistory museums. The Chongok Prehistory Museum is a very innovative museum and exhibits various reconstructions of fossil men. In a sense of archaeological intelligence, the reconstructions of fossil men are the critical part of museum's intellectual properties, because they are based on scientific reasoning. We have demonstrated that it may be necessary to develop a new concept of "*creative original*" museum collections for these kinds of reconstructions, in order to keep the records of current archaeological intelligence and variations of artistic expressions in each period. *Creative originals* are not just fakes or copies from existing ones, but form new scientific creation.

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