

CATCHING THE SPIRIT

Theatrical Assets of Historic Houses and their Approaches
in Reinventing the Past



Proceedings of the ICOM/DEM HIST international conference, Antwerp, 17-20 October 2011

Werner van Hoof (ed.)

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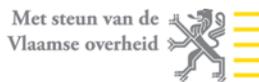
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** These are extracts of the keynote speech Peter Greenaway held on Monday 17th October 2011 in the KBC auditorium in Antwerp during the ICOM-Demhist conference 'Catching the Spirit'.*

*'There is no such thing as history,
there are only historians'**

*Peter Greenaway
Filmmaker, painter, writer and curator*

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'One of the projects I'm involved in is called 'Nine classic paintings revisited'. One of them is 'The Night Watch' by Rembrandt. We projected a film on the real painting. This led to a lot of discussions about the validity of that opportunity. A discussion that is relevant for all kind of museums. Another painting that is part of this project is 'The Last Supper' by Leonardo da Vinci. This project proved that notions as entertainment and instruction are not necessarily separate and can be combined. It turned out to be an opportunity to reverse the banality of the painting – which for most people is best known from chocolate boxes and tea towels – and to bring back an association of its original power.'

Peter Greenaway

The theme of the 2011 annual conference of the ICOM International Committee for Historic House Museums (DEMHIST) was 'Catching the Spirit - Theatrical Assets of Historic Houses and their Approaches to Reinventing the Past'. After many years of discussing questions of sustainability, conservation, management, identity and identification with the neighbouring community, DEMHIST once again focused on the subject of how to interpret historic houses. Given the increasing need to communicate at different levels with a broad range of audiences the type of communication chosen for an historic house becomes a matter of success and sustainability. However, any interpretation of a house and its collection reinvents the past and this reinvention and the attempt to catch the spirit of a house is always determined by the time and space within which the interpreter acts.

Amongst the various possible approaches to reinventing the past, this year's conference dealt with the Historic House Museum as a 'theatre of history'. This concept toys with meaning and identity, mixes so-called authenticity with fiction, thus creating a kind of 'meta-reality', which enables visitors to perceive the historic house emotionally as well as intellectually. Such an holistic approach is of great value for the conveyance of information and emotions, evidence and atmosphere. The question that we as historic house curators have to ask ourselves is: what kind of atmosphere do we wish to create, and how can the balance be maintained between presenting the scientific as well as the sensual and/or emotional aspects of an interpretation, while still taking into account the identity of the house and its collection. The numerous questions and issues addressed during the conference were divided into three parts.

The first part dealt with authenticity. How authentic can any reinvention of the past be? Is there such a thing as authenticity? Is there such a thing as history or are there only historians reinventing the past? It was suggested that one way out of this dilemma would be to focus on the interaction between the production and reception of the past, i.e. house museum curators and their audiences.

Another part of the conference discussed the museum as a stage. The filmmaker and artist Peter Greenaway, the artist Pipi Lotti Rist and the curator of the London house of Dennis Severs, an American artist, were amongst those who demonstrated how the historic house can become a stage and presented their personal - sometimes provocative and sometimes poetic - interpretations of historic houses.

The third part dealt with the intangible aspects of reinventing the past. From reenacting court festivities to creating an audio guide for and by people with a disability, a number of convincing, fascinating and touching examples have been presented, which demonstrated the challenges of conveying the intangible heritage inherent in historic houses.

DEMHIST, the ICOM International Committee of Historic House Museums, would like to thank the organizers and speakers for an excellent and stimulating conference. We are delighted to be able to make all the papers presented available to a larger audience and would like to thank all sponsors and editors for helping to realize this publication.

Daniela Ball, Chair of DEMHIST from 2005 to 2011

The ICOM/DEMHIST Conference 'Catching the Spirit' took place in Antwerp (Belgium) from 17 to 20 October 2011. The conference was organized by the Gaasbeek Castle and the Museum Plantin-Moretus.

The conference focused on three main topics: 1. Authenticity and Reinvention: an Intriguing Antagonism(?); 2. Theatres of History: the Museum as a Stage; 3. Reinventing the Past: Intangible Aspects. Each conference topic was introduced by a lecture with a theoretical focus. The lectures were followed by discussion papers with cases from the field of historic house museums. The contributors to the lectures and the discussion papers provided a text for the conference proceedings.

The keynote speech is presented in an elaborate number of quotes that can be found throughout this publication. Besides the keynote and the three main themes the conference was also a platform for eight papers and six short topics. These papers and short topics - 15 and 10 minute contributions respectively - focused on a specific issue or historic house museum within the overall conference theme 'Catching the spirit'.

The papers and short topics have been summarized in view of this publication. The summaries of the papers are mainly based on the audio recordings made during the conference. The summaries of the short topics were provided by the authors. Two short topics, from Ana Cristina Carvalho and Heinz Buri respectively, have been summarized in the form of quotes.

The conference organization is answerable for the summaries of the papers and the quotes -short topics and key note. We sincerely hope that they accurately rephrase the main ideas of the contributors. Audience remarks and questions have been attached to the sections concerned.

We acknowledge the generous support of FARO - the Flemish interface centre for cultural heritage - in making this publication possible. We would like to thank all the contributors for sharing their expertise. We hope that the proceedings of the 2011 ICOM/DEMHIST conference will be an inspiration for the way in which historic house museums communicate with their visitors.

The organizing committee.

'There is 8000 years of painting in the Western world and 115 years of cinema. I think some of the elements taken from painting can be part of a cinematic experience. This is an uphill task because our education system is a system that is heavily text based. Even in museums this is the case with the catalogues and art bookshops and writing legends and texts. Umberto Eco writes that we have had a civilization of 8000 years that is text based. The text masters are really in control of our culture. They write all our holy books, they devise our moral and ethical systems, they inform us constantly through words, words, words. But since the digital revolution the text masters have had to move aside and create a space for the image masters - and mistresses, who rightfully claim their place. Eco dates this switch in 1983. If we are going to introduce the notion of the prioritizing of the image then surely we have to be informed about it and our educational system has to change its perspectives in order to make a serious embrace of the questions of visual literacy.'

Peter Greenaway

LECTURES AND DISCUSSION PAPERS

AUTHENTICITY AND REINVENTION:
AN INTRIGUING ANTAGONISM (?)

Bed of a 19th century courtesan in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris (France). Different from the other beds in the museum, this bed is made. The narrative detailing balances between humor and cliché. Photograph by the author.



CATCHING THE SPACE BETWEEN THE OBJECTS

Peter van Mensch

Professor of cultural history at the Reinwardt Academie, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

The last exhibition organised by the Museum für Volkskunde in Berlin (German Democratic Republic) before November 1989, was dedicated to its textile collection. Like its predecessor *Grossstadtproletariat* [Metropolitan proletariat] (1980-1987), the exhibition *Kleidung zwischen Tracht und Mode* [Clothing between dress and fashion] (1989-1992) showed reconstructed workers' interiors of around 1900 (Karasek 1991). Despite the use of authentic objects, the museum failed in its ambition to demonstrate the miserable living conditions of the Berlin workers and their families. It is one of the interesting paradoxes in museum work that it can be argued that precisely because the museum used authentic objects, the historical situation was not adequately represented. After all, museum objects are supposed to be well restored and clean and the museum spaces have reduced humidity and are certainly not smelly. Obviously 'even' a museum with an explicit ideological message, such as the Museum für Volkskunde was, and is not able to escape the rules that govern the reality of the museum as context.

The present paper will explore 'the rules that govern the reality of the museum as context' with special focus on historic interiors. The guiding thought behind the paper is Kenneth Hudson's famous dictum 'A tiger in a museum is a tiger in a museum and not a tiger' (Hudson 1977).

Experiencing authenticity

If we visit a historic house our experience is very much defined by three parameters. The substrate of our experience is the physicality of the house itself. This physicality is the result of two processes: the dynamics between the house and its inhabitants in the pre-acquisition phase of its existence, and the results of post-acquisition interpretations. In addition, our experience is influenced by the actual time and space related conditions, varying from time of the day (did we have our coffee already), weather, finding a parking place, etc. Finally, it is our personal context (earlier experiences, expectations, knowledge, learning style, etc.) and the social framework of the visit (with a dear friend, with parents, with children, etc.) (Falk & Dierking 2000). Thus, in the eyes of the visitor, the house as historic artefact has a layered identity with three basic layers: the house as it was created and used before it became musealised, the transformation of the house into a historic house museum, and the house as perceived during the visit.

Each layer is defined by a specific interaction between three components: physical properties, function and significance, and context. In a room or house, every individual object can be defined on the basis of its location (i.e. its physical position in space and its relation to other objects) and its 'Niche' (its functional position in relation to space and other objects) (Van Mensch 1991). Somewhere in between these three components is the metaphorical spirit of the place, the 'idea' that holds the components together. In the process of musealisation the 'original idea' that defined the specificity of the place is gradually replaced by the intentions of the museum staff. To some extent, during the visit, the visitor him-/herself is the centre of the logic that holds the components together.

What is the connection between the three layers? Is there a continuity, and, if so, on what principle is this continuity based? It can be argued that the concept of continuity is very much related to the concept of authenticity. In their book on *Authenticity* (2007a), Joseph Pine and James Gilmore explain that authenticity is what visitors perceive as being authentic which is related to trust: 'To get real, museums must confront these two standards for all of their artifacts, edifices and encounters: Is it true to itself? Is it what it says it is?' (Pine & Gilmore 2007b). Pine and Gilmore summarize this point of view as 'be true to what you say you are'. According to this approach it is possible to speak of real fake and fake real. A phenomenon can be true to itself but not be what it says it is (fake real), or be what it says it is, but not true to itself (real fake). It would be interesting to collect examples of historic houses that are real fake, fake real, fake fake or real real. In view of the choices made in the process of musealisation it can be discussed to what extent a historic house can ever pretend to be real real, but on the other hand, when the history of interpretation is part of the educational programme of the museum, the museum is true to itself and is what it says it is. Within a set of clear parameters a reconstructed Neolithic hut can be as authentic as the musealised house of a contemporary poet. It is about trust, it is about being true to yourself, it is about being transparent. According to Janet Marstine, 'radical transparency' is a core principle in museum ethics (Marstine 2011). At this moment it is only fair to mention that the staff of the former Berlin Museum für Volkskunde was well aware of the paradox referred to at the beginning of this paper. In the exhibition catalogue, director Erika Karasek explains the limitations of the material, caused by restoration principles applied by previous generations of restorers (Karasek 1983).

Historic houses as heterotopian places

By definition, in a musealised historic house the visitor is always confronted with a mediated situation. It is not the house where something has happened, or where somebody has lived. It is the house that is interpreted and accordingly presented as the representation of the house where something has happened, or where somebody has lived. The biographical specificity of the place might be challenged on the one hand by the wish to emphasise general art historical notions about style and interior design, or at the other the wish to emphasise general social historical notions about daily life (upstairs and downstairs). The first might result in a reductionist approach in which objects that do not represent the style of design are easily removed. The second might result in forms of narrative detailing (staging) based on extrapolation rather than genuine evidence (Van Mensch 1991, 2001). The first might result in the disappearance of the spirit of the place; the second might evoke a convincing experience that balances between real real and fake fake.

In order to understand the mechanisms involved in experiencing authenticity, it might be fruitful to use Foucault's concept of heterotopia. According to Foucault a heterotopia represents a way of looking at the world. Elsewhere, Foucault uses the term 'gaze' in this context. He explained the concept in 1967 in a radio lecture which was published in 1984 (Foucault 1984). The term has been regularly applied to the museum situation (Bennett 1995, Kahn 1995, Hetherington 1996, Dubuc 2011, Franke & Niedenthal 2011). The different uses show that it is a 'malleable concept' (Van der Duin 2009). Heterotopia is about the dialectic between place as physical place and place as a socially constructed place. In this dialectic heterotopias differ from utopias. Utopias do not have a connection with real place.

Grossstadtproletariat (1980-1987), Museum für Volkskunde, Berlin (German Democratic Republic). Photograph: Museum für Volkskunde, Berlin.



Kleidung zwischen Tracht und Mode (1989-1992), Museum für Volkskunde, Berlin (German Democratic Republic). Photograph: Museum für Volkskunde, Berlin.



Zuiderzeemuseum, Enkhuizen (Netherlands). The picture was taken in the 1990s. After more than twenty years the appearance of the room is still the same, showing the dilemma of time in a museum context. The virtual children have grown up, but their toys are still lying on the same place in the same constellation. Photograph: Zuiderzeemuseum, Enkhuizen.



In his text, Foucault gives a number of principles that underlie the heterotopia. They can easily be related to the specificity of the museum situation, in particular historic houses. For example, the heterogeneity of the concept is very useful: heterotopias are capable of juxtaposing in a single real place, several meanings that are in themselves incompatible (3rd principle). Where Foucault speaks about the difference in time perception within and outside the heterotopic situation (4th principle), he specifically mentions museums: 'Museums [as heterotopias, express] the will to enclose in one place all times, [while the place] is itself outside of time'. Although he was not using museums as an example to his fifth principle, these institutions are a prime illustration of an elaborate 'system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable'. Museums are generally open to everyone, but are characterized (and stabilized) by boundaries and conditional access. There is a clear difference between a historic house as private house and a historic house as museum. There is a different ritual of entry involved. The entry to a museum is even more ritualized than in a private situation, thus emphasizing the 'otherness' of the place. The fact that very often the original front door of the historic house is not used as public entry to the museum, makes clear that the place is essentially a world following its own logic. The visitor is expected to accept and to surrender to this logic (and a required behaviour that goes with it). If the visitor is not familiar with the conventions, he/she will be lost.

The term surrender is not used by coincidence. The experience of authenticity, in the sense of what the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga (in 1920) has called 'historical sensation' (Ankersmit 1993), depends on what Samuel Taylor Coleridge (in 1817) has described as 'willing suspension of disbelief'. In his essay on fairy tales, J.R.R. Tolkien (1947) rejects this idea of 'suspension of disbelief'. In his eyes, the author creates a *secondary world* that is internally consistent. This makes it possible that the reader, within the parameters of the story, surrenders to a form of *secondary belief*. Performance theory has much to add to the complexity of the relation between framed realities, but this will be explored further here.

The colony and the brothel

Several authors have discussed the potential paradox involved in the concept of heterotopias. For example, Hilde Heynen (quoted in Van der Duin 2009) speaks of the heterotopias of orderliness ('Neatly arranged, 'calcified' places of structure and stability') versus heterotopias of disarray ('Transgressive, 'mercurial' places of experiment and change'). This relates to the opposition between brothels and colonies mentioned by Foucault at the very end of this text. Whether we speak of colonies or heterotopias of orderliness, historic houses show a strong tendency to (re)present stability. To a certain extent this is related to the specificity of the institutional context with its professional traditions (as is mentioned in the first paragraph of this paper). The lack of the dynamics that are so much part of our real life, results in a 'hyperreality' that might be convincing in its narrative details, but leaves empty spaces between the objects.

The solution to this problem may lie in Foucault's brothel. Several attempts have already been made to turn historic houses into 'transgressive, 'mercurial' places of experiment and change', thus liberating the spirit of the place from the shackles of structure and stability. This is what Michael Shanks and Christopher Tilley proposed when they spoke of 'redemptive aesthetic' (Shanks & Tilley 1986). They oppose 'professional preservative history with its

archaeologist-curator speaking for a monolithic and murdered past', and advocate 'specific acts of construction, work in progress, varied forms of relationship with the artifactual past instead of a fixed relation of representation of a completed past'. So we must 'detach the artifact from its 'self-evident' meaning as object of scientific study, reveal the artifact as non-identical with its apparent meaning, strip the object of its pretension to being-in-itself, strip the object of its immediacy in order that it might be released from the sterile continuum of the homogeneous history of the always-the-same'. A contemporary version of these ideas has crystallized as 'critical heritage studies'. The term is coined by Rodney Harrison (2010). According to him the issue is 'who has the power to control [the] interpretation of the past in the present'. 'Being critical in heritage studies simply means 'thinking about' heritage: why do we value particular objects, places and practices from the past more than others? If we memorialize some aspects of heritage, what other aspects might we forget in the process?' (Harrison & Linkman 2010).

Making historic houses mercurial places of experiment and change, turning interpretation into an act of construction and work in progress, stripping historic houses of their pretension to being-in-itself, and being critical of our own biases, this requires a new museological language. Artists such as Fred Wilson have shown the way. In perhaps his most famous exhibition 'Mining the Museum' (1992-1993), this Afro-American artist showed that the black perspective in the collection of the Maryland Historical Society (Baltimore) was completely missing. In associative installations, Wilson made, as it were, the invisible visible: 'I look at the relationship between what is on view and what is not on view', Wilson said in a recent interview (Yellis 2009). Making the invisible visible, liberating the spirit of the place. It is a worthy challenge for every historic house museum.

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Peter van Mensch

Q: To whom belongs history?

A: The past doesn't belong to anyone. As the past isn't anyone's property, social communities shouldn't monopolize the right to decide what will happen to 'their' heritage. This should not have to mean that history should be alienated from its roots, but at the same time we should strive to liberate heritage, we should try to free heritage from social conditions.

Reaction from the audience:

It is difficult for these source communities to lose the right to talk about 'authenticity'. It is important to them that the object of discussion has some kind of 'legitimacy'. So maybe the focus should be put more on legitimacy rather than authenticity.

Q: Is there really such a thing as authenticity? Do we still need objects or can imagery replace these objects?

A: To the audience, it is more interesting to have a wide variety of information. Therefore, imagery shouldn't replace objects, but should be put next to them. This way, the audience has access to a much richer source of information and is stimulated to deal with these different kinds of media in a more critical way.

Q: In the context of an historic house, there isn't just one history to show and there are lots of stories to tell. Shouldn't the purpose of an historic house be to tell as much of these stories as possible?

A: Telling all these stories would probably be impossible and maybe even unnecessary. It is a good idea 'though, to put some more stress on the fact that exhibitions -like other media, such as books and films- have an author. We should try to find more methods to make this author known to the public and explain that every exhibition is defined in time and space.

Another, perhaps more difficult idea, would be to use more irony in museums, as is done in the Dennis Severs House for example.

SAME FAMILY, DIFFERENT TIME, DIFFERENT PLACE. REMEMBERING DUKEDOM AND CROWN

Maria de Jesus Monge

Director of the Museu da Casa de Bragança, Paço Ducal de Vila Viçosa, Portugal

When in 1915, Manuel II decided to transform his family home into the museum of the House of Braganza he probably had in mind what he visited in England, the place of his exile. The king wished it to be a theatre of history, where the successive owners of the estate would be evoked: dukes of Braganza, kings of Portugal. They 'wrote' in those spaces the story of their deeds, interests, grandeur but also some very hard moments, both for them and for the people in general, the nation as a whole. To that purpose the king ordered the part of his collections that had remained in Portugal to be taken to Vila Viçosa and made a will stating that all his artistic possessions - *objets de vertu* - should be sent back after his death. This perspective of what should be presented in a museum says a lot about what was then considered a museum object and also meant that many aspects of daily life would not be represented. Manuel II had probably also in mind what his own grandfather, king Louis Philippe of France, promoted in the Versailles Palace, with the creation of the Musée de l'Histoire de France.

Upon the king's death in 1932, the Portuguese government had to approve his wishes, not because he was the former monarch but because he had made his dispositions according to British law. In doing so, and in further supporting the creation of the new museological institution, the Government – at the time this meant António de Oliveira Salazar – gained the power to decide how and by whom the museum should be installed and run. The decision was made to transform the museum into what we would now call a period building, everything would 'talk' about 1640, the time of the restoration of the Portuguese independence.

It is normal practice in most western countries to turn former royal residences into museums, the same happened in Portugal. The difference here is that, more or less during the same period, two institutions were created to emphasize certain aspects that, apparently, the existing national palaces did not provide. Were these spaces less charged with contemporary political meaning or was it simply because they were more easily adapted to the message they were supposed to convey?

When the newly arranged space opened to the public in the 1950's, after years of renovation, the museological approach was not exactly what Manuel of Braganza must have thought of. The political agenda defined what should be remembered. The XVIIth century was considered as

the most important and all the features of the building and objects related to that period were given priority, whereas the XIXth century, by far the best kept and represented, was ignored. This meant filling in gaps and, accordingly, adapting in a quite free manner the remaining spaces and buying or having freshly made fittings.

This period also favored large parades and festivals that pretended to show the moments of grandeur of the nation: its foundation in 1143, embodied in Guimarães, with the fittings of the Middle Ages; the XVIth century overseas voyages and trade, the 1640 refoundation/restoration of the independence and, finally, the richness of the XVIIIth century. All subsequent periods were considered decadent, poor, in short – uninteresting from the history telling perspective. Within this perspective, spaces were recreated to emphasize national pride and tell the appropriate tale, constructions that had more to do with scenography than with museological approach. This practice may have influenced recent professionals who try to avoid the use of anything that will look like staging and prefer a more subdued, safer presentation, where spaces and objects are left to speak for themselves with as little direct involvement as possible from mediators.

In the last decades, reinterpretation of the space and collections has called for a totally different approach, but the strong presence of the first furnishing program, both on the museum as on the public memory, also means accepting and learning how to cope with this 'adapted' reality. Simultaneously, new forms of interacting with the public call for solid interpretation in order to avoid former misconceptions and appealing but less scientific approaches.

In recent years we have tried to give the ensemble: building – collections – people, the space to be presented in a large span of time: 1501 to 1910, the collections displayed are original - replicas and objects size-made to 'tell' history went into the depots-even if this means having original XVII or XVIIIth century pieces that were not part of the Braganzas' collections but that are similar to the ones that documentation refers to. The 'freezing a moment' approach would not work for a number of reasons: the interiors were changed far too much in the eighty years of existence of the museum, and this would also reduce a five centuries old building to one, probably the newest, of its layers.

There is a large project going on based on the study of a 1565 inventory, in collaboration with Lisbon Universidade Nova, which is already enabling us to learn a lot about how the building evolved, how everyday life was, what kind of objects filled the rooms, which were the more valuable ones, where they came from... After the conclusion of this project we will be able to reinterpret and present that particular moment in a new light.

House museums, as all other museums, have communication at the very core of their existence. However, this obligation to provide information, to deepen the knowledge on someone or something can not erase emotion. The challenge is to maintain the atmosphere and – as much as possible – the 'truth' of the ambiance and at the same time respecting conservation and security requirements.

In doing so, do we have to 'entertain' our visitors in a 'showbiz' way?! Plastic chickens and the like are just the most innocent testimonies of an obsession with entertainment, very often oblivious of historical truth and elementary good practices. The adoption of every reason - or no

reason at all – to provide entertainment is becoming such an overwhelming trend that institutions sometimes forget their mission. How does the celebration of certain dates, for instance Halloween or Valentine's day, in countries that have no such traditions, benefit cultural activity?

The increase of visitor's numbers is on the agenda of almost every museum. Though house museums, with a few exceptions such as royal residences, are not the most appealing option to large masses of people, nevertheless the problem poses itself as space is more often than not scarce. How do we appeal to growing numbers of people who do not relate to the ambiance/heritage we preserve and display? Should we compromise or keep to a strict line of interpretation? If we favour very professional and strict lines do we accept loosing less informed visitors? House museums survive only as long as their 'hero/es' is popular and known to the society they are part of.

Nevertheless, house museums are the best equipped to face the challenges of the 21st century. Whereas traditional art or science museums deal with objects, very often representative of distant realities, house museums have in their core the most universal of all subjects: man. In its varied perspectives and interests, each individual celebrated in the physical space of a residence has plenty in common with everyday men – everyone is born and dies, everyone goes through the same moments that frame social evolution (tuition, engagement/marriage, work...).

These same realities are dealt with in different ways, in different geographical, social and economic realities. And this is yet another particular and very actual characteristic of house museums: you may have a contemporary art Museum in Paris, Tokyo or S. Paulo built by the same architect and with similar collections, the curator maybe from no matter what nationality, but a house museum speaks about a unique person, his/her time and achievements. No matter how global the approach, the house museum can not be stripped from its time, place and circumstances. You may even have more than one house museum dedicated to the same person/persons but they are set in different environments, they celebrate different moments and they give different insights in the same individual/s.

Most visitors prefer to be given the 'key' to understand what they are experiencing and guided tours are usually welcome as they provide useful information. However, some visitors prefer to explore at their own pace and to decode meanings by themselves. The Paço Ducal only has guided tours and now and then visitors complain at this restriction of their freedom to explore and apprehend spaces, collections and atmosphere.

In southern countries museums, some experiences have been made recreating particular moments, but most house museums do not have that sort of interpretation tool. It is expensive and can only be effective if born from the work of an interdisciplinary team, a luxury that very few can afford... However some very interesting experiences have been carried out with schools, though a recent change in curricula will make this cooperation more difficult.

'What I do is use a vocabulary which consists of the use of languages to support the sense of celebration and inhalation and combine it with education in the best possible ways. Like Descartes' vision on „making people curious“. We have taken this vocabulary to several historic houses amongst which La Venaria Reale in Turin. The commission here was to entertain in the huge number of corridors and rooms and the massive garden, six areas of interest.

We made a combination of the pyramid of life and hierarchy in an extraordinary event. We attempted to give an impression of the life of the place. We did not ignore the „upstairs-downstairs“ phenomena. Like in many historic houses you have the fabric, you have the architecture, you might have furniture and some paintings but you don't have the people. It's the people that make the place.'

Peter Greenaway

SAME FAMILY, DIFFERENT TIME, DIFFERENT PLACE. THE BIRTH OF A ROYAL FAMILY

António Ponte

Director of the Ducal Palace of Guimarães, Portugal

This communication aims at presenting two distinct moments of the same family, in two separate places, a few hundred kilometres away.

The Ducal Palace of the Braganza is located in the city of Guimarães, in the region of Minho, in the north of Portugal, in the city that will be a European Capital of Culture in 2012. The Palace relates to the moment when the House of Braganza was formed, due to the dream of two men: Nuno Alvares Pereira and João I.

The Ducal Palace of Vila Viçosa is located in Vila Viçosa, in the Alentejo, in the south of the country, and illustrates the transition of the national power centres to the south of Portugal. The Ducal Palace of Vila Viçosa is closely related to the 4th Portuguese dynasty – the House of Braganza – that had the palace built in 1501. Their family lived there until the House took the throne and kept returning seasonally until the last Portuguese king went in exile after the republican *coup d'état* in 1910.

The construction of the Ducal Palace in Guimarães began around 1420 and marked the beginning of a new phase for Afonso, the 1st Duke of Braganza, due to his marriage with Constança of Noronha, after his first wife died. His first wife, Beatriz, was the daughter of Nuno Alvares Pereira, who probably was the richest nobleman in the kingdom at the time.

Afonso was an illegitimate son of João I, nevertheless he was chosen by Nuno Alvares Pereira to marry his daughter. Afonso was an open-minded man, a traveller, a *connoisseur* of what was happening in his contemporary Europe and he also joined his brothers in the battles of North Africa.

However, after the death of the Duke in 1461, the construction of the Palace came to a stop. The

widow Duchess continued to live in the palace, and started to use it as a kind of a boarding house for the poor and the ill.

After the death of Constança, the occupancy of the Palace in Guimarães became sporadic and only a few occasional works were carried out. This led to a gradual process of degradation that only ceased around 1933. At this time the *Estado Novo* – the Portuguese dictatorial regime – decided to rebuild the monuments of the Monte Latito, in Guimarães, in order to turn them into important symbols of the Portuguese nationality, as the monuments related to the foundation of the country and some of its most glorious moments.

The restoration project of the Palace was assigned to the architect Rogério de Azevezo. Because there was a lack of exact information the architect made a few trips throughout Europe, searching for inspiration, so he could redesign the building, sorting roots of medieval inspiration, among others, from Burgundy.

The process was anything but peaceful. Many people opposed the redesign, deeming it as speculative. Nevertheless, the project was continued because it followed the wishes of the regime that supported glorious restorations.

The works lasted until approximately 1958 when, due to the leverage of the central government, it was opened to the public.

Some functional aspects of the Palace raised particular questions:

- The conversion of the Palace in an official residence for the President of the Republic – although it met the nationalist rhetoric of the *Estado Novo* – was a controversial solution that went along with the monarchical fringes of the regime. The direct intervention of the Prime Minister, António de Oliveira Salazar, in 1949, was decisive in the restoration process.

- What kind of furniture would decorate the spaces?

- How could the Palace fulfil the aim for the glorification of the Portuguese History?

Subsequently, when it was decided to open the Palace and to finish the works that had been in preparation for years, a Furniture Commission was appointed. It was chaired by the Architect Luís Benavente, who in 1951 had coordinated the interventions in the official residence of the Portuguese President – the Belém Palace.

As part of its duties, the Commission selected the same type of items as it had been done for Seteais.

But the decoration of the noble floor was a far more complex matter. From the beginning, it was decided that a decoration of medieval characteristics would not be interesting. This was thought for two reasons: the medieval furniture was both scarce and expensive. In May 1955, the Public Works Minister instructed that the space should be filled with original pieces – gathered from national palaces and museums – as well as with acquired furniture of superior quality both from Portugal and abroad. Accordingly, several pieces and works of art, essentially from the 17th and 18th centuries, were acquired.

The Palace opened to the public on the 24th of June 1958 and, until this day, aside its museologic function, it has held a numerous number of solemn acts of State, and it has hosted several Portuguese and foreign Presidents.

What can be seen today in the Ducal Palace is:

Apart from the area of residence for the President of the Republic, there is a recreation of a medieval Palace – that was shaped as a symbol of the Portuguese identity – with the exhibition of works of art that aim the recreation of the 17th and 18th centuries. Its narrative also aims to present to the public the glorious past of the Portuguese Discoveries, its colonies and its international exchanges.

Its collection includes Portuguese furniture, Indo-Portuguese furniture, tapestries with various motifs – with a remarkable set of four replicas of the tapestries of Afonso V from the 15th century and the Aubusson tapestries –, a significant number of oriental rugs, Chinese porcelain, Portuguese ceramics and some interesting paintings of the 17th and 18th centuries.

The Ducal Palace is regarded as a reconstruction of the 20th century that is based on a 15th century building, that perpetuates the past of Portugal. Its stories are mediated to diverse groups of visitors in many different ways: lectures, guided tours, puppet shows, historical recreations, publications and exhibitions.

Mediation takes place at several levels. In the exhibition areas of the lower floor, where there is no permanent collection, several stories are shared:

- The evolution of the monuments' construction process, its turning points, mentioning and assuming the stages of ruin and the philosophy that was followed during the reconstruction.
- Another exhibition contextualizes the history of the monument and the history of the House of Braganza until the 1580s.
- There is a promotion of temporary exhibitions that introduces specific aspects of the customs of the Ducal Palace and of its inhabitants, in order to promote a more cohesive knowledge of the history of the Palace.

Staged visits present essential moments of the space and its inhabitants.

Always taking into consideration the target audience, several approaches are applied. Our list of activities that decode and disseminate these historic events also comprises puppet shows, historical recreations, or didactic prospects.

Through these methods it is possible to achieve the goal of transmitting knowledge in a lively way, with non-traditional techniques that promote knowledge and don't scare away the public.

The Ducal Palace, due to its high symbolic value, represents, together with the Castle of Guimarães, the foundation of our nationality and they attract many visitors of all ages. It is today one of the most popular museums in Portugal and, in 2010, it received about 280.000 visitors.

António Ponte and Maria de Jesus Monge

Q: To whom belongs this history?

A: *History belongs to everyone and especially to whoever is interested in it.*

Q: Are the visitors aware that they can't always trust their eyes? Do you inform them about the fact that the 16th century furniture they see, is in fact made in the 20th century?

A: *We explain everything to the visitors. As we want to provide the audience with as much knowledge as possible, we do not leave these facts out.*

Reaction from the audience:

Knowing that there is a problem with 'authenticity' here, is providing the visitors with an exhibition still the best way to deal with the past, or should other options be explored? Like perhaps clearing out all the objects and inviting Peter Greenaway to develop a presentation on what's wrong with the representation of history?

Q: I don't think we should get rid of the objects, on the contrary, to me it seems there are a lot of objects missing here that could provide a clearer view on the represented period, like, for example, tapestries or ceramics that originally were present in this house.

A: *Our most important task is to try and bring stories alive. The curator plays a big role in this process, because he is the one who not only chooses which objects will be displayed, but also in which way these objects will be presented. We might not have all the original objects, but we provide the visitors with similar ones, in a sincere way. We have to keep in mind that visitors don't want to know everything, they want to find things out and understand things by themselves. A house museum is a place of many views, and we have to respect that.*

Q: What will be your approach towards the next presentations?

A: *Our first goal is to transform the objects into a language everyone can understand. They have to be fully identified, so it is clear for which purpose they were being used, how they were used, etc. When these questions have been fully answered, we can give an interpretation on how people lived their lives and how they coped with certain aspects of life, like religion, hygiene, food, health, etc. When people enter a house museum, these everyday objects are usually what they are hoping to find.*

Reaction from the audience:

House museums should also be looking at the future. Shouldn't we be collecting 20th century objects that had an impact? We should for example think of the restorations of these buildings and their impact on Portuguese immigrants and decide whether this is also a story we would like to tell.

'I've often thought that cinema would be the absolute ideal place where we all could become visually literate. Although cinema supposedly makes images, most cinema is based on text and not on image. It is with some qualms then that one would make an investigation and try to push and pull the possibilities of the idea of visual literacy. But if I say that maybe the cinema would be the place where we become visually literate, surely also museums and historic houses would be part of that. Let us endeavor to increase the visual literacy of the population of the world. With the notions to the digital revolution – which primarily has to do with seeing and looking – we now have an extraordinary apparatus to do so.'

Peter Greenaway

LECTURES AND DISCUSSION PAPERS

THEATERS OF HISTORY: THE MUSEUM
AS A STAGE

Interior of Sauvageot, (Illustration - JournalUniversel, 1858, 141)



M. Alphonse Karr examines a bomb found in the sea, (Musée des Familles, 1850-1851, 49)



THEATRICAL DOMESTICITY? PLAYING THE PAST

Yves Schoonjans

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In 1883 Ermance Dufaix writes in her famous handbook 'Good manners in Ordinary Life and in the Civil and Religious ceremonies': 'The present house is a practical course in furnishing. Each room reproduces a different time. But as few people are in a position to reach this ideal, one is satisfied to pile up at home, randomly biddings of the (bidding house) Hotel-Drouot, the rarest, and sometimes most heteroclite specimens. Good manners are a little disorientated in this chaos, more especially as there is at the bottom of these exaggerations a real sentiment of the beautiful, which is developing.'(...) 'To be frank, this confusion tallies better with our manners than a scrupulous exactitude. It is more logical to live in a museum, than in a historical decorum from where the costumes are always excluded. Of course, the fundamental furniture of each room must be of only one style. But be guarded to banish those pieces of furniture of all times and of all the countries, which are there as object-d'art. It is in those artistic tendencies, that one will recognize later these alofourtime.'¹

The bourgeois interior as construct

In 1910 the known Paris photographer Atget sells a photo-album entitled 'Parisian interiors, beginning of the 20th century, artistic, picturesque and bourgeois' to the Paris Museum Carnavalet. It is a collection of sixty photographs 'des intérieurs d'époque'². The pictures are very interesting. Take for instance the four pictures of 'an interior of an employee of the department store 'du Louvre', rue St. Jacques'. It is not the exquisite character of the images that strikes us, but the identity of the owner, an employee. An uncomplicated man of the middle class without artistic extravaganza nor imaginative pretensions. A plain interior: a table protected by a cloth and embellished with a vase with flowers, a heavy decorated cabinet crowned with two Chinese vases and flanked by chairs, in front of it a statue, on the right a piano, some pictures and bric-a-brac.

The interior of this employee is less dominated by a snugness or intimacy than by the necessity of the bourgeois' urge of representation. These photographs show the nineteenth-century importance of the house and its interior in the bourgeois culture. Atget's photographs tell us that there is no indifference in the interior, that the various objects are not accumulated by pure coincidence. The choice of the furniture, their size and formal style, the static of their posi-

tions, the selection of the paintings, statues and the bric-a-brac are not without engagement. It wants to convince the presence of bourgeois qualities and values. The bourgeois interior cannot be created by accident or at random. It also has ambition.

When looking at Atgets' pictures on the dining room of the employee we notice different accents: the cabinet in style Henri II, the mantelpiece with a mirror, in front of it a statue, a collection of paintings and the grouped chairs. The cabinet and the statue on the mantelpiece are opposite to one another. As much as they differ from each other - the massiveness of the closet in contrast to the elegance of the statue - they carry the same function. Both are emblems of culture and history: the cabinet referring to the northern renaissance, the statuette as a copy of the masterpiece of the Venus of Milo collected at the Louvre. Both are reconstructions of another era. Familiarity gets its extension with the notion of good taste. 'Fortune, that in our time levels all ranks of society', writes the Baroness of Clessy in her handbook 'Life indoors and in the world', 'obliges the wife, that when you move out of your milieu, you have to know -in small details- all requirements of the code for the future practice. Her new relations new with society provides laws; and those laws are severe for those which neglect them or are unaware of its uses.'³The bourgeois dignity does not only support on the engagement of the woman, nor on the business-success of the man. Being able to pay for the objects is not enough. Success, and the respect for the bourgeois culture must coincide with the right culture, the possession of the right taste. The notion of taste pops up in the most diverse documents that are closely or remotely related to the middle class domestic culture. In the characterization, clothing, furniture and the interior itself are always evaluated on aesthetic bases. They are elegant or disgraceful, tasteful or tasteless. This judgment is almost always a social one. The possession of good taste is closely connected with good manners and the 'savoir-vivre'. Social correct behavior goes hand in hand with the tasteful decoration of the home, and the rightly gathering of the numerous objects. Taste is an interiorized culture by which one can distinct oneself from the vulgar new rich and the lower class. Lack of taste is always suspicious. Objects are burdened with connotations. They refer to archetypical interior-models, become arguments. Their presents are not without engagement. The composed interior is forced in numerous obligations, in a clear social scenery. It becomes a model full of codes that guaranties in its own special way a unity in the heterogeneous image. Taste refers to a broad cultural dedication structured by historic reference. It is an aesthetic judgment that makes choice possible and accountable, and therefore structures multiplicity.

The interior of the bourgeois collector - Disorder raised to an elegancy

In this context it is interesting to study the interiors of some of the more famous nineteenth-century bourgeois art collectors because they were seen as important examples of the tasteful interiors. The most significant French middle-class journal 'L'illustration-Journal Universel' tackled those private collections in the period 1840-90 on a frequent base. The structure of the articles is almost always identical. In 1843, for example, the journal gives a description of the collection of Alexandre du Sommerard, who just passed away. He was a famous collector with a great knowledge on French medieval and renaissance culture. 'His collection is far out the most precious and complete in France (...) Du Sommerard was not only an amateur of good taste, but also an antiquarian and scholar' writes Augé, in his encyclopedia.⁴ The text was illustrated with different objects of his collection and with an overview of his gallery. In this last drawing we are not struck by a visual order. We cannot detect a chronological, thematic or scientific

structure. What we see is packed space where mirrors, paintings, vases, etc... stand and hang at random. What started in the 'Gallery of Mr. Du Sommerard' mounted to the highest pitch in the illustration of 1858 of the interior of Sauvageot. Like Du Sommerard Sauvageot was a well known collector and stood example for the famous character of 'the cousin Pons' in the novel of de Balzac . When Sauvageot decided to donate his collection to the Louvre -that was more than happy to accept this gift- he had it portrayed by the English court artists James en Arthur Robert in the intimate environment of his own home as a remembrance. The two pictures (one of his bedroom, and one of his dining room) illustrate two congested rooms where the heterogeneous objects are gathered in a pure coordination. One can detect the same attitude in the text. Although the writer describes the collection as a 'whole of objects', he structures the text as an enumeration of artifacts. Objects are selected, portrayed and put back. 'On the low small table we see an alignment of five pieces of ceramic of the period of the king Henry II. This modest clay pipe is simply decorated with black niello or red perforations, and all covered with glaze. The ornaments are from such a good taste, the form of the pieces is really happy, fine and delicate. Undependably from their rarity they have a great art value. (...) On the table covered with a Smyrna rug, that occupies the center of the room and is illuminated by burning-glass decorated with colored arabesques and an Arab lantern, you can find Flemish jugs covered with enameled embossments, German glassworks charged with armorial bearings of the great empire and Italian majolica's.'⁵The author of the text does not emphasize the strong and firm mutual relations of the artifacts in the collection, but concentrates on a enumerated description of the independent objects. Every item -the dish, pipe, Arabian lantern, jug...- is caught in a coordination. The illustrated collections of du Sommerard and Sauvageot seem disparate, unstructured, without order. But those words are not used in the mentioned articles, on the contrary. The collection of du Sommerard is described as 'conveniently classified', the one of Sauvageot as a 'wonderful accumulation of objects of great value'. The order of the collected objects is not so rigid as in the scientific classification. When the nineteenth-century encyclopedia 'Le Nouveau Larousse Illustré' defines the notion 'collection' as a 'reunion of objects assembled for instruction, pleasure, utility; a whole of people or things not united by fact, but considered together'⁶ it approximates the essence of that sort of collections. The objects of the collections of du Sommerard and Sauvageot are being 'considered together', but are not 'united by fact'. A collection is a whole of artifacts kept together by a perhaps logic, but loose connection. The objects did not conquer a fixed and unambiguous place, but a worthy one. Worthy because they transmit important historic and cultural, and by this social, connotations.

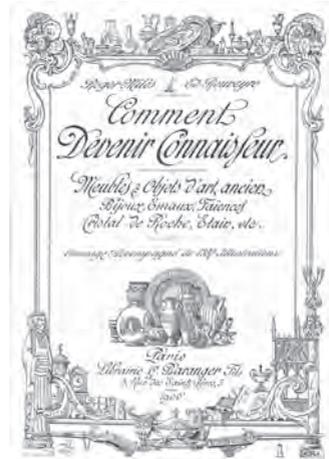
A second aspect is to be found by the collector himself. In the cited description in the 'Nouveau Larousse Illustré' the editors also refer to the importance of the choice in the construction of a collection, and therefore to the position of the collector. There is maybe an ambiguous way in how the collection is composed, partly gathered by coincidence based on the availability of the object, the price.... but this does not mean that the arrangement is done at random. Objects are being selected. The admiration for the collections of du Sommerard, Sauvageot, etc. is combined with the esteem towards the collector. He is the one who has the ability to choose the most interesting objects out of the abundant offerings in the antique shops and at auctions, based on his scholarly knowledge of history, arts and science. He recognized its value, expressiveness and eloquence. The collection is a symbol of the collector's erudition, a sign of his ambition, namely 'the rescue of man's history'. But this means that the collection is structured by a scientific activity, and therefore controlled by logic and a sense of order.

It is that notion of erudition that causes the collection not to be regarded as a product of personal impulse of possession, but of the realization of cultural and social significances. The collector uses his ability to preserve those artifacts from getting lost; he preserves them for the future generations. He helps with the construction of a national and historic patrimony. 'Remember the splendor the collections of Verhelst, Renauld, De Renesse, Versturme, D'huyvetter, Callion, Kervyn, Schamp, Boddaert, Ongena, etc. etc. (...)', writes the expert Van Duyse in the catalogue of the inheritance of the famous Belgian collector and architect Minard, 'This plead of particular museums were the most important public collections went for nurturing, where the fantasy of the most exigent amateurs could be satisfied.'⁷ The act of collecting is seen as a social one. The collectors act like guardians of a treasure room where they seem to have no direct financial but only social profit. This is the reason why those collections could easily be transferred to the official museums. There is a congeniality between the scientific activity of the professional and the amateur. They seem to be structured in the same way, albeit that the private collection is steered by personal, and by 'subjective' interests and personal choices.

Du Sommerard and Sauvageot chose a multiplicity of objects of different era's, places and styles and brought them together in their domestic interior. By doing this they did not destroy nor mutilate the authenticity of the chosen artifact. Their collections didn't pretend syncretism. They were not looking for aesthetic harmony in the unity of style in their interior. On the contrary, every object had its special value and had to maintain its relative autonomy. Judging by the descriptions of the interiors of the collectors in most of the popular middle-class journals depicted as treasure-houses, the characteristics of the remarkable objects, the social and artistic commitment, the calculated accumulation of artifacts and the choice based on scien-



Bureau de la Rédaction du journal Illustration - Journal Universel, (Illustration - Journal Universel, 1844, 9)



tific foundation... one could understand the collection as a way of assembling a multitude of objects towards one entity. This is the reason why the heteroclitic interiors are not seen by the contemporary middle-class as disparate or confusing but as evident. And by this they envied and copied them.

The articles on the collectors refer also to an aesthetic aspect on how the objects met. 'Mr. Sauvageot,' stated Alfred Darcel in the journal 'Illustration' in 1858, 'is not an ordinary collector, who accumulates without care of harmony resulting in resemblances and contrasts. Everything is calculated to provoke reciprocity. He follows the law of graduation that, by insensible nuance in color and by unnoticed variations in form, calls attention towards the most simple to the most exquisite and delicate.'⁸ Darcel demonstrates that Sauvageot's collection is not purely based on enumeration, but that an attempt is made to design small tableaus. Those ensembles are made possible by the loose connection between the objects of the collection, where one could easily compose 'an ensemble that embraces thousands of years', based on eclectic architectural formal characteristics like 'variety', 'richness', 'unexpectedness' or 'the picturesque'. The image of the interior-composed by a multiplicity and mixture of objects, is assessed on the basis of the good taste. Here the involvement of the inhabitant towards the societal values and its cultural level is estimated. The attunement of the different objects is more mental than formal. It refers to the fact that the right objects are present in the house and every place is correctly taken.

My silent friends

In his well-known study 'Collectionneurs, Amateurs et Curieux' the Polish-French historian Krzysztof Pomian gives the following definition of the word 'collection'. A collection is a whole of natural or artificial objects that has been put temporarily or forever outside of the circuit of economic activities; that is surrounded with special care in a confined space which is especially arranged for that purpose and is displayed to be visited. Three elements are put forward. Pomian speaks of a whole or unity and refers to the relation between the different objects of a

collection. They have a mutual link. Secondly Pomian states that the objects from a collection lose their practical function, while at the same time they are surrounded with extreme care. Finally an important emphasis is put on the aspect of looking at these objects.⁹

Central in the approach of Pomian is the relation between the spectator and the collected object. It is a particular relation between man and his material surroundings. Important is the status of the collected object. It obtains its value through a cultural and symbolic meaning. The object refers, according to Pomian, to something that is not visible anymore, and where we cannot participate physically. These collected objects are 'intermediates' or a gateway between the spectator and the invisible world from which the object originates. Pomian uses the word *semiophore* here, or bearer of signs. He describes religious artifacts, epitaphs, dead masks, ethnographic or scientific objects, naturalia, etc. He finds the same communication with historical objects that refer to the past, ethnographic objects to distant places, etc. It is important to note that those objects are not collected for their practical value but for their communicative feature towards the invisible.

The idea that objects can pronounce eloquence is strongly present in the romantic movement in the 19th century. The important historian Michelet writes in a scientific text that the resurrection of the past (and therefore understanding the past itself) could best be realized through historical evocation. A historical object (or the description of it in a picture or text) functions as a mediator between the present and the past. This one object 'brings together everything what one knows about an era, a country, an industry or an owner'. The collector does not only collect to preserve the past for the future, he also collects objects to talk to the past. This strong idea dissolved in the dominant new 19th century academic scientific labor based on the word moving the object towards the museum away from scientific knowledge.

The matching of the different objects in the bourgeois interior is more based on mental attitude than on the notion of form. Every object is connected to a predetermined place, where the determination refers to the fact that all is present and every place is filled in. The interior is an alchemistic composition of different objects in a half-loose connection where the items are caught in a web of social references and evocations. Their style appeals at the same time to the collective memory as to the particular responses. Objects are triggers for moral codes like home-enjoyment, taste, social respectability, science, culture... but at the same time they are essential for personal escape from them. 'The pieces of furniture are our friends', the 'sociétaire de la Comédie-Française', Cécile Sorel wrote in 1899, 'Those works of art extend us. Close to them I ennoble my personality. (...) At some of the boisterous evenings when all my guests have left I long to stay alone in the middle of my silent artifacts, and let me be overpowered by their mystery. Very leisurely I stroll in my quarters letting their fairy scene envelop me. The past time is recreating. The women dressed in crinoline and the men in their elegant costumes that commissioned those pieces, choose their bric-a-brac, are leaving the shadows and encompass me. I enter my room. There, on a stage, reigns the bed of the Comtesse du Barry, in gilded wood crowned with roses and four columns mounted with incensory. I glide inside, like long past days the favorite of the king, finely liberated from her dress and waiting for her royal lover. The room is breathing, palpitating like a heart. Is it not the king Louis XV who fades away in this odoriferous smoke? I perceive in this vision that slowly evaporates in to my nightly dreams.'¹⁰ The attention here is not completely drawn to the historic or even exotic experiences, but to the evasive daydream, what they called the 'demie-réalité'. The scientific knowledge of the past and

the distant is a pretext to mentally leave the harsh reality, to be elsewhere in the middle of this overwhelming interior.

The interior of the employee of the department store 'aux magasins du Louvre' does not only illustrate the archaic and static prototypical bourgeois interior, it does not only show the importance of the different middle-class objects as representative of good taste and social codes but also the extreme closeness of those artifacts. The bourgeois interior presents congestion. It seems that the middle class did not only fill up their space from the need for the correct representation but also to keep the materiality as close as possible, to narrate the emptiness away. But the closer the objects are positioned the more intense the physical contact between the occupant and the artifacts becomes; and the easier it is to be taken away to far-away places. The dusk of the, by curtains disconnected, interior at the one hand and the mirror at the other make this effect even bigger. 'When the room is too illuminated, the art objects, flayed from the shadow, lose their harmony and grace. Paintings shine and lead to mockery. Everyone who doubts this truth must study the different sceneries of our most famous merchants of precious objects.'¹¹ The proximity, the gaze, the touch, the caress make the dream so much the better. The interior becomes a 'mot d'esprit', a mental state that refers to the artificial bourgeois model



Atget, an interior of an employee of the department store 'du Louvre', rue St. Jacques, ca 1899. (Nesbit Molly & Reynaud Françoise. Eugène Atget - Intérieur Parisien - Un Album du Musée Carnavalet (Paris, Editions Carré, 1992, planche 10)

but that, at the same time, can be topped up by own individual stories. The construction of the interior is a social and a personal story.

Precisely the simultaneous presence of the concrete and the vague, the scientific and the anecdotic, reality and the dream make the collected objects useful for the bourgeoisie. The spectator uses science in an unscientific way, links the scientific `curiosité' with its own collective and individual pipe-dreams and fantasmagoric desires. He not only uses the scientific or historical reference as a pretense to daydream, but also to enforce it. The `demie-réalité' touches both sides.

Endnotes

1. Dufaux Ermance. *Le Savoir Vivre dans la Vie Ordinaire et dans les Cérémonies Civiles et Religieuses* (Garnier Frères, 1883), 13-14.
2. Nesbit Molly & Reynaud Françoise. *Eugène Atget – Intérieur Parisien - Un Album du Musée Carnavalet* (Paris, Editions Carré, 1992). See also Schoonjans Yves. 'Au Bonheur des Dames - Vrouw, Smaak en het Burgerlijk Interieur', *Tijdschrift voor Vrouwenstudies* (Amsterdam, 1997), n°2, 136-152. Schoonjans Yves. *Architectuur & vooruitgang: De Cultuur van het Eclecticisme in de 19de eeuw* (A&S, University press Ugent, 2007).
3. Baronne de Clessy, *La Vie Chez Soi et dans le Monde* (Paris, Orsoni P., 1899), 2.
4. Augé (ed.), *Nouveau Larousse Illustré*, vol III, (s.d. ca 1899) 899. Alexandre du Sommerard (sometimes mentioned as Dusommerard) was archeologist. 'A partir de 1831 jusqu'à sa mort (1842), il ne cessa de rassembler les objets les plus curieux, les plus parfaits des produits d'art ancien, surtout celui du moyen âge et de la Renaissance. La collection était la plus précieuse, la plus complète qui existait en France' *Nouveau Larousse Illustré*, vol III, p 899. His collection is the base of the present museum Hôtel de Cluny in Paris.
5. Alfred. 'La Collection de M. Charles Sauvageot' *L'illustration*, 1858, vol 1: 142.
6. Augé (ed.). *Nouveau Larousse Illustré*, tome VII (s.d. ca 1899), p202.
7. Van Duyse Hermann. *Catalogue des Objets d'Art et Antiquités Composant la Magnifique Collection de Feu M. L. Minard, Architecte à Gand*, (Gand, s.d.), 12.
8. Alfred. (1858), 142.
9. Pomian Krzysztof. *Collectionneurs, Amateurs et Curieux - Paris, Vénise, XVIe-XVII Siècle* (Paris, Gallimard, 1987).
10. Sorel Cécile, 'Les Belles Heures de ma Vie', geciteerd in: NesbitMolly& Françoise Reynaud (1992), 8.
11. Dufaux Ermance. (1883), 18.

Reaction from the audience:

In the 20th century, knowledge is perceived as being the product of academic research while before, objects were believed to carry certain truths within them, so knowledge could be derived from an object. Knowledge has moved away from residing in objects and is now found in academic disciplines and laboratories. Because of this, museums became irrelevant to the creation and dissemination of knowledge and universities are now considered as being the most important sources of knowledge.

'What is fascinating is that far more people are interested in mythology than in history. In addition to that most people now learn their history through cinema. Cleopatra surely looks like Elisabeth Taylor.

The Coliseum is best known from Ridley Scott's Gladiator. In the 19th century most people learned their sense of history from the novel, considering how powerful Walter Scott was.'

Peter Greenaway

THE TALE OF A HOUSE IN SPITALFIELDS. DENNIS SEVERS. 1948 – 1999. ARTIST AND COLLECTOR

David Milne

Curator at Dennis Severs' House, London, UK

Dennis Severs died in London on December 27th 1999. His life an extraordinary one, a far cry from his childhood in California, a life that he at the age of 18 would decide was not for him and London would one day become his home.

He built his first house at the age of four in his back yard and at the same time began collecting things. Old black and white films and, adaptations of Charles Dicken's stories were to fuel his desire for England. He believed a day would come when he would travel past the picture frame and into a warmer, mellower and more romantic light. At the age of eleven one such light, a combination of old varnish and paint, had identified itself to him, it was identified as English.

Dennis first visited England in 1965 and again that following year and five days after graduating high school in 1967 he came to live in England, he was just eighteen and it was love at first sight!

In 1969 Dennis acquired a horse drawn carriage and took people into the back streets of London and used its quiet squares and cobbled mews as a backdrop for his dramatic stories on social history. The carriage, the horses, the sound of hoofs upon cobbled streets worked like a time machine transporting Dennis and his travelers back to a foreign city amongst their present day one. Dennis and his tours became famous, journeys that even today people talk about.

In August 1979 Dennis came east to the city of London and to Spitalfields where he acquired a rundown early 18th century five story red brick Silk Merchant town house at 18 Folgate Street. His intention was not so much to restore it but to bring it back to life. And so armed with a candle, a chamber pot and bedroll he began about seeking the house's soul and once found, he began his work from the inside out creating a collection of atmospheres within the house's 10 chambers that captured a moment of history one just still, never absent and so was born what would become a historic house that would harbor the light and the spirit of the past, a lost age. Dennis worked upon one room at a time, each finished to perfection. And then he created a family to live along side him of Huguenot origin, the Gervais later Jervis.

From the cold dark basement room set amongst the ruins of the medieval Saint Mary's Spital through into the light and warmth of the kitchen, the domain of the house's cook, Rebecca Philpot, into the formal dining chamber of Isaac Gervais and his new wife Elizabeth in 1724, the smoking room of 1730, a detriment of wonderful masculine chaos to the formal exquisitely balanced withdrawing room of Elizabeth 1750 and the masters bedchamber of 1760 then into the regency room of 1830 before heading up into 19th century squalor when the house became the home for tenants, the Lakeaux's, as Spitalfields fell with the birth of the industrial age and the poor began to inhabit the house, every chamber within the house looking as if its inhabitants had just departed. Upon this another layer was to be added, light and then smell and then another, sound, each sense stimulated by this unique and heavy cocktail of his wonderful vision of the past. Such was its success that the house became a time machine lit only by candle light and heated by open fires. It would draw people from across the world all in search of its magic and beauty.

The tours that Dennis gave to small groups of people and only in the winter evenings were to become the stuff of legend. For upon those rare evenings the sights and sounds of the past would inhabit the house and its ten chambers. Guests were welcomed by Dennis, not to a museum but into his home and then taken on a journey into it. The house motto was 'You either see it or you don't'. Those who did were rewarded with a uniquely brilliant piece of theatre. Those who did not by failing to participate by asking practical questions or raising doubts about historical accuracy, would be thrown out.

This became Dennis' art, a type of theatre quite unique and rare. A visit to his house was to take a journey back into the past where you would be the silent witness to a world lost but somehow magically brought to life fleetingly and quite beautifully for the duration of your visit. The tour was extraordinary, it became a famous time machine that drew history and human nature together.

From 1983 Dennis shared 18 Folgate Street with his partner Simon Pettit, the ceramicist (1965-1993). Pettit's work can be seen in the house and within the chimneypiece of Dennis' bedchamber. It is a series of Delft style tiles depicting their fellow friends and neighbours.

Dennis lived in the house until his death in 1999, after which the house passed to the Spitalfields Historic Buildings Trust who agreed to run it as Dennis had intended and those that knew and loved him are keeping his spirit and the house alive.

Q: What are your plans for the next 5 to 10 years? How is this house evolving in time?

A: Our main plan for the future is to bring Dennis Severs back to life. We own recordings with Dennis' views on the house and it would be interesting to integrate these into the visit. We don't offer any information to the visitors, we don't even answer their questions. This adds to the experience we are trying to provide, but the recordings could be used to give a little personal information from Dennis himself.

Q: What can other, more academically presented, historic houses learn from the Dennis Severs house?

A: It is difficult to take elements from the Dennis Severs house and place them into other houses, because not everyone is capable of providing a similar experience. Because of the great amount of rules nowadays, a lot of places use fake objects, like for example fake candles. But fake doesn't give you an indication of life. The goal for these kinds of places should be to give a more genuine and a less fake representation.

'Cinema exists for over a hundred years and there is no way to unlearn the cinematographic experience, whatever you feel about it. Personally I think cinema is brain dead. Cinema died when the remote control was introduced to our houses. From then on it was no longer the director who decided what you would see. The remote control made the choice of the distance possible for the audience. It was also the starting point of the reintroduction of the mighty triad, god the father, god the son and god the holy spirit in the form of mobile phone, cam recorder and laptop. This has given us extraordinary opportunities to reconsider our position now, economically, financially, spiritually, esthetically, etc. but it makes it also possible to be able to visit a culture with enormous profit.'

Peter Greenaway

THEATER OR MUSEUM? PRESENTING THE PAST AT STRAWBERRY HILL IN 1797 AND 2011

Nicholas Smith

House director at the Strawberry Hill Trust, UK

Horace Walpole was in possession of both a unique house and an extraordinary collection which he enjoyed as a private individual and a host, and opened to tourists for their pleasure. His use of the building can be viewed as both theatrical and as creating a museum.

A gentleman, Walpole was in possession of not only a useful sinecure from his family estates and investments but also very much part of 18th century society and as an MP the political life of the nation. In the mid-1740s, in his twenties, Walpole sought summer quarters outside of town, finding in 1747 a building including river frontage on the edge of Twickenham, known locally as Chopped Straw Hall.

Walpole was delighted to see in the original deeds that the area was referred to as 'Strawberry Hill Shot' and decided on purchasing the cottages in 1748, christening them Strawberry Hill in the process. He then set about Gothicising the cottages and extending their rooms before building on to the house in an apparently unplanned pattern over the next twenty years.

The building that Walpole constructed set in train a further two centuries of development on the site in the gothic style. His 19th century successor, Frances Waldegrave commissioned Augustus Pugin to design a ballroom, billiard room and additional accommodation for guests at her lavish parties. During the 20th century, in the ownership of St Mary's University College, the site saw another spurt of building overseen by Sir Albert Richardson including the construction of a vast chapel of cathedral proportions for the use of the predominantly Catholic institution.

With Walpole's extraordinary collection sold by Frances Waldegrave and her second husband and a building on the verge of collapse the Strawberry Hill Trust faced a unique set of circumstances on signing a lease with St Mary's in 2007. Not only did the fabric of the building need to be saved but the decision was taken to restore the principal rooms of the house to their ap-

pearance in the 1790s as building work at Strawberry Hill ceased.

In doing so the Trust's architects at Inskip + Jenkins were able to draw on three major sources of evidence; Walpole's extensive documentation of the work that took place, the watercolours and drawings he commissioned from a variety of skilled artists, and most satisfyingly the discovery of physical evidence within the building to confirm the 18th century documentation.

The most immediate example of this approach to restoration is apparent to visitors as soon as they arrive at Strawberry Hill in the gleaming white rendered and lime-washed surface of the house. Even in the more restricted modern landscape the building continues to make a series of statements about Horace Walpole and his approach to living.

Was this most striking of buildings constructed by a theatrical set designer or a museum maker? There's evidence for each approach, both in the house itself and in Walpole's own letters and accounts of living at Strawberry Hill. Walpole to some extent appears to have kept a museum for his own enjoyment, deriving great pleasure from the arrangement and care of objects, while wishing his friends and tourists arriving at the house to enjoy a genuinely engaging experience during their visit.

Given the astonishing appearance of the house it is worth beginning by considering the theatrical aspects. The visitor approaching the house from Waldegrave Road finds a narrow alleyway between a selection of what initially appear to be separate buildings, of different eras, randomly extended to join each other.

Venturing to the far side of the site to examine the gardens they would be forgiven for thinking they look back on a different house altogether with the Great Cloister and Gallery above forming a less medieval, more classical appearance of well-ordered windows, columns, and good symmetry.

The deliberate confusion of eras continues as the visitor arrives through the door at the far end of the narrow front alley. Immediately they are thrust into darkness as the entrance hall features a very low ceiling and light through only two narrow windows of painted glass either side of the door.

By contrast the staircase to their left is bathed during the daytime in bright light from four large quatrefoils at the very top of the building. This is an early introduction to the deliberately dramatic and emotional journey around the house which Walpole continued to refine in part by viewing the reaction of guests and tourists to the various spaces. As visitors ascend the stairs they are surrounded by extremely detailed fictive decoration in part inspired by Worcester Cathedral and painted for Walpole by theatrical set designers.

The first floor landing allows the visitor to look upwards to a mezzanine level containing the armoury, and to view the windows in the ceiling clearly for the first time. The 18th century display of arms was set up by Walpole in various niches designed particularly for their objects including a glorious suit of armour holding a pike which protruded dizzily into the peak of the roof.

The use of contrasting light and dark continues through the building and especially through the rooms that formed the core of Chopped Straw Hall. Decorated in a deliberately austere manner with scrubbed timber floorboards and walls in relatively muted colours the strong impression is given, as from the entrance court, of a monastic building that has been reconfigured as a house.

The most dramatic change in light takes place in the Trunk Ceiled Passage, the corridor linking Chopped Straw Hall to Walpole's State Apartment. Painted in dark grey with only the faintest of light filtering through a window at the far end the journeying visitor eventually finds the handle for the door leading into the south-facing Gallery, full of mirrors and gold leaf and easily the brightest room in the building.

Adjacent to the Gallery, Walpole's Tribune provided him with another opportunity to experiment with the presentation of a room with the use of light. With the sash shutters closed, the only natural light is provided by a star of yellow stained glass in the ceiling which lends a very dark but cosy feel to the space, consistent with Walpole's concept of *Gloomth*. With the shutters open, a great deal of natural light can flood in, while another sash containing scenes painted on glass could also be pulled down to provide a third way of lighting the space.

As a writer and art critic Walpole was also involved in telling stories within the theatrical spaces he created. Next to the mezzanine of the armoury visitors can walk through to view the Library, the ceiling of which is lavishly decorated to Walpole's own design, incorporating the Walpole arms and those of associated families with images of knights in battle and the image, repeated throughout the building, of a Saracen's severed head signifying loyal service in the Crusades.

On the second floor he kept his bedchamber in which he claimed to have awoken at night and walked out to the staircase to find a giant mailed fist floating in mid-air, supposedly inspiring his novel *The Castle of Otranto* in which many of the rooms are clearly based on those at Strawberry Hill. Walpole created and decorated a set, filled it with objects, and then used it in order to tell stories.

Beyond writing stories and telling them with the aid of the house Walpole seemed to want to involve himself within its imagined history. From declaring that in constructing Strawberry Hill he would 'build the castle of my ancestors' to the letter to his friend George Montagu, Walpole appeared to desire to associate himself with the glorious history he was writing for his building:

'I have kings and queens, I hear, in my neighbourhood, but this is no royal foundation. Adieu! Your poor beadsman THE ABBOT OF STRAWBERRY' 18.vi.1764

Not only would Walpole describe himself as an historical figure (or at least the figure he might expect to find living in Strawberry Hill) he would go to some lengths on occasion to present himself as one. Describing, again to Montagu, how he decided to greet some guests who had travelled from France to see the house:

'At the gates of the castle I received them dressed in the cravat of Gibbons's carving, and a pair of gloves embroidered up to the elbows that had belonged to James I.' 21.v.1763

Whether or not the guests were convinced that this was the dress of the typical English gentlemen, at one point in their tour many visitors were gratified to find that a very gentlemanly surprise had been laid on for their amusement. Walpole's printing press was not only used to publish his writings and those of friends but additionally to provide a theatrical moment on a tour of the outbuildings. Again to Montagu:

'As the French ladies had never seen a printing house, I carried them into mine; they found something ready set, and desiring to see what it was, it proved as follows;'

The text, entitled *The Press Speaks for Madame de Boufflers*, was a highly complimentary poem, praising the guest as 'graceful fair' with a 'polish'd accent'.

Alongside his gentlemanly interest in the printing press Walpole was also contributing to other scientific and social endeavours of the time, including as a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and a fellow of the Royal Society. Most importantly his status as a founding Trustee of the British Museum allows us insight to his role as a museum-maker at Strawberry Hill. Speaking of his role in looking after Hans Sloane's extraordinary collection Walpole commented that it was '*embryos and cockleshells*' and perhaps embarrassed by the news told Horace Mann '*...do be assured that there never was so dull a place as London.*'

But although he may not have valued Sloane's collection Walpole was an excellent choice of Trustee given the care and attention he paid to his own possessions. Throughout Strawberry Hill he created a variety of cupboards and closets to look after his objects, paying attention to the use of natural light in useful corners of the building to enhance their display. His Small Closet and Glazed Closet in the state apartment are particularly excellent examples.

Walpole's objects also influenced his architectural decisions. The gilded fretwork and mirror glass in the gallery was cut size ready to exhibit deliberately chosen portraits, while in the Great North Bedchamber the fireplace contains labels for a portrait miniature of Anne of Bretagne and a bust of Frances II.

In the Tribune during the restoration of the house the Trust has found handwritten labels on the walls, indicating which painting was to hang in which spot. Ensuring that the house was properly displayed by the housekeeper on his return at Easter, with the objects either coming out of store or returning ahead of their owner, was clearly a very important activity for Walpole and his domestic staff.

While considering the theatrical nature of Strawberry Hill this paper has touched on Walpole's desire to achieve emotional responses in tourists. Additionally the housekeeper conducting the tour would very likely have been briefed in advance by her master on the interests of those visiting. In addition to handwritten notes explaining how the building should be shown, Walpole would provide additional suggestions of pictures or objects particular visitors might wish to see given their ancestry or social standing.

But no matter how important the visitor was they were also subject to a strict set of rules that modern visitors to houses would recognise as a 'timed-ticket system', controlling numbers to not only enable Walpole's enjoyment of enjoyment of his own house, but also to ensure it was

shown in the way in which he intended. On prior application visitors were issued tickets enabling them to bring up to three others (but no children) between twelve and three on the stated date. If visitors did not comply with these rules they would be refused entry.

Despite these best efforts to control access visitors did sometime manage to upset Walpole. The worry of all museum curators is damage to the objects and Walpole was no exception. Writing to Mary Berry in June 1791, he exclaims:

‘Two companies have been to see my house last week, and one of the parties, as vulgar people always see with the ends of their fingers, had broken off the end of my invaluable eagle’s bill, and to conceal their mischief has pocketed the piece...’

‘...It almost provokes me to shut up my house, when obliging begets injury!’

Thankfully Walpole’s friend Anne Damer (acting in the role of conservator to his curator) made a false beak for the eagle with wax ‘so he can once again receive company’!

It would be unfair for a modern commentator to expect an 18th century gentleman seeking a comfortable home to have instead made a conscious decision to create a theatre or museum instead. But Strawberry Hill contains elements of both, and perhaps more of both than its contemporaries or neighbours along the Thames. From the deliberate decision to create a journey of moods through the building to the story-telling that took place within it is undeniable that a sense of theatre pervades the house. Meanwhile, as the abode of an antiquarian, it’s not surprising that we should recognise the building as the forerunner of our own historic house museums where we share his concerns of allowing access while minimising damage. Walpole took joy from both creating the building and placing his objects within it – making Strawberry Hill both a theatre and museum, a combination we should take care to continue to balance in the future.

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Horace Walpole's Correspondence 01 Sept. 2011 <http://www.library.yale.edu/hwcorrespondence>

Q: What will be the approach of the staff towards the recently completed restorations and new decoration of Strawberry Hill? Will it acquire a natural patina or will it be kept 'as new' throughout the next decades?

A: *Given the fact that these restorations are a lifetime's work to a lot of people, enabling the interior to acquire a natural patina would actually be a waste. Although this could be a lesson in letting go of personal projects, it would be difficult, even shocking to some, to see the restorations gain a patina.*

*'Everything man makes has to be designed. It has
to be designed in relation to the human figure, to
witness the relationship of a culture to the human
body.'*

Peter Greenaway

LECTURES AND DISCUSSION PAPERS

REINVENTING THE PAST: INTANGIBLE
ASPECTS

Picturesque Belgium

AUTHENTIC REPLICA VILLAGE



YOU GET ALL THESE BUILDINGS IN BEAUTIFUL COLOR
PLUS A COBBLESTONE STREET PLAN
CUT OUT AND SCORED FOR YOU, ALL YOU DO IS FOLD AND GLUE

Cover of a box of cardboard cutouts of the Belgian Village in New York in 1964 (private collection of Marc Jacobs, Brugge)

DESTROY AFTER USE.

CONSTRUCTING TEMPORARY PASTS FOR PROFIT: 'HISTORIC HOUSES' IN OLD AND GAY BELGIUMS

Marc Jacobs

Director of FARO. Flemish Interface Centre for Cultural Heritage and professor at Vrije
Universiteit Brussel.

1789 / 1989: patrimoine / heritage and historicity regimes

In the contemporary western European heritage (studies) paradigm, an official story line or genealogy has crystallized out that takes two years as crucial milestones: '1789' and '1989'. This corresponds with milestones adopted by the French model of historicity regimes inspired by Reinhart Koselleck and developed by François Hartog.¹ Hartog considers '1789' as the pivotal point between the old and the modern regimes of historicity and '1989' (the crumbling of the Berlin Wall and the implosion of the Soviet Empire) as the beginning of a newer regime of historicity: "*Historia magistra presented history, or supposedly did so, from the point of view of the past. On the contrary, in the modern regime, history was written, teleologically, from the point of view of the future. Presentism implies that the point of view is explicitly and only that of the present*".² Hartog interprets the rapid growth of heritagization and expansion of the semantic field of the concept of heritage in the 1990s and 2000s as signs of the presentist regime of historicity. Chris Lorenz offers a stimulating reflection in a chapter called "Picking up pieces of the past under the 'presentist' regime of historicity". Among the elements that have gained importance, Lorenz mentions the proliferation of the interactive or experience museum and new forms of digitalized and interactive virtual history.³

In a discussion about the post-1989 historicity regime, Hartog emphasizes that the "museified gaze is thus directed towards that which surrounds us.(...) The destruction of the Berlin Wall, followed

by its instantaneous museification is a good example, with, also just as quickly, its merchandising. Pieces of the wall were immediately available for sale, duly stamped Original Berlin Mauer.”⁴ But what if something similar happened in 1789? Next to the important mainstream discourses about ‘public goods’ for citizens, collective access, national heritage and heritage communities, and the ‘public domain’ paradigm, there is a secondary storyline to be explored: ‘for profit’ approaches. Some of them function in a ‘souvenir’-mode and take the form of movable commodities. Others function in a peculiar ‘destroy after use’-mode, cashing in on the exploitation of elixirs of constructed temporary pasts. What can the public and amateur cultural heritage sector (operating not for quick profit, but for sustainable development and ethical care) learn from this, combining the available pieces in the presentist historicity regime?

The fall and rise of the Bastilles

The storming and subsequent fall of the Bastille in Paris, on July 14, 1789, has evolved (and been promoted) into a key symbolic ‘starting’ event of the French Revolution. In 21st-century France, ‘le quatorze juillet’ still is a public holiday, the ‘Fête de la Fédération’, also known as Bastille Day in English. The disappearance of the (medieval fortress turned into a) prison was useful to symbolize and demarcate the destruction of the *Ancien Régime* in France. A wave of destructions and attacks (‘vandalism’) followed, in castles, cathedrals, churches and many other buildings. Numerous objects with heraldic symbols of the nobility and the Catholic Church were destroyed, stolen or damaged.⁵ This tabula rasa-campaign triggered a counter reaction against ‘vandalism’, that partly generated the heritage cultivation, selection and protection movement that conquered Europe the next two centuries. Abbé Gregoire proclaimed that: “le respect public entoure particulièrement les objets nationaux qui, n’étant à personne, sont la propriété de tous (...) Tous les monuments de sciences et d’arts sont recommandés à la surveillance de tous les bons citoyens”. It was an episode of what Jean-Michel Leniaud called the phase of ‘collective appropriation’.⁶ In the post-1789 revolutionary period, the citizens also were granted access to public libraries, state archives and museums. This interpretation of ‘patrimoine’ is also connected to the basic principles of (early modern) ‘*prudentialia*’ or sustainable development : future generations should also be able to enjoy the values of what is transmitted and preserved. It goes beyond classic (Roman Law) notions of property (the right to use, or even abuse and destroy), and instead refers to common or public goods. In the 19th and 20th century, the idea of monuments was cultivated and different interventions and practices selection, safeguarding or restauration were applied. The case of heritage brokers like Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879) in France can serve as a reminder *pars pro toto* that actions, policies and visions mattered but also changed.

In the 21st century, partly due to the heritagization boom, attempts are being made to construct a historiography or genealogy that makes sense for the contemporary practices on a global scale. The aforementioned storylines featuring the passage of the French *Ancien Régime* to newer regimes or for instance the evolution of the UNESCO heritage paradigms partly offer milestones and leverage points in these attempts of a new synthesis.⁷ But there are curious bypaths or sidelines, right from the start ; stories of commodification and commercialisation, ... that are more difficult to fit in to the emerging picture(s). What happened the day(s) after July 14th, 1789? A huge and immovable construction like the Bastille did not just vanish into thin air overnight. Just like approaches of heritage work and practices, this problem requires a repertoire of questions like the one Bertolt Brecht explored in his famous poem *Questions from a worker who reads* (1935): “Who built Thebes of the seven gates? In the books you will find the names of kings.

Did the kings haul up the lumps of rock? And Babylon, many times demolished. Who raised it up so many times?” So, who actually demolished the Bastille (or Babylon for that matter)? Building and demolition contractor Pierre-François Palloy (1755-1835) secured the contract to make that happen. More than 1000 workers carried out the job in a few months. Palloy considered it as his patriotic duty to immortalize the memory of the prison and the destruction of the Bastille as a reminder of the birth of revolutionary France. *En passant*, the entrepreneur also tried to make a profit and/or to promote himself. He harvested the stones, iron chains and other objects as ‘patriotic relics’. A program of paid guided tours on the demolition site, skeletons still in place, was offered. Palloy cultivated the symbol of the Bastille by arranging celebrations and re-enactments of the anniversaries of the fall. He sold engravings, booklets and souvenirs made from the stones of the building. Dozens of stone blocks were transformed in miniature Bastilles and sent to important institutions. Plaster Bastilles were reproduced and multiplied on a larger scale and sold by the Paris businessman Pommay and later by Palloy. Miniature Bastilles were distributed throughout the country. Special certificates were made, stating “*je certifie que cette pièce vient de la Bastille*” signed “*Palloy patriote*”.⁸ Two centuries later, after the Fall of the Berlin Wall, as François Hartog underlined, commercial transaction could be documented, tapping in to the commercial potential of the work of remembering and forgetting, erasing, demolishing and tearing down. One of the most striking examples is offered, in 2012, on a website about what is cynically (or commercially) called ‘The Berlin Wall Freedom Expedition’: <http://www.berlin-wall.net>.

Imagine a project proposal to rebuild (a soft, no shooting version of) the Berlin Wall today, just for cashing in on nostalgia and *Ostalgie*, making money by recreating the bad old days of split city. Such a project might be considered if the construction would be limited in time and space (e.g. with an American and DDR neighbourhood, accessible by paying a fee), rebuilding it in wood, plaster and staff, just for six months, e.g. at the occasion of a future World’s Fair in Berlin. It might make a profit (if a virtual reality construction would not be a more ‘realistic’ proposal by then). One of the powers of attraction and seduction of the formula of a World’s Fair is that it occupies a specific space for a limited period in time (‘now or never’) and that (most of) the buildings are deconstructed or simply demolished after the end of the Exhibition. Those powers are apparently squared if existing or disappeared ‘real’ historic buildings are (re) constructed in the margin of that temporary fairground, used for recreation and destined to be destroyed after use.

1889 was the year of the first Centenary.⁹ It was also the year of a World’s Fair in Paris. At that occasion, the Bastille was recreated on a smaller scale in the city’s Rue Suffren. A former student of Viollet-le-Duc, Eugène Colibert (1832-1900), coordinated the project. The ‘old Bastille’ was not used as a prison, but as a place that could be visited after paying an entrance fee, to enjoy banquets or performances. It was a huge success, also commercially, during the two years of its existence. Colibert and his colleagues tried to capitalise on the popularity of the 1889 Bastille exhibit by setting up a ‘Paris in 1400’ project, a ‘historical and archeological reconstitution of the Cour des Miracles’ at the 1900 Paris World’s Fair.¹⁰

The material used for many of these temporary constructions was ‘staff’: a mix of powdered plaster of Paris, cement, glycerin, and dextrin, sometimes strengthened with jute or hemp, mixed with water and then cast in moulds. It was an innovative technique that spread in the second half of the 19th century: it was in particular used for buildings at the world’s fairs. Staff

is very flexible and can be shaped, painted or adapted to copy parts of buildings and making them appear convincing enough from a distance, ideal for a temporary copy or reconstruction of historic houses.

1900

One of the most famous new temporary old complexes in staff and other materials was set up at the *Exposition Universelle* in 1900 in Paris. This turn-of-a-century edition was, on the one hand, a celebration of modernity, industry, electricity, science and *Belle Époque* hope for the future. Yet, on the other hand, one of its most successful attractions was a picturesque model city imagined by Albert Robida and built along the Seine: *Le Vieux Paris*. A top location, 6000 square meters running along the Seine from Trocadéro to the Alma Bridge, was reserved to construct old Paris, echoing or showing historic houses and churches destroyed by the Haussmann campaign a few decades or by other forces centuries before. After paying admission, visitors could visit three neighbourhoods: a fifteenth-century section of Quartier des Écoles, a mixed area with medieval, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century constructions and a Central Market of the 'eighteenth century'. In a 'fifteenth-century' house like 'Au Grand Coq', the seventeenth-century newspaper editor Théophraste Renaudot was celebrated. There the visitor could buy *La Gazette du Vieux Paris*, with stories about French history and about events taking place in 1900. Robida had a clear strategy, vision and plan: "It was never a question, of course, of being purely and severely archeological, of sacrificing everything for a momentary exactness (...) Buildings, like living organisms, change and transform across the ages. It was necessary above all to be living, to make choices and to take, here and there, the most curious bits of vanished monuments, of homes of particular interest or famous for historical reasons, and to make an amalgam, a single work that would be picturesque for the eye, teeming with enough life and movement to represent truthfully curious and characteristic aspects of life in the past".¹¹ A stream of publications, texts, guidebooks, drawings, photographs multiplied the effect.

Elisabeth Emery emphasized that on the one hand it was a successful enterprise profiting from nostalgia, enhanced popular culture and aestheticized everyday life in the past and the present, and medievalism. On the other hand Robida was attempting "to redress his contemporaries' neglect of their shared architectural and literary heritage (...) Although Robida's display invited visitors to relive the past, *Le Vieux Paris* really championed the present--it drew attention to Paris in 1900. Robida telescoped 700 years of history, compacting it in the narrow passage along the *Quai de Billy* (...) The dilapidated buildings still standing in 1900 lost their 'true' history as they were conflated with the re-constructed models of Robida's exhibit. Yet the picturesque and entertaining consumer spectacle nonetheless served a valuable function. The new site of memory, 'Le Vieux Paris', brought needed attention to the 'milieux de memoire', the old neighbourhoods of Paris where life continued as it had for centuries."¹²

Emery was right to underscore the importance of the enterprise and she claimed that it was a truly original innovation: "In envisaging the display, the Fair's organizers sought no more than to create a parallel to the 'Old Brussels' attraction created in 1897, a hugely successful commercial enterprise and a decorative foil to the modern inventions of the Exposition. Yet, thanks to Albert Robida, it went much further. He painstakingly constructed the exhibit to help contemporaries enjoy themselves while learning about the architectural heritage they had previously taken for granted. First of all, unlike earlier 'recreated cities' of World's Fairs in Antwerp, Brussels, Stockholm, Rouen or Geneva, in which characters stood in front of painted facades and sold their wares, *Le Vieux Paris* included real wooden and stone buildings inhabitable from the ground floor up."¹³

'Old Belgium' (cities, Flanders, ...) and gay Belgians in Universal or International (World's) Fairs

The key innovation of the formula has in fact to be attributed to the performance (in many senses of the word) of an elite network in Antwerp in 1894. A group of intellectuals, artists, the city council and other politicians, and shop keepers and entrepreneurs in the booming harbour of Antwerp not only decided to use the World's Fair in their city in 1894 as an occasion to recreate 'golden age', 16th-century 'Antwerp' (combined with historic houses and buildings from other places and periods) in staff, stones and wood. A selective core of key actors decided to move from their (real) houses in the city, rent a temporary fake house or workshop and go, work and live in *Veille Anvers/Oud Antwerpen*, for several months.¹⁴ Key figure was Frans Van Kuyck, artist, politician – he was alderman of fine arts in Antwerp between 1895 and 1915, cultural broker, famous for facilitating museum, theatre or imported invented traditions like Mother's day.¹⁵ As one of the protagonists of the team, he took responsibility for drawing and designing historic houses, interiors, the clothing and other paraphernalia. Fascinating eye-witness accounts but also photographs, letters, news paper reports, etc. of this historical experience are available. I will just mention a very rich description by playwright Gustaaf de Lattin as a *pars pro toto* for the experiment.¹⁶ It boosted the awareness for several forms of cultural phenomena we now call 'heritage' ranging from monuments and historic houses to forms of intangible culture like the use of language, storytelling, parades and puppetry. Some of the houses were rebuilt afterwards, outside the city (in a village called 'Buitenland: Foreign Country') or in the city. One of the most striking and puzzling examples is the historic house Museum Mayer van den Bergh (<http://www.museummayervandenbergh.be>), with a reconstructed façade of one of the Old Antwerp houses at the fair and rebuilt as annex to the private home of the art collectors: today one the important museums for art history in Antwerp.

Old historical reconstructions, villages or neighbourhoods, accompanied all the following world exhibitions in Belgium. This was for instance in Brussels in 1897 ('*Bruxelles-Kermesse*'), in Liège in 1905 ('*Vieux-Liège*'), in Brussels in 1910 ('*Brussel-Kermesse*'), in Ghent in 1913 ('*Vieille*' or '*Ancienne Flandre/ Oud-Vlaanderen*'), in Antwerp (1930 : '*Oud-België*'), in Brussels 1935 ('*Oud Brussel*') and in Brussels in 1958 ('*Vrolijk België/Belgique Joyeuse*'/*Gay Belgium*).¹⁷ Drinking, eating, dancing, making and enjoying handicrafts and using new temporary authentic fake old constructions that were copies of still existing or demolished buildings, ... with effects on the attitudes on the projects of reconstruction and policy about monuments: a storyline has to be explored to yield a richer approach of heritage.¹⁸ But also at the 'Century of Progress' World's Fair in Chicago in 1933 and 1934, the Belgian village was a success. A description of this temporary 'Belgian Village' in the USA speaks volumes about the ambiguous and contradictory discourses and constructions that characterized these projects: "*This consists of 30 buildings, exact reproductions of buildings found in Brussels or Antwerp, the same stone and brick pavements, everywhere a strictly Belgian atmosphere prevails. Complete with faithful reproductions of the gate of Ostend, the old French-Gothic church of St. Nicholas, a city gate from medieval Bruges, and Belgian homes made from plaster casts of the real thing, the Belgian Village was a large and impressive exhibit (...). And on the cobbled streets, Belgian dogs could be spotted pulling milk carts*".¹⁹ The problematic case of the Belgian Village at the 1964-1965 fair in New York deserves a book. The illustration on page 56, showing the cover of a do-it-yourself-bricolage-kit for building a cardboard miniature version of an 'authentic replica' of a Belgian village in plaster and staff lets us understand in one image the complexity and ambiguity of what we examine here. One of the world-famous legacies of that 1964-1965 fair on Flushing Meadows is probably the 'Bel-Gem' or Belgian Waffle. Much less

successful was the 'Picturesque Belgium'-project, that failed and was restarted several times. The architectural part of the project was partly coordinated by Alphonse de Rijdt, one of the architects involved in the 'Gay Belgium'-endeavour of 1958 in Brussels and in the pre-war Chicago version of the Belgian Village. In New York, the 'Belgian' village opened too late and the promoter, Robert Straile, was prepared to go far in negotiating about what might fit in to the concept of 'Belgian'. The project proposed by Hugh Hefner to set up a Playboy Club in the reconstructed town hall of Damme and to let bunnies dress up (to strip) in Flemish costumes à la Breughel was aborted by the general management of the fair.²⁰ *Trop* is too much.

Seam²

The format of constructing a zone with usable or temporarily inhabitable (fake) historic houses and (work)shops from different eras (and copied from real existing or disappeared dwellings and constructions in cities and villages on Belgian territory) in the margin of world's fairs was cultivated in Belgium during the *Belle Époque* and then practiced in Belgium and the United States until the 1960s. Reduced but 'exact' copies in staff were built in separate spaces, accessible by paying a fee, next to the world exhibitions. Why were most of them so successful?

Clues are provided by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett in recent reflections about intangible cultural heritage: "While the categories of tangible and intangible heritage distinguish things from events (and from knowledge, skills, and values), even things are events. (...) A thing is a slow event." The perception of change is a function of the relationship between the actual rate of change and "the windows of our awareness." Things are events, not inert or deteriorating substance, in other senses as well. A thing can be an 'affecting presence,' ...²¹ The different experiences in that spirit allow to explain the different ways the intangible dimension can be conceptualized, varying from stories and practices attached to build heritage (or the other way around) to the recent safeguarding intangible cultural heritage paradigm, according to the 2003 UNESCO convention. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett again: "This is true of much that is considered intangible heritage, namely performances of all kinds. On the contrary, it could be said that because they cannot be collected, in the way that objects can be collected, because they cannot be preserved, in the way that a house can be preserved, meals and stories and songs have to be done—they have to be performed—over and over again.(...) Ephemerality gives to things their processual and eventful character, while evanescence is the enabling condition for performing over and over again, which is itself the enabling condition for the maintenance, transmission, and reproduction of embodied knowledge. The principle: use it or lose it."

In order to understand why it not only seemed to make sense, but actually generated profits and popular enthusiasm, to reconstruct old historic houses in exact detail for only six months, use and then to destroy them, all this in the context of a World's Fair, it is useful to think these Fairs but also constructing these fake authentic villages and neighbourhoods, as big and complex rites of passage. It was a special variety of liminality (Victor Turner) and precisely this in-between-and-between zone was ideal to communicate profound messages about how a society deals with future, present and past and what role constructs play and what roles can be played in those constructions. In the future-oriented historicity regime of the 19th and 20th century, these Belgian villages as slow but gay and festive events short-circuited the usual monumental paradigms. In another comment by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, we find another important ingredient in the secret formula of success: "What provokes anxiety or delight is our ability to recognize ourselves in what is presented and our uncertainty about the rest - that is, the visibility of

the seam between the familiar and the unfamiliar, our heightened sense of the distinct components in the mix, and our inability to experience the coalescence as such".²² The Antwerp time-space elixir or "Picturesque Belgium"-format worked in the modern historicity regime: would it still work or would this formula work better than ever work in the presentist historicity regime? Let us keep a broad perspective while constructing an interesting genealogy for critical heritage studies and practices.

Endnotes:

1. François Hartog, 'Temps et histoire. Comment écrire l'histoire de France?', in: *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 50, 1995, nr. 6, 1219-1236 & François Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité. Présentisme et expériences du temps*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 2003. See Marc Jacobs, "Zonder twijfel dat waarschijnlijk... Ambachtelijke geschiedenissen in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden aan het einde van het 'Oude Regime'", in: Catharina Lis & Hugo Soly (ed.), *Werelden van verschil. Ambachtsgilden in de Lage Landen*, Brussel, VUBPress, 1997, 243 - 292.
2. Quoted and further developed in Chris Lorenz, 'Unstuck in time. Or: the sudden presence of the past', in: Karin Tilmans, Frank van Vree & Jay Winter (eds.), *Performing the past. Memory, History and Identity in Modern Europe*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2010, 67-102, 82
3. Lorenz, Unstuck, 88.
4. François Hartog, 'Time and Heritage', in: *Museum International*, 57, 2005, 7-18, 16.
5. Marc Jacobs, 'La sottise héraldique'? Wapenschilden, 'hulp'- en technowetenschap. in: André Vandewalle (ed.), *Te Wapen! Heraldiek, teken van gezag en identiteit*, Brugge, Stadsbestuur Brugge, 2004, 9-27.
6. See Jean-Michel Leniaud, *Les archipels du passé. Le patrimoine et son histoire*, Paris, Fayard, 2002, 85-107.
7. One of the most recent proposals for a synthesis is Rodney Harrison, *Heritage. Critical Approaches*, London & New York, Routledge, 2013. It offers very interesting perspectives but it is obvious that it should be combined and supplemented with the old and recent discussions developments in other languages than English.
8. Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink & Rolf Reichardt, *The Bastille. A History of A Symbol of Despotism and Freedom*, Durham & London, Duke University Press, 1997, 118-147.
9. For a discussion of the heated political debates about the Bastille myth and/or symbolism in the 1880s, see Lüsebrink & Reichardt, *Bastille*, 231-233 and Beat Wyss, *Bilder von der Globalisierung. Die Weltausstellung von Paris 1889*, Berlin, Insel Verlag, 2010, 58-73.
10. Elizabeth Emery & Laura Morowitz, *Consuming the Past. The Medieval Revival in fin-de-siècle France*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2003, 172-175.
11. Emery & Morowitz, *Consuming*, 191-208, quote 194.
12. Elizabeth Emery, 'Protecting the Past. Albert Robida and the Vieux Paris Exhibit at the 1900 World's Fair', in: *Journal of European Studies*, 35, nr. 1, 2005, 65-68.
13. Emery & Morowitz, *Consuming*, 199-200 and note 818.
14. See Marnix Beyen, 'De massa en het volk. De culturele en maatschappelijke context van de volkskunde in de lange twintigste eeuw', in: Bert De Munck & Werner Van Hoof (ed.), *De poppen aan het dansen. Honderd jaar Antwerps volkskundemuseum. Nieuwe visies op erfgoed en musea*, Nijmegen, Uitgeverij Vantilt, 2007, 15-33 or Pieter Uyttenhove, *Stadland België. Hoofdstukken uit de geschiedenis van de stedenbouw*, Gent, A&S/books, 2011.

15. Marc Jacobs, 'Moederdagen. Rijpe vruchten van personencultus, lobbywerk en PPS', in: *Mores. Tijdschrift voor volkscultuur in Vlaanderen*, 4, 2003, nr. 2, 12-25 and Marlies Geldof, *Moeder waarom vieren wij? Moederdag in Vlaanderen (1913-1939)*, Gent, 2007 (MA dissertation in history).
16. Gustaaf De Lattin, *Herinneringen aan het Tooneel in open lucht. Oud-Antwerpen (tentoonstelling 1894)*, Antwerpen, Cl. Thibaut, 1903
17. See for instance Helena Plomteux, *Romantische oude steden. De historische reconstructies op de Belgische Wereldtentoonstellingen voor de Eerste Wereldoorlog*, Leuven, 2002 (MA dissertation in history); André Capiteyn, *Gent in weelde herboren. Wereldtentoonstelling 1913*, Gent, Stadsarchief, 1988; Annick Lesage, *Expo '58. Het wonderlijke feest van de fifties*, Antwerpen, Standaard, 2008, 219-237.
18. See for instance "Toen er voor het eerst sprake was alhier een internationale tentoonstelling te houden, besloot men dat de kern daarvan het oude Gent moest zijn – geen Gent van plaaster, naar het voorbeeld van de grote internationale exposities der laatste jaren, maar een echt oud Gent van steen en baksteen, als onverwoestbare getuige van wat onze stad in het verleden is geweest. Vanaf dat moment maakte een ware restauratiekoorts zich van ons meester." (statement by Pierre Verhaegen, Gentse Maatschappij voor Geschied- en Oudheidkunde, 15/3/1911, quoted in Capiteyn, Gent, 57)
19. See the different villages on the Midway, including the Belgian Village GLEISTEN (S.), *Chicago's 1933-34 World's Fair A Century of Progress in Vintage Postcards*, Chicago, Arcadia, 2002, passim and quote 108.
20. Lawrence Samuel, *The End of the Innocence. The 1964-1965 New York World's Fair*, New York, Syracuse University Press, 2007, 44-45.
21. http://www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/web/heritage_MI.pdf, "Intangible heritage as Metacultural production" and other recent contributions on: <http://www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/web>
22. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'Foreword', in: Lucy Long (ed.), *Culinary tourism*, Lexington, The University of Kentucky, 2004, xi-xiv, xii

'The method of „living history“ is a difficult one for all kinds of practical reasons, but it is also hard to perpetually „believe in“ when one is confronted with it. In La Vereria Reale the public was first introduced to a series of characters who lived or worked in the place. When you walked through the museum you kept meeting these characters. The techniques we use give a historical sense of place, a sense of genius loci based upon a huge amount of research relevant to these places and has therefore a lot of attraction for living museums.'

Peter Greenaway

EXPOSING A HISTORICAL HOUSE. A STORY FOR THE VESSELS OF TALBOT HOUSE, POPERINGE

Dries Chaerle

Staff member of Talbot House, Poperinge, Belgium

In December 1915, in the midst of the Great War in Flanders, a wealthy private House in the town of Poperinge, was taken over by the British Army to establish a soldiers' recreation Club. After a tour of duty in the trenches near Ypres (some nine or ten miles away) troops found their way into the Poperinge area for a period of rest. Spare time was spent in the town, mainly with beer, wine and women – and the Club wanted to offer a more home-like alternative to these. More than half a million men walked through the place to enjoy the garden, the piano and the library, to sit down for a while in the ground floor canteen or to climb the stairs into the attic where the Reverend Clayton (who ran the Club) had established his chapel. The presence of these thousands of men at the house was and is the foundation of what the Historical House Talbot House is today: 'they walked this ground.'

Nevertheless, it is a very specific post-war evolution that eventually decided upon the actual re-opening of Talbot House. After the war, veterans who had known the Soldiers' Club wanted the place to be preserved. Only in 1929 the old house was bought and got a new designation as a guest-house for pilgrims visiting Flanders' Fields. The house somehow had (and still has) to absorb this re-designation: bedrooms were installed – and have been refurbished over and over again –, sanitary facilities were built and furniture updated. As this post-war function still is an ongoing business, Talbot House today does not appear as a Historical House in the usual way of 'a place that is a look-alike or a copy of itself.' Things have changed in the house, and it is not at all something like a time machine that takes visitors back in history. Visitors expecting to find a 'frozen' wartime place must be disappointed by that – and they sometimes are.

If the B&B function seems to have messed up the wartime appearance of the house, there are two rooms in which a historical look-alike has been rebuilt. One is the Chaplain's room, furnished almost like a typical writer's house. The other one is the attic, where the original chapel was. In the attic some original items and objects have been embedded in an atmospheric reconstruction – with hangings and carpets that try and evoke times definitely gone by. This, one should think, should meet the expectations of visitors in search of a tangible past. I do

remember however an incident, that radicalises the problem of the exposure of Talbot House as a historical place.

One day I was on the second floor landing when a few people turned up. It was clear enough that climbing that high had been a job of its own for them. So they sat down and took some breath, noticing that there was yet another flight of stairs to go, a really steep ladder. It was decided to send forward the fittest member of the party to go and explore the final floor. And up he went, taking some 4 or 5 steps – just until his head went over the top. The others asked: ‘What’s it all about up there?’ – ‘Seems to be the chapel up here’ – ‘Oh, and? Is it worth the effort?’ – ‘Uh, well, it’s a chapel.’ And then the scout descended, the little party disappeared, and I was left alone – with one and only one question: how for God’s sake is this possible ?

At first I thought that they themselves were the problem. If they can’t catch the spirit, then that must be their problem: never cast pearls before swine. But further thoughts were more reflective: how is it possible that people indeed can say that the chapel is just another chapel, or even nothing but a chapel? Knowing that it is not history as such that established the place, the answer to the question should not point to them, as visitors, but to ourselves who are responsible for the way the chapel is displayed.

My point is that any setting of a historical house should be aware of itself as being only a setting. A presentation should not give the impression to be an immediate confrontation with the past. The past is gone, and as it is gone forever, every presentation of it should be honest enough to appear as a mediation. A historical house can realize (i.e. make real) nothing but an interpretation of the history of the house. If the history as such is not around, all that is left are stories to be told.

As my daily audience is not an international assembly of museum professionals, and as I myself am nothing but a field worker and a story-teller, I have put down one exemplary story. In its details, it is reconstructed from various and very different sources. As a whole, it goes with the silver vessels of the chapel of Talbot House.

When in 1914 the War breaks out, the 1st Wessex Field Ambulance takes active service in France with the 8th British Division. At the same time, in a training camp in Dawlish, a second-line unit is set up to recruit additional stretcher bearers for the overseas unit. The pool grows steadily, with tens and tens of boys and men from Teignmouth, Dawlish and Exeter. And that is where he came from: Arthur Richard Cole. On April the 20th of 1915 he leaves his job (he was a bank clerk) to start and learn how to bandage wounds and to splint fractures.

The more exacting the war gets, the more Arthur’s group increases, and in the end it grows into an independent medical unit. The only thing the 2nd line Medical Unit lacks, are ambulance cars. But –oh!– they have their own band, and that is considered good enough to leave England and to set off for France in the night of 14 January 1916.

The day after a train takes them from Le Havre to Abbeville, and finally the unit is accommodated in the Chateau of Courturelle. There they find seven ambulance cars waiting for them. The cars are scarred; and to understand where these veterans come from, the scratches, dents and bullet holes do not need to be touched – except by a Doubting Thomas. And that’s not at all what Arthur is.

During the spring of 1916 the Field Ambulance builds its reputation as a well organized and committed unit. That is reason enough for their engagement in the Summer's Offensive near the river Somme, where they run a dressing station at Guillemont. The insanity of war can't be denied any longer in there: the shells even explode amongst the painfully collected wounded, and four of Arthur's comrades are killed. When the unit leaves the battlefield by the end of September, Arthur takes down his experience in a few poetical lines – in which he calls upon an Upper World to try and reconcile to the horrible one on earth. This religious attitude might hide a survival strategy: within the terms of this world, there is no way at all for man to accept the inhumanity, to rationalize the irrationality, or to understand the unreasonableness of war. Another world cannot change this one, but it might help to go on – certainly when there is no other option than to go on. And there isn't. In Maricourt, where the field ambulance ends up after their tour of duty at the Somme, a train is waiting to take it into Flanders.

And so, in October 1916, the 2nd/1st Wessex Field Ambulance comes to Ypres. They take over Advanced Dressing Stations near the trenches, and establish their main station in the town of Poperinge, in the buildings of the local college. On Christmas Eve a festive dinner is organized, followed by a concert. Music and theatre too help every now and then to bring peace into a world full of war. 'Come on, give us another song !'

The winter of 1916 and the spring of 1917 in the Ypres Area are of no importance when it comes to the great history of the Great War. There are no glorious battles or military operations worth mentioning in a history book – there is only the utmost triviality of daily ongoing warfare. And so in the dressing station there is always a call for 'stretcher bearers!' – and then off they go to find wounded men. On the 3rd of June 1917, the call was for Frederick Martin, one of Arthur's own folks again. It was far more an accident than a feat of arms. A British shell, meant to keep away a German plane, goes off badly and hits the medical post – where it explodes. Frederick's parents are informed by the officer in charge, and a few weeks later his mother writes back:

'How truly grateful we were for your letter which told us just everything we wanted to know. We feel our dear boy was with those he respected and loved, as much as if he were at home.

We have nothing to regret.

Frederick has not mentioned the name of any special chum; otherwise I would send a special message to any who would specially miss him.

Should you ever meet the Rev Clayton of Talbot House, will you give him my heartfelt thanks for all he was to Fred?

My husband joins with me in kindest regards.

Miriam Martin.'

'Will you give my heartfelt thanks to the Rev Clayton of Talbot House' - there it is, the connection you must have been waiting for. As indeed, immediately upon their arrival in Poperinge in October 1916, they did come in – the men of the 2nd/1st Wessex Field Ambulance. The preserved lists of the visitors, however scarce and incomplete they are, do hold their names. Amongst them is – Arthur Cole. It seems he was a regular visitor to the house; and in the chapel he acted as a server. For Arthur, and for men like him searching for a way-out into an Upper World, the Upper Room of Talbot House must have been a place as near as possible to heaven.

On the 31st of July a new battle sets off near Ypres. The 2nd/1st Wessex Field Ambulance once again is bound to run an Advanced Dressing Station. It must have felt like the Somme, all over again – if it wasn't for the rain. During the first days of the attack, the battlefield gets so soaked that

it takes 6 or 8 men to bear a stretcher. Bearers who succeed in returning to the dressing station can hardly be recognized. And those who don't succeed, get lost forever. Francis Richards, yet another fellow of Arthur's unit, is reported missing on 2 August 1917 and is remembered on the famous Menin Gate Memorial in Ypres. Six months before, he put his name in the register of Talbot House – as a sign of life. Arthur himself is lucky enough to survive. So by the end of September 1917, after almost 12 months in Flanders (and in Talbot House) he steps on the train again, from Poperinge back to France.

But in times of war, luck too seems to be rationed:

'The morning of 9th April 1918 will be one which will ever remain in the memory of all units of the 55th Division. The HQ of our Field Ambulance was in the College in Béthune. Dawn at the 9th broke very foggy, and was ushered-in by a very heavy bombardment. It was obvious that an attack was in progress. It was found that the enemy had broken through. A steady stream of casualties was coming in to the Main Dressing Station in Béthune where all casualties were collected further to be evacuated to hospital.

The following day was another dull one. The shelling of Béthune increased, and our main Dressing Station was hit several times. About 5pm a 15inch shell drove in the front of the building occupied as a temporary billet. Several men got...'

Arthur Cole was one of them. He was evacuated to the Hospital at Choques, where he died – and was buried. Today a Portland headstone marks the place. Plot 1, Row M, grave number 38: Lance-Corporal Arthur Richard Cole, 2nd/1st Wessex Field Ambulance, age 23, who died on 10 april 1918. And that 's it.

Long after the war – in 1936 – Sergeant Pearce, a comrade of Arthur's, sent out a portrait of Arthur to the Rev. Clayton of Talbot House. At the back of it the Chaplain wrote *'My most faithful server in the Upper Room of Talbot House, in Poperinge.'* This makes a good enough caption to link the name of Arthur Cole to the Silver Vessels he used to manipulate at Talbot House. And so it goes with all the other objects and furniture that gradually were assembled in the chapel. They all make keepsakes related to known, wartime visitors, whose names also can be read – still today – somewhere in the fields of Flanders or France. When you get the story across, nothing is what it looks like. And what at first sight only looks like a chapel, has meanings far beyond that.

It is wonderful to learn that the men themselves of the Wessex Field Ambulance did realize this long before. Actually, they have known it ever since they came in 1916. In the small Official History of the Unit, it reads like this:

'Never will any war memorial, however conceived, however fashioned, be so filled with associations of our dead, as was this spot, where we seemed possessed by an overmastering sense of their very presence. There was something about the place.'

Wise words these are indeed – though the wisdom is not without consequences: it seems you cannot send out a scout to experience the 'something about the place.' One most individually has to close one's eyes to see what can't be seen. One has to open up one's heart and mind to catch 'some' spirit. A bitter lesson this must be for those believing, like Doubting Thomas, in nothing but – tangibles.

MAKING HISTORY THEATRICAL AT THE LOWER EAST SIDE TENEMENT MUSEUM

Morris J. Vogel

President of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, New York, USA

New York's Lower East Side Tenement Museum defines theatricality in terms of the tension among ideas, audiences, and presentations more than through costume, setting, script, or performance. The dramatic ideas in today's United States concern national and personal identity. Presenting these ideas has required the Museum to shift from its earlier focus on immiseration and exclusion.

The Museum originated in 1988 as a part of the social history movement. New York's Lower East Side, then an impoverished district with a rich history as America's iconic immigrant neighborhood, offered a perfect setting to tell the stories of ordinary people and everyday life and to provide an ideological counterweight to the triumphalism that marked the American historical consensus in the post-World War II period. The Museum documented how much the United States shared the history of social, racial, and gender injustice that marked the many other societies. Social history drew its energy from the culture of the 1960s, which was informed by the moral crises of the Vietnam War and the struggle for Civil Rights. It drew much of its energy from the effort to emphasize how imperfect the United States was.

Social history developed narratives of poverty, exclusion, and immiseration, for which a condemned tenement, boarded up for more than half a century, provided an ideal setting. The Museum stabilized (and exhibits) some of the apartment interiors in the condition in which they were found in 1988. It interprets its 1863 building as a six-storey, purpose-built tenement which originally held two ground floor shops and twenty-two 325-square-foot, three-room apartments, all without heat, utilities, or plumbing. No matter what interpretation we subsequently overlay on these spaces, no matter what points our educators emphasize in their performance, visitors are overwhelmed by the stark facts of poverty and struggle.

Each educator-conducted tour visits one or two of the six currently interpreted apartments into which the Museum's four tours are organized. Each apartment tells the story of a specific family who lived in the building at a specific moment in its history as a residential building from 1863 to 1935. The Museum saw 175,000 visitors in the past year; it is an affiliated site of the National Park Service, paired by Act of Congress with Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty.

The Museum's newly revised mission statement calls for the Museum 'to forge emotional connections between visitors and immigrants past and present, and to enhance appreciation for the profound role immigration has played and continues to play in shaping America's evolving national identity.' It also includes the aspiration 'that the press, the policy community, and the general public will regularly cite the Museum's exhibits and programs in framing public discussions of immigration, citizenship, and national identity.' That aspiration builds on today's appreciation for the role of the Lower East Side in American history. Citing the neighborhood in 2008, the National Trust for Historic Preservation wrote that 'more of everything that is iconically American derives from this square mile than anywhere else.'

The Museum's first interpreted apartment shows the Gumpertz family in the financial panic of 1873. Julius Gumpertz abandoned his wife and children; his wife Natalie made a life and supported her children as a seamstress. She may have received her sewing machine from a Jewish charity concerned to keep abandoned women from prostitution.

This is the Museum's oldest tour; the Moore family, inaugurated in 2008, is the newest. This tour is still evolving; it originally focused on public health, centering on the death of a newborn. One feature of social history was a preoccupation with death. Now the tour is shifting to be more about Irish identity and anti-Irish discrimination. Taken together, the Gumpertz and Moore tours reveal a problem common to all Tenement Museum tours: staff note that all are about hard times, struggle, and survival regardless of their names and themes. In addition, equally regardless of names and themes, visitors ask for tours in terms of specific ethnic groups.

Our tours are meant to evoke interest and promote engagement. One challenge is to escape audience pre-conceptions, particularly as they concern ethnicity. We try to do so by giving audiences an active role. All of our educators promote questions and foster dramatic interchange, building on the views that visitors have about immigration, a reality that surrounds us and is part of all of our lives. We have fifty part-time educators, working up to twenty hours per week. Most come from New York's creative economy – actors, singers, dancers, playwrights, directors, artists – drawn to the City in the hope of building careers. We have found it easier to educate artists in history than to train scholars in performance.

Our living history program is based on an actor playing fourteen-year-old Victoria Confino in 1916. Her family fled the collapsing Ottoman Empire; the theme of the tour is the way an adolescent makes sense of her new environment. Visitors play roles of new immigrants looking for homes; they have the opportunity to ask Victoria questions.

The Museum's most popular tour is Sweatshop Workers, which visits the home of Harris and Jennie Levine in the 1890s and focuses on the garment industry. More than half the women's clothing produced industrially in the United States in 1900 came from Lower East Side sweatshops much like the one depicted in Jacob Riis's photographs. Labor and sweatshops are im-

portant to social history, but we find that few visitors today connect with the nation's industrial history. Of course we still touch on industrial and labor history because of its historic importance.

The second half of *Sweatshop Workers* visits the Rogarshevsky family's apartment in the 1910s. This part of the tour originally focused on death and labor unions, prominent features of social history narratives. The table was set for Abraham Rogarshevsky's shiva (a Jewish mourning ritual) after he died from tuberculosis. Death was the ultimate disproof of the 'smiling aspect of American life,' and therefore often featured in social history interpretations. Our recent reinterpretation replaced the mourning ritual with the Sabbath table. Loft factories—which replaced sweatshops in the early twentieth century as industries consolidated production—were open on the Jewish Sabbath and closed Sundays, raising questions of religious observance for the Rogarshevskys and other workers. The tour now deals with these questions as a way of raising issues about negotiating identity and discovering what it meant to make one's way in America.

Reinterpretation extends as well to new exhibits. The Museum had long planned to develop John Schneider's Lager Bier Saloon in its original 1863-1879 home in the tenement's basement. That plan referenced an important moment in the history of the Lower East Side: Kleindeutschland of the 1850s-1870s. The Museum is including Schneider's but also moving beyond it in our current exhibit plan. We will also recreate the 1890s home of a kosher butcher in the rear basement and a 1930s peddlers' supplies auction house in the front.

Shop Life will show how the Lower East Side's immigrants exploited their marginality to become entrepreneurs. They operated in ethnically protected markets, selling what others could not to customers who would not trust outsiders. The saloon and the butcher shop broke explicit anticompetitive rules that governed majority communities by selling on the Sabbath, which they observed differently, in the case of Germans, or on a different day, in the case of Jews. Both the insider market and the willingness to violate community norms offered immigrants competitive advantages. Immigrant entrepreneurs also violated implicit rules by selling at discount (which they could do by holding costs down through self-exploitation) and by selling out-of-season goods and seconds, which their customers valued because they could not afford full priced items. These shops turned the Lower East Side into the city's bargain district; these practices correlate strongly to practices that continue to characterize contemporary immigrant entrepreneurs. The exhibit will argue that America's economic vitality owes in part to immigrant commerce.

We are extending this new interpretive frame even further. We are unable to tell post-1935 stories in the Museum's 1863 tenement because it was condemned and closed to residential use in 1935. A newly purchased 1888 building which has stayed active as a tenement into the present offers opportunities to interpret and present more contemporary narratives. Lower floors house a new visitor and education center; upper floors will allow the Museum to present an account of how the United States shifted from the race-based immigration quota regime imposed in 1924 to non race-based immigration. The Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 completely excluded Asian and African immigrants, but its basic purpose had been to categorize Southern and Eastern Europeans as non-white.

The new apartments will show post-1945 immigration, including Jewish refugees from Nazi death camps, Puerto Rican migrants, and a Chinese immigrant dormitory. The Civil Rights era Hart-Cellar Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 continued the retreat from a race-based immigration regime first represented by the President's Emergency Directive of December 1945, which had allowed 1000 concentration camp survivors to enter the country. Taken together, these apartments will allow us to tell how Americans regained the confidence to constitute themselves as a nation on a non-racial basis.

Defining America's identity is the nation's most enduring conversation. The United States has gone through a series of shifting consensus about the bases of its national identity since its founding. The consensus has at times stressed ideology, or place, or race, and the flow of debate has regularly shifted at inflection points. We are again at one such moment. Some Americans disconcerted about losing control of the nation's identity strike back by attacking President Obama for not being born in the US or for being a Muslim. The facts seem irrelevant. Some Americans are pushing to rewrite the Constitution's 14th Amendment, which guarantees citizenship to those born in the United States. Scariest than just ill tempered behavior or racist hysteria, this attitude is about re-writing the nation's ideals.

The challenge for the Tenement Museum is to make sure that visitors understand the confidence that many in the past had, that inclusion was possible and desirable. Addressing the tension visitors confront in our own time gives us an opportunity to drive this point home. Our presentations remind visitors that immigration has long been an essential force in shaping the American nation, and that our open society, our democratic institutions, our cultural creativity, our economic vitality, and our ability to accommodate difference owe to our experience as a nation of immigrants. Making that point is the Museum's mission.

Q: There has been a noticeable shift in this museum's mission towards values as tolerance. Did this shift take place because of the internal goals of the museum, or was the shift directed by the audience?

A: *The shift in the museum's mission was an iterative process. We monitored our visitors by means of surveys and follow-ups and at the same time the visitors themselves shared their questions with us. On the other hand, it is also important for us to place our interpretation within the evolving scholarship. We notice that, as the scholarship has shifted towards identity, the audience, their questions and their interests have shifted in that way as well.*

Q: Do the visitors ever ask what happened to the families represented in this museum? Keeping the 'American Dream' in mind, do they ever wonder whether these people's lives eventually turned out to be positive after moving to the U.S.A. ?

A: *Visiting this museum, one cannot deny the misery of these people's lives. You cannot help but feel overwhelmed by the little spaces where these –most of the times really extensive- families lived. After seeing that these families lived without plumbing, without light and most of the time also without windows, one has to acknowledge the fact that these people lived in very poor, not to say miserable, conditions. In one of the tours, we explicitly share what happened to these families, because it helps us with the larger presentation.*

Q: How do you protect the balance between knowledge and imagination?

A: *While we are very sensitive to the fact that there is a discipline of history, the main role of this museum is to reach visitors viscerally instead of intellectually. We make sure the materials our audience is provided with are from the highest possible level, but we also trust our employees to use their imagination.*

'For our work in museums we use all the possibilities of computer instigated material which we can manufacture a long way from the site. It also has the ability to be changed during the period of display. That ability to metamorphose is going to make our products very much related to ideas of the present tense. This fascination to utilize the modern technology - which the laptop generation is very familiar with - is going to change the way they look at – for example – the old masters, having understood and appreciated and thinking that their world is post 1983. If we get back to the idea of Descartes to enliven peoples curiosity, we now have a language where we can manoeuvre past and present and future in extraordinary ways, provided we avoid the vulgarities of son-et-lumière and similar notions of popular entertainment. There's an enormous amount of legitimacy in being able to utilize modern disciplines to make a deep and profound examination of the past.'

Peter Greenaway

UN SEUL DÉSEAR GAASBEEK CASTLE

Dirk Van Den Broeck

Teaches drama at the Academy of Word, Dance and Music in Bruges (Belgium) and works as a writer and director for different theatre companies.

■ Why this audio guide?

- On April 1 2010 the Gaasbeek Castle introduced audio-guides for grown-ups. This upgrade generated many positive reactions with the visitors, especially since no textual information is present within the castle. One year later the castle presented the public with audio-guides for children. People with an impairment seemed to be left out of the picture. Ensuing repeated requests to organise fun excursions from institutions concerned with care for the impaired, the Gaasbeek Castle thought it was important that this target audience could also fully enjoy a visit to the castle, adjusted to their specific environment and with respect for their being and abilities.

■ Use?

Regarding 'the holy houses'.

- As Gustav Mahler stated: 'Das wichtigste in der Musik steht nicht in den Noten.'

Wherein can it be found in this case?

- In the aura, the significances ('old places, narrative spaces').
- In possible associations.
- Confrontation between 'then' and 'now'.
- In dialogue that transcends time and space, the field of tension that is created by who we are here and now and that which we encounter.
- The objective approach of the phenomenon which is known as historic house is being countered with a series of subjective visions.

Consequence

- The visitor is aroused, provoked, cannot possibly limit his experience to merely a nostalgic journey.

Result

- Rabbit Hole (or more commonly known as Alice in Wonderland-effect): What is real, what is beyond reality? The audience is not presented with a ready-made explanation, but is handed the tools to associate freely. This way the holy house stays a living organism.

Regarding the participants of the project

- Encounter for the first time a historic frame which appeals to one's imagination and is perceptible. Explore new spheres and a different world within which can be explored, discovered and experienced.
- Enjoy various creatively broadening workshops conducted by a professional monitor. See the product grow dynamically.
- Enjoy the end result, which clearly breathes the participants' influence. Their differences are clearly shown in spontaneous imagination. Being able to share this in a qualitative end product with others makes them aware of their creative capacities.
- Work toward a common goal within a newly combined collective.
- Participate in a cultural project which others, be it with or without impairment, will be able to enjoy.
- Encounter a different, thus broadening, environment.
- The product as such guarantees an equal input from all contestants. Communication is the key. No pre-fab lines, but lines with personal input. Honest, reciprocal communication between monitor and contestants becomes the building stone of this creative process.
- Experience has taught me that participants grow personally and improve their assertiveness during and after such projects.

Regarding the quality

- Many artists with an impairment remain in the 'apartheid' or separateness of their handicap and cannot find their way into the participation of public cultural programmes. Here, convincing integrating opportunities are provided by, for example, a professional artistic guidance with the creative process and a result, during the course of which mutual inspirational and enriching material and artistic synergy is created.
- The audio guide is custom made to the target audience: mature, simple and informatively basked in fantasy.

Regarding the existing accommodations within the branch.

- This project transcends occupational therapy and usefully contributes to the already existing cultural offers.
- The gained expertise may be passed on to other cultural projects. We hope that by using direct information distribution, participants will become eager to participate in similar projects. This initiative for audio guides may also inspire other museums to develop this within their programme, thereby lowering the threshold for cultural initiatives for people with a cognitive disability.

Regarding the audience.

- This project convinces the audience that people with an impairment are indeed able to create an artistic and quantitatively qualitative audio guide. The result will possibly be 'different', but from an artistic point of view it is equally authentic and valuable. We ask the interested audience to adjust their wavelength, and establish an open attitude. The audience will then develop a different view on the diversity of the participants, who may or may not speak a different language. The 'different' way of looking, watching or communicating is no longer associated with the 'compassionate support', but becomes a wholesome form of communication with mutual respect.
- As the icing on the cake, people with an impairment get to hear a comprehensible audio guide, that makes the experience of the visit to the castle more fantastic and more worthwhile.
- Not only do we make use of inclusion, but we also make use of inverted inclusion: the participants with a cognitive disablement have something to offer to themselves.
- The purpose of this project is to convince both the audience and the participants that creativity and imagination are fundamental components for communication, integration and experience.

■ The creative process

Audition and purpose.

- In cooperation with the Schoonderhaeghe non-profit association I organised two audition days for people with an impairment
- With the people that were selected I set out to work with the greatest respect for their input and experience. During the workshops they were immersed in a sensorial stimulating way in the 'living in the castle-spheres'. This way immersion leading to improvisations was made possible, from which a lot of textual material could be procured for the audio guides. The texts were then recorded by the participants themselves. The result was an audio guide for people with an impairment. Naturally, and preferably, these audio guides can also be listened to by other people. They are informative, poetic and inspiring. It is the view on the castle of people with an impairment

The first reconnaissance without prior information.

- What do you feel and think about everything you see right now? Here became obvious what the participants' view on 'it' is, and how they put 'it' into words.

Encourage fantasy through exercises, immersion, empathy.

- Relaxation exercises: with each start of a session we embarked on a voyage through the body, to give an opportunity to the underlying contents to surface during improvisation and fantasising.
- Drama games to incite spontaneity, to prepare for the improvisation. To create you must let go.
- In the background, the marquise's favourite music was played.

- Watching video fragments about life at the time of the marquise, both inside and outside the castle.
- Relating and role playing games. Experience for yourself what status and habitat of that time felt like.
- Keeping busy in between. In a non-compelling way I asked of the participants to think, to fantasize about the subjects of the following week. Every participant received a map containing pictures portraying the most important historical objects in the castle. This proposal received many positive reactions
- With historic costumes we reenacted historic situations from the marquise's day-to-day life (for example: sleeping, dreaming, getting out of bed, reading, taking strolls, kitchen situations, meals, etc...)
- Ensuring fun for the participants.
- Share historically correct information about the castle. Knowledge and imagination in a dynamic symbiosis.
- A visibly dynamic result during the creative process (videos on You Tube - pictures - reading out self-made stories and texts,...).
- Searching for the participants' point of view, in order for the result to reflect their perceptions.
- The final text was evaluated by the participants: does everyone understand what it is about? Is everything adequately fascinating and interesting?
- Rehearsals to give the participants an opportunity to study their texts. Everyone participates.
- Try-out with a representative target audience, evaluate and remediate.

The result

- Makes sure that the public learns something, experiences something, without us having directed everything. We aim to create an environment where the listener's fantasy is being aroused. This way we can reach a larger audience.
- Finds its roots in the specific point of view of the producers.
- Respects both aura's as information. There are those who prefer the magical atmosphere of the castle, there are those, however, who would like to be taught a few things about what they see. Even among the participants the admiration was equally great. Knowledge, in this case, no longer serves a goal as such, but acts as a carriage that takes away the participants to the castle's fantastic world. We could have gone still further by for example letting the characters on the tapestries have conversations with each other, but that might have been a bit too confusing for those who crave facts and certainty. We hope we have satisfied both groups.
- Wants the visit to be experienced as an interesting walk that brings quiet, harmony and catharsis. Hence my decision for music by Arvo Pärt, because he succeeds in bringing parallel and/or diverging lines/emotions together in harmony. The music improved the metaphysical broiling and feeling of connectedness with the castle and the marquise's longing for respectful love and unconditional human right (also for women).
- It is meant for a very wide audience. Anyway that is the case for any performance: to be differently and/or openly receptive to watch and/or to listen to. This way the spectator/listener discovers and appreciates the uniqueness within diversity.

'In a design museum outside Milan I made a film in a setting that had a sense of an expanded, architectonic, environmental cinema. Something completely different from a traditional cinema setting where people are sitting still in the dark and looking in one direction; a kind of setting which we are finally moving away from because this static situation seems to be so antagonistic to the notion of moving and imagination. The film traced the history of European art from Pompeii to the beginning of the 20th century. It was conducted as a visual exercise.

No words, no text, only images.'

Peter Greenaway

PAPERS

*'Schliessen sie mir das Kleid danke/Close my dress, thank you', Villa Langmatt, Switzerland.
Photograph Andres Morya; Courtesy videostill: Pipilotti Rist und Hauser & Wirth*



PAPERS

The Enchanted Palace. How Building Work Shook the Stories from the Fabric of Kensington Palace, London

John Barnes

Conservation and Learning Director at Historic Royal Palaces, United Kingdom.

Joanna Marschner

Senior Curator at Historic Royal Palaces, United Kingdom.

John Barnes and Joanna Marschner introduced the project 'Enchanted Palace' as it was realized at Kensington Palace. This palace is a residence for members of the royal family since more than 300 years. In 1898 the state apartments were opened to the public. The venue is the place where the royal ceremonial dress collection is shown. At this moment Kensington Palace is working on a project that will be dramatically changing the palace. The first phase of the project turned the palace into a building site. Although this had great influence on visitor's comfort the palace will stay open to the public.

In recent years the thinking process about how to present the palace has been moving on. Management and curators felt that they were on the cusp of a greater shift in their ambition. Thinking about what to do with the palace during building works gave the platform to work on that bigger change. The project was called Enchanted Palace and it is an imagined world within the palace. It's not an exhibition, or a display or a performance. It is a multilayered collection of inspiration using many different media and it engages the visitors on a quest which draws them through this very complicated site making discoveries. At its heart are the stories of seven real princesses from history, each with a special connection to Kensington palace, and these can be discovered through clues, real artifacts, poems, artist installations and performance. There is a parallel strand of information provided in a more traditional form; books of information for instance about each room. The visitor makes what he will of the journey. Each room is different: some of them contain the story of one of the princesses, others have a theme. The front house team is crucial to the articulation of the piece. They have been built into the performance, and so is the rest of the staff when they are in the museum.

The program started with counting the assets of the palace: the rooms, the collections, the stories, the front house team, friends in the fashion world and the academic and community partners. To draw all this together the museum engaged a partner from the outside: a group of theater makers. Performance was an element that was not represented in the traditional set of connections.

The basis of the stories are historical facts. A selection was made. Some of the stories were so

important that they had to be taken as a given. This resulted in the stories of seven princesses that spanned four centuries of palace history. These stories are powerful and emotional, touching on key human emotional experiences. A poet was commissioned to write a series of stories based on hard curatorial facts: the diaries, the letters, the inventories, the shopping lists. These texts drew the stories into the mythic. Every story is connected to a room. At the heart of each story there is the work of a fashion designer or an artist that focuses the mind of the visitor on one of the princesses.

What did the museum try to achieve? First of all: at the heart of the piece are real places and real artifacts; this authenticity is very important for the museum. Secondly, the museum tries to make intangible facts – like atmosphere and story – tangible for visitors. The stories touch on the emotions. The museum wants visitors to go away caring about the people presented, so that they try to make a connection between their own lives and that of the people who lived in the palace in past centuries. The museum explores aspects of life that affect us all (duty, sadness, frustration, etc.). Thirdly, the museum has sought to address the fact that historic houses come with a whole set of traditional paradigms that we wanted to question and if possible, to break. The museum made an irreverent list of things ‘not to do in a palace’ and tried to achieve as many of them as possible, it sought to spell the silence and the solemnity of the place. The goal was to make a visit to the palace rather a social than a solitary experience. So the museum wants a visit to be fun and encourage – a gentile – level of participation. The museum encourages its visitors to be curious. Stories are best remembered if visitors have to work a little bit to find them out. There are laid in many strands of clues with the intention of appealing to a wide variety of audiences and their learning styles. The harder visitors look the richer and the more multilayered their experience becomes.

Enchanted Palace moves beyond fact and information to deal with the border of reality and fantasy. It tries to touch on emotions and aims to speak a universal language. Empathy is an important trigger for learning and learning is a key part of what Enchanted Palace tries to do. There are different levels. On the most simple level the interpretative techniques and media exploited by Enchanted Palace as opposed to a conventional visual or text based approach, provides more points of connection for the wide range of learning styles of our visitors. Feedback tells that people are making their own connections and taking away their own meanings. On the other hand some of the traditional visitors don't like Enchanted Palace at all. To start with this project was a risk. Alienated traditional visitors will not come back. Also one could be criticized for the way the palace is used, and this could damage the museum's reputation. On the other hand it has been a wonderful opportunity to experiment and to develop the capabilities of the in house team and to make further creative leaps when the next opportunity arises. A project like this one, requires a leap of faith.

Q: You mentioned that you changed some things along the way. Can you be more precise about these changes?

A: *The key things there were: being clear in advance about what people were going to get. We deploy many more methods to explain what people can expect. Marketing and website are clearer now. We have people at the entrance who go through the whole experience with people before they pay their money and come in. Within the experience itself we did recognize a few things people were saying: the darkness for instance, we worked on that. We also introduced a new strand based on information provided by a woman who was a housekeeper at the palace. This information contains facts and figures. It helps people who want to explore the palace in a more traditional way.*

The Modern Gesamtkunstwerk

Conny Bogaard

Project director for the new Rocky Flats Cold War Museum in Arvada, Colorado, USA. Former curator of Syptestejn Castle and Museum, Loosdrecht, the Netherlands

In her paper Conny Bogaard tried to make the connection between the aesthetic principles of Wagner's Gesamtkunstwerk and the theatrical display in museums and other art projects. Theatrical display is not only relevant for historic houses. It's also relevant for other types of museums. Recently there is a renewed interest in Wagner's theory of the Gesamtkunstwerk. Museum and exhibition curators but also writers, are referring to it. It is timely to have a closer look at this theory as it resonates with contemporary imagination and may help us understand certain current art forms and projects, from Peter Greenaways' films to the exhibits in (new) museums.

Wagner's theory of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* expresses the ideal notion of unifying the three fundamental arts: dance, music and poetry via theatre. In English the common way of translating *Gesamtkunstwerk* is 'total work of art' but other forms are known such as 'communal work of art', 'collective work of art', 'combined work of art' and 'unified work of art'. Most people think of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* as an aesthetical principle mainly used in opera. The term has also been used to describe a wider synthesis between music, painting, sculpture, architecture, stage design, and so on. In an architectural context the *Gesamtkunstwerk* usually refers to the role of the architect to control the interior design as well as the outer shell of the building. It is tempting to draw a parallel with historic houses.

It has been argued that Wagner's theory of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* was just another response to the widespread desire to an aesthetic synthesis that was – for Walter Benjamin – required by the allegorical way of looking at things. Benjamin's critique was aimed at the manipulative side of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. To him allegory framed ideas and artistic creations in order to grasp them more clearly. It permitted a distance that fostered analyses that things were too close for comprehension. Additionally the arts turned to one another for inspiration and theoretical sustenance. For Benjamin the *Gesamtkunstwerk* is tied with ideology as it is using art's aura to win people's hearts and minds for a certain cause. The critique in modern times is basically aimed at the control and manipulative role of the artist. Also criticized is the potential of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* to overwhelm the spectator's emotions, impede the possibility of critical thoughts

and mould a group of individuals into a powerless mass. Ultimately the *Gesamtkunstwerk* was a utopian ideal, a proposal for the new German nation.

So to interpret the *Gesamtkunstwerk* as a purely aesthetic principal is not doing justice to the revolutionary spirit of Wagner's work. His aesthetics are always inseparable of his larger political vision, which explains the problematic reception of his work. The *Gesamtkunstwerk* is a social dream, it's essentially a communitarian dream. Just as it would unite a variety of art forms and would blur artistic categories so too would individual spectators be brought together and become a unified audience through their shared aesthetic experience. For Wagner the presence and the experience of the audience helps to create the work of art.

The attempt to merge art with life implies a desire to restore something, to recover a lost unity whether in the individual subject or in society at large. This raises a number of questions. What kind of totality is envisaged? Did Wagner aim at wholeness and truth? Or can the *Gesamtkunstwerk* be interpreted as open ended and unfinished?

Wagner witnessed a rapid transformation of his audience in his time. Technological advances had a profound effect on the experience and production of culture. Theater spectators turned into mass audiences. Art lost its aura and became part of a commodity culture. Wagner understood people's desire for authentic experiences. In that respect the *Gesamtkunstwerk* was Wagner's attempt to combat and appropriate the emerging pressure of mass culture. Our time is not very different. Contemporary manifestations of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* can be found all around us, from theme parks to virtual realities to theatrical displays in museums. That does not mean that it doesn't have a potential for change. One thing can certainly be learned from Wagner's concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*: it is much more than just a theatrical form of display. It points out the problem of representation.

Museums have always been a stage, representing interpretations of history, objects, notions of culture and national identity. Where is truth to be found in those representations? Is truth found in the museum's authoritative voice, trying to restore the aura and taking the imaginary for the real? Or do we agree with Wagner's initial ambition to ground meaning in the presence and the experience of the audience? Presumably the latter has more potential but only if it takes into account the double meaning of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*: a work of art and a vehicle for audience participation. Without a dialogue the total art work can easily turn against itself and become a controlling manipulative mechanism in which art and audience will both be sacrificed.

Museums Recreating the Spanish Golden Age. The Lope de Vega House Museum

Carmen Jiménez Sanz

General coordinator of Museums at the Deputy Directorate of Museums, Regional Government of Madrid, Spain.

To Carmen Jiménez Sanz house museums represent a type of museums with numerous development opportunities. They connect personality with the public's raising expectations for leisure and knowledge on a human scale and display a wide range of content and stories within history. In Spain on a total of more than 1400 museums only 95 are described as house museums. These museums offer a varied panorama in terms of ownership, funding, origin, creation, presentation of collections, building type, management, objectives and staffing. Seven of them deal with the Spanish Golden Age. These are house museums about Spanish writers that were created many centuries after they died/lived. Carmen Jiménez Sanz presented two of them: the Cervantes Birthplace Museum and the Casa de Lope de Vega.

The Cervantes Birthplace Museum was created in 1956. It is the most visited Golden Age writer house and the most visited museum in the region of Madrid, outside the capital. The museum receives around 150,000 visitors every year. Its scenography has influenced reenactments done in the last 10 years in other historic houses related to Cervantes. The Casa de Lope de Vega is a house museum of which the museological project and museography has stayed almost unchanged since its opening in 1935.

The Cervantes house has been transformed with different setups since 1956. The last one was developed in the year 2001 by scenographers with a cinema and theater background. It recreates the daily life of a wealthy Castilian family in the 16th century in detail. By doing so it also reveals an inconsistency: Cervantes' house must have been much more modest considering the financial situation of his family. In the recreated rooms the public discovers a sense of the activities of the occupants and thanks to dramatic effects and sounds it gets a better understanding of how the Cervantes family actually lived. The objects that are used for this recreation did not belong to Cervantes or his family. This way of 'recreating' for that matter, pops up an important question: where is the line between real and fiction? When the visit is satisfactory visitors find themselves taken by the atmosphere that this stage set offers and are under the illusion of being in a place preserved through the centuries. Given the success of this type of museography the Cervantes house in Valladolid and the house of Dulcinea were also recreated in in this way.

De Lope de Vega house is a very different case. Lope de Vega (1562-1635) purchased the house in 1610. Here he lived here the last 25 years of his life. It continued to be used as a residence, but it was almost forgotten about until the beginning of the twentieth century, when the transformation to a museum began. In 1862 the history of the house was documented. This led to increased interest in the building and in the writer, and the involvement of the Spanish Royal Academy. In 1929 a Teaching Foundation was set up to establish a museum. The house was declared a Historical Monument and was opened as a museum in 1935.

The restoration of the house and garden was based on respect for the cues and construction elements of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in an attempt to recover the original size and layout of the property, which had been subsequently altered. A complex job was undertaken to preserve the historical house and to recreate what had disappeared in a faithful manner.

Historical documentation on the building and archive material served as essential references in the recreation of the various rooms and their artistic and functional items. Apart from acquisitions, the Academy called for private donations and implemented a successful repository policy for institutions and museums.

All the above mentioned measures allowed to recreate the atmosphere of the house with seventeenth century works of art, furniture and pieces, some of which had belonged to the family. The repository of books from the sixteenth and seventeenth century attempts to make the intangible tangible. They have the intention to evoke the memory of Lope de Vega by recreating his environment and thus providing visitors with a deep emotional experience. Recently the museum reopened. It has kept the original idea of representing the transmission of emotions. The goal is to present a whole range of themes: the Golden Age, art and literature, life and work of Lope de Vega, Madrid in the early 17th century, the customs, history, religion, society, urban design and architecture.

A historic house museum is a place of homage. The permanent search for clues and references is necessary to recreate it as perfectly as possible and to shed light on the doubts. The house obviously outlived the former owner, but it is still *his* house and it is preserved in *his* memory. In that sense, it becomes a museum for being anchored in the past. The uniqueness of the Lope de Vega house lies mainly in its well documented approach. It is the result of deliberation by several intellectuals who, just before the Spanish Civil War, rendered an interpretation of a personality, a literary work and a seventeenth century domestic space. It would, therefore, only be correct to continue this approach, easing dissemination, reconciling use with conservation, allowing quality visits for small groups, continuing work on preventive conservation, restoration, facility improvement and the presentation of collections, interfering as little as possible in a setting which recently turned 75.

These two cases bring up some important questions. What is authentic in these houses? How is the past reenacted in them? First, the places where these writers dwelled anchor the memories and are essential for that reason. The places of Cervantes and Lope became sites of 'civil pilgrimage' and they shape literary routes targeted at cultural tourism. Secondly, the past is reenacted by contextualization. Other museums and cultural institutions were contacted to find works of art, objects, furniture, and books of that time in order to create the right context in domestic spaces. A scientifically accurate recall can only be achieved by research. This allows us to create faithful museographies. Thirdly, there are objects on display that belonged to the writer and his family. They offer the illusion of coming close to lives lived and they shorten the stretch of time that separates the visitor from the house. Fourthly, the houses are at the same time a product and a warrant of collective memory. They also express the will of a society to pay homage to distinguished figures in order to foster identity, assert territorial issues and vindicate certain authors or characters from their works. Fifthly, these are places that have been lived in and that hold inside them many different readings of stories to be told. In the tour to Lope's house many references are made - through poems and literary quotes - to the former inhabitants of the house. When one is visiting the house the frontier between the authentic and the reinvented becomes blurred because creating an atmosphere in these houses works as a whole. Finally, these house museums are a testimony of the intellectual process that led to their creation. In the case of Lope, the house reflects the criteria used and the decisions made with a view to recreating the house where he lived during the last years of his life. The house museum

also bears witness to the state of historical research 75 years ago. This can be verified by consulting the archives of the institution and reading certain detailed publications of those times. We are deeply convinced that this aspect of the memory of the institution must also be preserved.

'Schliessen sie mir das Kleid danke/Close my dress, thank you'

Mario Marchisella
Composer and musician, Switzerland.

Mario Marchisella worked together with the Swiss artist Pipilotti Rist for her exhibition 'Schliessen sie mir das Kleid, danke' at the Langmatt museum. Villa Langmatt was designed by the architect Carl Moser in 1900 and was the residence of Sidney and Jenny Brown and their three children. Together with a staff of about ten servants they lived in the villa opposite of Mr. Browns machine factory. In 1906 Moser designed an art gallery for the collection of the Brown family attached to the villa. The collection contained an impressive amount of works from French impressionist like Degas, Monet, Renoir, Cézanne and Gauguin, amongst others. In 1990 the house was converted into a museum.

Since 1996 the museum has a summer exhibition. In 2010 the summer guest curator was video artist Pipilotti Rist. She created video installations which interfered with the antique furniture, ceramics, etc. in the house. Rist's videos were an homage to the staff of the house, to the daily labor of quiet workers. She did this by projecting films of hands performing typical labors like gardening, cooking, cleaning, etc. This material was mixed together with other video sequences, showing landscapes and abstract floating. This was projected onto objects in the villa.

The technical equipment of this intervention was invisibly integrated into the house. To create a dark setting for the projection all the windows were covered with colored plastic foil. Mario Marchisella was asked to create music and soundscapes that supported the videos and created an atmosphere that would take visitors on a trip into Rist's world. Marchisella composed a simple, yet hypnotic main theme, inspired by the villa. He used the old Steinway piano in the main room as a basis for his compositions and integrated original elements like insects, birds and the industrial background of the house. Each of the different rooms had a theme song in which Marchisella combined elements of the main theme with specific melodies that fitted well with the videos.

Reaction from the audience:

Yesterday Peter van Mensch spoke about liberating the spirit of the place. I think this is a perfect example of that. It proves also that historical houses do not necessarily need to be only looking back into their 'glorious past' but that we can try to continue their story by inviting wonderful artists. It is just a perfect match.

Q: Which criteria were used to hide the video equipment?

A: Pipilotti Rist always works like this; there should be no techniques visible. She wants to take you by

the hand in to her own world. With a lot of technique in the background of course, but one should not see it.

Q: Was this intervention permanently on show during the day or was there a specific time schedule?

A: *The video and the music were on a permanent loop during opening times. They were randomly looped. The longest video loop lasted around 11 minutes, the music was between 3 and 20 minutes long, depending on the room. Because of the video it was rather dark the whole time. This created a problem because there were people who came especially for the paintings. The information was on the website but of course you cannot expect that everybody has read that. At the reception you could take a torch to lighten the paintings. But still, there were people who were angry because of the profound intervention.*

Q: I can imagine that a project like this one needs a lot of cooperation between the artist and the museum. How did that work out?

A: *The main problem with this project was the security. There are very unique paintings on the walls. The open mind of the museum staff was absolutely astonishing. The curator never said: 'No, that's not possible.' We had to leave the paintings in their original places and we worked out solutions. The atmosphere was very good. Maybe this is a difference between a private museum and a state owned museum. Here we could work the whole night through if necessary, with the security people standing next to us.*

The Antiquarian Tour

Hedvig Mårdh

PhD candidate at the department of Art History at Uppsala University, Sweden.

In her contribution Hedvig Mårdh started from the point of view that historic sites reflect contemporary ideas about the world and the past, rather than a fixed past. For a very long time the interest in historic houses and sites was mainly a professional one. It was about reconstruction, conservation and musicological aspects. In recent years this developed to a more general interest. This agenda got in full swing in the 1990's. Mårdh explained why this happened.

The 'antiquarian tour' is a way of guiding the visitor through a site by telling the complex history of it. In museums it is rarely a separate tour. The attention to the scenography of the place is a feature that is most of the time part of a regular tour. An antiquarian tour contains different elements, one of them being dramaturgy. For instance, restoration projects are presented as a place for the clash of ideologies of understanding the past. The work from an earlier date is often condemned. Comments like: 'We would never do this today' or 'Choosing the wrong techniques resulted in numerous problems today', are often heard in this kind of tour. Instead the competence of the restorers of today is promoted. The guide often wants to induce a sense of trust in the conservator of today. Implicitly or explicitly the tour confirms statements as: 'We are professionals and this is the best we can do today.' If a restoration is going on it is often shown to the public and the public might even be included.

What is the reason for revealing the scenography and what is it a consequence of? How come the guide can use this point of departure at all? Why are visitors interested in these aspects? Sometimes more than in the history of the people that lived there? Why did its popularity increase in the 1990's?

There are three possible explanations. First, there is the awareness of scenography. Within museum studies and related fields there is a greater theoretical awareness of how cultural heritage is used. How it is staged, how it is performed and how it is based on the needs and interests of today. But also in society at large there are elements that have contributed to raising the awareness of scenography. Cinema, literature and art play a vital role in this. Authors and screenwriters often play with time. Cinema and television played an important role and increased the interest in reenactments and reconstructions. Peter Greenaway, in his keynote speech, told about the end of cinema. Simultaneously it might have been the end of telling the history of a historic site from beginning to end, in a chronological way. We have to rethink it. Another reason for an increased interest in scenography is that scenography seemed to be failing us. Many restorations made in the 1930's and 1950's are in desperate need of attention and restorers who work in these sites are very much aware of this.

There's also a growing awareness amongst the public, in a time where restoring your own home has become common place. When people discover layers of time in their own houses, finding old wooden floors or wallpaper, the attention of these aspects increase. Or maybe it's the other way around: people make the discoveries in their own home after an inspirational tour in a historic house. Consequently the historic houses respond by displaying their constructiveness.

Secondly, there has been a thirst for authenticity. One important shift in the 1990's was that the notion of authenticity was recognized as neither univocal nor universal, which was officially manifested in the NARA (National Archives and Records Administration) document in 1994. The focus on the regional material in the Venice Charter in 1964 had been replaced by the awareness of several layers of authenticity and different sources of information such as form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting and spirit and feeling. In a way authenticity and honesty has been more closely linked than authenticity and the original material. This was also paired with a new public interest in craftsmanship and ecology and an authentic lifestyle.

Thirdly, we also have the need to create new scenographies. Historic houses have to a large extent become part of an experience economy. They are important contributors to regional development and the demand to attract large numbers of visitors spurs to inventiveness. This might be one of the reasons behind the renewed acceptance for reconstructions within the field. Reconstructing the past and doing it the right way is a matter of professionalism. Included in that professionalism is the demand to be honest and making work transparent. This includes telling the visitor what is true about the scenography and preferably involve him in the process instead of 'only for experts'. Visitors are involved in creating or at least made to understand the scenography of the place. This is also based on the belief that people care, or should be taught to care about heritage.

So there are three explanations or developments for contributing to the antiquarian tour closely linked to the notion of scenography: the awareness of scenography, a thrust to authenticity

and the need to create new scenographies. The theme of this conference day is 'Authenticity and reinvention: an intriguing antagonism(?)'. I would like to claim that authenticity is constantly reinvented. It is rather so that an antagonism might lie between authenticity and dishonesty. To reveal a scenography might be seen as an act of honesty towards the visitor although it is not certain that it will increase the authenticity of their experience. Authenticity and reinvention might not be opposing ideas at all, rather the first – authenticity – has spurred reinvention. The antiquarian tour is one of them.

Q: To whom do you think history belongs? To the artist?

A: *This antiquarian tour has been a way of making new categories of people - people who were interested in other things - interested in historic houses. If there is an interest there is also something which makes you feel that something belongs to you. It's an important way of starting things.*

Introduction of dr. Sun Yat-sen and Soon Ching-ling's House

Ruiling Shi

Vice director of the Education Department of Xian Banpo Museum, China.

Ruiling Shi was invited by the Demhist board to present two historic houses in Shanghai, China.

The first was that of Dr. Sun Yat-sen. He was a forerunner of the Chinese democratic revolution. He is often referred to as the father of modern China as he played a key role in the overthrowing of the Qing dynasty in 1911. He was the first provincial president when the Republic of China was founded in 1912. In 1918 Sun Yat-sen and his wife, Soon Ching-ling moved to the house on Xiangshan Road in Shanghai. The house was built in the early 1900's in European style. It was donated to him by a Canadian Chinese who supported his revolutionary activities. In 1961 the house was proclaimed a cultural heritage site under the protection of the central government. Most objects on display are original and arranged as they were in the 1920's and 1930's.

The second house was the house in Shanghai where madam Soon Ching-ling lived from 1949. She was a chairwoman of the Peoples Republic of China. The house was not only a residence but also the place where she would conduct her state affairs. This house is also in European style. It was originally built for a German business man.

Q: In Demhist we have been working on categorization of historic houses. Demhist recognizes different categories of historic houses. I would say that the two houses you showed are personality houses. But I would like to know, since China is changing, are there other kinds of house museums coming up in China? Do you see certain developments?

A: *We see other museums coming up. Like collectors houses. In Xian we have people who have been collecting coins or Ming dynasty objects, who recently opened a museum. They applied to the government and built their own museum.*

Re-enacting Authentic Courtly Festivities: a Walk on a Tight Rope

Kaspar von Erffa

Founder member and art director at Höfische Festspiele Potsdam, Germany.

For Kaspar von Erffa a museum is a stage. The main elements that make a stage are present in a museum: there is something on display and there are people looking at it. What is true for museums is also true for historic houses like castles and palaces. They are often conceived as a stage. The complete architectural perspective obeys to the laws of theatre. Sometimes these 'architectural theaters' were actually used as stages, for court festivities. Höfische Festspiele Potsdam tries to reenact festivities that really took place in the 18th and 19th century in the Prussian palaces and gardens of Berlin, Potsdam and Brandenburg. Kaspar von Erffa presented some of the festivities that were staged in the past years.

One of the court festivities that was popular in the 18th and 19th century was the *tableau vivant*. The starting point for this project was a painting of 'Apollo and Daphne' made by an unknown French painter. The painting was showed as a *tableau vivant*, but not as a copy. The scene had the same characters and just outside the *tableau* was an interpreter, someone who explained the scene to the public. This was done in the words of that time, translated in contemporary German and by performing the 'Apollo and Daphne' cantata of G.F. Händel.

Another court festivity that was reenacted was originally held in the Palace of Charlottenburg in 1804 where Queen Louise played the role of Minerva in a pantomime dance. The reenacting was based on the original costume drawings and the original music, so it was a recreation of a court festivity like it might have been and to demonstrate that Louise was an artistic Queen who loved classicism. The play was performed next to the apartments of the Queen in Charlottenburg. The public could visit the apartments afterwards and see for themselves how present classicism was at that time, not only in the house but also in the thinking.

Another project was the reenactment of a court festivity of 1821, which was an oriental romance that took place in the rooms of the city palace of Berlin. It was an enormous court festivity with more than two hundred actors and two orchestras. The group went from one room to the other and played a different part of the play in each room. Because the palace does not longer exist the festivity was staged in a palace garden where the public was invited to join the actors on different locations in the garden where the episodes were played. The main goal of the reenactment was to try to give an impression of how it might have been at the time of the festivity.

The project for 2012 is the 'Carrousel de Sanssouci', a sort of ballet with horses. It is one of the most sophisticated forms of court festivities that took place in the 17th, 18th and 19th century. Höfische Festspiele tries to show the highlights of what Frederick the Great presented in 1750 in honor of his sister Wilhelmina. Original costume drawings of the festivity still exists and are the starting point for the reenactment.

All this is walking on a tight rope and there are different reasons for it. First there is the discussion of authenticity. How much authenticity can you have and how much authenticity can you show to your audience? The shows have to be interesting for the audience so the first balance is one between authenticity and bringing an interesting show for a contemporary public. The second balance is the one between the curatorship and the performance. You have to persuade

the curator to allow things that are not 'business as usual' in a museum. A third balance is a financial one. Ticket sales are important to finance the project so it's necessary to attract as much people as possible and interest them in the program but also interest them in the places where these festivities are taking place.

Reactions to this kind of work are varied. Some people think of it as fascinating. Others are more critical. What we try to do with Höfische Festspiele Potsdam is to contribute to the discussion about history.

Q: What is the relation between the organization of the Höfische Festspiele Potsdam and the foundation of the Royal Palaces?

A: We are cooperating intensively because, obviously, we cannot do anything without asking. Because we are an organization in development we try to persuade the foundation not to want too much money from outside, so the thing can grow. We see that there is a huge interest in seeing these historical sites with an event or with something special happening in them. My hope as an entrepreneur is that we will find a possibility to show in cooperation with the foundation these historical sites in an interesting way or in an unusual way and make it that big that the foundation will get the interest because they will get money out of it. Ticketing is for that reason separate.

For the foundation in the end it's about history and we keep on working together but it is in our interest to have a continuous work like this one. But in the end it's an economical question whether it will work or not.

The support is big. If we can use some of the marketing channels of the foundation, that's a great help for us.

Q: How many of these court festivities were there in the past?

A: I don't know. There were not that many really big ones, but a very large number of small ones. I don't think we will run out of court festivities for the next decade. I don't think you always have to reinvent the complete festivity, but you have to show the main elements. For me it would be a dream to develop this kind of horse ballets. Unfortunately we don't know what music they used. We then could invite composers to reinvent music for this kind of festivities. There are a lot of possibilities for developing this using the practice of the time.

An Experience to Remember

Geert Werkers

Designer, teaches audiovisual art at the MAD faculty of the KUL association, Belgium

Sien Design is a Belgian design company that works for museums and often uses theater and film techniques in its exhibition scenography. It tries to provide the audience with 'exhibition experiences'. Sien Design tries to provide scenic, atmospherical and sometimes even interactive experiences that speak to the visitor's emotions.

Geert Werkers presented a few of their projects. The first was 'From pièce montée to pêche Melba', a temporary exhibition at the Gaasbeek castle. The exhibition was about noble desserts in the 19th century. It focused on the evolution of dessert making. The set up was a castle party just before the guests are finishing their dinner. Sien wanted to create a scenography and an atmosphere that was subservient to the objects. It also wanted to unify the existing interiors of the castle with the setting of the exhibition. Because the interiors of the castle are very impressive they were used instead of hidden or neglected. In this setting Sien wanted to work as little as possible with showcases, just to augment the feeling of reality of a castle party. Finding a balance between a safe exhibition and a high level experience was quite a challenge. For those people who did not wish to have an experience, this was a layer which could be left aside so that only the artifacts could be looked at.

The second project was 'The Millennium expo'. This was an exhibition in the Koekelberg Basilica in Brussels that reflected on the concept of time. Sien chose the venue for its atmosphere and symbolic value. One of the applied techniques were actors who were walking in the exhibition. They had two functions: contributing to the atmosphere and guiding the visitors. Another technique were introduction films for every theme. It was an introduction that the public could not skip.

A third project was the Palace at the Meir in Antwerp (which was on the conference program), a monument with a rich building history. Sien focused on the people who had lived in the house and/or who had played a key role in the building's history. They selected four personalities and it is their relation with the building that guides the public.

Q: To whom do you think history belongs? To the artist?

A: Definitely not. I agree with earlier statements that it does not belong to anyone. I think the strength of heritage was always there and it didn't say: 'Hey, I'm here'; we found it and we value it. It survives until we feel that we value it.

'Descartes once said: 'You have to grab people's curiosity before you can do anything else.' You have to excite the public with an idea, you have to manipulate them to come on your side so they open their ears and eyes and make themselves ready for anything else you want to do with them.'

Peter Greenaway

SHORT TOPICS

Impression of the conference visits to Brussels and surroundings in the conference newspaper Demhist Daily: Horta House, Museum van Buuren, Seneffe Estate, Gaasbeek Castle. Photographs Charlotte Heyninck.

Have you seen this?



© Charlotte Heyninck

SHORT TOPICS

Theatrical Approaches in Guided Tours and Advertisement Campaigns

Heinz Buri

Director of marketing, Prussian Palaces and Gardens Foundation, Berlin-Brandenburg, Germany

‘What is the unique selling point of historic house museums? What makes historic house museums different from other cultural attractions like museums, historic sites and monuments or other places of interest? The unique attraction of historic house museums is of course the aura of the authentic original, the sense of place with original interiors. That is in the globalised world of modular components the outstanding strength, especially with respect to tourism. Authenticity, tradition and history present the counterbalance to the *disneyfication* of typical touristic offerings. This would seem to eliminate theatrical approaches that are usually based on the system of mimesis, the creation of an illusion: actors who are pretending to be someone else, in the past. That seems to be in a certain contradiction to the authentic sense of place in historic house museums. Theatrical presentation is not the core business of historic house museums. Nevertheless it can enhance the experience. It can be the cherry on the cake. Theatrical presentations are more than actors in front of visitors pretending to be a historical person.’

‘Guided tours with theatrical components can provide an inside view of courtly life. The main principle [...] is the role of the messenger, well known from staged theatrical plays. It is more interesting to hear somebody talking about what someone else has done [...]. It’s quite boring to hear someone talking about himself. [...] We mainly present the minor characters, the satellites [...].’

‘Advertisement works also with theatrical approaches, also in the cultural section. For example in the promotion for a temporary exhibition. It is the intention of advertising to create attention and therefore theatrical approach can be helpful. If we campaign for a temporary exhibition we are in competition with thousands of events and attractions. [...] we need the second view, we need distinction. The task is to bring people to the exhibition, to bring them [...] to the box office, and not in the first instance to inform them truly about the content of the exhibition. The education objectives have to be achieved in the exhibition itself and not in advertisement.’

Historic House Museums: How Far can they go Retelling Stories in Different Contexts?

Ana Cristina Carvalho

Curator of the Governmental Palaces, São Paulo, Brazil

‘Historic house museums are not only spaces to achieve information. They are places where stories are told. A translation, recreation or representation of a story is a meta-reality. It is not a fake situation. It is a situation of multiple realities where creativity, freedom and transcendence take place to face the confusing diversity of the world we live in. Retelling a story through the house museum is ‘translating’ its original text. In a translation we have to consider the author’s spirit (which is timeless), but also the circumstances of the text (the momentary appearances and manifestations).’

‘Dramatization as a way of telling history in a house museum is natural and authentic, but also relative and subjective. The language of the narrative will always be in relation to the present time. There will always be a gap between the story and the visitor, as it can only be recovered in a symbolic way. The visitor will eventually perceive what is evident and what is veiled. In order to understand the latter it is necessary to evoke the spirit contained in the objects. They become real when they are called forth, like the actors in a play. Supported by the scenography they turn into a poetic script of history.’

‘The house museum is by nature a theater of memories. It touches the universe of sensitivity and emotion. An authentic object can move us without us understanding it. It has the power to enrapture. For that very reason, the critical curatorial attitude must be one of complete respect for the spirit, the truth. The narrator/curator needs to enter into the spirit, catch it, and embody it. Without this, only a simulacrum is created. Greek theater teaches us this by means of epiphanies. and one way to evoke history is to present it through perception. If it is a solid, intense story, we can even keep silence to allow the visitor to hear the voices of the real characters. The ‘theater museum’ is a way to find some other voices.’

The Imperial Museum: The Struggle Between the Representation of the Brazilian Empire History and the Emperor’s Favorite Home

Mauricio Vicente Ferreira jr.

Director of the Imperial Museum, Pétropolis, Brazil

The Imperial Museum is housed in the former Imperial Palace of Petrópolis, a city about 67km to the north of Rio de Janeiro. The city is also referred to as the Imperial City and the Museum and the d. Pedro II’s Palace are two of its main attractions. The Museum reports to the Ministry of Culture through the Brazilian Museums Institute and preserves a part of Brazilian history as well as that of the former Emperor’s summer house.

With 350,000 documents, 55,000 books and 10,000 objects the Museum preserves, studies and communicates. The revitalization of the Museum, including a series of projects, is intended to meet two specific dimensions: the representation of Brazil under the Braganza monarchy and

its link with the birth of the city and the Palace's ambience. It is a matter of the national and local integrating to the benefit of Brazilian society.

Patine and Modern Media as Theatrical Effect

Jorien Jas

Curator at the Gelderland Trust, Arnhem, The Netherlands

In 1951 the Gelderland Trust wished to open Cannenburch Castle in Vaassen (close to Het Loo Palace in Apeldoorn) to the public. Since 1881, when the last member of the Van Isendoorn family had died, the original contents of the castle were no longer there. After the Second World War the castle was confiscated. The result was an empty castle, only the portraits that are part of the interior decoration survived.

How does one refurnish a castle, of which the original contents have gone, without any collections and without any budget to acquire objects? This difficulty did in fact turn out to be an advantage. Because lots of private persons gave objects on loan, Cannenburch could be furnished with objects that are characteristic for a castle in the east of The Netherlands. These objects did not come from the art-market, and most of them were never touched by a restorer.

The patine of these objects, sometimes with primitive repairs, plays an important role in the atmosphere of the interiors. The wear and tear of interiors and objects is a characteristic that is easily underestimated. In any case it is characteristic for castles and country houses of which the glorious past is since long gone. The (theatrical?) effect of patine was since then aimed for. In the mean time an unexpected number of 18th century objects from the original furnishings returned to Cannenburch. Nowadays we are keen to sustain the patine of every object, especially through systematic housekeeping.

The furnishing and presentation of Cannenburch Castle did hardly change until 2010. In that year new theatrical effects were added to the presentation. Modern media, for example 'talking portraits,' enliven the presentation. In this way the former owners and their personnel tell their stories. This revival of Cannenburch castle is much enjoyed by the public.

The Agnon House in Jerusalem. Not a Simple Story...

Eilat Lieber

Chief curator of the Agnon House, Jerusalem, Israel

The Agnon House in Jerusalem is the home of author Shmuel Yosef Agnon, one of the greatest authors of Hebrew literature in modern times and Nobel Prize recipient for literature in 1966. The house, built in 1931, was designed by German-born Architect Fritz Kornberg, from the Bauhaus School of Architecture. Starting in 2006, the house was extensively restored and was opened to the public in January 2009. The author's original study with his impressive library

comprising thousands of books is displayed. His personal effects are laid out just as he used them in his daily writing. In addition, the modest family lounge, where he received presidents, heads of state, rabbis, writers from all over the world, philosophers and close friends, is preserved as it was. It was finally decided to preserve the character of the house through the original collection and contents. To date, four different exhibitions have taken place in the central gallery. One of these, in the summer of 2010, a display of the original illustrations of Avigdor Aricha for Agnon's *Stray Dog* succeeded beyond all expectations, with thousands of visitors.

The challenge facing the museum is not simple – to continually present exhibitions of public cultural interest with limited resources; to produce, advertise and market cultural events based on the works of Agnon. Indeed, in the near future it is possible that a media performance for youngsters and tourists based on the latest technology will be integrated into the exhibition for screening during the evening hours in different languages. By doing so, we will truly have reached 'the golden path' combining authenticity with innovation, the virtual with the real, literature with life.

Nearer to Past Realities

Elsa Rodrigues

Curator of the João de Deus Museum, Lisbon, Portugal

The Historic House and Museum 'João de Deus' is the house where the author spent the last eight years of his life (1830-1896). João de Deus was an admired poet and a respected pedagogue in his time, and he is still remembered today. Visitors come to imbibe the spirit of the 19th century and also to absorb some aspects of João de Deus' daily life. We live in a technological era. Our time is different from the 19th century. What we do at the Museum is to try to catch the spirit of the past. We recreate the atmosphere, the ambiance of the house and crucial moments of João de Deus' life. A recreation is an interpretation of the past. A recreation is a fiction.

It's always a fabricated moment but it is also a great opportunity to come close to past realities. Some of our activities at the historic house museum are designed to help people feel integrated in daily life of the second half of the nineteenth century and to interact with the past.

'For me the language and the techniques we use is a metamorphosis process. I can make an opera, which can be turned into a website, which can become a theatrical activity, which can become a vj-show, which can be turned into a book or a catalogue: the phenomenon of creating a total artwork. This is now becoming common place. It is the concern for the total art phenomenon. Something you could already find with Michelangelo. He was a painter, a sculpture, a poet and ...he made wedding cakes. He turned his hand to anything and his inventiveness and sense of curiosity made him able to manoeuvre backwards and forwards through the whole spectrum of cultural activity.'

Peter Greenaway

APPENDIX

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

■ **Monday 17 October 2011**

Day chair: Daniela Ball

10:00 h	Opening ceremony	Daniela Ball , Chair ICOM/DEM HIST Philip Heylen , Alderman for Culture and Tourism city of Antwerp Jos Van Rillaer , director Agency Arts and Heritage of the Flemish Community Hildegard Van de Velde , Curator Rockoxhuis/ KBC-bank
	Keynote	Peter Greenaway (UK) <i>There Is no such Thing as History, There Are only Historians</i>
12:30 h	Lunch	
13:30 h	Theme	Authenticity and Reinvention: an Intriguing Antagonism (?)
	Introduction to the theme	Peter van Mensch (NL) <i>Catching the Space between Objects</i>
	Discussion paper	Maria de Jesus Monge (PT) <i>Same Family, Different Time, Different Place - Remembering Dukedom and Crown</i>
	Discussion paper	António Ponte (PT) <i>Same Family, Different Time, Different Place - The Birth of a Royal Family</i>
	Discussion/ Questions	
15:30 h	Break	
16:00 h	Paper	Geert Werkers (BE) <i>An Experience to Remember</i>
	Paper	Hedvig Mårdh (SE) <i>The Antiquarian Tour</i>
	Discussion/ Questions	
16:45 h	Visits	Palace at the Meir, Antwerp Bart Jonckheere (BE) Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp Iris Kockelbergh & Werner van Hoof (BE)
19:30 h		Welcome reception City Hall
20:30 h		End of program

■ Tuesday 18 October 2011

Day Chair: Hetty Berens

9:00 h	Theme	Theatres of History: the Museum as a Stage
	Introduction of the theme	Yves Schoonjans (BE) <i>Theatrical Domesticity? Playing the Past</i>
	Discussion	David Milne (UK) <i>The Tale of a House in Spitalfields</i>
	Discussion	Nicholas Smith (UK) <i>Theater or Museum? Presenting the Past at Strawberry Hill in 1797 and 2011</i>
	Discussion/ Questions	
11:15 h	Break	
11:45 h	Paper	Mario Marchisella (CH) <i>'Schliessen Sie mir das Kleid danke/Close my dress, thank you'</i>
	Paper	Conny Bogaard (USA) <i>Historic Houses and the Modern Gesamtkunstwerk</i>
	Paper	John Barnes & Joanna Marschner (UK) <i>The Enchanted Palace: How Building Work Shook the Stories from the Fabric of Kensington Palace, London</i>
	Discussion/ Questions	
12:45 h	Lunch	
13:45 h	Short Topics Questions	Ana Cristina Carvalho (BR) <i>Historic House Museums: Ho Far can they go Retelling Stories in Different Contexts?</i> Heinz Buri (DE) <i>Theatrical Approaches in Guided Tours and Advertisement Campaigns</i> Eilat Lieber (IL) <i>The Agnon House in Jerusalem. Not a Simple Story...</i> Mauricio Vicente Ferreira jr. (BR) <i>The Imperial Museum : the Struggle Between the Representation of the Brazilian Empire History and the Emperor's Favourite Home</i> Jorien Jas (NL) <i>Patine and Modern Media as Theatrical Effect</i> Elsa Rodrigues (PT) <i>Nearer to Past Realities</i>
15:00 h	Visits	Rubens House, Antwerp Ben Van Beneden (BE) Rockox House, Antwerp Hildegard Van de Velde (BE)
18:30 h	End of program	

■ **Wednesday 19 October 2011**

Day chair (morning): Maria de Jesus Monge

Day chair (afternoon): Hartmut Dorgerloh

9:00 h	Theme	Reinventing the Past: Intangible Aspects
	Introduction to the theme	Marc Jacobs (BE) <i>Destroy after Use. Constructing Temporary Pasts for Profit: 'Historical Houses' in Old or Gay Belgiums</i>
	Discussion paper	Dries Chaerle (BE) <i>Exposing a Historical House. A story for the Vessels of Talbot House, Poperinge</i>
10:15 h	Break	
10:45 h	Discussion paper	Morris J. Vogel (USA) <i>Making history theatrical at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum</i>
	Discussion paper	Dirk Van Den Broeck (BE) <i>Un seule désEAR. Gaasbeek Castle</i>
11:45 h	Discussion/ Questions	
12:15 h	Lunch	
13:15 h	Paper	Carmen Jiménez Sanz (ES) <i>Museums Recreating the Spanish Golden Age. The Lope de Vega House Museum</i>
	Paper	Ruiling Shi (CN) <i>Introduction of dr. Sun Yat-sen and Soon Ching-ling's House</i>
	Paper	Kaspar von Erffa (DE) <i>Re-enacting Authentic Courtly Festivities: a Walk on a Tight-rope</i>
	Discussion/ Questions	
14:15 h	Visits	<i>Exposition 'Reünie' Cathedral, Antwerp</i> Ria Fabri (BE) <i>Museum aan de Stroom – MAS, Antwerp</i> Carl Depauw (BE)
18:00 h	End of program	
18:00 – 20:00 h	<i>General Assembly DEMHIST + Reception</i>	

■ **Thursday 20 October 2011**

9:00 h		Transfer to Brussels
10:00 h	Visits	Horta House, Brussels Museum Van Buuren, Brussels
12:30 h		Transfer
13:30 h	Visits	Seneffe Estate, Seneffe Marjolaine Hanssens (BE) Gaasbeek Castle and Garden, Gaasbeek Luc Vanackere (BE)
18:30 h	Farewell Dinner	Gaasbeek Castle
21:00 h		Transfer to Antwerp
22:00 h	End of program	

