

— | | —

# Key Concepts of Museology

— | | —

— |

| —

— |

| —

# Key Concepts of Museology

Edited by André Desvallées  
and François Mairesse

  
**ARMAND COLIN**

  
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF MUSEUMS  
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MUSEES  
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MUSEOS

With the assistance of the Musée Royal de Mariemont  
[www.musee-mariemont.be](http://www.musee-mariemont.be)



And the assistance of the ICOM International Committee for Museology



Cover photos:

© 2009 Musée du Louvre / Angèle Dequier

© National Heritage Board, Singapore

© Auckland Museum

© Ningbo Museum

© Armand Colin, 2010

ISBN: 978-2-200-25398-1

## EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

François Mairesse, André Desvallées, Bernard Deloche, Serge Chaumier, Martin Schärer, Raymond Montpetit, Yves Bergeron, Noémie Drouguet, Jean Davallon

*With the participation of:*

Philippe Dubé, Nicole Gesché-Koning, André Gob, Bruno Brulon Soares, Wan Chen Chang, Marília Xavier Cury, Blondine Desbiolles, Jan Dolak, Jennifer Harris, Francisca Hernandez Hernandez, Diana Lima, Pedro Mendes, Lynn Maranda, Monica Risnicoff de Gorgas, Anita Shah, Graciela Weisinger, Anna Leshchenko, all of whom have contributed to the ICOFOM Symposium in 2009 on this subject or have read through this document.

Translated from the French version by Suzanne Nash

— |

| —

— |

| —

## FOREWORD

The development of professional standards is one of the core objectives of ICOM, particularly in the area of advancement, sharing, and communication of knowledge to the broad-ranging global museum community, but also to those who develop policies in relation to its work, to those responsible for managing the legal and social aspects of its profession, and not least to those to whom it is directed and who are expected to participate in and benefit from it. Launched in 1993, under the supervision of André Desvallées, and with the collaboration of François Mairesse from 2005 onwards, the *Dictionary of Museology* is a monumental work resulting from many years of research, interrogation, analysis, revision and debate by ICOM's International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM), which is particularly devoted to the process of developing our comprehension of the practice and theory of museums and the work that is undertaken within these institutions daily.

The role, development and management of museums has changed greatly in the last couple of decades. Museum institutions have become steadily more visitor-focused and some of the larger museums are veering more towards a corporate management model in their daily operations. The museum profession and environment have therefore inevitably evolved. Countries such as China have seen an unprecedented increase in their museum presence, but there are equally important museum developments occurring at the micro level, for example in Small Island Developing States (SIDS). These exciting changes

## FOREWORD

lead to increasing discrepancies in museum job specifications and training courses across different cultures. In this context, a reference tool for museum professionals and students of museology is all-the-more essential. Where the ICOM/UNESCO publication *Running a Museum: A Practical Handbook* provided museum practitioners with a basic handbook on current museum practice, the Encyclopaedia Dictionarium should be regarded as a companion piece, providing a complementary perspective on the theory of museums.

While the challenges of day-to-day work often overwhelm the ability of the museum field to stop and think about its fundamental philosophical bases, there is a growing need for functionaries at all levels to rise to the challenge of bringing clarity and comprehension to those who question the relevance of the museum to society and its citizens. ICOFOM's crucial work as encapsulated in the Encyclopaedic Dictionary provides for a cogent, structured deconstruction and distillation of the core precepts underpinning our work today. Although the Dictionary presents a predominantly Francophone vision of museology for reasons of linguistic coherence, the terminologies synthesised herein are comprehended and/or utilised by museologists in several different cultures. The publication, while not exhaustive, synthesises decades of knowledge development in a systematic investigation of both the epistemology and etymology of the museum and offers an in-depth presentation of the primary concepts in Museology today, with an elegantly pragmatic view of both the historical redundancies and current contentions, which invest in the growth and expansion of the profession. ICOFOM, the Dictionary's editors and its authors have consistently brought sensibility, perception, rigour and balance to this task of 'defining' and explaining the institution and the practice.

As an *avant première* of the complete Encyclopaedic Dictionary, this brochure has been designed to give access to the widest public possible, in the context both historical and current, for the derivation and evolution of the various terms that litter the language today. In the spirit of ICOM's policy of embracing diversity and promoting greater inclusion, ICOM anticipates that like the *ICOM Code of Ethics*



**FOREWORD**

*for Museums*, its publication will stimulate broad-based debate and collaboration in its continued updating and revision, rather than being left on the high shelf. ICOM's 22<sup>nd</sup> triennial General Conference, in Shanghai, China is therefore a fitting début for this invaluable reference tool in museology. Bringing together museum professionals of all nationalities is precisely the type of platform that gives birth to standards and reference tools such as these for current and future generations.

Alissandra Cummins  
President  
International Council of Museums (ICOM)

— |

| —

— |

| —

## PREFACE

In accordance with the underlying principles of ICOM, the aim of the International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM) since its beginnings in 1977 has been to develop museology as a scientific and academic discipline which will foster the development of museums and the museum profession through research, study, and dissemination of the main currents of museological thinking.

To this end a multidisciplinary working group was created to make a critical analysis of museological terminology, focusing its thinking on the fundamental concepts of museology. For nearly twenty years the Thesaurus Working Group compiled remarkable essays and summaries from its scientific research. Convinced of the importance of providing the public with a catalogue of terms constituting fundamental reference material, ICOFOM decided – with the support of the International Council of Museums – to introduce this publication at the ICOM General Conference to be held in Shanghai in November 2010. The introductory brochure, a summary of each of the twenty-one essays on a fundamental museological term, will be presented as a ‘preview’ of the forthcoming *Dictionary of Museology* in which these essays will be published in full, accompanied by a selective dictionary describing close to 500 words mentioned in them.

I would like to emphasise that this brochure, an introduction to the far more extensive work, does not pretend to be exhaustive but aims to permit the reader to differentiate between the concepts that are

## PREFACE

covered by each term, to discover new connotations and their links to the entire museological field.

Dr. Vinos Sofka did not work in vain when, in the first years of ICOFOM, he strove to turn this international committee into a forum for reflection and debate on museological theory, able to reflect on its own foundations. Thus the committee's ongoing intellectual production, which continues today, has been preserved through the annual publication of the *ICOFOM Study Series* (ISS) which has enriched the body of museological theory for over thirty years. The international bibliography of all ICOFOM publications is unique and represents a faithful picture of the evolution of museological thinking throughout the world.

From reading the articles in this brochure we can understand the need to reconsider the theoretical fundamentals of museology from an integrating and pluralistic approach, founded in the conceptual wealth of each word. The terms presented in this brochure are a clear example of the work of a group of specialists who have been able to understand and enhance the fundamental structure of the language, our intangible heritage *par excellence*. The conceptual reach of museological terminology allows us to appreciate the extent to which theory and practice are inseparably linked. Wishing to go beyond beaten paths, the authors introduced their own observations wherever they needed to draw attention to a specific characteristic of a term. They were not trying to build or rebuild bridges, but rather to start from an examination of other more precise concepts and search for new cultural meanings which enrich the theoretical foundations of a discipline as vast as museology, destined to strengthen the role of museums and their professionals worldwide.

In my position as Chair of ICOFOM it is a great honour and pleasure to be present at the launch, through this brochure, of a work that will soon be a landmark in the vast museological bibliography produced by the members of ICOFOM from different countries and disciplines, all united around one common ideal.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all who have generously contributed their time and talents to bringing these

## PREFACE

fundamental works to life: our friends and colleagues of whom we are extremely proud:

- to ICOM, our guiding organisation, for having understood, thanks to the responsiveness of its Director General, Mr. Julien Anfruns, the importance of a project begun long ago and which can now be completed thanks to his commitment,
- to André Desvallées, author of and driving force behind a project which has gained unexpected and well-deserved importance,
- to François Mairesse, who began his trajectory within ICOFOM in his youth, bringing his gifts as a productive writer and researcher, and who, with André Desvallées, successfully coordinated the actions of the Thesaurus Working Group and completed the editing of this brochure and the *Dictionary of Museology*.
- to all the internationally renowned authors of the different articles, museological experts in their respective disciplines,
- and finally to our three translators, whose work has also been scientific in the translation of specialised terms from French when their equivalent is not always obvious, either in English or in Spanish... or in Chinese.

To all those who have contributed, each in their own way, to fulfilling a dream that has become a reality, I would like to express my most sincere gratitude.

Nelly Decarolis  
Chair  
ICOFOM

— |

| —

— |

| —

## INTRODUCTION

What is a museum? How do we define a collection? What is an institution? What does the term 'heritage' encompass? Museum professionals have inevitably developed answers to questions such as these, which are fundamental to their work, compiled according to their knowledge and experience. Do we need to reconsider these? We believe so. Museum work shifts back and forth between practice and theory, with theory regularly being sacrificed to the thousand and one daily tasks. The fact remains, however, that thought is a stimulating exercise which is also fundamental for personal development and for the development of the museum world.

The purpose of ICOM, on an international level, and of national and regional museum associations more locally, is to develop standards and improve the quality of the thinking that guides the museum world and the services that it provides to society, through meetings between professionals. More than thirty international committees work on this collective think tank, each in its specific sector, producing remarkable publications. But how can this wealth of thought on conservation, new technologies, education, historical houses, management, professions, and more, all fit together? More generally, how is what one might call the museum field organised? These are the questions addressed by the ICOM International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM) since its foundation in 1977, in particular through its publications (*ICOFOM Study Series*) which set out to inventory and synthesise the diversity of opinions in museology. This is the context in which the plan to make

## INTRODUCTION

a compendium of basic concepts in museology, coordinated by André Desvallées, was launched in 1992 by Martin R. Schärer, Chairman of ICOFOM. He was joined eight years later by Norma Rusconi (who sadly passed away in 2007), and by François Mairesse. Over the years a consensus emerged that we should try to present, in some twenty terms, a panorama of the varied landscape that the museum field has to offer. This work has gathered momentum over the past few years. Several preliminary versions of the articles were published (in *ICOFOM Study Series* and in the review *Publics & musées*, which later became *Culture & musées*). We propose here a summary of each of these terms, presenting different aspects of each concept in condensed form. These are addressed and further developed in the articles of about ten to thirty pages each, along with a dictionary of about 400 terms, which will appear in the *Dictionary of Museology* now being prepared for publication.

The project to compile the *Dictionary* is based on an international vision of the museum, fuelled by many exchanges within ICOFOM. The authors come from French-speaking countries, for reasons of linguistic coherence: Belgium, Canada, France, Switzerland. They are Yves Bergeron, Serge Chaumier, Jean Davallon, Bernard Deloche, André Desvallées, Noémie Drouguet, François Mairesse, Raymond Montpetit and Martin R. Schärer. A first version of this work was presented and discussed at length at the 32<sup>nd</sup> symposium of ICOFOM in Liège and Mariemont (Belgium) in 2009.

Two points are worthy of brief discussion at this point: the composition of the editorial committee and the choice of the twenty-one terms.

### **The French-speaking museal world in the ICOM dialogue**

Why did we choose a committee with almost exclusively French speakers? Many reasons explain this choice, most but not all of them practical ones. We know that the idea of an international and perfectly harmonious collective work is a utopian vision, when not



## INTRODUCTION

everyone shares a common language (scientific or not). The international committees of ICOM are well aware of this situation, which, to avoid the risk of a Babel, leads them to favour one language – English – today's *lingua franca*. Naturally, the choice of the smallest common denominator works to the benefit of those who master the language, often to the detriment of many others less familiar with the tongue of Shakespeare, who are forced to present their thoughts only in a caricatured version. Using one of the three ICOM languages (English, French and Spanish) was unavoidable, but which one? The nationality of the first contributors, under the direction of André Desvallées (who had worked for many years with Georges Henri Rivière, the first Director of ICOM and the founder of French museology) quickly led to the selection of French, but there were other arguments in its favour. Most of the contributors can read if not all three, then at least two of the ICOM languages, even though their command may be far from perfect. We are familiar with the wealth of Anglo-American contributions in the museum field, but we must point out that most of these authors – with some notable exceptions, such as the emblematic figures of Patrick Boylan and Peter Davis, read neither French nor Spanish. The choice of French in connection, we hope, with a fairly good knowledge of foreign literature, allowed us to embrace, if not all contributions in the museum field then at least some of its aspects, which are not generally explored but which are very important for ICOM. We are, however, aware of the limits of our research and hope that this work will inspire other teams to present, in their own language (German or Italian, for example), a different approach to the museum field.

On the other hand, the choice of a language has consequences for the structuring of thought – as illustrated by a comparison of the definition of the museum by ICOM in 1974 and in 2007, the first being originally drafted in French, the second in English. We are aware that this volume would not have been the same in Spanish, English or German, both on the level of its structure and in its choice of terms, but there would also have been a certain theoretical bias! It is not surprising that most practical guides about museums are written in English (such as the excellent manual edited by Patrick Boylan

## INTRODUCTION

*Running a Museum: A Practical Handbook*<sup>1</sup>), while they are much rarer in France or in the old eastern European countries, which favour essay writing and developing thought and theory.

It would nevertheless be too caricatural to divide museum literature into a practical component, strictly Anglo-American, and a theoretical component, closer to the Latin way of thinking: the number of theoretical essays written by Anglo-Saxon thinkers in museum literature completely contradicts this picture. The fact remains that a number of differences exist, and differences are always enriching to learn and to appreciate. We have tried to take this into consideration.

Finally it is important to pay tribute, through the choice of the French language, to the fundamental theoretical work continued for many years by the first two directors of ICOM, Georges Henri Rivière and Hugues de Varine, without whom a large part of the museum work in continental Europe and in the Americas and Africa could not be understood. A fundamental reflection on the museum world cannot overlook its history, just as it must keep in mind that its origins were anchored in the Enlightenment and that its transformation (that is its institutionalisation) occurred at the time of the French Revolution, but also that the theoretical foundations were laid on the other side of the Berlin wall during the 1960s when the world was still divided into two antagonistic blocs. Although the geopolitical order was completely overturned nearly a quarter of a century ago, it is important that the museum sector should not forget its own history – this would be absurd for an instrument that passes culture on to the public and to future generations! However, there is still a risk of a very short memory which retains from museum history only how to run such institutions and how to attract visitors...

### **A constantly evolving structure**

Right from the start it was not the authors' aim to write a 'definitive' treatise about the museum world, an ideal theoretical system cut off

<sup>1</sup> BOYLAN P. (COORD.), *Running a Museum: A Practical Handbook*, Paris, ICOM/Unesco, 2004. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001410/141067e.pdf> (accessed: June 2010).

## INTRODUCTION

from reality. The relatively modest formula of a list of twenty-one terms was chosen to try to mark out a continuum of thought on the museum field with only so many waymarks. The reader will not be surprised to find here a number of familiar terms in common use, such as museum, collection, heritage, public, but we hope he will discover some meanings and aspects of these which are less familiar. He may be surprised not to find certain other terms, such as 'conservation', which is examined under 'preservation'. We have not, however, taken up all the developments that have been made by the members of the International Committee for Conservation (ICOM-CC), whose work extends far beyond our pretensions in this field. Other more theoretical terms may seem somewhat exotic to museum practitioners at first sight: museal, musealisation, museology, etc. Our aim was to present the broadest view possible of what can be observed in the museum world, including some common and some more unusual practices likely to have a considerable impact on the future of museums in the long term, for example the concept of virtual museums and cyber museums.

Let us first set out the limits of this work: we are proposing a theoretical and critical reflection on museum work in its broad sense, which goes beyond traditional museums. We can of course begin with *museum* and try to define it. In the ICOM definition of museum, it is an *institution* at the service of *society* and its development. What do these two fundamental terms mean? But above all – and museum definitions do not immediately answer this question – why do museums exist? We know that the museum world is linked to the concept of *heritage*, but it is far larger than this. How can we suggest this wider context? By the concept of *museal* (or the museal field), which is the theoretical field dealing with these issues, in the same way that politics are the field of political reflection, etc. The critical and theoretical examination of the museal field is *museology*, whereas the practical aspect is *museography*. For each one of these terms there are often not one but several definitions which have altered over time. The different interpretations of each of these terms are examined here.

## INTRODUCTION

The museum world has evolved a great deal over the years, both in terms of its functions and through its materiality and the main elements upon which its work is built. In practical terms, museums work with *objects* which form their *collections*. The human element is obviously fundamental to understanding the way museums work, as much for the staff working within the museum – the *professionals*, and their relation to *ethics* – as for the *public* for whom the museum is intended. What are the functions of museums? They carry out an activity that can be described as a process of *musealisation* and visualisation. More generally, we speak of museal functions, which have been described in different ways over time. We have based our research on one of the best known models, crafted at the end of the 1980s by the *Reinwardt Academie* in Amsterdam, which recognises three functions: *preservation* (which includes the acquisition, conservation and management of collections), *research* and *communication*. Communication itself includes *education* and *exhibition*, undoubtedly the two most visible functions of museums. In this regard it seemed to us that the educational function had grown sufficiently over the past few decades for the term *mediation* to be added to it. One of the major differences that struck us between earlier museum work and today is the growth in the importance attached to notions of *management*, so we thought that because of its specificities, it should be treated as a museum function. The same is probably true for museum *architecture*, which has also grown in importance to the point where it sometimes upsets the balance between other museum functions.

How does one define a museum? By a conceptual approach (museum, heritage, institution, society, ethics, museal), by theoretical and practical considerations (museology, museography), by its functions (object, collection, musealisation), through its players (professionals, public), or by the activities which ensue from it (preservation, research, communication, education, exhibition, mediation, management, architecture)? There are many possible points of view which have to be compared to better understand the museum phenomenon, which is rapidly developing, the recent evolutions of which cannot leave anyone indifferent.

## INTRODUCTION

In the early 1980s the museum world experienced a wave of unprecedented changes: having long been considered elitist and unobtrusive, museums were now, as it were, *coming out*, flaunting a taste for spectacular architecture, mounting large exhibitions that were showy and hugely popular and intending to become part of a certain style of consumerism. The popularity of museums has not failed since, and they have doubled in number in the space of little more than a generation, while astonishing new building projects spring up from Shanghai to Abu Dhabi, at the dawn of the new geopolitical changes promised in the future. One generation later the museum field is still changing. Even if *homo touristicus* seems to have replaced the visitor as the main target of museum marketing, we can still wonder about their prospects and ask: is there still a future for museums as we know them? Is the civilisation of material goods crystallised by museums undergoing radical change? We cannot claim to answer such questions here, but we hope that those who are interested in the future of museums in general or, more practically, in the future of their own institution, will find in these few pages some elements which may enrich their thoughts.

François Mairesse and André Desvallées

— |

| —

— |

| —

# A

## ARCHITECTURE

*n.*—Equivalent in French: *architecture*; Spanish: *arquitectura*; German: *Architektur*; Italian: *architettura*; Portuguese: *arquitectura* (Brazil: *arquitetura*).

(Museum) architecture is defined as the art of designing and installing or building a space that will be used to house specific museum functions, more particularly the functions of exhibition and display, preventive and remedial active conservation, study, management, and receiving visitors.

Since the invention of the modern museum, from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup>, while old heritage buildings were also being reconverted for museum use, a specific architecture evolved that was linked to the requirements of preserving, researching and communicating collections through permanent or temporary exhibitions. This architecture is evident in the earliest museum buildings as much as in the most contemporary ones. The architectural vocabulary has itself influenced the development of the idea of the museum. Thus the form of the temple with a cupola and columned portico became established along with the gallery, conceived as one of the main

models for fine arts museums, and by extension gave rise to the names *gallery*, *galerie*, *galleria*, and *Galerie* in France, Italy and Germany and in Anglo-American countries.

Although the form of museum buildings was often focused on safeguarding collections, it evolved as new functions in museum work were developed. So it was that after seeking solutions for better lighting of the exhibits (Soufflot, Brébion, 1778; J.-B. Le Brun, 1787), for distributing the collections better throughout the museum building (Mechel, 1778-1784), and for structuring the exhibition space better (Leo von Klenze, 1816-1830), at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century museum people realised that the permanent exhibitions must be reduced. To this end they created storage areas, either by sacrificing exhibition rooms or by creating space in the basement, or by building new structures. In addition, every effort was made to make the setting for the exhibits as neutral as possible – even if this meant sacrificing all or part of the existing historical décor. The invention of electricity greatly facilitated these improvements and allowed the lighting systems to be completely revised.

New functions that emerged in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century led to major architectural changes: the increase in the number of temporary exhibitions led to a different distribution of collections between the permanent exhibition and storage spaces; the development of visitor facilities, educational workshops and rest areas, in particular the creation of large multi-purpose spaces; the development of bookshops, restaurants and shops for selling items relating to the exhibitions. But at the same time, the decentralisation by regrouping and by subcontracting some museum operations required the building or installation of specialised autonomous buildings: firstly, restoration workshops and laboratories which could specialise while serving several museums, then storage areas located away from the exhibition spaces.

The *architect* is the person who designs and draws the plans for the building and who directs its construction. More broadly speaking, the person who designs the envelope around the collections, the staff and the public. Seen from this perspective, architecture affects all the elements connected with the space and light within the museum, aspects which might seem to be of secondary importance but which prove to be determining factors for the meaning of the display (arrangement in chronological order, visibility from all angles, neutral background, etc.). Museum buildings are thus

designed and built according to an architectural programme drawn up by the scientific and administrative heads of the establishment. However, the decisions about definition of the programme and the limits of the architect's intervention are not always distributed in this way. Architecture, as art or the method for building and installing a museum, can be seen as a complete oeuvre, one that integrates the entire museum mechanism. This approach, sometimes advocated by architects, can only be envisaged when the architectural programme encompasses all the museographical issues, which is often far from being the case.

It can happen that the programmes given to the architects include the interior design, allowing the latter – if no distinction is made between the areas for general use and those for museographical use – to give free rein to their 'creativity', sometimes to the detriment of the museum. Some architects have specialised in staging exhibitions and have become stage designers or exhibition designers. Those who can call themselves 'museographers', or specialists in museum practice are rare, unless their practices include this specific type of competence.

The present difficulties of museum architecture lie in the conflict which logically exists between, on the one hand, the ambitions of the architect (who will find himself in the spotlight due to the international visibility of this type of building today), and on



the other hand, the people connected with the preservation and displaying of the collections; finally, the comfort of the different visitors must be taken into account. This issue has already been highlighted by the architect Auguste Perret: “For a ship to float, should it not be designed quite differently from a locomotive? The specificity of the museum building falls to the architect, who will be inspired by its function to create the organism.”

(Perret, 1931). A look at present day architectural creations shows that, even if most architects take the requirements of the museum programme into consideration, many continue to favour the beautiful object over the excellent tool.

▷ **DERIVATIVES:** ARCHITECTURAL PROGRAMME.

☞ **CORRELATED:** DÉCOR, EXHIBITION DESIGN, INTERIOR DESIGNER, LIGHTING, MUSEOGRAPHIC PROGRAMME, MUSEOGRAPHY.

# C

## COLLECTION

*n.* – Equivalent in French: *collection*; Spanish: *coleccion*; German: *Sammlung, Kollektion*; Italian: *collezione, raccolta*; Portuguese: *colecção* (Brazil: *coleção*).

Generally speaking, a collection may be defined as a set of material or intangible objects (works, artefacts, mentefacts, specimens, archive documents, testimonies etc.) which an individual or an establishment has assembled, classified, selected, and preserved in a safe setting and usually displays to a smaller or larger audience, according to whether the collection is public or private.

To constitute a real collection, these sets of objects must form a (relatively) coherent and meaningful whole. It is important to distinguish between a collection and a *fonds*, an archival term referring to a collection from a single source, which differs from a museum collection by its organic nature, and indicates archival documents of all kinds which have been “automatically gathered, created and/or accumulated and used by a physical person or a family in its activities or its functions.” (Bureau of Canadian Archivists, 1992). In the case of a *fonds*, unlike a museum collection, there is no selection and

rarely any intention to build a coherent whole.

Whether material or intangible, a collection is at the heart of the museum’s activities. “Museums have a duty to acquire, preserve and promote their collections as a contribution to the safeguarding of the natural, cultural and scientific heritage” (ICOM Code of Ethics, 2006, article 2). Without saying as much explicitly, ICOM’s definition of a museum remains essentially tied to this principle, confirming Louis Réau’s long-standing opinion: “We understand that museums are made for collections and that they must be built as it were from inside to outside, shaping the container according to the content” (Réau, 1908). This concept no longer corresponds to some models of museums which do not own collections, or which have collections that are not at the heart of their scientific work. The concept of collection is also one of those most widely used in the museum world, even if we have favoured the notion of ‘museum object’, as will be seen below. However, one can enumerate three possible connotations of this concept, which varies according to two factors: on the one hand, the

institutional nature of the collection, and on the other hand, the material or intangible nature of the collection media.

1. Frequent attempts have been made to differentiate between a museum collection and other types of collection because the term 'collection' is so commonly used. Generally speaking (since this is not the case for every museum) the museum collection – or the museum collections – are both the source and the purpose of the activities of the museum perceived as an institution. Collections can thus be defined as “the collected objects of a museum, acquired and preserved because of their potential value as examples, as reference material, or as objects of aesthetic or educational importance” (Burcaw, 1997). We can thus refer to the museum phenomenon as the institutionalisation of a private collection. We must note, however, that if the curator or the museum staff are not collectors, collectors have always had close ties with curators. Museums should have an acquisition policy – as emphasised by ICOM, which also mentions a collection policy – museums select, purchase, assemble, receive. The French verb *collectionner* is rarely used because it is too closely linked to the actions of the private collector and to its derivatives (Baudrillard, 1968), that is to say collectionism and accumulation, known pejoratively as 'collectionitis'. From this perspective the collection is seen as both the result and the

source of a scientific programme, the purpose of which is acquisition and research, beginning with the material and the intangible evidence of man and his environment. This criterion, however, does not differentiate between the museum and the private collection, in so far as the latter can be assembled with a scientific objective, even though the museum may acquire a private collection which has been built with very little intention to serve science. This is when the institutional nature of the museum dominates when defining the term. According to Jean Davallon, in a museum “the objects are always parts of systems and categories” (Davallon, 1992). Among the systems relating to a collection, besides the written inventory which is a basic requirement of a museum collection, it is just as essential to adopt a classification system which describes and can also rapidly find any item among the thousands or millions of objects (taxonomy, for example, is the science of classifying living organisms). Modern classification systems have been greatly influenced by information technology, but documenting collections remains an activity requiring specific and rigorous knowledge, based on building up a thesaurus of terms describing the relations between the different categories of objects.

2. The definition of collection can also be viewed from a more general perspective to include private collectors and museums, but taking

its assumed materiality as a starting point. Since this collection is made of material objects – as was the case very recently for the ICOM definition of museums – the collection is identified by the place where is located. Krzysztof Pomian defines the collection as “any group of natural or artificial objects that are held temporarily or permanently outside the circuit of economic activity, subject to special protection in an enclosed place designed for this purpose, and displayed on view” (Pomian, 1987). Pomian thus defines the collection by its essentially symbolic value, in so far as the object has lost its usefulness or its value as an item for exchange and has become a carrier of meaning (“semiphore” or carrier of significance). (see *Object*).

3. The recent development of museums – in particular the recognition of intangible heritage – has emphasised the more general nature of collections while also raising new challenges. Intangible collections (traditional knowledge, rituals and myths in ethnology, ephemeral gestures and performances in contemporary art) have led to the development of new systems for acquisition. The material composition of objects alone sometimes becomes secondary, and the documentation of the collecting process – which has always been important in archaeology and ethnology – now becomes the most important information. This information is not only part of research, but also part of communicating to the public.

Museum collections have always appeared relevant provided that they are defined in relation to the accompanying documentation, and also by the work that results from them. This evolution has led to a much wider meaning of the collection as a gathering of objects, each preserving its individuality, and assembled intentionally according to a specific logic. This latter meaning, the most open, includes toothpick collections accumulated as well as traditional museum collections, but also collections of oral history, memories or scientific experiments.

▷ **DERIVATIVES:** COLLECT, COLLECTION, COLLECTOR, COLLECTION MANAGEMENT.

☞ **CORRELATED:** ACQUISITION, CATALOGUE, CATALOGUING, CONSERVATION, DEACCESSION, DOCUMENTATION, EXHIBIT, EXHIBITION, PRESERVATION, RESEARCH, RESTORATION, RETURN, RESTITUTION, STUDY.

---

## COMMUNICATION

*n.* – Equivalent in French: *communication*; Spanish: *comunicación*; German: *Kommunikation*; Italian: *comunicazione*, Portuguese: *comunicação*.

Communication (C) is the action of conveying information between one or several emitters (E) and one or several receivers (R) through a channel (the ECR model, Lasswell 1948). The concept is so general that it is not limited to human processes of bearing information of a semantic nature, but is also encountered in relation to machines and to animals or social life (Wiener 1949). The

term has two usual connotations which can be found to different degrees in museums, according to whether the phenomenon is reciprocal ( $E \leftrightarrow C \leftrightarrow R$ ) or not ( $E \rightarrow C \rightarrow R$ ). In the first case the communication is called interactive, while in the second it is unilateral and spread out in time. When communication is unilateral and operates in time, and not just in space, it is called *transmission* (Debray, 2000).

In the museum context communication emerges both as the presentation of the results of research undertaken into the collections (catalogues, articles, conferences, exhibitions) and as the provision of information about the objects in the collections (the permanent exhibition and the information connected with it). This interpretation sees the exhibition both as an integral part of the research process and as an element in a more general communication system including for example, scientific publications. This is the rationale which prevailed in the PRC (Preservation–Research–Communication) system proposed by the Reinwardt Academie in Amsterdam, which includes under communication the functions of exhibition, publication, and education fulfilled by the museum.

1. Application of the term ‘communication’ to museums is not obvious, in spite of the use made of it by ICOM in its definition of the museum until 2007. This definition states that a museum “acquires, conserves, researches, communicates

and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.” Until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the principle function of a museum was to preserve amassed cultural or natural treasures, and possibly to display these, without explicitly expressing any intention to communicate, that is to convey a message or information to a receiving public. If in the 1990s, people were asking themselves whether the museum was really a medium (Davallon, 1992; Rasse, 1999) this was because the museum’s communication function did not appear obvious to everyone. On the one hand, the idea of a museum message appeared only relatively late, with thematic exhibitions that were principally aimed at education; on the other hand, the receiving public remained a great unknown for a long time, and it is only quite recently that museum visitor studies and visitor surveys have developed. Seen from the perspective favoured in the ICOM definition of museums, museum communication would appear to be the sharing, with different publics, of the objects in the collection and the information resulting from research into them.


2. We can define the specificity of communication as practised by museums in two points: (1) it is most often unilateral, that is, without the possibility of reply from the receiving public, whose extreme passivity was rightly emphasised by McLuhan and Parker (1969, 2008). This does

not mean that the visitor is not personally involved (whether interactively or not) in this type of communication (Hooper-Greenhill, 1991); (2) it is not essentially verbal, nor can it really be compared with reading a text (Davalon, 1992), but it works through the sensory presentation of the objects exhibited: “The museum as a communication system, then, depends on the non-verbal language of the objects and observable phenomena. It is primarily a visual language, and at times an aural or tactile language. So intense is its communicative power that ethical responsibility in its use must be a primary concern of the museum worker” (Cameron, 1968).

3. More generally speaking, communication gradually became the driving force of museum operations towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This means that museums communicate in a specific way (using their own methods), but also by using all other communication techniques, possibly at the risk of investing less in what is most central to their work. Many museums – the largest ones – have a public relations department, or a “public programmes department”, which develops activities aimed at communicating to and reaching various sectors of the public that are more or less targeted, and involving them through traditional or innovative activities (events, gatherings, publications, extramural activities, etc.). In this context the very large sums invested by museums in their internet sites are a significant part of the museum’s communication logic.

Consequences include the many digital exhibitions or cyber-exhibitions (a field in which a museum may have genuine expertise), on-line catalogues, more or less sophisticated discussion forums, and forays into social networks (YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, etc.).

4. The discussion regarding the communication methods used by the museum raises the question of transmission. The chronic lack of interactivity in museum communication has led us to ask ourselves how we can make the visitor more active, while seeking his participation (McLuhan and Parker 1969, 2008). We could, of course, remove the labels or even the story line so that the public could build their own rationale as they move through the exhibition, but this would not make the communication interactive. The only places where a degree of interactivity has been developed (such as the *Palais de la Découverte*, the *Cité des sciences et de l’industrie* in Paris, or the Exploratorium in San Francisco) seem closer to amusement parks that develop fun attractions. It appears nevertheless that the real task of the museum is closer to transmission, understood as unilateral communication over time so that each person can assimilate the cultural knowledge which confirms his humanity and places him in society.

 **CORRELATED:** CULTURAL ACTION, EXHIBITION, EDUCATION, DISSEMINATION, INTERPRETATION, MEDIA, MEDIATION, TRANSMISSION, PUBLIC AWARENESS, PUBLIC RELATIONS.

# E

## EDUCATION

*n.* (Latin: *educatio, educere*, to guide, to lead out of) – Equivalent in French: *éducation*; Spanish: *educación*; German: *Erziehung, Museums-pädagogik*; Italian: *istruzione*; Portuguese: *educação*.

Generally speaking, education means the training and development of human beings and their capacities by implementing the appropriate means to do so. Museum education can be defined as a set of values, concepts, knowledge and practices aimed at ensuring the visitor's development; it is a process of acculturation which relies on pedagogical methods, development, fulfilment, and the acquisition of new knowledge.

1. The concept *education* should be defined in relation to other terms, the first of these being instruction, which “concerns the mind and is understood as knowledge acquired by which one becomes skilful and learned” (Toraille, 1985). Education relates to both the heart and the mind, and is understood as knowledge which one aims to update in a relationship which sets knowledge in motion to develop understanding and individual reinvestment. Education is the action of developing moral, physical, intellectual and scientific values, and

knowledge. *Knowledge, know-how, being and knowing how to be* are four major components in the educational field. The term education comes from the Latin “*educere*”, to lead out of (i.e. out of childhood) which assumes a dimension of active accompaniment in the transmission process. It is connected with the notion of *awakening*, which aims to arouse curiosity, to lead to questioning and develop the capacity to think. The purpose of informal education is thus to develop the senses and awareness; it is a *development* process which presupposes change and transformation rather than conditioning and inculcation, notions it tends to oppose. The shaping of it therefore happens via instruction which conveys useful knowledge, and education which makes this knowledge transformable and able to be reinvested by the individual to further the process of his becoming a human being.

2. In a more specifically museum context, education is the mobilisation of knowledge stemming from the museum and aimed at the development and the fulfilment of individuals, through the assimilation of this knowledge, the development of new sensitivities and the realisation of new experiences. “*Museum pedagogy*

is a theoretical and methodological framework at the service of educational activities in a museum environment, activities the main purpose of which is to impart knowledge (information, skills and attitudes) to the visitor" (Allard and Boucher, 1998). *Learning* is defined as "an act of perception, interaction and assimilation of an object by an individual", which leads to an "acquisition of knowledge or the development of skills or attitudes" (Allard and Boucher, 1998). Learning relates to the individual way in which a visitor assimilates the subject. With regard to the science of education or intellectual training, if *pedagogy* refers more to childhood and is part of upbringing, the notion of *didactic* is considered as the theory of dissemination of knowledge, the way to present knowledge to an individual whatever his or her age. Education is wider, and aims at the autonomy of the individual.

We can mention other related concepts which shade and enrich these different approaches. The concepts of *museum activities* or *cultural action*, like that of *interpretation* or *mediation*, are often invoked to describe the work carried out with the public in the museum's efforts at *transmission*. "I am teaching you" says a teacher, "I am allowing you to know" says a mediator (Caillet and Lehalle, 1995) (see *Mediation*). This distinction aims to reflect the difference between the act of training, and a process of awareness appealing to an individual who will finish

the work according to the extent to which he assimilates the content before him. Training assumes constraint and obligation, whereas the museum context supposes freedom (Schouten, 1987). In Germany the term pedagogy, or *Pädagogik* is used more frequently, and of the word used to describe education within museums is *Museumspädagogik*. This refers to all the activities that a museum may offer, regardless of the age, education or social background of the public concerned.

▷ **DERIVATIVES:** ADULT EDUCATION, EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES, EDUCATIONAL SERVICES, LIFE-LONG EDUCATION, INFORMAL OR NON-FORMAL EDUCATION, MID-CAREER EDUCATION, MUSEUM EDUCATION, POPULAR EDUCATION.

☞ **CORRELATED:** AWAKENING, CULTURAL ACTION, CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, DEVELOPMENT, DIDACTIC, INTERNSHIP, INSTRUCTION, MEDIATION, PEDAGOGY, TEACHING, TRAINING, TRANSMISSION, UPBRINGING.

---

## ETHICS

*n.* (From the Greek *ethos*: customs, character) – Equivalent French: *éthique*; Spanish: *ética*; German: *Ethik*; Italian: *etica*; Portuguese: *ética*.

Generally speaking, ethics are a philosophical discipline in philosophy that deals with identifying values which will guide both private and public human conduct. Far from being a simple synonym of morality, as is currently believed, ethics is the opposite in so far as the choice of values is not imposed by a specific set of rules, but rather freely chosen by the individual taking action. This



distinction is essential because of its consequences for museums, since the museum is an institution, that is to say a phenomenon which exists by common agreement and which can be altered.

Within the museum, ethics can be defined as the discussion process aimed at identifying the basic values and principles on which the work of the museum relies. Ethics lead to the drawing up of principles set out in museums' codes of ethics, of which the ICOM code is one example.

1. Ethics are aimed at guiding a museum's conduct. In a moral vision of the world, reality is subject to a moral order which determines the place occupied by each person. This order constitutes a perfection towards which each being must strive by fulfilling his function perfectly, and this is known as virtue (Plato, Cicero, etc.). By contrast, the ethical vision of the world is based on a chaotic and disorganised world, left to chance and without any fixed bearings. Faced with this universal disorder, individuals are the only judge of what is best for them (Nietzsche, Deleuze); they alone must decide for themselves what is good or bad. Between these two radical positions that are moral order and ethical disorder, a middle road is conceivable in so far as it is possible for people to agree freely among themselves to recognise common values (such as the principle of respect for human beings). Again this is an ethical point of view which on the whole governs the way modern


democracies determine values. This fundamental distinction still influences the division between two types of museums or two ways of operating even today. Some very traditional museums such as fine arts museums seem to follow a pre-established order: their collections appear to be sacred and define a model of conduct by different actors (curators and visitors), and a crusading spirit in the way they carry out their tasks. On the other hand, some museums, perhaps more attentive to the practical reality of people's lives, do not consider themselves subject to absolute values and continuously reassess them. These may be museums more in touch with real life, such as anthropology museums, striving to grasp an ethnic reality which is often fluctuating, or so-called "social museums" for which questions and practical choices (political or social) are more important than the religion of collections.

2. While the distinction between ethical and moral is quite clear in French and Spanish, the term in English is more open to confusion (*éthique* in French can be translated as ethic or also as moral in English). Thus the English version of the ICOM Code of Ethics (2006) in appears in French as *Code de déontologie* (*Código de deontología* in Spanish). The vision expressed in the code is, however clearly prescriptive and normative (and very similar to that expressed in the codes of the UK Museums Association and the

American Association of Museums). It is laid out in eight chapters which identify basic measures to allow the (supposedly) harmonious development of the museum institution within society: (1) Museums take care of the protection, documentation and promotion of the natural and cultural heritage of humanity (institutional, physical and financial resources needed to open a museum). (2) Museums which maintain collections hold them in trust for the benefit of society and its development (issues of acquisition and deaccession of collections). (3) Museums hold primary evidence for building up and furthering knowledge (deontology of research or of collecting evidence). (4) Museums provide opportunities for the appreciation, understanding and management of the natural and cultural heritage (deontology of exhibiting). (5) Museums hold resources that provide opportunities for other services and benefits to the public (issues of expertise). (6) Museums work in close collaboration with the communities from which their collections originate as well as with those that they serve (issues of cultural property). (7) Museums operate in a legal manner (respect for the rule of law). (8) Museums operate in a professional manner (professional conduct and conflicts of interest).

3. The third impact on museums of the concept of ethics is its contribution to the definition of museology as museal ethics. From this perspective, museology is not a science

in development (as proposed by Stránský), because the study of the birth and the evolution of museums does not follow the methods of both human and natural sciences in so far as it is an institution that is malleable and can be reshaped. However, as a tool of social life, museums demand that endless choices are made to determine the use to which they will be put. And precisely here, the choice of the ends to which this body of methods may be subjected is none other than a choice of ethics. In this sense museology can be defined as museal ethics, because it is ethics which decide what a museum should be and the ends to which it should be used. This is the ethical context in which it was possible for ICOM to build a deontological code for the management of museums, a deontology which constitutes a code of ethics common to a socio-professional category and serving it as a paralegal framework.

 **CORRELATED:** MORAL, VALUES, DEONTOLOGY.

---

## EXHIBITION

*n.* (early 15c., from O.Fr. *exhibicion*, from Latin *exhibitionem*, nom. *exhibitio*, from *exhibere* 'to show, display,' lit. 'to hold out,' from *ex-* 'out' and *habere* 'to hold') – Equivalent French: (from the Latin *expositio*, *gen. expositionis*: *exposé*, *explication*) *exposition*; Spanish: *exposición*; German: *Austellung*; Italian: *esposizione*, *mostra*; Portuguese: *exposição*, *exhibição*.

The term 'exhibition' refers to the result of the action of displaying

something, as well as the whole of that which is displayed, and the place where it is displayed. "Let us consider a definition of the exhibition borrowed from outside and not drafted by ourselves. This term – along with its abbreviated term 'exhibit' – means the act of displaying things to the public, the objects displayed (the exhibits), and the area where this display takes place" (Davallon, 1986). Borrowed from the Latin *expositio*, the French term *exposition* (in old French *exposiciun*, at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century) first had at the same time the figurative meaning of an explanation, an exposé, the literal meaning of an exposition (of an abandoned child, still used in Spanish in the term *expósito*), and the general meaning of display. From there (in the 16<sup>th</sup> century) the French word *exposition* had the meaning of presenting (merchandise), then (in the 17<sup>th</sup> century) it could mean abandonment, initial presentation (to explain a work) or situation (of a building). In 18<sup>th</sup> century France the word *exhibition*, as a display of art works, had the same meaning in French as in English, but the French use of the word *exhibition* to refer to the presentation of art later gave way to *exposition*. On the other hand, the word *exposition* in English means (1) the setting forth of a meaning or intent, or (2) a trade show, thus preserving the earlier meanings of the French. Today both the French *exposition* and the English *exhibition* have the same meaning, which applies to

the setting out of exhibits of all kinds in a space for public viewing; also the exhibits themselves, and the space in which the show takes place. From this viewpoint, each of these meanings defines somewhat different elements.

1. The exhibition, understood as the container or the place where the contents are on display (just as the museum appears both as a function and as a building) is characterised not by the architecture of this space but by the place itself. Even though the exhibition appears to be one of the characteristics of museums, exhibition thus has a far broader reach because it can also be set up by a profit-making organisation (market, store, art gallery). It can be organised in an enclosed space, but also in the open air (in a park or a street) or *in situ*, that is to say without moving the objects from their original sites natural, historical or archaeological sites. Seen from this perspective exhibition areas are defined not only by the container and the contents but also by the users – visitors and museum professionals – that is to say the people who enter this specific area and share in the general experience of the other visitors at the exhibition. The place of the exhibition is thus a specific place of social interaction, the effects of which can be assessed. Evidence of this is provided by the development of visitor studies, and the growth of a specific field of research connected with the communication aspect of the place and with all the

interactions specific to this place, or to all the images and ideas that this place might evoke.

2. As a result of the act of displaying, exhibitions are seen today as one of the main functions of the museum which, according to the latest definition by ICOM, “acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity...” According to the PRC model (Reinhardt Academie), exhibition is part of the museum’s more general function of communication, which also includes policies for education and publication. From this point of view exhibitions are a fundamental feature of museums, in so far as these prove themselves to be excellent places for sensory perception, by presenting objects to view (that is, visualisation), monstration (the act of demonstrating proof), ostention (initially the holding up of sacred objects for adoration). The visitor is in the presence of concrete elements which can be displayed for their own importance (pictures, relics), or to evoke concepts or mental constructs (transubstantiation, exoticism). If museums can be defined as places of musealisation and visualisation, exhibitions then appear as the “explanatory visualisation of absent facts through objects, and methods used to display these, used as signs” (Schärer, 2003). Showcases and picture rails are artifices which serve to separate the real world and the imaginary world of museums. They serve no other role

than to mark objectivity, to guarantee distance (creating a *distancing*, as Bertolt Brecht said of the theatre) and let us know that we are in another world, a world of the artificial, of the imaginary.

3. Exhibitions, when they are understood as the entirety of the objects displayed, include *musealia*, museum objects or “real things”, along with substitutes (casts, copies, photos, etc.), display material (display tools, such as show cases, partitions or screens), and information tools (such as texts, films or other multimedia), and utilitarian signage. From this perspective the exhibition works as a specific communication system (McLuhan and Parker, 1969; Cameron, 1968) based on “real things” and accompanied by other artefacts which allow the visitor to better identify their significance. In this context, each of the elements present in the exhibition (museum objects, substitutes, texts, etc.) can be defined as an *exhibit*. In such a situation it is not a question of rebuilding reality, which cannot be relocated in the museum (a “real thing” in a museum is already a substitute for reality and an exhibition can only offer images which are analogous with that reality). The exhibition communicates reality through this mechanism. Exhibits in an exhibition work as signs (semiotics), and the exhibition is presented as a communication process which is most often unilateral, incomplete and interpretable in ways that are often very different. The term *exhi-*

bition as used here differs from that of *presentation*, in so far as the first term corresponds, if not to a discourse, physical and didactic, then at least to a large complex of items that have been put on view, whereas the second evokes the showing of goods in a market or department store, which could be passive, even if in both cases a specialist (display designer, exhibition designer) is needed to reach the desired level of quality. These two levels – presentation and exhibition – explain the difference between exhibition design and exhibit display. In the first case the designer starts with the space and uses the exhibits to furnish the space, while in the second he starts with the exhibits and strives to find the best way to express them, the best language to make the exhibits speak. These differences of expression have varied during different periods, according to tastes and styles, and according to the relative importance of the people installing the space (decorators, exhibition designers, display designers, stage designers), but the modes of exhibition also vary according to the disciplines and the objective of the show. The answers to the questions regarding “to show” and “to communicate” cover a vast field allowing us to sketch the history and typology of exhibitions. We can imagine the media that were used (objects, texts, moving images, environments, digital information technology, mono-media and multi-media exhibitions); according to

whether or not the exhibition was of a profit-making nature (research exhibition, blockbuster, stage show exhibition, commercial exhibition), and according to the general concept of the museographer (exhibit design for the object, for the point of view or approach, etc.). And we note that the seeing visitor has become more and more involved in this great range of possibilities.

4. The French words *exposition* and *exhibition* differ, in so far as *exhibition* now has a pejorative meaning. Towards 1760 the word *exhibition* could be used in French and in English to indicate an exhibition of paintings, but the meaning of the word has been degraded in French to indicate activities that are clearly for show (sport exhibitions), or indecent in the eyes of the society where the exhibition takes place. This is the case for the derivatives *exhibitionist* and *exhibitionism* in English, which refer even more specifically to indecent acts. Criticism of exhibitions is often the most virulent when it takes the approach that the exhibition is not what it should be – and by association, what a museum should do – but has become a hawker show, far too commercial, or offensive to the public.

5. The development of new technologies and computer-aided design have popularised the creation of museums on the internet with exhibitions that can only be visited on screen or via digital media. Rather than using the term virtual exhibi-

tion (the exact meaning of which would be a possible exhibition, that is to say a potential reply to the question of “showing”), we prefer the terms digital or cyber exhibition to refer to these particular exhibitions seen on the internet. They open up possibilities (collecting objects, new ways of display, analysis, etc) that traditional exhibitions of material objects do not always have. While for the time being they are hardly competition for exhibitions of real objects in traditional museums, it is not impossible that their development will affect the methods currently used by museums.

▷ **DERIVATIVES:** AGRICULTURAL EXHIBITION, COMMERCIAL EXHIBITION, CYBER EXHIBITION, EXHIBIT, EXHIBITION CATALOGUE, EXHIBITION CURATOR, EXHIBITION DESIGN, EXHIBITION DESIGNER, EXHIBITION GALLERIES, EXHIBITION PRACTICE, EXHIBITION SCENARIO, EXHIBITION STUDIES, EXHIBITOR, *IN SITU* EXHIBITION, INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION, NATIONAL EXHIBITION, OPEN AIR EXHIBITION, PERMANENT EXHIBITION (A LONG OR SHORT TERM EXHIBITION), TEMPORARY EXHIBITION, TRAVELLING EXHIBITION, TO EXHIBIT, UNIVERSAL EXHIBITION.

☞ **CORRELATED:** COMMUNICATION, DECORATOR, DEMONSTRATION, DIDACTIC OBJECT, DIORAMA, DISPLAY, DISPLAY TOOL, EXPOSITION, FAIR, FICTIONAL REALITY, GALLERY, HANGING, INSTALLATION, INSTALLING SPACE, MEANS, MECHANISM, MEDIA, MESSAGE, METAPHOR, MONSTRATION, OPENING, OSTENTION, PICTURE RAIL, POSTING, PRESENTATION, PROJECT MANAGER, REALITY, REPRESENTATION, STAGE SETTING, SHOW, SHOWCASE, SOCIAL SPACE, SPACE, STAGE DESIGN, VISUALISATION.

# H

## HERITAGE

*n.* – Equivalent in French: *patrimoine*; Spanish: *patrimonio*; German: *Natur- und Kulturerbe*; Italian: *patrimonio*; Portuguese: *patrimônio*.

The notion of heritage (*patrimonium*) in Roman law referred to all the assets received by succession, assets which, according to law, are inherited by children from fathers and mothers; family assets, as opposed to assets acquired since marriage. By analogy, two metaphorical uses were born later. (1) Recently the expression ‘genetic heritage’ to describe the hereditary features of a living being; (2) earlier the concept of ‘cultural heritage’ seems to have appeared in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Leibniz, 1690) before being taken up again by the French Revolution (Puthod de Maisonrouge, 1790); Boissy d’Anglas, 1794). The term, however, has many more or less broad meanings. Because of its etymology, the term and the notion that it infers have spread more widely in Romance languages since the 1930s (Desvallées, 1995) than in the Anglo-Saxon world, which favoured the term property (goods) before adopting the term heritage in around the 1950s, while differentiating it from legacy. In the same way the Italian govern-

ment, while one of the first to recognise the term *patrimonio*, continued to use the expression *beni culturali* (cultural goods). The idea of heritage is inevitably tied to that of potential loss or disappearance – as was the case after the French Revolution – and at the same time to the will to preserve these goods. “Heritage can be recognised by the fact that its loss means a sacrifice and that its conservation also presupposes sacrifices” (Babelon et Chastel, 1980).

1. Starting with the French Revolution and throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, heritage essentially referred to immovable property and was generally confused with the idea of historical monuments. A monument, in the original sense of the word, is a construction intended to perpetuate the memory of somebody or something. Aloÿs Riegl identified three categories of monuments: those that were conceived intentionally “to commemorate a specific time or a complex event in the past” (intentional monuments), “those chosen by subjective preferences” (historical monuments), and finally “all the creations of mankind, independent of their significance or their original intent” (ancient monuments) (Riegl, 1903). According to the prin-

ciples of history, history of art, and archaeology, the last two categories essentially belong to the category of immovable heritage. Until very recently the Directorate of the Heritage of France, whose principle purpose was the preservation of historical monuments, was separate from the Directorate of the Museums of France (French Museums Board). Today it is not unusual to find people supporting this differentiation, which is at the very least strict. Even when expanded worldwide under the aegis of UNESCO, the idea that is fostered especially by ICOMOS, the equivalent of ICOM for historical monuments, is first of all based essentially on monuments and on groups of monuments and sites. Thus the Convention on the World Cultural Heritage stipulates: "For the purposes of this Convention, the following shall be considered cultural heritage: – monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, [...] – groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings, [...] because of their architecture, [...] – sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and man, [...]. For the purposes of this Convention the following shall be considered natural heritage: natural features, [...] – geological and physiographical formations [...] – natural sites or natural areas." (UNESCO 1972).

2. From the mid 1950s, the notion of heritage gradually incorporated all material evidence of man and his environment and became conside-

rably wider. Thus folklore heritage, scientific heritage and then industrial heritage were gradually integrated into the concept of heritage. The definition of heritage in French-speaking Québec also followed this general tendency: "May be considered heritage all objects or groups of objects, material or intangible, that are collectively recognised or appropriated for their value as evidence and historical memory and which merit being protected, preserved, and enhanced" (Arpin, 2000). This concept refers to all natural or man-made goods and values, whether material or intangible, without restriction of time or space, whether they be simply inherited from the forbears of earlier generations or gathered and preserved to be transmitted to the descendants of future generations. Heritage is a public good; its preservation must be assumed by the community when individuals fail to do so. Individual local natural and cultural characteristics contribute to the conception and building of the universal character of heritage. The concept of heritage differs from the concept of inheritance with regard to time and events: whereas inheritance is identified immediately after a death or when there is a transferral of goods from one generation to another, heritage defines all the goods received or gathered and safeguarded by earlier generations that will be transmitted to their descendants. To a certain extent, heritage can be a line of inheritances.



3. For some years the notion of heritage, essentially defined on the basis of a western concept of transmission, has felt the impact of the globalisation of ideas, such as the relatively recent concept of intangible heritage. This concept, of Asian origin (in particular from Japan and Korea) is founded on the idea that transmission, to be effective, must essentially be done by human carriers, from whence evolved the idea of *living human treasures*: “Living human treasure refers to a person who excels above others in performing music, dance, games, plays and rituals which are of outstanding artistic and historical value in their respective countries as envisaged in the Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Cultures and Folklore” (UNESCO, 1993). This principle was accepted internationally and endorsed in the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

“The *intangible cultural heritage* means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus pro-

moting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.” (UNESCO, 2003).

4. Heritage covers a field that has become increasingly complex, and in the past few years the uncertainties of its transmission have led to more focused thinking on the mechanisms of building and extending heritage: what exactly is the process of heritage building? Much contemporary research analyses the institution of heritage building beyond the empirical approach, seeing it as the result of strategies and interventions focused on marking and signals (framing). Thus the idea of heritage building is necessary to understand the position in society that heritage represents, rather as others speak of the idea of “artification” (Shapiro, 2004) with regard to works of art. “Heritage is a cultural process or performance that is concerned with the types of production and the negotiation of cultural identity, individual and collective memory, and social and cultural values” (Smith, 2007). If we accept that heritage is the result of the founding of a certain number of values, this implies that these values are the basis of heritage. These values should be examined, but also – sometimes – contested.

5. The institution of heritage also has its detractors: people who question its origins and the abusive 'fetishist' value attached to the forms of the underlying culture, in the name of western humanism. In the strictest sense of the word, that is to say in the anthropological sense, our cultural heritage is only made up of very modest practices and skills. To a far greater extent it depends on the ability to make and use these tools, especially when these are fixed as objects inside a museum showcase. Too often we forget that the most elaborate and powerful tool invented by man is the concept, the instrument for developing thought, which is very difficult to arrange in a showcase. Cultural heritage understood as the sum total of the common evidence of humankind has been severely criticised for being a new dogma (Choay, 1992) in a society which has lost its religious bearings. It is possible, moreover, to list the successive stages of building this recent product: heritage reappropriation (Vicq d'Azyr, 1794), spiritual connotation (Hegel, 1807), mystical, disinterested connotation (Renan, 1882) and finally, humanism (Malraux, 1947). The

notion of collective cultural heritage, which only transposes the legal and economic lexicon to the moral field, appears suspicious, to say the least, and can be analysed as being part of that which Marx and Engels called ideology, that is to say a by-product of a socio-economic context intended to serve special interests. "The internationalisation of the concept of heritage is [...] not only false, but dangerous in so far as one imposes a whole set of knowledge and prejudices whose criteria are the expression of values built on aesthetic, moral, and cultural received ideas, in short an ideology of a caste in a society whose structures are not compatible with those of the third world in general and Africa in particular" (Adotevi, 1971). It is all the more suspect because it coexists with the private nature of economic property and seems to serve as the consolation prize for the deprived.

▷ **DERIVATIVES:** HERITOLGY, INHERITANCE.

☞ **CORRELATED:** COMMUNITY, CULTURAL PROPERTY, CULTURAL RELIC, EXHIBIT, EVIDENCE, IDENTITY, IMAGE, LEGACY, LIVING HUMAN TREASURE, MATERIAL CULTURE, MEMORY, MESSAGE, MONUMENT, NATIONAL TREASURE, OBJECT, PATRIMONY, REALITY, SEMIOPHORE (SEE *OBJECT*) SUBJECT, TERRITORY, THINGS, VALUE, WITNESS.

# I

## INSTITUTION

*n.* (From the Latin *institutio*, convention, setting up, establishment, arrangement). Equivalent in French: *institution*; Spanish: *institución*; German: *Institution*; Italian: *istituzione*; Portuguese: *instituição*.

Generally speaking an institution indicates a convention established by mutual agreement between people, being thus arbitrary but also historically dated. Institutions are elements in the broad range of solutions that mankind has created to answer the problems raised by the natural needs of life in a society (Malinowski, 1944). More specifically, institution refers to an organism that is public or private, established by society to fill a specific need. The museum is an institution in the sense that it is governed by an identified legal system of public or private law (see the terms *Management* and *Public*). Whether it is based on the concept of *public trust* (in Anglo-Saxon law) or *public ownership* (in France from the Revolution), demonstrates, beyond the differences in conventions, a mutual agreement between the people in a society, that is to say an institution.

In French, when the term is associated with the general qualifier 'museal' (*institution muséale*, in the

common sense of that which relates to museums) it is often used as a synonym for 'museum', most often to avoid excessive repetition of the word museum. The concept of institution, for which there are three precise accepted meanings, is nevertheless central to debates regarding museums.

1. There are two levels of institutions, according to the nature of the need they are intended to satisfy. This need may be first of all biological (need to eat, to reproduce, to sleep, etc.) or secondly the result of the demands of living in a society (need for organisation, defence, health, etc.). These two levels correspond to two types of institution that are unequally restrictive: meals, marriage, lodging on the one hand, and the State, the army, schools, hospitals, on the other. In so far as they meet a social need (sensory relation to objects) museums belong to the second category.

2. ICOM defines museum as a permanent institution in the service of society and its development. In this sense the institution is a construction created by man in the museal (see this term) field, and organised in order to enter into a sensory relationship with

objects. The museum institution, created and maintained by society, rests on a collection of standards and rules (preventive conservation, forbidden to touch objects or display substitutes while presenting them as originals) which are founded on a value system: preservation of heritage, presentation of works of art and unique pieces, the dissemination of current scientific knowledge, etc. Emphasising the institutional nature of museum thus means strengthening its normative role and the authority it has in science and the fine arts, for example, or the idea that museums remain “in the service of society and its development.”

3. In contrast to the English, which does not precisely differentiate between them (and in general to the way they are used in Belgium and in Canada too), the terms institution and establishment are not synonymous. Museum, as an institution, is different from museum as an establishment, a specific concrete place: “The museal establishment is a concrete form of the museal institution” (Maroević, 2007). One should note that questioning of the institution, even purely and simply denying it (as in the case of Malraux’s imaginary museum or the fictitious museum of the artist Marcel Broodthaers) does not mean that it has left the museal field, in so far as the museal field can

extend beyond the institutional framework. In its strict sense, the term virtual museum (existing in essence but not in fact) takes account of these museal experiences on the margin of institutional reality.

This is why in many countries, in particular in Canada and Belgium, people use the expression ‘museal institution’ (*institution muséale*) to identify an establishment which does not have all the characteristics of a traditional museum. “By museal institutions, we mean non-profit establishments, museums, exhibition and interpretation centres which, besides the functions of acquisition, conservation, research and management of collections that some may carry out, have in common that they are places of education and dissemination dedicated to the arts, history and the sciences.” (*Société des musées québécois, Observatoire de la culture et des communautés du Québec*, 2004).

4. Finally, the term ‘museal institution’ can be defined, like ‘financial institution’ (the IMF or the World Bank) as all the national or international bodies which govern museum operations, such as ICOM or the former *Direction des musées de France*.

▷ **DERIVATIVES:** INSTITUTIONAL, MUSEAL INSTITUTION.

☞ **CORRELATED:** ESTABLISHMENT, PUBLIC DOMAIN, PUBLIC OWNERSHIP, PUBLIC TRUST, VIRTUAL MUSEUM.

# M

## MANAGEMENT

*n.* – Equivalent French: *gestion*; Spanish: *gestión*; German: *Verwaltung, Administration*; Italian: *gestione*; Portuguese: *gestão*.

Museum management is defined today as the action of ensuring the running of the museum's administrative business and, more generally, all the activities which are not directly attached to the specific fields of museum work (preservation, research and communication). In this regard, museum management essentially encompasses tasks relating to financial (accounting, management control, finances) and legal responsibilities, to security and upkeep, to staff management and to marketing as well as to strategic procedures and the general planning of museum activities. The term *management* is of Anglo-Saxon origin (although the Anglo-Saxon term comes from the French *manège* and *ménage*), and is currently used in French with the same meaning. The guidelines or 'style' of management illustrate a certain concept of museums – in particular its relationship to public service.

Traditionally the term *administration* (from the Latin *administratio*,

service, aid, handling) was used to define this type of museum activity, but also, more generally, all the activities necessary to make a museum function. The treatise of museology by George Brown Goode, *Museum Administration* (1896), examines the aspects connected with the study of the display of collections and the daily management, while also addressing the overall vision of the museum and its integration into society. Rightfully derived from the civil service rationale, the act of administering means, whether referring to a public or a private service, ensuring that it operates properly while taking responsibility for initiating and running all its activities. The notion of (public) service, or even, with its religious undertones, that of vocation, is closely related to administration.

We are aware of the bureaucratic connotation of the term 'administration' since it is used in connection with the (dys)function of public authorities. So it is not surprising that the general evolution of economic theory in the last quarter of a century, favouring the market economy, has led to increasingly frequent recourse to the concept of management, which had been in use for a long

time within profit-making organisations. The concepts of market launch and museum marketing, like the development of tools for museums that have resulted from businesses (defining strategies, focusing on the public/visitor, resource management, fundraising, etc.) has considerably changed the museums themselves. Thus some of the conflicts regarding museum organisation and policies have been directly conditioned by the conflict, within the museum itself, between a market rationale and a more traditional rationale of governance by public authorities. The result has been the development of new forms of financing (expansion of the ranges of museum shops, renting of premises, reintroducing entrance fees, developing popular temporary exhibitions – *blockbusters* – or even selling objects from the collection. Increasingly these tasks which were auxiliary when they first began have had a real impact on the conduct of other museum tasks, to the point that they have sometimes been developed to the detriment of the other operations required for preservation, research and even communication.

The specificity of museum management, which may be structured around the sometimes contradictory or hybrid logics of the market on the one hand, and the public authorities on the other hand, derives from the fact that it is structured around the logic of giving (Mauss, 1923), through donations of objects and money or the actions of volunteers and asso-

ciations of friends of the museum. Although donations and volunteer activities are properly and implicitly taken into account, this aspect has been less examined for its medium and long-term impact on museum management.

▷ **DERIVATIVES:** MANAGER, COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

☞ **CORRELATED:** ADMINISTRATION, BLOCKBUSTERS, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, ENTRANCE FEES, FEASIBILITY STUDY, FUNDRAISING, FRIENDS, HUMAN RESOURCES, MISSION STATEMENT, MUSEUM MARKETING, MUSEUM TRUSTEES, NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS, PERFORMANCE MARKERS, PROJECTS, PLANNING, STRATEGY, VOLUNTEERS.

---

## MEDIATION (INTERPRETATION)

*n.* (from 15<sup>th</sup> century Vulgar Latin: *mediatio*, de *mediare*) – Equivalent in French: *médiation*; Spanish: *mediación*; German: *Vermittlung*; Italian: *mediazione*; Portuguese: *mediação*.

Mediation is the translation of the French *médiation*, which has the same general museum meaning as ‘interpretation’. Mediation is defined as an action aimed at reconciling parties or bringing them to agreement. In the context of the museum, it is the mediation between the museum public and what the museum gives its public to see; intercession, intermediate, mediator. Etymologically we find in mediation the root *med*, meaning ‘middle’, a root which can be found in many languages besides English (Spanish *medio*, German *mitte*) and which reminds us that mediation is connected with the idea

of being in the median position, that of a third element which places itself between two distant poles and acts as an intermediary. While this position characterises the legal aspects of mediation, where someone negotiates in order to reconcile adversaries and reach a *modus vivendi*, it also points to the meaning that this concept takes in the cultural and scientific field of museology. Here too mediation is an in-between, filling a space that it will try to reduce, creating a connection or even acceptance.

1. The notion of mediation works on several levels: on the philosophical level it served Hegel and his disciples to describe the movement of history itself. Dialectics, the driving force of history, advances by successive mediations: a first situation (the thesis) must pass through the mediation of its opposite (antithesis) to progress to a new condition (synthesis) which retains something of each of the two preceding moments.

The general concept of mediation also leads us to think about the institution of culture itself as the transmission of that common heritage which unites the members of a community and in which they recognise themselves. In this sense of the word *mediation*, it is through the mediation of its culture that individuals perceive and understand the world and their own identity; several writers speak of symbolic mediation. Again in the cultural field, mediation acts to analyse the 'making public' of ideas and cultural products – their

being taken care of by the media – and to describe their circulation in the whole social sphere. The cultural sphere is seen as a dynamic, nebulous area where products mix together and take over from one another. Here the reciprocal mediation of cultural products leads to the idea of intermediality, of the relationship between medias and the way in which one media – television or cinema for example – translates forms of production made in another media (a novel adapted for the cinema). These creations reach their targets by one or other of the various technical aids that make up their mediatisation. From this angle, analysis shows that many mediations are set in motion by complex chains of different agents to guarantee content in the cultural sphere and ensure that this content reaches a broad public.

2. In museology the term mediation has been in frequent use in France and in European French-speaking zones for more than a decade, when speaking of 'cultural mediation', or 'scientific mediation' and 'mediator'. Essentially it refers to a whole range of actions carried out in a museal context in order to build bridges between that which is exhibited (seeing) and the meanings that these objects and sites may carry (knowledge). Mediation sometimes seeks to favour the sharing of experiences and social interactions between visitors, and the emergence of common references. This is an educational communication strategy,

which mobilises diverse technologies around the collections exhibited to give visitors the means to better understand certain aspects of these and to share in their appropriation.

The term thus touches on the neighbouring museological concepts of communication and museum public relations, and especially *interpretation*, very much present in the Anglo-Saxon museum world and on North American sites where it overlaps to a great extent with the notion of mediation. *Interpretation*, like mediation, assumes a divergence, a distance that must be overcome between that which is immediately perceived and the underlying meanings of natural, cultural or historical phenomena. Like means of mediation, interpretation materialises in interpersonal human actions and in aids which enhance the straightforward display of exhibited objects to suggest their meaning and importance. Born in the context of American natural parks, the notion of interpretation has since expanded to mean the hermeneutic nature of the experience of visiting museums and sites. Thus it can be defined as a revelation and unveiling which leads visitors to understand, and then to appreciate, and finally to protect the heritage which it takes as its object.

In the end, mediation comprises a central notion in a philosophy which is hermeneutic and reflective (Paul Ricœur). It plays a fundamental role in each visitor's quest for self-knowledge, a knowledge facilitated

by the museum. When the viewer stands face to face with works produced by other humans it is through mediation that he or she can arrive at a special subjectivity which can inspire self-knowledge and understanding of one's own human adventure. This approach makes the museum, the custodian of the evidence and signs of humanity, one of the best places for this inescapable mediation which, in offering contact with the world of cultural works, leads each person on the path of a greater understanding of self, and of reality as a whole.

▷ **DERIVATIVES:** MEDIATION, MEDIATOR, TO MEDIATE.

☞ **CORRELATED:** ACTIVITIES, EDUCATION, INTERCESSION, INTERPRETATION, POPULARISATION, PUBLIC RELATIONS, VISITOR EXPERIENCE.

---

## MUSEAL

*adj.* – Equivalent in French: *muséal*; Spanish: *museal*; German: *museal*; Italian: *museale*; Portuguese: *museal*.

The word has two meanings in French (one when it is used as an adjective to qualify 'museum' and another when it is used as a noun), but only one in English, where it has been rarely used until now, to qualify a field covering more than the classical notion of 'museum'. The museal field covers not only the creation, development and operation of the museum institution but also reflections on its foundations and issues. The museal field of reference is characterised by a specific approach,



which establishes a viewpoint on reality with regard to the world of heritage (to consider something from the museal angle, for example, means to ask oneself whether it is possible to preserve it for exhibition to the public). Museology can thus be defined as all the attempts to theorise or think critically about the museal field, or as the ethics and philosophy of that which is museal.

1. Museal identifies a “specific relation to reality” (Stránský, 1987; Gregorová, 1980). This places it alongside politics and on the same level as social life, religion, demographics, economics and so on. Each example is a sphere or an original field in which problems will be raised which will be answered by concepts. Thus the same phenomenon can be found at the point where several levels meet or, to speak in terms of multidimensional statistical analysis, it will project itself onto several heterogeneous levels. For example, GMO (genetically modified organisms) can be simultaneously a technical problem (biotechnology), a health problem (risks regarding the biosphere), a political problem (ecological issues), and also a museal problem: some social museums have decided to stage exhibitions on the risks and the issues of GMO.

2. This position of *museal* as a theoretical field of reference opens considerable avenues to expanded thinking, because the museum as institution now appears to be just one illustration or example of the entire

field. This has two consequences: (1) It was not museums that gave rise to museology, but rather museology that founded museums (the Copernican revolution); (2) This allows us to understand that experiences which are of a different nature to those usually identified with museums (collections, building, institution) are part of the same problem, and to accept museums of substitutes, museums without collections, extramural museums, towns as museums (Quatremère de Quincy, 1796), and ecomuseums or even cyber museums.

3. The specificity of the museal field, in other words, that which makes it unequivocal compared to neighbouring fields, lies in two aspects: (1) *sensory display*, which sets the museal apart from the textual, managed in a library, which offers a documentation relayed through the medium of writing (mainly that which is printed; books) and which requires not only the knowledge of a language but also the ability to read. This procures an experience which is more abstract and more theoretical at the same time. On the other hand, a museum does not need any of these aptitudes, because the documentation it proposes is above all sensory, perceivable by sight and sometimes by hearing, more rarely by the three other senses of touch, taste and smell. This means that an illiterate person or even a young child can always gain something from a museum visit, whereas they would

be incapable of using the resources of a library. This also explains experiences of visits adapted for blind or partially sighted people, where other senses are called in to play (hearing and especially touch) to discover the sensory aspects of the exhibits. A painting or a sculpture is made to be seen first of all, and reference to a text (or reading a placard if there is one) only comes afterwards and is not absolutely essential. Thus we can say when of the museum that it fulfils a “sensory documentary function” (Deloche, 2007). (2) *Marginalising reality*, because the museum “specifies itself while separating itself” (Lebensztejn, 1981). Unlike a political field where it is possible to theorise about the management of the concrete lives of people in society through the mediation of institutions such as the State, that which is museal on the other hand serves to theorise about the way in which an institution creates, through separation and de-contextualisation, in short through the putting into images, a space for sensory display “at the margin of all reality” (Sartre). This is the essence of a utopia, that is to say a completely imaginary space, certainly symbolic but not necessarily intangible. This second point characterises what one might call the utopian function of museums, because in order to change the world, one must be able to imagine it otherwise, and thus to distance oneself from it, which is why utopia as a fiction is not necessarily a lack or a deficiency, but rather the imagining of a different world.

▷ **DERIVATIVES:** MUSEAL FIELD, MUSEALIA, MUSEALITY, MUSEALISATION.

☞ **CORRELATED:** MUSEOLOGY, MUSEUM, MUSEUMIFICATION (PEJORATIVE), REALITY, SENSORY DISPLAY, SENSORY EXPERIENCE, SPECIFIC RELATION.

---

## MUSEALISATION

*n.* – Equivalent in French: *muséalisation*; Spanish: *musealización*; German: *Musealisierung*; Italian: *musealizzazione*; Portuguese: *musealização*.

In the accepted understanding of the term, musealisation means the placing in the museum, or more generally, transforming a centre of life, which may be a centre of human activity or a natural site, into a sort of museum. The expression ‘heritagisation’ is undoubtedly a better description of this principle, which rests essentially on the idea of preservation of an object or a place, but does not cover the entire museal process. The neologism ‘museumification’ translates the pejorative idea of the ‘petrification’ (or mummification) of a living area, which may result from such a process and which may be found in numerous critical reviews about the ‘musealisation of the world’. From a strictly museological point of view, musealisation is the operation of trying to extract, physically or conceptually, something from its natural or cultural environment and giving it a museal status, transforming it into a musealium or ‘museum object’, that is to say, bringing it into the museal field.

The process of musealisation does not consist of taking an object to place it within the physical confines of the museum, as Zbyněk Stránský explains. Through the change of context and the process of selection and display, the status of the object changes. Whether it is a religious object, a useful object or one for enjoyment, animal or vegetable, even something that may not be clearly conceived as an object, once inside the museum it becomes the material and intangible evidence of man and his environment and a source of study and exhibition, thus acquiring a specific cultural reality.


The recognition of this change in nature caused Stránský, in 1970, to propose the term *musealia* to identify objects which had undergone the process of musealisation and could thus claim the status of museum objects. The term was translated into French as *muséalie* (see *Object*).

Musealisation begins with a phase of separation (Malraux, 1951) or of suspension (Déotte, 1986): objects or things (real things) are separated from their original context to be studied as documents representing the reality to which they formerly belonged. A museum object is no longer an object to be used or exchanged, but now delivers authentic evidence of reality. This removal (Desvallées, 1998) from reality is already an initial form of substitution. An object separated from the context from where it was taken is already no more than a substitute for the reality of which

it is supposed to be evidence. This transfer, by the separation that has been made from the original environment, inevitably causes a loss of information, which can be seen most clearly from illegal archaeological digs where the context of the objects has been completely lost as they were unearthed. It is for this reason that musealisation, as a scientific process, necessarily includes the essential museum activities: preservation (selection, acquisition, collection management, conservation), research (including cataloguing) and communication (via exhibition, publications, etc.) or, from another point of view, the activities around the selection, collection and display of what has become *musealia*. At most, the work of musealisation gives an image which is only a substitute for the reality from which these objects were chosen. This complex substitute, or model of reality (built within the museum) comprises museality, that is to say a specific value which documents reality, but is in no way reality itself.

Musealisation goes beyond the logic of collections alone and is part of the tradition founded on rational processes developed with the invention of modern sciences. The object carrying the information or the document-object, once musealised, is incorporated into the core of the museum's scientific activity just as this has developed since the Renaissance. The purpose of this activity is to explore reality by means of sen-

sory perception, experiment, and study of its constituent parts. This scientific perspective conditions the objective and repeated study of the thing which has been conceptualized into an object, beyond the *aura* which obscures its meaning. Not contemplating, but seeing: the scientific museum not only displays beautiful objects, it invites the visitor to think about their meaning. The act of musealisation leads the museum away from being a temple to make it part of a process which brings it closer to the laboratory.

 **CORRELATED:** COLLECTING, COMMUNICATION, DISPLAY, DOCUMENT-OBJECT, HOARDING, MUSEALIA, MUSEALITY, MUSEUM OBJECT, PRESERVATION, RESEARCH, RELIC, SELECTION, SEPARATION, SUSPENSION.

## MUSEOGRAPHY (MUSEUM PRACTICE)

*n.* (derived from Latin *museographia*) – French equivalent: *muséographie*, Spanish: *museografía*; German: *Museographie*; Italian: *museografia*; Portuguese: *museografia*.

The term museography first appeared in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Neikel, 1727) and is older than the word museology. It has three specific meanings:

1. Currently museography is essentially defined as the practical or applied aspect of museology, that is to say the techniques which have been developed to fulfil museal operations, in particular with regard to the planning and fitting out of the museum premises, conservation, restoration, security and exhi-

bition. In contrast to museology, the word museography has long been used to identify the practical activities associated with museums. The term is regularly used in the French-speaking world, but rarely in the English-speaking one, where *museum practice* is preferred. Many museologists from Central and Eastern Europe have used the term *applied museology*, that is to say, the practical application of techniques resulting from the study of museology, a science undergoing development.

2. In French the use of the term museography identifies the art (or the techniques) of exhibitions. For some years the term *expography* (exhibit design) has been proposed for the techniques involved in exhibitions, whether they be in a museum or in a non-museum space. Generally speaking, what we call the 'museographical programme' covers definition of the contents of the exhibition and its requirements, as well as the functional links between the exhibition spaces and the other museum areas. This definition does not mean that museography (museum practice) is defined only by that part of the museum which is seen by the visitor. Museographers (museum designers or exhibit designers), like other museum professionals, take into account the scientific programme and collection management, and aim to display the objects selected by the curator in a suitable manner. They must know methods of conserva-

tion and how to inventorize museum objects. They create the scenario for the contents and propose a form of language which includes additional media to aid understanding. They are concerned with the needs of the public and employ the communication methods most suitable for putting across the message of the exhibition. Their role, often as the head of a project, is to coordinate all the scientific and technical specialists working within a museum: organising them, sometimes clashing with them and arbitrating. Other specific posts have been created to fulfil these tasks: the management of the art works or objects is left to the registrars, the head of security is responsible for surveillance and the tasks carried out by this department, the conservator is a specialist in preventive conservation and in remedial conservation measures, and even restoration. It is in this context, and in interrelation with the different departments, that museographers concern themselves with the exhibition tasks. Museography is distinct from scenography (exhibition or stage design), which is understood to mean all the techniques required for installing and fitting out display spaces, just as it is different from interior design. Certainly stage design and museum interior design are a part of museography, which brings museums closer to other methods of visualisation, but other elements must also be taken into account such as the public, its understanding of

the message, and the preservation of heritage. These aspects make museographers (or exhibition specialists) the intermediary between the collections curator, the architect and the public. Their role varies, however, depending whether or not the museum or the exhibition site has a curator to lead the project. The further development of the role of some specialists within museums (architects, artists, exhibition curators, etc.) has led to a constant fine-tuning of the museographer's role as intermediary.

3. Formerly and through its etymology, museography referred to the description of the contents of a museum. Just as a bibliography is one of the fundamental stages of scientific research, museography was devised as a way to facilitate the search for documentary sources of objects in order to develop their systematic study. This meaning endured throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and still continues today in some languages, in particular Russian.

▷ **DERIVATIVES:** MUSEOGRAPHER, MUSEOGRAPHIC.

☞ **CORRELATED:** EXHIBITION DESIGN, EXHIBITION PRACTICE, INTERIOR DESIGN, MUSEUM FUNCTIONS, MUSEUM OPERATIONS, MUSEUM PRACTICE.

---

## MUSEOLOGY (MUSEUM STUDIES)

*n.* – Equivalent in French: *muséologie*; Spanish: *museología*; German: *Museologie*, *Museumswissenschaft*, *Museumskunde*; Italian: *museologia*; Portuguese: *museologia*.

Etymologically speaking museology is the 'study of the museum' (or museum studies), and not its practice, which is museography. But the term *museology* and its derivative *museological*, accepted in its wider sense in the 1950s, now has five clearly distinct meanings.

1. The first and most commonly accepted meaning applies the term museology to anything relating to museums and generally listed, in this dictionary, under the heading *museal*. Thus one might speak of the museological departments of a library (the reserved section or the numismatic cabinet), museological questions (relating to museums) and so on. This is often the meaning used in Anglo-Saxon countries, which has even spread from North America to Latin-American countries. Thus, where there is no specific recognised profession, such as in France where the general term *curator (conservateur)* would be used, the term museologist applies to the entire museum profession (for example in Québec), in particular to consultants given the task of drawing up a museum project or creating and staging an exhibition. This use is not favoured here.

2. The second meaning of the term is generally accepted in many western university networks and is close to the etymological sense of the word: museum studies. The most commonly used definition is that proposed by Georges Henri Rivière: "Museology: an applied science, the science of the museum. Museology

studies its history, its role in society, the specific forms of research and physical conservation, activities and dissemination, organisation and functioning, new or musealised architecture, sites that have been received or chosen, its typology and its deontology" (Rivière, 1981). In some ways museology contrasts with museography, which refers to the practices attached to museology. Anglo-Americans are generally reluctant to accept the invention of new 'sciences' and have favoured the expression *museum studies*, particularly in Great Britain where the term *museology* is still rarely used to date. Although the term has been increasingly frequently applied internationally since the 1950s, along with the increased interest in museums, it is still rarely used by people who live with museums on a daily basis, and the use of the term remains limited to people who observe the museum from the outside. This use of *museology*, widely accepted by professionals, has gradually established itself in Romance countries from the 1960s, replacing the term museography.

3. From the 1960s in Central and Eastern Europe, museology gradually came to be considered as a genuine field of scientific research (albeit a developing science) and an independent discipline examining reality. This view, which greatly influenced ICOFOM in the years 1980-1990, presents museology as the study of a specific relationship between man and reality, a study in

which museums, a phenomenon set in a specific time, are only one of the possible manifestations. "Museology is a self-differentiating, independent scientific discipline the subject of which is a specific attitude of man to reality expressed objectively in various museum forms throughout history, an expression of and a proportionate part of memory systems. Museology, by nature a social science, pertains to the sphere of mnemonic and documentary scientific disciplines, and contributes to the understanding of Man within society" (Stránský, 1980). This particular approach, freely criticised (the determination to impose museology as a science and to cover the whole field of heritage seemed pretentious to more than one), but it is nonetheless fertile with regard to its implications. Thus the object of museology is not the museum, since this is a creation that is relatively recent in terms of the history of humanity. Taking this statement as a starting point, the concept of a "specific relation of man to reality", sometimes referred to as *museality* (Waidacher, 1996), was gradually defined. Thus following in the wake of the Brno school which prevailed at the time one could define museology as "A science studying the specific relation of Man to reality, consisting of the purposeful and systematic collecting and conservation of selected inanimate, material, mobile, and mainly three-dimensional objects documenting the development of nature and

society" (Gregorová, 1980). However, the likening of museology to a science – even under development – has slowly been abandoned in so far as neither its object of study, nor its methods, truly correspond to the epistemological criteria of a specific scientific approach.

4. The new museology (*la nouvelle muséologie* in French, where the concept originated) widely influenced museology in the 1980s, first gathering some French theoreticians and then spreading internationally from 1984. Referring to a few pioneers who had published innovative texts since 1970, this current of thought emphasised the social role of museums and its interdisciplinary character, along with its new styles of expression and communication. New museology was particularly interested in new types of museums, conceived in contrast to the classical model in which collections are the centre of interest. These new museums are eco-museums, social museums, scientific and cultural centres, and generally speaking, most of the new proposals aimed at using the local heritage to promote local development. In English museum literature the term New Museology appeared at the end of the 1980s (Virgo, 1989) and is a critical discourse on the social and political role of museums – lending a certain confusion to the spread of the French term, which is less known to the English-speaking public.

5. According to a fifth meaning of the term, which we favour here

because it includes all the others, museology covers a much wider field comprising all the efforts at theorisation and critical thinking about the museal field. In other words, the common denominator of this field could be defined as a specific relation between man and reality, which is expressed by documenting that which is real and can be grasped through direct sensory contact. This definition does not reject *a priori* any form of museum, including the oldest (Quiccheberg) and the most recent (cyber museums), because it tends to concern itself with a domain which is freely open to all experiments in the museal field. Nor is it limited to people who call themselves museologists. We should note that if some protagonists have made museology their field of choice, to the point of presenting themselves as museologists, others tied to their professional branch who only approach the museal sphere on occasion prefer to keep a certain distance from “museologists”, even though they have, or have had, a fundamental influence in the development of this field of study (Bourdieu, Baudrillard, Dagonnet, Debray, Foucault, Haskell, McLuhan, Nora or Pomian). The guidelines in a map of the museal field can be traced in two different directions: either with reference to the main functions inherent to the field (documentation, collecting, display and safeguarding, research, communication), or by considering the different branches of knowledge

which examine museology from time to time.

With this last view in mind, Bernard Deloche proposed defining museology as museal philosophy. “Museology is the philosophy of the museal field which has two tasks: (1) it serves as metatheory for the science of intuitive concrete documentation, (2) it provides regulating ethics for all institutions responsible for managing the intuitive concrete documentary function” (Deloche, 2001).

▷ **DERIVATIVES:** MUSEOLOGICAL, MUSEOLOGIST.

☞ **CORRELATED:** MUSEAL, MUSEALIA MUSEALITY, MUSEALISATION, MUSEALIZE, MUSEOGRAPHY, MUSEUM, MUSEUM OBJECT, NEW MUSEOLOGY, REALITY.

---

## MUSEUM

*n.* (from the Greek *mouseion*, temple of the muses). – Equivalent in French: *musée*; Spanish: *museo*; German: *Museum*; Italian: *museo*; Portuguese: *museu*.

The term ‘museum’ may mean either the institution or the establishment or the place generally designed to select, study and display the material and intangible evidence of man and his environment. The form and the functions of museums have varied considerably over the centuries. Their contents have diversified, as have their mission, their way of operating and their management.

1. Most countries have established definitions of museum through legislative texts or national organi-



sations. The professional definition of museum most widely recognized today is still that given in 2007 in the Statutes of the International Council of Museums (ICOM): "A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment." This definition replaces that used as the term of reference for over 30 years: "A museum is a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of the society and its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates, and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of man and his environment" (ICOM Statutes, 1974).

The difference between these two definitions, which is at first sight barely significant – a reference to the intangible heritage added and a few changes in structure – nevertheless attests on the one hand to the preponderance of Anglo-American logic within ICOM, and on the other to a diminution of the role given to research within the institution. Initially the 1974 definition, written in French as the lead language, was a fairly free translation into English to better reflect the Anglo-American logic about museum functions – one of which is the transmission of heri-

tage. English has become the working language most widely used in council meetings, and ICOM, like most international organisations, now operates in English too; it seems that the work to draft a new definition was based on this English translation. The structure of the French definition of 1974 emphasised research, introduced as the driving force of the institution: "*Le musée est une institution permanente, sans but lucratif, au service de la société et de son développement, ouverte au public et qui fait des recherches concernant les témoins matériels de l'homme et de son environnement, acquiert ceux-là, les conserve, les communique et notamment les expose à des fins d'études, d'éducation et de délectation.*" (ICOM Statutes, 1974). The literal translation, but not the official one, reads: "A museum is a permanent, non-profit institution, in the service of the society and its development, open to the public, *which does research* regarding the material evidence of man and his environment...". In 2007 the principle of research (modified in French by the word *étudier* - to study) was relegated to a list of the general functions of museums, as in the 1974 English version.

2. For many museologists, and in particular those who claim to adhere to the concept of museology taught in the years 1960-1990 by the Czech school (Brno and the *International Summer School of Museology*), the museum is only one means among

many that attest to a “specific relationship between Man and reality”, a relationship which is defined by “purposeful and systematic collecting and conservation of selected inanimate, material, mobile, and mainly three-dimensional objects documenting the development of nature and society” (Gregorová, 1980). Before the museum was defined as such in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, according to a concept borrowed from Greek antiquity and its revival during the western Renaissance, every civilisation had a number of places, institutions and establishments that were more or less similar to those that we group under the same word today. In this regard the ICOM definition is considered to be clearly marked by its time and its western context, but also too prescriptive, since its purpose is essentially corporatist. A ‘scientific’ definition of museum should, in this sense, free itself from certain elements contributed by ICOM, such as the not-for-profit aspect of a museum: a profit-making museum (such as the *Musée Grévin* in Paris) is still a museum, even if it is not recognised by ICOM. We can thus more broadly and more objectively define museum as “a permanent museological institution, which preserves collections of ‘physical documents’ and generates knowledge about them” (Van Mensch, 1992). For his part Schärer defines museum as “a place where things and related values are preserved studied and communicated, as signs that inter-

pret absent facts” (Schärer, 2007) or, in a way that seems tautological at first, as the place where the musealisation takes place. In an even wider sense, the museum can be understood as a “place of memory” (Nora, 1984; Pinna, 2003), a ‘phenomenon’ (Scheiner, 2007), covering institutions, different places or territories, experiences, and even intangible spaces.

3. From this perspective which goes beyond the limited nature of the traditional museum, it is defined as a tool devised by man with the purpose of archiving, understanding, and transmitting. One could, like Judith Spielbauer (1987), say that museums are an instrument to foster “an individual’s perception of the interdependence of the social, aesthetic and natural worlds in which he lives by providing information and experience and fostering self-knowledge within this wider context.” Museums can also be “a specific function which may or may not take on the features of an institution, the objective of which is to ensure, through a sensory experience, the storage and transmission of culture understood as the entire body of acquisitions that make a man out of a being who is genetically human” (Deloche, 2007). These definitions cover museums which are incorrectly referred to as virtual museums (in particular those that are on paper, on CD-ROM or on the Web) as well as more traditional institutional museums, inclu-

ding even the museums of antiquity, which were more schools of philosophy than collections in the accepted sense of the term.

4. This last use of the term museum brings us to the principles of the *ecomuseum* in its original conception, that is to say a museal institution which, for the development of a community, combines conservation, display and explanation of the cultural and natural heritage held by this same community; the *ecomuseum* represents a living and working environment on a given territory, and the research associated with it. "The *ecomuseum* [...] on a given territory, expresses the relationship between man and nature through time and space on this territory. It is composed of property of recognised scientific and cultural interest which is representative of the community it serves: non-built immovable property, natural wild spaces, natural spaces occupied by man; built immovable property; movable property; fungible goods. It includes an administrative centre, headquarters of the major structures: reception, research, conservation, display, cultural action, administration, in particular one or more field laboratories, conservation bodies, meeting halls, socio-cultural workshops, accommodation etc.; trails and observation points for exploring the territory; different architectural, archaeological and geological elements...duly indicated and explained" (Rivière, 1978).

5. With the development of com-

puters and the digital world the concept of *cyber museum*, often incorrectly called 'virtual', gradually became accepted; a notion generally defined as "a logically related collection of digital objects composed in a variety of media which, through its connectivity and its multi-accessible nature, lends itself to transcending traditional methods of communicating and interacting with visitors.; it has no real place or space; its objects and the related information can be disseminated all over the world" (Schweibenz, 1998). This definition, probably derived from the relatively recent notion of virtual computer memory, appears to be something of a misinterpretation. We must remember that 'virtual' is not the opposite of 'real', as we tend to believe too readily, but rather the opposite of 'actual' in its original sense of 'now existing'. An egg is a virtual chicken; it is programmed to become a chicken and should become one if nothing gets in the way of its development. In this sense the *virtual museum* can be seen as all the museums conceivable, or all the conceivable solutions applied to the problems answered by traditional museums. Thus the virtual museum can be defined as a "concept which globally identifies the problem areas of the *museal* field, that is to say the effects of the process of decontextualisation/recontextualisation; a collection of substitutes can be a virtual museum just as much as a computerised data base; it is the

museum in its *exterior theatre of operations*” (Deloche, 2001). The virtual museum is the package of solutions that may be applied to museum problems, and naturally includes the cyber museum, but is not limited to it.

▷ **DERIVATIVES:** VIRTUAL MUSEUM.

☞ **CORRELATED:** CYBER MUSEUM, MUSEAL, MUSEALIA, MUSEALISATION, MUSEALISE, MUSEOGRAPHER, MUSEOGRAPHY, MUSEOLOGICAL, MUSEOLOGIST, MUSEOLOGY, MUSEUMIFICATION (PEJORATIVE), MUSEUM STUDIES, NEW MUSEOLOGY, EXHIBITION, INSTITUTION, PRIVATE COLLECTIONS, REALITY.

# O

## OBJECT [MUSEUM OBJECT] OR MUSEALIA

*n.* – (from the Latin *objectum*, past participle *objectare*, to throw against) – Equivalent in French: *objet*; Spanish: *objeto*; German: *Objekt, Gegenstand*; Italian: *oggetto*; Portuguese: *objecto*, (Brazilian: *objeto*)

The term *museum object* is sometimes replaced by the neologism *musealia*, modelled on the Latin neuter noun *musealium* with *musealia* in the plural. The equivalent in French: *museálie* (rarely used), *musealia*; Spanish: *musealia*; German: *Musealie, Museumsobjekt*; Italian: *musealia*; Portuguese: *musealia*.

In the simplest philosophical sense of the word an object is not in itself a form of reality, but a product, a result, or an equivalence. In other words it means that which is placed, or thrown forward (*ob-jectum, Gegen-stand*) by a subject, who treats it as different from himself, even if he considers himself as an object. This distinction between the subject and the object developed relatively late and is a feature of Western culture. In this way the object is different from the thing, which is related to the subject as a continuation or an implement (for example, a tool as a continuation of the hand is a thing and not an object).

A *museum object* is something which is musealised; a *thing* can be defined as any kind of reality in general. The expression ‘museum object’ could almost be a pleonasm in so far as the museum is not only the place which shelters objects, but also a place with the principal mission of transforming things into objects.

1. The object is not in any case raw, reality or simply a given item which it would be sufficient to collect, for example, to be part of a museum’s collection, as one would collect seashells on the shore. It is an ontological status which, in given circumstances, a particular thing will assume, on the understanding that the thing would not be considered an object in other circumstances. The difference between the thing and the object lies in the fact that the *thing* has become a concrete part of life and that the relationship we have with it is a relationship of affection or symbiosis. This is revealed by the animism of societies often reputed to be ‘primitive’: it is a relationship of usability, as is the case of the tool adapted to the shape of the hand. By contrast, an *object* is always that which the subject sets down in front of himself, and separate from him; it is thus what is ‘facing’ and different.

In this sense the object is abstract and dead, closed on itself, as evidenced by that series of objects which is a collection (Baudrillard, 1968). This status of the object is considered today to be a purely western product (Choay, 1968; Van Lier, 1969; Adotevi, 1971), in so far as it was the West which broke with the tribal way of life and thought about the gap between subjects and objects for the first time (Descartes, Kant, and later McLuhan, 1969).

2. Through their work of acquisition, research, preservation and communication, museums can be presented as one of the major authorities in the 'production' of objects. In this case, the museum object – *musealium* or *musealia* – does not have any intrinsic reality, even if the museum is not the only instrument to 'produce' objects. In fact other approaches are 'objectivising' as is the case in particular for scientific processes to establish reference standards (c.f., measurement scales) which are completely independent of the subject and which consequently find it difficult to treat that which is living as such (Bergson) because it tends to turn it into an object, wherein lies the difficulty of physiology compared to anatomy. The museal object is made to be seen, with its whole mass of implicit connotations, because we can display it in order to stir emotions, to entertain, or to teach. This action of displaying is so essential that it is what turns a thing into an object by creating this dis-

tance, whereas the priority in scientific operations is the requirement to account for things in a universally intelligible context.

3. Naturalists and ethnologists, as well as museologists, generally select things which they already call objects, according to their potential as evidence, that is the quality of information (markers) that they can provide to reflect the ecosystems or cultures the traces of which they wish to preserve. "Musealia (museum objects) are authentic movable objects which, as irrefutable evidence, show the development of nature and society" (Schreiner 1985). The wealth of information they provide has led ethnologists such as Jean Gabus (1965) or Georges Henri Rivière (1989) to attribute to them the name *witness-object*, which they retain when they are displayed. Georges Henri Rivière even used the expression *symbol-object* to describe certain witness objects heavy with content which might claim to summarise a whole culture or period. The result of systematically making things into objects is that they can be studied much better than if they were still in their original context (ethnographic field, private collection or gallery), but it can also become fetishist: a ritual mask, a ceremonial costume, a prayer tool etc. quickly change their status when they enter the museum. We are no longer in the real world, but in the imaginary world of the museum. For example, the visitor is not allowed to sit on

a chair in a museum of decorative arts, which supposes an established distinction between the functional chair and the chair-object. Their function has been removed and they have been 'decontextualised', which means that from now on they will no longer serve their original purpose but have entered a symbolic order which gives them new meaning, leading Krzysztof Pomian to call such objects *semiophores* ("carriers of significance") and to attribute a new value to them – which is first of all purely a museal value but which can become an economic value. They thus become sacred (consecrated) evidence of culture.

4. Exhibitions reflect these choices. For semiologists like Jean Davallon "Musealia can be considered less as *things* (from the point of view of their physical reality) than as *language beings* (they are defined, recognized as worthy of being safeguarded and displayed) and as *supports of social practices* (they are collected, catalogued, displayed etc.)" (Davallon, 1992). Objects can thus be used as signs, just like words in speech, when they are used in an exhibition. But objects are not just signs, since by their presence alone they can be directly perceived by our senses. For this reason the term *real thing* is often used to indicate a museum object exhibited because of its power of "authentic presence", that is "The real things of the museum language are those things which we present as what they are, not as models or ima-


ges or representations of something else." (Cameron, 1968). For various reasons (sentimental, aesthetic, etc.) we have an intuitive relationship with that which is displayed. The noun *exhibit* refers to a real thing which is displayed, but also to anything displayable (a sound, photographic or film document, a hologram, a reproduction, a model, an installation or a conceptual model) (see *Exhibition*).

5. A certain tension exists between the real thing and its substitute. Regarding this we must note that for some people the *semiophore object* is only a carrier of meaning when it is presented for itself, and not through a substitute. Wide as it may seem, this purely *reist* concept does not take account of either the origins of museums in the Renaissance (see *Museum*) or the development and diversity reached by museology during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Nor does it allow us to take into account the work of a number of museums whose activities are essentially on other support systems such as the internet or duplicated media, or more generally all the museums made of substitutes such as museums of casts (gypsotheques), collections of models, collections of wax reproductions (ceratheques), or science centres which display mostly models. Since these objects were considered as elements of a language, they can be used to create *lecture exhibitions*, but they are not always adequate to sustain the entire lecture. We must therefore envisage other elements

of a language of substitution. When the exhibit replaces a real thing or authentic object, through its function or nature, the replacement is called a *substitute*. It may be a photograph, a drawing or a model of the real thing. The substitute would thus be said to be in conflict with the 'authentic' object, even though it is not exactly the same as a *copy* of the original (such as the casts of a sculpture or copy of a painting), in so far as substitutes can be created directly from an idea or a process and not just by producing a perfect copy. According to the form of the original and the use that should be made of it, the substitute can be two or three-dimensional. The idea of authenticity, particularly important in fine arts museums (masterpieces, copies and fakes), influences the majority of the questions attached to the status and value of museum objects. We must nonetheless note that there are museums which have collections made solely of substitutes, and that, generally speaking, the policy of substitutes (copies, plaster casts or wax, models or digital images) opens the field of museum operations very wide and leads us to question all the present values of the museum from

the point of view of museal ethics. Moreover, from the wider perspective mentioned above, any object displayed in a museum context must be considered as a substitute for the reality it represents because as a musealised thing, the museum object is a substitute for this thing (Deloche, 2001).

6. In the museological context, especially in the fields of archaeology and ethnology, specialists are accustomed to invest the object with the meaning they have developed from their own research. But this raises several problems. First of all, the objects change their meaning in their original environment at the whim of each generation. Next, each visitor is free to interpret them according to his or her own culture. The result is the relativism summarised by Jacques Hainard in 1984 in a sentence which has become famous: "The object is not the truth of anything. Firstly polyfunctional, then polysemic, it takes on meaning only when placed in context." (Hainard, 1984)

 **CORRELATED:** ARTEFACT, AUTHENTICITY, COLLECTION, COPY, EXHIBIT, FETISH-OBJECT, REAL THING, REPLICA, REPRODUCTION, SPECIMEN, SUBSTITUTE, THING, TRANSITORY OBJECT, WITNESS-OBJECT, WORK OF ART.



# P

## PRESERVATION

*n* – Equivalent French: préservation; Spanish: preservación; German: Bewahrung, Erhaltung; Italian: preservazione; Portuguese: preservação.

To preserve means to protect a thing or a group of things from different hazards such as destruction, deterioration, separation or even theft; this protection is ensured by gathering the collection in one place, inventoring it, sheltering it, making it secure and repairing it.

In museology, preservation covers all the operations involved when an object enters a museum, that is to say all the operations of acquisition, entering in the inventory, recording in the catalogue, placing in storage, conservation, and if necessary restoration. The preservation of heritage generally leads to a policy which starts with the establishment of a procedure and criteria for acquisition of the material and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment, and continues with the management of those things which have become museum objects, and finally with their conservation. In this sense the concept of preservation represents that which is fundamentally at stake in museums, because the building up

of collections structures the mission of museums and their development. Preservation is one axis of museal action, the other being transmission to the public.

1. The *acquisition* policy is, in most cases, a fundamental part of the way any museum operates. Acquisition, within the museum, brings together all the means by which a museum takes possession of the material and intangible heritage of humanity: collecting, archaeological digs, gifts and legacy, exchange, purchase, and sometimes methods reminiscent of pillage and abduction (combated by ICOM and UNESCO – *Recommendation* of 1956 and *Convention* of 1970). The *management of collections* and the *overseeing of collections* comprise all the operations connected with the administrative handling of museum objects, that is to say their recording in the museum *catalogue* or registration in the museum *inventory* in order to certify their museal status – which, in some countries, gives them a specific legal status, since the items entered in the inventory, especially in publicly owned museums, are inalienable and imprescriptible. In some countries such as the United States, museums may exceptionally deaccession objects by transfer to


another museal institution, destruction or sale. Storage and classification are also part of collection management, along with the supervision of all movements of objects within and outside the museum. Finally, the objective of *conservation* is to use all the means necessary to guarantee the condition of an object against any kind of alteration in order to bequeath it to future generations. In the broadest sense these actions include overall security (protection against theft and vandalism, fire and floods, earthquakes or riots), general measures known as *preventive conservation*, or “all measures and actions aimed at avoiding and minimizing future deterioration or loss. They are carried out within the context or on the surroundings of an item, but more often a group of items, whatever their age and condition. These measures and actions are indirect – they do not interfere with the materials and structures of the items. They do not modify their appearance” (ICOM-CC, 2008). Additionally, *remedial conservation* is “all actions directly applied to an item or a group of items aimed at arresting current damaging processes or reinforcing their structure. These actions are only carried out when the items are in such a fragile condition or deteriorating at such a rate that they could be lost in a relatively short time. These actions sometimes modify the appearance of the items” (ICOM-CC, 2008). *Restoration* covers “all actions directly applied to a single and stable item

aimed at facilitating its appreciation, understanding and use. These actions are only carried out when the item has lost part of its significance or function through past alteration or deterioration. They are based on respect for the original material. Most often such actions modify the appearance of the item” (ICOM-CC, 2008). To preserve the integrity of the items as far as possible, restorers choose interventions which are reversible and can be easily identified.

2. In practice, the concept of *conservation* is often preferred to that of preservation. For many museum professionals, conservation, which addresses both the action and the intention to protect cultural property, whether material or intangible, constitutes a museum’s core mission. This explains the use in French of the word *conservateurs* (in English curators, in the UK keepers) which appeared at the time of the French Revolution. For a long time (throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century at least) this word seems to have best described the function of a museum. Moreover the current definition of museum by ICOM (2007) does not use the term preservation to cover the concepts of acquisition and conservation. From this perspective, the notion of conservation should probably be envisaged in a much wider sense, to include questions of inventories and storage. Nonetheless, this concept collides with a different reality, which is that conservation (for example, in the ICOM Conser-

vation Committee) is much more clearly connected with the work of conservation and restoration, as described above, than with the work of management or overseeing of the collections. New professional fields have evolved, in particular collection archivists and registrars. The notion of preservation takes account of all these activities.

3. The concept of preservation, in addition, tends to objectivise the inevitable tensions which exist between each of these functions (not to mention the tensions between preservation and communication or research), which have often been the target of much criticism: “The idea of conservation of the heritage takes us back to the anal drives of all capitalist societies” (Baudrillard, 1968; Deloche, 1985, 1989). A number of acquisition policies, for example, include deaccession policies at the same time (Neves, 2005). The question of the restorer’s choices and, generally speaking, the choices to be made with regard to conservation operations (what to keep and what to discard?) are, along with deaccession, some of the most controversial issues in museum management. Finally, museums are increasingly acquiring and preserving intangible heritage, which presents new problems and forces them to find conservation techniques which can be adapted for these new types of heritage.

 **CORRELATED:** ACQUISITION, DOCUMENT, ITEMS, MONUMENT, GOODS, PROPERTY, SEMIOPHORE, THINGS, RELIC (HOLY), WORK; HERITAGE, INTANGIBLE, MATERIAL;

REALITY; COMMUNITY; PREVENTIVE CONSERVATION, REMEDIAL CONSERVATION, SAFEGUARD; COLLECTION MANAGEMENT, COLLECTION OVERSIGHT, COLLECTION MANAGER, CURATOR, CONSERVATOR, INVENTORY, RESTORER; DEACCESSION, RESTITUTION.

---

## PROFESSION

*n.* – Equivalent in French: profession; Spanish: profesión; German: Beruf; Italian: professione; Portuguese: profissão.

Profession is defined first of all in a socially defined setting, and not by default. Profession does not constitute a theoretical field: a museologist can call himself an art historian or a biologist by profession, but he can also be considered – and socially accepted – as a professional museologist. For a profession to exist, moreover, it must define itself as such, and also be recognised as such by others, which is not always the case in the museum world. There is not one profession, but several museal professions (Dubé, 1994), that is to say a range of activities attached to the museum, paid or unpaid, by which one can identify a person (in particular for his civil status) and place him in a social category.

If we refer to the concept of museology as presented here, most museum employees are far from having received the professional training that their title would imply, and very few can claim to be museologists simply because they work in a museum. There are, however, many positions which require a specific background. ICTOP (The ICOM International

Committee for the Training of Personnel) has listed twenty of them (Ruge, 2008).

1. Many employees, often the majority of people working in the institution, follow a career path which has only a relatively superficial relationship with the very principle of the museum – whereas to the wider public, they personify museums. This is the case with *security officers* or *guards*, the staff responsible for the surveillance of exhibition areas in the museum, who are the main contacts with the public, like the receptionists. The specificity of museum surveillance (precise measures for security and for evacuating the public and the collections etc.) has gradually throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century imposed specific recruitment categories, in particular that of a body which is separate from the rest of the administrative staff. At the same time it was the figure of the *curator* who appeared as the first specifically museal profession. For a long time the curator was in charge of all tasks directly relating to the objects in the collection, that is their preservation, research and communication (PRC model, *Reinhardt Academie*). The curator's training is firstly associated with the study of the collections (art history, natural sciences, ethnology etc.) even if, for several years now, it has been backed up by a more museological training such as that given by a number of universities. Many curators who have specialised in the study of the collections – which remains uncontested as

their main field of activity - cannot call themselves either museologists, or museographers (museum practitioners), even if in practice some of them easily combine these different aspects of museal work. In France, unlike other European countries, the body of curators is generally recruited by competition and benefits from a specific training school (*Institut national du Patrimoine*/the National Heritage Institute).

2. The term *museologist* can be applied to researchers studying the specific relationship between man and reality, characterised as the documentation of the real by direct sensory perception. Their field of activity essentially concerns theory and critical thinking in the museal field, so they may work elsewhere than in a museum, for example in a university or in other research centres. The term is also applied by extension to any person working for a museum and holding the function of project leader or exhibition programmer. So museologists differ from curators, and also from *museographers*, who are responsible for the design and general organisation of the museum and its security, conservation and restoration facilities along with the exhibition galleries, whether permanent or temporary. Museographers, with their specific technical skills, have an expert vision of all the ways in which a museum operates – preservation, research and communication – and by drawing up the appropriate specifications they can manage the information connected

with the overall work of the museum, from preventive conservation to the information disseminated to different publics. The museographer differs from the *exhibit designer*; a term proposed to indicate the person with all the skills required to create exhibitions, whether these are situated in a museum or in a non-museum setting, and from the *exhibition designer* in that the latter, who uses techniques to set the scene for the exhibition, may also find himself skilled at setting up an exhibition (see *Museography*). The professions of exhibit designer and exhibition designer have long been related to that of *decorator*, which refers to decoration of the spaces. But the work of interior decoration in functional areas pertaining to the normal activities of interior decoration differs from the tasks that are required for exhibitions, which are in the field of exhibit design. In exhibitions, their work tends more towards fitting out the space using exhibits as elements of decoration, rather than starting from the exhibits to be displayed and given meaning within the space. Many exhibit designers or exhibition designers call themselves first of all architects of interior design, which does not mean that any architect of interior design can claim the status of exhibit designer or exhibition designer, or of museographer. In this context the *exhibition and display curator* (a role often played by the curator, but sometimes by a person from outside the museum) takes on its full meaning, since he or she

produces the scientific project for the exhibition and coordinates the entire project.

3. Assisted by the development of the museum field, a number of professions have gradually emerged and to become independent, and also to confirm their importance and their will to be a part of the museum's destinies. This phenomenon can essentially be observed in the fields of preservation and communication. In preservation, it was first of all the *conservator*, as a professional with scientific competences and above all the techniques required for the physical treatment of the collection objects (restoration, preventive and remedial conservation), who required highly specialised training (by types of material and techniques), competences which the curator does not have. Similarly the tasks imposed by the inventory, relating to management of the reserves, and also to the moving of items, favoured the relatively recent creation of the post of *registrar*, who is responsible for the movement of objects, insurance matters, management of the reserves and sometimes also the preparation and mounting of an exhibition (at which point the registrar becomes the exhibition curator).


4. Regarding communication, the staff attached to the educational department, along with all the staff who work in public relations, have benefited from the emergence of a number of specific professions. Undoubtedly one of the oldest of these is that of guide-interpreter,

*guide-lecturer* or lecturer, who accompanies visitors (most often in groups) through the exhibition galleries, giving them information about the exhibition and the objects on display, essentially following the principle of guided visits. This first type of accompaniment has been joined by the function of *animator*, the person in charge of workshops or other experiences coming under the museum's communication methods, and then that of *cultural projects coordinator* who is the intermediary between the collections and the public and whose aim is more to interpret the collections and to encourage the public to take interest in them than to systematically teach the public according to a pre-established content. Increasingly the *web master* plays a fundamental role in the museum's communication and mediation tasks.

5. Other cross-cutting or ancillary occupations have been added to these professions. Among these are the *head* or *project manager* (who may be a scientist, or a museographer) who is responsible for all the methods for implementing the museal activities and who groups around him specialists in the fields of preservation, research, and communication in order to carry out specific projects, such as a temporary exhibition, a new gallery, an open reserve, etc.

6. In more general terms it is very likely that *administrators* or *museum managers*, who already have their own committee in ICOM, will emphasise the specific skills of their function by

distinguishing it from other organisations, for profit or not. The same is true for many other administrative tasks such as logistics, security, information technology, marketing, and media relations, which are all growing in importance. Museum directors (who also have associations, particularly in the United States) have profiles that cover one or more of the above proficiencies. They are symbols of authority in the museum, and their profile (manager or curator, for example) is often presented as indicative of the development and action strategy that the museum will adopt.

 **CORRELATED:** ANIMATOR, COMMUNICATOR, CONSERVATION, CURATOR, CULTURAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR, EDUCATOR, EVALUATOR, EXHIBIT PRACTICE, EXHIBIT STUDIES, EXHIBITION DESIGNER, GUARD, GUIDE, GUIDE-INTERPRETER, INTERIOR DESIGNER, LECTURER, MANAGEMENT, MEDIATOR, MUSEOGRAPHY, MUSEOLOGIST, MUSEOLOGY, MUSEUM PRACTICE, MUSEUM STUDIES, PROJECT MANAGER, RESEARCHER, RESTORER, SECURITY OFFICER, STAGE DESIGNER, TECHNICIAN, VOLUNTEER.

---

## PUBLIC

*n., adj.* (Latin *publicus*, *populus*: people or population) – Equivalent in French: public, audience; Spanish: público; German: Publikum Besucher; Italian: pubblico; Portuguese: público.

The term has two accepted meanings, according to whether it is used as an adjective or a noun.

1. The adjective 'public' – as in 'public museum' – explains the legal relationship between the museum

and the people of the area in which it is located. The public museum is essentially the property of the people; it is financed and administered by the people through its representatives and by delegation, through its management. This system is most strongly present in Latin countries: the public museum is essentially financed by taxes, and its collections are part of the logic of public ownership (in principle they cannot rightfully be removed or deaccessioned, nor can their status be changed unless a strict procedure is followed). The working rules are generally those of public services, especially the principle of continuity (the service is required to operate continuously and regularly, with no interruptions other than those provided for in the regulations), the principle of mutability (the service must adapt to changes in the needs of the general public interest, and there should be no legal obstacle to changes to be made to this end), the principle of equality (to insure that each citizen is treated equally). Finally the principle of transparency (communication of documents about the service to anyone who requests them, and the reasons for certain decisions) signifies that the museal establishment is open to all and belongs to all; it is at the service of society and its development.

In Anglo-American law the prevailing notion is less that of public service than that of public trust, principles which demand that the *trustees* have a strict commitment to

the museum, generally organised as a private enterprise with the status of a non-profit organisation, and that the activities of the board of trustees are aimed at a certain public. This museum's main point of reference, particularly in the United States, is more an idea of community than that of public, the term community often being taken in a very wide sense (see *Society*).

This principle of public interest causes museums worldwide to see their activities carried out, if not under the aegis of public authorities, then at least with reference to them, and most often to be partly run by these authorities, which in turn obliges museums to respect a number of rules which influence their administration and a number of ethical principles. In this context the question of the private museum and that of the museum managed as a commercial enterprise allows the assumption that the different principles connected with state ownership and the nature of public authorities mentioned above would not be encountered. It is from this perspective that the ICOM definition of museum presupposes that it is a non-profit organisation, and that many of the articles of its code of ethics have been drafted according to its public nature.

2. As a noun the word 'public' refers to the museum users (the museum public), but also, by extension from its actual user public, to the whole of the population addressed by the

establishment. The notion of public is central to almost all of the current definitions of museum: “institution ... at the service of society and its development, open to the public” (ICOM, 2007). It is also a “collection ... the conservation and display of which are of public interest and intended for public knowledge, education and enjoyment” (Law on the museums of France, 2002), or again “an institution which owns and uses material objects, preserves them and exhibits them to the public according to regular opening hours” (American Association of Museums, Accreditation Program, 1973); the definition published in 1998 by the Museums Association (UK) replaced the adjective ‘public’ with the noun ‘people’.

The very notion of public closely associates the museum activities with its users, even those who are intended to benefit from it but do not use its services. By users we mean of course the visitors – the public at large – about whom we think first of all, forgetting that they have not always played the central role that the museum recognises today, because there are many specific publics. Museums have opened up to everyone only gradually, being first of all a place for artistic training and for the territory of the learned and scholarly. This opening, which has led museum staff to take an increasing interest in all its visitors and also in the population that does not visit museums, has fostered the growth of ways of interpreting

the museum to all the users, as we can see by the new words used over time: people, public at large, non-public, distant public, disabled or frail; users, visitors, observers, spectators, consumers, audience, etc. The development of the professional field of exhibition critics, many of whom present themselves as “public advocates” or “for the voice of the public”, is evidence of this current tendency to reinforce the idea that the public is at the core of general museum operations. Essentially since the end of the 1980s we talk of a real “turn towards the public” in museal action, to show the growing importance of museum visits and take account of the needs and expectations of visitors (which corresponds to what we also call “the commercial trend of museums”, even if the two do not necessarily go together).

3. By extension, in the models of community museums and ecomuseums, the public has been extended to cover the whole of the population in the areas in which they are set. The population is the basis of the museum and in the case of the ecomuseum, it becomes the main player and no longer the target of the establishment (see *Society*).

▷ **DERIVATIVES:** DISABLED PUBLIC, MINORITY PUBLIC, NON-PUBLIC, PUBLIC AT LARGE, PUBLIC RELATIONS, PUBLICITY, TARGET PUBLIC.

☞ **CORRELATED:** AUDIENCE, ASSESSMENTS, COMMUNITY, CUSTOMERS, ECOMUSEUM, EVALUATION, EVALUATORS, LOYALTY BUILDING, PEOPLE, POPULATION, PRIVATE, SOCIETY, SPECTATORS, ENQUIRIES, TOURISTS, USERS, VISITING, VISITORS.



# R

## RESEARCH

*n.* – Equivalent in French: *recherche*; Spanish: *investigación*; German: *Forschung*; Italian: *ricerca*; Portuguese: *pesquisa, investigação*.

Research consists of exploring pre-defined fields with the purpose of advancing the knowledge of these and the action it is possible to carry out in these fields. In the museum, research consists of the intellectual activities and work aimed at discovery, invention, and the advancement of new knowledge connected with the museum collections, or the activities it carries out.

1. Until 2007 ICOM presented research in the French (and official) version of the definition of museum, as the driving force behind its functioning, the objective of the museum being to carry out research on the material evidence of man and society, which is why the museum “acquires, conserves, and exhibits” this evidence. This formal definition which presented the museum as a kind of laboratory (open to the public) no longer represents museal reality today, since a large part of the research such as was carried out in the last third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been moved from museums to laboratories and universities. Now

the museum “acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity” (ICOM, 2007). This definition, shorter than the previous one (and with the term “*fait des recherches*” [does research] in French replaced by “*étudier*” [study]) nonetheless remains essential to the general operations of the museum. Research is one of the three activities of the PRC model (Preservation – Research – Communication) proposed by the Reinhardt Akademie (Mensch, 1992) to define the functioning of museums; it appears to be a fundamental element for thinkers as different as Zbyněk Stránský or Georges Henri Rivièrè, and many other museologists from central and eastern Europe, such as Klaus Schreiner. At the Musée national des Arts et traditions populaires (The National Museum of Folk Arts and Traditions), and more precisely through his works on l’Aubrac, Rivièrè perfectly illustrated the repercussions of the scientific research programme for all the functions of a museum, in particular its acquisition, publication and exhibition policies.

2. Aided by market mechanisms which have favoured temporary exhibitions to the detriment of per-

manent ones, part of the fundamental research has been replaced by a more applied research, particularly in the preparation of temporary exhibitions. Research within the framework of the museum or attached to it can be classified into four categories (Davallon, 1995), according to whether it is part of the operations of the museum (its technology) or produces knowledge about the museum.

The first type of research, certainly the most developed, is direct evidence of traditional museal activity and is based on the museum's collections, relying essentially on the reference disciplines connected with the content of the collections (history of art, history, natural sciences, etc.). The building of classification systems, inherent to the building of a collection and productive of catalogues, was one of the foremost research priorities within the museum, particularly in natural science museums (this is the essence of taxonomy), but also in museums of ethnography, archaeology and of course fine art.

The second type of research involves sciences and disciplines which lie outside the realm of museology (physics, chemistry, communication

sciences, etc.), pursued in order to develop tools for museum practice (considered here as museal techniques): material and standards for conservation, study or restoration, surveys of the public, management methods, etc.

The aim of the third type of research, which can be called museological (for example, museal ethics), is to stimulate thought about the mission and operations of museums – especially through the work of ICOFOM. The disciplines involved are essentially philosophy and history, or museology as defined by the Brno school.

Finally, the fourth type of research, which can also be seen as museological (understood as all critical thought connected with the museal) addresses analysis of the institution, in particular through its communication and heritage aspects. The sciences mobilised for building up knowledge about the museum itself are history, anthropology, sociology and linguistics, etc.

▷ **DERIVATIVES:** MUSEOLOGICAL RESEARCH CENTRE, RESEARCHER.

☞ **CORRELATED:** CURATOR, COMMUNICATION, MUSEOLOGY, MUSEUM STUDIES, PRESERVATION, SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME OF THE MUSEUM, STUDY.

# S

## SOCIETY

*n.* – Equivalent in French: *société*; Spanish: *sociedad*; German: *Gesellschaft*, *Bevölkerung*; Italian: *società*; Portuguese: *sociedade*.

In its most general sense, society is the human group understood as a more or less coherent whole in which systems of relationships and exchange are established. The society addressed by museums can be defined as a community of individuals (in a specific place at a specific time) organised around common political, economic, legal and cultural institutions, of which the museum is a part and with which it builds its activities.

1. Since 1974 the museum has been viewed by ICOM – following the declaration of Santiago de Chile – as an institution “in the service of society and its development”. This proposal, historically determined by the birth of the expression “developing country” and its identification during the 1970s as a third group of countries between western and eastern countries, sees the museum as an agent for the development of society, whether this be culture (the use of the term going so far as to include its literal meaning at this time of agri-

cultural development) or tourism and economy, as is the case today. In this sense society can be understood as all the inhabitants of one or more countries, or even the entire world. This is the case for UNESCO, the international promoter most committed to the maintenance and development of cultures and the respect of cultural diversity, as well as to the development of educational systems – a category in which museums willingly take their place.

2. If on first sight society can be defined as a community structured by institutions, the concept of community itself differs from that of society, since a *community* is a group of people living collectively or forming an association, sharing a number of things in common (language, religion, customs) without necessarily gathering around institutional structures. More generally speaking, *society* and *community* are generally differentiated by their assumed size: the term *community* is generally used to define smaller and more homogeneous groups (the Jewish community, the gay community, etc., in a city or in a country), whereas the term *society* is often used in the case of much larger and necessarily more

heterogeneous groups of people (the society of this country, bourgeois society). More precisely, the term *community*, regularly used in Anglo-American countries, does not have a true equivalent in French since it represents “A collection of constituents or stakeholders 1) audiences, 2) scholars, 3) other public interpreters, e.g. Press, interpretative artists, 4) program providers – arts groups, etc, 5) repositories, including libraries, preservation agencies, museums” (American Association of Museums, 2002). The term is translated in French either by *collectivité* or population locale or *communauté* (in a restricted sense), or also by *milieu professionnel*.

3. Two types of museums – *social museums* and *community museums* – have been developed in recent decades in order to emphasise the specific connection that these museums wish to build with their public. These museums, traditionally ethnographic museums, present themselves as establishments which have strong ties with their public, who is at the centre of their work. Although the nature of their respective objectives is similar, their management style differs, as does their relation with the public. The term *social museums*

includes “museums which share the same objective: to study the evolution of humanity in its social and historical components, and to transmit the staging posts, the points of reference, for understanding the diversity of cultures and societies” (Vaillant, 1993). These objectives establish the museum as a truly interdisciplinary space and can produce exhibitions addressing subjects as varied as the BSE crisis, immigration, ecology etc. The operation of *community museums*, which can be part of the movement of social museums, is more directly related to the social, cultural, professional or geographical group which they represent and which is meant to sustain them. Although often professionally managed, they may also rely on local initiative alone and the spirit of giving. The issues they address touch directly on the functioning and identity of this community; this is particularly the case for neighbourhood museums and ecomuseums.

▷ **DERIVATIVES:** SOCIAL MUSEUMS, SOCIETY MUSEUMS.

☞ **CORRELATED:** COMMUNITY, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, COMMUNITY MUSEUM, DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, ECOMUSEUM, IDENTITY, LOCAL, NEIGHBOURHOOD MUSEUM, PUBLIC.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ADOTEVI S., 1971. "Le musée dans les systèmes éducatifs et culturels contemporains", in *Actes de la neuvième conférence générale de l'Icom*, Grenoble, p.19-30.
- ALBERTA MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION, 2003. *Standard Practices Handbook for Museums*, Alberta, Alberta Museums Association, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.
- ALEXANDER E. P., 1983. *Museum Masters: their Museums and their Influence*, Nashville, American Association for State and Local History.
- ALEXANDER E. P., 1997. *The Museum in America, Innovators and Pioneers*, Walnut Creek, Altamira Press.
- ALLARD M. et BOUCHER S., 1998. *Éduquer au musée. Un modèle théorique de pédagogie muséale*, Montréal, Hurtubise.
- ALTSHULER B., 2008. *Salon to Biennial – Exhibitions That Made Art History*, London, Phaidon.
- AMBROSE T., PAINE C., 1993. *Museum Basics*, London, Routledge.
- AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS [EdCOM Committee on Education], 2002. *Excellence in Practice. Museum Education Principles and Standards*, Washington, American Association of Museums. Available on the internet: <http://www.edcom.org/Files/Admin/EdCom-BookletFinalApril805.pdf>
- ARPIN R. *et al.*, 2000. *Notre Patrimoine, un présent du passé*, Québec.
- BABELON J.-P., CHASTEL A., 1980. "La notion de Patrimoine", *La Revue de l'Art*.
- BARKER E., 1999. *Contemporary Cultures of Display*, New Haven, Yale University Press.
- BARROSO E. et VAILLANT E. (dir.), 1993. *Musées et Sociétés*, actes du colloque Mulhouse-Ungersheim, Paris, DMF, Ministère de la Culture.
- BARY M.-O. de, TOBELEM J.-M., 1998. *Manuel de muséographie*, Biarritz, Séguier Atlantica – Option Culture.
- BASSO PERESSUT L., 1999. *Musées. Architectures 1990-2000*, Paris/Milan, Actes Sud/Motta.
- BAUDRILLARD J., 1968. *Le système des objets*, Paris, Gallimard.
- BAZIN G., 1967. *Le temps des musées*, Liège, Desoer.
- BENNET T. 1995. *The Birth of the Museum*, London, Routledge.
- BOISSY D'ANGLAS F. A., 1794. *Quelques idées sur les arts, sur la nécessité de les encourager, sur les institutions qui peuvent en assurer le perfectionnement...*, 25 pluviôse an II.
- BROWN GOODE G., 1896. "The principles of museum administration", *Report of Proceedings with the papers read at the sixth annual general meeting, held in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, July 23rd-26th*, London, Dulau, p. 69-148.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BUCK R., GILMORE J. A., 1998. *The New Museum Registration Methods*, Washington, American Association of Museums.
- BURCAW G. E., 1997. *Introduction to Museum Work*, Walnut Creek/London, Altamira Press, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.
- BUREAU CANADIEN DES ARCHIVISTES, 1990. *Règles pour la description des documents d'archives*, Ottawa.
- CAILLET E., LEHALLE E., 1995. *À l'approche du musée, la médiation culturelle*, Lyon, Presses universitaires de Lyon.
- CAMERON D., 1968. "A viewpoint: The Museum as a communication system and implications for museum education", in *Curator*, n° 11, p. 33-40: 2 vol.
- CASSAR M., 1995. *Environmental Management*, London, Routledge.
- CHOAY F., 1992. *L'allégorie du patrimoine*, Paris, Le Seuil.
- CHOAY F., 1968. "Réalité de l'objet et "réalisme" de l'art contemporain", in KEPES G. (dir.), *L'objet créé par l'homme*, Bruxelles, La Connaissance.
- DANA J. C., 1917-1920. *New Museum, Selected Writings by John Cotton Dana*, Washington/Newark, American Association of Museums/The Newark Museum, 1999.
- DAVALLON J., 1992. "Le musée est-il vraiment un média", *Public et musées*, n° 2, p. 99-124.
- DAVALLON J., 1995. "Musée et muséologie. Introduction", in *Musées et Recherche*, Actes du colloque tenu à Paris, les 29, 30 novembre et 1<sup>er</sup> décembre 1993, Dijon, OCIM.
- DAVALLON J., 1999. *L'exposition à l'œuvre*, Paris, L'Harmattan.
- DAVALLON J., 2006. *Le don du patrimoine. Une approche communicationnelle de la patrimonialisation*, Paris, Lavoisier.
- DAVALLON J. (dir.), 1986. *Claquemurer pour ainsi dire tout l'univers: La mise en exposition*, Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou.
- DEAN D., 1994. *Museum Exhibition. Theory and Practice*, London, Routledge.
- DEBRAY R., 2000. *Introduction à la médiologie*, Paris, Presses universitaires de France.
- DELOCHE B., 1985. *Museologica. Contradictions et logiques du musée*, Mâcon, Éd. W. et M.N.E.S.
- DELOCHE B., 2001. *Le musée virtuel*, Paris, Presses universitaires de France.
- DELOCHE B., 2007. "Définition du musée", in MAIRESSE F. et DESVALLÉES A., *Vers une redéfinition du musée?*, Paris, L'Harmattan.
- DÉOTTE J.-L., 1986. "Suspendre – Oublier", *50, Rue de Varenne*, n° 2, p. 29-36.
- DESVALLÉES A., 1995. "Émergence et cheminement du mot "patrimoine"", *Musées et collections publiques de France*, n° 208, septembre, p. 6-29.
- DESVALLÉES A., 1998. "Cent quarante termes muséologiques ou petit

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- glossaire de l'exposition", in DE BARY M.-O., TOBELEM J.-M., *Manuel de muséographie*, Paris, Séguier – Option culture, p. 205-251.
- DESVALLÉES A., 1992 et 1994. *Vagues. Une anthologie de la nouvelle muséologie*, Mâcon, Éd. W. et M.N.E.S., 2 vol.
- DUBÉ P., 1994. "Dynamique de la formation en muséologie à l'échelle internationale", *Musées*, vol. 16, n° 1, p. 30-32.
- FALK J. H., DIERKING L. D., 1992. *The Museum Experience*, Washington, Whalesback Books.
- FALK J.H., DIERKING L.D., 2000. *Learning from Museums*, New York, Altamira Press.
- FERNÁNDEZ L. A., 1999. *Introducción a la nueva museología*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial.
- FERNÁNDEZ L. A., 1999. *Museología e Museografía*, Barcelona, Ediciones del Serbal.
- FINDLEN P., 1989. "The Museum: its classical etymology and Renaissance genealogy", *Journal of the History of Collections*, vol. 1, n°1, p.59-78.
- GABUS, J., 1965. "Principes esthétiques et préparation des expositions pédagogiques", *Museum*, XVIII, n° 1, p. 51-59 et n° 2, p. 65-97.
- GALARD J. (dir.), 2000. *Le regard instruit, action éducative et action culturelle dans les musées*, Actes du colloque organisé au musée du Louvre le 16 avril 1999, Paris, La Documentation française.
- GOB A., DROUGUET N., 2003. *La muséologie. Histoire, développements, enjeux actuels*, Paris, Armand Colin.
- GREGOROVÁ A., 1980. "La muséologie – science ou seulement travail pratique du musée", *MuWoP-DoTraM*, n°1, p. 19-21.
- HAINARD J., 1984. "La revanche du conservateur", in HAINARD J., KAEHR R. (dir.), *Objets prétextes, objets manipulés*, Neuchâtel, Musée d'ethnographie.
- HEGEL G. W. F., 1807. *Phénoménologie de l'esprit*, tr. fr. BOURGEOIS B., Paris, J. Vrin, 2006.
- HOOPER-GREENHILL E. (Ed.), 1994. *The Educational Role of the Museum*, London, Routledge.
- HOOPER-GREENHILL E. (Ed.), 1995. *Museum, Media, Message*. London, Routledge.
- ICOM, 2006. *Code of Ethics for Museums*. Paris. Available on the internet: [http://icom.museum/code2006\\_eng.pdf](http://icom.museum/code2006_eng.pdf)
- ICOM-CC, 2008. *Resolution submitted to the ICOM-CC membership. Terminology to characterise the conservation of tangible cultural heritage*. On the occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> Triennial Conference, New Delhi 22–26 September, 2008. Available on the internet: ICOM-CC Resolution on Terminology English.pdf
- JANES R. R., 1995. *Museums and the Paradox of Change. A Case Study in Urgent Adaptation*, Calgary, Glenbow Museum.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- KARP I. *et al.* (Ed.), 2006. *Museum Frictions*, Durham, Duke University.
- KLÜSER B., HEGEWISCH K. (dir.), 1998. *L'art de l'exposition*, Paris, Éditions du Regard.
- KNELL S., 2004. *The Museum and the Future of Collecting*, London, Ashgate, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.
- LASSWELL H., 1948. "The Structure and Function of Communication in Society", in BRYSON L. (Ed.), *The Communication of Ideas*, Harper and Row.
- LEIBNIZ G. W., 1690. *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe. Erste Reihe. Allgemeiner politischer und historischer Briefwechsel*, vol. 5 [1687-1690]. Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1954.
- LENIAUD J. M., 2002. *Les archipels du passé, le patrimoine et son histoire*, Paris, Fayard.
- LUGLI A., 1998. *Naturalia et Mirabilia, les cabinets de curiosité en Europe*, Paris, Adam Biro.
- MALINOWSKI, B., 1944. *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press
- MALRAUX A., 1947. *Le musée imaginaire*, Paris, Gallimard.
- MALRAUX A., 1951. *Les voix du silence – Le musée imaginaire*, Paris, NRF.
- MAROÉVIĆ I., 1998. *Introduction to Museology – the European Approach*, Munich, Verlag Christian Müller-Straten.
- MAROÉVIĆ I., 2007. "Vers la nouvelle définition du musée", in MAIRESSE F., DESVALLÉES A. (dir.), *Vers une redéfinition du musée ?*, Paris, L'Harmattan, p.137–146.
- MAUSS M., 1923. "Essai sur le don", in *Sociologie et anthropologie*, Paris, PUF, 1950, p. 143-279.
- MCLUHAN M., PARKER H., BARZUN J., 1969. *Le musée non linéaire. Exploration des méthodes, moyens et valeurs de la communication avec le public par le musée*, tr. fr. par B. Deloche et F. Mairesse avec la collab. de S. Nash, Lyon, Aléas, 2008.
- VAN MENSCH P., 1992. *Towards a Methodology of Museology*, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Philosophy, Doctoral thesis.
- MIRONER L., 2001. *Cent musées à la rencontre du public*, Paris, France Édition.
- MOORE K. (dir.), 1999. *Management in Museums*, London, Athlone Press.
- NEICKEL C. F., 1727. *Museographia oder Anleitung zum rechten Begriff und nützlicher Anlegung der Museorum, oder Raritäten-Kammern*, Leipzig.
- NEVES C., 2005. *Concern at the Core. Managing Smithsonian Collections*, Washington, Smithsonian Institution, April. Available on the internet: [http://www.si.edu/opanda/studies\\_of\\_resources.html](http://www.si.edu/opanda/studies_of_resources.html)
- NORA P. (dir.), 1984-1987. *Les lieux de mémoire. La République, la Nation, les France*, Paris, Gallimard, 8 vol.
- OBSERVATOIRE DE LA CULTURE ET DES COMMUNICATIONS DU QUÉBEC, 2004. *Système de classification des activités de la culture et des communications du Québec*. Available



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- on Internet: <http://www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/observatoire/scaccq/principale.htm>
- PERRET A., 1931. "Architecture d'abord!", in WILDENSTEIN G., *Musées. Les Cahiers de la République des Lettres, des Sciences et des Arts*, vol. XIII, Paris, p. 97.
- PINNA G., 2003. [Proposition de définition du musée – participation à la discussion sur le forum ICOM-L], *ICOM-L*, 3 décembre. Available on the internet: <http://home.ease.lsoft.com/scripts/wa.exe?A1=ind0312&L=icom-l>
- PITMAN B. (dir.), 1999. *Presence of Mind. Museums and the Spirit of Learning*, Washington, American Association of Museums.
- POMIAN K., 1987. *Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux: Paris, Venise, XVII<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Paris, Gallimard.
- POMMIER E. (dir.), 1995. *Les musées en Europe à la veille de l'ouverture du Louvre*, Actes du colloque, 3-5 juin 1993, Paris, Klincksieck.
- POULOT D., 1997. *Musée, nation, patrimoine*, Paris, Gallimard.
- POULOT D., 2005. *Une histoire des musées de France*, Paris, La Découverte.
- POULOT D., 2006. *Une histoire du patrimoine en Occident*, Paris, PUF.
- PREZIOSI D., 2003 FARAGO C., *Grasping the World, the Idea of the Museum*, London, Ashgate.
- PUTHOD de MAISONROUGE, 1791. *Les Monuments ou le pèlerinage historique*, n°1, Paris, p. 2-17.
- QUATREMÈRE DE QUINCY A., 1796. *Lettres à Miranda sur le déplacement des monuments de l'art en Italie (1796)*, Paris, Macula, 1989.
- RASSE P., 1999. *Les musées à la lumière de l'espace public*, Paris, L'Harmattan.
- RÉAU L., 1908. "L'organisation des musées", *Revue de synthèse historique*, t. 17, p. 146-170 et 273-291.
- RENAN E., 1882. *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation ?*, Conférence en Sorbonne, le 11 mars.
- RICO J. C., 2006. *Manual práctico de museología, museografía y técnicas expositivas*, Madrid, Silex.
- RIEGL A., 1903. *Der Moderne Denkmalkultus*, tr. fr. *Le culte moderne des monuments*, Paris, Seuil, 1984.
- RIVIÈRE, G.H., 1978. "Définition de l'écomusée", cité dans "L'écomusée, un modèle évolutif", in DESVALLÉES A., 1992, *Vagues. Une anthologie de la nouvelle muséologie*, Mâcon, Éd. W. et M.N.E.S., vol. 1, p. 440-445.
- RIVIÈRE, G.H., 1981. "Muséologie", repris dans RIVIÈRE, G.H. et alii., 1989, *La muséologie selon Georges Henri Rivière*, Paris, Dunod.
- RIVIÈRE G. H. et alii., 1989. *La muséologie selon Georges Henri Rivière*, Paris, Dunod.
- RUGE A. (dir.), 2008. *Référentiel européen des professions muséales*, ICTOP. Available on the internet.
- SCHÄRER M. R., 2003. *Die Ausstellung – Theorie und Exempel*, München, Müller-Straten.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- SCHEINER T., 2007. "Musée et muséologie. Définitions en cours", in MAIRESSE F. et DESVALLÉES A., *Vers une redéfinition du musée ?*, Paris, L'Harmattan, p. 147-165.
- SCHREINER K., 1985. "Authentic objects and auxiliary materials in museums", *ICOFOM Study Series*, n° 8, p. 63-68.
- SCHULZ E., 1990. "Notes on the history of collecting and of museums", *Journal of the History of Collections*, vol. 2, n° 2, p. 205-218.
- SCHWEIBENZ W., 2004. "Le musée virtuel", *ICOM News*, Vol. 57 [première définition en 1998], n° 3, p. 3.
- SHAPIRO R. 2004. "Qu'est-ce que l'artification ? ", in *L'individu social*, XVII<sup>e</sup> Congrès de l'AISLF, Comité de recherche 18, Sociologie de l'art, Tours, juillet 2004. Available on the internet: <http://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/docs/00/06/71/36/PDF/ArtificHAL.pdf>
- SCHOUTEN F., 1987. "L'Éducation dans les musées: un défi permanent", *Museum*, n° 156, p. 241 sq.
- SMITH L. (dir.), 2006. *Cultural Heritage. Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies*, London, Routledge, 4 vol.
- SPIELBAUER J., 1987. "Museums and Museology: a Means to Active Integrative Preservation", *ICOFOM Study Series*, n° 12, p. 271-277.
- STRÁNSKÝ Z. Z., 1980. "Museology as a Science (a thesis)", *Museologia*, 15, XI, p. 33-40.
- STRÁNSKÝ Z. Z., 1987. "La muséologie est-elle une conséquence de l'existence des musées ou les précède-t-elle et détermine [-t-elle] leur avenir ? ", *ICOFOM Study Series*, n° 12, p. 295.
- STRÁNSKÝ Z. Z., 1995. *Muséologie. Introduction aux études*, Brno, Université Masaryk.
- TOBELEM J.-M. (dir.), 1996. *Musées. Gérer autrement. Un regard international*, Paris, Ministère de la Culture et La Documentation française.
- TOBELEM J.-M., 2005. *Le nouvel âge des musées*, Paris, Armand Colin.
- TORAILLE R., 1985. *L'Animation pédagogique aujourd'hui*, Paris, ESF.
- UNESCO, 1972. *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, Paris, 16 November. Available on the internet: [whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf](http://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf)
- UNESCO, 1993. *Establishment of a system of "living cultural properties" (living human treasures) at UNESCO*, adopted by the Executive Board of UNESCO at its 142<sup>nd</sup> session (Paris, 10 décembre 1993). Available on the internet: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0009/000958/095831eo.pdf>
- UNESCO, 2003. *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. Paris, 17 October 2003. Available on the internet: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001325/132540e.pdf>

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- VAN LIER H., 1969. "Objet et esthétique", *Communications*, n° 13, p. 92-95.
- VERGO P. (dir.), 1989. *The New Museology*, London, Reaktion books.
- VICQ d'AZYR, F., POIRIER, DOM G., 1794. *Instruction sur la manière d'inventorier et de conserver, dans toute l'étendue de la République, tous les objets qui peuvent servir aux arts, aux sciences et à l'enseignement*. Rééd. in DELOCHE B., LENIAUD J.-M., 1989, *La Culture des sans-culotte*, Paris/Montpellier, Éd. de Paris/Presses du Languedoc, p.175-242, p. 177 et 236.
- WAIDACHER F., 1996. *Handbuch der Allgemeinen Museologie*, Wien, Böhlau Verlag, 2<sup>e</sup> éd.
- WEIL S., 2002. *Making Museums Matter*, Washington, Smithsonian.
- WIENER N., 1948. *Cybernetics: Or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*, Paris/Cambridge, Librairie Hermann & Cie/MIT Press.
- ZUBIAUR CARREÑO F. J., 2004. *Curso de museología*, Gijón, Trea.



— |

| —

— |

| —

— |

| —

— |

| —

— |

| —

— |

| —

— |

| —

— |

| —





— |

| —

— |

| —