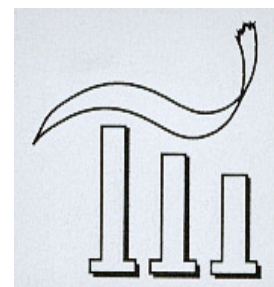


BULLETIN of the European Museum Forum

October 2004



2004 EMF Workshop in Bertinoro

On 6-10 October 35 participants from 13 countries met at the University Residential Centre at Bertinoro in the Emilia Romagna region to explore the theme of lifelong and adult learning in museums from a European perspective. This year the meeting took place in co-operation with the Istituto Beni Culturali in Bologna and Socrates-funded project Collect & Share, which is a new Europe-wide network extending cultural access. In particular, it promotes exciting lifelong-learning opportunities for visitors to museums and galleries by gathering and sharing good practice.

Emphasis was placed on intensive group work and in due course a document will be produced which will highlight a series of guidelines and recommendations to be adopted by museum professionals, together with examples which participants considered to be of particular interest. The Workshop ended with a visit to Ravenna, during which participants had the privilege of a preview of the forthcoming Giacometti exhibition at the City Museum.

EMF Annual Meeting, Brussels 4-7 May 2005 Registration forms and further details will be available in January and will be sent automatically to everyone on the EMF mailing list. Copies may be obtained from Committee members and National Correspondents and can also be downloaded from the EMF web site.

2006 EMYA competition Application forms for the 2006 Awards – those candidates who will be visited during the summer and autumn of 2005 – will be available in November 2004.

Postscript to the 2004 Council of Europe Prize On 27 September EMF's Swiss Committee member, Hans Woodtli, travelled to Edirne in Turkey to take part in the local ceremony celebrating the success of the Trakya University Sultan Bayazid II Kulliye Health Care Museum this year. In his speech Mr Woodtli first spoke about the economy and the place allotted to culture within it, saying 'It is the duty of politics and the economy to take care of culture at its foundations, especially where there is a need to intensify economic relationships. We must not forget that we are all people with our own special identity and we first have to become familiar with other cultures to be able to understand them properly. Preparation of the cultural groundwork is the precondition for the success of economic efforts and economic growth.'

He went on to say: 'As an EMF jury member in the European museum landscape I see tremendous opportunities for public museums to promote understanding for other cultures, and in a much more effective manner than the economy appears able to do. When I speak about museums here I am talking about the many small and medium-sized museums, a category to which the Museum of Health Care at the

University of Edirne belongs. There are more than 40,000 museums on the European continent. As members of the EMYA jury we visit newly-opened museums from the North Cape to Malta, and from Siberia to Lisbon. No-one else has the opportunity to see cultural differences so clearly. In a continent of so many different cultures how is it then possible to compare one museum with another when the museums in a single country can be so very diverse?

'In our heterogeneous Europe it is simply not possible to assert that a museum in Iceland, for example, is better than a museum in Anatolia. But it is quite possible to say: this museum is exemplary, since its subject matter and presentations contribute a great deal to the idea of Europe. Because it opens new perspectives and because it promotes mutual, cultural understanding. Because it is a model for other museums and because it builds bridges between different cultures.' Mr Woodtli went on to praise the achievements of the Health Care Museum and wished it every success in the future.

Landscapes and identity in the Netherlands: the mobile museum
Our National Correspondent in the Netherlands, Frans Ellenbroek, reports: During the last decade or so we have seen an overwhelming number of good examples of museum practice focused on regional identity and historical awareness. The same can be said about new ways to involve audiences in an active way in museum activities. Nevertheless I would like to share some such experiences of Natuurmuseum Brabant in the Netherlands with readers of this Bulletin, because for some colleagues they might be inspiring.

As a provincial museum concerned with nature and the landscape we have spent a lot of time and effort on the design of a new format in exhibition development. First I will

give a rough outline of the way of working we settled on eventually, more or less by trial and error. Then I will finish this brief report with some examples of results.

In the beginning there were three basic thoughts. The first was, that if a nature museum wants to reach people and evoke in them a growing awareness of the values of nature, their back garden will almost literally be the best starting point. Secondly, we figured out that a way to reach more people would be to have the museum staff leave the museum building and go to the more remote places in our province. Third, we made the supposition that the natural aspects of landscape, certainly in our country, are not the only successful trigger: take the existing interests of local inhabitants as a starting point, as a trigger for involvement. Culture, history, economic values, recreation or political controversy are examples of other starting points.

So this is how we work. We invite people from a local community to come together and tell us what their major concerns or interests are in the landscape in which they live and work. Or which elements in their landscape are valuable for them or, on the contrary, bother them or worry them. An exercise with various outcomes. Next, we form a group of inhabitants of different backgrounds to start a short research project into many aspects of this chosen landscape or landscape element. The result is a very mixed collection of private or public objects, texts, pictures, works of art, very often recovered from attics. Under the professional guidance of museum staff members this group makes a small exhibition in a public place, such as a town hall, a bank or a school. In addition, they organise excursions, lectures and debates or school activities around this exhibition. The official opening is carried out by the Mayor or some other well-known local person. Emphasis in publicity is on

the local media. The whole process from the start to the end of the exhibition and associated activities takes no more than six months. Often the exhibition is made permanent in some way in some local facility, such as the school or the Town Hall. We do this in six to eight different places each year.

One of the intriguing outcomes of this work has been that we bring together permanently people of different backgrounds. For example, amateur cultural historians meet amateur natural historians, archaeologists meet artists, young people meet old people, etc. Often they had been active within their field of interest for years without meeting other people who shared their interest in the landscape from a different angle. The museum activities brought them together. In this way we successfully tackled the old problem that a nature museum only reaches those already more or less interested.

A second effect that I want to mention is the positive effect of this work on the name and reputation of the museum, and thereby on visits to the actual museum building. And last but not least, in some cases the exhibition and activities about a local landscape have led to discussions in the local press and even among politicians. In general, we believe we have found an effective way of leading people to an involvement in their own landscapes, resulting in curiosity, responsibility, awareness or even actions aimed at conservation, restoration or other improvement.

Pride is a magic word in this. We noticed that knowing and understanding more of the present and past of the nearby park, the river, the dykes around the corner, the old railway, or whatever, had the fascinating effect of becoming *proud of your own landscape*.

We strongly believe that this involvement in local aspects of nearby

landscape ('the back garden') in this multi-disciplinary way, is the most effective first step towards a more general awareness of and support for the values of landscape on a national or even global level. So this recommended approach may be not only for nature museums, but also for others.

I can very well imagine that this format might be applicable to a co-operation project of European museums. Local and regional identity and its connection to local and regional landscape in its great variety, is one of Europe's strengths. In an exchange programme of these locally produced, small-scale exhibitions, people in different parts of the continent might be encouraged to appreciate this variety. Some colleagues from Hungary, England, Croatia, Italy and Cyprus have already shared their interest. Has anyone else? Please contact

f.ellenbroek@natuurmuseumbrabant.nl

A great Norwegian museum tragedy: not only a great loss for the art lovers of the world, but also an Olympic tragedy? One Norwegian news item doesn't need a local correspondent to reach the ears of the outside world. The theft of Norway's two most famous paintings, Edvard Munch's 'The Scream' and 'Madonna' from the Munch Museum in Oslo on 22 August was instant news around the world.

One of the perhaps more far-fetched theories was that it had something to do with the Olympic Games in Athens which opened on 13 August. It was pointed out that the last time 'The Scream' was stolen (a different version from the one at the Munch Museum), it was from the Norwegian National Gallery in Oslo on the opening day of the 1994 Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway.

The paintings worth hundreds of millions of Norwegian crowns were not

insured against theft. Their value was too great to make insurance possible, and as the director said, money can never replace these works of art.

All sorts of questions are being asked. Why were the defective surveillance cameras not replaced? Why were the paintings not bolted to the walls? Why were they not behind bullet-proof glass? Why didn't the doors close automatically when the burglar alarm went off? It has been pointed out that it would not have been an ideal situation having armed robbers locked into a building with lots of terrified visitors and with one of the robbers pointing a gun at the head of a museum attendant. And great damage would have been done if the paintings had been bolted to the walls and the robbers tried to pull them off.

I am sure more Norwegian museum curators than yours truly got a great shock. The shock waves were probably felt in every museum in every fjord and valley of the 2,000 km long coastal kingdom. And the next day everything not bolted down or behind or under thick glass walls was removed from the Alta Museum exhibitions.

After luring the poor curator of the Alta Museum to comment on the sufficiency of local museum security measures, the editor of the local newspaper poured sarcasm on the idea of tightened security in Alta. What does he think thieves would be interested in – the skis of Alta's world ski-jumping champion? While not degrading myself to remind the newspaper (and instead, going to the EMF Bulletin) that we are the guardians of one of Norway's five UNESCO World Heritage monuments, Alta's prehistoric rock art, I would think most Norwegians would lament the loss of some of the 'relics' of the very-much-still-alive and all-time greatest Norwegian skiing champion, Bjørn Wirkola.

Norway prides itself on being such a safe place that nothing from here ever gets into the international news. All this changed on 22 August 2004. Hans Christian Søborg, director, Alta Museum and EMF National Correspondent

Museum night in Budapest

Following the practice of several cities in Europe, Hungarian museums organised an event around Midsummer Night. This year was the third occasion and was an outstanding success. On 26 June 29 museums were open until three in the morning, and all offered special programmes. These included classical and pop music performances, theatre, children's games and special guided tours. Key factors in the success were an excellent marketing campaign led and paid for by the Ministry of National Cultural Heritage, special buses travelling from museum to museum, a successful press conference with the Minister – and good weather.

We in the Hungarian Natural History Museum found that the programmes put on at previous events were also a key factor, since many visitors mentioned their good memories. Our idea this year was 'museum objects come to life'. They spoke, displayed, demonstrated, joked and introduced themselves to the public, explaining their relevance and importance as part of the cultural heritage. This 'theatre' lasted for four and a half hours and proved very exhausting for the curators who were acting as the objects! It was followed by a programme of African music and dance, and all this brought in 7,000 visitors.

The attraction which was most visited was the Gizi Bajor Actors Museum, where several popular actors played Puck from Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* – as they did it earlier on stage. The event attracted some 150-200,000 visitors and turned Budapest into a museum festival for

one night. **Tamás Vasarhelyi, EMF National Correspondent**

The 3rd Open Museum Forum took place in July at Yasnaya Polyana, the estate of Leo Tolstoy near Tula. It incorporated a competition of museum projects and a creative workshop. The first two Forums were held in Vladivostok and on Lake Baikal. On this occasion it was a co-project of the Open Museum Association in Krasnoyarsk and the Association of Russian Museums, and was held for the first time in Central Russia.

This Forum is based on the traditions of the European Museum Forum, as an instrument for creating a map of the latest innovations in the museum field. OMF searches for new projects which have a strong influence on museum practice and also pays attention to projects whose message is important but which have been neglected for some reason.

This year the projects realised in 1997-2002 were analysed and 11 projects were chosen out of the long list of applications received. They included exhibitions, educational projects, and a series of films on museums. The programme for each day included lectures, presentations, round tables and 'talks grounds', where various questions of museum theory and practice were raised and discussed. These varied from problems of the contemporary museum press in Russia to the ICOM code of ethics, and current museum practice in different countries.

The overall prize was given to the project 'Trace of the Garden', produced in 2001 by the Pavel Kuznetsov House Museum, a branch of the N. A. Radischev Fine Arts Museum in Saratov. The project had three parts, which reproduced symbolically the garden's natural life – returning to life in the Spring, pollination in the summer, and harvest in the autumn. The end of the project

involved making apple jam and little jars – with the notice 'recommended to take with tea' were sent to 44 Russian and foreign museums where Pavel Kuznetsov's works are kept. The continuation of the project was a 'virtual' common tea party in many museums, from Sweden to Vladivostok, united by their memory of the artist. According to the authors, the project presents a new type of activity of a memorial house-museum, helping to keep the memory of a historic figure alive and introducing him into modern cultural life.

The next Open Museum Forum will take place far beyond the Urals, in Igarka. Elena Plosnita, EMF National Correspondent

A 1979 flat in Oslo becomes part of a museum The interior decorators Ola Ulset and Tove Kvalstad were 31 years old when they redecorated their downtown Oslo flat in 1979. Economy determined that nearly everything was bought from the local IKEA store, but this style is what they like, they are still true minimalists and have never had any use for trinkets. Industrial carpets cover the floors and burlap the walls. However, they did have some antiques. Now they have donated the flat and its contents to the largest Norwegian museum, the Folk Museum in Oslo, including their record collection with Cat Stevens, Joan Armatrading and Boney M. The flat is now a permanent part of the museum's exhibitions and opened to the public on 18 June. Hans Christian Søbørg, EMF National Correspondent

Victoria & Albert's hopes dashed The Board of Trustees of the V & A has announced that it has dropped plans to build its £70m spiral extension, designed by Daniel Libeskind. The Board said that the decision of the Heritage Lottery Fund to reject the V & A's £15m application in July had killed off all hope of securing the public

funding needed to complete this ambitious project. The museum plans to open an Islamic Gallery in 2006 and a Jewellery Gallery in 2008. *Leisure Opportunities*, 28/09/04

City Museum of Ljubljana in the renovated Auersperg Palace Our Slovenian Committee member and director of the museum, Taja Vovk Cepic, celebrated with her staff on 16 July its re-opening by the Mayoress of Ljubljana, Danica Simscic. The opening of the palace signifies the end of the first half of the renovation of the museum. In situ archaeology in the basement of the palace, the announcement of a permanent exhibition and the completed thematic complex, *Power and Authority of the City*, are parts of the future permanent museum exhibition on the history of Ljubljana and its people. The museum has co-operated since 2003 with the designers, *Event Communications* in London. The setting is designed in the form of content cores, which constitute the entire history of the city and people in such a way that individual cores can change quickly without interrupting the thread of the story.

Renovation of the 16th-century palace was extremely demanding and is the result of the combined efforts of museologists, archaeologists, architects, conservators and construction workers as well as people from a number of other professions. The five million Euro project was completely sponsored by the City Municipality of Ljubljana. During the work thousands of years of history under the building were revealed, including prehistoric wood and urn cemeteries and an ancient Roman road which connected the gates of Emona (the Roman name for Ljubljana) in the east with the harbour on the River Ljubljanica.

Completion of the permanent exhibition next year will begin the second half of the museum's renovation.

The Museum of the Romanian Peasant in Bucharest was the winner of the European Museum of the Year Award competition in 1996, under its charismatic director, Horia Bernea, who sadly died four years later. There have been a number of recent problems at the museum and the next issue of the *EMF Bulletin* will present views from both sides.

The Swiss museum pass: a success story *Susann Bosshard-Kälin is our new National Correspondent for Switzerland, and she tells us about this pioneering scheme.* On 18 May 1996 – the annual Swiss museum day – the Association of Swiss Museums, the Federal Office of Culture and the Swiss Tourist Office jointly launched the Swiss museum pass. From November 1996 onwards, this annual pass would initially entitle holders to free admission to over 160 museums throughout Switzerland. The museums themselves adopted a critical and even disapproving attitude towards the idea, and funds to launch and promote the pass were largely in short supply and had to be borrowed. But there were some motivated people behind the scheme, people who believed in the pass and in its future: the Foundation Council for one, and above all Theo Wyler, the ‘founding father’ of the museum pass idea and since its launch the enterprising Director of the Swiss Museum Pass Foundation in Zürich.

4 x 100 museums Today, eight years on, it would be impossible to imagine the Swiss cultural landscape without the Swiss museum pass. 930,000 people own one of the credit-card shaped annual passes and, since the start of the scheme, almost 400 museums have joined. Alongside the major art institutes, for example, in Bern, Basel, Geneva and Martigny, historical museums and small and medium-sized establishments have also signed up. The Dinosaur Museum is just as entitled to its place

among the varied member museums as the Vine and Wine Museum in the Valais canton, the Ballenberg Open Air Museum in the Bernese Oberland or the Children's Museum in the Aargau canton.

Part of the Swiss cultural offering

The success of the Swiss museum pass is no accident. Substantial commitment, tireless efforts and the constant trust of the partner institutions are the key. In addition to the main activities of the administrative office, the partnership with the Swiss Raiffeisenbank deserves a special mention. Since 2000 this financial institution represented throughout Switzerland and with many local branches has been the main sponsor of the museum pass. The bank's personal credit card also serves as an entrance ticket to the museums in the scheme. The partnership, which has become indispensable for the pass, has also developed into a valuable cultural commitment for the bank, something it does not want to have to give up. This is why the partnership is provisionally guaranteed until 2007.

Various advertising campaigns are in progress with the Swiss Post Office and Swiss Railways and an ever-growing number of new partners. The refunding system enables museums to recover 80% of the average entrance fee for their particular institution. What is more, a separate contract is drawn up with each individual museum. The system is now well established and has proved its worth.

An idea with potential In 2003, 32 new museums were added to the pass – and no museums at all left the scheme! Which is proof of the excellent co-operation between the museums and the Swiss museum pass administrative office, making the pass a great success. Soon, half of all Swiss museums will participate. And its popularity just keeps on growing. People who hardly ever set foot in a museum have overcome their

prejudices and misgivings to become enthusiastic visitors, among them many children and young people.

The list of special exhibitions shown in a wide range of museums, which changes every year, can be called up from the Swiss Tourist Office and Swiss Museum Pass database – around 500 suggestions each year. A very costly but highly informative special service provided by the Swiss museum pass.

If you too would like to find out more about the Swiss museum pass, look at www.museumspass.ch

The British Empire & Commonwealth Museum in Bristol has unveiled a project taking an in-depth look at the spread of the English language. Examining the ways in which the former Empire has influenced the language spoken in the UK today, ***Language and Legacy in Empire*** shows how it has affected vocabulary, accents and even cadence of voice of people from all over the Commonwealth. Funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the museum worked with the Centre for Employment and Enterprise to collect over 50 interviews with members of Bristol's Asian, African and Afro-Caribbean communities aged between the ages of 18 and 30. www.empiremuseum.co.uk

Mid-Troms Museum wins 2004 Norwegian Museum of the Year Award The award-winning museum is a conglomerate of seven museums in seven municipalities and is an example of the type of museum the government is encouraging to avoid having one-man museum units which cannot function effectively. The themes they work with include ethnic pluralism, natural history, industrial history, mining history and military history. The Committee awarding the prize praised the museum for its exhibitions, school service and future

plans, as well as for its efficient administration. Committee members include the President of the Norwegian Parliament, the producer of the national radio programme, 'Museum' and the director of an institution called 'Fritt Ord' (Freedom of Speech), who is the former director of the Norwegian Folk Museum in Oslo. We congratulate the museum on its success.

One of the short-listed museums for the Award was the Leprosy Museum at St George's Hospital (1750s) in Bergen, which is one of the few leprosy hospitals in Europe which have been preserved. Its collections tell the story of leprosy in Norway from the 15th century to 1946 when the last patient died. Pioneering research was carried out in Norway: the disease is also known as Hansen's disease, named after the Norwegian scientist who found the bacillus. The leprosy archives in Bergen are on UNESCO's Programme for the Memory of the World.

The other short-listed museums were the Jewish Museum in Trondheim and the Art Nouveau Centre in Ålesund (Jugendsenteret). Hans-Christian Søbørg

New staff members beetle away at NHM A colony of 100 flesh-eating beetles has joined the staff at the Natural History Museum in London. The *Dermestes maculatus* beetles are 10mm long and will be working behind the scenes at the museum with the grisly task of stripping animal carcasses to skeletons.

The museum's osteology collections include more than a million whole and partial skeletons. They are studied by scientists around the world and can help identify new species and understand the way an animal lived. They are also used for research into skeletal structure. However, many of the specimens waiting in the museum's freezers are still whole and

the beetles' job is to strip away any flesh to reveal the bones underneath. The main advantage of using beetles is that every aspect of the bone is preserved – chemical processing alternatives such as hydrogen peroxide and carbon tetrachloride can often make bones fragile and destroy the molecular information they hold.

The beetles' first meals will include an orange roughy fish, a long-tailed fruit bat and a very rare Norwegian puffin hound. From the initial group of 100 beetles and larvae, the museum intends to breed around 1,000. The museum's curator and new manager of the beetles, Patrick Campbell, said: 'They aren't the most conventional colleagues but they do work very hard. The larvae will eat the most and when the group is established they will get through about two to four kilos of flesh a week.'

As the beetles will eat any organic material, they will be kept under tight security, well away from the museum's collections of stuffed animals and skins. **Leisure Opportunities, September 2004**



BRICKS Project In our July 2004 issue we reported on EMF's involvement in the European Union BRICKS project. EMF is very keen to involve as many museums as possible in the early stages of the project. Anybody with an interest in wider exposure for digital museum resources or participation in the development of new e-learning and e-trading tools for the museum sector, please contact the project co-ordinator, Anita van Mil (avmil@btopenworld.com) or sign a Letter of Intent on the BRICKS Community new website, www.brickscmmunity.org/how.html

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<http://www.europeanmuseumforum.org>
<http://www.serlachiusartmuseum.fi> and then LINKS and EMF logo
<http://www.hdg.de> and then 'International Co-operation'
<http://www.naturalis.nl> and then 'over naturalis', 'links'
http://assembly.coe.int/Museum/e_index.htm

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