



Cultural Base

Social Platform
on Cultural Heritage
and European Identities

Which Museums for the (European) Heritage of the 21st Century

Paris, the 17th of January 2017

Local *CulturalBase* Project Workshop's Report

Dominique Poulot,
Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University

Isidora Stanković,
Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University

Paris, February 2017

info@culturalbase.eu
www.culturalbase.eu

© 2016 CulturalBase



This project has received funding from
the European Union's Horizon 2020
research and innovation programme
under grant agreement No. 649454





Table of Contents:

Summary of Discussions	3
List of Participants	5
Program	6
Longer Summary of Discussions	8
• <i>Good practices of the European Museums of the 21st Century: Propositions</i>	8
• <i>Museum and Communities</i>	10
• <i>Museum Studies, Management and Public</i>	13



Which Museums for the (European) Heritage of the 21st Century?

Summary of Discussions:

Local *CulturalBase* Workshop ***Which Museums for the (European) Heritage of the 21st Century*** was organized in Paris, the 17th of January 2017, in the Institute for Advanced Study. Participants were several members of the Consortium, several stakeholders already involved in the stakeholders' network of the *CulturalBase* project, but the new ones as well, from France, Portugal or from the Balkans, namely academics or professionals working in museums or other heritage institutions.

Several main ideas in relation to heritage and museums emerged during presentations, some of which were already tackled during the work on the project.

The idea all participants agreed upon was the necessity that traditional museum institution change, becoming capable to deal with different challenges imposed to Europe, or to the whole world, some of which represent the result of the economic crisis and the others of the political changes. Furthermore, transformations should be based as well on the knowledge of the museum's audience.

Imperative that museums have an active role in society (and to be socially responsible) was pointed out several times, stressing also that they include different communities in their work. Thus, museum should be a place where people could express freely their different points of view and debate with respect (similar idea appeared during the discussions in Brighton, that a "safe space" should exist, and afterwards in Florence).

Profession of curator was emphasized as important for the work of museums in the future, their training, but diversity as well – the French case was mentioned where curators are usually French citizens that finished studies either of Art History or Archeology.

Several museums (Louvre-Lens, Quai Branly Museum) and civil society organizations (Europa Nostra, Europa Nostra Serbia) insisted on the young



people as target audience, which should be educated in order to be the agent of change afterwards.

Tendency to perceive jointly all heritage institutions was pointed out as well, or all institutions that deal with public memory because of the similarity of concepts these institutions approach. The idea was introduced in the British context with GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums), and during the conference a tendency to involve even other institutions appeared, alongside with a necessity to create a common theory that would be the basis of their practical work.



List of participants:

1. **Jean-Michel Tobelem**, associate professor, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University and director of the *Option Culture*, Studies and Research Institute
2. **Luís Raposo**, president of *ICOM Europe*
3. **Nikola Krstović**, senior curator, *Old Village Museum*, Sirogojno (Serbia)
4. **Yannick Lintz**, curator, director of the *Islamic Art Department*, Louvre Museum
5. **Irina Subotić**, professor emeritus, vice-president of *Europa Nostra* and president of *Europa Nostra Serbia*
6. **Mark O'Neill**, associate professor of College of Arts, University of Glasgow and former director of Policy and Research *Glasgow Life*
7. **Tomislav Šola**, director and founder of *The Best in Heritage* and former professor at the University of Zagreb
8. **Anne Krebs**, head of socio-economic studies and research division, *Research and Collection Department*, Louvre Museum
9. **Frédéric Keck**, director of the *Research Department*, Quai Branly – Jacques Chirac Museum
10. **Felicity Bodenstein**, scholarship holder of the Quai Branly – Jacques Chirac Museum
11. **François Mairesse**, president of the *International Committee of the ICOM* and professor at the University of Paris 3: Sorbonne Nouvelle
12. **Jérémy Molho**, *CulturalBase*, European University Institute, Florence
13. **Matías Zarlenga**, *CulturalBase*, University of Barcelona
14. **Arturo Rodríguez Morató**, *CulturalBase*, University of Barcelona
15. **Dominique Poulot**, *CulturalBase*, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University
16. **Isidora Stanković**, *CulturalBase*, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University
17. **Ina Belcheva**, PhD Candidate, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University
18. **Andrea Delaplace**, PhD Candidate, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University
19. **Élodie Ballot**, PhD Candidate, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University
20. **Alexandra Gauthier**, PhD Candidate, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University
21. **Martin Hullebroeck**, PhD Candidate, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University



Program:

Which Museums for the European Heritage of the 21st Century

8h45 – Welcome speech, Dominique Poulot, partner on the *CulturalBase* project, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University

8h50 – Presentation of the *CulturalBase* project, Arturo Rodríguez Morató, coordinator of the *CulturalBase* project, University of Barcelona

9h – Presentation of the workshop, Isidora Stanković, research assistant on the *CulturalBase* project, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University

First session – Good Practices of the European Museums of the 21st Century: Propositions

9h 05 – Presentation of participants

9h 30 – Luís Raposo – Museums for the 21st century: Back to basics in order to move forward

10h – Visit of the hotel Lauzun

10h 25 – Coffee

10h45 – Jean-Michel Tobelem – Could Louvre-Lens be an agent of democratization

11h05 – Nikola Krstović – Heritage as Act(ion): Inevitable Challenge to the Public Adherence

11h30 – Discussion

12h – Lunch

Second session – Museum and communities

13h – Yannick Lintz – The opening of the Islamic Art Department in the Louvre Museum: A new vision of Universal Culture

13h30:

- Irina Subotić – Between Paneuropean Aspirations and National Needs (EN/ENS)
- Mark O'Neill – Museums and Difference
- Jérémie Molho – Territorializing the museum, from regional ties to the urban space: Lessons from Istanbul

14h15 – Discussion



14h45 – Coffee

Third session – Museum Studies, Management and Public

15h15 – Tomislav Šola – The theory that makes future happen

15h45:

- Anne Krebs – Bringing into discussion or putting an end to the inclusiveness motto?
- Frédéric Keck – Museums of world cultures as instruments of soft power
- François Mairesse – “Museums for the 21st Century”: prospective views around Europe

16h30 General Discussion

17h – Conclusions of the meeting, summarizing the main issues emerged during the sessions, Dominique Poulot

17h15 – Implementation of the reflections within the *CulturalBase* project, Arturo Rodríguez Morató



Longer Summary of Discussions:

The workshop started with presentation of the project by **Arturo Rodríguez Morató** and things that have already been done up to this point in order to provide a framework in which the local workshop is organized. After him, **Dominique Poulot** presented main issues that emerged within the "memory axis" of the project, particularly in relation to museums (metropolization of Europe and reshaping of local territories, national uses of heritage, its branding, appropriation of heritage by the immigrants – new Europeans and dealing with difficult heritage).

The workshop was divided into three sessions – the first one was dedicated to European practices in relation to museums, the second to museums and different communities involved in their work and the third one was related to museum studies, management and public.

The session *Good practices of the European Museums of the 21st Century: Propositions* started with presentation of **Luís Raposo**, president of the *ICOM Europe*. After presenting briefly this institution and the planned projects, he talked about increase of the number of museums, blockbuster museums and exhibitions, often mediatized, but which do not represent a "real picture" about what is happening in the museum world. According to him, museums are exactly the European landmark. When talking about the guidelines for the future of museums, he mentioned three international charters – Faro convention, UNESCO's "Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, their Diversity and their Role in Society" but pointed especially out the third one – Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Resolution on "The libraries and museums of Europe in times of change", since it encourages, on one hand, merging of museums and other public and cultural institutions (as libraries, for example), and it emphasizes, on the other, public role of these institutions. Therefore, he pointed out small, local and community museums as examples of good practice for the future of museums. However, in this context, the role of the professionals – curators of collections should be preserved as well.

The next example presented during this part of the workshop was the Louvre-Lens museum by **Jean Michel Tobelem**, associate professor at the Paris 1



Panthéon-Sorbonne University specialized for the management of museums and director of the *Option Culture*, Studies and Research Institute. By emphasizing the government's tendency to make an outpost of the Louvre somewhere, city of Lens, perceived as an example of a deprived area was chosen for the project with an idea that this museum represents a "catalyst for urban regeneration". He questioned the decision to create the museum here, particularly this one. People had in mind "Bilbao effect" and the myth around it, but without understanding what Bilbao effect really is and the influence of the public and private investments in that area in general on the change of the economic situation. One of objectives was that Louvre-Lens democratized access to art and culture, particularly in relation to young people, but to attract foreigners as well. However, architecture resembling more to the corporate building and the lack of interpretation, especially in the "Galerie du temps" which reunited numerous objects from different contexts, were not in accordance to the stated objectives. Apart from presenting high culture, museum, however, represents the local community. The number of actual visitors was much less than expected, especially among young people, furthermore, blue collar visitors were under-represented (in comparison to their presence in the sociology of the region) and the resources spent on the project were enormous. He showed concern for reserves of the Louvre, which should be moved to this area. According to him, other numerous cultural assets of the region could be used differently.

Another example presented during this session was program created in the "Old Village" open-air museum in Sirogojno, Serbia, presented by its senior curator, **Nikola Krstović**, guest lecturer of the University in Belgrade as well. His presentation was related to the performance in museum, role play re-enactments with an additional quality, which is engaging, and how we can deal with polarities and different ideas in the society. He explained some programs of other open air museums, and two examples of role playing that provoked discussions and that targeted important questions today – in Colonial Williamsburg, museum crucial for the constitution of America and national discourse, the program "Sold" related to the slavery market and African Americans, and the other one – "Homeless" in Den Gamble By in Aarhus in Denmark, where the homeless person was invited to live in the museum. He explained the "Old Village" museum's program "Heritage in the Supermarket". As other open air museums, "Old Village" works and develops a particular



relation with the local community. During the role play in the museum objective was to confront two personalities, "characters", of different generations and different value systems. Furthermore, during the role play, idea was that they discuss among themselves, often following scenarios, different questions in relation to heritage, its value, market, past and present, tradition, memories, social questions, minorities, drugs, abortion, adulatory, media, culture. The role play provoked public's involvement into discussion and possibility that they represent their own points of view, which was the program's objective from the beginning. They wanted to show as well that everyone is in fact related to the creation of heritage. Afterwards, the program was evaluated through heritage theory and student's work at the University of Belgrade.

Discussion afterwards pointed out the fact that good community museum is always involved in the dialogue and that this program allowed respected argumentation in the public, which is a success already and a huge contribution to the public space, due to the current political situation. It was also discussed that previously mentioned Louvre-Lens is not contributing to the civil society, it could, to the contrary, provoke humiliation of local people for not understanding the concept, exhibitions, and for showing their culture is not good enough to be in the museum. It was pointed out as well that maybe a better way would be to send collections to the existing museums, to use other heritage resources of the region and to create the links between them and the Louvre-Lens, particularly since the project is principally founded by the region.

The second session *Museum and Communities* started with presentation of the Islamic Art Department of the Louvre Museum by **Yannick Lintz**, director of the aforementioned department. The presentation had several main points. The first one was explanation of the beginning of the Islamic Art collecting and exposing in the Louvre at the end of the 19th century (firstly as "Muslim art" included in the decorative art department), through its addition to the Near Eastern Department in the new space provided to it in 1993 and possibility to create a narrative, firstly chronological related to dynasties during the project "Big Louvre", which equipped the museum with the pyramid and the new entrance. In 2003, a political decision was made by Jacques Chirac to open a department fully dedicated to the Islamic Art, opened in 2012 when it got a new building, with a tendency to show that Islam represents a part of French culture as well. The second point was creation of the new narrative for the 21st



century which still remained in the chronological order because the issue, according to Lintz, was to present 12 centuries of the Islamic civilization and to speak about very huge territory, namely to represent the Islamic Art in the universalist way. The third point of the presentation emphasized new challenges – on one hand related to better knowledge about how the visitors of museum act due to research of the public, and on the other hand, the ones imposed by new national context of jihadism and Islamism – the fall of the number of French visitors after Charlie Hebdo, and negative connotation of the word “Islam” that emerged in the world. New responsibility is, therefore, imposed to the department as the cultural actor, to spread the “right” ideas about these civilizations and history of Oriental Art – by different projects, exhibitions and social debates.

Discussion after the presentation raised several questions, however, two were particularly pointed out – the complexity of the idea to base a collection on the religion, and moreover, the fact that the concept “Islamic art” is a European concept. Therefore, question if this category is the right one and does it implicate a gaze – “how do we perceive the others” appeared. The second one was related to the audience of the department – there are traditional French visitors of the Louvre, people from abroad, and Muslim tourists proud to come to the Louvre and to be “at home”, looking for religion and not for art. Lintz pointed out as well that the Muslim visitors do not know what “Islamic art” is, since for them their culture is not “Islamic culture”. However, the model of Islamic art representation of the Louvre's department will probably be used in China and Indonesia as well.

In the next presentation of this session, the work and activities of *Europa Nostra* and *Europa Nostra Serbia* were presented by **Irina Subotić**, vice-president of *Europa Nostra* and president of *Europa Nostra Serbia*. Presentation started from the explanation of the situation with the “main” museums of Belgrade – the National Museum that is closed for 14 years now and will be opened soon with the same permanent exhibition concept as the one from 30 years ago, and the Contemporary art Museum is closed for 10 years. In that kind of context, civil organizations are active, and Subotić represents one of them. After presenting the most important projects of *Europa Nostra* (7 most endangered monuments across Europe, lobbying with European Commission, European Parliament and other stakeholders involved in the decision making,



etc.), question of a country that is not in the European Union was tackled, alongside with that of the financial support in relation to its heritage, but also what a representative of European organization could do for the cultural situation in Serbia. In the culture that has to deal with the heritage of Communism and common Yugoslav history, dichotomy between international and local situation, Subotić presented the civil society organization related to transnational and international cooperation, alongside with its activities.

Presentation of **Mark O'Neill**, associate professor of College of Arts in Glasgow and former director of Policy and Research *Glasgow Life* tackled firstly the theoretical preoccupations that he considered important in relation to the future of museums in Europe – mentioning Enlightenment, utopian tendencies to universal knowledge and truth, Romanticism and nationalism, idea of the European civilization as the most appreciated. Furthermore, belief in the power of knowledge led to perception of museums as a mean to educate masses and democratic movement influenced romanticizing of the everyday life, particularly the rural one, destroyed by urbanization. Museums show these big societal stories, either related to the nation, city or a group. They have dark side as well – celebrating local/national becomes the exclusive vision of citizenship, furthermore, valuing culture of only one group can say that the other group's culture is not authentic or not valuable. Museums are often non-reflective and we can deceive ourselves that when giving these messages we are actually promoting universal knowledge. He emphasized several museums of Glasgow, in whose work different communities were involved, by showing in fact the contradictions that exist in museums, but reflect the contradictions of the society (universal values vs group values, serving the educated vs educating society, healing the city vs serving the tourists). Thus, the People's palace was presented and its extended research done before the display with the aim to put the visitor in the center of preoccupations, furthermore program of the Gallery of Modern Art "Contemporary Art and Human Rights" (dealing with drug, LGBT culture, etc.). Plan to include the immigration discourse in different museums of Glasgow, and not to create immigration museum was presented as well. Finally, he stated that museum could engage with the society outside, walk with different partners and tell different stories, but for that the courage is needed, and people who can develop a theory from practice.



Jérémie Molho, research associate at the European University Institute in Florence articulated, on the example of Istanbul, two issues from the geographical point of view, usually separated – relation of international/transnational and regional, as well as the interconnection of museum and its environment. He pointed out as well the explosion of the number of museums, especially in developing countries and in emerging cities since museums are being used by cities as branding tools. This raises two issues – the focus on the regional aspects (collections and narratives related to region or creating regional networks) and on the relations with urban environment. Reasons for the first one could be – strategy of cities to create soft power and to be influential in a region, or it could be an idea presented in the market (auction houses, representing the part of the system), or tendency to challenge the universalist vision by representing transnational regional discourse. Regarding the second issue, Molho emphasized the physical (integration in the urban landscape), economic (that would help city's economy, local business), social (reaching to local populations) and cultural (collaboration with local and civil society) dimension. Furthermore, he showed several museums of Istanbul that reflect these hypotheses.

Debate pointed out that risk assessment is now being done before exhibitions, especially about the controversial contents (Glasgow), due to the public attack on one of their exhibitions – curators learn a lot about political sophistication on these occasions (that are not part of their regular training). The activist role of museums was pointed out as well.

The third session *Museum Studies, Management and Public* started with presentation of **Tomislav Šola**, director and founder of *The Best in Heritage*, and former professor of the University in Zagreb, particularly from the challenges that Europe is facing – because numerous issues – immigrants, wars, etc., haven't been resolved. The other challenges he pointed out are that we have finally arrived to the knowledge society – we are drowning in the ocean of the useless information, we finally have perfect memory, but we don't need it. Everything goes and nothing matters – you can be curator without any knowledge or training – professionalism is in danger. Even the existence of museums was questioned in the past – thus, they have to change by responding to people's needs – one of possibilities is through relation with the civil society. Museums have their own disease – they are oversized, dull,



pretentious, incomprehensible and foreign. He pointed out as well that we did not live anymore in the age of museums, we are in the age of heritage – in the much more wider area where museums are not the only ones (archives, libraries, etc.) – all the memory processes and institutions are there, hence, we are in fact dealing with public memory. The establishment in England has come to the famous “GLAM”, even though relation between these institutions existed before, but it did not come up with the common theory, science we need to be a proper profession. He showed as well the pieces of the lecture delivered on the conference 10 years ago “Europe” in Cracow – because, nothing has changed in relation to the culture in Europe. Budget for the culture is still small, democracy and the rule of law could not be applied to each context/country and the self-congratulating humanist culture, which does not care for context/others, is dominating. He emphasized that Bilbao earns annually 50% of its own capital investment – there is no factory like that, if it is only 10% it is judged as very successful. Government implies that culture is very expensive – which is not really the case. The ideal of the age of heritage is influencing, correcting the governing value system, contributing to the quality decision making whose part we as a profession should be. A useful museum is making a world a better place and the essence of our job is the democratic dialogue. We are so powerful that we could deal with some of these challenges of the world if we unite, if we know what our mission is and if we envisage the common shared culture.

Anne Krebs heads the socio-economic studies and research division of the Louvre Museum. She pointed out that since the 1930s approaching the social role of museums became schizophrenic for curators and museums' professionals especially in France, because they had to take into consideration their traditional missions and institutional injunctions, respecting these political norms, but they were gradually asked to go towards the “democratization” and “cultural democracy” principles, and nowadays they also have to take into consideration diversity, the question of “communities” and even the question of “indigenous rights”. All of this is related to the reclaiming of identities, and even the reclaiming of artifacts themselves. Yet, “inclusiveness” is one aspect of the normative discourse and contemporary dialogue between museums and society and one possible aspect of a public policy, directly related to the broader issue of contemporary socio-economic problems and values. Thus, the social responsibility of museums is not a “new” issue. She emphasized as well that a



characteristic of the Louvre, related to the complexity of the building, the variety of its collections which lead to different and diverse museographical approaches, and the need to take into consideration the high level of attendance, also requires to adapt to various cultural habits and social backgrounds. What she pointed out is the importance of planned policies regarding the role of museums outside of their boundaries (whether physical or digital), and planned policies turned to different and specific categories of visitors: for example, building long-term agreements with other ministries (involving education, civic or health programs), creating partnerships with other facilities outside of the museum field, and working, in particular, with excluded groups, which present different levels of literacy, or people unfamiliar with traditional cultural dialogue, not accustomed to participate in various debates or to the social standards of museum visits. Numerous discussions on themes and contents suited to participants' concerns and experiences need to be asked – for instance, the idea to link classical art and popular culture, and to create links and references with participants' life trajectories. What was pointed out as significant as well is to strengthen partnerships between museums and academia: a research led by the University of Madison-Wisconsin in partnership with international universities and the Louvre is under way, in order to launch "Health Humanities" programs in relation to the influence of artistic practices and experiences on health and well-being. Such proposals seek to bring the arts to health research, to develop conceptually and empirically sound assessment tools for measuring the scope, frequency and intensity of people's encounters with the arts, including in early life, and to collect survey data, using newly developed assessment tools.

Frédéric Keck, director of the Research Department, Quai Branly – Jacques Chirac Museum, pointed out main aspects of the work of the Quai Branly museum and its particularities. The museum does not have a specific name, but the one of the place where museum is established alongside with the name of big political founder. It is related to the field of "world culture" museums – mostly German term, it does not represent the museum of art, nor the museum of art and civilization. On the other hand, besides the representation of the "world culture" there is tradition of the universal museum – the Louvre. Quai Branly Museum is in fact between that two concepts. Keck is interested to perceive the specific position of Quai Branly museum as the world museum, but instrument of soft power in the world of globalization. Furthermore, he explains



in what way – firstly as an instrument of diplomacy. France as a nation-state represents its position in the world through the collection inherited from the past – foreign objects come from different relations – the French king, or the nation-state had with the societies in the rest of the world, therefore, there is a tendency to conquest, colonization, globalization. The tendency to represent France in the rest of the world is blocked, however, by certain dualisms – Western vs non-Western artifacts – museum has non-Western ones, primitive societies vs big civilizations – in museum the “primitive, small ones” are presented, traditional vs contemporary art (they have only contemporary photography). What are the solutions – to link permanent exhibition (revealing “you are visiting the world from Paris” representation) with temporary ones (that reflect different narratives); developing the politics of public (80% of the visitors are French and 20% descendents from non-Western societies; tendency to address to young public and to deconstruct stereotypes); collections should be represented in relation to the trend of globalization, not only the contemporary one, link the objects with political history and tell different narratives about them; digitization. The second soft-power element is to research how images circulate in the globalization which connects different societies – from the circulation of materialities, through exhibitions, circulation of data, perception how the objects can affect visitors in the way they affected the ones who watched them in the source communities. His department triggers the relation between art and agency in the society as well.

François Mairesse, professor at the University of Paris 3: Sorbonne Nouvelle and president of the international committee of ICOFOM, talked mainly about the future of museums and the prospective views about them. French Ministry of culture launched in May 2016 a mission on the museums in France for the 21st century – a report should be finished in the beginning of February. Four groups gathered 20 experts and dealt with ethical and citizen museum, multiactivities of the museum, inclusiveness and collaboration and different professional preoccupations. Something similar was done before and it was not the first mission that tackled what could be done with museums in France. Meetings were held not only in Paris, but in different regions, province, that welcomed a lot of people – around 500 professionals were invited to participate. Internet platform was created to try to involve citizens in the debate. Data will be involved in the report. Enormous literature starting from the 19th century exist about the future of museums. Mairesse works on the



literature with prospective views, from the 1970s to 2013 that could be divided into three periods – the first – as the answer to museum's crisis (beginning of the 1970s), second at the beginning of the new century undertaken by numerous associations, but also the Louvre, and the third one, provoked by economical crisis. American Alliance of Museums created the Center for the Future of Museums in 2007/2008, ICOM reflects upon something similar almost every year, Dutch Association of Museums, Irish National Gallery, Museum's Association from Switzerland, British Museums Association as well – museum associations are initiators of these reflections, not the government. From the prospective point of view the aspects of demography, economics, globalization, technologies, education are researched. One of the major trends of these reports – retreat of the baby-boomers, and the grey market – important for the museums. Second trend – government cuts. French report – a problem is that new government is coming. A lot of recommendations that are involved follow the trends of other reports. It is interesting to think what would be revolutionary scenario – closing of the 50% of cultural institutions, disposal of objects, position of the curator – museums in France are run by curators, formed in the National Institute for heritage – maybe employ some other people beside curators. Social work of museums – the idea is not new, it was started in the 1970s (in France with ecomuseums and the nouvelle muséologie, when Kenneth Hudson wrote "Social History of Museums"), but reemerged again in 2007, just with the start of crisis. His hypothesis is that the first emerging was also in the time of economic crisis, and during the crisis of the 1930s idea existed as well. In the time of economic crisis, people think that museums could help. If there is a cycle, we could work on the growing importance of public – museum centered on public.

The discussion pointed out the position of the "national curator" in France, who could actually be a curator since they are usually French, formed in the realm of Art History or Archeology. Maybe diversity should be included in the profession.