

Museums as intercultural spaces: exploring new paradigms



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NEMO webinars series, 30 November 2016



Museums and the promotion of intercultural dialogue: prevailing policy approaches across Europe

- “**showcasing difference**”: a knowledge-oriented multiculturalism intended to promote in autochthonous audiences a better understanding and greater respect of “other” cultures
- “**heritage literacy**”: integration of new citizens within mainstream culture, to help them become more familiar with a country’s history, language, values and traditions
- **promotion of cultural self-awareness** in migrant communities through “culturally specific programming”

source: S. Bodo (2008), «From “heritage education with intercultural goals” to “intercultural heritage education”: conceptual framework and policy approaches in museums across Europe», in ERICarts Institute (ed.), *Sharing Diversity. National approaches to intercultural dialogue in Europe* (www.interculturaldialogue.eu)

What do these approaches have in common?

- they tend to be underlined by a static, essentialist notion of heritage, which is primarily seen as a “closed” system, a “received patrimony” to safeguard and transmit
- they generally avoid cross-cultural interaction, and build projects which are targeted either to “migrants” or to a “native” audience
- even where interaction between different groups *is* encouraged, the main aim is to promote mutual knowledge and respect, rather than initiating new knowledge systems, relationships, interpretive communities

Museums as intercultural spaces: a gradual journey

Showcasing difference

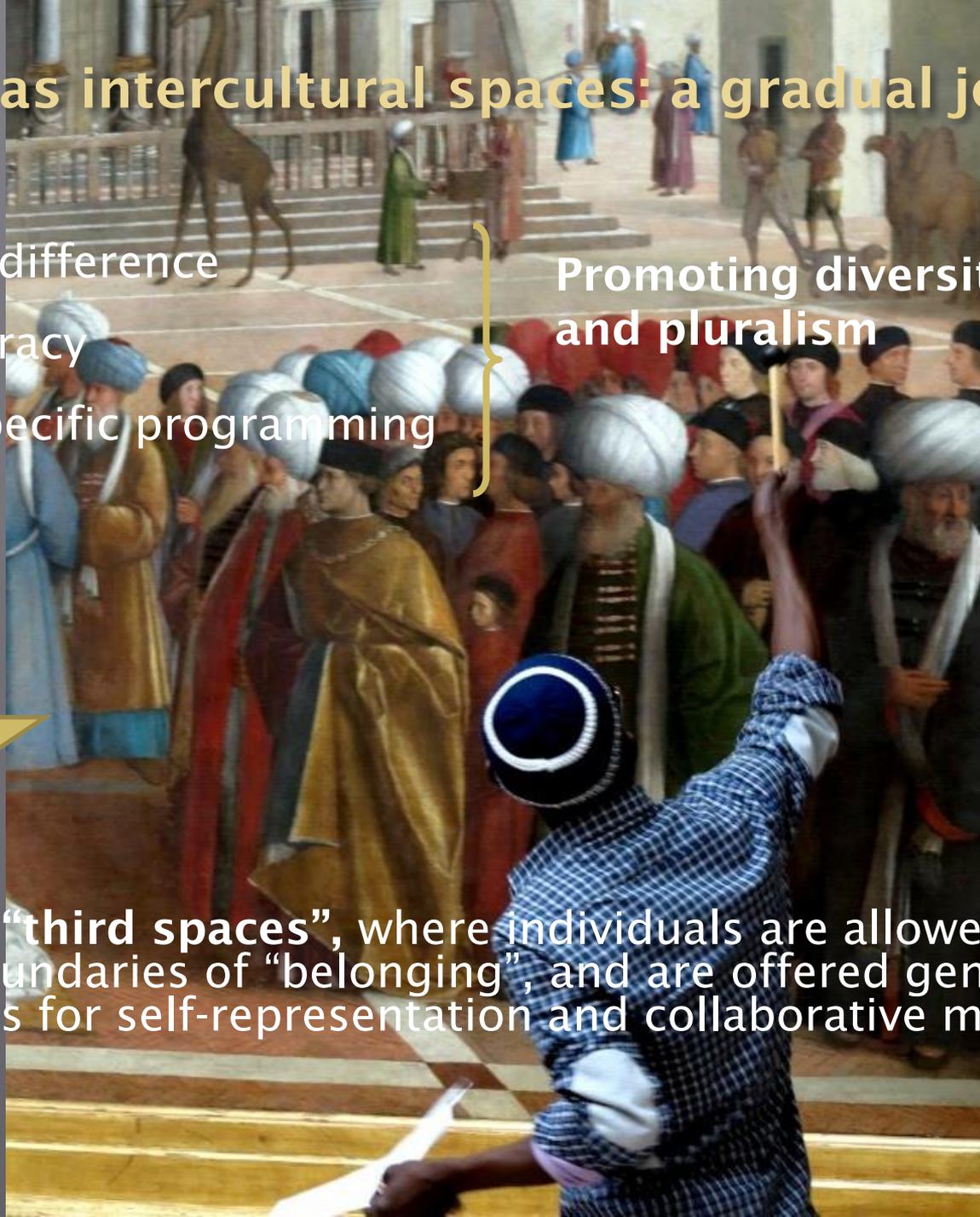
Heritage literacy

Culturally specific programming

Promoting diversity
and pluralism



Creation of “third spaces”, where individuals are allowed to cross the boundaries of “belonging”, and are offered genuine opportunities for self-representation and collaborative meaning-making



New challenges for museums

- to go beyond policies targeting individuals and groups according to their racial origin and ethnicity, working on identity as «the start rather than the end of the conversation»*
- to facilitate new connections between people and objects, thereby generating new, inclusive and shared meanings/narratives around collections
- to reshape heritage as a shared space of social interaction

* **source:** N. Khan (2010), *The Artist as Translator*, paper delivered at the seminar “Super Diversity – Who Participates Now? Discussion on the phenomenon of ‘super diversity’ in the visual arts”, Institute of International Visual Arts, London, 2 February 2010

Is carrying out intercultural work about...



- enhancing the “literacy” of immigrant individuals and groups in a country’s history, art and culture (filling “cultural deficits”)
- compensating their past misrepresentation in museums in the eyes of “autochthonous” audiences
- promoting cultural self-awareness
- or is it rather a bi-directional process which is dialogical and transformative on both sides (“natives” and “migrants”), and in which all are equal participants?

A benchmarking tool for diversity management in cultural institutions

Benchmarks for Diversity Management in Cultural Institutions

	ORGANISATIONAL FRAMEWORK	GENERAL LEARNING	PROGRAMME / EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS	FORUMS / COLLABORATION	PAP	SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT	IMPACT
CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS							
MIGRANTS							

Designed in the framework of the “Brokering Migrants’ Cultural Participation” project (<https://mcpbroker.wordpress.com>) in order to:

- empower the professionals in cultural institutions to tackle transformation in a systematic and comparable way

- raise the standards and expectations levelled against cultural institutions, especially by funding bodies

- equip migrants and their organisations to make demands for the transformation of cultural institutions and their access to them

* The benchmarking tool can be downloaded from:

<https://mcpbroker.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/benchmarking-tool-with-logos.pdf>

Creating “third spaces”: an experimental strand of practice

Training and actively involving museum mediators with an immigrant background in the planning of narrative trails, collaborative exhibitions etc. with a view to exploring a more dialogical, multi-vocal interpretation of collections



Desiré Bakorogotane
"Lingua contro Lingua. Una mostra collaborativa"
17 novembre 2008 - 31 gennaio 2009
Museo di Antropologia ed Etnografia dell'Università di Torino
Courtesy of Centro Studi Africani (2009)



Case study: the Museum Mediators Project, Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art (GAMEC) of Bergamo

Goal of the “Guests of Honour” project (2006)

- to understand how GAMEC was perceived by “new citizens” (who had never been to the museum), and what expectations, concerns, requests they had



Goals of the first training course for Museum Mediators (2007)

- to promote the cultural citizenship of mediators, by helping them become “new interpreters” of collections and leading actors in the museum’s effort to become a more open and multi-vocal institution
- to encourage increased levels of awareness and use of the collections on the part of migrant communities



Continued opportunities for the training and professional growth of Museum Mediators, often shared with GAMEC’s educators and aimed at the development of specific planning, interpretive and relational skills

Case study: the Museum Mediators Project, Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art (GAMEC) of Bergamo

Mediators: from acting as “bridges” between their respective communities and the museum through visits in their mother tongue, to engaging diverse audiences (migrants from different backgrounds, Italian museum-goers and non-visitors, school and university students, teachers, disabled people, inmates, foreign tourists) in intercultural activities



Goals of the “Twelve storytellers in search of an author” project (2014-2015)

- to promote new points of view on the permanent collection through storytelling: a crucial tool to convey emotions and life experiences alongside art-historical contents, and to help all individuals (whether frequent visitors or non-visitors, “natives” or “migrants”) to approach cultural heritage in a way that gets them personally involved
- to encourage cross-fertilisation between “narrative” and “creative” perspectives on collections (the narrative trails developed by museum mediators and the videos produced by NABA students)

Case study 1: the Museum Mediators Project, Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art (GAMEC) of Bergamo

Useful links:

“Guests of Honour” project (2006)

<http://www.patrimonioeinterculturala.ismu.org/index.php?page=esperienze-show.php&id=27>

Training course for Museum Mediators (2007)

<http://www.patrimonioeinterculturala.ismu.org/index.php?page=esperienze-show.php&id=28>

“Twelve storytellers in search of an author” project (2014-2015)

<http://www.patrimonioeinterculturala.ismu.org/index.php?page=esperienze-show.php&id=125> (project description)

<http://www.gamec.it/it/narrazioni-museali-12-narratori-cerca-dautore>

(videos available in both Italian and the native language of Mediators: Albanian, Chinese, Hebrew, Hungarian, Japanese, Persian, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Swedish)

Case study 2: “Brera: another story” project, Brera Picture Gallery, Milan

Useful links:

“Brera: another story” project (2012-2014)

<http://www.patrimonioeinterculturala.ismu.org/index.php?page=esperienze-show.php&id=98> (project description)

<https://vimeo.com/144091788> (documentary in Italian; no subtitles, but English translation available upon request)

<http://www.patrimonioeinterculturala.ismu.org/index.php?page=video-show.php&id=47> (trailer in Italian)

For Italian-speaking museum professionals:

The full texts of the narrative trails produced in the framework of GAMEC and Brera’s projects are available in: Bodo S., Mascheroni S., Panigada M. G. (eds.) (2016), *Un patrimonio di storie. La narrazione nei musei, una risorsa per la cittadinanza culturale*, Mimesis Edizioni, Milan

Web resources

Websites / blogs

Museums and migration

<https://museumsandmigration.wordpress.com/info/>

Experiences, ideas and practices regarding migration and the refugee crisis

Museum & Society

<http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/museumsociety>

An on-line journal launched in 2003, featuring essays on issues such as “Museums, identity and difference”, “Museums and social inclusion”, “Audience research” and “Politics and display”

The Inluseum

<https://inluseum.com>

An on-line resource/platform advancing new ways of being a museum through critical discourse, community building and collaborative practice related to inclusion in museums

Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe

<http://www.culturalpolicies.net>

Country profiles with chapters devoted to “Cultural diversity and inclusion policies” (4.2.4) and “Intercultural dialogue: actors, strategies, programmes” (4.2.7)

Patrimonio e Intercultura (Heritage and Interculture)

www.patrimonioeintercultura.ismu.org

To learn more about experimental practices in Italian museums, and more in general about projects aimed at fostering migrants’ cultural participation

Web resources

Project websites

Cultural Base

<http://culturalbase.eu/>

Social Platform on Cultural Heritage and European Identities

Brokering Migrants' Cultural Participation

<https://mcpbroker.wordpress.com/>

Good practices from Austria, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Sweden, reference material and a benchmarking tool on diversity management in cultural institutions

LEM – The Learning Museum

MAP for ID – Museums as Places for Intercultural Dialogue

The websites no longer exist: see relevant publications on slides 15 and 16

Web resources

Reports / Guidelines / Repertoires of good practice

NEMO (2016), *Initiatives of museums in Europe in connection to migrants and refugees*, http://www.nemo.org/fileadmin/Dateien/public/Documents_for_News/NEMO_collection_Initiatives_of_museums_to_integrate_migrants.pdf

NEMO/German museums association (2016/2014), *Museums, migration and cultural diversity. Recommendations for museum work*, http://www.nemo.org/fileadmin/Dateien/public/NEMO_documents/Nemo_Museums_Migration.pdf
How can the topics of migration and diversity be incorporated in museum work?

OMC (Open Method of Coordination) group of EU member states experts (2014), *Report on the role of public arts and cultural institutions in the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue*
http://ec.europa.eu/culture/library/reports/201405-omc-diversity-dialogue_en.pdf

LEM - The Learning Museum Network (2013), *Museums and intercultural dialogue. The Learning Museum network project report nr. 4*
<http://online.ibc.regione.emilia-romagna.it/l/libri/pdf/LEM4rd-report-museums-and-intercultural-dialogue.pdf>

Web resources

Publications / papers

Bodo S. (2013), *New Paradigms for Intercultural Work in Museums – or Intercultural Work as a New Paradigm for Museum Practice?*, article published on the "The Inluseum" blog

<http://inluseum.com/2013/04/18/new-paradigms-for-intercultural-work-in-museums-or-intercultural-work-as-a-new-paradigm-for-museum-practice-part-i/> and

<http://inluseum.com/2013/04/29/new-paradigms-for-intercultural-work-in-museums-or-intercultural-work-as-a-new-paradigm-for-museum-practice-part-ii/>

Basso-Peressut L., Lanz F., Postiglione G. (eds.) (2013), *European Museums in the 21st Century: Setting the framework*, MeLa Books, MeLa Project -◆European Museums in an age of migrations

vol. 1 http://www.mela-project.polimi.it/upl/cms/attach/20131205/141436483_5752.pdf

vol. 2 http://www.mela-project.polimi.it/upl/cms/attach/20130905/160445503_9628.pdf

vol. 3 http://www.mela-project.polimi.it/upl/cms/attach/20131029/165134178_5998.pdf

Torch C. (2010), *European museums and interculture. Responding to challenges in a globalised world*, Council of Europe

<http://cm.regione.emilia-romagna.it/lemproject/library/books-papers/european-museums-and-interculture/view>

Bodo S., Gibbs K., Sani M. (eds.) (2009), *Museums as places for intercultural dialogue. Selected practices from Europe*

http://www.ne-mo.org/fileadmin/Dateien/public/service/Handbook_MAPforID_EN.pdf

Pilot projects from Hungary, Italy, Netherlands and Spain

Web resources

Recent documents by the EU and Council of Europe

Joint communication of the European Commission to the European Parliament and the Council
“Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations” (available in different languages)

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=JOIN%3A2016%3A29%3AFIN>

Draft European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21st Century (Council of Europe)

<http://www.ectp-ceu.eu/images/stories/PDF->

[docs/CDCPP%20European%20Cultural%20Heritage%20Strategy%20for%20the%2021st%20Century%202016.pdf](http://www.ectp-ceu.eu/images/stories/PDF-docs/CDCPP%20European%20Cultural%20Heritage%20Strategy%20for%20the%2021st%20Century%202016.pdf)

An interesting upcoming conference ...



<http://www.intercult.se/eng/6-december-the-future-of-the-european-project-migration-kultur-december-6-the-future-of-the-european-project-migration-culture>

Thank you for your attention, and if you would like to stay in touch...

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