

Interaction between public and museum object, a managerial approach in the exhibition space

Gina Boda, Ph.D.

Scientific Researcher
Dacic and Roman Museum of Civilization Deva,
Romania
ginaboda15@gmail.com

Abstract

Rethinking the museum space in general and the cultural exhibition in particular, as developments necessary to meet the increasingly sophisticated requirements of public visitors, imprint to the current museology new axiomatic coordinates. In this context, we can design the exhibition space as a place of socialization, networking activities and interaction with museum objects, with self and others, a space designed to put new communication coordination relationship of the museum subject with the visiting public. In this micro-cultural universe that is the exhibition, the visitor is free to create and recreate scenarios around objects, which, in turn, act directly on the intellect, emotions and sensory of the visitor. In these areas occur interaction and networking aimed at changing opinions and tastes of the visitor and to re-capitalize the museum objects.

Key words: museum object, public, museum, exhibition, relations, management.

Introduction

In 1949, George Salle created the first educational service in a museum (Buffet 1995, p. 48), which proved a model of good practice later adopted by more and more museums. But since the second half of the twentieth century, there is an ever increasing democratization

of museums and an increasing openness to communities and individuals. From now on, the museum begins to abandon the pretense of space only for the elites, specialists or „the chosen” and starts becoming more and more a space of socialization, information, learning, education, recreation, creation and relaxation for increasingly larger public groups. The return of the ordinary man inside the museum is the leap that increasingly characterizes the work of museum institutions.

The educational activity or museum pedagogy carried out by specialists of the museum to visitors divided into various age categories, constitutes a favorite concern. The museum space has been turned into a forum of education in which various educational and recreational activities are carried out, designed to provide information, educate, amaze, stimulate creativity, to produce emotions and attitudes, to form habits and attitudes, to urge relationship with both the subject and others.

From the historical point of view we can say that exhibitions are not an invention of the modern age, but they have existed since ancient times, but with no sense conferred on it today (Boda, 2008: 99). In the museum's core activities, exhibitions occupy a special place. They pose as symbolic micro-universes that combine imagination and reality by providing a common reference framework which offers itself generously to the individual or the community. In these ephemeral microcosms that are actually exhibitions, places where rationality and imaginary travels, the museum specialist brings to the attention of visitors the museum object or rather the real thing turned into exhibit.

The activity of a museum is not limited to collecting and conservation. It's true that it was, for long periods, its favorite activity, but for a few decades the educational work of recovery has gained a growing importance. Museums no longer merely increase their collections with new items that they are required to keep in the best condition, but seek means more unusual, to expose their collections to create stories around objects, put them in stage plays so that a visitor participates directly during the act of visiting. As an

object once entered into a collection loses its use value, it becomes an object of art or civilization (Chaumier, 2011: 5).

What changed the orientation of museum objects held in collections was the act of them becoming museum exhibits, their introduction into the patrimony. Epistemic explanation is needed to understand the specific relationship between the object / objects of exhibition and the visitors. Serge Chaumier manages to take us into the world of museum objects and to figure out this problem in a logical and highly coherent manner. He makes a clear distinction between *object*, which he regards as a tool, an extension of the hand, inserted in the concrete life and maintaining a relationship of continuity with the subject and *object of the museum*, which is actually a museum exhibit, out of functionality and decontextualized, which takes on a new value by entering a symbolic order that gives a new meaning, making it also the sacred witness (Chaumier, 2011: 1).

This epistemic perspective on museum objects is extremely important because it helps us to understand the messages they convey when inserted in a museum exhibition. In this context, museum objects become objects of public communication by performing a report to a particular exhibitor, subject and audience forming a triangle that forms between all sorts of crossed interpretations (Chaumier, 2011: 3). Another specialist in museology, the Czech Zbynek Stransky, introduces, since the mid-60s, the term *musealium* by which he means the subject of genuine museum object, material, three-dimensional source of scientific knowledge and the means of expression that serves the communication influencing social knowledge in this way (Chaumier, 2011: 3). However, Stransky regards the museum object as trigger of the visitors' relationship with reality, but with their own representations (Chaumier, 2011: 3). Through their understanding of museum objects, Stransky anticipates the latest developments in museology.

Hypostases of museum exhibitions

Staging physical or virtual exhibitions firstly envisages the visitor, meeting the needs of all categories of consumer culture, thus

the museums increasingly develop a business of disseminating information among the visitors about the museum objects and about the collections to which they belong. Experts from museums create information around the object, place it in a certain context trying to reconstruct the history, then bring it to the attention of visitors, usually in an exhibition (Bontempi, 2007: 1). The act of bringing objects to the attention of the visitors falls onto the approach of the specialist "making functional museum space as a set of signs and landmarks whose meaning finally becomes mobile as a place for the visitors" (Vol, 1998: 69). This space can be viewed either as a scenario in which the visitor creates his own role, or as a book which he lectures, either as a media.

In creating the image of protagonist for the visitor, the main role is played by the specialist, who by the organizing theme of the exhibition and the means chosen creates scene objects having the role of telling „stories“, stimulating the imagination, to translate into other temporal dimensions. The visitor is free to play with its imagination, to create and recreate scenarios. He can walk through objects, can perceive their reality and can re-functionalize various other positions. The exhibition is presented as a museum scene where each object has its well-established role, contributing eventually to transmitting the message of the exhibition. The visitor must continually readjust semantically during the operation between the two referential worlds, the real and the artificial, existing in the exhibition space, this giving it the role of „actor“ (Sumier, 1997: 197).

When the specialist creates the exhibition as a reading, he must take into account certain aspects without which he could not achieve this. Firstly, in regard to the texts, which must be perceived as a conversation (Sumier, 1997: 1967) with the visitor. Seen in this context, museum objects become the objects of reading. It is seen as a sign, „as a screen on which we design, enroll speech or speeches that we want to build“ (Clément, 1983: 37, apud Sumier, 1998: 198). When the exhibition places „the museum object as serving a speech“ it is absolutely mandatory the placement of a text to introduce the visitor to the world of the topic, to provide information that must be

followed during the visit, to show the main „actors“ which it puts on stage, and the purpose it wishes to perform, the exhibition appearing as a book in which the rooms appear as paragraphs and the objects as words of a figurative speech (Sumier, 1997: 198-201).

Another aspect of the exhibition is the media. Repositioning sociological approach to social media enabled devices that redefine the term as a place of interaction, the production of social discourse in which it establishes its own social connection type between actors is at the center of social space, etc., redefining media approach allows its connection with other cultural structures such as theater, cinema or museum (Davallon, 1992: 103). We can say, in light of redefining the term media that both the museum and the exhibition have its attributes. First, they are considered as venues for the encounter of visitors with museum objects. During the visit, which is an act of knowledge, contemplation, creativity, reflection, visitors create a special relationship with the object, but also with the exhibition space, which is transformed into a genuine area of reception where they meet two types of speeches, that is the spaciousness of presentation and commentary register (Davallon, 1992: 107-108). Here there is a direct action on the visitor during which he is affected emotionally and cognitively, he is issuing certain views, which he can then run out, thus helping to transform the exhibition into a true communicational device between a public and a presentation (Davallon, 1992: 107-108). This exhibition discourse outsourcing helps form opinions and / or tastes.

But the crucial fact of the direct influence on the visitor remains, how the museum specialist projects its messages on it, causing the emergence of new perceptions and representations of museum objects, the emergence of new views and education of tastes by guiding this scientific or artistic discourse. We must not forget that the museum forms tastes, attitudes, skills that will help form specific audiences. Visiting the museum should primarily create visual pleasure. But we must not forget the other senses. Therefore, museum experts should focus on organizing exhibitions involving, if not all our senses, at least most of them (visual, auditory, olfactory,

gustatory, tactile) and final satisfaction of the visitor after one visit should be as comprehensive as possible, even full. This sensoriality is experienced even by people with various disabilities as well as the common people and can be found, for example, in culinary exhibitions, those where the visitor can touch the objects, considered until recently taboo, in exhibitions that appeal to music and color. And all this to involve sensory and emotional the visitor in order to create the pleasure of visiting and returning to the museum as a friend.

Conclusions

In contemporary European museology, lately the term „local context of interaction “has emerged, which refers to visiting the exhibition from the visitor's experience appears as a construction purely subjective and ephemeral, his presence in the curatorial space mobilizing „its cognitive, affective, social reference, its ability to analyze, achieve and apply logic to acquire, directly involved in the production of meaning and the construction of his knowledge“ (Vol, 1998: 70). This is because the exhibition is a place of information, development of creativity and imagination, where the visitor can create his own universe, juggling with the information received. Also in this exhibition space, the museum through the use of new technologies, transports the visitor into a world of sounds and colors designed to recreate at least some historical context or natural space in which is placed the cultural object, revealing its usefulness, purpose and its entire intrinsic world.

In conclusion, transforming the exhibition into a social space, a place of interaction, in a receiving space and means of communication helps the museum fulfill its mission and objectives and to maintain close its faithful audience, as well as to attract new visitors. This is because on the cultural market new social actors have emerged, that provide inspiring alternatives for leisure and the museum must make efforts to maintain the supremacy as institution that offers culture, knowledge, education and leisure.

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