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MODULE 5

# ART AND SCIENCE

UNIT 1

EXPERIENCE THROUGH ART;  
EDUCATIONAL TOOLS FOR EVERYONE

The museum as cultural shrines as

They are (and/or have been) the house for collective memory of the humankind.

It is a kind of archival work of selected items being presented to the visitors.

It is definitely related to the past no matter this is remote or recent past and brings visual elements of the past contextualized in certain manner.

The origin of the word is ancient Greek *muse*, the inspirational beings to be.

It was used in the seventeenth century for library or a place to study linking to the university building in ancient Alexandria.

Then it turned up to be a building to display objects.

Although today it refers mostly a place where art works are displayed, there are innumerable museums telling different stories via artifacts, documents etc.

The vital essence of a museum is to have items to help the visitor to visualize the context.



Musée du Louvre, Paris, France



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Musée du Louvre, Paris, France



British Museum, London, U.K.



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British Museum, London, U.K.



British Museum, London, U.K.



Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy



Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy



Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy



Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia



Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia



Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia



Archaeological Museum, Istanbul, Turkey



Archaeological Museum, Istanbul, Turkey



Museu Serralves, Porto, Portugal



Museu Serralves, Porto, Portugal



National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest, Romania



National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest, Romania



Cyprus Archaeological Museum, Nicosia, Cyprus



Cyprus Archaeological Museum, Nicosia, Cyprus

Museums are challenged to produce histories that are more compelling, more accurate and more sophisticated.

Kavanagh writes that the much responsibility for the challenge of the museum lies with the curator and the range of the abilities and ideas that person brings with them. Another important element is the visitor and his/her engagement with the museum.

According to Kavanagh, museums are meeting ground for official and formal versions of the past called *histories*, offered through exhibitions, and the individual or collective accounts of reflective personal experience called *memories*, encountered during the visit or prompted because of it.

Gaynor Kavanagh, ed., *Making Histories in Museums* (London & New York: Leicester Uni. Press, 1999)

For many museums, there is still a preferred way of working which prioritizes the fabric and the form of the object over the individual memories behind it, the formal outsider's history over the insider's account, the history over the memory.

At this point Kavanagh raises an issue of a plough to be exhibited if it was made for a decoration of a pub or it was really used in a field for farming thus helping the owner to survive.

If the item is exhibited with its generic name only as plough, excluding its 'personal' history, the memory gets lost and history is ill served.

Five types of museums considered are:

- Object centered,
- Narrative,
- Client centered,
- Community
- National.

Almost all museums are mixtures and no museums is only one type or more.

Gurian, E. H. (2002). "Choosing Among the Options: An Opinion about Museum Definitios." *Curator* 45(2): 75-88

## **Object-centered**

- Treasure-based / unique objects
- Concentrate on the material they own or can borrow
- Are mostly (but not only) art museums
- Generally present objects without context
- Value being the “Temple of the Completeive”
- Interested in aesthetics

## Object-centered

- Difficult for the novice to understand without other aids, i.e. context, glossaries
- Mostly created for knowledgeable adults
- Audience demographics are often “upper class”
- The type of museums is now undergoing change to become more understandable.

## Narrative

- Tells stories
- Chooses to display only those objects that fit within story
- Use objects as visual evidence
- Piloted the use of environments as display
- Extensive use of all types of media.

## Narrative

- Designers use emotions /scripted /drama
- Closest to attractions “Disneyland”
- Mostly history and social history
- Often display generic objects
- Layering
- Motive: educational

## **Client centered**

- Most interested in the audience.
- Concentrates on individuals and small social groups.
- Interest in learning theory, curriculum, schools, children and families
- Most often Children's Museums and Science Centers.

## Client centered

- Focused on novice/beginning learners
- Created many interactive and role playing exhibition techniques.
- Purpose built environments that simulate experiences.
- Motive for audience: fun, educational for the children.

## Community

- Looks least like museum and is often multi-agency community center.
- Interested in the well-being of a community.
- Often includes social service.
- Usually Culturally, regionally or audience specific: Eco-Museums, Native American Centers.

## Community

- Often under-funded
- Pilot programs like integration of language training, health education, day-care within the museum.
- Motive community healing, well-being.

## National

- Physical display of national aspirations.
- Motivation
- Part of marketing tourist attraction package.
- Highly contested/by politician.

## National

- Often displays only good news/celebratory without reveling critical nuances.
- Often more timid and conservative in topic choice then non-national museums.

- Motivation and intention is different one from another.
- Different audiences prefer different types of museums.
- Some audiences prefer each museum for a different purpose i.e. adult outing, family outing, patriotic pilgrimage, tourist attraction, etc.
- Almost all museums are a mixture of some combination.