
EXHIBITIONS FOR THE YEAR 2000

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Over the last one-hundred years all "traditional" ways of exhibiting collections have been used or attempted in all European and overseas museums. At least six types established themselves in the "history" of museological imagination.

1. Halls which were full of objects, expressing the idea "we exhibit everything we have". This is probably the oldest way of exhibiting which originated in 16th and 17th century galleries and cabinets of curiosities. This "chaos" strongly appeals to children and unsophisticated adults, to whom a museum is essentially a chamber of wonders and a romantic place which any scientific arrangement can only spoil. At present, we can still find such displays in small local museums.

2. Comparative displays which also make use of a myriad of objects. Their origin may go back to 19th century museums which were then magnificent strongholds of science and of generally orientated research. The Horniman Museum in London and some British university museums continue to be good examples of this way of displaying.

3. Art exhibitions or displays in an "art gallery fashion". Such exhibitions also became very popular in ethnographic museums during the 1960s.

4. Displays reconstructing specific cultural and historical situations using cultural sets from a period which represented "typical" historical houses or rooms. When reconstructing the cultural environment of a wider region the authors use "mosaic" or "case study" techniques. The mosaic technique enables the display of things from different regional locations which the author conceives as being "very characteristic", in order to give a visitor an idea of some characteristic features of regional culture, i.e. a reconstructed and fictional picture of regional culture. The case study method means that a complete set of cultural items (a cultural inventory) belonging to a single location in a single period is used to represent and demonstrate the culture of a wider area (in the author's view the set is highly characteristic).

5. Open-air museums as a specific type of display in which the "old-fashioned" life is reconstructed. Reconstructions enable the visitors to acquaint themselves with the history of houses and their former inhabitants as well as with the ways of everyday life, presented, that is acted, by the museum's employees or by the amateur "friends" of the open-air museum. Such museum spectacles are very successful and very popular with the public.

6. Exhibitions or museums which travel to the (possible) visitor - i.e. itinerant exhibitions displayed in exhibition halls, museums and galleries, various museum buses which travel across the country to enable the inhabitants of "faraway places" to see the exhibition.

Regardless of the variety of methods of exhibition the people which prepare them have been engaging in discussions on specific display techniques for the last century: the use of pictorial documentation (engravings, photos, maps, diagrams), the use of accompanying texts, the replacement of "static" pictorial documentation by films, videos, etc. In the last two decades exhibitions using computers have appeared in museums (technology museums were usually the first to use them). They enable the visitor to look up further, additional data about the objects exhibited. Displays using computers allow visitors, first of all children, to learn more about a culture or historical period by means of a game. They also enable the visitor to participate in some way in the understanding of a culture or historical period. As the fashion changes in museums, people either support or reject the use of figures wearing period costumes. In the 1970s and 1980s figures exhibited in the USA and representing Native Americans had the facial features of actual persons - primarily the features of the local Native American people who supervised whether the museum's staffed acted correctly. Live actors in open-air museums have been a topic in discussions for over half a century.

At the turn of 20th century it is difficult to find something new. On the other hand, museums have to face the strong competition of television films, educational computer programs, computer games (some of them involve "historical" or "exotic" stories from different cultures), etc. It appears to me that museums and galleries are not capable of competing with television and software companies as far as technological innovations are concerned. This means that it would be necessary to compete with the "mass media" of the late 20th century with very sophisticated exhibitions, enabling visitors to find answers (or to try to find answers) to the principal problems of contemporary life and human existence. Exhibitions will have to abandon their scientific way of communicating with visitors and to turn to a more philosophical way of communicating with them.

This involves among others a statement that exhibitions are not so much an expression of actual reality but more a reflection of the author's knowledge

and opinions (just like a book, an article or painting) - i.e. a construction arrangement expressing the author's views on a region, species, nation, tribe or historical period. In preparing such "constructions of reality" and in expressing their character through subjective imagination we can make use of a wealth of means which were not possible in "traditional" and "objective" exhibitions. A very important aspect of such exhibitions would also be their aesthetic content. In fact, these forms of displaying and imagination are used by the authors of gallery exhibitions. But the principal positive aspect consists of the possibility to use three-dimensional objects to symbolise an issue, an idea etc. - i.e. to use them for the construction of a "problematic world/universe". It is in this way that the Náprstek Museum in Prague is preparing an exhibition for the year 2000. The working name is "A walk through time" and the main idea is the unity of human knowledge and experience.

RAZSTAVE ZA LETO 2000

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V preteklem stoletju so v vseh evropskih in neevropskih muzejih uporabili ali preizkusili vse "tradicionalne" načine razstavljanja zbirk. V zgodovini muzeološke domišljije se je tako uveljavilo šest vrst razstav.

1. Dvorane polne predmetov, ki obiskovalcem sporočajo: "Razstavljamo vse, kar imamo". To je verjetno najstarejši tip razstave, ki izvira iz galerij in kabinetov čudes 16. in 17. stoletja. Tovrstni "kaos" močno privlači otroke in nezahtevne odrasle, ki jim je muzej predvsem romantični prostor čudežnih stvari, ki bi ga znanstvena ureditev gradiva samo pokvarila. Danes take postavitve najdemo še v manjših krajevnih muzejih.

2. Primerjalne razstave, ki prav tako uporabljajo našteje predmete. Njihov izvor je morda v muzejih 19. stoletja, ki so bili takrat sijajne utrdbe znanosti in splošno usmerjenega raziskovanja. Muzej Horniman v Londonu in nekateri britanski univerzitetni muzeji so še vedno odlični primeri tega načina postavitve.

3. Umetnostne razstave ali postavitve na način "umetnostne galerije". Take razstave so v šestdesetih letih tega stoletja postale zelo priljubljene tudi v etnografskih muzejih.

4. Postavitve, ki rekonstruirajo določena specifična kulturna in zgodovinska stanja z uporabo vrste kulturnih predmetov, ki predstavljajo tipično zgodovinsko hišo ali sobo. Pri rekonstrukciji kulturnega okolja širšega območja avtorji uporabijo metode "mozaika" ali "študije primera". Mozaična metoda omogoča razstavljanja predmetov iz različnih regionalnih krajev, ki jih avtor ima za "zelo značilne" in ki naj bi obiskovalcu posredovali podobo nekaterih značilnih lastnosti regionalne kulture, tj. posredujejo rekonstruirano in izmišljeno podobo regionalne kulture. Metoda "študija primera" pomeni, da se celota kulturnih predmetov (kulturni inventar), ki pripadajo posamezni lokaciji in določenemu obdobju uporablja za predstavitev in ponazoritev kulture širšega območja (avtor razstave meni, da je taka postavitve zelo značilna).

5. Muzej na prostem je posebna vrsta razstave; v njem se rekonstruira "stari" način življenja. Rekonstrukcije omogočajo obiskovalcem, da se seznanijo z

zgodovino neke hiše in njenih prebivalcev in z načini vsakdanjega življenja, ki jih predstavljajo, tj. igrajo, uslužbenci muzeja ali "ljubitelji" muzejev na prostem. Taki muzejski "spektakli" so zelo uspešni in priljubljeni pri občinstvu.

6. Razstave ali muzeji, ki gredo k obiskovalcem, tj. potujoče razstave, ki gostujejo v razstavnih dvoranh, muzejih in galerijah in razni muzejski avtobusi, ki potujejo po deželi in tako omogočajo ljudem v oddaljenih krajih, da si ogledajo razstave.

Ne glede na raznolikost metod razstavljanja tisti, ki jih pripravljajo, že stoletje razpravljajo o posebnih tehnikah razstavljanja: o uporabi slikovnega gradiva (grafike, fotografije, zemljevidi, diagrami), o uporabi spremnih besedil, o zamenjavi "statičnega" slikovnega dokumentarnega gradiva s filmi, videoposnetki itd. V zadnjih dveh desetletjih so se v muzejih pojavile tudi razstave, ki uporabljajo računalnike (muzeji tehnologije so jih običajno prvi uvedli). Obiskovalcem omogočajo, da poiščejo širše dodatne podatke o razstavljenih predmetih. Postavitve z računalniki omogočajo obiskovalcem, predvsem otrokom, da se skozi igro naučijo več o neki kulturi ali zgodovinskem obdobju. Hkrati omogočajo obiskovalcem, da na nek način sodelujejo v razumevanju neke kulture ali zgodovinskega obdobja. Tako kot se spreminja moda v muzejih, ljudje bodisi podpirajo ali zavračajo uporabo lutk, ki nosijo zgodovinska oblačila. V sedemdesetih in osemdesetih letih tega stoletja so v ZDA lutke, ki so predstavljale Indijance, imele poteze živih oseb - zlasti poteze lokalnih Indijancev, ki so bedeli nad korektnim ravnanjem muzejskih delavcev. Živi igralci v muzejih na prostem pa so že več kot pol stoletja predmet diskusij.

Na prelomu v 21. stoletje ni lahko najti karkoli novega. Na drugi strani se muzeji soočajo z močno konkurenco televizijskih filmov, izobraževalnih računalniških programov, računalniških iger (nekateri vključujejo "zgodovinske" ali "eksotične" zgodbe iz različnih kultur) itd. Zdi se mi, da muzeji in galerije niso kos konkurenci televizije in izdelovalcev programske opreme, vsaj ne na ravni tehnoloških inovacij. To pomeni, da bi morali z množičnimi mediji dvajsetega stoletja tekrovati z zelo naprednimi razstavami, ki obiskovalcem omogočajo, da najdejo odgovore (ali jih skušajo najti) na bistvene probleme sodobnega življenja in človekovega obstoja. Razstave bodo morale opustiti znanstveno komunikacijo z obiskovalci in se posvetiti bolj filozofskemu načinu komuniciranja z njimi.

Tak pristop med drugim zahteva opredelitev in izjavo, da razstave niso toliko izraz dejanske resničnosti, ampak bolj odraz avtorjevega znanja in stališč (tako kot velja za knjigo, članek ali umetniško sliko) - da so tvorbe, ki izražajo avtorjevo videnje nekega območja, vrste, naroda, plemena ali zgodovinskega obdobja. Pri pripravljanju take "skonstruirane resničnosti" in pri izražanju njihove narave skozi subjektivno domišljijo lahko uporabimo množico sredstev, ki jih "tradicionalne" in "objektivne" razstave niso dopustile. Zelo pomemben vidik

takih razstav je tudi njihova estetska plat. Dejansko take oblike postavitve in domišljije že uporabljajo avtorji galerijskih razstav. Vendar je glavni pozitivni vidik v možnosti uporabe tridimenzionalnih predmetov, ki simbolizirajo neko temo, zamisel itd., tj. možnosti njihove uporabe za izgradnjo "vprašljivega sveta/vesolja". Muzej Náprstek v Pragi na ta način pripravlja razstavo za leto 2000. Delovni naslov je "Sprehod skozi čas" in vodilna misel je enotnost človekovega znanja in doživetij.

BESEDA O AVTORJU

Josef Kandert, dr., je študiral etnografijo, narodopisje in afrikanistiko na Karlovi univerzi v Pragi. Terensko delo je opravljal v Nigeriji, na Slonokoščeni obali, v Etiopiji, Zimbabveju, Maroku in na Slovaškem. Dr. Kandert je v Muzeju Náprstek v Pragi zaposlen kot kustos asistent in znanstveni sodelavec. Na oddelku za sociologije Karlove univerze predava o socialni antropologiji.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Josef Kandert, Ph.d., studied ethnography, folklore studies and African studies at the Charles University in Prague. He carried out field work in Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Morocco, and Slovakia. Dr. Kandert is employed at the Náprstek museum in Prague as assistant curator and scientific fellow. He also lectures on social anthropology at the university's Department of Sociology.