



**BEST
PRACTICES
ON INCLUSIVE
CURATING**

**WRITTEN BY
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When I started my internship at Framerframed in September, I was full of enthusiasm and excitement. I was also quite nervous about my assignment and the fact that everything had to be in English. Now, more than six months later, I have produced a little booklet and I am very proud of the result.

This would not have been possible without the guidance of Josien and Cas, my internship supervisors. Also Anne, my fellow intern, was really supportive during my time at Framerframed. I would also like to thank Nancy, who helped me with the organizational part of my internship.

Last but not least I want to thank my mother, Eva, for helping me edit the articles and of course for being the best mother I could wish for.

Recommendations for ways of inclusive curating for Framerframed

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Introduction

Framer Framed is an initiative to discuss the politics of representation and curatorial practices in the 21st century. As a cross-disciplinary platform for those interested in the role of cultural memory organizations in society, Framer Framed organized over 30 discussions with collaborating museums and other cultural institutions about different themes relevant for the cultural heritage sector.

Problem statement

At the first of May, 2014, Het Paviljoen will open its doors in the Tolhuistuin, a cultural playground situated in Amsterdam Noord. This new cultural institution will accommodate different cultural organisations and entrepreneurs. Framerframed will be responsible for the exhibition venue located in the building. With five years experience in various ways of representing artists and their artworks, Framerframed now has the possibility to put theory into practice. The aim of Framerframed is to represent not only the voice of the curator in the exhibition and the exhibiting process but also to give the public a voice in storytelling. To accomplish this aim, Framerframed initiated a panel containing a group of people, all with a certain relation to the theme of the exhibition. The panel secures the voice of the public and keeps the curator from 'claiming' the most important role in the exhibiting process. Framerframed also decided to create an exhibition programme next to the main exhibition. This exhibition programme will consist of different kinds of organised events where the public has the opportunity to reflect on the exhibition. Next to these two ways for the public to express how they feel or relate to the presented artworks, Framerframed was wondering how they could best tackle this inclusive way of curating. To gain more insight in the way other inclusive projects were initiated and organised, they wanted to initialize information about 'best practices' on inclusive curating and this is where I came in.

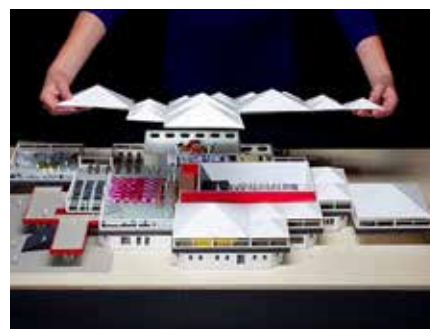
Methodology

For my internship at Framerframed, I was asked to write articles about best practices on inclusive curating. By interviewing key figures that were, or still are, involved in projects where the public has a great impact on the exhibiting process, I was able to get more insight in their working methods. By asking all participants the same questions about the projects they worked on, I was able to compare the answers they gave me. I tried to find similarities and differences in the projects from the answers that were given to me. In the attachment you will find the table I used to compare all the answers that were given to me.

Note

At first I wrote my articles for the EU project WeCurate. This project was initiated as a search for the changing role of art organizations in society. However, the project was cancelled due to organizational problems. I decided to write the articles to get more insight in other inclusive projects. In this way, Framerframed can use the outcomes of my research recommendations in their exhibition venue in Het Paviljoen.

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Results of summary

The projects I wrote an article about were all very different from each other. In some of the cases the projects were initiated out of personal ideas/ interests, other projects started out of an organisation. In some scenarios, asking the public for input was necessary because of lack of money or for other relevant reasons. The more organisation based projects asked the public for input because they were curious about the opinion of the public and what their needs were on the subject. Even while questioning each person in the same way, all answers were different and still difficult to compare, also because of the diversity of the project themes.

Discussion of results

When I started my search for best practices in inclusive curating, I asked people in different disciplines to help me find projects. I didn't really realise how dependent I was on them because I needed them to connect me to the people who initiated the projects I was looking for. Together with the supervisors of my internship we decided to go for five projects across the world. My supervisors gave me a list of people from their personal network who could help me find relevant projects. During the process of getting in contact with the right persons and collecting the information and stories from them I was also dependent on them in order to gain information so I could write an article about the project they worked on. Luckily I found five people who were kind enough to help me and who were willing to make an effort in spending some time by providing information and answers about the projects. As I said, the results of my internship project are the five articles about best practices on inclusive curating. During the process of my internship I was sometimes afraid that, because of the fact that I was so dependent on people whom I had never met before, I wouldn't be able to successfully finish my project. Happily everything worked out just fine.

In the beginning of the process I was in doubt whether it was best to first write guidelines or parameters in which the projects would have to 'fit'. Together with my supervisors we decided to ask people from their network who all worked in different disciplines in the cultural field. In this way the 'research' I did was very personal instead of working in a more theoretical way. The personal aspect of the research is visible in the output of my internship project. The interviews are really personal, they give you a great insight in the process of developing 'inclusive' projects, but seen from the perspective of someone who initiated or was really involved in the process. In this way, the results of my project aren't objective but always represent somebody's personal interpretation.

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Recommendations

Which information provided by the answers of the interviewed persons could be useful for Framerframed? What kind of ideas and concepts from the projects will they be able to use in their exhibition policy? The following recommendations I formulated out of the answers that were given to me by the persons I interviewed.

- * Create a network around the project of people who are interested and willing to help with building/ thinking/ creating new concepts for future exhibitions. This has already got an output in the discussion panel but could be extended by actively asking the surrounding community, people from the neighbourhood, to work together on a project and offer them the right tools to create an appropriate exhibition.
- * Ask people to reflect on different themes by telling a personal story. When people get the possibility to give their own personal reflection, for example telling a story about an object they brought themselves, people may be more willing/ daring to open up and create input for an exhibition.
- * Accommodate the participants' needs. Working together with participants means that you should be able to give them the tools they need to create an exhibition. The Open Museum for example is a success because of their outreach based working method. They increase access to the museum collection by matching their aims with the aims of the collaborating partner. By giving the participants enough and the right equipment necessary they are able to create the best output possible.
- * Be sure whether the results of the participatory project are useful to you and your organisation but also make sure that the content will be correctly showcased for the people who participated in the project. You must be able to define why a participatory project is useful and can benefit your institution. If you will not be doing anything with the outcome of the project, why start the project in the first place? The communication with the participants about the project has to be clear. Participants should know how and when they will be rewarded for their participation. A Participatory project loses its value and potential future when the outcomes of the project aren't processed in the right way. Your organisation has to develop some workable process to display the participatory content and inform the participant when their work is showcased.¹
- * Make sure you analyze the process. By analyzing the process of your participatory project and being open about the working strategy you realize and maintain a transparent identity as an organisation.
- * Always have parameters to work within. Creating a participatory project isn't easy but you should always have set parameters for your organisation to work from. Working as co curators in a project is possible but you can't expect from your participants that if you give them a blank piece of paper and a brush, they will be able to make a participatory project from scratch. A 'well scaffolded' participatory experience, as Nina Simon calls it in her book *The Participatory Museum*, gives the participants an opportunity to express themselves - but the overall expressive element is tightly constrained by the participatory platform at hand.

¹ N. Simon, *The Participatory Museum*. (Santa Cruz: Museum 2.0, 2010) page 17, Consulted on 18-03-2014

My own privacy policy- an ongoing social art project

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Privacy is one of the fundamental principles of human rights, but (what if) we don't give similar meaning to the concept of privacy. Privacy is not static but variable: by changing the context, its meaning and impact will also change. The line between reality and the artificiality of life is destroyed. Because of the globalization of public spaces such as the Internet, not only the boundaries between private and public start to blur, but also the borders between individuals and societies are changing.

Elham Puriyamehr set up an ongoing social art project that reflects on these aspects. For the coming two years she will be travelling with a transformed line bus through Sanandaj in Kurdistan, Iran.

The bus is customized on both the inside and outside: everywhere in the bus you'll find different kinds of artwork. Elham Puriyamehr used the bus as a concept to automatically include the "audience". The bus functions just like a normal line bus and passengers aren't expecting to enter an "exhibition". The bus is a space where the public and private collide with each other. The interior of the bus automatically involves the audience in the project: people react to the artworks in the bus, "some of them took pictures and we took pictures of them". One of the artworks was shown continuously on a website, so people in different countries could watch what happened inside the bus.

The first destination for the bus was on November 19th this year in Sanandaj, Kurdistan. Elham: "The question I asked with this project was, what is privacy policy exactly? The people who entered the bus just wanted to go to their destination, they didn't know that we showed them, their privacy, to other people." Most people don't realize that too often privacy policies are violated, because of the changeable definition of the concept of privacy, which depends on time and space, on culture and ideas. A typical example of the variability of concepts such as privacy policies, is one of the artworks in the bus called 'Evin'. Evin is a prison in Tehran, well known for its political prisoners. Because of the high amount of intellectuals in this prison, it is given the nickname "Evin University". In Tehran Evin stands for prisonship and political insecurity while in Kurdish, Evin means love.

All artworks relate to the concept of privacy policy, Elham tries to make clear that certain definitions relating to the boundaries between private and public are lacking. All artists involved in the project wrote an artist statement in which they described why and how their artwork reflects on the encompassing theme, you find the artist statements written below the images in this article.

The participating artists in the project were; Mona Aghababaie, Mojgan Arbabzade, A3 art project group, Negar Farajiani, Babak Kazemi, Sohrab Kashani, Maryam Khosroshahi, Khadije Mohammadi Nameghi.



Babak Kazemi, Origin: Kurdistan, Destination: Iran



Babak Kazemi, Origin: Kurdistan, Destination: Iran

Lost our land and forgot where we come from and where we should go. Having a house on the rocks that our ancestors picked, they have bookmarked its four corners. Journey to the Land of stones. In this project, I will take pictures of people's profile and will print them on transparency paper to attach to the bus windows, also, I use their luggage to carry on the back of the bus to tell their stories.



The Interior of the bus

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Elham's answers to questions about the project

What has been your working strategy?

A mutual dialogue with the general public is the most important goal for me. When a dialog is created without a predetermined target, it will be very honest and straightforward. I think that the audience's contribution is just as important to the exhibition as the participation of artists, but of course only when these conversations occur in an informal location. Instead of fictional production, an exhibition venue is really effective in establishing a real conversation between the audience and artist. I wanted to produce an exhibition on the subject of privacy policy in public space, however: I preferred the exhibition space to define the subject in relation to the audience. So I chose to take the bus as exhibition space, the instability of time, place and people helps to shape the event. It's a space where the public audience was invited to create a set of dialogues. Audiences were not selected, but as part of their daily path they themselves elected to attend the exhibition. A new dialogue in the bus would be made by their presence which remains unfixed. They were engaged in the processes related to the formation of the "self" with the lectures and other participants, and layers of their behaviour allow the event to be created, in a coexistence of the public and the private. A kind of variable cultural industry that cannot be attributed by its limit.

What inspired you to start this project? What kind of projects or disciplines inspired you?

I often use the public transport for commuting. When I'm in a bus or subway, I hear a lot of people talking and sometimes I participate in it. The conversations are not planned and most are focused on general issues. I have often seen that a public matter becomes a private matter and this causes discomfort or joy, which is temporary, because people come and go. What remains is an unfinished conversation, or a conversation that's been altered by one of the participants according to their will. I believe speaking in society without any fear is very important. Being able to have a dialogue with the public community regardless of others' perceptions and self-censorship is what I like to achieve. The dialogues can be organized in a public place, on social media or in public transport and I try to record all the happenings and events that come along with it. "My Own Privacy Policy" was a good opportunity for producing this kind of dialogue. By going into dialogue with the Kurdish people, we actually hear the voices of Kurdish people instead of hearing about them in the media.

How was or is the relation between the curator (or concept designer) and the public/ participators in the process of "exhibition" making? Did the public have any influence on the process and in what way?

In all the exhibitions I initiated, the public means presence of concept. They made all concepts by themselves. As a curator, I create an environment that helps people to feel at ease to express ideas and opinions. An important point is the relationship between the audience and the exhibition. Every concept and meaning changes by the presence of an audience.



Khadije Mohammadi Nameghi, *Opened Album*

Privacy is a relative concept dependent on the person, time and place. Diaries, private letters, old photo albums, and so on, are part of people's non heritable spiritual privacy: after someone dies, opening private letters and publishing albums is not considered as an invasion of privacy. I will replicate some images from an old Kurdish album about women in the past and their family and will show them on the bus, one of the most common, urban and contemporary spaces and will let passengers touch their history.



Maryam Khosroshahi, *"Self"*

Privacy policy approach is that takes place when someone wants to define one's "self" versus "other" and so protect "self" and so protecting the "self" against fusing the boundaries of privacy with the "other"; because, "self" as far as "self" is not mixed with the "other" and is independent of them. I will put on display the images of my everyday life, and I define my own definition of "self" to break the boundaries of my own privacy for "other".



Maryam Khosroshahi, *"Self"*

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How did or do you realize participation? How do you manage to tell one story while receiving widely different input in "storytelling" by the public?

As I said, by preparing an open space for each event, much participation occurs which is not pre-specified prior to the event. I do not consider myself the only narrator; so many stories are told in my projects that I can only choose them as a curator. Public narratives provide the meanings everyone is craving and curation is the art of context. I present a compelling argument, start a useful conversation, and allow for discovery. Using the webcam in one of my artist's projects, this narrative transforms into new thoughts and new meaning for international audiences, because the aim is the means of accelerating cultural transformation.

How do you prevent a participation paradox (the public isn't satisfied with the outcome of their input in the "exhibition making" process)?

In my statement I inform participants about what is going to happen in the exhibition, everything depends on their own choice. If they are not satisfied with the outcome, they are free to give their opinion. As Shakespeare said: All the world's a stage, and all the men and women are merely players; they have their exits and their entrances. So, I respect their choices.

How do you realize online and offline platforms for your project?

It depends on the kind of project I work on, every project is different so I really try to create methods that best serve the project. Every decision has to be made based on demands of the type of concepts, audiences and circumstances. Just like an artist can choose the medium for an artwork that best represents his/her idea and concept of the artwork, I think a curator can choose the best medium based on the concept of the exhibition. For me, curators are not just the experts of display, reception and interpretation; they are collaborators or mediators in art projects. By accepting the role of mediator, I begin to examine how relations are altered and transformed during the process. This is an investigation motivated by self-interest as a way of conceptualizing what I do as a producer, consumer and communicator of exhibitions.

What sort of resources do you have available and visible for the possibility of participation in your project?

My projects usually have multiple resources, but I choose them on their cultural impacts on audiences. For example in the "My Own Privacy Policy" project, I choose a bus as exhibition venue because of the subject and concept of the exhibition. A bus is a public space where cultural events can happen, sometimes intentional, sometimes unintentional. For ICPI, a non-profit organization that brings artists, curators, and art professionals in Iran together to develop a responsive curatorial practice, I need a public page on Facebook where I can place all kinds of information on Iranian artists and their exhibitions. I use it as a form of contemporary archive. But the most important resource is using social display on social media: when I use social media as context for the online archive on curatorial practices in Iran, it creates a dialogue between people who comment on the activities I post on ICPI's Facebook page. I like to invite and include many



Mojgan Arbabzade: The Secrets behind the door

At which point does the distinction between public and private blend or disappear?

This subject is displayed by an installation of both text and images on the door of the bus. The idea is that the mental realm between the lines of the folk legendary "Blue Beard" and his forbidden room and the theme "Privacy Policy" are linked.

Bluebeard warns his wife not to use the door key to open the door to the forbidden room while he is away
And the door will be opened...



Sohrab Kashahi: A Tehraner's guide to Sanandaj

"A Tehraner's Guide to Sanandaj" is a project by Sohrab Kashani developed for "My Privacy Policy" - touring exhibition curated by Elham Puriyamehr part of The Fourth Annual of the Contemporary Art of Sanandaj. The website shows the actual location of the bus and also provides camera images

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different kinds of people from all over the world in my projects, so internet is a good choice.

What would be your ideal situation of curating/ project developing in the future?

Making exhibitions with different meanings in different cultural contexts is very important for me. It is difficult to predict what will be the outcome of the exhibition but you will always create and criticize new meanings and findings that are based on the situation of the project.

What is your ideal 'third place' (informal meeting place)/ critical community?

My ideal is to achieve group curatorial projects in real life, all over the world. A kind of utopia produced without the presence of time and place. Interaction of cultures is what I want to achieve, a kind of Neolithic world based on cultural exchange. The challenge is to produce a situation in which projects I initiated occur in dialogue with one another. I like to produce projects that have a discourse outside the boundaries of time and place.

Do you want to add anything else to these questions?

I just want to thank everyone who kindly gave me an opportunity to talk about my projects. I want to express my gratitude to all my artists, colleagues and Kurdish people for helping me to produce this project and also Framer Framed because of their attention and for introducing My Own Privacy Policy and ICPI projects. Thank you very much Julia Geven.



Mona Aghababie, Syncope

There is a significant difference between life and existence, which contains a hallmark outside the quotidian circle of norms; Life is a form of human experience in which the circumstances flow in time automatically and commonly. At times this experience becomes unusually an existential one in the form of a work of art and at other times it receives the role, and keeps on being, a simple lived experience.



A3 Art Group: Ghoul

A ghoul is a kind of devil that would sometimes appear to the passengers. It would take the form of a desperate man or woman who lures travelers and takes their lives.

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Elham Puriyamehr is an Iranian-born curator and writer based in Tehran. She received her BA and MA at the Art University of Tehran. She is a PhD student in curatorial research at Alzahra University in Tehran. She continues to work in the field of arts, organizing exhibitions, performances, talks, and publications on a broad range of themes related to curating contemporary art and culture in social context. She's worked with Mohsen Gallery for two years, where she was formerly project manager and curator. She teaches at many Universities in Iran and is part of the directorial board of Association of Iranian Sculptor (AIS). Elham has participated and organized programs for many conferences and lectures in Iran.

Elham is founder of the Institute for Curatorial Practice in Iran (ICPI): a non-profit organisation, which brings artists, curators, and arts professionals together to develop a responsive curatorial practice that supports the preeminent from the contemporary and emerging fields of visual culture . She uses social media, Facebook, as an online platform to share exhibition practices and connect Iranian artists with other people interested in art. By posting links about new exhibitions or ideas from people about art projects Elham creates an online agenda and archive about art practices in Iran.

Links

ICPI facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/Elham.Puriyamehr/info>

Elham Puriyamehr's website

<http://elhampuriyamehr.com/www>

A Tehraner's Guide to Sanandaj

<http://www.atehranersguidetosanandaj.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1398504377054826/?previousaction=join&source=1>



Negar Farajiani, A shadow play in town

In the middle of the town, a light canvas hangs in the back of the bus, it is visible both in the men and women's section of the bus. The play is about to begin: a shadow play in public, vague shadows of body parts next to a few familiar signs and some personal belongings. Along the way shadows appear and disappear from behind the screen. Perhaps they visualize the blurred presence of someone's privacy. This play has to be watched in the standing position, as the rest of passengers are sitting in both the men and women's section, with the screen at their back. In fact they are looking forward to reach the destination.



Negar Farajiani, A shadow play in town

Tate Art Maps; how a mobile app can engage people with art

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There are many ways to achieve participation in your cultural institution. One way is to trigger the public to involve in a participatory activity on site. Another way to get people involved is offering them a way to participate with their smart phones. A very good example of this way of 'inclusive curating' is the Tate Art Maps project. The research-based project is finding ways to gain more information of user experiences in technology and intends to create a platform for users to explore Tate artworks in relation to place. Users are called to contribute to the project by using the Tate Art Maps web application. People, who use the application on a computer, or via an optimised mobile version, have the possibility to relate artworks to the places, sites and environments they encounter in daily life. Although the Art Maps project is not yet in the public domain, through a series of public engagement events it is proving a good example of how to engage the public with art via (mobile) technology. The research project started in 2012, will go live to the public in early 2014, and will continue until 2015

Tate is one of Britain's best-known art institutions and holds the national collection of British art from 1500 and international art from 1900. The four galleries, The Tate Modern, Tate Britain, Tate Liverpool and Tate St Ives, share the Tate collection that includes nearly 70000 artworks, available to view in digitised form on the Tate web site (www.tate.org.uk), and Tate Modern stands in the top 5 most visited art museums in the world.¹ Only one third of the total collection had been indexed by Tate with information about the locations represented in the artworks, this information is in some cases very specific but most of the times the information is quite general, referring only to a city, region or major geographical feature.² With the Art Maps project Tate aims to improve the quality of the geographical data relating to the artworks in the Tate collection. With a web application for desktop computers and smart phones, people can add information about the site represented in the artwork. They are able to share their personal memories or responses and are given the chance to tell why an artwork is appealing for them. In this way the application will generate an (online) learning/ exchange community. Gabriella Giannachi, project leader of the Tate Art Maps project and Professor in Performance and New Media, explains in the Art Maps blog the following: 'the project aims to facilitate Tate's transition into the digital economy by engaging with Tate Online in developing a novel collection documentation and public engagement tool. The project will allow Tate to gain new insights into the user experience and create new distribution and communication strategies. The project intends to create a interactive platform that can be used by others. Studying the use of Art Maps offers insight into how people use technology to understand their environment, in relation to place and space, location and mapping, through art, and art through their personal histories'.³

1 Wikipedia, "most visited art museums in the world" (version 05-01-2014), http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_most_visited_art_museums_in_the_world, consulted on 05-01-2014

2 Tate, "Art Maps" (version January 2012) <http://www.tate.org.uk/about/projects/art-maps>, consulted on 05-01-2014

3 G. Giannachi, "Art Maps: A Research Project", Tate Art Maps (blog) (20 March 2012) <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/blogs/art-maps-research-project>, consulted on 05-01-2014



Tate logo

Image from the Tate website



The Art Maps display situated in relation to the free exhibition Looking at the View, was made up of two computer stations
Image from the Tate website



Different groups of visitors at the Art Maps kiosks

Photo taken by Cristina Locatelli

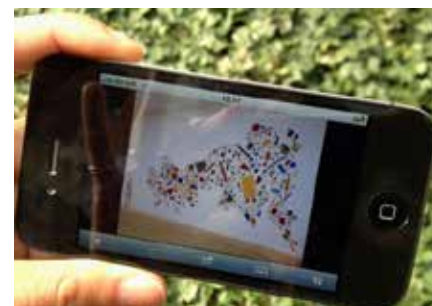


Image from the Tate website

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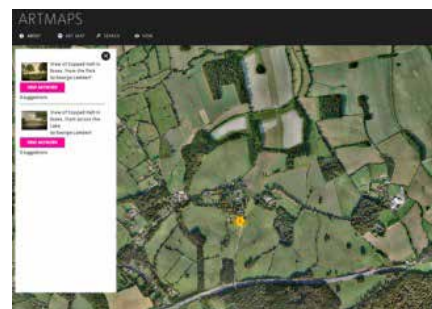
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As the project is both a research initiative and an activity for Tate's online visitors, it is important to investigate and analyse what the (future) users of the application think of it. As Rebecca Sinker, curator digital learning at Tate, writes in the Art Maps blog: 'Earlier this year (2012), we held our Art Mapping workshop, a public programmes event that ran over two consecutive Saturdays. Public programmes offer events that enable people to experience the Tate collection and its interpretation in new ways, to gain insights into artists' practices, understand the contexts for the production and consumption of art and actively participate in the debates that further this knowledge. We were looking to see how people would use the technologies on their smart phones, how they would respond to the art of place - and the place of art - and how people learned with each other, or alone. Both days were filmed and all participant interviews and discussions were transcribed'.⁴

You can find short audio documentations about the engagement workshop, and outcomes of the data collected during the Art Maps demo website installation at Tate Britain via the links at the end of this article.

As the Art Maps website explains: 'It is expected that the new app will enable members of the public to help Tate pinpoint the locations of particular images and identify the viewpoints used by artists through sending comments or uploading their own photographs or videos of the sites for publication on Tate's website. The app will analyse users' locations and display artworks that are associated with that location (typically because they represent it or were created there). With works that are not specifically 'about' a location (for example, abstract works or performances), Art Maps will offer audiences the possibility of annotating the works in relation to, for example, the site of a performance or the artist's studio. Additionally, Art Maps will facilitate the creation of journeys through cities according to a particular artist's work (J.M.W. Turner's views of Venice, for example), a movement or a theme'.⁵

Art Maps is developed by researchers at the University of Nottingham and University of Exeter with funding from Horizon, an RCUK-funded Research Institute for Digital Economy Research, in collaboration with Tate. Established in 2009, Horizon brings together researchers from a range of disciplines to investigate how digital technology can enhance the way we live, work and play. The prototype application will consist of an Art Map of Tate's collection; future Art Maps may involve other collections.



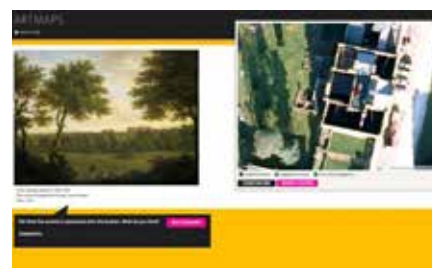
Example of the Art Maps application design
Image from the Tate website



Art Maps second public engagement event
2012
Image from the Tate website



Art Maps participants creating a sculpture
and documenting activity
Image from the Tate website



Example of the Art Maps application design
Image from the Tate website

4 R. Sinker, "Art Maps: modes of engagement" (blog) (22 August 2012)

<http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/blogs/art-maps-modes-engagement>, consulted on 06-01-2014

5 Tate, "Art Maps" (version January 2012)

<http://www.tate.org.uk/about/projects/art-maps>, consulted on 05-01-2014

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Gabriella Giannachi is project leader of The Art Maps, professor in Performance and New Media, and Director of the Centre for Intermedia at the University of Exeter, which promotes advanced interdisciplinary research in performance and the arts through collaborations between artists, academics and scientists from a range of disciplines. As in the other best practices in this reader, I asked Gabriella the same set of questions about the project. You find her answers here:

What has been your working strategy?

We have worked interdisciplinary and through R&D (research and development).

What inspired you to start this project? What kind of projects or disciplines inspired you?

The idea of Art Maps came from John Stack, Head of Tate Online. The project itself was then developed through three departments at Tate: Tate learning, Tate Research and Tate Online; the Centre for Intermedia in the Department of English at the University of Exeter and the department of Computer Science at University of Nottingham, as part of Horizon, funded by RCUK. The aim is to expand Tate's user-group by encouraging mobile learning and participatory curation outside the museum.

How was or is the relation between the curator (or concept designer) and the public/ participators in the process of "exhibition" making? Did the public have any influence on the process and in what way?

Through the R&D users were able to influence the design and functionalities of Art Maps. You can see from our blog how the two public engagement events we held early on in the project shaped our thinking right from the beginning.

How did or do you realize participation? How do you manage to tell one story while receiving a lot of different input in "storytelling" by the public?

We will monitor and manage the content.

How do you prevent a participation paradox (the public isn't satisfied with the outcome of their input in "exhibition making" process)?

We may use tasks to prompt specific action through social media.

How do you realize online and offline platforms for your project?

The platform was developed by Computer Scientists at University of Nottingham.

What sorts of resources do you have available and visible for the possibility of participation in your project?

Users will be able to determine the location of Tate's collection on Art Maps; annotate them and generate trails.

What would be your ideal situation of curating/ project developing in the future?

We are starting a new project in April, which will develop the first archive of performance at Tate from 1960 to today.



Art Maps activity sheet
Image from the Tate website



Art Maps worksheet 2012
Image from the Tate website



Finding the site of Charles Ginner's Claverton Street today.
Image from the Tate website



The journey mapped by GPS.
Image from the Tate website

Tate Art Maps; how a mobile app can engage people with art

We Curate: Research on best practices for inclusive curating

What is your ideal “third place”(informal meeting place) / critical community?

A dispersed user group that is not as yet familiar with art or technology.

Do you want to add anything else to these questions?

For more information about the process of the Art Maps project visit the Art Maps blog.

Links

Tate Art Maps Blog

<http://bit.ly/artmapsblog>

Watch short video documentations about the Tate Art Maps project

<http://bit.ly/artmapsvideo>

<http://bit.ly/artmapsvideo2>

Data analysis of Tate Art Maps (12 February - 2 June 2013)

<http://bit.ly/artmapsanalysis>



Passing San Giorgio, Venice 2011

Photo: Gabriella Giannachi



Joseph Mallord William Turner

The Dogano, San Giorgio, Citella, from the Steps of the Europa exhibited 1842

Oil on canvas

Image from the Tate website

Museum of Broken Relationships; A travelling exhibition about past love stories

We Curate: Research on best practices for inclusive curating

What to do when the relationship with your former partner has ended? In addition to the period of time you need to get over the breakup, you have to deal with all the consequences that arise from ending a relationship. Dividing all shared belongings could take a lot of effort and time, and deciding who gets what isn't an easy job.

This all happened to Olinka Vištica and Dražen Grubišić, founders of the Museum of Broken Relationships. They started an exhibition where the objects tell stories about ended relationships. People are invited to donate objects that relate to a past relationship and share the story bound to the object. Their idea became such a success that the exhibition started to travel around the world. Now, seven years after Olinka and Dražen ended their relationship, the Museum of Broken Relationships has become a well-known concept. The motive from which everything started were love break-ups but very soon this concept of broken relationships will significantly widen to all kinds of emotional relations that are important in peoples' lives. The permanent exhibition is situated in Zagreb, Croatia and the travelling exhibition has already visited over 15 different countries. At this moment the Museum of Broken relationships is on show in The Oude Kerk, Amsterdam.

I came upon this project via Annemarie de Wildt, curator of the Amsterdam Museum, who contributed to the Amsterdam edition of the Museum of Broken Relationships. She wrote about the origins of the MBR and her experiences: In 2011 the Museum of Broken Relationships won the Kenneth Hudson Award, given in honor of the founder of European Museum of the Year Award, which goes to the museum, person project or group of people who have demonstrated the most unusual, daring and, perhaps, controversial achievement that challenges common perceptions of the role of museums in society.

Olinka Vištica and Dražen Grubišić founded the Museum of Broken Relationships (MBR) after the couple ended their own romantic relationship in 2006. They realized that beloved belongings were much harder to divide than household goods. The basic idea was to collect objects and stories related to the end of a love relationship. The MBR would give people the opportunity to help them get over an emotional crisis in a creative way: by donating an object and its story to the museum collection.

The MBR started as a temporary exhibition with love mementos donated by their friends. It was followed by the 'Broken Hearts in Broken Countries Tour' through the countries of former Yugoslavia where the stories about personal histories of lost loves mingled with histories of war and broken relationships resulting from the country's break up. This was the beginning of a worldwide tour that has taken the museum and its founders to the US, Mexico, South Africa, Singapur, Philippines, Argentina ect.. Two months before the opening of each exhibition there is a Call for Donations in order to collect local objects.



Museum of Broken Relationships logo
IMAGE FROM THE MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS
TUMBLR



MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS EXHIBITION
IMAGE FROM THE MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS WEBSITE



Museum of Broken relationships Exhibition
IMAGE FROM THE MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS WEBSITE

Museum of Broken Relationships; A travelling exhibition about past love stories

We Curate: Research on best practices for inclusive curating

Since two years Olinka Vištica and Dražen Grubišić also have a permanent museum in a beautiful spot in the old town of Zagreb. In September 2012, when lecturing in the Croatian capital on controversial subjects in museums, I visited their initiative. It struck me as a powerful ethnographic museum of love sickness. How do we as human beings deal with relations gone astray? Do we keep the mementos even if they are painful - and what stories do we tell about them? The MBR is a truly global place. Whereas most ethnographic museums are neatly divided by geography, the MBR shows objects and stories from various parts of the worlds next to each other as a collective emotional history of love. That arrangement invites novel questions like: is love sickness different in Singapur than in Mexico? Feelings of loss, anger, and revenge are said to be universal, but the remains of these loves can be colored by local history and materiality, such as the de-mined soil from Sarajevo or the mate cup from Argentina. Other objects like cell phones, watches or a Frisbee testify to the forces of globalization in many trajectories of people's love relationships.

Jacqueline Grandjean, director of the Oude Kerk, invited the artists and their MBR to be part of the exhibition Memento that opened in November 2013. For the first time in its travelling existence, the MBR found a temporary home in a house of God. As curator for the Amsterdam Museum, I provided help in gathering the Amsterdam objects and started a search for people who would donate their love mementos. Some of the objects collected locally are a stiletto heeled shoe donated by a former prostitute, a little plastic bag with ecstasy pills, a Chinese wedding gift, a prayer mat a Muslim lover left in an Amsterdam apartment, a green sari from India, and part of a playing card from a German magician. Almost 180 different nationalities live in Amsterdam--and the donations reflect this demographic richness. Global stories mix with local ones.

I was happy to be able to make a connection with the Oude Kerk community who incorporated some of the objects and stories into their Sunday church services. Through the MBR, the church becomes a place where feelings are shared and where people find comfort in the company of strangers' stories.



MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELAIOTNSHIPS EXHIBITION
IMAGE FROM THE MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS WEBSITE



MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELAIOTNSHIPS EXHIBITION
IMAGE FROM THE MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS WEBSITE



MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELAIOTNSHIPS EXHIBITION
IMAGE FROM THE MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS WEBSITE

Museum of Broken Relationships; A travelling exhibition about past love stories

We Curate: Research on best practices for inclusive curating

The questions I asked about the project were answered by Olinka Vistica, Co founder of MBR and Ivana Druzetic, collection manager and co-curator of MBR.

What has been your working strategy?

The Museum of Broken Relationships exists as an art concept since 2006 when it first presented itself as a small temporary art installation in Zagreb. Several dozens of trivial objects, accompanied by a personal story, formed a display with an intention to create a space of 'secure memory' or 'protected remembrance' in order to preserve the material and nonmaterial heritage of broken relationships. The public response was amazing and the co-authors of the museum, Olinka Vištica and Dražen Grubišić, very soon began to seriously consider numerous invitations for hosting the exhibition. During the last 7 years, the collection has grown up to 1200 objects, the museum has had exhibitions in 30 cities all over the world and a permanent display in Zagreb has been opened for visitors since 2010.

What inspired you to start this project? What kind of projects or disciplines inspired you?

Of course every idea comes out of a personal experience and Museum of Broken Relationships is no exception. However, this theme instantly resonates with a very personal tone and indeed is a brainchild of two people whose own emotional puzzlements during their break-up finally became an inspiration. It took a period of over two years before the idea of Olinka and Dražen came into existence. They shared their thoughts with their friends and it turned out that everybody they talked to reacted very enthusiastically to the concept. What to do with all those tokens of love that you gathered during your relationship? Wouldn't it be great if there is a special place where you can leave it knowing that it continues its existence independently? Once this really simple idea crossed their mind, the inspiration for pursuing its realization was inexhaustible - everything that surrounds us, especially art in every form, is in a way significant for the way we live and deal with our past.

How was or is the relation between the curator and public (or other kinds of participation) in the process of "exhibition" making? Did the public have any influence on the process and in what way.

We perceive the public as a co-creator of the exhibition in the fullest sense. The objects and the stories written by the donors form the core of the museum display in which we as the curators tend to provide an articulated space and time for its expression, a sort of stage which adds to its inherent scenic potential. Also, the public constantly continues to be the central actor of our exhibitions by contributing to our collection. This continuous joining of the public in our mutual venture inevitably expands its meaning while we try to maintain our curatorial role as mediators of these personal investments. On the other hand, the "exhibition" as a concept is an artificial situation after all and I (Ivana) believe that, as a curator, one does not have to abstain too much from interpreting as long as the voice of the public participant is not misused (which is a very delicate aspect and opens a whole new area for discussion).



MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELAIOTNSHIPS EXHIBITION OUDE KERK, AMSTERDAM (PHOTO: JULIA GEVEN)



MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELAIOTNSHIPS OUDE KERK, AMSTERDAM (PHOTO: JULIA GEVEN)



MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELAIOTNSHIPS EXHIBITION OUDE KERK, AMSTERDAM (PHOTO: JULIA GEVEN)



MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELAIOTNSHIPS EXHIBITION OUDE KERK, AMSTERDAM (PHOTO: JULIA GEVEN)

Museum of Broken Relationships; A travelling exhibition about past love stories

We Curate: Research on best practices for inclusive curating

How did or do you realize participation? How do you manage to tell one story while receiving a lot of different input in “storytelling” by the public?

The only unique story here is the one about a relation that once was and now is gone or changed in a significant way. This is the baseline which is expectedly altered by each individual story that comes from the public. These narrative transformations are actually encouraged as they shed light on various contexts that condition or simply accompany these personal experiences. Whether different cultural traits, religious traditions or economic backgrounds, they all add to the initial concept a dimension of real life. Even the initial concept of love break-ups has somewhat changed through this unbounded storytelling by broadening its significance to various emotional ties that people cherish and part with through the course of their lives (like friendship, a parent-child relation, or even a relation with a certain way of life).

How do you prevent a participation paradox (the public isn't satisfied with the outcome of their input in the “exhibition making” process)?

We do our best to provide a clear explanation of the concept to the public as well as the way in which their donations will form a part of the exhibition. The only public objections we have encountered until now were disappointments with the fact that we are not able to display each donation we receive. For example, there is an ongoing call for donations in Mexico for our upcoming exhibition in March. Despite our original intention to display all of the objects and their accompanying stories, we had to announce a selection process when we realized that our displaying capacity has reached its limit the very first day of the donation process. This has caused some individual complaints.

How do you realize online and offline platforms for your project?

The online platform has been a significant anchor point all along, since the procedure for contributing to the collection starts by submitting a donation form on our web site. Everyone interested in participating can here find all the information needed for getting familiar with our work as well as the terms for joining the project. There is also a big community of followers on our Facebook page where we do our best to regularly inform the public about our current projects and share a certain spirit of what we do. On the half way between the online and the offline, a great media interest has had a considerable impact on informing the public and fostering participation. Finally, a new book on the museum will be published very soon by which we want to introduce the museum to everyone interested in knowing how the project has been developing through the years and enable to experience the idea in a very close manner.



MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS EXHIBITION
IMAGE FROM THE FOX IS BLACK WEBSITE



BA D MEMORIES ERASER
IMAGE FROM THE TRIPADVISOR WEBSITE



MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS EXHIBITION
IMAGE FROM THE FOX IS BLACK WEBSITE



MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS EXHIBITION
IMAGE FROM THE MY DESTINATION WEBSITE

Museum of Broken Relationships; A travelling exhibition about past love stories

We Curate: Research on best practices for inclusive curating

What sorts of resources do you have available and visible for the possibility of participation in your project?

Alongside the ones mentioned in the previous answer, which can be considered as permanent, the ways of approaching the public differ according to the particular project. As our projects are performed in close cooperation with a certain partner institution where the exhibition takes place, the resources for public participation greatly depend on their available public channels as well as our mutual agreements in relation to the given circumstances.

What would be your ideal situation of curating in the future? What do you pursue next to the things you work on now?

At the moment we are preparing a new permanent display in Zagreb, collecting donations for the next travelling exhibition in Mexico and arranging the following one in Brussels. Lots of other possible and very exciting projects are emerging aside. To be honest, I still have not made the most out of these ongoing projects that are very realistic and feasible so I have not even afforded myself to imagine the ideal ones. I like to see this as an enviable situation. What I may wish out loud is to meet people who are open to new ideas, unburdened with ever growing prejudices and willing to learn from each other. Then everything else can be achieved.

What is your ideal “third place”/ critical community?

The universal concept of the Museum of Broken Relationships and the international span of its realization have enabled us to reach a very wide public. What we strive to achieve in our future exhibition projects is also to get through “vertically” - both to the most excluded parts of society as well as the ones considered socially distanced from the popular public projects. Maybe by perceiving both of these strata as marginalized, each in their own way, and conceptually connecting them can yield a certain new dimension of perceiving humanness.

You can still visit the exhibition Memento in the Oude Kerk till March 2nd 2014. See the link to the website of de Oude Kerk below.

The website of Museum of Broken Relationships just announced that Museum of Broken Relationships is moving to Mexico. The call for donations is opened and already a lot of objects have been donated. The selected items will be displayed at Museo del Objeto del Objeto from March 12 till June 8, 2014.

Links

website Museum of Broken Relationships
<http://brokenships.com/>

Website Oude Kerk
<http://www.oudekerk.nl/nl>



MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELAIOTNSHIPS EXHIBITION
IMAGE FROM THE MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS WEBSITE



MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELAIOTNSHIPS EXHIBITION
IMAGE FROM THE MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS WEBSITE



MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELAIOTNSHIPS EXHIBITION
IMAGE FROM THE GYPSIFIED WORDPRESS WEBSITE

The Maboneng Township Arts Experience; Turning homes into galleries

We Curate: Research on best practices for inclusive curating

Why go to a museum when you can visit your neighbours to see artworks made by fellow citizens and international artists? Offering local artists the opportunity to show their works by using people's homes as exhibition venue creates a whole new dimension of exhibiting and offers new insights in how to (re) use buildings that can (also) function as cultural institutions or art galleries. By engaging a city's residents in creating an exhibition or art gallery, the locals get very much involved in the development process. In this way the support of the participants can be much larger and everyone who helped put up the project feels responsible and co owner of the result.

"The Maboneng Township Arts Experience is a national public arts initiative that turns homes in townships into galleries and outdoor spaces into performance podiums. The Township Art Experience project works together with homeowners and families to create a warm intimate arts environment in their townships. Now, after 10 years, The Maboneng Township Arts Experience has turned over 70 homes in South African townships into galleries, exhibited over 50 artists and encouraged township residents to invest in art.

The Maboneng Township Arts Experience started when Alexandra native and artist, Sipiwe Ngwenya realised that art awareness was lacking in his neighbourhood. Sipiwe also realised that there was a perception of art as being an outsider and art was inaccessible for some people. With this at the forefront of his mind, Sipiwe started exhibiting art on the streets and corners of this South African township. In the process, he involved local artists and encouraged local kids to see art as a viable career path.

Since then the project has grown from its humble roots to a national programme that hosts Annual Township art festivals and includes various permanent township art routes, attracting numerous visitors.

The word Maboneng stands for the place of lights; The Township Alexandra in Johannesburg, South Africa was former known as the dark city because there was no electricity for a long period of time. When the government constructed the electricity network things started to get better. The vision of the Maboneng Township Arts Experience is to end negative perceptions about townships by 2030 through the arts. Townships will turn into great towns; they want to achieve this by celebrating the simpler and closer things in life, like their families, houses, and the high calibre of community ethics"¹



Maboneng Logo
Image from www.Moboneng.com



Maboneng Festival Map
Image from www.Moboneng.com



Maboneng Township Arts Experience
Image from www.Moboneng.com

¹ Maboneng Township Art Experience. "About", <http://www.maboneng.com/>, consulted on 14-02-2014

The Maboneng Township Arts Experience; Turning homes into galleries

We Curate: Research on best practices for inclusive curating

The Maboneng Township Arts Experience project has achieved a lot since it has been initiated in Alexandra. At first, the project only took place once a year in one location where for a period of time an entire street block functioned as festival terrain. Now, the project holds annual festivals in townships throughout the country and also found a permanent location for the Township Art Galleries (TAG) and art routes. This permanent location is Langa TAG; everyday, except for Sunday, people have the possibility to visit the galleries in people's homes and take a look at the different artworks in people's living room. The organisation behind the Maboneng Township Art Experience, Buntuzim Media Production, also launched an interactive virtual map of the Langa TAG, which gives you a taste of this colourful tour from anywhere in the world, you can find the link to this map among the links below. The Township Arts Experience also has been chosen as an official project of the 2014 Cape Town World Design Capital (WDC) programme. The project was also included at the top of the New York Times' list of 52 places to see in 2014 (see the link to this article among the links below.)

In 2013, the township art experience took place in Gugulethu (Western Cape), Alexandra (Gauteng) and Madadeni (KwaZulu-Natal). The events during these festivals included visual art exhibitions, film screenings, dance, theatre productions and music. The website of the Maboneng Township Arts Experience gives the following information about the coming year and the newest developments of the project: "Based on our successes in Gugulethu and Langa, we'll be launching in Imizamo Yethu in Hout Bay in 2014. In this township, we're collaborating with the inspiring Lalela Project, which uses the arts to connect with youth affected by poverty. The launch will coincide with the Design Indaba, the Cape Town Art Fair and the Southern Guild Cape Town exhibition. Shuttle systems will be available from these events to make it easy for visitors to join us. Moreover, later this year, Imizamo Yethu will also host its own festival. We'll also be building a permanent gallery there. Through our interventions, we've noticed that communities want to be even more involved. Many of them are coming up with their own ideas and initiatives to enhance the Maboneng Township Arts Experience. This is one of the reasons why we were looking forward to this year. In 2014, we hope to bring even more visitors to townships as part of our goal to become top destination-makers, to help create sustainable businesses that will inspire community members of all ages and to collaborate with more people. If you want to get involved, we'd love to hear from you. Some of the artworks can be bought through the website and you can find out more about the permanent art route tours".¹



Maboneng Township Arts Experience
Image from www.Moboneng.com



Langa TAG
Image from www.Moboneng.com



Maboneng Township Arts Experience
Image from www.Moboneng.com

¹ Maboneng Township Art Experience. "About", <http://www.maboneng.com/>, consulted on 18-02-2014

The Maboneng Township Arts Experience; Turning homes into galleries

We Curate: Research on best practices for inclusive curating

Siphiwe Ngwenya, initiator of the Maboneng Township Arts Experience, answered the questions I asked about the project.

What has been your working strategy?

Our working strategy is working in partnership with homeowners in townships. Creating festivals together and creating permanent art routes outside their homes for visitors from all over the world.

What inspired you to start this project? What kind of projects or disciplines inspired you?

What inspired me was the lack of public art in townships. Also being personally involved in taking art everywhere as an artist and not being paid attention made me realize this. My home, the township itself, became a new exhibition space for me. I saw it like I never did before and my neighbours supported me in the way I saw possibilities for art in the townships.

How was or is the relation between the curator (or concept designer) and the public/ participators in the process of “exhibition” making? Did the public have any influence on the process and in what way?

Homeowners and the artist and community volunteers are involved in the curating process in some way or another. For instance a good example of the involvement is a home curated by Zipho Dayile in 2012 in Gugulethu. The interior of the house was changed by the homeowner because he felt that the view of one of the paintings would be better when he put it in the place he wanted it to be. Who are we to fight and moan? He was, by definition, involved in the curating process.

How did or do you realize participation? How do you manage to tell one story while receiving a lot of different input in “storytelling” by the public?

In each township everybody looks at things in different ways. One of the greatest things of the project is that this process has kept me communicating with many homeowners across South Africa. Every home I have seen wants to keep showcasing something to the public and see this as their chance to be involved in the cultural discourse. All the different inputs also put me in a sort of school myself as I see and feel the pulse of each township. This inspires me.

How do you prevent a participation paradox (the public isn't satisfied with the outcome of their input in “exhibition making” process)?

It is all a living process of negotiating and educating each other. Not everyone is always satisfied but everyone understands the context and why we are doing this work. This is why a lot of citizens want to continue contributing to the project, to earn some support for their children to build something out of their own township, which in most cases, are the only spaces they can call their own.



Maboneng Township Arts Experience
Image from www.Moboneng.com



Maboneng Township Arts Experience
Image from www.Moboneng.com



Artwork by Tommy Machaba
Image from www.Moboneng.com

The Maboneng Township Arts Experience; Turning homes into galleries

We Curate: Research on best practices for inclusive curating

How do you realize online and offline platforms for your project?

We have our normal website, twitter and facebook pages but also engage in marketing outside like a lot of word of mouth and print. We also partner with other organisations to spread the word through their off and online facilities.

What sorts of resources do you have available and visible for the possibility of participation in your project?

We are building a system that can make it possible for an individual to join the exhibition. In the past however we have experienced challenges in having as many people involved because that takes quite a lot of administration. But as we went along we realised that this is important and that the access we gave people to participate needed to be beyond what we have achieved. Since that realisation many people have chosen to volunteer and the system is slowly shaping up so it can assure us the best public participation framework.

What would be your ideal situation of curating/ project developing in the future?

We would like to see curator and project manager teams in different provinces that can ensure an autonomous working process for the creation and display of works in different townships. We want to pursue international collaboration which we call: finding sister townships where ideas from different people can boost an international township arts economy.

What is your ideal 'third place' (informal meeting place) / critical community?

We are a growing organisation but have achieved quite a lot. We have done this because we are a collaborative agency and always looking for places to work together with fellow arts practitioners from all over the world. We feel that if we keep continuing to do this, we will gain support from different disciplines in the arts, and that eventually the livelihoods of the people in the townships will be better because they really need it.

Links

Website Maboneng Township Arts Experience

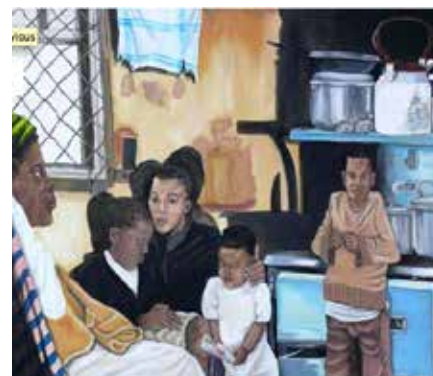
<http://www.maboneng.com/>

New York Times article

http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/01/10/travel/2014-places-to-go.html?_r=0

video fragment with an interview with Sipiwe Ngwenya About the Maboneng Township Arts Experience

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=viyDyyTVkFk>



Artwork by Tommy Machaba
Image from www.Moboneng.com



Artwork by Tommy Machaba
Image from www.Moboneng.com



Artwork by Tommy Machaba
Image from www.Moboneng.com

Glasgow Open Museum; taking the Collection into the Community

We Curate: Research on best practices for inclusive curating

Often, museums give you a feeling of authority; objects are put on display in showcases and the texts on the wall explain the story of famous artists from an omniscient narrator point of view. You enter the exhibition, absorb all the content that is provided by the museum, and leave again. The museum experience you'll have from this exhibition will be informative but very abstract. Another way of creating a museum experience is giving the audience the opportunity to determine the content of the exhibition and tell the stories about the objects themselves.

However, as Nina Simon (author of the book 'Participatory Museum') writes in her blog Museum 2.0; 'One of the primary fears museum professionals (and all professionals) have about entering into new relationships with audiences is the fear of losing control'.¹ What remains the function of museum professionals when the audience has taken their 'authority' from them? This is where the Open Museum Glasgow (OM) comes in; 'The OM team is made up of curators, outreach assistants, a technical team and a manager. They call themselves facilitators, creative practitioners and designers, experimenting with a range of participatory, inclusive ways of working to engage people with objects, designing and building community-led exhibitions to the highest professional standard. The museum team brings a wide range of professional experience to help community relationships create exhibitions in their own institutions outside the museum venues.'²

The Open Museum provides a loan service for people to borrow museum objects to support their own community-based work. In this way the Open Museum is able to reach many more people with their collection than would otherwise be possible. Through the 'loan-service', the museum encourages organizations and individuals to use the collections themselves. 'A final presentation of the work is also key - giving people the opportunity to stand back and reflect on what they have achieved and to share it with family and friends. Giving the opportunity to individuals and organization to create an exhibition in their institution opens the door to different cultural venues across the city; the Open Museum tries to democratize the sense of ownership of the collection and other museums and other cultural spaces. The exhibitions are designed and built by the technical team of the museum and they carefully balance group choices with responsible care of the collections. Whatever the scale, the important thing is that the people feel ownership of the exhibition'.³ The museum really feels a responsibility to influence the power bases in museums to bring about institutional change - to ensure that the core museum is affected by the opportunity for dialogue with its communities.



Open Museum logo

Images from www.glasgowlife.org.uk



Exterior of the Glasgow Museums Resource Centre, which houses the Open Museum
image from harriethill21.wordpress.com

1 N. Simon, "The Future of Authority", Museum 2.0 (blog), (October 08, 2008), <http://museumtwo.blogspot.nl/2009/01/starting-exercise-for-designing.html>, consulted on 06-02-2014
2012. <http://museumtwo.blogspot.nl/2008/10/future-of-authority-platform-power.html>

2 E. Addington et al., Out There. The Open Museum: Pushing the boundaries of museums' potential. (Glasgow: Glasgow Museums, 2010), XI. Consulted on 06-02-2013

3 E. Addington et al., Out There. The Open Museum: Pushing the boundaries of museums' potential. (Glasgow: Glasgow Museums, 2010), XI. Consulted on 06-02-2013

Glasgow Open Museum; taking the Collection into the Community

We Curate: Research on best practices for inclusive curating

In 2010, the Open Museum published the book *Out There*. *Out There* is a celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Open Museum. The book is written by the Open Museum team and presents all sorts of different projects initiated by the museum. The book is divided in 5 chapters with different themes; each chapter contains about 5 stories about projects, all with different participating 'co curators'. On the first page of the chapter you find facts about the project; which and how many participants were included in the project, what was the location of the project and what was the duration of the project.

The latest chapter explains the 'behind the Open Museum perspectives'. The intention of the OM is to bring curators nearer to their public. Julian Spalding, former head of Glasgow Museums (1989/1998), says the following; "My ambition was to have every curator throughout Glasgow Museums (and other members of staff, including Museum Assistants) working on at least one Open Museum project all the time".¹

At this moment the Open Museum holds 23 handling kits and 35 reminiscence kits that could be used by other organisations and individuals. You can find more information about these kits on the Glasgow Open Museum Website.

The questions I asked about the museum and its projects were answered by Claire Coia and Crawford McGugan, curators at the Open Museum;

What has been your working strategy?

The Open Museum works to Glasgow Museum and Glasgow Life Strategic Objectives and the National Outcomes. We take the museum collection beyond the museum walls out into the community. This involves: Identifying needs within the community; identifying and forming partnerships with key organisations with areas of expertise in addressing these needs; creating standards for best practice; using our extensive museum collection to engage with our communities in a directly relevant way.

What inspired you to start this project? What kind of projects or disciplines inspired you?

All the Open Museum projects are outreach based. I look for inspiration from the groups that we work with, the skills that they bring and their areas of interest, then work from there. It's a growing process. With the partners I work out what the key aims of the project are - a combination of their aims and ours - and work with the participants to realize those aims.

My particular focus lies with museums and the Criminal Justice System (each Learning and Access and Outreach Curator has responsibility for a 'Portfolio'). The key overarching aim for working in this field is rehabilitation. The two other Curators in the Open Museum have portfolios on Regeneration and Health. Each portfolio is based on addressing a need that has been identified.

¹ E. Addington et al., *Out There*. The Open Museum: Pushing the boundaries of museums' potential. (Glasgow: Glasgow Museums, 2010), 121. Consulted on 06-02-2013



The Open Museum publication; *Out There*
Photo: Julia Geven



The Open Museum publication; *Out There*
Photo: Julia Geven



The Open Museum publication; *Out There*
Photo: Julia Geven

Glasgow Open Museum; taking the Collection into the Community

We Curate: Research on best practices for inclusive curating

How was or is the relation between the curator (or concept designer) and the public/ participators in the process of “exhibition” making? Did the public have any influence on the process and in what way?

As the Open Museum, we have our key aim of increasing access to the collections through outreach - and we work to Glasgow Museums, Glasgow Life and National Strategic Objectives. We match those aims up with the partner’s aims (a literacy focus or working towards improving mental health, for example). We then meet with the group and consult with them as to their areas of interest, what their ideas are, and look at ways of realizing those ideas. As museum professionals with certain procedures to follow (staff time, resources, conservation requirements, display requirements, safety of collections etc), we are able to take those ideas and say what is realistic or possible. We take the parameters, the ideas, and work together to find the best solution possible. This also applies to interpretation - there may be limitations (such as no offensive language, no misleading information etc.) but inside these limitations we are wide open to what the group wants, and they have key influence on the direction of the project - we take their lead. We work with partner organisations to identify community needs and this is our starting point. Partnerships are key to identifying community need and how we can effectively work with people in our communities to address those needs. We are part of a bigger process.

How did or do you realize participation? How do you manage to tell one story while receiving a lot of different input in “storytelling” by the public?

Everyone has a story to tell. I facilitate group work and encourage the group to decide for themselves - it’s their project after all. Interpretation / art work. etc that doesn’t get directly used in the final outcome can be shown and celebrated at the project launch and on the website. The final output has to be decided by the participants: the group facilitation is managed so that everyone can have equal and fair input and ultimately have responsibility for the project.

How do you prevent a participation paradox (the public isn’t satisfied with the outcome of their input in “exhibition making” process)?

There will always be parameters to work within since we are working with museum collections. We try to accommodate where we can and explain why certain things can’t be done (e.g. display of a fragile object that they have chosen; an opinion which is offensive; the word count for an exhibition label and so on). Parameters are emphasized at the beginning of the project - and throughout - so that everyone knows what they are working towards and has a clear outcome in mind. With the group taking ultimate responsibility for the direction of the project, the outcome is in their hands. Sometimes last minute changes may need to be made during the production of the output (e.g. a change to the display to accommodate an unexpected difficulty in displaying an object) and any changes are explained to the participants. Good communication is key.



The Open Museum publication; Out There
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How do you realize online and offline platforms for your project?

Online activity in terms of project work is focussed around the Open Museum website and Open Museum Facebook page. Beyond that online platforms would have to be considered on a case by case basis. As our ethos is using museum objects to engage with people in non museum spaces we haven't explored online potential in any great extent.

Recent online specific projects have included the Outreach Network and Red Road Flats sites. The first is an attempt to provide and develop a support network for those working in museums or galleries in Scotland. Initial funding was provided by Museums & Galleries Scotland in 2009 and developmental work was carried out by a committee from around the country.

Red road Flats website was developed as part of a larger Red Road Engagement Project involving partners beyond museums. It was a great success and had an ability to generate reminiscence content from around the world.

In terms of offline platforms we have developed an outreach project into a short film that now features in permanent display at the Riverside Museum - Journeys to Glasgow. Other offline digital projects have included short films.

What sorts of resources do you have available and visible for the possibility of participation in your project?

The participants that I work with are from excluded, hard to reach and often vulnerable groups in our community. I work with key partners who identify groups / participants to work with based on their professional knowledge and experience.

What would be your ideal situation of curating/ project developing in the future?

An ideal situation would be where museums are considered as dynamic forums for reflection, discussion and inhabiting. Museums as spaces that represent not simply past concerns but present and future ones too.

But thinking pragmatically for a moment I would say that, in an ideal situation, colleagues having the opportunity to get out of the museum (bunker) to see how objects can be used in dynamic ways around the city with different communities.

What is your ideal 'third place' (informal meeting place)/ critical community?

The ideal informal meeting place would be a multifunctional space where social and economic functions merge and compliment each other. A space that is intergral to a community and place. Perhaps a piazza - outside. Perhaps an art centre with office and shopping - inside. But mostly my type of work means meeting where people are most comfortable themselves - might be at home, in café. So, to me, that's the best ideal. I don't think about critical communities. I think about 'who gets it'. That's the people to work with and learn from.



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The Glasgow Open Museum is part of Glasgow Museums, an overarching organization with the largest civic museum service in the UK. The Glasgow Museum contains ten museums and galleries, including the Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA) and St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, one of only four museums of religion in the world. The concept of the Open Museum was created as a part of Glasgow museum. The OM is a place where museum professionals learn from people who normally don't visit museums. The Open Museum is based in the Glasgow Museums Resource Centre, which houses 80% of the collections not on display and gives access to 1.4 million objects. The objects differ from world-class collections of fine art to natural history and world cultures.

At the heart of Glasgow Museums is a fundamental philosophical commitment to the museum as a civic space, one that facilitates discussion around current and historical issues, beliefs and cultures; a 'safe ' space for perceptions, ideas, stories and issues to be presented; where awareness is raised and a clear invitation given out to visitors and participants to contribute and shape the discussion being stimulated by what is on display. The Open Museum enlarges this statement of the museum as a civic space by challenging the very essence of what that space is or should be. By taking the collections outside the museum walls they create new civic spaces and new opportunities for engagement, exploration and discussion.

Links:

The Open Museum Glasgow website

<http://bit.ly/Openmuseum>



The Open Museum publication; Out There
Photo: Julia Geven



The Open Museum publication; Out There
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References

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My Own Privacy Policy

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