

summary

THE BACKGROUND OF LOANING ARTWORKS

The activity of the Hungarian Registrars Association

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If we were to ask the average museum visitor who they thought works in a museum, they would probably come up with restorers, museologists, exhibition guides and perhaps museum educators. If, just out of curiosity, we were to catch them standing before the Rembrandt self-portrait – loaned from the collection of the Galleria degli Uffizi – at the show advertised on posters all over the city and ask what kind of work they thought had gone into this masterpiece being brought from Florence to the Museum of Fine Arts, we would be presenting our visitors with a far more onerous challenge. The more informed visitor would probably think of the tasks more pertinent to the curator or possibly the forwarding agency. Yet, just like in every institution, in museums there is also a great deal of work that goes on in the background to produce spectacular events. Such work – best done if it remains ‘unseen’ – is carried out, among others, by the museums’ legal experts, exhibition organisers, economic experts, art technicians and their *registrars*. The word *registrar* can be misleading since only part of the tasks involved in a registrar’s activity are administrative, despite what one would initially associate it with. A less ambiguous term is “art loaning expert”, which is listed under the civil servant activities in the cultural sphere in the supplement to a government decree in 2010, the document where this profession was first referred to in the context of Hungarian legislation. In carrying out the organisational, co-ordinating and administrative tasks linked to the loan of artworks, museum registrars may deal with the dispatch and receipt of loaned artworks, depending on whether they represent a borrowing or a lending institution. The registrar profession emerged in the USA in the 1960s and 1970s. When adopted in Europe, it underwent significant adjustments to the peculiarities of local institutions and collections. The diversity of the activities it involves prevails even today: the actual work and scope of activities of registrars may vary from country to country and from institution to institution. In response to the EU directives urging collection mobility, the early 2000s saw the appearance of Hungarian exhibitions displaying a great number of works loaned domestically or from abroad. The idea to launch a domestic forum for Hungarian registrars was proposed at the European Registrars Conference in Madrid in 2006. The first informal meeting took place in 2008 with participants from the Hungarian National Museum, the Hungarian National Gallery, the Ludwig Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts. The Hungarian Registrars Group was officially formed in 2017. It transpires from the above that the museum registrar profession is a fundamentally fledgling one in Hungary. Hence, one of the association’s main goals is to specify the tasks of Hungarian museum registrars and to exploit the potentials inherent in this profession with a view to fostering rising standards in the loan of artworks.

At the end of October, the Hungarian government initiated the overhaul of sectoral legislation on Hungary's archaeological heritage protection (Act LXIV of 2001). Organisational and personnel changes introduced last year and this year in heritage protection – an area supervised by the Prime Minister's Office since 1914 – have resulted in a new approach. Carrying out archaeological excavations has become a public function of the state, successfully resolving long years of conflict and debate that emerged through the process of privatising archaeological tasks in recent years. After the amendment takes effect, private companies may no longer perform archaeological activities. It is also stipulated that conducting archaeological excavations is first and foremost the task of museums with their scope of collection extending to archaeology, as stated in their founding deeds. These state and municipal institutions will now be entitled to carry out not only preventative archaeological excavations but also those linked to large-scale development projects and they can outsource tasks beyond their capacity exclusively to state and municipal institutions with an excavation licence. This has brought another decade-long dispute to a close as several attempts had been made since 2007 to curtail and infringe upon the right of museums to perform archaeological excavations, causing severe damage to Hungary's archaeological heritage. Having adequate capacity has always been key to carrying out archaeological tasks. To this effect, the legislator states that in the event of a shortage in capacity only the services of institutions with an excavation licence may be enlisted, and with this the practice of previous decades has been restored. Another welcome change is the extended scope of the Hungarian National Museum's archaeological tasks. Investors in large-scale development projects seeking a contract for archaeological work will have to turn to the National Museum, which, within five days, will inform them about the institution entitled to perform the preventative excavations and coordinate the contracting process. Preventative excavations linked to large-scale development projects may only be carried out by town museums with county rights and a relevant area of collection – such institution in Budapest being the Budapest History Museum – while local museums with a relevant area of collection must be involved in the process to the extent of their available capacity. If a shortage in capacity persists, the only other institutions that may be contracted are those entitled to carry out excavations. Hence, the decision of the Prime Minister's Office to discontinue the institutional system of archaeological accreditation is understandable. The legislator asserts that in the past the accreditation of those entitled to excavations did not in itself encourage museum maintainers to significantly increase the capacities of their institutions, and the accreditation of companies will no longer be necessary.

As Lucius Burckhardt, Swiss sociologist and an expert in cultural studies says: liberated from the compulsion of identity-building, 20th-century museums must be ready to engage in a dialogue between ‘own’ and ‘alien’. In this respect, the *Völkerkunde* museum provides lessons for all others, demonstrating that a museum of today must be based on *inner ethnology*. When Burckhardt used the phrase *Völkerkunde* museum in his emblematic sentence referred to above, he did not refer to what in Hungarian translates into *museum of ethnography*. The Hungarian and non-Hungarian terms used for ethno sciences show great diversity across different periods and in the interrelation of languages. Also, the linguistic forms of words with the same roots (ethnographia, ethnologia, anthropologia, cultura) barely correspond to one another in their usage by the different nations. When and what was referred to as *Völkerkunde*, *Ethnologie* or *néprajz* (*tudomány*) (ethnographic science) is integrally linked to how society was viewed in a given period, what expectations of the sciences were held by society, and the extent of social responsibility assumed by the various branches of science. From the 18th to the mid-20th century – the period when the terms applied to ethno sciences were shaping and became institutionalised – the process of arriving at a permanent term was closely linked to the notion of ‘other’ or ‘alien’ each nation needed to ‘discover’ in order to define and confirm their own identity. Having found this ‘alien’, the question of how and where it was eventually positioned in the given society in comparison to itself much depended on the definition of its own identity, or rather its representation: was it defined from the standpoint of a world power or from the perspective of imagined, real or constructed historical, ethnic and national isolation? The temporary parallels in the Hungarian and German scholarly terminology applied to ethno sciences partly stemmed from the fact that up until the middle of the 20th century many similarities had existed in the self-definition of the two societies. It was thanks to these shared experiences that the German terms for the ethno sciences – *Volkskunde* and *Völkerkunde* – can be largely seen as equivalent to the Hungarian *néprajz* (ethnography) and *etnológia* (ethnology), inasmuch as the former vindicated the right to explore domestic, national, ethnic and historic cultures, while the other laid claim to the realm of distant, universal, ‘primitive’ cultures outside Europe. The above parallels had come to an end after WW II and – starting from 1968 as a symbolic date – the discourse of ethnography and ethnology has been diverging to such an extent that they are no longer compatible without lengthy explanations. From 1968 onwards the German *Volkskunde* has undergone a radical paradigm shift, while *Völkerkunde* arrived at post-colonial criticism in a far slower course that had been imbued with colonial notions for a long period of time.

WHERE ARE THE 'FOLKS'?

The lack of democratic and emancipatory public education in Hungary

Zsolt K. Horváth

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The relations between 20th-century culture, intelligentsia and public education have been the theme of many exhibitions. Recent examples, without aspiring to completeness, include the 'overture' titled *Enlargements – 1963. Solvere et Ligare and Its Era*, organised under József Mélyi's outstanding curatorship, and *Gaudiopolis 2017*, organised as part of the OFF-Biennale. The latter, organised in the exhibition venue of the Open Society Archives, placed at its focus the efforts of Lutheran pastor Gábor Sztéhlo, who saved hundreds of children during WW II, while proclaiming the importance not only of pedagogy but public education in general. Although the period of 1945-1948 was only a brief one it was nevertheless imbued with hope and the spirit of experimentation. Experimental pedagogical programmes were also launched later, in the 1970s; these were featured by Lódi Virág's excellent exhibition *Pedagogical Partisan Action*, organised in Der Punkt Gallery, also within the framework of the 2017 OFF-Biennale. These three examples are linked by one aspect: they pointed out the importance of pedagogy, education and Bildung, drawing attention to the fact that schools provide the foundation of and opportunity for a new society. What had been shown to audiences implicitly or explicitly in *Enlargements* and *Gaudiopolis* was approached only as a distant memory in *Pedagogical Partisan Action*, evoking the 1970s and the 1980s. This memory was no other than the system of the so-called folk or people's colleges that reached out to children in villages and farmsteads, who could not partake in the benefits of modernisation, by including them in formal education and thus opening up to them the opportunity of social advancement. But what exactly were folk colleges? Why were they ascribed the attribute 'folk'? And why is so little said about them? Indeed, the National Alliance of Folk Colleges (Nékosz) is in the cross-section of Hungarian social and educational history and deserving of wider recognition than what it receives these days. While Nékosz might have been a contradictory organisation of a contradictory era, the study of its formation, its goals, organisation and methods should nevertheless not be neglected. The Alliance was formed after WW II to unite all folk colleges, but its veritable history must be dated to before 1945, since the institution of the folk college was inextricably linked to the movement that emerged in the early 1930s with the aim of supporting the advancement of the peasantry and landless farmers, who constituted more than half of Hungary's population at the time. It was recognised only in this period that starting from the last third of the 19th century a huge divide had existed in the structure of modern Hungarian society between the urban population and the agrarian populations of villages and farmsteads. Individual and collective field research projects formed the basis of works in the area of what we refer to as folk sociography.

The Museum of Public Health changed its name, maintaining institution, location and objectives several times between 1901 and 1939. Its operation was finally put paid to by World War II, when its entire collection was destroyed and its replacement and the restoration of the museum building were never realised. The former, 5-storey seat, now home to the Mayor's Office of Budapest's 6th district, can still be found at 3 Eötvös Street in Budapest. During its forty years, the museum set itself the mission of documenting the history of industrial health-care, embracing worker's safety training as well as the moral, political and health education of the working class. The Social Museum was established in Budapest in 1901 by the minister of commercial affairs with the aim of raising awareness through exhibitions on public health-care and workers' interests. It operated as part of an international network alongside the German Soziales Museum, the French Musée Sociale and the British Institute of Social Service, and harmonised its activity with these institutions at a theoretical level as well as in regard to specific events. At its first exhibition in 1901 it sought to present a selection of the objects previously displayed at the World Fair in Paris and especially products linked to industrial capitalism. According to its mission statement issued in 1909, the Social Museum's main goal was to promote the emancipation of the working class by documenting social service measures and the means through which they are realised (achievements in workplace safety, health-care, hygienic developments). Until World War II, the term 'worker' was equally applied to officials, tradesmen, industrial workers and private employees. As the museum attracted a wide range of visitors, it significantly extended its scope of themes presented within the area of workers' protection, addressing issues such as foreign and domestic social legislation, health-care regulations, the situation of workers' homes, child services, education in hygiene and poverty. To this effect, it also launched its own journal, founded a permanent collection besides its exhibitions, organised its own festivals and events and issued various publications. In 1920 the Ministry of Public Welfare became the maintaining authority of the Social Museum, and the institution was renamed the Museum of Public Health. Its scope of objectives was narrowed down to healthcare and social interests, and while the cause of educating the working class was carefully hidden between the lines, it was no longer named. Between 1920 and 1927 the museum was repeatedly on the verge of being closed down due to uncertainties in regard to its maintaining authority and objectives. In the end, it reopened in 1927 as the Museum and Institute of Social Hygiene. Its scope of tasks was expanded, and henceforth it did not operate exclusively as a museum but also as a supervisory authority of public health organisations.

ART COLLECTING: A ONE-GENERATION GAME?

A collector, an accumulator and the Hungarian museum system

Judit Jankó

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Internationally speaking, the history of art collecting has attained prominence as a theme and area of expertise for art historians and as such is diversely researched. In contrast, the publication of such writings in Hungary is mainly linked to the art dealing circuit and commercial galleries, and these volumes are not always received with praise by the profession. On a positive note, artworks seemingly acquired at random assume a new meaning under the competent hands of a good collector, who, upon realising that what he is doing is a one-generation game, makes every effort to find an institution for his/her collection, at which point the unbiased eye of museum experts is vital. No art collection can exist without the vision, knowledge and commitment of its collector, who will eventually wish to hand his/her 'creation' over to the public. However, several factors determine if a collection is dispersed or enters our collective memory. We surveyed the history of two great collections (those of György Emőd and Károly László), firmly believing that both point beyond themselves, acting as a case study of the ailments of the Hungarian museum system. Both collections display unparalleled diversity and besides their Hungarian relevance are tied with myriad threads to the culture and tradition of Europe and beyond. Both collections found their way to a museum, although one of them only temporarily. György Emőd was the most preeminent collector of applied art in the past thirty years: he built up a collection seminal to the modern history of 16th-17th-century goldsmith's and porcelain art. Károly László – who lived a long life rife with adventures and participated in the art scene of Western Europe and overseas – was one of the co-founders of Art Basel. The most potent section of his multifarious collection provides a summary of the Avant-garde trends of the early 20th century and includes many artists missing or barely represented in Hungarian public collections. Neither collector is alive but both had gone to great lengths before their deaths to protect the integrity of their collections. After a tragedy and the fast reaction of a museologist, the Emőd collection successfully made its way into the Hungarian National Museum. Only now, five years after the collector's death, is the material being inventoried, since the process of its integration into a public collection could only commence after the completion of the administrative procedure, since Emőd left no heirs or last will behind. The László Károly collection followed a less fortunate course: despite the collector's tireless efforts to preserve his material by finding it a home in a Hungarian museum, in 2017 his heir laid claim to even those 200 works that had for thirteen years been exhibited in the Dubniczay Palace in Veszprém as a long-term deposit. Utolsó mondatok: Károly László believed his artworks had found a permanent home in the town. At the moment there is scant hope that the collection will be ever exhibited in Hungary.

Having set itself the ultimate goal of vanquishing Western civilisation both physically and by dealing blows to Western identity, traditions and culture, the so-called Islamic State (ISIS) began to systematically destroy and sell off the cultural heritage of the Middle East. Although black trade is not a new thing, it has escalated and entered a new phase in the last 30 years affecting developing and developed countries alike. This change can be traced back to three factors: insufficient protection afforded to objects of cultural value, advances in transportation, and an increased demand on the globalised art market. Illegal art trade in the Middle East started to flourish when the local population realised the value attributed to their historic monuments by the West and they began to conduct illegal and incompetent digs. Regrettably, the international community had devoted little attention to this up until 2011. The excavations and trading had been tolerated or banned by the authorities, and these processes had carried on without hardly any organisation or strategy. Change ensued in 2011, during the Syrian war, when ISIS gathered strength. Besides conducting illegal transactions, the terrorist organisation set about systematically demolishing the cultural heritage of the region. Having recognised the potential financial gain obtainable on the black market, ISIS initially carried out illegal trading directly but later began to organise, supervise and, obviously, take a share from transactions realised by others. The UN, and within it UNESCO, approach the protection of cultural heritage that represents outstanding significance and value for humanity at a fundamentally supranational level, and regards the seeking out, registration, conservation, protection and presentation of endangered artworks as their main mission, coordinated by an international team of experts. The scope of the new system extends from national museums and collections to dealers or archaeologists, geared to optimise efficiency. The flexible regulatory system allows easy adaptation to new situations. UNESCO's World Heritage List contains ten locations in the Middle East, out of which nine – including some that have already been destroyed – are described as 'subject to immediate threat'. UNESCO issued Red Lists in 2013 and 2015, raising awareness to the region's outstanding cultural wealth, which, therefore, must be given distinguished attention not only in regard to protection but also looting and theft. These lists primarily compiled for the authorities, museologists, experts, researchers and dealers not only name the endangered locations but also provide a detailed description of the groups of stolen treasures to make their identification easier.

The Secessionist Darvas-La Roche House in Nagyvárad, designed by the Vágó brothers, was put to museum use in spring 2016. The building had initially been lived in by private residents and the wing owned by the municipality operated as the seat of the Nagyvárad Bihar FC football club from 2001. Conferring museum status prepared the groundwork for preserving Nagyvárad's architecture and its exploitation for tourism purposes. As part of this process, the municipal government plans the exploration and restoration of the town's Secessionist and Baroque heritage. In 2015 Nagyvárad became part of the Réseau Art Nouveau Network, which presently has twenty members (the network was established in 1999 by the heritage protection organisation in Brussels; its other members in the region are Vienna, Budapest, Szeged and Szabadka/Subotica). Besides passing local council resolutions urging and promoting the restoration of the overwhelmingly Secessionist apartment-villas in the town centre, the municipal authorities set themselves the goal of reconstructing the main square and expanding pedestrian zones. While the restoration of the Baroque heritage of Nagyvárad will be realised with the participation of the Roman Catholic Church and the Hungarian state, its Secessionist preservation has become a global municipal priority. Unlike the mythologizing socialist tradition that still has a strong hold over Romanian historiography, the Secessionist heritage of Nagyvárad can easily be channelled into international tourism processes, while it's being ethnically linked to the local Jewry makes it less likely to be re-ethnicised than in the case of the Baroque. The Darvas villa is one of the buildings jointly designed by architect brothers József and László Vágó and originates from their last period of collaboration. Commissioned by the timber merchant Imre Darvas, whose second shareholder in his joint stock company was Alfred La Roche, a banker in Basel (the house bears the names of both families), the house was built between 1909 and 1912. The owners were Imre Darvas and his wife, Margit Schulz but *La Roche and Darvas Timber Company* inscribed above the rear entrance confirms that the rear wing was used for offices. The building therefore had a dual function: it was a residential home and the seat of a joint stock company. The Simon family purchased the house in the 1930s but were later deported; their memory is preserved by a plaque in the interior. After the building was nationalised, three rooms were reserved for the surviving offspring. The Darvas house had its darkest hour as an historic monument when it was utilised by the sports club, as it was then that it sustained the greatest damage due to construction works. The Nagyvárad Secessionist museum forms part of the Nagyvárad Castle and Municipal History Museum, a museum network initiated by the local government and established in 2016.

In accordance with the monarch's decision of 1 May 1884, Ágoston Trefort, Minister of Religion and Education, ordered the establishment of the Hungarian Historical Gallery, the first exhibition of which was organised in the halls on the south side of the Castle Garden Bazaar by Károly Pulszky and opened on 17 January 1886. Little is known about this debut since the 161 exhibits were not recorded in a catalogue. The venue soon proved to be unsuitable for the safe display of the sensitive artworks so the collection was moved to the art hall of the 1885 Hungarian National Exhibition on Stefánia Road in the City Park. The new exhibition comprising 490 paintings, sculptures and graphic sheets was opened here on 17 May 1894. The material was selected and arranged by Károly Pulszky and János Peregriny, who also made the catalogue. However, with the Millennium Exhibition approaching, the halls in the City Park had to be emptied by 1 September 1895, and the works were again transferred to a new location and displayed in the nine halls on the third floor of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. This exhibition was rearranged and augmented several times but in its essence it sought to preserve the first concept once made by Pulszky, who by then had resigned from his post. The show that opened here on 1 March 1907 presented 1,132 artworks of the significantly enlarged collection: 528 paintings, graphic works and sculptures, as well as 604 drawings and prints in the showcases. The exhibition was temporarily closed during World War I, at which time the collection organisationally belonged to the Museum of Fine Arts. The last re-arrangement of the permanent exhibition was completed in 1922. The Historical Gallery was organisationally transferred back from the Museum of Fine Arts to the Hungarian National Museum in 1934. One wonders why in a country for which its national past is an avowed and frequently quoted priority, a collection like the Historical Gallery, unique in scale and quality, is not granted a permanent and exclusive venue of exhibition. Why has the public not been able to view these artworks at a permanent exhibition for almost seven decades now? Is it perhaps because in Hungary "memory, which is defenceless against being used and manipulated" is more important than "history, which is always a problematic and imperfect reconstruction of what no longer is"? What should a contemporary presentation of the Historical Gallery be like? Should such a permanent exhibition reflect on the history of the institution, its founders and on the extent to which historical research and even political changes have helped or hindered the display and critical evaluation of the collection? One thing is certain: the objective should not be to show off the 'heroes' glorified by the incumbent political systems but to present identity, history, culture, creative genius and diversity through historical portraits.

THE HOUSE OF EUROPEAN HISTORY

Eastman Building, Parc Léopold, Brussels

Péter György

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With thanks to Joanna Urbanek and Andrea Mork

In the case of exhibitions and museums alike, choosing the starting point for a study written about them is a matter of scale and focus. The micro-history of the House of European History and its environment – the space it occupies – form an integral part of the museum, even if most visitors are more interested in the artefacts on display than in the institution's social and cultural history, which is true for many other museums around the world. Nevertheless, the building of the House of European History itself raises several questions. Its location, Parc Léopold, has been an English landscape garden, home to several cultural and scientific public institutions since 1880. A dense web of references, this space is marked by the simultaneous presence of Europe and Belgium.¹ American photographer, industrialist, legendary philanthropist and the founder of Kodak, George Eastman opened the building to benefit the poor as part of his charitable project to transform society. Constructed in 1935 as a dental clinic to promote health and solidarity, fitting in with other institutions of hygiene and eugenics at the time,² the Eastman Building was acquired in several stages by the European Parliament, and the museum opened here in 2017 became one of the institutions enshrining historical self-knowledge: institutions that look beyond canonised cultural and national self-representation, holding the belief that identity is inseparable from the history of conflicts and committed to critical remembrance. The history of the Palais de la Porte Dorée provides a good example of the kind of metamorphosis such museums went through: it was erected on the occasion of the 1931 Paris L'Exposition coloniale, was first renamed in 1935 as the Musée de la France d'Outre-mer (museum of French territories overseas), then ascribed the name Musée des Arts africains et océaniques (museum of the art of Africa and Oceania) in 1960, and again renamed in 1990 as Musée national des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie (national museum of the art of Africa and Oceania). In 2003, its collection was combined with that of the Musée du quai Branly, opened at the time, and today it is the site of the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration (museum of the history of immigration). In a similar way, participatory museums giving 'trauma therapy' to visitors were established one after the other on the Washington Mall alongside and as part of the traditional institutions of the Smithsonian, including the National Museum of the American Indian, and the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the latter opened last year. Worthy of equal note is the Weltmuseum Wien in the Hofburg, created from the former museum of ethnography. The permanence of its history, location and collection as well as the history of their transformation accurately signify the gradual prevalence of the approach that forms an important part of the

House of European Culture too. Then there is the TropenMuseum in Amsterdam: opened in 1864 and also radically restructured in recent years, it has since 2014 been part of the Dutch Museum of World Cultures together with the Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden and the Africa Museum in Berg en Dal. Other outstanding examples include the Haus der Geschichte in Bonn, the Zeitgeschichtliches Forum in Leipzig, as well as the Museum in der Kulturbrauerei and the Tränenpalast in Berlin.

- ¶ Thus, the House of European History is not a one-off, isolated example: its philosophy, pedagogy and demonstrational methodology are linked to an approach clearly manifest in Europe and beyond: to the institutional practice of a real network of thought, namely the participatory, performative museum.³
- ¶ Embracing this approach, the House of European History relates the history of Europe not through a teleological metanarrative but rather through the unbiased, ideology-free and impartial presentation of many conflicts, as a participatory observer standing on the outside: it recounts the story of how society operates partly through objects and partly through the medium of dramatic scenes. In other words, the present, thus facilitating the understanding, experience and a different internalisation of history for members of generations growing up in a completely new geophilosophical⁴ system of experiences and world of communication and media. An example of this participatory approach is using the recording of the 'kitchen debate' between Khrushchev and Nixon at the 1959 American National Exhibition in Moscow: this solution not only throws light on the political meaning of the culture of objects during the Cold War but also helps visitors to personally experience the significance of this broadcast in the history of television.⁵ Just as captivating a performative space – in my estimation – is one of the sections of the exhibition's closing chapter: *Milestones of European Integration III*, presenting the conceptual work *80,000 pages of European Law* (2003) by the great Dutch architect, essayist and designer, Rem Koolhaas, who simply printed the EU laws of the time on A4 sheets and placed them side by side in a wooden frame: presented in this way, the text was unreadable but it made a clear visual case of what the rule of law means in practice. Exhibited in this same hall were the multi-lingual dictionaries of languages used in Europe. Visitors can personally experience the dissociability of orderly arrangement and complexity in both exhibits which provide a response to the criticisms directed at the EU, as well as a critique of criticism, presented quietly and implacably.
- ¶ The museum's approach to history is not merely, and not primarily, defined by political chronology, i.e. the narrative assembled from major historical events, but much rather by reconstructing the social history context of a few but all the more crucial, historic events. The second floor is devoted to the history of Europe from 1798 to 1914: the section *Europe: A Global Power* is an excellent example of the museum's approach. Playing a role similar to the portrayal of the decades of social revolutions is the chapter *Markets and People*, which simultaneously presents the relevant developments in the technological and political history of industrial

revolutions: the visual documentation displayed here is understandably and appropriately selected from among contemporaneous Belgian paintings featuring the working class. Hence the several parallelisms that can be discovered in both the approach and the pictures seen in Parc Léopold and in the permanent exhibition of the Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique: Musée Fin-de-Siècle Museum (opened in 2013). Among others, Alexandre-Louis Martin's triptych *Metallurgy*, Constantin Meunier's paintings about the life of the working class – the mining region and metallurgy, as well as Eugène Laermans's compositions and Léon Frédéric's fascinating triptych *Les Marchands de craie* (1882-1883) all raise the same question – the moral responsibility of those in power and the fundamental issues of society – through the depictions of the everyday lives of the poor and destitute, the silent and oppressed protagonists of the industrial revolution.

- ¶ Especially noteworthy are the museum's solutions to present the history of colonialism, including the plaster masks from the National Museum in Dublin which represent the differences and dissimilarities between the 'races' as biological necessity and a gap that can never be bridged; these objects were frequently used as educational tools by museums of anthropology throughout most of the 19th and 20th centuries. However, these casts made of faces did not record individuals but represented 'human types'. For many generations they were looked upon as the visible manifestations of the 'truth' of scientific racism, proven by the natural sciences, that was used to justify the necessity and unavoidability of colonialism. The Musée de l'Homme in Paris had once exhibited Saartje Bartman, nicknamed the Hottentot Venus, a mythical example representing scientific racism: her brain, skeleton, the plaster imprint made of her body by Cuvier, as well as her genitals had been on show for about 150 years, until, after decades of confusion, shame and silence, her remains were repatriated in 2002 to South Africa, complying with Nelson Mandela's request, and 192 years after she had left her homeland she was buried in a dignified manner in Hankey in the Eastern Cape.⁶ The Musée de l'Homme reopened in 2015 and it exhibited the many masks and busts in its collection with a radically reinterpreted approach informed by a critical evaluation of its former history.
- ¶ Brussels and Belgian history also provide a sensitive context,⁷ which was clearly – and correctly – recognised by the directors of the permanent exhibition at the House of European History. A critical interpretation of the memory of Leopold II, King of Belgium – the man who regarded Congo as his private property and introduced terror that eventually led to massacres – had been a recurring topic of debate in those years.⁸
- ¶ Perhaps the most sensitively and accurately elaborated part of the exhibition is the parallel presentation of the similarities of National Socialism and Stalinism, as well as its radical differences. In their approach, the exhibition directors did not regard the distinction between totalitarianism and democracy as self-evidently identical to the dictatorial practice of National Socialism and Stalinism. Their demonstration of the distinction between the essence

of the revolution of 1917 – which had led to the birth of the Soviet Union – and Stalinism accords with the questions posed by the post-kremlinological and increasingly critical anthropological approach of contemporary historical and social sciences, and the above referred-to chapter of the exhibition bears witness to this.⁹ Applying the categories of genocide and terror to National Socialism but using terror in the case of Stalinism, the exhibition makes a distinction between the two dictatorships or chooses not to do so merely based on the approach of (current) politics but rather follows the logic and approach of their political anthropology. In an era when both dictatorships had become a thing of the past – since the European Union most obviously regards the practice of democratic rule of law as the foundation of political community – the issue of historical distinctions can be considered the museum's basic mission. This is confirmed for example by the illustration of the differences between the mass executions of Stalinism and the mass deportations of National Socialism, which eventually led to Shoah. In accordance with this metahistorical and post-political approach, the goal of National Socialism, total warfare, was not only military victory but also the obliteration of ethnicities and social groups seen as opponents and their deletion from history without a trace. The exhibition's chapters of history are bound to lead up to the present at one point, which is the present of the European Union too. It is the unquestionable commitment to our own (hi)story that enables the contemporary chapters of the exhibition to devote attention and space to the conflicts, disputes, identity crises and current political issues of the EU.

- ¶ The methodology used here – as referred to above – exploits the fine instruments of the participatory museum, which means that visitors are enabled to use the displayed objects, even if sometimes only symbolically, and the boundaries of the exhibition space are dispensed with, hence replicating and making perceptible the Schengen idea in a micro-space. There are as few showcases, or isolated 'no-go zones' as possible, while free movement within the museum is also important, its extent quite obviously made dependent on the size of the experience spectrum provided.
- ¶ In the House of European History moving images exploiting all forms of enlargement are typically combined with artefacts from the past, breathing with authenticity, so at some points of the exhibition visitors actually step inside total installations, life-size 'stage sets', spaces formed from ensembles of objects.
- ¶ Beyond merely showing an awareness of Pierre Nora's now vastly famous *lieu de mémoire*, the exhibition creates and applies this concept. Of course the venue itself is already a site of memory, but visitors are able to 're-live' the archaeology of collective and personal memory again and again, on each floor, and how they are inextricable from space.
- ¶ A 25-metre sculpture encompassing the six levels of the museum can be seen and read by the stairway. Created by Todomuta Studio of Seville, it is titled *The Vortex of History* with its aluminium ribbons inscribed with letters of different alphabets spiralling with an uninterrupted

flow right next to the visitors. Viewed from the stairs, they bear fragments of European texts which can also be read as visual poems from the same vantage point. Having become the emblem of both the exhibition and the museum, this spiral is the visual representation of the unity of temporal continuity and writing, telling us that memory is none other than the endless flux of texts, the dissoluble union of lights and shadows, spaces and cultural constructions.

¶ If it is possible to create a catharsis in a museum, *The Vortex of Time* is testament to that possibility.

- [1] Guy Baeten: The Europeanization of Brussels and Urbanization of 'Europe'. Hybridizing the City. Empowerment and Disempowerment in the EU District. In. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, Vol. 8. Issue 2. 117-130. 2001 April. Ill. Katarzyna M. Romanczyk: Transforming Brussels April. 2012.
- [2] See e.g. the Museum of Hygiene in Dresden (built in 1928-30), the Museum Boerhaave in Leiden (opened in 1907 and then rearranged in 1928, the National Museum of Health and Medicine in Silver Spring, Milwaukee (established in 1862), and the Semmelweis Museum of Medical History in Budapest (opened in 1965).
- [3] Nina Simon: *The Participatory Museum*, California, Santa Cruz, Museum 2.0. 2010, *Performing Heritage, Research, practice and innovation in museum theatre and live interpretation*, Manchester University Press, 2012. Edited by: Anthony Jackson and Janny Kidd. Ill. Navina Jafa: *Performing Heritage, Art of Exhibit Walks*, SAGE Editions, Thousand Oaks, California, 2012
- [4] Cf. Rodolphe Gasché: *Geophilosophy: On Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's What is Philosophy*, Northwestern University Press Chicago, 2014.
- [5] Cf. Susan E. Reid: 'Our Kitchen is Just as Good'. *Soviet Responses to the American National Exhibition in Moscow, 1959*. In: *Cold War Modern / Design 1945-1970* edited by David Crowley and Jane Pavitt, V and A Publishing, London, 2008, 154-163.
- [6] Clifton Crais & Pamela Scully Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus: A Ghost Story and a Biography. Princeton University Press. 2009. Gilman, Sander L. "Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature". In: Gates, Henry (Ed.) *Race, Writing and Difference*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press. 1985.223-261.
- [7] An interesting experience in this regard was the exhibition *Power and Other Things. Indonesia and Art 1835-Now* organised in the BOZAR – Palais Beaux-Arts in Brussels as part of the Europalia, Indonesia Arts Festival.
- [8] Adam Hochschild: *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa*, Houghton Mifflin, 1999.
- [9] Cf. Stephen Kotkin: *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization*. Berkeley, California University Press, 1995. Jochen Hellbeck: *Revolution on my Mind, Writing a Diary under Stalin*, Harvard University Press, 2009.

“GIVING A VOICE TO WOMEN”

In conversation with the MúzeumCafé prize-winner Krisztina Kelbert

Marianna Berényi

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Despite her young age, Krisztina Kelbert, the winner of this year's MúzeumCafé prize, has demonstrated an extraordinarily productive career as a museologist: she is a successful author, the curator of highly popular exhibitions, and a recognised conference organiser and speaker. The starting point and basis of her research and other work are formed by the history material of the Savaria Museum in Szombathely, which she oversees and nurtures as a historian-museologist and head of department. By the end of 2016, she had systemised the results of her research on the life and history of Szombathely's Jewry in a book of over 650 pages, titled *Eye to Eye. Pictures from the History of Szombathely's Jewry*, which received the first prize in the "Bibliophile and Specialist Publication" category of the Beautiful Hungarian Book 2016 Competition in June 2017. Her bilingual, English and Hungarian, volume is not only a spectacular publication of the photographs of the Knebel Collection preserved in the museum and an expanded catalogue of two exhibitions but also a work on social-, mentality-, gender- and local history exploring the life of the Hungarian Jewry from Dualism onwards through the inhabitants, families and communities of Szombathely. Uniquely, photographs were used as the primary source material for both the volume and the exhibition that preceded it. Krisztina Kelbert has worked for the Savaria Museum in Szombathely since she finished college. She took her school leaving exams and acquired her first degree in Szombathely: she graduated in Hungarian and history with an archaeological technician specialisation from Dániel Berzsenyi Teacher Training College in 2003. She first worked at the museum's Department of Archaeology, where she remained right until 2008. She acquired her MA in history at the University of Pécs in the same year, and in 2009 she transferred to the museum's Ethnography and History Archive. Since October 2013 she has been the director of the institution's renewed Department of History. She began her PhD studies at Loránd Eötvös University in Budapest, where she will soon complete her dissertation titled *The Forms of Women's Activities, Possible Roles for Women, and the Socio-historical Background of Women's Associations in Szombathely, a Microregion in Western Transdanubia, from 1870 to 1947*. The exhibition titled *Eye to Eye* and its album of over 600 pages present the story of women during the Holocaust, introducing a fresh perspective since the history of women's suffering was previously either not documented with the appropriate detail, or it was treated in the same way as the suffering endured by men. Giving a voice to women, the volume and the exhibition highlight, among others, the survival strategies used by women in the concentration camps. In 2017, Krisztina Kelbert organised a temporary exhibition *Lightsense/Personal* in the Savaria Museum's ceremonial hall, which was a visual representation of the history of the town.

“I WAS QUITE ACTIVE AT THE TIME, COMPLETELY SINCERELY AND UTTERLY UNNECESSARILY”*In conversation with historian Péter Deme*

Marianna Berényi–Emőke Gréczi

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Péter Deme (b. 1950) graduated in history and English from ELTE in 1973 and was conferred the title *dr. univ.* in 1978. He started working in the Party History Institute in 1973 and from 1987 was appointed deputy director-general of the Hungarian Labour Movement Museum (later: Museum of Contemporary History). He was the head of the public relations department of the Hungarian National Museum from 1993 to 2002, ministerial commissioner from 1994 to 1997, and headed the department of social relations of the National Office of Cultural Heritage from 2002 to 2012. He held various senior positions in the Pulszky Society from 1992 and has been its president since 2001. Péter Deme joined the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP) as a fourth-year university student and a member of the Hungarian Young Communist League, but in the third year of his university studies he had already helped a researcher write catalogue cards in the Party History Institute. After his graduation in 1973 and after being politically vetted and his employment approved by the Secretariat of MSZMP's Central Committee (CC), he joined the staff of the institute, working there from March 1974 to the end of 1986. His workplace, the Party History Institute (est. 1948) of MSZMP's CC, theoretically operated as one of the departments of the CC's apparatus, however its direct links were primarily to the CC's scientific, public education, cultural, agitation and propaganda departments. The staff of the institute was predominantly composed of labour movement veterans and Holocaust survivors, the majority of them having obtained the relevant qualifications in accelerated courses. This was in the early 1970s when young people were first employed on the basis of merit and their knowledge. Starting his office as deputy director-general of the Hungarian Labour Movement Museum on 1 January 1987, his duties extended to international relations, publications and exhibition organisation, i.e. community culture and external relations, while his other area was professional and collecting work. It was at the 1988 party conference, when János Kádár was appointed President and Károly Grósz General Secretary of MSZMP, that a genuine change could be first perceived in the political climate. This affected the museum too, where the party leadership stated their support of reforms aimed at democratic socialism. Péter Deme also played an active role in those years “completely sincerely and utterly unnecessarily”, to quote his own words; he was even delegated to the Budapest convention of delegates preceding the 14th Party Congress in 1989. A decision adopted at the turn of 1989 and 1990 stipulated the termination of the museum as a national institution as well as its integration into the National Museum as a history museum branch. It was around this time that Deme joined the Pulszky Society, and in 2011 he was conferred the office of the society's president.

“BUDAPEST WILL HAVE ITS OWN MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY”

In conversation with museum director Péter Baki

Ágnes Karácsony

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Although Hungary is “the country of André Kertész, Moholy-Nagy, Brassai, Robert Capa and Martin Munkacsy”, the tome on Hungarian photographic art is yet to be written. Besides the lack of historical research, there is no solidarity in the profession either, says photographer and photographic historian Péter Baki, the director of the Hungarian Museum of Photography and the president of the Association of Hungarian Photographers, who has been making every effort for the last ten years to have the unique collection of Hungarian photography moved from its present home in Kecskemét to a Budapest location. The Association of Hungarian Photographers (est. 1956) began to accumulate its collection in 1958, upon which the Kecskemét museum was founded in 1991. Importantly, from the late 19th century onwards, there were calls in virtually every decade for a museum of photography to be opened in Budapest, but after the change in the political system the collection was eventually taken to Kecskemét. The initial idea of preserving Hungarian photographs in a museum dates back to 1862, when Ferenc Veress, a photographer in Kolozsvár (now Cluj) announced a call to establish a museum documenting the history of Hungarian photography. His initiative was thwarted by the lack of funds at the time. Then, in 1895, during the organisation of the millennial celebrations, Veress again spoke out for the cause of a museum. Again, to no avail. It was in the interwar period that a collection suitable for founding a museum upon was created but no appropriate building was available then – nor later. Hence, until the late 1980s, the idea of a museum of photography remained just that, without any feasible plans being put forward. In 2006 Péter Baki was placed at the helm of the museum in Kecskemét and faced a shortage of funds in the institution’s operation. In 2008, for the first time in the history of the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts, an exhibition of photography was staged with the title *Soul and Body, Kertész to Mapplethorpe*, attracting more than 70 thousand visitors. Another breakthrough was the 2011 London show *Eyewitness* featuring 20th-century Hungarian photographers and pulling in 65 thousand visitors. Highly successful exhibitions of photography had been organised before too but these shows opened the eyes of the Hungarian public to the potential of photography. The Hungarian state finances Hungarian photography with an annual amount of ca 970 thousand Euros. Painfully little, indeed, especially if we consider the potential contribution of Hungarian photography to the national economy. There is a shortage of theorists, art historians and aesthetics specialised in photography. Historical research on photography is also lacking, and canonisation – which museum visitors and people wanting to invest in photographs would equally benefit from – is badly needed.



I Harminc éve tevékenykedik a sérült alkotókért a Magyar Speciális Művészeti Műhely Egyesület. Rendkívül sokszínű programjaik igazi hiánypótló rendezvények, hiszen a sérült, értelmi fogyatékos emberek számára is fontos a kultúra, a művészet. Nem pusztán szabadidős elfoglaltságot jelent nekik a különböző művészeti ágak megismerése, kipróbálása, hanem az önkifejezés egyik nagyon fontos eszközt is biztosítja számukra a zene, a tánc vagy éppen a festészet.

¶ Az Egyesület számos programmal segíti a sérült emberek beilleszkedését, világuk megismerését és elfogadását: művészeti táborokat, workshopokat és szakmai konferenciákat, esélyegyenlőségi napokat szerveznek. Tavaly nagy érdeklődés mellett, Egerben jubilált az akkor 30. alkalommal tartott és a Magyar Fejlesztési Bank által is támogatott „Határok nélkül” - Országos Speciális Művészeti Fesztivál, amely 12 éve egyben nemzetközi szintér is a művészetek iránt fogékony értelmi fogyatékos emberek életében. Az összművészeti fesztiválon 40 magyarországi szociális és oktatási intézmény, alapítvány, egyesület, és további 2 európai partnerszervezet mintegy 650 résztvevővel képviseltette magát. A fellépők a Gárdonyi Géza Színház színpadán mutatkozhattak be: például a nagyháti Wywaras Tánc csoport, a szolnoki Sok a Duma színjátszó csoport, az újpalotai Figura néptánc csoport, és a bólyi Színkottás zenekar színvonalas műsorát láthatta a közönség, nemegyszer integrált formában, egri színészek közreműködésével. Az egyesületi hagyományokat követve a bemutatókat neves művészek értékelték, így többek között a fesztivál arcaként Radó Denise színművésznő.

¶ Idén nyáron Székesfehérvár ad majd otthont ennek a nagy múltú rendezvénynek, az 5 napos fesztivál programjában néptánc, társastánc, moderntánc, ének, vers- és prózamondás, színjátszás és hangszeres zene szerepel, képzőművészeti- és fotókiállításokkal, filmvetítésekkel, koncertekkel tarkítva, lehetőséget biztosítva az értelmi fogyatékosággal élő alkotók egyéni és csoportos megmutatkozásához. Az Egyesület hitvallása változatlan: „A művészet mindenkié!”. (x)

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