



PARTICIPATION IN MUSEUMS

Seminar by Cultural Transformations Wednesday April 19 13.00-17.00

How do museums facilitate different forms of participatory processes? The focus of the seminar is on empirical research and the practice in museums. The seminar is organized by the research program Cultural Transformations on the occasion that Associate Professor Eleonora Redaelli from School of Planning, Public Policy and Management at University of Oregon. Redaelli is a visiting researcher during April and May 2023. During her visit at AIAS, she will be collaborating with several major Danish museums.

13.00	Welcome
13.15	Eleonora Redaelli: <i>Examining Participation Design in Danish Museums</i>
14.00	Martin Djupdræt: <i>Museum, identity and value</i>
14.30	Coffee break
14.45	Birgit Eriksson and Tina Louise Hove Sørensen: <i>Embroidering, Weaving and Knitting Participation at Trapholt Museum</i>
15.30	Break
15.40	Christiane Særkjær: <i>Visitor voices in the museum space – sharing art experiences as a participatory mode in museum communication</i>
16.10	Discussion and final remarks
16.30	A glass of wine

Registration at: <https://events.au.dk/museums190423/signup>

The seminar is organised by Louise Ejgod Hansen, Centre for Cultural Evaluation as an activity within the research programme Cultural Transformations, School of Communication and Culture, Aarhus University. It is open for academics and practitioners.



Examining Participation Design in Danish Museums

At the research seminar, I will present the framework for studying the implementation of participatory design and how I plan to use it to study how Danish museums and how they facilitate participation through multiple aspects of the museum: location, building (exterior and interior), curatorship, programming, and governance. I have selected the following six Danish museums: Statens Museum for Kunst, Arken Museum for Moderne Kunst, Aros Aarhus Museum Moesgård Museum, Kunsten Museum of Modern Art, Trapholt Museum for Moderne Kunst. For my analysis, I will use a novel theoretical framework developed in my edited volume, which is currently in press, titled *Visiting the Art Museum: A Journey Toward Participation*. I aim to observe, discuss and research (1) how the location of each museum in the overall city affects who can participate and access the museum, (2) how the building welcomes everybody, supporting a different type of disability (mobility, vision, etc.), (3) how exhibition design facilitates movement in the space and connections with the artwork, (4) how artworks are presented and who are the receivers of such presentation, (5) who is included in educational programs and how, (6) and who is on their board of directors, aiming to understand the strategies of recruitment.

Eleonora Redaelli is Associate Professor at School of Planning, Public Policy and Management, University of Oregon, her research areas are arts management, urban planning, cultural policy and creative cities. She is visiting scholar at AIAS in April and May 2023.

Museum, identity and value

Museums give hope and inspiration to society and its audience – but not necessarily the hope the museums themselves believe they give. There is a need for a more thorough study of what benefits and values museums have for their users.

At the seminar I will present my industrial PhD project *Museum and Identity* where I focus on the individual and collective identity-based values the museums have. I will analyse and show how this identity-based value already is an element in the existing models and theories of the values of museums, but often an element to which little attention is paid, as it is not an area the societal discourse has contemplated.

I will also discuss different feasible method of uncovering and investigating the visitors' identity use of the museum.

Martin Brandt Djupdræt: Chief Curator at the open-air museum Den Gamle By, Aarhus, Denmark since 2011. Has since 2021 been engaged in the research project “Museums and Identity - An investigation about the value of museums”, an industrial Ph.D. with Copenhagen Business School, Den Gamle By and a number of other Danish museums as partners. The Ph.D. investigate and develop a method for a new type of user survey that can, to a greater extent than existing ones, value the visitors' benefits by visiting museums.

Embroidering, Weaving and Knitting Participation at Trapholt Museum

Since 2014 Trapholt Museum of modern art and design has developed a collaborative practice involving one artist and up to 1000 participants in large-scale craft-based art projects. Our presentation digs into this rather unique practice, which aims at combining relational, creative craft processes with the production of artworks of interest for a general public.

Based on recent projects at Trapholt – *Stitches Beyond Borders* (2020-21), *Data Mirror* (2022-23) and *Things Matter* (2023-24) – we ask what we can learn about the transformative potential of participation by comparing the design, craft and experiences of the three projects. After a short introduction to Trapholt's practice, we more

specifically ask: 1) what kind of voice and creative agency is present in the three projects, 2) how and to what extent is diversity articulated, crafted and managed, and 3) what kind of links are established between individuality, participatory “artonomy” and collectivity?

Our presentation builds on a rich empirical material from the three projects, most of which is generated within CraftWorks (2021-2024) – an ongoing research collaboration between Trapholt and Aarhus University.

Birgit Eriksson, professor in cultural theory and analysis, School of Communication and Culture, Aarhus University. Birgit researches participation in arts and culture, art and social communities, aesthetics and politics. Current research projects include CraftWork: Creative, museological and social potentials of new participatory forms at art museums (2021-24) and Participate. On participatory cultures in Denmark (2019-23). Birgit co-directs a research program in Cultural Transformations <https://cc.au.dk/en/research/research-programmes/cultural-transformations>. Web: <http://au.dk/aekbe@hum>

Tina Louise Hove Sørensen, Postdoctoral researcher in Department of Communication and Culture at Aarhus University. She's currently involved in Craftworks, a collaborative research project by Trapholt Museum and Aarhus University, researching the social, institutional, and creative potentials in large scale participatory craft-projects.

Visitor voices in the museum space

- sharing art experiences as a participatory mode in museum communication

My presentation at the seminar will take its departure in an experiment at Randers Art Museum, I did as a part of my PhD project (Særkjær 2021). Here, museum visitors were asked to share their experiences with artworks from the museum's collection – at first as an individual act and later by making the visitors' experiences visible in the exhibition space.

I will present my analysis of the way museum visitors' own voices was included in the communication of the permanent exhibition and discuss how sharing an individual art experience can lead to a form of participation and pluralism which affect both the (power) relationship between the visitors and the museum institution, between the visitors and the art as well as between the visitors themselves.

The presentation is related to the ongoing discussion on how museums can be more inclusive and relevant for the individual and the surrounding society (Simon 2016; Black 2012) e.g. with an increasing focus on incorporating visitors' experiences, opinions and reactions into exhibition design (Nashashibi 2003; McLean 2003; McLean and Pollock 2007; Black 2012).

Christiane Oved Særkjær is currently affiliated to Center for Cultural Evaluation at Aarhus University.

She holds a PhD in museum studies and art history. From April 1st she will start in a postdoc position working with a project on children's meetings with national cultural heritage.