

Objectives

a contribution to
Qatar – Curate, Global Curating Prize.

The Objectives is a place where objects can be viewed from different angles, whereby a visitor will experience different contexts.

But preferably, a place where objects are displayed without any explanation. With separately, a rich database where anyone in the world can make contribution to the alleged identity of these objects.

The general public still perceive museums with an image of scientific integrity. Museums are considered among the most reliable sources when it comes to providing historical information. But the mere exhibiting of objects was not enough and we, the exhibition designers, made our appearance. We started putting together objects that fitted in with a specific theme, and we started looking for tales to make the objects gear better to the perception of the public. Soon the theme of the exhibition itself became the central point and we used the objects as illustrations with the tale.

However, in the last decades the focus in museums has shifted from the objects themselves to the way they are presented and how the public experiences the museum and the objects. Formerly, the objects were important, in most museums these days the central focus is on reflection and interpretation. However, the truth knows many versions. Knowledge is time-bound, context dependent and situated in the subjectivity of the connoisseur.

Until recently I thought that, if we used objects from the depot and returned these after the end of the exhibition, nothing had happened. Just now I realize that the vision and the temporary context in which we place objects can strongly influence the perception of the past and of the future of the visitors. Since we place the objects in a room in a certain order and this way tell a story, we change the interpretation of the objects in the course of time, and we produce a permanent added value to the identity of the objects. Their reality and the way in which they have moved us are things we carry with us forever.

Everyone agrees about one thing: the collection is the heart of a museum. The objects are crucial. Presentation and interpretation relies increasingly more on the type of media employed. The authentic objects in the meantime have acquired numerous interpretations, varying educational information and contexts from various periods. Perceiving an object has become a relative rather than an absolute matter.

Set-ups in museums that relate about the past tell us perhaps more about the situation now than of the past itself. Would it in the future therefore not be logical to store objects in their context, for instance by saving a virtual mirror image of the exhibition? This way, a museum should systematically build up an intellectual collection next to a material collection. The intellectual collection should be a rich source collection that is just as scientifically sound as the physical collection. What's more, nowadays the physical and the intellectual collection cannot exist without one another.

List of materials:
authentic objects, space and a global brain.

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