

MUSEUMS, CITIES & CULTURAL POWER

URBAN PAMPHLETEER
10

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We are delighted to present Urban Pamphleteer #10

In the tradition of radical pamphleteering, the intention of this series is to confront key themes in contemporary urban debate from diverse perspectives, in a direct and accessible – but not reductive – way. The broader aim is to empower and inform citizens, professionals, researchers, institutions, and policy-makers, with a view to positively shaping change.

#10 Museums, Cities & Cultural Power

Starting with the Museum of London's upcoming move to West Smithfield, this issue explores the relationship between museums and urban areas from a variety of viewpoints and locations globally. Inserting a new cultural venue into an existing neighbourhood changes its social, cultural and economic dynamics. In recent decades, many new urban museums have been built with the aim of revitalising neighbourhoods and cities, raising significant questions about their local impact, and the roles and authority of cultural institutions in cities. The COVID-19 pandemic also prompted questions around their local significance when city centres emptied suddenly of tourists.

This issue brings together the voices of practitioners, activists and academics under the rubric of 'place, people and power' to consider how museums can reflect, represent and be of value to a wide cross-section of society in cities. Museum buildings are not just designed to store and display collections, but also as symbolic opportunities to support city branding, attract visitors, stimulate place-based regeneration, and build architectural reputations. Simultaneously as public institutions, they have a duty to reflect critically on their capacity to generate social change.

Museums have increasingly sought to attract a wider range of audiences to their buildings. These discussions consider what a museum created by, with and for its city entails. Museums have historically played a key role in shaping and representing particular ideologies and social value systems, and this continues today in relation to evolving public concerns around sustainability and the environment, economic inequalities and social justice, globalisation and marketisation, decolonisation and migration. Simultaneously, they are powerful actors in spatial redevelopment, the maximisation of urban property values, and the production of new landscapes of consumption. Our contributors consider how museums should engage with their position of power in society, interrogating the possibilities which they hold for the creation and management of new kinds of relationships and interactions in cities.

THE CITY AS A SITE OF DIRECT ACTION



Above: Museum of Homelessness protest outside the Home Office, London: David Tovey, 2020.

Left: Volunteers take supplies to the street in lockdown, May 2020: Jessica Turtle.

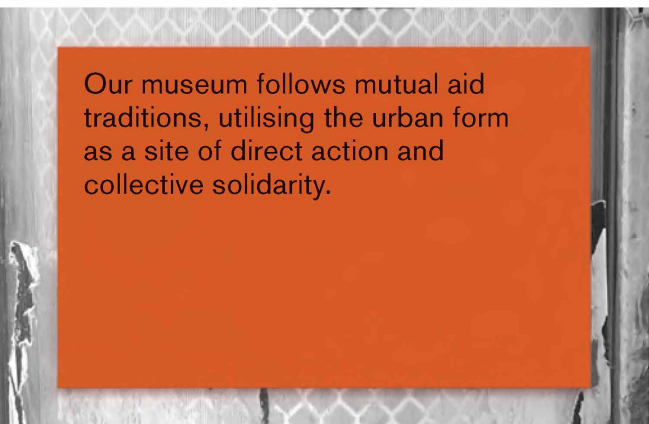
Despite a heroic effort to bring people into safety during the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), deaths in the homeless community increased. When we published our Dying Homeless Project findings in 2021, the UK government issued a press release stating that they had reduced rough sleeping by 37%. We

responded by creating temporary installations in Trafalgar Square in Central London to mark each life lost and holding a community vigil to mourn those we have lost.

We are mourning the fact that deaths in our community have increased by 80% over two years (barely any of these deaths were from COVID-19 itself). We are dealing with an epidemic of inequality, trauma and poverty, both on a structural level and in the everyday. We believe museums must stand against this. In 2020, we made a museum outside the Home Office to challenge the 'hostile environment' – a series of im-

migration legislature and policy changes introduced since 2012 – that has not only caused deaths and misery for homeless migrants but has also emboldened racists and far right groups.

Why is a museum challenging the government? The Museum of Homelessness (MoH) was born in 2015 and took its first steps in a landscape of austerity, bedroom taxes and food banks. We don't yet have our own building, but metaphorically we are located in an increasingly hostile environment for migrants, ethnically diverse people, poor people and disabled people. Homelessness is a symptom of this inequality and this has shaped what the museum does, led by what the community needs. Our museum follows

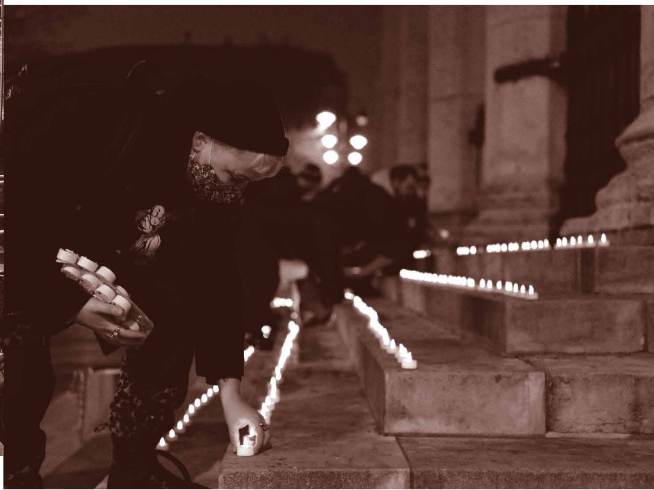


Our museum follows mutual aid traditions, utilising the urban form as a site of direct action and collective solidarity.





Museum of Homelessness COVID-19 Homeless Taskforce in May 2020: Matt Turtle.



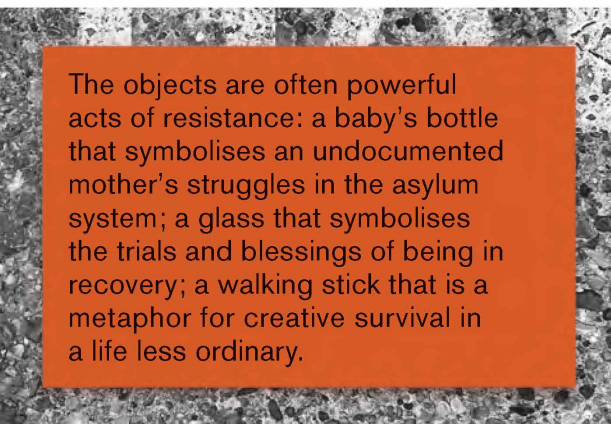
Carla Ecola, Director of Outside Project, lays candles at Museum of Homelessness vigil, 2021: Anthony Luvera.

mutual aid traditions, utilising the urban form as a site of direct action and collective solidarity.

Collectively, since the pandemic hit, our Homeless Taskforce crew has organised doggy dispatch for squat dogs; taken sunscreen out in the heat-wave; distributed hundreds of thousands of meals and care packs; set up street vaccine clinics; and sourced cardboard when none was to be found in London's West End. We spent April 2020 distributing a thousand Easter eggs across London, and Christmas morning in Trafalgar Square with hot drinks and chocolate coins. We've fought evictions and intervened against police and council harassment and far right racism. We've held each other's mental and emotional balance when formal services were not an option. It has been intense. Everyone directly involved with MoH has survived – against the odds – yet we are also full of grief

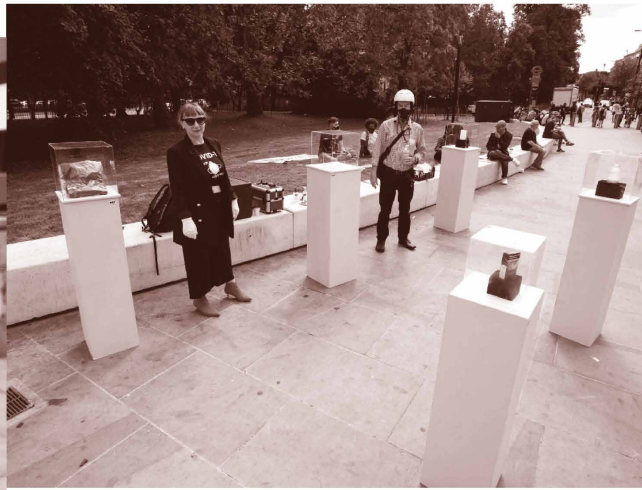
that we haven't saved as many lives as we had hoped we could when the pandemic started.

Justice-focused work is woven into all of our processes, including how we collect and document tomorrow's history. With each object we collect, we take a testimony. The story is then performed when the object is shared with our audiences. The objects are often powerful acts of resistance: a baby's bottle that symbolises an undocumented mother's struggles in the asylum system; a glass that symbolises the trials and blessings of being in recovery; a walking stick that is a metaphor for creative survival in a life less ordinary.





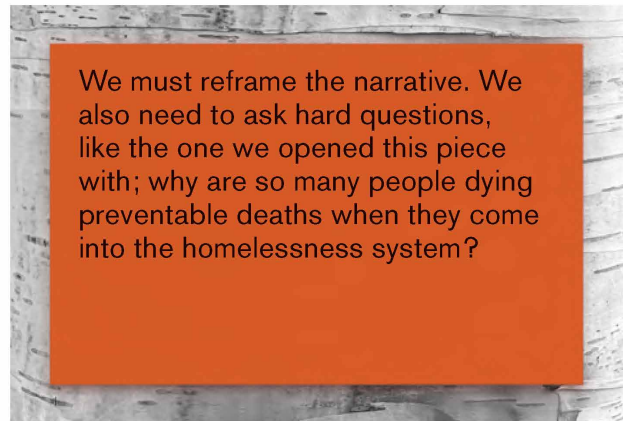
Museum of Homelessness collection displayed outside the Home Office in August 2020: Richard Matthews.



Museum of Homelessness street museum installation, London 2020: Daniela Sbrisky.

stick that is a metaphor for creative survival in a life less ordinary. These are the objects we placed outside the Home Office in an act of symbolic defiance when far right groups, emboldened by the racism at the heart of government, went migrant hunting in the COVID-19 hotels that we had helped to set up.

This work is important for today, but also for the future. By holding these objects in our collection, we are carrying out work that those of us involved in the founding of the museum won't live to see the fruits of. When historians look at what happened with homelessness during 2020, they will be able to access direct unfiltered accounts from people who lived through it. If you look at archives and collections from a



We must reframe the narrative. We also need to ask hard questions, like the one we opened this piece with; why are so many people dying preventable deaths when they come into the homelessness system?

Jess Turtle Co-founder,
Museum of Homelessness.

hundred years ago, those accounts are not included.

We must reframe the narrative. We also need to ask hard questions, like the one we opened this piece with; why are so many people dying preventable deaths when they come into the homelessness system? An independent museum, shaped by its community and implementing rigorous research, documentation and interpretation is in a good position to do these things. We will continue to make a space of creative resistance, adapting as we go, for as long as it is needed.



ON THE POWER OF MONUMENTS

When you exit Brixton Tube station in South London and turn left towards Lambeth Town Hall, you will come to the grassed, pedestrianised area of Windrush Square. As we continue to commemorate Windrush Day each June, it gives us a minute to pause and reflect on the significance of naming and memorialising, and the role of communities in shaping our understanding of belonging.

An examination of the naming of Windrush Square and the moniker given to the 'Windrush Generation' that represents the arrival of thousands of people from across the Caribbean from 1948 to roughly 1962, makes visible many of the tensions present in the desire to memorialise and commemorate alongside the selective acts of remembrance and forgetting.

Many of the following observations I owe to public historian and blue badge guide Kelly Foster, who pointed out that most of the instances of memorialisation in Brixton are driven by the local community (in its widest sense) and what the community wishes to remember, rather than the State-driven memorials more prominent in Central London. It is the local community who often sustain the development and care of these memorials.

Turning briefly to the square formerly known as Brixton Oval and then Tate Gardens, Windrush Square itself was re-named in 1998 by a public vote to remember the people from the Caribbean who came to call Brixton their

home. Thus, the renaming reflects the changing uses and community significance over time. On Windrush Square there is the grassed square itself and the associated landscape architecture including metal windrushes; fixed chairs and ironwork; a commemoration to the Sharpeville Massacre in South Africa of 1960; a statue of Sir Henry Tate (who gifted Tate Brixton Library, Streatham Tate Library and South Lambeth Tate Library to Lambeth); a war memorial to African and Caribbean servicemen and women; and the recently unveiled memorial, designed by Sir David Adjaye, to Cherry Groce who was shot and paralysed by police during a raid of

her house in 1985 and which sparked the uprisings of that year.

Sited at number One Windrush Square is the building that is the home of Black Cultural Archives, a Grade II listed Georgian building once known as Raleigh Hall. Established in 1981 as the African People's Historical Monument Foundation, the organisation was inspired by the work of African American activist and reparations campaigner Queen Mother Moore. Having established her African People's Historical Monument Foundation in New York, Moore came to England to discuss her ideas for a diasporic network of

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Images are being r





Windrush Monument, Windrush Square, Brixton:
Chris McKenna, 2011 (CC BY-SA 3.0).



Windrush Square, Brixton: Felix-felix, 2006 (Public Domain).



Bust of Sir Henry Tate, Windrush Square, Brixton: Matt Brown, 2011
(CC BY 2.0).

Black Cultural Archives building, Windrush Square,
Brixton: © Black Cultural Archives.



organisations that would commemorate and memorialise those who had lost their lives during the Transatlantic Slave Trade, through the plantation system and colonialism, and systems of racialised terror across the world. The key aim of the foundation was to critically engage with the production of historical narratives, and also the underlying systems through which narratives are produced, within the archive. The founders set about finding a permanent home for the organisation, and Black Cultural Archives became a project of the African People's Historical Monument Foundation in order to have a suitable, permanent building to house their growing collections. The act of renovating and inhabiting a Georgian building speaks to the interweaving of the histories of enslavement with the broader narratives of Britain. Black Cultural Archives now occupies a space that connects to, and resonates with, important figures in Britain's Imperial past – Sir Walter Raleigh (although there doesn't appear to be a direct connection) and the statue of Sir Henry Tate of Tate and Lyle, who made his fortune from the cultivation of sugar in the Caribbean – and the symbolism of Windrush itself.

In their desire to create a monument, the founders of Black Cultural Archives were attempting to create a permanent marker that speaks of the presence of Black communities in England, and a memorial to those lost (physically and metaphorically). It is important to situate the desire to create monuments within this aspiration to disrupt narratives, but also to be wary of the risk that monuments can come to symbolise monolithic ideas of the communities they represent.

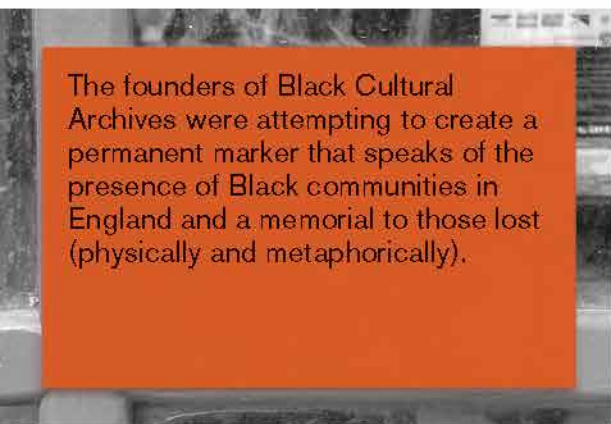
I want to end with a final quote by Nigerian author and playwright Wole Soyinka, who reminds us:

every landmark is a testament of history [...] They are indices of truth, an essence and a reality that offer any people, however impoverished, a value in itself, a value that, especially when rooted in anguish and sacrifice, may dictate a resolve for redemption and strategies for social regeneration.¹

Soyinka argues that whilst it is vital to guard against the essentialising tendencies of monuments, sometimes the very presence of a monument can be an important reparative marker. Given the origins of the African People's Historical Monument

Foundation – as a site to engage with the legacies of enslavement, migration and belonging – it is clear that Black Cultural Archives, as a monument, offers another important space to confront and disrupt the narratives of Black presence in the UK.

¹ W. Soyinka, 'Memory, Truth and Healing', in I. Amadiume and A. An-Na'im (eds), *The Politics of Memory: Truth, Healing and Social Justice*. London and New York: Zed Books. 2000, p.32.



Undocumented workers are invisible in the cityscape, yet they often perform some of its vital functions. Here I discuss what a museum created by, with and for its city entails.

MUSEUMS, UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

From October 2010 to January 2011, the National Museum of the History of Immigration (NMHI) in Paris was occupied by 500 undocumented workers. It was one of the longest unauthorised occupations of a museum. The NMHI in Paris was opened in 2007 and aims to present immigration as a positive force for France – as long as it is

legal and it leads to full integration of citizens.

These 500 *sans-papiers* represented a wider group of more than 6000 undocumented individuals who had been working – some of them for as long as ten years – in low skilled and physically difficult professions, such as in catering, hospitality or cleaning. Most of the occupiers were men from Mali and Senegal.

The occupation corresponded to a wider protest against the French government's failure to implement guidelines that would provide a simplified and unified criteria for the regularisation of undocumented workers who had a work contract with an employer either full- or part-time. The aim of the occupation of NMHI was also to negotiate for the unified and harmonised treatment of regularisation dossiers, and obtain the regularisation of all working *sans-papiers* who fulfilled the official criteria. The occupation was coordinated by a trade union called the General Confederation of Workers (confederation Générale du travail) in cooperation with nine other organisations.

The NMHI was chosen as a symbolic space. By occupying this immigration museum, these workers made the point that positive immigration is not only a phenomenon of the past, as presented in the museum, but of the present as well. The occupation of such an open space also aimed to make visible to the public the existence of working *sans-papiers*. Most frequently the term *sans-papiers* is associated with immigrants fighting for their residence permit on humanitarian grounds. The fact that undocumented immigrants can be workers with, for some, full-time contracts is a reality that had been obscured until this recent movement and occupation.

As part of my research,¹ I wanted to understand how this occupation had been represented within the museum. Although there had been plans to do so, the occupation is not mentioned

By occupying this immigration museum, these workers made the point that positive immigration is not only a phenomenon of the past, as presented in the museum, but of the present as well.





Glass cabinet displaying objects from the occupation of the NMHI: Sophia Labadi, 2015.

at all in the permanent exhibition, called Repères (landmarks), that was re-vamped in 2014. During my regular visits to the museum, I was continuously referred to a small glass cabinet (see photo), away from the permanent exhibition, for information on the occupation. The cabinet forms part of a wider display on the history and organisation of the museum, although it is difficult to determine why this case was not included in the permanent exhibition. The conservator of the ethnographic collections who prepared this glass case stated that the cabinet's location made sense, as the occupation was one event in the history of this museum. It thus needed to be presented in the section on the history of the museum. However, the peripheral location of this small cabinet and the lack of references



¹ S. Labadi, *Museums, Immigrants and Social Justice*. London: Routledge, 2017.
Sophia Labadi Professor of Heritage, University of Kent.



to the working sans-papiers movement in the permanent space of the museum highlights the uneasiness of the museum staff to deal with this occupation, and also with contemporary migratory phenomena.

Even more than an uneasiness, this peripheral location also suggests a refusal by the museum to recognise the importance of this occupation and of the phenomenon of undocumented workers – maybe to respect the government's position, which funds this institution. This could also be a strategy by the museum to prevent any further occupation of the museum in the future. In any case, this approach has resulted in a level of censorship that is clearly demonstrated by the choice of material displayed in the glass cabinet, which contains objects left by the immigrant workers when the occupation came to a forced end.

The objects focus on the 'social' aspect of the occupation and include a teapot, a jerry can to carry water, a prayer mat and a tape. Those objects were selected because they illustrated how life in a community was orchestrated during this occupation. However, this presentation is biased and presented in an unethical manner for two reasons. First, it was prepared without the knowledge or the participation of any immigrant worker, trade union or NGO involved in the occupation. Second, not one of the artifacts on display refers to the trade union or any other organisation that coordinated the movement, even though immigrant workers left behind many leaflets, badges and stickers displaying their logos. The display thus perpetuates the traditional stereotypical image of immigrants as non-workers who are detached from politics and lacking any substantial support network.

A result of the occupation is that it helped to speed up the delivery of residence permits. However, the main goal of the movement was to achieve a common and harmonised approach in the treatment of all regularisation dossiers, yet official figures reveal that there remains a level of arbitrariness in the treatment of these dossiers. Therefore there have since been further strikes to try to achieve better treatment for all sans-papiers workers. The occupation of the NMHI had very mixed practical results for immigrant workers.

The lack of references to the working sans-papiers movement in the permanent space of the museum highlights the uneasiness of the museum staff to deal with this occupation.



REINVENTING MUSEUMS: THE LONDON MUSEUM

MD Could you explain why the Museum of London is moving to a new site at West Smithfield and your ambitions for the new museum?

SA We found ourselves at London Wall in 1976, but that location and building is no longer adequate for a museum, in fact, it's probably the antithesis of our new museum design. Recently, we were presented with the opportunity to relocate, recreate and be reborn in a series of market buildings that will be the new London Museum, located in West Smithfield, right in the City of London and very close to St Paul's Cathedral and Tate Modern. It's a remarkable opportunity to have a museum that flows into the streets, for people to walk through, and in fact we do have a street going through the museum and a train line. London takes place on the street, and West Smithfield is probably the most hyperbolically 24-hour part of London.

MD What is distinctive about the ways that the London Museum will connect to its local area and with the people who live, travel or work there?

AK Since the beginning of its documented history, almost a thousand years ago, Smithfield or Smooth Field has communed Londoners in enormous numbers. From fairs to executions, prayer to celebrations, healing to market trading; it all happened here at a grand scale. Distances along the Great North Road to Edinburgh were even measured from here. This

This text is based on a conversation 'A New Museum for London' that took place as part of the Museums, Cities, Cultural Power symposium, between Monica Degen (Brunel University London) and Sharon Ament (Director, Museum of London), Asif Khan (Asif Khan Studio) and Paul Williams (Stanton Williams).

Stanton Williams as lead architects, with Asif Khan and conservation architect Julian Harrap, are transforming the historic West Smithfield General Market and Poultry Market into the new home for the Museum of London.

site was really one of the centres for London life, and that was our starting concept for the project – to re-instate its position in London.

Horace Jones' General Market building was designed to be public, permeable and most importantly, transformable.

As all the nearby streets – with all their history – lead to the market building, our task has been to extend the permeability, bringing the street into this museum and the museum into the street. We have created many views through the walls and up and down through the floors, and enhanced the multiple entrances so the museum can always adapt with the times and seasons.

This is a building that's an entire city block in size, it has about fifty shop fronts that are its external wall to the city. These will be one of the museum's points of transaction – and form part of its identity. All of these shops are potential holders for content, for retail, for collaborations, and for partnerships. The museum isn't a singular institute, it's a coral reef, it's where lots of other players can be part of this ecosystem. I don't think there is any cultural institute whose facade is a changing high street of shops. There is so much potential for it to be more interesting than any other museum in the world.

PW This is a story of renewal and re-invention. The museum is being re-cast in two buildings – the General Market and



the Poultry Market – that, although currently derelict, are already embedded and woven into the fabric of the city. Existing between these two museum buildings is a canopied city street that will be owned and inhabited by the museum, and act as a major conduit into the surrounding neighbourhood. Understanding the impressive scale of the existing interior spaces, the atmosphere, the quality of the daylight throughout the day, the sounds, the touch, the tone and the mood is fundamental to the experience that the public is going to have. And the amazing physicality to that rawness that already exists on the site is certainly something the museum and the design team want to harness and celebrate.

These two buildings and the street between them will allow Sharon and her team the flexibility to create an arena for public life, performance, installation, debate, and places for rest and reflection.

SA Instead of imposing a design we've eased our way into the buildings, and I think that makes for a really powerful design that I think will endure.

MD *How are you integrating the new and the old, what are the challenges of doing something like this?*

AK Sharon and her team have always spoken about the building as the largest artefact in the museum's collection. We're still discovering things because the building has to be picked apart in order to stitch it back together, to repair it and to make it good, as

it was derelict for a long period of time. We are also embedding ideas and details that, while new, continue the tradition of transformability that is within this

building's DNA.

It's a great voyage of discovery. We've often said that Horace Jones is the fourth member of the architectural team.

PW We are engaged in a dialogue with the building: decoding and translating its scars and traces, either cleaning and restoring the existing fabric or removing redundant elements in preparation for adding contemporary interventions when and if required, in order to create a clear organisational logic to the unfolding interior spaces whilst making the layers of history visible. For us, you need to understand the past before you can move forward with any certainty.

AK A lot of what you see and touch in the new museum will be materials that have a history, they have a sense to them, they're dusty. There are so many stories in the building and the museum can tell these stories, they won't get lost.

MD *Sustainability is a really big issue for all buildings, and especially for this one. Could you tell us a bit more?*

PW The initial decision taken by the museum not to procure a new building, but instead, reinvent and transform an existing set of derelict market buildings immediately achieves a significant embodied carbon saving.

SA Our intuitive feeling was that West Smithfield would be a fantastic place for the museum, and that was borne out by lots of analysis. It's the centre of London and certainly it's going to be one of the most connected museums: two train stops away from Paris. And Smithfield remains a viscerally compelling and evocative place. From the sound of the train through to the drip, drip, drip of water, and the residue of the former tenants all around.





When it was a live meat market in around 1849 – the live meat market closed in 1855 – 250,000 pigs were driven through London to West Smithfield and slaughtered, as well as 1.2 million sheep, and over 250,000 heads of cattle, not even counting turkeys and poultry. That in itself is just an example of the extraordinary stories that are embedded within the soil of West Smithfield.

PW We're reusing and salvaging materials from the market wherever we can. If we can't reuse them on site, they'll be recycled or sold. And of course, this diverts as much of the waste from landfill as possible. We've been very astute in what we've kept, and, as a result of this 'archaeological' work, the museum now has a fascinating new range of salvaged objects, such as scales, meat hooks, spiral stairs. We have also retained a remarkable set of painted signage panels bearing the names of many of the traders who once worked in the buildings. These found objects really provoke the imagination and provide a strong link back to the buildings' previous use and activities.

PW Beneath the General Market and the surrounding streets, lie the cavernous underground railway chambers with wonderful seven-meter-high brick vaults that will become the home to many of the museum's objects. We would like to think that when the visitor

arrives at the top of the stairs in the General Market, and descends, as it were, through the sedimentary layers of London's past, they will be conscious of arriving on the same level as the Roman settlements of 2000 years earlier.

MD *Why do cities need museums?*

AK The first museums were about siting your dynasty on the shoulders of great dynasties before you, it was a political move to demonstrate power by showing what artifacts and objects had been conquered or had been bequeathed. That's a thread that connects a lot of museums in the world, and this is an important historical narrative. But museums now have a different function in the city – they can be civic spaces where the barriers to entry are much lower than to other spaces, allowing you to interact with other people from that city. They're places of transaction but without anything being required of you. I think that maybe we need an alternative word for this new type of social or civic space. It's a sort of freedom: I own it and I can contribute to it; it's my neighbourhood; I'm both audience and performer here. A place where that can happen makes a healthy city and happy people.



The Centre for Contemporary Culture of Barcelona, colloquially known as CCCB, was founded in 1994 and is a multi-disciplinary cultural centre based

THE CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY CULTURE BARCELONA: LOCALLY ROOTED WITH GLOBAL LINKS

in Barcelona with a focus on urban issues. Its foundation coincided with the Olympic Games in Barcelona, at a time of huge urban transformation in the city and following the first democratic elections after 40 years of dictatorship. It is housed in a former alms house in the neighbourhood of el Raval, Barcelona's former red light district, which remains a complex and disadvantaged inner city neighbourhood.

Architecture is fundamental to the CCCB. It is crucial that museums and cultural spaces have a building that reflect their principles. Our basic principle is openness. We're fortunate to have a building that is completely open and porous so that people can walk through and that is well connected

to its neighbourhood. It is important when we conceive of new museums or cultural spaces to view their architecture as a tool for the museum. For example, our open space is used by families and young people who come to a familiar setting to take part in our programs. The CCCB space creates moments where strangers meet and through which the city becomes a laboratory.

The museum was conceived as a centre devoted to cities and public space – informed by the belief that cities are the main social, political, anthropological and cultural spaces of modernity. We view culture as a force for urban transformation by understanding 'culture' as a way of bringing together people from different disciplines and neighbourhoods in a space for encounter. With this idea we view culture as a force to improve the perception and everyday life of this neighbourhood and connect it to the other neighbourhoods in the city of Barcelona.

The neighbourhood we are situated in, el Raval, is located next to the Ramblas – Barcelona's famous boulevard – and next to the port. Historically, it's been the entry point for migration into the city, as it provides affordable housing and allows a starting point from which people then move to other neighbourhoods. El Raval is Barcelona's most diverse neighbourhood – population has increased from 2% foreign migrants to almost 60% in 25 years. Now

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Map showing location of the CCCB in el Raval, Barcelona: OpenStreetMap, 2022.

We joined ten young migrants with ten local writers, and they worked together to create text or visual pieces that explained their own trip to Spain, exploring themes such as home, future and displacement.

el Raval hosts more than 70 nationalities in a small and compact area. These factors mean it is a paradoxical neighbourhood with a lot of potential and a number of challenges such as social exclusion, limited access to housing, poor quality public space, and religious coexistence.

The CCCB, as a museum in this ever evolving and complex neighbourhood, aims to bring people from different backgrounds together to encourage interaction and recognition. Our aim is to create programs that attract people from other neighbourhoods in town – the well-educated, middle class, or young people

– while simultaneously promoting programs organised with and by the communities in the neighbourhood.

With this aim, we created a program during lockdown that guaranteed that children could continue to go to school during the pandemic by offering our space as additional classrooms. The situation also gave us an amazing opportunity to transform the curriculums in the schools while creating a program that transformed us. For example, we had a wonderful exhibition by South African artists, and we involved children from Raval's schools in the curation



and production of that exhibition so they could get insights into how our cultural centre works. More importantly, during history class, we discussed with students themes we also discussed during the curatorial process with our artists and curators, such as colonialism and imperialism. This was a way of involving them in the cultural life of the city through the CCCB, and through our programs.

In an exhibition called *Trip to Mars*, on the cultural history of Mars, the Red Planet, we involved an NGO that accompanies young migrants that have arrived in Catalonia without any family. We joined ten young migrants with ten local writers, and they worked together to create text or visual pieces that explained their own trip to Spain, exploring themes such as home, future and displacement. This was a way of introducing these young migrants to the cultural space of a museum, a space that otherwise they probably would have never accessed.

The pandemic has confirmed the importance of digital spaces to keep public conversations alive. Lockdown has further illustrated the importance of onsite and physical spaces for collective life. We could argue that the pandemic has actually accelerated a transformation that was already under way. Museums and cultural spaces need to be strongly locally rooted without losing their international links. These two aspects are not contradictory. Global conversation is essential, but at the same time if museums want to be relevant in ten years, for new local and international audiences, we need to find ways of engaging new audiences, new publics and new young people. We need to listen and not pretend that we know everything. Cities are changing at a fast speed and in Barcelona's case, the CCCB is trying to be alert to how urban life is changing. Our mission is to be alert and to listen to our immediate ecosystem, to see how we can be useful and meet the cultural needs of our city, Barcelona, and our neighbourhood, el

Our mission is to be alert and to listen to our immediate ecosystem, to see how we can be useful and meet the cultural needs of our city ... This double role, of being a mirror and, simultaneously, a driving force, is what defines us.

Judit Carrera Director, Centre for Contemporary Culture of Barcelona.

Raval. This double role, of being a mirror and, simultaneously, a driving force, is what defines us.



In building a new V&A in East London, we stand on the shoulders of the original radical practices of museology that the museum began with, and in a location where we can continue the tradition of invention and creativity.

BUILDING ON THE RADICAL HISTORY OF THE V&A IN A NEW MUSEUM FOR THE EAST END

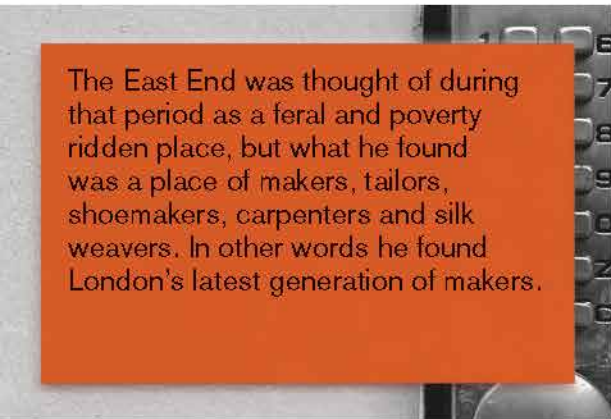
museums shouldn't just be for academics and the educated middle class, but that they need to engage with and dynamise wider constituencies.

At a similar time Henry Mayhew, journalist and sociologist who founded Punch magazine, was surveying London and travelled eastward to the least fashionable part of London where he was awestruck by what he saw. The East End was thought of during that period as a feral and poverty ridden place, but what he found was a place of makers, tailors, shoemakers, carpenters and silk weavers. In other words he found London's latest generation of makers. East London was always a place of creativity, and today it is as fascinating and complex as ever.

In the new V&A we will create two new spaces, which will combine to be a deeply compelling museum platform. In one building we will create a vast collection centre that will bring together 260,000 objects that tell the story of the very best of human creativity over 5000 years, as well as 1000 archives and a very

significant visual arts library. Alongside that will be a really great new museum on the waterfront in the Olympic Park, designed like a Balenciaga dress.

These two new buildings sit in a part of London that has attracted waves of migrants and creative people, but has always felt under-resourced. It's within a stone's throw of the city which post-Brexit will be delivering a third of the wealth of the nation annually. I would love it if we could be an institution that can be a welcoming space for the local communities, as well as a conduit to some of that money, resource and expertise.



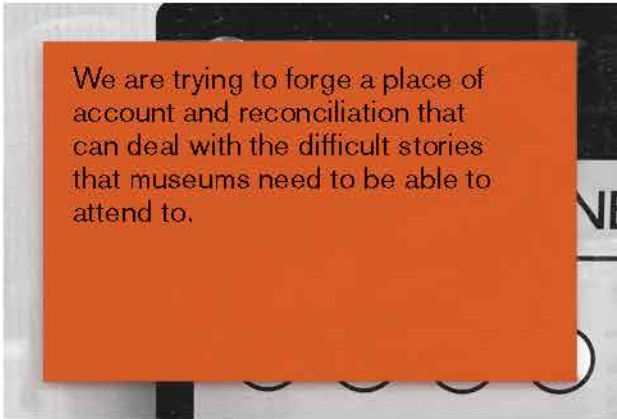
The East End was thought of during that period as a feral and poverty ridden place, but what he found was a place of makers, tailors, shoemakers, carpenters and silk weavers. In other words he found London's latest generation of makers.



This developing story of museums is one in which they are increasingly speaking to a wider constituency, which can actually contribute and become part of the story. What all of the new cultural institutions on the park have in common is that they are underpinned by a drive to serve a variety of different kinds of public, working in an equitable way with new communities and engaging them in the sorts of things that concern them, but also offering them opportunities to transform the things that might concern us.

We are working with international and national institutions but our main partners are people living in and around the site. We are trying to forge a place of account and reconciliation that can deal with the difficult stories that museums need to be able to attend to. We're doing very good work in the four boroughs that surround our sites by working with local groups to find out what they would like to see and how they would like us to engage. We have been doing this years in advance of us opening so that we can get it right, so that they can feel like it is a partnership, rather than something that is landing from another planet which doesn't reflect the aims, desires and aspirations of the local community.

Museums need to shift to reflect new technologies and the publics' expectations, particularly those of young people. This requires new museums that are calibrated to the concerns of a new age. Digital spaces have changed the way in which people feel and interact in most areas of life. Museums are important institutions that link opportunity for the young with opportunity for professionals and the academic world, and most importantly create a continuity between all of those different areas. It's great that a child can come into an environment and share a research space where sitting next to them might be someone doing their PhD, and next to them is someone who is redefining a particular sector or industry. I see this crucible of possibilities in bringing together multiple voices, that gives opportunity



We are trying to forge a place of account and reconciliation that can deal with the difficult stories that museums need to be able to attend to.

Gus Casely-Hayford Director, V&A East.

to the young but also creates a feedback loop in which people who are very established can look at the sorts of revolutionary things that young people are thinking about and innovating.

Finally, post Brexit it is time for us as a nation to begin to formulate a new set of relationships, not just nationally, but internationally. V&A East has a part to play within that because the arts must be substantive ambassadors for Britain in this moment. This area of East London has a great tradition of creative innovation, it has a huge voice, and it needs to be heard. I hope that the V&A can be a platform, or a megaphone, on their behalf.



As a nation we are experiencing a myriad of disruptions and challenges, both inside and outside of the cultural sector. Museums and heritage sites are ac-

FROM FINDING SAFE SPACES IN HOSTILE ENVI- RONMENTS, TO RE-IMAGINING LIBERATED SPACES

tive shapers of their surroundings due to their huge influence on society and the economy. Therefore, here we consider different experiences within hostile built environments and explore how we might reimagine these spaces as liberated places in the future.¹

The lens of psycho-geographies is useful to examine the importance of identifying coded messages of hostility and modes of exclusion and alienation. The limitations of the heteronormative patriarchal imagination have given rise to various design systems that have historically prioritised the needs and conveniences of able-bodied men over all others. These limitations impact detrimentally on our sense of belonging, and freedom to navigate the built environment. Concepts such as chromophobia in architecture and white cube museum design – explored by Detoxer, Susuana Amoah – have further robbed us of a sense of being understood in spaces that might authentically represent us.

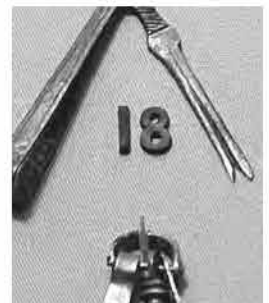
Acknowledging that many heritage buildings and museums memorialise oppression, trauma and wounding for some, and do not just display beauty and artistry as experienced by others, is imperative. This is slowly being recognised through notions of neuro-architecture. In allowing for traumatic memory, it is important to reflect that these are places where our possessions, histories and stories have historically gone to die and be forgotten. In this sense, museums can be seen as mausoleums.

However, we want to bring in some light and healing, to exhale and refocus our energy to create different atmospheres. We can start to look past hostile environments to a future

that is different for people of colour in the workforce, in cities and as visitors to cultural and historical places. We need to shift our focus to reimagine what liberated spaces might look and feel like for us.

In order to do this we need to reflect on what safety and belonging feels like in the museum workforce, in a city's cultural landmarks and buildings, and as visitors to these spaces, as well as the differences between our understandings of safety and liberation. We need to talk openly about how barriers to that sense of liberation can be challenged through the reclamation of both spaces and our history, in order

Acknowledging that many heritage buildings and museums memorialise oppression, trauma and wounding for some, and do not just display beauty and artistry as experienced by others, is imperative.





Museum Detox members: Hannah Phung.

to oppose that hostility and exclusion in the landscape, workforce and visitor experience. This includes envisioning what liberated spaces might look and feel like, and the signals and codes that might begin to redefine that experience. The work of Museum Detox is powerful because the visual representation of a group of people of colour in cultural spaces challenges perceptions and ideas of liberation in the eye of the beholder.

1 This text is based on a session run by members of Museum Detox's 2021 Executive Committee; Charlotte Holmes, Curator at the National Trust; Sam Allen, Director and Arts and Heritage Consultant, Creative Art Social Consultancy Ltd; and Laura Hampden, Historic Environment Record Project Officer, Historic England.

Museum Detox is a network for people of colour who work in museums, galleries, libraries, archives and the heritage sector. We champion fair representation and the inclusion of cultural, intellectual, and creative contributions from our communities. As a network we work to deconstruct systems of inequality that exist, to enable a sector where the workforce and audience is reflective of the UK's 21st century population. Our commitment is further reflected in our core values of Equity, Solidarity, Support, Activism and Empowerment.

If you are a person of colour, working in the arts and heritage sectors and would like to join our community, please sign up below: www.museumdetox.org/

We can start to look past hostile environments to a future that is different for people of colour ... We need to shift our focus to reimagine what liberated spaces might look and feel like for us.

become-a-member

If you would like to collaborate with Museum Detox or make a donation, please contact us below: www.museumdetox.org/contact-us

You can also follow us on Instagram and Twitter: @museum_detox



CRITICAL THINKING FOR PUBLIC SPACE

This text by Megan O'Shea is accompanied by images and film stills provided by artist Larry Achiampong and created as part of his role as Artist-in-Residence for the public realm redevelopment of the historic Smithfield area of the City of London, 2021.

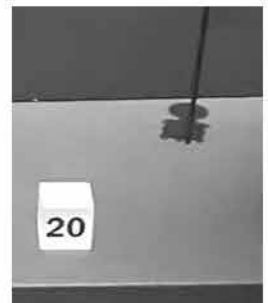
As a child, artist Larry Achiampong occasionally accompanied his mother on cleaning jobs in office blocks, crossing the emptied City of London in the early hours of the morning, experiencing the City in a lull before the workers arrived for the day. These early memories of London – out-of-hours, occupied but by those who might go unnoticed – informed Achiampong's response in his role as Artist-in-Residence on the design team transforming the public spaces around Smithfield. Achiampong was invited into the role of Artist-in-Residence by the City of London and the cultural district Culture Mile in order to inform the design of the area's public spaces ahead of the Museum of London's move to West Smithfield.¹

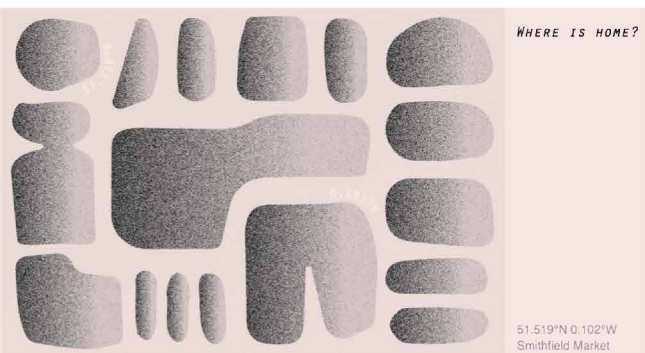
The project was conceived of before the pandemic, when public space was bustling and lockdown an unheard-of concept. At that time, we discussed what it might mean to be an Artist-in-Residence when there is no residence, but rather an embedded role as part of a collaborative team of designers working on a public space. In reality, Achiampong's residency occurred during a period when public space was closed to most publics, and collaboration with the design team was forced online. This became a residency based on memories of place and feeling, rather than site visits and physical mapping.

The residency centred around a series of online workshops structured by Achiampong, and his collaborator Nephertiti Oboshie Schandorf,² with materials including film, music and text shared to invite responses to the themes: Texture; Memory and Place; Light, Memory and Time. Some of these references are shared on these pages, alongside a selection of stills from the film Achiampong made in St Bartholomew's Hospital in West Smithfield during the residency. The staff of this hospital, among the few who continued to traverse the City through the pandemic, in the dawn and dusk hours, retraced, for Achiampong, the footsteps of his childhood.

Because the residency did not coincide with an intensive design period, there was no pressure on the design team to deliver immediate outcomes. Instead, this strange pandemic time – when everything seemed at once to be in hiatus and yet more intense – allowed for expansive thinking about place and what it means to different people at different times. Reflections on the shared materials became personal, with memories and emotional responses entering first the public format of the workshop, and later becoming formalised within the transformation of the Smithfield public realm.

A residency based on memories of place and feeling, rather than site visits and physical mapping.





Details of postcards, part of Culture Mile resident consultation on memory and place, designed by Gabrielle Smith as part of Larry Achiampong's Smithfield public realm commission with the City of London, Hawkins\Brown and Contemporary Art Society.



Collage of film stills from *Blacks Britannica*, Dir. David Koff, 1979. The film was part of the Larry Achiampong's Artist in Residence reading list that informed the workshops with the Smithfield public realm commission with the City of London, Hawkins\Brown and Contemporary Art Society.

And so, as we discussed the sounds and rhythms of Smithfield, a conversation about crackles in the music of Burial was translated into design thinking about textures for the material palette of these public spaces. The workshops, and the design thinking they prompted, developed iteratively.

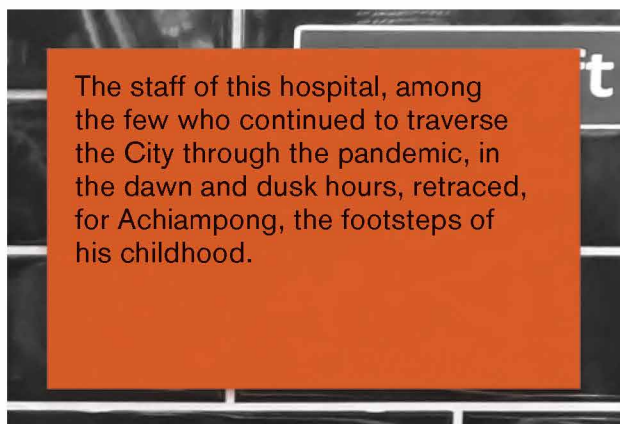
This process of working with the design team was just the beginning of a series of conversations which have been continued through engagement with community elders, and will be extended further through a cohort of youth voices. Even when empty, the spaces of Smithfield are continuously filled with overlapping narratives, and this process has encouraged long-term thinking – about the histories and futures of the site – rather than seeing the design team involvement with this public realm as ‘a moment’ in time.

Achiampong's work as Artist-in-Residence, as part of the design team and alongside wider Smithfield audiences, shows the benefit of engaging subjectively with the public realm. The residency encouraged the interdisciplinary design team to speak their own minds, to share their different personal stories and to design these into the new public spaces. Perhaps, equitable public realm might start here; with a design team sharing its differing and personal experiences of space, inviting others to be part of the conversation, and writing-in change through design.

1 Larry Achiampong was chosen following a curatorial process led by Contemporary Art Society Consultancy. The role was defined through conversations with architects Hawkins\Brown, the City of London and Culture Mile stakeholders including the Barbican and Museum of London.

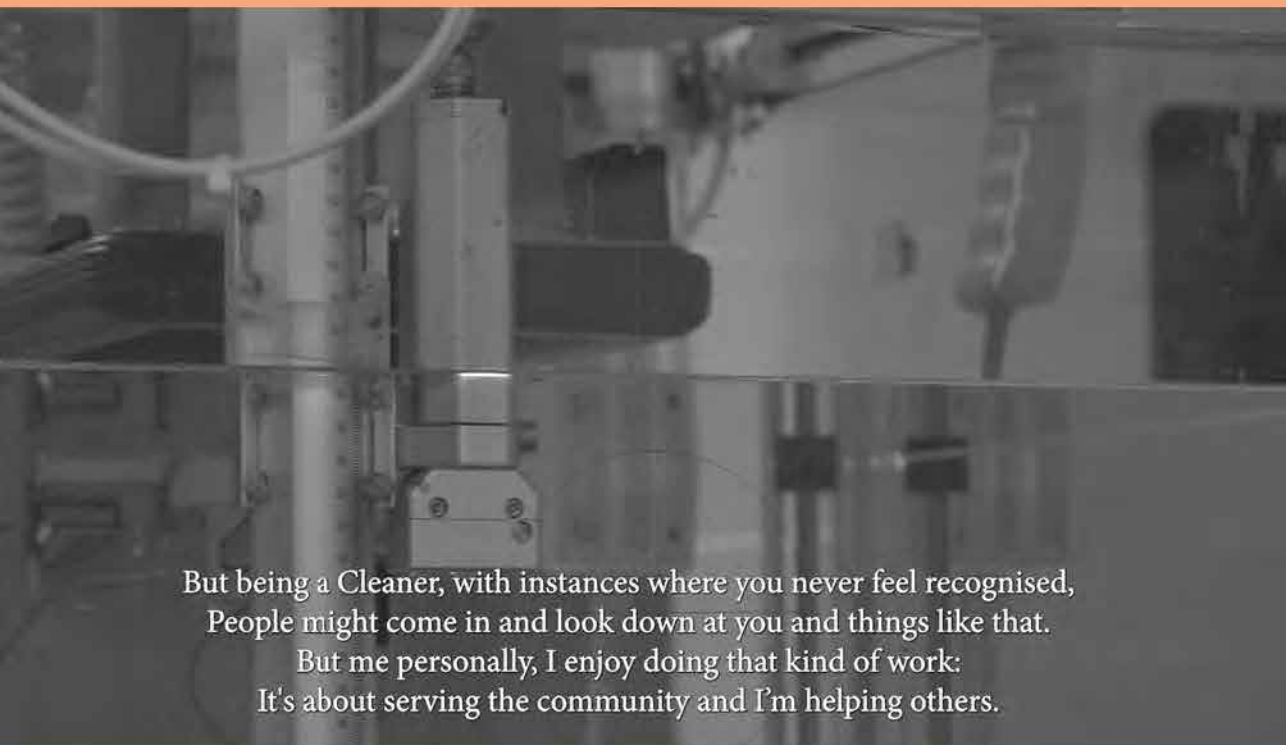
2 The workshops were held online with the Hawkins\Brown-led design team including Contemporary Art Society Consultancy, landscape architects OKRA, lighting designers Studio Dekka and transport consultant Momentum.

Text by **Megan O'Shea**, Senior Art Producer, Contemporary Art Society Consultancy.



The staff of this hospital, among the few who continued to traverse the City through the pandemic, in the dawn and dusk hours, retraced, for Achiampong, the footsteps of his childhood.



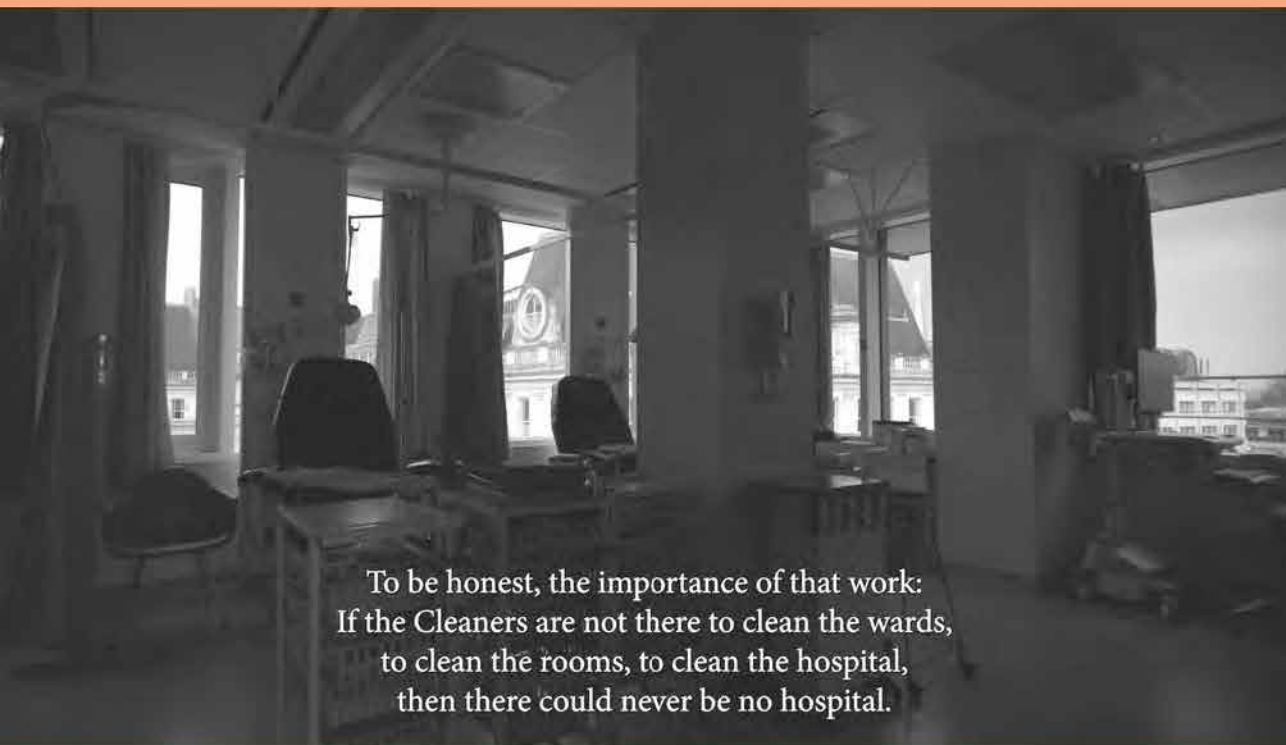


But being a Cleaner, with instances where you never feel recognised,
People might come in and look down at you and things like that.
But me personally, I enjoy doing that kind of work:
It's about serving the community and I'm helping others.

WHERE IS THE CRASH TROLLEY?

MERCURY	VENUS	MARS	JUPITER	SATURN
				
CT	NURSES	XSTRAHL	CK	OTHER (CHECK TICKET BAR)

Because every time you enter through that door, you be thinking, yeah?
You know, just praying and hoping that all this, this doesn't happen again.



To be honest, the importance of that work:
If the Cleaners are not there to clean the wards,
to clean the rooms, to clean the hospital,
then there could never be no hospital.

A black and white photograph of a hospital room. The room is dimly lit, with light coming from large windows on the right side. There are several medical beds or examination tables arranged in the room. A person is visible sitting on one of the beds, looking out the window. The room has a clinical, sterile feel. The text is overlaid on the lower part of the image.

So to me personally, I feel that the Cleaners are very,
very important in the hospital.
They play a great role, they play a great part within the hospital.

WATCHING XANADU



Still from the film *A Cacophony of Crows*, directed by Stephen Pritchard, 2018.

A vision in a dream – a fragment. Walls imposed on nature by stately decree. Enclosed palace of pleasure which sees itself reflected in an unrestrained river. Empire. Human power. Nature's power. Time unending. Time becomes a loop. The loop becomes a song about self-obsession and loss. This song of loss is part of who we are and what we humans do: we build to destroy – keeping little fragments, not to remember the loss we created, but to *retell* its stories in palatable ways.

We build our pleasure domes – our museums and galleries, our glass castles and concrete cathedrals of cultural power – in our own image, without thought or care for those already there: those whose stories, memories, lives are not worthy of our new faux-Brutalist pleasure domes. Our pleasure domes are for the emperors of our time – and for their followers (and for the emperors and followers of all the empires before and after). For *us*, not *them*.

We build our walls to protect our vision in a dream – our intentionally fragmented histories and imagery safely preserved as formal, interpreted, collected floral displays behind walled gardens. But no matter how much 'outreach' and 'engagement' emanates from our pleasure domes, and no matter how much zeal our cultural missionaries and mercenaries apply, the new emperors do not want the weeds or the *supposedly* culturally bereft neo-barbarians inside.

No community centres, libraries, youth clubs, sports clubs, playing fields or parks for them. But there *is*, for example, a place in our pleasure domes – our Xanadus – for fragments of paraded 'streets in the sky' – for robbed sections of Robin Hood Gardens council homes – for *us*.

The world is on a knife edge. The 'free markets' and 'austerity' of neoliberal capitalism have led to constant precarity for more and more people, including artists, arts workers, and many arts institutions.



Chunk of London housing estate to star at architecture festival

Eight-tonne fragment of Robin Hood Gardens to be reassembled at Venice Architecture Biennale



Still from the film *A Cacophony of Crows*, directed by Stephen Pritchard, 2018.

But now is a time for everyday utopias, not just gilded cultural pleasure domes. Everyday utopias can re-enchant our everyday lives by understanding that we *all* have visions and dreams.

The re-enchantment of our everyday lives is not about museums and galleries leading the way to some culturally rich promised land in which our pasts and presents are censored, sanitised, sugar-coated then mercilessly monetised. This is the path to disenfranchisement and disenchantment.

Instead, re-enchantment puts people before place and power, cultural democracies ahead of bureaucracies, to create beautiful everyday utopias in which our pasts, presents, futures are shared and celebrated.

The world is on a knife edge. The 'free markets' and 'austerity' of neoliberal capitalism have led to constant precarity for more and more people, including artists, arts workers, and many arts institutions. This system treats nature and people as 'things' to be stolen, bought, sold, fought over. It turns some artists into individual heroes and celebrities but many others

into freelancers battling for commissions that are increasingly unlikely to support reasonable standards of living. It turns arts institutions into enterprises, arts workers into expendable casual workers, and audiences and community members into 'targets'.

But this is something that can be changed, slowly. It will be a struggle in which our best action is the re-enchantment of art, of cultures and of our everyday lives. We need realisable alternatives, and we need to focus on developing them and trying them out now. It is not enough to believe, to hope – we must listen, enact

Just because we're part of the system it doesn't mean we can't change the system *from the outside* – from the borders, margins, peripheries, and edges – *and from the inside* – from within the institutions of art, the businesses, the focus groups, the state agencies.





Still from the film *A Cacophony of Crows*, directed by Stephen Pritchard, 2018.

hope, and embody trust; remember our pasts and imagine our futures – good, bad, different, differently; self-organise. Self-organising is not about selfishness but about collectiveness: cooperation, not cut-throat competition.

And, as artists, cultural workers, creative industries managers, museum administrators, we are part of the system. But just because we're part of the system it doesn't mean we can't change the system *from the outside* – from the borders, margins, peripheries, and edges – *and from the inside* – from within the institutions of art, the businesses, the focus groups, the state agencies, etc. Our ability to make such changes lies in our abilities to self-organise and produce new alternatives.

For example, many cultural organisations and museums may 'perform' social justice and community care, but they can also embody compassion and embrace their communities – *with our help*. No amount of state aid or coercion can achieve this. But, by self-organising for change, we can all help to Do It Together.

A re-enchanted culture of all our cultures – all our pasts, presents and futures – can help us unlearn our deeply engrained capitalist narratives. It requires new forms of cultural production – sharing, not competition: reconnection with one another and with nature. Our little acts of re-enchantment are about rediscovering what it means to be human and about how deeply we are connected to one another and to nature.

We need to escape our Xanadus – sing our Songs of Innocence and Experience – because, paraphrasing William Blake, when we see the world in every grain of sand and heaven in every wildflower, we can leave our shackles behind and begin to become truly human again.

Our little acts of re-enchantment are about rediscovering what it means to be human and about how deeply we are connected to one another and to nature.



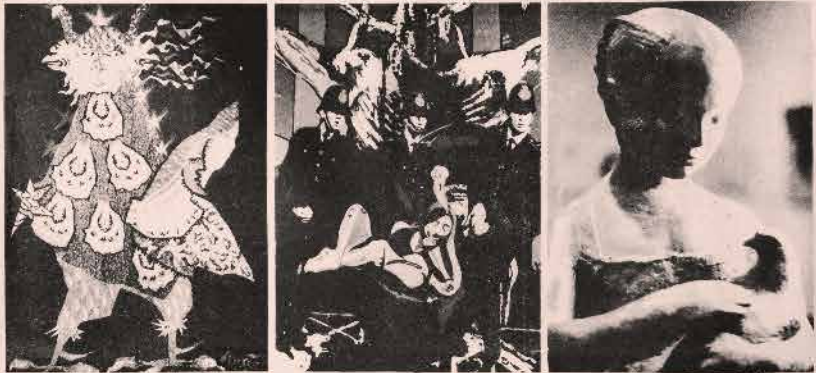
MUSEO DE LA SOLIDARIDAD SALVADOR ALLENDE: A MUSEUM PERMEATED BY ITS SURROUNDINGS



Above: Press record of the first inauguration of the Museum of Solidarity. Salvador Allende and Mario Pedrosa appear among those attending the exhibition in front of the sculpture by Octavio Podestá 'Gong' 1971. Santiago, Chile: MSSA archive, May 1972.
Below: Press record of the publicity of the first exhibition of the Museum of Solidarity in 1972 titled 'The Nation'. Santiago, Chile: MSSA archive, July 2 1972.

museo de la solidaridad

HOY, ULTIMO DIA DE EXHIBICION EN EL MUSEO DE ARTE CONTEMPORANEO DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE CHILE. EN EL GRABADO OSWALDO VARGAS: "JANGU", TATIZ DEL FRANCIS LERICAT. "SIN TITULO" DEL GRUPO "CRONICA" DE ESPANA. Y "PALOMA Y NIÑO" DEL DIBUJANTE ARMANDO GONZALEZ.



DE LOS ARTISTAS DEL MUNDO AL GOBIERNO POPULAR DE CHILE.

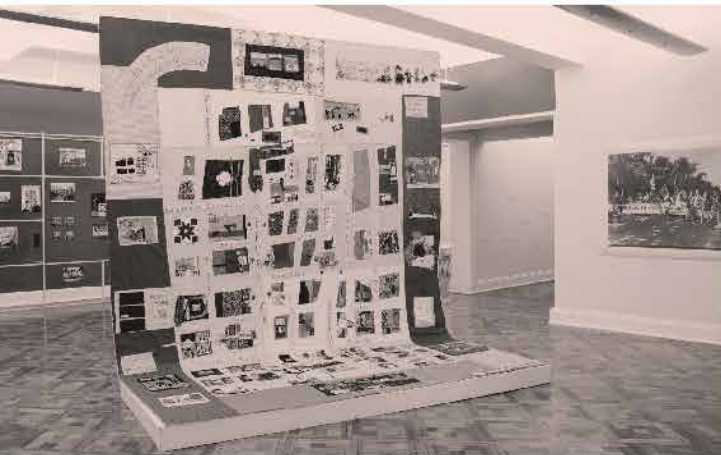
The Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende (MSSA, Salvador Allende Museum of Solidarity, in English), is a modern and contemporary art museum in Santiago de Chile. It is home to an art collection of high international value, one of the most important in Latin America. The museum is considered a referent for its curatorial model, which defies hegemonic principles in the field of arts and culture. Its collection was formed through artists' solidarity outside the mainstream art market, and thought through the lens of critical curatorial practices.

The museum was founded in 1971, when the idea of encouraging artists' circles across Latin America and Europe to donate artworks emerged. The aim of these donations was to enable Salvador Allende's government – the first democratically elected socialist government in the world – to create a museum 'for the Chilean people'.

The ideological tensions that Chile and the world have faced since its creation have had an impact on the museum, which has been known by three different names since it was founded:

→ Museo de la Solidaridad (1971–1973). A period of international artists' donations to the people of Chile.





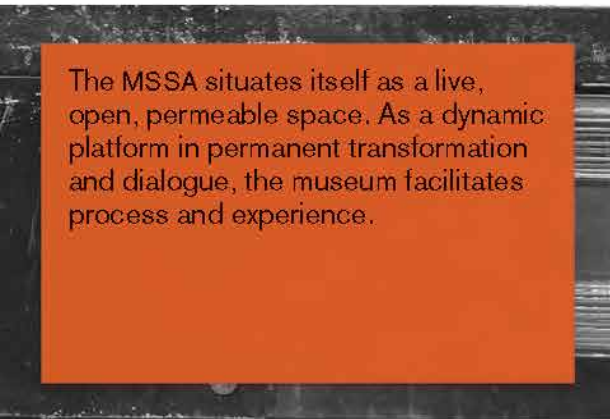
Textile Registry created by the residents of Barrio Republica exhibited in the Mirada de Barrio Exhibition. Santiago, Chile: Lorna Remmele, MSSA archive, 2019.



The textile book *New Constitution* created by the MSSA Textile Companies. Santiago, Chile: Lorna Remmele, MSSA archive, 2020.

- Museo Internacional de la Resistencia Salvador Allende (1975–1990). Following the coup of 1973, the project was taken into exile and artists' donations became political gestures of resistance against dictatorship.
- Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende (1991–present). Since the return of democratic elections, artworks that had been kept abroad have been brought back to Chile and reunited with parts of the collection that had been hidden since the 1970s.

It is a collection that keeps growing to this date.



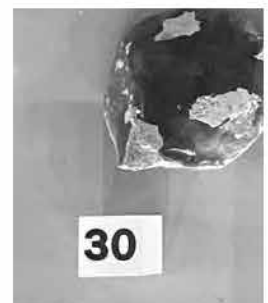
The MSSA situates itself as a live, open, permeable space. As a dynamic platform in permanent transformation and dialogue, the museum facilitates process and experience.

The museum's curatorial model was developed by a global network of progressive artists and intellectuals. Brazilian art critic Mário Pedrosa, the founder and first director of the museum, understood art as 'an experimental exercise of freedom'. Pedrosa argued that art projects that incrementally integrated art in daily life, that connected interior with exterior, and that responded to the social function of educating citizens' sensibilities, allowing them to discover new ways of relating to the world, should be incentivised. The museum was therefore con-

ceived of as a progressive and experimental space of experiences – a par-laboratory both for artists and the wider community.

With these foundational principles that are so fundamental to our current social reality, the MSSA situates itself as a live, open, permeable space. As a dynamic platform in permanent transformation and dialogue, the museum facilitates process and experience.

Since 2012, when I became Director of the MSSA, our work has taken a critical pedagogical and curatorial standpoint, based in principles of cultural





Activity called 'Making with hands' during the program Linking with the Territory. Santiago, Chile: Lorna Remmele, MSSA archive. November, 2019.

and artistic mediation, enhancing dialogue, experimentation, and individual reflection from the collective. In 2016 we started the transdisciplinary project *Mirada de Barrio (Neighbourhood Gaze)*, which saw sociologists and artists collaborating with the museum team. Following several encounters to build trust with local neighbours, a decision was made to start work on an exhibition on the neighbourhood's past, present and future heritage. The exhibition showcased creations that emerged from a co-creative process of textile, photography, writing and book binding workshops. Titled *Haciendo Barrio (Making Neighbourhood)*, the exhibition opened in September 2018. It was a product of collective curation with a group of neighbourhood representatives of the different workshops. The complexity of this project meant that it was an important learning process which has transformed the museum as an institution, and its staff. The project has opened new relationships of trust with the museum's local community. By setting ourselves up as a permeable institution, with all the risks that entails, we have become another member of the local community.

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The community/institution relationship has always been a complex and asymmetric one, and it is common that the former is suspicious of the latter. Collaboration has been built bit by bit among neighbours, local organisations, the museum and its staff. This process has prioritised respecting diversity and each party's own dynamics, all the while establishing a day-to-day dialogue through which the common project is in permanent negotia-



Inauguration of the Tejido Social Exhibition. Museum of Solidarity. Santiago, Chile: Lorna Remmele, MSSA archive, April 30th 2019.



Participation of the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende in the International Women's Day march. Santiago, Chile: Lorna Remmele, MSSA archive, March 8th 2020.

tion and discussion. Publics are propositional, heterogeneous and in constant transformation. Everyone brings their own subjectivities and personal history, adding tension to the shared space, to the museum, and therefore to its public. The root of such tension is an understanding of the museum's link to its surroundings as the cornerstone of our museum policy, based in solidarity, political and artistic principles. The museum, with an institutional structure, responds to that tension by rethinking itself.

The 2019 social outburst in Chile strengthened the MSSA's links with its local community. While most museums responded to street protest by closing their doors, we made the museum available to our community. This was the starting point of a busy schedule of citizens' encounters attended by hundreds of people. In parallel to the growth in citizen reflection, a path to reform the country's constitution, created during the dictatorship, was established. One year later, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, 80% of citizens voted in favour of a new constitution for Chile.

We believe that the current fracture in the country's social fabric must be rebuilt from affection, from the local, and alongside communities. We are committed to being a platform that facilitates processes, that is permeable and open to collaboration, and is a space that expresses horizontal management based in trust, honesty and listening to each other. Our aim is to move towards the integration of the arts within daily life, a vision that permeates the museum as a critical space created in solidarity and fraternity – a Latin American beacon of arts and politics.

We are convinced that the current fracture in the country's social fabric must be rebuilt from affection, from the local, and alongside communities.



WESTERN FANTASY AND TROPICAL NIGHTMARE: SPECTACULAR ARCHITECTURE, NEW MUSEUMS AND URBAN WARFARE IN RIO



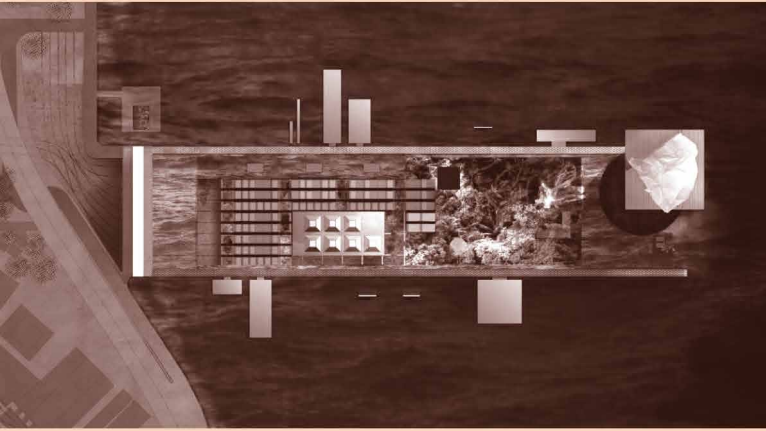
Rio de Janeiro is a paradigm of contradictions produced by the violence of the competitive management of cities and the extreme architectural and urban forms built for mega-events and large real estate projects. In Rio – host of the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics – arenas, Olympic constructions, luxury buildings, new museums and cultural centres designed by ‘starchitects’ are framed by a paradisiacal backdrop that renews colonial dreams of the Western tropical landscape.



Arenas, Olympic constructions, luxury buildings, new museums and cultural centres designed by ‘starchitects’ are framed by a paradisiacal backdrop that renews colonial dreams of the Western tropical landscape.

In a Benjaminian sense, the architectural forms and extreme geographies of Rio that I will present here, act as revealing ‘allegories’, and their ‘regimes of visibility’ as ‘allegories of capitalism that have the duty to take the market-form to its ultimate consequences’.¹ Rio is a place where Benjamin’s definition of ‘the Golden Age as catastrophe’² is remarkably evident. But Rio, unlike Paris and its Arcades, is a city of stunning open-air scenery which mobilises the European exotic fantasy of the tropical paradise on earth, fuelled by the narratives and paintings of travellers. We must not forget that 19th century Rio was still the largest modern city in the world to practice slavery extensively.





Prev. page (above): Rio's Botafogo Bay and Princess Joaquina Mansion – a stunning open-air scenery, which mobilizes the European fantasy: Johann Moritz Rugendas, 1820. *Brasiliana* Collection. (Public Domain).

Prev. page (below): The Dinner. A white couple being served and fanned by black slaves. 19th century Rio was the largest modern city in the world to practice slavery extensively: Jean-Baptiste Debret, 1837. Itaú Cultural Collection. (Public Domain).

Above: Guggenheim Project (not built), Pier Mauá, Rio, 2002–2008: Atelier Jean Nouvel. © AJN.



The Museum of Tomorrow, Pier Mauá, Guanabara Bay, 2010–15: © Calatrava.

One of the most fabulous (in the sense of a fabled) projects in 21st century Brazil, although unbuilt, was that of the Guggenheim Rio, designed by architect Jean Nouvel who was commissioned in 2002 by Thomas Krens. It was to serve as the 'anchor' of Rio's waterfront renovation strategy, which would be named – with a fantastical marketing name – *Porto Maravilha* (Wonderous Harbor). The French architect, as an 'urban imagineer' (in the words of Sharon Zukin),³ reproduced a tropical 'theme park museum'. In a presentation about the project the architect stated, without any hesitation, that he had conceived of 'dream territories' and that he was inspired by the 'myth of Atlantis'.⁴

The 'economics of appearances' of mega-events and cultural sets presupposes 'pacification and depoliticization', in the words of Jules Boykoff, a 'festive commercialism with military fortressification'.

The same pier that had been offered up for the Guggenheim became host to a new project several years later – the Museum of Tomorrow – designed by Santiago Calatrava. The Museum of Tomorrow is not a typical science museum. It is about the Anthropocene, environmental imbalances and a desirable sustainable future. However, the Anthropocene's interactive spectacularisation on display is completely sanitised, with an expography based on media, games, and data with

¹ T. Clark, 'Should Benjamin Have Read Marx?'. *Boundary* 2. 30:1, 2003, pp. 31–49.

² B. Walter, *The Arcades Project*. Harvard University Press. Translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. 1999, p.906.

³ S. Zukin, *The Culture of the Cities*. Oxford, Blackwell. 1995.

⁴ J. Nouvel, *A Submerged Port*. 2002. <http://www.jeannouvel.com/en/projects/musee-guggenheim/>





Museum of Image and Sound (under construction), Copacabana, Rio, 2009–present: © DS + R.

little critical reflection. The contradictions, conflicts, massacres and predations produced by the unbridled expansion of capital are transformed into a show of ascetic and technological images.

The museum anchored in Guanabara Bay does not hide the violence of its colonial presence of conquest. It is like a ship docking at the pier, un-

loading a vision of the future into the city in the form of an eco-technical and Eurocentric envi-

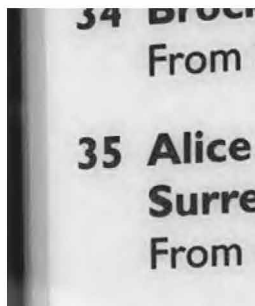
ronmental discourse, without regard for other epistemologies, visions and cultures (in which Brazil is rich and plural). Needless to say, a large amount of the public resources for these new private museums ended up far from Rio's public institutions, which suffer from underfunding.

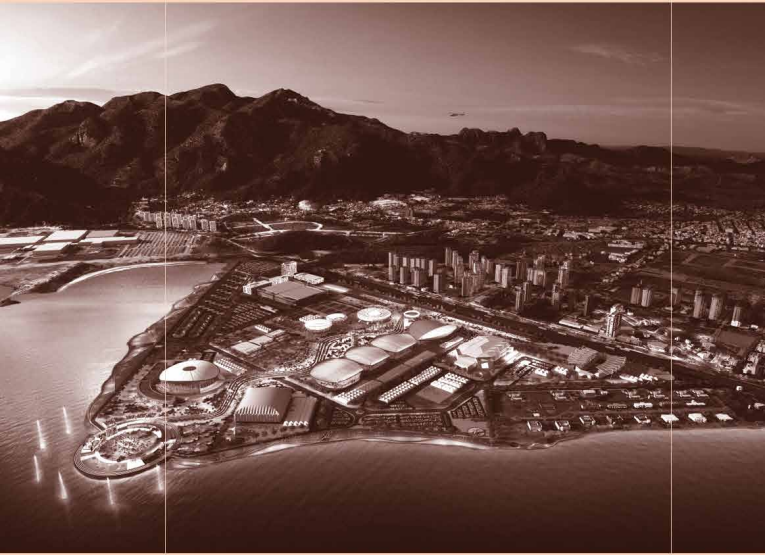
Urban renewal in Rio is anchored in new cultural or Olympic facilities with spectacular architecture. The 'economics of appearances' of mega-events and cultural sets presupposes 'pacification and depoliticization', in the words of Jules Boykoff,⁵ a 'festive commercialism with military fortressification'.⁶ Rio was the first place in the Global South to host the Olympic Games, with all the

The traumatic remembrance of experiences by a community strengthens their resistance against new forms of submission that may happen.

⁵ J. Boykoff, *Celebration Capitalism and the Olympic Games*. London: Routledge, 2014, p. 18.

⁶ J. Boykoff, *Celebration Capitalism and the Olympic Games*. London: Routledge, 2014, p. 109.





Original design of the Olympic Park, 2011–2015: Architect – Bill Hanway (AECOM) © AECOM.



The military performing urban security during the 2016 Olympic Games: Márcia Foletto. © Foletto.

dramatic symbolism of an experiment rooted profoundly in the system of exception imposed by a mega-event, and in which ‘celebration capitalism’ is simultaneously, to use the words of Naomi Klein, ‘disaster capitalism’.⁷ On the western border of the colourful and festive Olympic Park, however, the nightmare of the Black and poor people who lived in the region was playing out as Vila Autódromo (Racetrack Village), originally a fishing colony, was partially evicted. The Olympic speculative wave renewed the nightmare of removals, with an estimated 67,000 people removed from across Rio during this era of mega events.

Nightmares can be warnings. The traumatic remembrance of experiences by a community strengthens their resistance against new forms of submission that may happen. The countless projects and interventions, the destruction of neighbourhoods, the attacks on rights, and the many instances of social counter-reforms that occurred in the decade that these mega-events took place represent a kind of urban shock doctrine that, at first glance, paralyses the horizon of social movements that fight for a future of urban and social justice.

But resistances do exist. For example, in Vila Autódromo, popular organising guaranteed the continuing memory of the community by converting the

As an anti-Museum of Tomorrow, it is a space where the absence of form reveals the presence of a struggle, remembering inequalities that have accompanied Brazilian history for centuries.





Open air Museum of Evictions. The banner reads – Memory cannot be evicted:
© RioOnWatch/Catalytic Communities.

demolished area into a Museum of Evictions. As an anti-Museum of Tomorrow, it is a space where the absence of form reveals the

7 N. Klein, *The Shock Doctrine. The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. London: Penguin Books, 2008.

8 A. Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003, p.18.

9 A. Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.

Pedro Fiori Arantes Associate Professor, Federal University of São Paulo.

presence of a struggle, remembering inequalities that have accompanied Brazilian history for centuries. A museum of the ruins of forced displacement has special meaning when the future does not look

promising for the vast majority of the population. As Benjamin claimed, the ruins indicate the trail of catastrophe left by progress. Or, in the terms of Andreas Huyssen: 'Why are we building museums as if there were no tomorrow?'⁸

In Rio, there was an attempt to transform tomorrow into a memory of seduction celebrating the urban experience as a theme park for the happy few. But the landscapes of resistance bear witness to the politics of the displaced and dispossessed. They show another possibility for the politics of memory, a rupture that brings 'uncomfortable places' into evidence so that tomorrow may not be one of 'selective forgetting'.⁹

They show another possibility for the politics of memory, a rupture that brings 'uncomfortable places' into evidence so that tomorrow may not be one of 'selective forgetting'.



MUSEU DA MARÉ: MUSEOLOGY FROM THE FAVELA

The Maré Center for Solidarity Studies and Action, created in 2006, was born from the struggles of local residents in the Maré favela, in northern Rio de

Janeiro. Over the years and through cooperation and knowledge exchange between diverse people and institutions this space has become an important cultural reference for the city of Rio. It is a space that is open to the local community, for social movements, and for collectives from across Rio.

The Maré favela is located in the North Zone of Rio de Janeiro and comprises a cluster of 17 communities, where about 140,000 people live. The region borders the Guanabara Bay and

is located between major highways that cross the city. In 1997 a group of Maré residents came together to create the non-governmental organisation Centro de Estudos e Ações Solidárias da Maré (Maré Center for Solidarity Studies and Action), the institution that manages the museum.

The central exhibition held by the museum – The Times of Maré (Os Tempos da Maré) – is a collection that resulted from research carried out in the city's public archives along with donations made by residents who contributed personal objects and testimonials of their life stories. In the exhibition everything is mutable as past, present and future co-exist. The exhibit is

organised around 12 archetypal themes that speak to the historical development of the Maré communities and realities of everyday lives. Visitors are welcomed into the exhibition by a large orange display that references the colours of the earth and clay in the arid and dry regions in northeast Brazil, the place of origin of the first residents of Maré.

The exhibition begins with the transformations that have occurred in the Bay since the 1920s, and the impact on the environment caused by the major works carried out by the public authorities including: construction of the Avenida Brasil (1946); landfills that integrat-

ed eight islands, creating the Island of Fundão, housing the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (1953); installation of the Manguinhos Oil Refinery (1954); and finally the Rio Project, which filled in parts of the Guanabara Bay and created new communities in the region of Maré (1980). This section is called Times of Water and is saturated with different shades of blue that allude to the colours of the Guanabara Bay.

Next, we pay tribute to the north-eastern people (or *norderstinos*) who, from the 1940s onwards, migrated to Rio de Janeiro in order to work on these large construction projects. Included here are



Visitors are welcomed into the exhibition by a large orange display that references the colours of the earth and clay in the arid and dry regions in northeast Brazil, the place of origin of the first residents of Maré.



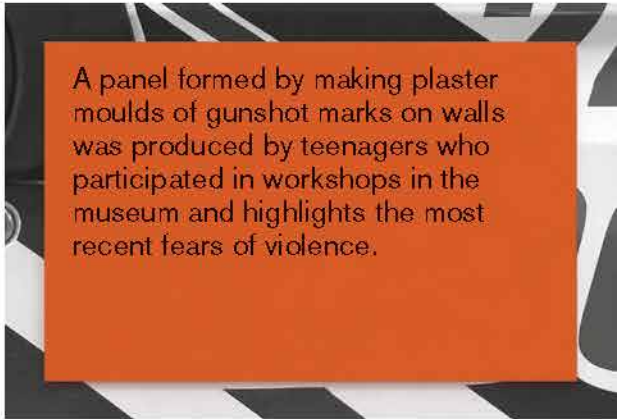
bottles, of different shapes and sizes, which contain pieces of the land from the hometowns of the first north-easterners who arrived at Maré. We always invite visitors to donate soil of their own hometowns to add to this display.

Further sections include the Time of Home, Time of Work and Time of Resistance which display the houses on stilts (built to withstand flooded regions) that, during the 1980s, were removed by the federal government for the implementation of the Rio Project, which promoted the construction of affordable houses to re-house residents. These exhibits prompt reflection on the importance of work, resistance and resilience throughout the history of Maré, and the struggles against the threats of removal and police violence.

Celebration is inseparable from the struggles of those who have built this place. Therefore, the Time of the Party portrays the importance of parties, festivities and leisure for the people who live in the region. There are open-air fairs in almost all of the 17 communities that make up the Favela da Maré, and so we also highlight how these are places for residents to buy fresh, and often cheaper, products, to generate income, and to meet and socialise. This includes the story of Senhor Francisco, who was from the northeast of Brazil and lived in Baixa do Sapateiro. He used to sell on credit and often 'forgot' to charge people who were going through financial difficulties; in this installation, some notes of those debts – never collected – are exhibited.

Further exhibits explore the changes to the building materials that have occurred as the territory has transformed; the resistance of religions – particularly Umbanda, a religion born in Brazil in the late 19th century – despite the loss of *terreiros* (places of worship); and the perspective of the child through toys and games that are played on the ground.

The penultimate section – the Time of Fear (Tempo do Medo) – leads visitors to confront various kinds of intimidating fears faced by people in Maré: loneliness, sickness, unemployment, hunger, rats, the storm, the rising tides at night, and the removal of dwellings. A panel formed by making plaster moulds of gunshot marks on walls was produced by teenagers who participated in workshops in the museum and highlights the most recent fears of violence, the stray bullet, drug wars, police operations, and brutal and pointless deaths. However, at the Maré Museum, fear does not have the last word. The exhibition ends by looking forward to the future and arguing that the future is built from today: through work, courage, engagement, dialogue and tolerance. But we must respect the struggles, the achievements and the memories of the residents that have gone before. Even in the face of fear, pain and anger, we collectively resist, and we



A panel formed by making plaster moulds of gunshot marks on walls was produced by teenagers who participated in workshops in the museum and highlights the most recent fears of violence.



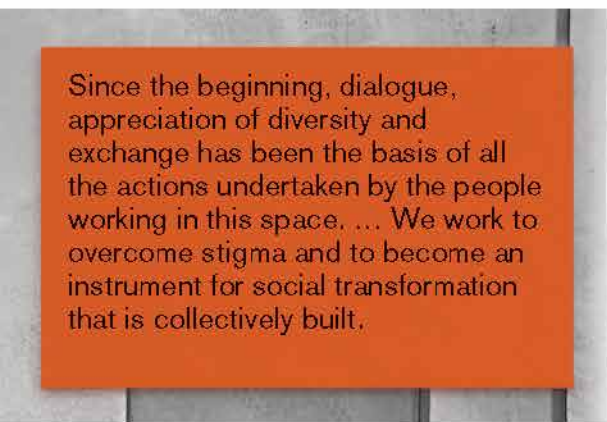


Installation in the Museu da Maré: © Museu da Maré.

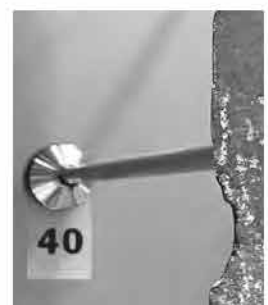
invent new possibilities for different futures.

Since the beginning, dialogue, appreciation of diversity and exchange has been the basis of all the actions undertaken by the people working in this space. The museum's political purpose is to establish bridges for communication with diverse realities, to challenge people, and to collaborate in order to generate new perspectives for social transformation.

We work to overcome stigma and to become an instrument for social transformation that is collectively built.



Cláudia Rose Ribeiro da Silva Co-founder, Center for Solidarity Studies Action, Maré (CEASM) and Coordinator, Museu da Maré.



Tom Butler

CAPITAL CULTURE: MUSEUMS, CITIES, CULTURAL POWER



V&A South Kensington entrance: Tom Butler, 2021.

Hayward Gallery across Waterloo Bridge:
Tom Butler, 2022.



*So a part of yesterday crumbles into dust. That
yesterday so sadly out of date for the changing
needs of London.*

These are the opening words to 'Capital Culture: Museums, Cities, Cultural Power', a short film produced using archive recordings and found footage. The words are part of the original voiceover to a 1960s black and white film titled 'The Changing Face of London' that shows the post-World War II reconstruction of the city, but they could equally apply to any period of London's history. Cities are always changing, and London is no exception.

Significant changes to any city's built environment often, very reasonably, prompt questions from those who live and work there. Why are these changes happening? Who are they for? Such questions however are often allayed – or avoided altogether – when 'culture' is involved.

Culture and cultural institutions have long been at the heart of large urban developments, serving economic, political and social objectives. However, these cultural developments continue to raise questions about access, agency and intent.

Culture and cultural institutions have long been at the heart of large urban developments, serving economic, political and social objectives, and through an array of architectural expressions. However, these cultural developments continue to raise questions about access, agency and intent.

To situate these questions within London, our film travels from west to east across the city looking at four cultural institutions that have been closely intertwined

Capital Culture

(although by no means uniquely) with the city's development over the last 165 years: the V&A in South Kensington; the Hayward Gallery on the Southbank; Tate Modern on Bankside; and the Museum of London at London Wall and its future home in West Smithfield. These institutions and their buildings represent different models of urban change at different points in London's history, as I will discuss.

The Great Exhibition of 1851 funded a new series of public buildings in South Kensington. This 87-acre complex transformed a former garden suburb into a remarkable concentration of cultural and educational institutions that was an act of Imperial nation-building mirrored in its architectural expression. The South Kensington Museum opened here in 1857, later becoming the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1899. It continues to adapt and evolve on this site, as well as to expand to other

We can begin to understand how powerful political, social, and economic drivers are expressed in the urban forms of cultural institutions, and the impacts they have both symbolically and materially.

locations across London, including Bethnal Green and Stratford.

The Hayward Gallery opened in 1968 as part of the transformation of the South Bank. Its brutalist form presented a radical and uncompromising vision for the future, one whose lack of conventional building facades and multiple terraces continues to attract critics. Yet this 'mound of urban concrete topography', as architect Peter Clegg termed it during its 2018 restoration,

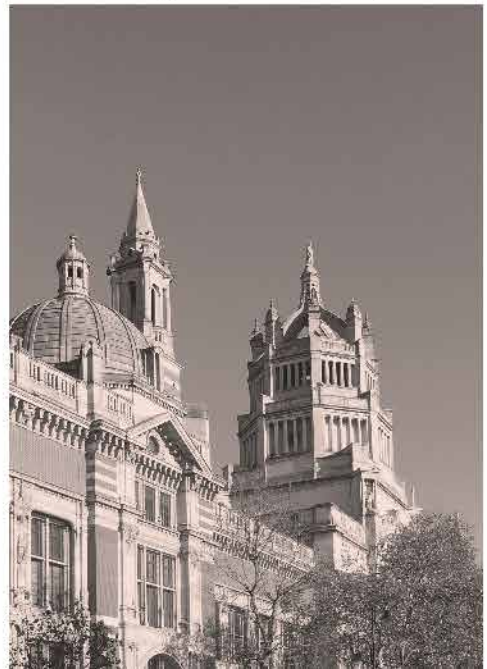


Tate Modern interior: Tom Butler, 2022.



Museum of London exterior from street level:
Tom Butler, 2014.

V&A South Kensington rotunda: Tom Butler, 2019.





Hayward Gallery with London Eye: Tom Butler, 2022.



Tate Modern interior, Turbine Hall with play equipment: Tom Butler, 2018.

Museum of London entrance: Tom Butler, 2014.



was conceived as an extension of the city in the way it was intentionally permeable, allowing diverse activities and cultures to populate its spaces.

Further downstream along the river Thames, Tate Modern was part of a global wave of cultural development projects in the 1990s and 2000s, exemplified by the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. At Bankside in London, 'regeneration' was the new rationale for large-scale development, within which culture was leveraged for its international reach as well as its urban impact. The transformation of the former coal- and oil-fired Bankside Power Station was hailed by architect Jacques Herzog as a 'generator of urbanity', whose location opposite London's most iconic building, St Paul's Cathedral, helped to strengthen its global credentials.

Over the Thames and in the heart of the City, the Museum of London opened in

Cities have used museums to both tell their stories and to change them.

1976 as one of the final components of the Barbican development. However, what was once an idealistic new urban development has suffered from a lack of a connection to the street and its people. In 2026 the museum will relocate to the previously derelict market buildings in West Smithfield. Despite being only a few hundred metres from the museum's current site, this working part of London is a world away from the urban future imagined in the 1970s and set

in concrete at London Wall. In Smithfield's Victorian-era General Market, the museum aims to create a new cultural space for the city. This vision of adaptive re-use has been contentious for some (including local market traders) but presents a positive model of urban change for others.

Through these four examples we can begin to understand how powerful political, social, and economic drivers are expressed in the urban forms of cultural institutions, and the impacts they have both symbolically and materially. The film 'Capital Culture: Museums, Cities, Cultural Power' is more of a provocation than an answer to the questions of agency, access and intent raised by culture-led urban developments. However, it provides a valuable comparison over a period of 165 years on the ways cities have used museums to both tell their stories and to change them.



General Market, Smithfield. Corner of West Poultry Avenue: Tom Butler, 2020.



General Market, Smithfield. Corner of Farringdon Road at night: Tom Butler, 2022.



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With gratitude

Urban Pamphleteer is supported by UCL Urban Laboratory. *Urban Pamphleteer* #10 has been produced with support from Brunel University London, the Museum of London, and Arts Council England

Printing

Belmont Press

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Gordon House
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London WC1H 0PY

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National Museum of the
History of Immigration, Paris:
Sophia Labadi, 2015.

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Thanks!

Central Saint Martins Graphic
Communication Design
The Bartlett, UCL

We gratefully acknowledge the
UCL Grand Challenges support
that helped to initiate the *Urban
Pamphleteer* series.

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ISSN 2052-8647 (Print)
ISSN 2052-8655 (Online)

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September 2022



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**LE COMBAT
CONTINUE!**

ILS MONTENT ICI
ILS VIENTENT ICI
ILS MONTENT ICI