

Week 1, Friday

E3b - Exhibitions – what is that?

**A VERY SHORT Introduction to exhibitions
and museums from Museum Studies /
Museology**

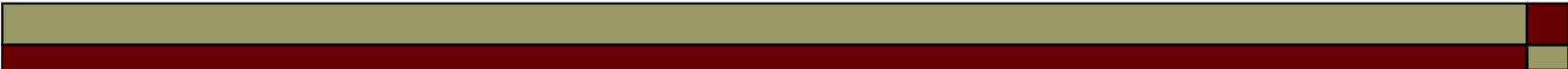
HPAH5085/6085

**Exhibiting the Past: Ancient Egypt, death
and modern representation**

Dr Katharina Zinn

Readings

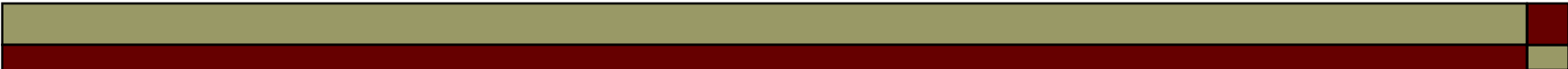
- ❑ McDonald, S. (2011). *A Compendium to Museums Studies*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- ❑ Hooper-Greenhill, E. (1992). *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*. London: Routledge.
- ❑ Ambrose, T.; Paine, C. (2006). *Museum Basics*. 2nd ed.
- ❑ Walsh, K. (2002/1992). *The Representation of the Past: Museums and heritage in the post-modern world*. London: Routledge.



Definitions – Museum

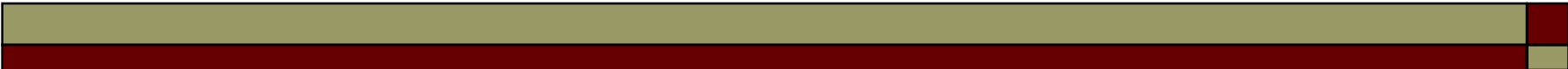
- ❑ **The International Council of Museums definition:**

- ❑ A museum is a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment.



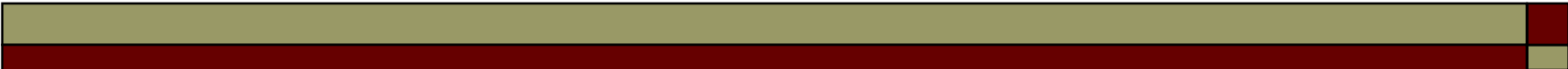
Definitions – Museum

- ❑ **The Museums Association (United Kingdom) definition:**
- ❑ A museum is an institution which collects, documents, preserves, exhibits and interprets material evidence and associated information for the public benefit.



A museum is an institution which collects, documents, preserves, exhibits and interprets material evidence and associated information for the public benefit.

- ❑ ‘Institution’ implies formalised establishment, = long-term purpose
- ❑ ‘Collects’ = all means of acquisition
- ❑ ‘Documents’ emphasises need to maintain records
- ❑ ‘Preserves’ = all aspects of conservation and security
- ❑ ‘Exhibits’ stands for expectation of visitors that they will be able to see at least a representative selection of the objects in the collections
- ❑ ‘Interprets’ covers display, education, research and publication



A museum is an institution which collects, documents, preserves, exhibits and interprets material evidence and associated information for the public benefit.

- ❑ ‘Material’ indicates something that is tangible
- ❑ ‘Evidence’ guarantees its authenticity (‘real thing’)
- ❑ ‘Associated information’
 - represents the knowledge which prevents a museum object being merely a curio
 - ❑ strange and interesting object which evokes curiosity
 - includes all records relating to its past history, acquisition and subsequent usage
- ❑ ‘for the public benefit’ = deliberately open ended; is intended to reflect current thinking “museums are the servants of society”, both within + outside profession

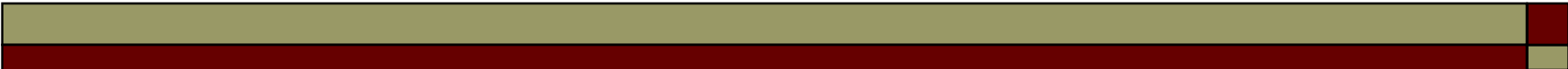
Definitions – Museum

- ❑ **The American Association of Museums definition:**
- ❑ A non-profit permanent, established institution, not existing primarily for the purpose of conducting temporary exhibitions, exempt from federal and state income taxes, open to the public and administered in the public interest, for the purpose of conserving and preserving, studying, interpreting, assembling, and exhibiting to the public for its instruction and enjoyment objects and specimens of educational and cultural value, including artistic, scientific (whether animate or inanimate), historical and technological material. Museums thus defined shall include botanical gardens, zoological parks, aquaria, planetaria, historical societies, and historic houses and sites which meet the requirements set forth in the preceding sentence.



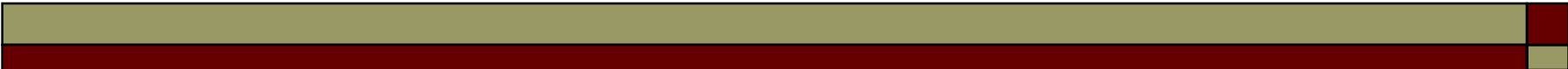
Museums and the shaping of knowledge

- = shaping knowledge over last 600 years: structures of knowledge and rules for the production of truth (especially during period of the Renaissance *episteme*, the classical age, and the modern age)
- accumulation of material things (natural + artificial) → one of the ways to know the world
- cabinets, *studioli*, *Theatrum sapientiae*, *repositories*, and ‘museums’ = constituted according to the prevailing epistemological context → enabled different ways of knowing → always according to the rules and structures in place at the time



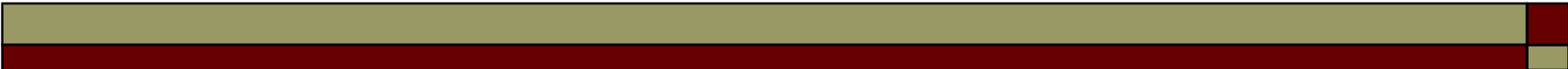
There is no essential museum!

- ❑ museum is not a pre-constituted entity which is produced in the same way at all times ('direct ancestors' or 'fundamental role' identified)
- ❑ identities, targets, functions, subject positions = variable + discontinuous
- ❑ no essential identity for museums
- ❑ constituted identities = subject to constant change (due to shifts, new relations of advantage and disadvantage)
- ❑ 'Truth is of the world: it is produced by virtue of multiple constraints' (Foucault, 1977b:13).



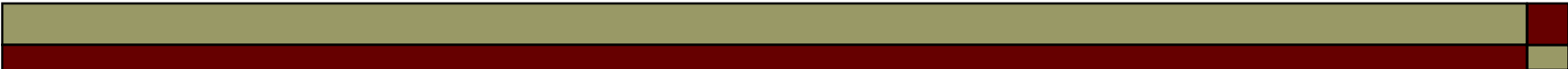
Museums as part of “Cultural Theory”

- ❑ Argument: we inhabit culture in the sense that we share a certain amount of knowledge and understanding about our environment → share “cultural maps,” of shared cultural maps involves making judgments about cultural practices or products + their value, status, and legitimacy
- ❑ applicable to work within museums and galleries where the act of display = of definition and attribution of value: “this is art” or “this is culture.”
- ❑ Controversies: arise over such acts of value definition



Definitions – Exhibitions

- ❑ most general sense: an exhibition is an organized presentation and display of a selection of items / artefacts / objects / displays / actions / performances
- ❑ In practice: usually occur within a cultural or educational setting (museum, art gallery, park, library, exhibition hall, or World's fairs)
- ❑ What does being an exhibition mean? → both the act of exhibiting or the state of being exhibited
- ❑ Can also be sporadic – pop-up exhibition

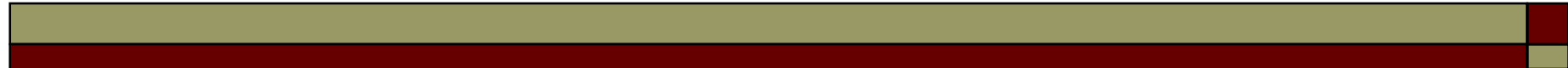


Pop-up exhibition

- ❑ temporary event, less formal than a gallery or museum but more formal than private showing of work
- ❑ Was introduced in the art world
- ❑ Pop-up exhibits are erroneously called pop-up museums, such as the Museum of Ice Cream but do not fit the International Council of Museums definition of a museum

Why is a pop-up exhibition outside this definition?

- ❑ **The International Council of Museums definition:**
- ❑ A museum is a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment.



Online / Virtual exhibition or museum

- ❑ An online exhibition (virtual exhibition, online gallery, cyber-exhibition) is an exhibition whose venue is cyberspace.
 - Ranges from extension of a website with images and text to virtually creating an exhibition room visitors can walk through with virtual reality and several software packages (CoSpace, Kunstmatrix, ...)
- ❑ A virtual museum is a collection of digitally recorded images, sound files, text documents, and other data of historical, scientific, or cultural interest that are accessed through electronic media.

Something like that

Exhibition Overview

Exhibition Objects

- <https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2020/goyas-graphic-imagination>

Exhibition Objects

116 Objects



Two Hunters

Goya (Francisco de Goya y Lucientes) (Spanish, Fuendetodos 1746–1828 Bordeaux)

Date: ca. 1775

Medium: Pen and ink on blue paper



Garroted Man

Goya (Francisco de Goya y Lucientes) (Spanish, Fuendetodos 1746–1828 Bordeaux)

Date: ca. 1775–78

Medium: Etching, printed in blue (working proof)

Accession Number: 20.22



Blind Guitarist

Goya (Francisco de Goya y Lucientes) (Spanish, Fuendetodos 1746–1828 Bordeaux)

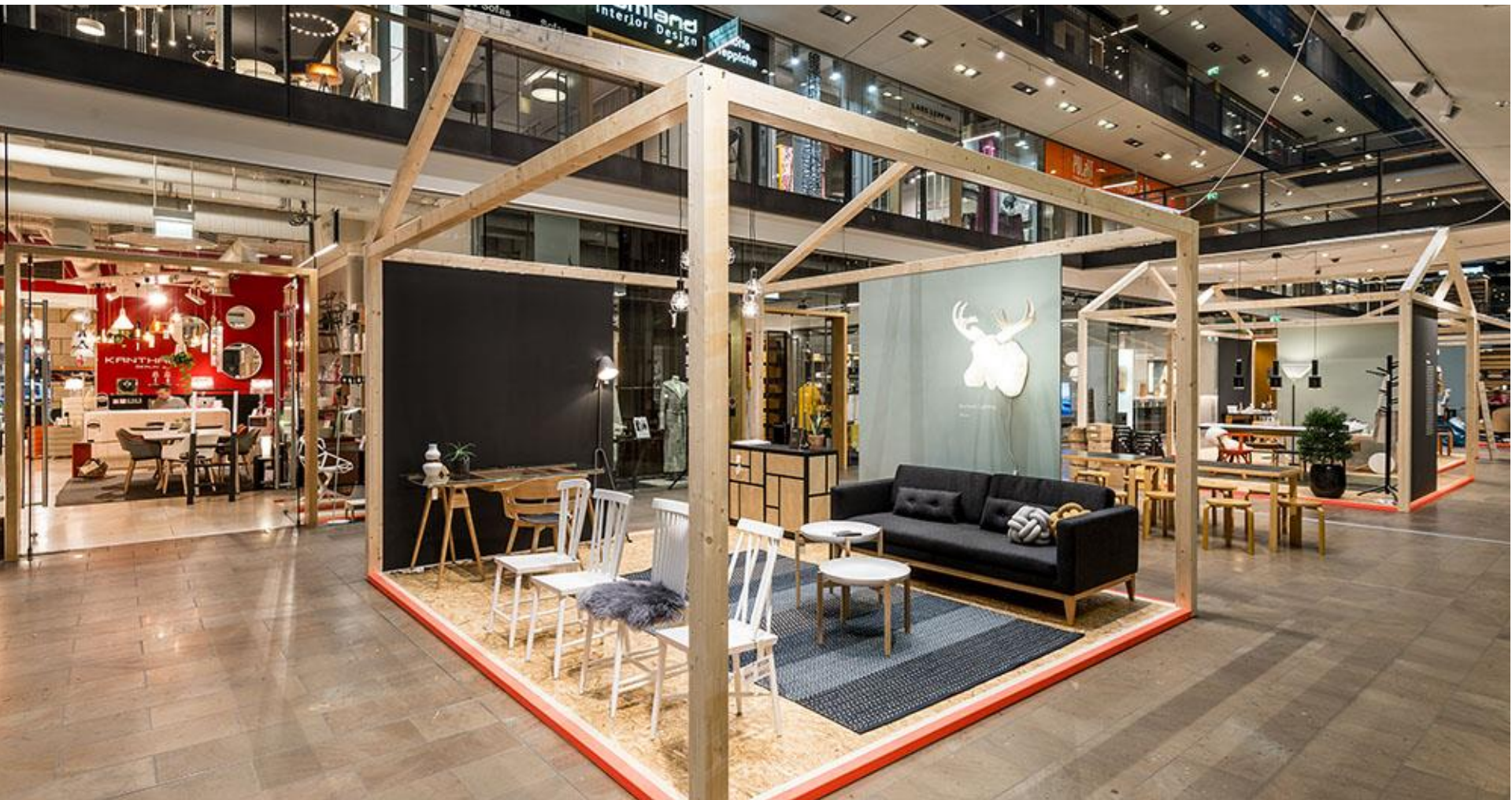
Date: ca. 1778

Medium: Etching

Accession Number: 22.63.29



Up to something like that...



Or something like that... (roaming exhibitions)





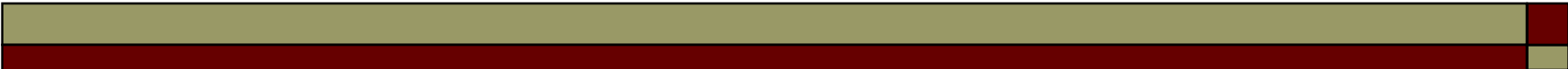
Exhibitions and museums as part of “Cultural Theory”

- ❑ public spaces in which definitions of cultures and their values = actively contested and debated
- ❑ materialize values + supports processes of meaning-making into sharp relief
- ❑ = reason that they are of such interest to cultural theoreticians and museum studies researchers alike

But more importantly!!!!

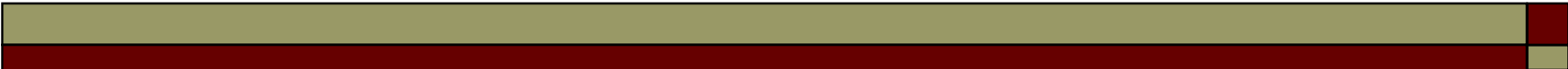
Exhibitions and museums as contact zone

- = interactive nature of the relationships between various communities, stakeholders
- “contact zone” = space of transcultural encounter → heritage: space where different cultures and communities intersect, interact, and are mutually influenced by the encounter
- Flexible / interchanging → reacting to (potential) visitors
- museums are changing continually in response to their own changing contexts – colonial, postcolonial, modern, postmodern, public, commercial, ...
- If longer term museum: itself = community with its own conventions and cultural values



Classifications – Types of museums

1. Classified by collections
 2. Classified by who runs them
 3. Classified by the audience they serve
 4. Classified by the way they exhibit their collections
-
- ☐ Most museums fall in more than one category / overlapping
 - ☐ → could also be applied to exhibitions

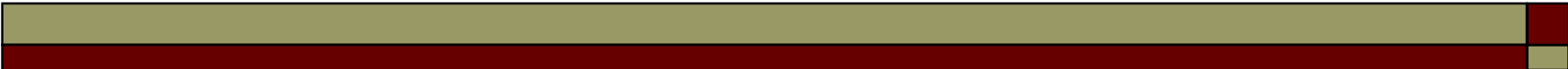


1. Types of museums – Classified by collections

- ☐ general museums
- ☐ archaeology museums
- ☐ art museums
- ☐ history museums
- ☐ ethnography museums
- ☐ natural history museums
- ☐ science museums
- ☐ geology museums
- ☐ industrial museums
- ☐ military museums

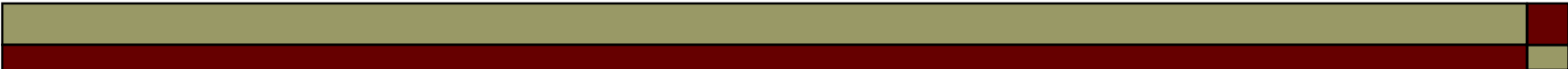
2. Types of museums – Classified by who runs them

- ❑ • government museums
- ❑ • municipal museums
- ❑ • university museums
- ❑ • independent (charitable trust) museums
- ❑ • army museums
- ❑ • commercial company museums
- ❑ • private museums



3. Types of museums - Classified by the area they serve

- ❑ national museums
- ❑ regional museums
- ❑ city museums
- ❑ local museums



4. Types of museums - Classified by the way they exhibit their collections

- ❑ traditional museums
- ❑ historic house museums
- ❑ open-air museums
- ❑ interactive museums

A manifesto for the object?

(Following O. Pamuk's *Manifesto for Museums*)

WE HAD

Epics
Representations
Monuments
Histories
Nations, Groups,
Teams
Large and expensive

WE NEED

Novels
Expression
Homes
Stories
Persons, Individuals
Small and Cheap

OBJECTS NEED

Stories
Attention
Awareness for
materiality
Identity (receiving
and giving)
Any scale



Hearing all this

❑ **WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR
YOUR PLANNED
EXHIBITION?**