

Great historical narratives in Europe's national museums

Les grands récits du passé et les musées nationaux en Europe

Conference organised by Pr. Dominique Poulot, Université de Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne as part of the Eunamus project – *European National Museums: Identity Politics, the Uses of the Past and the European Citizen*.

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Keynote speakers:

Session 1: María BOLAÑOS (Museo Nacional Colegio de San Gregorio, Valladolid)

Nations and fictions. On the national museums in Spain

This presentation summarises the history of the national museums in Spain through three key moments of their historical evolution: firstly their origins in the mid 19th century, linked to the construction of the liberal state, secondly in the Second Spanish Republic (1931-36) and thirdly in the postwar period, under Franco's dictatorship (1939-1975). The aim of this presentation is to consider national museums in their political framework.

Session 2: Ellinoor BERGVELT (University of Amsterdam)

History in the Dutch National Museums (1800-1940)

Only during the first years of the Rijksmuseum (1800-1806), history was as important as art. After 1806 in the national museum history became secondary to art. In 1816 a second national art museum was founded. Both national museums had the same purpose: to be a school for contemporary artists. For that purpose the museum staff would have liked to acquire foreign 16th- and 17th-century art, but because of the dire economic circumstances they had to be content with Dutch and Flemish paintings. Sometimes the museums also acquired paintings with historical

subjects, which were much cheaper than ‘real’ art; they seem to be acquired as an afterthought, rather than as a priority.

The Belgian Revolt of 1830 caused an almost complete stop on spending for the national museums. That lasted until about 1870. Not only the war with Belgium was to blame, but also the liberal governments that were in power until c. 1870; according to them culture was a matter for private individuals and not a task for the government.

In 1876 finally a museum for Dutch history was founded in The Hague. This museum had a very varied collection, with which no coherent narrative was possible. When the Dutch economy revived around c. 1870 finally the decision was taken to build a new Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. It opened in 1885/7, with a new history department: the collection of the museum in The Hague. The presentation in this department was again not coherent, because it had to be made in a very short period of time. The same applies to the art department.

After a national discussion in the 1910s and 1920s the Rijksmuseum departments were modernized and reorganized: the paintings department (1920s), the department of Dutch maritime history (1931) and the department of Dutch history (1937).

Session 3: Alexandra LOUMPET-GALITZINE (Maison des sciences de l’homme, Paris)

Un introuvable consensus ? Musées nationaux et grands récits en Afrique francophone

Mis en place après les indépendances, les différents musées nationaux des pays africains francophones, généralement issus de collections plus anciennes, ont peiné à dépasser un paradigme primitiviste accordant une place centrale à la préhistoire et l’ethnographie. Ni tout à fait musée d’histoire, ni d’art, achoppant sur des tensions politiques internes ou l’existence d’ensembles culturels transnationaux, ces musées reflètent la difficulté de jeunes Etats à bâtir un grand récit supra-ethnique et à le mettre en scène. Si des transformations récentes attestent dans certains pays d’orientations nouvelles, l’exemple des différents projets inaboutis du musée national au Cameroun ainsi que le développement concomitant de musées régionaux ou de communautés, soulignent également les diverses narrations muséographiques de l’absence d’un grand récit, offrant ainsi l’opportunité de réinterroger la fonction même du musée national à l’échelle continentale.

Presentations:

Eugenia AFINOQUENOVA (Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI)

Inscribing Monarchy into the New Regime: Time and Abundance at the Prado Museum,

1838-1868

“Post-Napoleonic” art museums are known for their patriotic agendas linking nations to their ruling monarchs or state structures. Producing the timelines and “schools” for national art, galleries also matched cosmopolitan cultures with the maps of nation-states. But since what ‘nation’ meant was itself a matter of a debate, national time and space represented in the museums were a contested

topic. The standard definition of nationhood refers to a community of voting citizens and/or taxpayers. Yet over the course of the nineteenth century other notions of nationhood were more prominent. One referred to a people identified with the Royal family. The other meant the State as a system of new administrative institutions. Yet another—cultural—definition relied on the notion of a community sharing a language and a mythology that could mean an institutionalized religion, a genealogy of national heroes, or some type of reinvented paganism. Different structures of time and space corresponded to each of these concepts of nationhood.

My paper will examine such hybrid narratives of the nation by focusing on the changes in Royal public museums under the Nouveau Régime. Specifically, I will explore now the shifting notions of nationhood translated into varying configurations of time and space at the Historical Gallery and the Gallery of Queen Isabella, designed by José de Madrazo at the Royal Museum in Madrid during Isabella II's reign. As I will argue, the contested female succession and the deepening of the crisis of monarchy triggered a need for transforming the museum (founded by the Queen's father Ferdinand VII with the purpose of improving shattered royal image) into a new type of display that would legitimize the Crown as a productive force vital for the nation.

Giovanni ARENA (Seconda Università di Napoli)

The City of the colonial museums: an exemplary case, the Mostra d'Oltremare of Naples

The *Mostra d'Oltremare* (First Triennial Exhibition of Italian Overseas Territories, 1940) is one of the most spectacular examples of exhibition of public and private colonial collections as well as governance practices implementation. It was settled, furthermore, to celebrate the expansion of the colonized territory by means of a multifaceted communication approach, abundance of financial resources, modern display techniques and the deployment of all well-known propaganda resources concerning the opportunities of Italy's overseas empire. The exhibition, in connection with the urban renewal of a portion of the city, was not only conceived as the finalization of the intervention in the urban district of Fuorigrotta but, mainly, as a driving vision of the city. The *Mostra* became the amplifying core of the function of Naples toward activities closely related to the life of the empire: it was thought as a real "idea of the city" whose trade and touristic sectors were going to play a key role.

In the *Mostra*, both in 1940 and in 1952 after the post-war reconstruction, the architecture and the art played a fundamental role, not only in the general project and in the architectural realizations, but also in the specific expositive choices, with the intent to reach a full comprehensibility of its contents. The wide range of experiences of the designers of the *Mostra d'Oltremare* exhibitions, nowadays documented by a few survived fragmented findings, became an exemplary model for the Italian way of exposition-design. By comparing the iconographic and textual documentation of the Naples Triennial in 1940, three specific types of exhibitions are detected. A major exhibition dedicated to the worship of Roman civilization.

Colonial exhibitions concerned, mainly, the geographical sector and were characterized by a constant eclecticism of the collections: memorabilia and photos of explorers, weapons and local products, objects, were picked and exposed with the purpose to demonstrate the wealth of the conquered territories, as well as the existence of new territories, ready to be conquered by the "Italian genius". The merchandise exhibits, concerning mainly the production and work sectors, were characterized by suggestions greatly communicative, plastic-iconic inventions and unexpected space articulations.

Milena BARTLOVÁ (Collegium Europaeum, Prague)

Shared space for two historical memories: Museum of German speaking people in the Czech Republic

The Czech National Museum in Prague has served since its foundation in the late 18th century as an important tool of identity performance for the Czech speaking inhabitants of Bohemia. The German speaking minority was never included in the story which the museum has construed, preserved and presented. The forced displacement of nearly three millions of Germans in 1946/47 changed the country which is now Czech Republic into a single nation state and culture. The contribution is devoted to the creation of a major museum, supported by the state that would be devoted to the historical presence of Germans in Bohemia and Moravia. The museum's concept is unique in so far as it will present a story of two interacting historical memories, which will be construed neither as inimical, nor as harmonious. The museum's inevitable engagement in social and political sensitivities intensifies the demand for both good scholarly grounding and effective realization of the museum's message. Transformation of the concept into the language of objects in a museum installation has been led by the devise "museum is the island of reality in a sea of fiction". At the same time, the formative role of space and movement of visitors in it has been acknowledged and a leading architect has been selected to collaborate with curators in creating an eloquent museum space.

Arnaud BERTINET (Université de Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne),

Préserver l'institution : La protection des collections publiques françaises durant la guerre de 1870

En 1870, la guerre franco-prussienne est le révélateur d'un nouvel engagement de l'État dans l'administration du patrimoine national, celui de la protection des collections muséales. En effet, si la voie de l'affrontement armé contre la Prusse montre un empire français trop serein et confiant en sa victoire, l'évolution du conflit finit par inquiéter le régime.

Alors que la situation de l'armée du Rhin devient périlleuse à la fin du mois d'août 1870, décision est prise de protéger les collections du Louvre. Les œuvres sont évacuées tandis que le Second Empire vit ses derniers jours. À la chute du régime, le comte de Nieuwerkerke, surintendant des musées impériaux, démissionne de ses fonctions dans un Louvre vidé de ses principales collections. Les tableaux placés durant vingt ans sous sa protection dépendent alors d'un seul attaché de conservation qui veille sur eux, loin de Paris assiégée puis en pleine tourmente, au moment des événements de la Commune. Devant l'avancée des troupes prussiennes, Arsène Houssaye, inspecteur général des beaux-arts en charge des musées de province, conseille, dans une circulaire adressée à tous les conservateurs de France, de prendre les mesures nécessaires à la protection de leurs collections.

Cette évacuation et cette circulaire, ainsi que les réactions constatées dans les divers musées de province, montrent à quel point l'éventuelle récupération de saisies révolutionnaires et les

destructions liées à la guerre moderne inquiètent l'institution. Ces mois de tension, qui nous paraissent révélateurs de l'évolution du musée, sont pourtant encore très mal connus.

Afin d'apporter un début d'explication à cet oubli de commémoration, nous interrogerons la portée réelle de cet événement, l'importance politique alors accordée au patrimoine muséal sous le Second Empire et l'absence de cet épisode dans l'histoire des musées français.

Maria Anna BERTOLINO (Università degli Studi di Torino)

Muséologie et anthropologie: histoire d'une rencontre (en Italie)

« L'itala gente dalle molte vite » : dans ces mots du folkloriste Lamberto Loria se résume le projet de collection de témoignages matériels du « Beau Pays » qui devait conduire à la naissance d'une anthropologie italienne. L'intervention vise à retracer l'idéologie muséologique qui accompagne la naissance des sciences ethno-anthropologiques de la fin du XIXe siècle à nos jours. En fait, depuis le Premier Congrès d'Ethnographie Italienne, tenu à Rome en 1911, on retrace la volonté des fondateurs de l'anthropologie de démarrer des campagnes de collecte d'objets appartenant au monde folklorique et paysan. Cependant, le rêve d'une muséographie de conception anthropologique s'estompe pendant les deux guerres mondiales mais il se réaffirme dans les années Soixante du XXe siècle avec un phénomène sociale de construction de musées ethnographiques par des associations locales et des groupes de bénévoles. Les anthropologues du monde académique italien, qui avaient quitté l'institution du musée, reviennent à en occuper et avec eux la loi italienne relative au monde des biens matériels et immatériels dont on apportera des exemples.

Constanze BREUER (University of Halle), Paul KAHL (University of Göttingen)

National Museums as Personal Memorial Sites?

Taking the Goethe National Museum in Weimar as a starting point for our presentation, we try to develop a new approach in understanding the type of museum designated as a “national museum”. First, we show that the Goethe National Museum was initially identical with Goethe's house, and in particular his study as the most important memorial site. Moreover, the foundation of the Goethe National Museum in 1885 marked the institutionalization of a personal memorial site – known in German as a “Personengedenkstätte”. It is the only personal memorial site that was elevated to the status of a national museum in 19th century Europe. Drawing on this special case, it can be shown that in general German national museums follow the pattern of personal memorial sites. Their origins lie in the culture of monuments and memory, less in the general history of museums. The Germanic National Museum (1852), the Bavarian National Museum (1855) and the Schiller National Museum (1903) were all not founded with the primary aim of creating collections. Their aim was rather to create a place to remember the national past as a historical continuum, to represent the life and the deeds of persons connected with the national identity. The Goethehaus Weimar is a special case insofar as a real personal commemorative site forms the basis of a national museum. Our considerations are framed by the theory of society developed by the German sociologist Niclas Luhmann, who saw a correlation between the rise of the “semantics of the nation” and the shift to modernity occurring in most European societies during the 18th century.

We argue that these semantics are mapped to national museums in the form of personal memorial sites. Finally, we will discuss the question as to whether our approach can be applied to national museums outside Germany.

Caroline CAILLET (Université de Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne)

Paris/Alger: un cas de restitutions mutuelles entre le Musée des beaux-arts d'Alger et le Musée du Louvre, 1960/1970

Nous proposons d'aborder le cas du Musée des beaux-arts d'Alger, créé en 1930 à l'occasion du Centenaire de l'Algérie française, et les négociations entre l'Algérie et la France autour de la propriété des œuvres après l'indépendance de l'Algérie. Les collections, constituées d'œuvres mises en dépôt par les musées nationaux français ou achetées par le musée, sont évacuées pour être mises à l'abri en France en 1962, et réclamées ensuite par le gouvernement algérien, considérées comme faisant partie du patrimoine national. Un accord franco-algérien conclu en 1968 statue sur la propriété des œuvres et les répartit entre les deux pays : on peut alors parler de « restitutions mutuelles ».

De nombreuses lettres, notes et rapports échangés entre les conservateurs, la Direction des Musées de France, le Ministère des Affaires culturelles et celui des Affaires étrangères à propos la situation des musées d'Algérie permettent de reconstituer les événements et les rapports entre la France et l'Algérie autour des enjeux de ce patrimoine. Ce sujet permettra de s'interroger sur le patrimoine comme un enjeu de construction de l'identité nationale, à la fois dans l'Algérie française et dans l'Algérie indépendante, notamment à travers la nature des collections. Il conviendra de considérer le rôle du politique, dans ce cas à part d'appropriation et de demande de restitutions d'un patrimoine à l'origine étranger.

Marie CAILLOT (École nationale des Chartes, Paris)

Museums and National Ideologies in the 1930s Europe: The International Museums Office (1927-1946) and the Archaeological Museums of Germany, France and Italy

The American political scientist Benedict Anderson defines a nation as an "imagined community", i.e. a group of individuals united by common beliefs and values. Museums are one of the places where national discourses are forged; indeed, heritage objects and works of art are memorial and symbolic signifiers. Museum collections anchor societies anchoring in time. Objects in museum showcases are not there by chance. Their selection and staging speak about the society and the national discourse it is transmitting. Museums are thus a possible angle of analysis to decrypt national ideologies and the way history is written or rewritten.

National rhetorics make use of museum collections, in particular with regard to archaeological pieces. Indeed, archaeological objects are often linked to national sentiment, as they function as identity markers. It is no surprise that the history of museums shows that states seeking to build a national ideology use archaeological museums to anchor their discourse in a historical legitimacy. This was the case in Italy and Germany, but also France during the 1930s.

The national archaeological museums in these three states experienced significant changes in terms of museology, which also demonstrates the nationalist trends at work. However, also at this

time, a pacifist organization of the League of Nations, the International Office of Museums (IOM – *Office international des Musées (OIM)* in French), strived to achieve international cooperation in the field of museums. The IOM organized international conferences about museums and the protection of heritage, with an internationalist perspective (Roma, 1930; Athens, 1931; Madrid, 1934; Cairo, 1937), published one of the first manual for museums (*Museography*, 1934) and the monthly bulletin *Museion* (1927-1946), which aimed to promote the spread of new museological trends and the ideal of a pacifist use of museums.

Nathalie CEREZALES (Université de Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne)

Les expositions d'art religieux en Espagne : Porte-parole du message religieux ecclésiastique?

Dans l'Espagne contemporaine, les quelques 400 musées ecclésiastiques du pays peinent à conquérir un public, alors que les expositions temporaires d'art religieux entraînent le déplacement de millions d'espagnols. Pouvant être qualifiées de *blockbusters* au regard du nombre de visiteur et de la ville d'exposition, elles débutent il y a vingt-deux ans dans la région de Castille y León avec le cycle *Las Edades del Hombre* (Les âges de l'homme).

José Velicia, prêtre chargé de la pastorale du diocèse de Valladolid et organisateur de l'événement, conçoit une formule reproduite à l'identique dans divers endroits du pays. À l'aide d'une muséographie didactique et attrayante, les œuvres sont présentées dans un lieu de culte, souvent une cathédrale, dégagé pour l'occasion de ses effets liturgiques et transformé en « musée éphémère ». Les objets appartiennent exclusivement à la région dans laquelle ils sont présentés et témoignent non seulement de l'histoire de la région et des prouesses artistiques du passé, mais doivent également rendre compte du rôle qu'a joué l'Eglise tout au long de l'histoire.

On constate alors que ces expositions ont à l'origine une triple vocation : elles s'insèrent dans un premier temps dans un mouvement de redynamisation du territoire régional, face à une unité nationale prônée sous le franquisme. Ensuite, elles tendent à réhabiliter l'image de l'Eglise, actrice majeure durant le franquisme, accusée en outre d'abandonner son patrimoine. Les expositions deviennent un moyen de tempérer les campagnes de presse qui soulignent ses différentes négligences, ainsi que le manque d'éducation artistique du clergé. Enfin, elles ont clairement une ambition pastorale : elles visent à promouvoir l'Eglise et son discours, dans une Espagne touchée par un phénomène de sécularisation accélérée.

On remarque, avec la multiplication de ce modèle d'exposition en dehors de Castille y León et alors même que ces manifestations ne sont plus rattachées à l'Eglise, que le discours reste sensiblement le même. Ainsi, il serait intéressant à travers cette étude d'analyser à la fois le discours sous-jacent tenu dans les expositions et la mise en pratique muséographique de ce discours. Cela permettrait de comprendre en quoi ce modèle d'exposition révolutionne la mise en valeur du patrimoine religieux en Espagne et les raisons du succès de ces manifestations, encore de nos jours.

Amy CLARKE (University of Queensland, Australia)

From Royal to National: the Changing Face of the National Museum of Scotland (Australia)

Since devolution in 1997 Scotland has been a nation increasingly conscious of its national brand. The Scottish government has undertaken several international partnerships in the fields of culture, education and commerce, and through its rhetoric and policy the government appears to be encouraging a global perception of Scotland as a nation in the throes of a ‘New Enlightenment.’ The National Museum of Scotland (and former Royal Museum) has benefited from this alleged cultural renaissance, having reopened this July following its second renovation in less than 15 years. Comprised of two separate buildings, the former Royal Museum (1854) and the Museum of Scotland (1998), the National Museum of Scotland’s most recent construction program restored and modernised the Royal Museum structure, which had originally been built as an Industrial Museum before receiving Royal status in 1904.

Given the fact that the Royal Museum’s origins were in part a testament to Scotland’s position in the United Kingdom and British Empire, the current Museum’s new form communicates much about the evolution of Scotland’s national identity and its relationship with the world. Scotland’s evolution from 19th century industrial powerhouse of the British Empire to the increasingly independent ‘Enlightened’ nation of today has been echoed by the ever-changing form of its national Museum. This paper will explore the evolution of the National Museum of Scotland from its origins as an Industrial Museum to its modern conception and will ultimately seek to show that the National Museum of Scotland fulfils an alternate role as an historic artefact in and of itself, as much a victim of Scotland’s evolving identity as the historic relics it houses.

Sylvain CORDIER (Paris, independent scholar)

Intimating History: (re)-furnishing Versailles for Louis-Philippe’s Musée d’histoire de France (1834-1837)

Among European historical museums, Versailles occupies a very specific place. The palace of the abolished kings was reinvested in the 1830s by liberal ideology inherited from the Revolution. From now on intended to display art collections dedicated “à toutes les gloires de la France”, the castle must undoubtedly be regarded as an iconic space for understanding the concept of National narrative within a historical place. From the Frank conquest to the revolution of 1830, the Versailles Museum, organized by the July Monarchy and opened in 1837, aimed to display a very framed and controlled discursive program on national history of whom each individual from the French people – and the electoral body – was supposed to feel a member and a part of.

The different natures and the variety of aspects of this very dramatic program on French multi-secular history constitute an immense source of reflection and study on the principle of historical narrative within the museum space. Thomas Gaehtgens, Claire Constans, or Michael Marrinan, have carefully studied important narrative cycles such as the *Galerie des Batailles*, the *Salles des Croisades* or the *salle de 1830* within this ideological context.

The purpose of this communication is to present the part that a traditionally more discrete, yet extremely effective medium, was intended to play in this massive reorganization of the castle to

turn it into a public museum. Furniture installed in the Museum rooms, whether consisting of modern deliveries for public use or historical pieces moved to Versailles from different Royal locations for exhibition, played an important part in the historical discourse of the Castle/Museum. My aim is to analyze the different ways the furnishing of Versailles may be understood as a form of narrative throughout the different sections of the museum.

An empty space in the 1830, Versailles had been the victim of the Revolutionary auction sales of its interiors and of the impossibility for both the Empire and the Restoration to properly re-inhabit the castle. Reusing the castle, whatever the purpose, implied for the July Monarchy to entirely refurnish it. The orders for furniture were numerous and massive, involving hundreds of benches as well as new historicist objects supposed to give new life to the State apartments. The ensemble undoubtedly expresses the idea that the style, the typology or the specific dispositions of the furniture on display along the walls of the galleries, or throughout the kings' apartments, were themselves companions to the same purpose of historical narration throughout the visit.

The problematic raised by the display of historically evocative furniture at Versailles is all the more interesting when compared to other policies of display in spaces involved in the narration of National histories in early nineteenth century. The cases of the different museums gathered in the Louvre (Musée royal, Musée Charles X, Musée Dauphin) offer an interesting point of comparison in France. Abroad, the historicist restoration of Windsor Castle in Britain, which began as a Royal whim by George IV but which became in part a museum after its opening to the public in 1848, shall also be considered.

Christina NTAFLOU (Université de Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne)

Les musées grecs avant et après le musée d'Acropole

Le nouveau musée d'Acropole a été officiellement inauguré en juin 2009. Les projets de sa construction datent depuis les années 1960 et les tentatives pour une sélection d'architectes de la scène internationale datent des années 1990. Les projets de réalisation du nouveau bâtiment pour le musée ont toujours été liés à la demande de restitution des marbres d'Elgin, un sujet qui tient un intérêt autant national qu'international. Le musée inauguré en 2009, plusieurs voix critiques ont été entendues, notamment pour son architecture et sa muséographie. Cette inauguration a par ailleurs alimenté la bibliographie avec des livres et des articles sur l'usage du passé et des antiquités dans les narrations nationalistes et imaginaires. Certes, le musée d'Acropole est un symbole pour les Grecs et une « arme » pour les arguments d'une demande de retour des marbres, indispensable pour l'État. Il prend part, pour ainsi dire, dans le conflit entre les défenseurs de l'une et l'autre opinion. Sous un autre point de vue, le musée est un lieu qui s'apparente conflictuel vis-à-vis les autres musées publics en Grèce, qu'ils soient nationaux, publics ou privés. En effet, d'autres projets de musées nationaux, tel celui du musée national d'art contemporain, ont pris et prennent beaucoup de temps à être réalisés. La politique culturelle et muséale officielle n'a pas pu bien gérer ces musées qui attribueront de la valeur à tous les récits nationaux qui accompagnent l'État depuis sa création au XIX^e siècle. Elle n'a pas non plus défini assez bien le musée, institution qui, aux yeux de la politique grecque, se représente mieux dans le musée archéologique. Ainsi, cet exposé présentera tant les usages du musée d'Acropole que sa mise en parallèle à d'autres musées grecs qui n'ont pas connu un destin et une réputation pareils. Les évolutions muséales et les choix muséographiques seront davantage au centre d'analyse.

Gabor ÉBLI (Moholy-Nagy University of Arts and Design, Budapest)

Between Aesthetics and Politics. On the Mission of National Galleries in Eastern Europe

Eager to articulate a vision of their history and their characteristics as a newly defined community, Central European nations – only being born in the course of events – keenly set up national museums in the 19th century. For many of these nations, attaining the status of a sovereign nation state lasted beyond the long nineteenth century, well onto the threshold of the 20th and 21st centuries. The role their national museums assumed has changed accordingly over time.

In parallel, these public collections also aimed at scholarly status, first in line with the principles of the Enlightenment, then yielding to the torchlight of specialised collections in the age of positivism, and trying to adapt to shifting expectations ever since. This autonomous vocation has often come into conflict with the task of forging and demonstrating national identity.

Today, most national museums in Central and Eastern Europe vacillate between, or try to balance, these tasks. While globalisation might seem to have put the national projects of museums into the background, actually several institutions in the region are confronted with expectations from the public, the media and politicians alike to play national(ist) tones.

In a comparative view, this paper looks at a special kind of national museums – national art galleries. From the 19th century on, the representation of art became central to museum development in the region, often as a proxy for overt national political messages suppressed by occupying foreign powers. Collections of national art contributed to building up a cultural canon, as much as expressed in symbolic language a desire for autonomy. Holdings of universal art, on the other hand, announced the determination of these small countries to rival, or at least imitate, leading museums in Europe.

With a focus on Hungary, the presentation will look at the institutionalisation of national art collections as well as their placement and urban environment. The emphasis on the changing message of their exhibitions over the past two centuries will be rounded up by brief references to other national galleries from Central Europe (19th century) to the Balkans (20th century).

Aleksandar IGNJATOVIĆ (University of Belgrade)

Tales of a New Nation: The National Museum in Belgrade in the interwar period (1918-1941)

Like many national museums in the nineteenth-century Europe, the National Museum in Belgrade, established in 1844, was one of the key instruments for the historicization of Serbian national identity and its affirmation in the public space. Nevertheless, in the wake of the Great War that marked the official end of the Kingdom of Serbia and the birth of the first Yugoslavia, the museum was transformed to suit the needs of the newly-imagined nation, becoming one of the producers of a narrative that would legitimate the elite's political aims. The narrative was formed from carefully selected historical events told through objects and works of art that reinforced the complex ideological objectives of Yugoslavism. On the one hand, the museum's collections were organized to support the historicist and evolutionary idea providing the historical legitimization of the ideology that advocated the historicity of both Yugoslavia as a political community and Yugoslav

nation as a communion of different peoples. At the same time, the display stressed the idea of cultural continuity of a 'compound nation' from antiquity to the present, which was a crucial segment of the same ideological framework aimed at creating an image of Yugoslav cultural superiority. Represented as complex and multifaceted, the Yugoslav historical narrative was complemented by yet another layer that ultimately put the Yugoslav historical perspective into a wider context, showing that local cultures—as complex and diverse as presented in the museum—had been and still were an inseparable part of European civilization.

It is interesting to trace this dual narrative through a variety of means—from the structure of the museum's collections, its permanent display, to international exhibitions, publication activities and the interior of the museum itself. It followed both linear-chronological and spatial-vertical frameworks, which simultaneously put a rather idealized history of Yugoslav culture and art into a distinct perspective. The display also revealed a double structure of the underlying historical narrative: one putting apart the long-lasting legacy of the Ottoman Empire, stressing the invented historical continuity of a syncretic Yugoslav culture described by carefully chosen objects; and the other promoting a wishful-image of the nation virtually united by the common ground of European civilization. In the context of the political and social instability of the country, shaken by a political crisis that followed failed attempts to historicize the nation as a single group, such a narrative seemed to have established a rather new paradigm of national identity conceived through a vision of different but shared histories of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes who had equally participated in the development of European civilization.

The comparison of the collections before and after the watershed-year of 1918 is quite indicative of complex ideological functions of the museum. Although the aim of the post-1918 display had been to reinforce Yugoslav, not Serbian history, it revealed a noticeable ideological ambiguity. Despite the fact that the overall perspective shifted from solely Serbian towards a multicultural concept of the nation's past (which should have supported a synthetic Yugoslav identity), pre-Yugoslav, Serbian state-building traditions remained the focus of the display.

Tiffany JENKINS (Institute of Ideas, London)

Inverting the nation at the British Museum

The British Museum, formed in 1753 in London was the first public museum in England. It forged great historical narratives and contributed to constructions of the nation and British identity. As a national museum, through its architecture and presentation of objects it helped to make the nation visible. In the last decade, however, the discourse of how the museum is presented has quietly altered. The museum is no longer formally referred to as a 'universal museum', opting instead for a 'museum of the world'. The director speaks of the institution as promoting tolerance. Rather than presenting the British nation, the newly presented British Museum is said to help people understand difference. A future exhibition to be shown next year will be 'Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam'. The great historical narrative of the nation is being replaced at the British Museum by a discourse that reveals multiple narratives of others. This presentation will consider why these themes have emerged now, why the Nation is problematic, how the British Museum is adapting to the changed social and political situation, and to what extent this revision can legitimate the British Museum.

Frank Matthias KAMMEL (Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg)

The cultural memory of a nation without national borders.

The *Germanisches Nationalmuseum* (Nuremberg) showcases and researches German-speaking culture. Its foundation in 1852 was grounded in the unity conscience of a nation which was characterised by a common language and culture but lived in numerous separate states: the particular German states, the Habsburg Empire, Switzerland, France (Alsace) etc. It is thus a 'Germanic' and not a 'German' museum, since it concerned – and still concerns - itself with German culture beyond national boundaries, from Schleswig to South Tyrol and from Alsace to Transylvania. The task of the institution was therefore not to present the political or even military history of a state-nation. Instead, its aim was to relate vividly and communicate visually the social and cultural life of the German people (population) in the past. This aim has not changed today. Not least for this reason, the *Deutsches Historisches Museum* was founded in Berlin in 1987, an institution, which is committed primarily to the political history of an entity of a sovereign state.

Leila KOIVUNEN (University of Turku)

The National Museum of Finland and silencing of the "exotic" other

After a prolonged construction period the National Museum of Finland opened its doors to the public in January 1916. At that time, Finland was still part of the Russian Empire, but gained independence a year later in December 1917. Obviously, the museum project was of major importance to the young nation, the construction of self-image and new identities, but it also had its roots in very different museum ideologies and collections. A large part of the materials of the new museum were derived from the former Museum of Ethnography, research and teaching collection in the University of Helsinki, which had a strong tradition in non-Western, "exotic" collections. The establishment of the Finnish National Museum represented a significant break with this tradition and an invention of new, seemingly more relevant nationally focused narrative and content to the museum.

In this paper, I will discuss the shift from the dominance of non-Western cultures and collections toward the narration based on the Finnish nation. I will shed light on the changing and diminishing importance of other cultures in the national story and the fate they eventually faced: most of the valuable objects of foreign origin were packed and stocked in the attic of the new museum for over one hundred years. Yet, at the same time when distant cultures were omitted from the national story, the idea of the Finno-Ugric community of the past gained strength in Finland and moved the boundaries between "us" and "them" to new directions.

Annie MALAMA (National Gallery-Alexandros Soutzos Museum)

Curator, National Gallery-Alexandros Soutzos Museum. A national scenario about Greek modernism: realizations and ideological trajectories

This paper explores the possibilities of proposing a different scenario concerning the national narrative about Modern Greek Art, in the context of the current exposition (*Unknown Treasures from the National Gallery Collections*, Oct. 2011-Jan.2012) in the National Gallery-Alexandros Soutzos Museum. It aspires to comment on the ways the works chosen today interact, or converse with the body of works that comprises the narrative of the permanent display of the National Gallery. They actually provide an opportunity to re-examine the main questions of the suggested route in place and time, to expand, enrich, even shift, perhaps, in the vista of a view that will not perpetuate stereotypes nor be necessarily motivated by the –sometimes compulsive– need to showcase masterpieces, to demonstrate an unbroken continuity in time, or to compare, exclusively based on formal analysis and superficial comparison of the output of the Greek visual arts production and its international counterparts.

In the Greek history of art, frequent reference is made to “modernity”, or “modernism” vs. “academic” or “tradition”, yet the historical connotations of these terms and their signification in the context of the Greek specificity –which in turn is neither homogeneous nor informed by commonly shared ideals or mutual pursuits and objectives– is not as frequently clarified. In this, complementary in some respect, exhibition organized by the National Gallery today of works in its collections, the scope expands to reflect the diversity in the perception and management of the modernist models in the context of the social, political, cultural environments in which these models evolved and the expectations they created, and which they were consequently expected to meet, at the time of their emergence. That’s where my case focuses on.

Pascale MEYER (Swiss National Museum, Zurich)

Swiss history - narrated in four chapters at the Swiss National Museum (2009)

In 2009, the Swiss National Museum in Zurich chose a new approach for its permanent exhibition, and made a thematic narrative – based on four major research areas of contemporary historiography – the centre of its exhibition rooms. Underpinning this concept was the realisation that the main focus of contemporary research must be reflected in the presentation of history, even if it is in a constant process of change and reformulation. The collection of objects in the National Museum’s possession reflects earlier areas of research into Switzerland’s cultural history. The second new permanent exhibition, the ‘Collections Gallery’ reflects this emphasis on collecting, and shows the outstanding pieces in a display that is solely focused on the objects.

In contrast, the permanent exhibition on Swiss history had to find new ways of presentation, since the National Museum’s collections have gaps in the areas of political and economic history, as well as in contemporary history. And yet, a new narrative of Swiss history must offer visitors precisely these links between outstanding objects of cultural history and the narrative of a national history, which addresses themes that are not shown in the collection. The four chapters of Swiss

history are structured chronologically and enable the historical study of the settlement, religious, political and economic history of Switzerland – from the pre-Christian era to the 21st century.

The objects in the collection have now been given ‘a new mediality’ in the nation’s venerable ‘Hall of Fame’. The modernity of the scenography, the presentations and arrangements of the objects, break with the earlier presentation of political history which was characterised by the depiction of military victories. It now takes the visitor along a path – which can be physically followed – to consensual Swiss democracy and thus makes a contribution to the contemporary understanding of political developments in Switzerland. The other rooms give visitors a picture of Switzerland that is shaped by immigration and emigration, by religious conflicts and splits, by its political system based on consensus as well as early economic successes. The narrative strand links transformational processes with the great ruptures in history, and thus places itself entirely at the service of historical learning, one of the most important tasks of a History Museum.

Hilde NIELSSEN, Sigrid LIEN (University of Bergen)

Conventional Ethnographic Display or Subversive Aesthetics? Historical Narratives of the Sami National Museum in Norway

‘...to what extent [the Sami culture] is best represented - in a natural history exhibition as an example of the adaptation to the barren Northern conditions, in an ethnographic context of foreign cultures, on the National museum as one of the regional cultures, in arts and crafts exhibitions as inspiration for local production and tourism, or in a separate national museum – is an open question that is negotiated in our time’ (Aronsson 2010: 347). The question of how and where Sami culture is best represented is still a debated issue in Norway. However, politically the problem has been “solved” through the establishment of a Sami national museum: RiddoDuottarMuseat in Finnmark (Northern Norway). The museum, which is run by Sami people, sorts administratively under the Sami Parliament.

Based on fieldwork at the museum, this paper presents an analysis of the exhibition practices that challenges earlier readings of Sami museums in Norway. Sami museums have been subjected to considerable criticism. They have been accused for propagating ethnic reification and for producing museum narratives that present a stereotypical and static image of Sami culture and identity. It is even argued that they paradoxically enhance ethnographic stereotypes (Mathisen 2010). The exhibitions are seen as replicas of conventional ethnographic displays. More specifically it has been argued that the RiddoDuottarMuseat in Karasjok presents an exhibition narrative that reflects a pre-modern Sami culture, that the objects are displayed without focus on chronology, and with no historical anchoring except for belonging to a traditional past.

We argue, on the contrary, that far from replicating the exhibition language of dominant western ethnography, the exhibition at the RiddoDuottarMuseat in Karasjok can be seen as an effort to undermine the conceptions of time and history of the dominant society. By evoking a mythical landscape through aesthetic means, they inscribe themselves in a Sami conception of time and space – a Sami understanding of reality. This and other aspects concerning the processes of museum narration in the production of Sami nationhood will be further discussed in the paper. It should be kept in mind that the production of nationhood is an ongoing process in a context where many Sami people talk about themselves as still being colonised. The paper is based on current research, as part of the multi-disciplinary project *Photographs, Colonial Legacy and Museums in*

Contemporary European Culture, financed by HERA (The Humanities in the European Research Area).

Michela PASSINI (Institut national d'histoire de l'art, Paris)

Les récits historiques de la nation au temps de l'internationalisation des musées. Exposer l'histoire de l'art national à Paris dans l'entre-deux-guerres.

In 1983 Benedict Anderson has insisted on the foundational role that museums have played in the construction of *imagined communities*. To better grasp the mechanisms at work in the shaping of historical narratives of the nation as it takes place in the museum – particularly at a juncture characterized by an acceleration of international exchanges, such as the XX century – it is vital to cross-reference the history of nationalism with recent studies on cultural and artistic circulation. The latter have proved that national identities are inherently constructed at a transnational level. The question is, therefore: what happens to the historical narratives manufactured by national museums at a time when museums as such undergo a process of internationalization mediated by traveling exhibitions?

My contribution will focus on a batch of exhibitions conceived by the national museums of several European countries and hosted by the Paris Jeu de Paume between 1921 and 1939 (exhibitions of Dutch, Danish, Belgian, Swiss, Austrian, Catalan, Romanian, Italian, Polish, Portuguese and Latvian art). I will analyze this group of exhibitions, in terms of the construction of national stereotypes, both at the level of the material production at the hand of foreign museums planning exhibitions abroad and from the point of view of their reception by more or less specialized publics, beginning with the Parisian curators. The texts of catalogues and documents clarifying the makeup of individual events will be compared with the specifically visual devices. Catalogue illustrations and the choice of works to be reproduced in journals, newspapers, on postcards, posters and advertisements are as many visual syntheses of specific national traditions. Our aim will be to clarify the political stakes at play in these choices.

Dr. Gabriela PETKOVA-CAMPBELL (Newcastle, independent scholar)

Uses and Exploitation of History – Official History, Propaganda and Mythmaking in Bulgarian Museum

The end of the Second World War marked the beginning of a period in Bulgarian development which, Dimitrov (2001:22) describes as 'a fundamental rupture in the history of modern Bulgaria as it led to the total repudiation of the political, social and economic system that had been developing in the country since the achievement of independence seventy years earlier'. The new communist authorities imposed the requirements for all organizations, including museums, to participate in the building of the socialist value system. This provoked the regulation of all museum activities and the introduction of a well controlled administrative style of museum management. In all decisions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party the role of the focused ideological

education amongst the population was constantly underlined. The inherited from previous governments' approaches to museum practice were completely denied and therefore drastically reconstructed to meet the new requirements. As Iliev (1984:11) underlined, in the years of Communist governance 'the meaning of the cultural – historical heritage reached new dimensions, it became part of the politics of the Party and the socialist state. Even more, it became part of the whole ideological activity of the Party'.

The paper discusses the way history was used and abused in Bulgarian museums in order to serve party directives. The uses of a distorted past by party activists in an attempt to change public perception of historicism are examined and analysed in order to shed light on this controversial period in the development of Bulgarian museums.

Melania SAVINO (SOAS, University of London)

Narrating the “new” History: Museums in the Construction of the Turkish Republic.

In Turkey, after the establishment of the Republic in 1923 the new government introduced a series of reforms inspired by ideals of westernisation and secularization aimed to create the “new citizens” of the Republic. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Kemalist government had to found a new state with new traditions, a common heritage to share within the Turkish boundaries. The basis of this idea of nationalism was to reject the multi-cultural past of the Ottoman Empire and to construct a new cultural identity. Part of these reforms was constituted by the foundation of a Turkish Historical Research Society, who was responsible for the formulation of the Turkish History Thesis. The thesis aimed to show a Turkish ethnic continuity in Anatolia since prehistoric times. According to the thesis, Hittites were part of the Turkic tribes who migrated from central Asia to Anatolia. With the formulation of this theory and in order to prove this claim, archaeology became the primary tool to prove and sustain the idea. Numerous excavations were conducted in Anatolia after the 1930s, especially on Hittite sites. Consequently the archaeological museums were intended to play an important role in showing to the larger public the new archaeological discoveries. The first museum was established in the country in the late nineteenth century purely as a response to the growing general interest in the European culture and was initially directed by two Europeans, who forged the museum inspired to European taste and style. After the establishment of the Republic more than forty state funded museums were created in the country and European models maintained a key role in their creation and arrangement.

This paper aims to explore the change in curatorial practices and display of antiquities in relation to the national identity of Turkey after the establishment of the Republic in 1923. Furthermore, I aim to explore the role of European models in the formation of archaeological museums in Turkey and to determine the extent of their influences on the institutions, specifically on the way of how the collection was organized and the objects displayed to the public. The case studies of my research will be the two main museums of the country: the Archaeology Museum of Istanbul, founded during the Ottoman Empire and the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations of Ankara, personally requested by Atatürk and established in the new capital. Focusing primarily on specific permanent exhibitions of these two museums in between the 1923 and the 1970s, my research looks into the public negotiation of the new Republican identity through material culture over time. I will explore the impact that the dominant representations of the new Republican government have had on the interpretations of archaeological objects in Turkey, trying to examine

this new relationship between the state and the museums through the visual representation of the past.

Miklós SZÉKELY (Ludwig Museum, Budapest)

Spatial shift and change of meaning: interpretations of the murals of the Hungarian National Museum at the Vienna Universal Exhibition (1873) and after.

The earliest museum building in the Austrian Empire was the Hungarian National Museum in Pest (Budapest from 1873). The museum was founded in 1802 based on the collection of Ferenc Széchenyi rich patron of art and culture. The classicist building followed the concept of the important museums of London, Berlin and Monaco it was constructed between 1837-47 after the plans of Mihály Pollack. The decoration of its staircases – similar to those of Peter Cornelius in Altes Museum, Berlin – showed the cultural history of Hungary. The murals created not only the frame of interpretation for the earliest exhibitions of the museum but they also interpreted the history of Hungary in the context of European and world history.

Side by side to the creation of modern museums world exhibition was a typical phenomena of the 19th century, its appearance followed in a short time the foundation of modern museums. The museum and the world exhibition were conceived as useful tools for the self-representation of the state both in economic and cultural fields. During the time of the Austro-Hungarian Empire the Hungarian political elite concentrated on elaborating the image of an economically and culturally independent country. Hungarian sections at world exhibitions served the cultural and political demonstration of the country, which appeared only in 1867 in the European political life and the 19th century globalization. The national history of Hungary was represented through politicized historical paintings at the Hungarian fine art section of the Vienna world exhibition in 1873, especially the cartoons of the mural sketched for the staircases of the Hungarian National Museum. Since the Vienna Universal Exhibition was the only “expo” organized in a German language country in the 19th century, its national art exhibitions were influenced by the political conflict of the 1870’. In spite of the dual political system of Austria-Hungarian Empire, Hungary had the statute of an invited and not an organizer country to the world exhibition. This fact influenced the interpretation of the Hungarian fine art exhibition. The supposed existence of the “Hungarian painting School” by foreign critics sustained the aspirations of the Hungarian elite in the second half of the 19th century: the recognition of the country at its former – medieval – *grandeur* as an independent and economically and politically strong modern European nation.

The first part of the paper analyses the political aspects of the historical narratives at the National Museum and the Redout in Budapest, both building having mural series depicting Hungarian mythology and cultural history. The second part of the paper concentrates on the sketches of the mural of the National Museum exhibited in Vienna in 1873, their original meaning, the change of the program and their interpretation.

Martin SUNDBERG (University of Basel)

Representation and Region. Moderna Museet and the Construction of a Narrative of Swedish Art

The relation between Stockholm's Moderna Museet, as government authority responsible for 20th century and contemporary art, and regional developments, as well as a focus on female artists, was the interest of a recent research project. Our aim was to shed light on the situation in Sweden and to compare Moderna Museet with regional museums with substantial collections of 20th century art. Moderna Museet, it turned out, did not really cover the Swedish nation, but focused entirely on Stockholm and what was presented in the capital. This might provoke further probing into the question of the museum's display of national art, as well as the version of art history it presents – which adheres to the centre and neglects the periphery. Furthermore, we focused on the absence of female artists in the collections. Our aim has been to provide for diverse gender studies and to facilitate another take at regionalism and representation. Nevertheless, we have been able to pinpoint many problems that concern any artist – especially working in a country whose art scene is more or less dominated by one city. Questions regarding national identity are closely linked to how an image is constructed in the first (capital) place. With this project as starting point, I also want to highlight some of the future possibilities that might help to understand great historical narratives.