

THE MUSEUM AS EXPERIENCE

An Email Odyssey through Artists' and Collectors' Museums

Dario Gamboni

404 p., 60 b/w ills, 140 col. ills, 220 x 280 mm,
2019, ISBN 978-2-503-58351-8
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The first general study of museums created by artists and/or collectors, *The Museum as Experience* provides fifteen case studies ranging from the turn of 1800 to the present and distributed across the globe. New in form and content, it is written as a correspondence and illustrated with many unpublished documents. Focusing on museums preserving their original installation, it analyses display as a form of expression and raises key issues about the history, geography, anthropology, and aesthetics of art museums at large.

Museums created by artists and/or collectors are a favorite destination of museum lovers and raise important issues in connection with the history and evolution of art museums at large. They have developed in a critical relation to large, collective or 'encyclopaedic' museums, defending a primacy of experience and intimacy. And they remain attached to the persons of their founders, functioning as monuments and even mausoleums. Yet despite their appeal, a recent surge of new creations and a wealth of monographic documentation, no general study of the topic has been attempted. *The Museum as Experience* describes and analyses the phenomenon as

a whole, from its beginnings around 1800 to the present and from its European origin to a worldwide extension. It examines in depth fifteen case studies distributed across the globe and chosen for their representative character and the quality of their original arrangement. In order to do justice to their meaningful relation to the spatial context and to their hospitality towards the subjective visitor, the book is written as a travelogue and organizes a dialogue between two narrators, an architect and an art historian. Richly illustrated with many unpublished documents, it is a scholarly work that can be read like a novel. It argues that artists' and collectors' museums are best understood as 'author museums' and make it possible to enjoy and study display as a mode of expression and communication, an art of assemblage and installation *avant la lettre*, and a challenge for interpretation.

Dario Gamboni is a professor of art history at the University of Geneva and has been a guest teacher and researcher at many institutions in Europe, the Americas and Asia. He has curated several exhibitions and is the author of numerous books.

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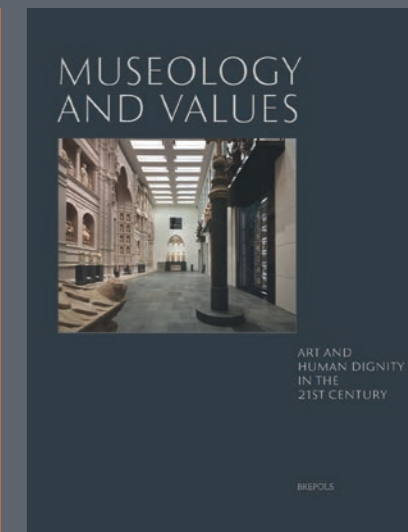
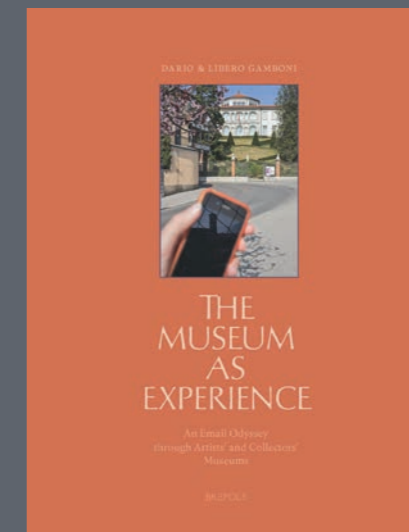
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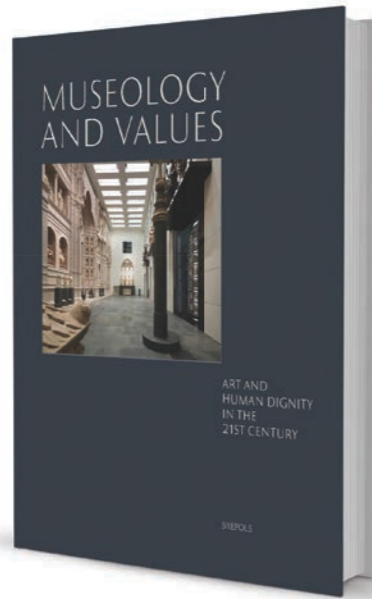
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Do 21st-century women and men still believe that museums can, through the way they display art, help shape their visitors' sense of the dignity of the person? Through the readings of history and style which they propose, can museums help bridge the gap that today seems to separate present from past, isolating individuals and groups in a contemporaneity without roots? If so, how? If not, why?

ABOUT THE SERIES MUSEUMS AND IDEAS

Museums are complex institutions that play an increasingly crucial and multilayered role in the cultural, political, economic and diplomatic life of and between societies worldwide. While there exists a vast body of technical literature in the field of museology, and the history of museums is rich in monographic and highly specialized studies, this series aims at exploring the ideas and the issues raised by art museums and confronting them, in the past and in the present. The series is open to inquiries into all periods and geographical areas, and especially welcomes proposals and manuscripts that explore new methodologies and formats to illuminate its object.

General Editors: Dario Gamboni and Dominique Poulot

MUSEOLOGY AND VALUES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OPENING MESSAGES

Sergio Givone
Vice President of Opera Santa Maria del Fiore

Alberto Bonisole
Minister of Cultural Heritage and Activities

Antonio Lampis
General Director of Museums

Antonio Paolucci
*Former Minister of Culture, Italy |
Former Director of the Musei Vaticani*

Foreword: Florence, Museums, Museology and Values

Timothy Verdon
Director, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence

Rita Filardi
*Collection Manager, Museo dell'Opera del
Duomo, Florence*

KEY TEXTS

THE MUSEUM YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

Museums Change Lives

Timothy Verdon
Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence

Museums and Values

James Bradburne
Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan

Museum: Where are we from? Who are we? Where are we going?

Michail Borisovich Piotrovsky
General Director of the State Hermitage

Museum, St. Petersburg
President of the Union of Museums of Russia

"Unity in Diversity"

One Louvre, Several Louvre Museums in the Twenty-First Century

Jean-Luc Martinez
Musée du Louvre, Paris

The Future of Museums

Julien Chapuis
*Skulpturensammlung und Museum für
Byzantinische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin*

Museology and Values Art and Human Dignity in the Twenty-First Century

Maria Serlupi Crescenzi
Musei Vaticani, Rome

ROUND TABLE SESSION

OTHER CULTURAL VIEWPOINTS

Reanimating Sacred Art for a Secular Age: Art & Religion at the National Gallery, London

Susanna Avery-Quash
*Senior Research Curator (History of Collecting),
The National Gallery, London*

Visitor Engagement: Designing Dignity

Allen Quine
The Museum of the Bible, Washington D.C.

The Museum Considered as a Moral Institution Suggestions from Schiller's Theory of Theater

Eike Schmidt
Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

Competing Values

Cristina Acidini
Academy of Design Arts, Florence

Presenting "Sacredness Through Humanity" Roles and Challenges of Curating Islamic Art in Qatar

Mounia Chekhab-Abudaya
Museum of Islamic Art, Doha

Best Practice: The Galleria dell'Accademia of Florence after the Reform of 2015

Cecilie Hollberg
Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence

What Is a Museum?

Christian Greco
Museo Egizio, Turin

Six Dreams for an Art Museum

Ulrike Lorenz
Kunsthalle Mannheim

Prestigious Collections, New Audiences

Paola Marini
Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence

ROUND TABLE SESSION

THE VIEWPOINT OF ARCHITECTS AND MUSEOLOGISTS

Doubts and Questions

Adolfo Natalini
Natalini Architetti, Florence

The Museum and the Form of Contemporaneity

Paolo Biscottini
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan

The Museum of the Duomo of Milan

Guido Canali
Canali Associates

The Museum's Ethical Role

Maria Concetta Di Natale
Università degli Studi, Palermo

The Museum We Believe In

Marco Magni
Guicciardini & Magni Architetti

Confessions of an Exhibition Designer

Boris Micka
BMA – Boris Micka Associates, Spain

The "Caring Museum"

A New Proposal for an Inclusive Museum

Adeline Rispal
Studio Adeline Rispal, Paris

Identity and Mission
Authors' Biographies