Defining Cultural Heritage

THREE CATEGORIES IN CULTURAL HERITAGE

Cultural heritage is the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations (UNESCO, 2011). Within this broader definition of cultural heritage, three distinctions are made (Bruins, 2015);

Natural heritage refers to the sum total of the elements of biodiversity, including flora and fauna, ecosystems, including geological structures and formations.

Intangible cultural heritage refers to the sum total of the elements of traditions, knowledge, forms of expression, skills and cultural spaces.

Tangible cultural heritage refers to the sum total of the elements of physical artifacts, objects, historic places and monuments. In reference to tangible cultural heritage, objects are classified as either movable or immovable.

These distinctions however, do not exist in a literal sense. This way of categorizing heritage is mainly used in heritage management. However, artefacts can embody multiple aspects of a cultural heritage to varying degrees.

Methods

Literature study

References

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Design Challenge: "Design a dynamic museum that evokes a sense
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discovery, by acting as a hub for participatory projects relevant to youth"

Romanticization of Cultural Heritage

OVER TIME CULTURE AND HISTORY CAN BECOME DISTORTED

What is this phenomenon?

It is possible for history and culture, due to a variety of different complex factors (e.g. globalization, education, politics or racial movements), to get lost or even become distorted. In an attempt to cope with the infinite volumes of data now available to the population and create a stable view of traditional culture, information tends to melt into more romanticized perspectives.

A case study from Bonaire provides a good example where younger and middle-generation Bonaireans tend to generalize and confuse Amerindian influences with African influences (Haviser, 1995).

How do you approach this?

As a designer and/or a cultural institution, one has to decide how to traverse this context and how to go about correcting or supplementing limited or distorted views of your audiences.

Methods

Literature study   Interviews

References

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The Value of Cultural Heritage

CULTURAL HERITAGE HAS 4 VALUES

Heritage can be many things, but it always has two core characteristics (King T. F., 2008): value in some- one's eyes and time depth (it has been around for a while). The type of value that someone attributes to heritage can be described as followed (Bruins, 2015);

Identity value: in the sense that it has cultural or historic significance, societal value, experiential value or distinction value.

Value of use (useful): in the sense that it can be used to improve of the environment, it can be exchanged, builds image or has economic value.

Scientific value: in the sense that it lends understanding as a means towards something (e.g. sustainability, inspiration or support)

Creative value: in the sense that it develops new experiences, per- spectives and ideas (Silva, 2015).

Methods

Literature study

References

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MUSEUM**FUTURES**

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The Participatory Museum
TYPES OF PARTICIPATORY MUSEUMS

There are 4 general approaches that an institution can use for designing public participation projects (Simon, 2010):

Contributory projects solicit visitors to provide limited and specified objects, actions, or ideas to an institutionally controlled process (e.g. Comment boards, story-sharing kiosks, etc.)

Collaborative projects invite visitors to serve as active partners in the creation of institutional projects that originate and are controlled by the institution.

Co-creative projects stimulate community members to work together with institutional members to define project goals and to generate programs or exhibits based on community as well as institutional interests.

Hosted projects turn over portions of the institutions facilities and/or resources to present programs developed and implemented by public groups or casual visitors, allowing participants to satisfy their own needs with minimal institutional involvement.

	What kind of commitment does your institution have to community engagement?	How much control do you want over the participatory process and product?	How do you see the institution's relationship with participants during the project?	Who do you want to participate and what kind of commitment will you seek from participants?	How much staff time will you commit to managing the project and working with participants?	What kinds of skills do you want participants to gain from their activities during the project?	What goals do you have for how non-participating visitors will perceive the project?
Contributory Museum	We are committed to helping our visitors and members feel like participants with the institution.	A lot – we want participants to follow our rules of engagement and give us what we request.	The institution requests content and the participants supply it, subject to institutional rules.	We want to engage as many visitors as possible, engaging them briefly in the context of a museum or online visit.	We can manage it lightly, the way we would maintain an interactive exhibit. However, we ideally want to set it up and let it run.	Creation of content, collection of data, or sharing of personal expression. Use of technological tools to support content crea-tion and sharing.	The project will help visitors see themselves as potential participants and see the institution as interested in their active involvement.
Collaborative Museum	We are committed to deep partnerships with some target communities.	Staff will control the process, but participants' actions will steer the direction and content of the final product.	The institution sets the project concept and plan, and then staff members work closely with participants to make it happen.	We expect some people will opt in casually, but most will come with the explicit intention to participate.	We will manage the process, but we are going to set the rules of engagement based on our goals and capacity.	Everything supported by contributory projects, plus the ability to analyze, curate, design, and deliver completed products.	The project will help visitors see the institu-tion as a place dedicat-ed to supporting and connecting with community.
Co-creative Museum	We are committed to supporting the needs of target communities whose goals align with the institutional mission.	Some, but participants' goals and preferred working styles are just as important as those of the staff are.	The institution gives participants the tools to lead the project and then supports their activities and helps them move forward successfully.	We seek participants who intentionally engage and are dedicated to seeing the project all the way through.	We will give much time as it takes to make sure participants are able to accomplish their goals.	Everything supported by collaborative projects, plus project conceptualization, goal setting, and evaluation skills.	The project will help visitors see the institution as a community-driven place. It will also bring in new audiences connected to the participants.
Hosted Museum	We are committed to inviting community members to feel comfortable using the institution for their own purposes.	Not much – as long as participants follow our rules, they can produce what they want.	The institution gives the participants rules and resources and then lets the participants do their own	We would like to empower people who are ready to manage and implement their project on their own.	As little as possible – we want to set it up and let it run on its own.	None that the institution will specifically impart, except perhaps around program promotion and audience engagement.	The project will attract new audiences who might not see the institution as a comfortable or appealing place for them.

Methods

Literature study

References

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Designing for Cultural Heritage

INCORPORATING HERITAGE QUALITIES IN YOUR DESIGN

In designing for cultural heritage, an architectural approach to tangible heritage may offer insights in how to approach such a complex task.

There is no standard blueprint for interventions on heritage, but it is crucial to take the existing situation as the starting point – and to look for a design strategy that gives the situation (new) relevance. Thats why it is useful to assess the existing cultural heritage values. These values form the narrative of the cultural history that the design then aims to incorporate.

Based on Meurs' approach to architecture (Meurs, 2016), there are three ways to incorporate the cultural heritage qualities in the design:

Preservation of existing elements and artefacts.

Redefining an object or a tradition to more relevant meanings.

Interpretation or expression of intangible value. Using these values as a design theme.

However, in designing any cultural heritage intervention, the ethics regarding what is and what is not authentic should always be considered

Methods

Literature study

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