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What is the future of museums (exhibitions)?

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DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Myself...



Work together with...



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Digitisation... What about it?

- There has been a huge effort in the last decades to provide access to cultural heritage resources by means of digitisation
- This has resulted in digital images and in 3D content
 - However, their full potential in use (for CH institutions and end users) is still to be exploited

Museums according to ICOM

‘A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. *Open to the public, accessible and inclusive*, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and *with the participation of communities*, offering varied *experiences* for education, *enjoyment*, reflection and knowledge sharing.’

24 August 2022, ICOM General Conference, Prague

Our take

- New museology: shift from collection items to people and stories
- Museums experience design (MXD):
 - Museum experiences focus on experiencing a museum collection, whether tangible or intangible, and whether inside or outside the walls of the physical museum building.
 - In line with the new ICOM definition, a museum facilitates a *dialogue* with communities and the public through participation and as such brings about interactions.

- Experiences are *stories* we make of moments we lived.
- They resonate with the *emotions* we felt during those moments.
- They require *agency* in the form of a dialogue with the social and physical environment in order to be perceived as positive experiences (Hassenzahl, 2022).

- In order for these interactions to be meaningful, visitors must play an active role – or need to get from passive to active – as only by engaging with them will the resulting experience be memorable (Duerden et al., 2015).
- Experiences are not only consumed by visitors, but also, and most importantly these days, *produced* by them, for example through the use of digital technology.

What is the future of museums?

- Conversations with six Dutch designers working for agencies that are very active in the cultural sector and have an international portfolio.
- The agencies are:
 - Fabrique (<https://www.fabrique.com/>),
 - Ijsfontein (<https://www.ijsfontein.nl/en/>),
 - Kiss the Frog (<https://www.kissthefrog.nl/en/>),
 - IN10 (<https://www.in10.nl/>),
 - NorthernLight (<https://northernlight.nl/>),
 - Tinker Imagineers (<https://tinker.nl/>).

Aim

- How the notion of museum experiences is changing
 - For example in relation to the use of digital technologies
- And to understand *what technological trends* are emerging, *why* and *how*.

Results

- Three main trends / challenges emerge:
 1. Storytelling
 2. Disneyfication
 3. Hybridisation

Storytelling



Data meets visitor experience

UNESCO World Heritage Kinderdijk

Spread with storytelling

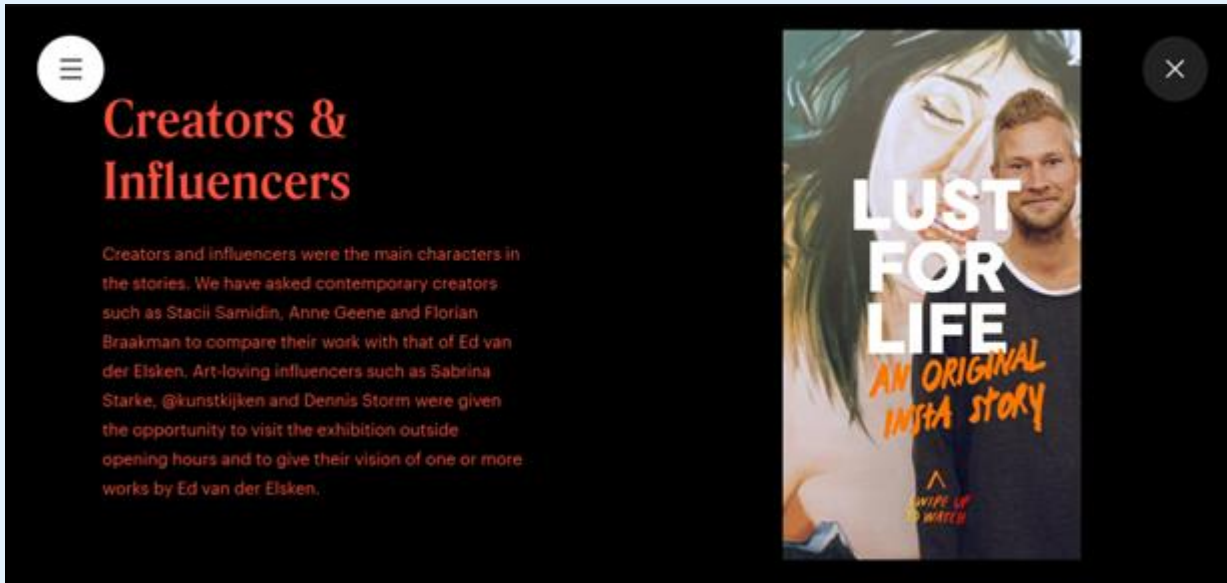
Hop on the water bus or park down the road and grab a bike. Even getting to Kinderdijk is an exciting experience with the new app. And by showing our visitors around we help them find their way to the lovely local establishments on the way.



© IN10 | Data meets visitor experience (Source: museum website)

Storytelling

- The role of influences



© Nederlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam (Source: museum website)

Storytelling

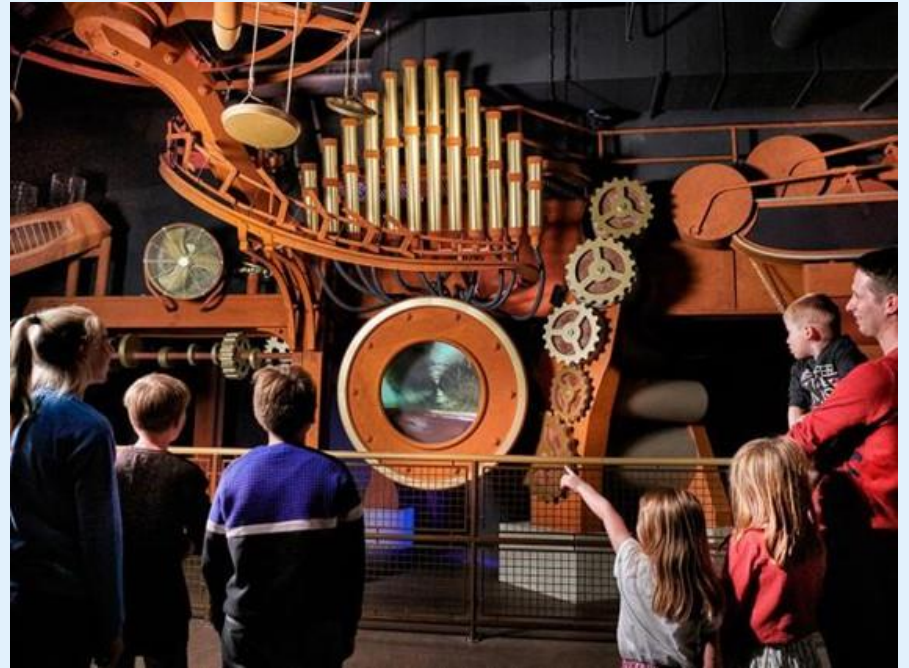
- Hidden technology



© Marquise Palace, Bergen op Zoom (Source: author)

Disneyfication

- Creating an open and magical experience

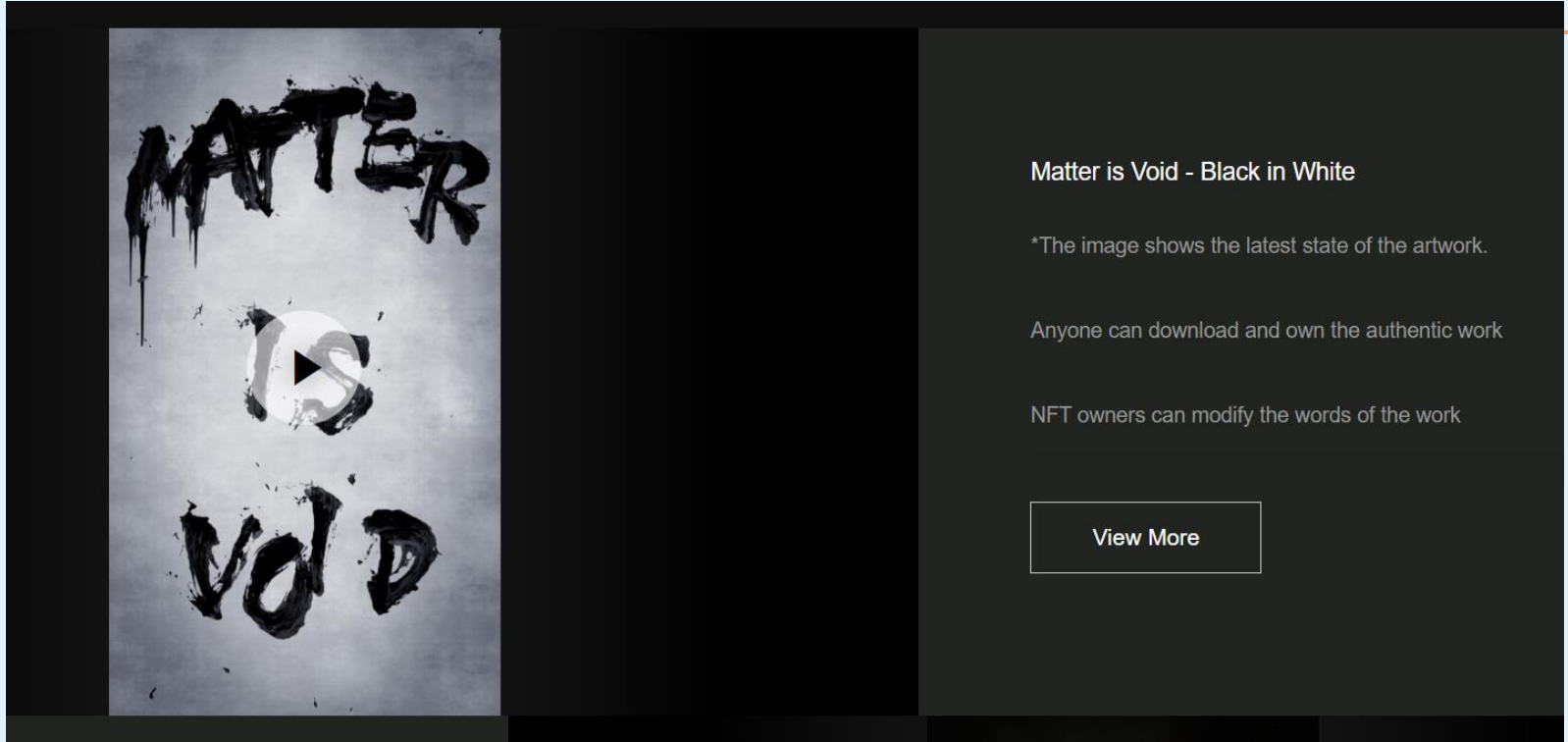


© Chocolate museum, Antwerp (Source: museum website)

Other experiences

- The '*museum in your pocket*'
- The use of *immersive environments*
- *Personalised* experiences (e.g., NFTs)

Immersive media



© Teamlab (Source: museum website)

Other experiences

- The use of *social media*



© Rijksstudio, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (Source: museum website)

The Instamuseum

- The popularity of Instamuseums



© Museum of Ice Cream, Instagram (Source: museum website)

Technological trends

Technology	Experiential theme	Purpose in relation to experience
Apps	Extending the journey.	Extend the journey to before and after the real visit.
	Providing additional information.	Relate digital experience to physical museum visit.
	Increasing engagement.	Carry the museum in your pocket.
Digital twins	Hybrid experiences	Experiencing collection items also outside the museum.
Sensors	Increased engagement	Trigger a storyline (e.g., audio or video).
	Playfulness	Enabling interactivity.
Audioguides, GuideID podcatcher	Guidance/ guided tour	Guide people through a museum.
	Providing additional information	Provide extra information at the moment and place where it is needed.
Projections (also projection mapping)	Guidance	Guide people through a museum.
	Providing additional information	Provide extra information at the moment and place where it is needed.
Immersive projections	Immersion Increased engagement	Aesthetic experiences by projected on objects or walls.
Movies	Providing additional information; Increased engagement	Provide additional information in an engaging way. Contextualising detailed information.
	Extending the journey (online videos)	Experiencing collection items also outside the museum
Social VR	Social experiences; Immersion.	Enable immersive experiences while retaining the qualities of social experiences.

Technological trends

Technology	Experiential theme	Purpose in relation to experience
Robots	Social experiences	Enable interactions that feel like social experiences.
Social VR	Social experiences; Immersion.	Enable immersive experiences while retaining the qualities of social experiences.
AI / Machine Learning / Image recognition	Identification Providing detailed information	Provide information at the right moment, when someone is looking at an object.
Identification technologies (NFC, RfID, face recognition).	Identification	Take history of visit into account, and tailoring experience to it.
Augmented reality	Providing additional information; Increased engagement; Extending (<i>augmenting</i>) the story.	Provide contextualised additional information in an interactive way.
Virtual reality	Immersion	Experience an environment in which someone cannot physically be present at that time.
Other technologies (Natural Language Processing, Deepfake)	Identification; Personalisation	Various future experiences

The future museum visit

- Main challenges:
 - The notion of *togetherness*, with a focus on
 - social
 - collaborative
 - family experiences.
 - *Hybridisation*

Hybridisation

- The merging of digital and physical elements



© Using Micrio for zooming in and providing detailed information about elements in the panoramic painting by Mesdag (Source: museum website)

What is the future of museums (exhibitions)?

- The future of museums is *hybrid*
 - In the future, digital and online museum experiences may *outnumber* the physical museum experiences
 - Physical and digital will gradually become one (as in the *digital twins*)
 - The primary museum experience will be digital
 - But there might still be this *very unique place* where a visitor still has a touch with reality and in which they can see the physical items ‘for real’

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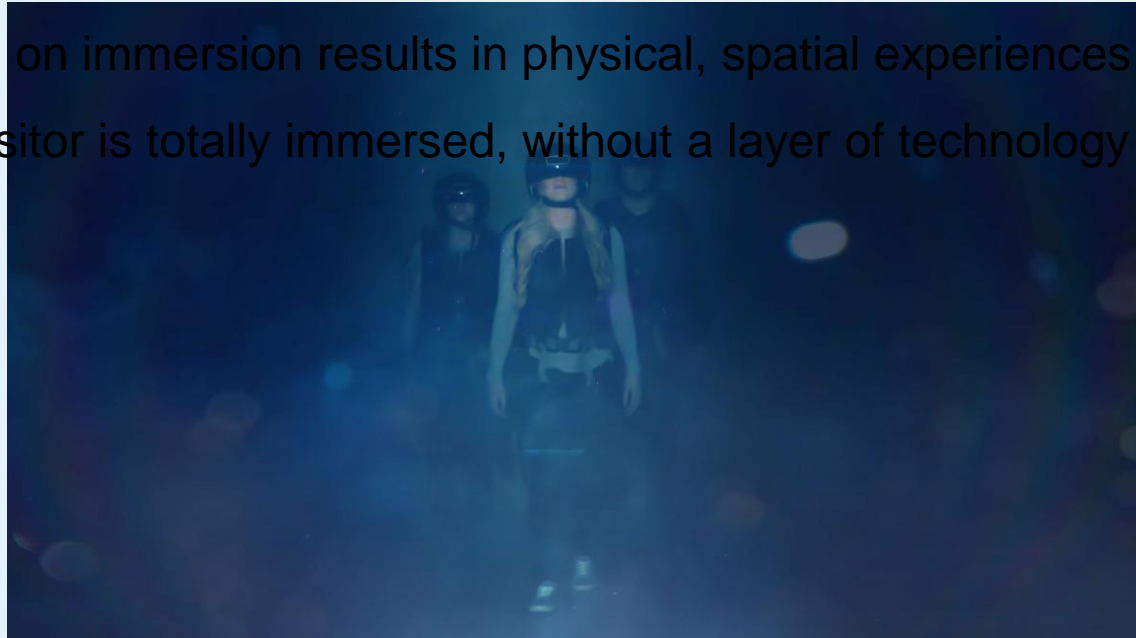
- The museum experience will take place on the visitors' Instagram rather than having something digital in a museum
 - The amount of time that people are already spending on social media.

What is the future of museums (exhibitions)?

- The museum of the future is also a museum with smart, intuitive environments
 - *Immersion* combined with *personalisation* are already becoming more and more important in physical museum spaces (e.g., through game engines like Unreal or Unity)

An example...

- This focus on immersion results in physical, spatial experiences, in which a visitor is totally immersed, without a layer of technology in between



© The Void (Source: museum website)

Conclusion

- These two trends (hybridisation and museums as smart, intuitive environments) together will gradually change the nature of a museum as a *place* and as a *space*
- Museums as *spaces* will potentially also be positioned in third places such as marketplaces, religious places where people get together and can then have cultural, transformative experiences
- Museums as *places* will also be thinking more and more in terms of them being a '*brand*'

Take aways

- There is so much (more) that we can do with digital heritage (also digitally born) than just building a repository and delivering this content via platforms like Europeana
 - Designing experiences
 - In line with what (design) experts in the field foresee as the future of museums

Thank you!

Questions?
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