

Questions for an Exhibition ¹

**A compilation that makes no claims to being
exhaustive**

The Museum as a Site of Unlearning: Materials and Reflections on Museum Education at the Weltkulturen Museum. Stephanie Endter, Nora Landkammer, and Karin Schneider (eds.), 2018.

[http://www.traces.polimi.it/2018/10/08/issue-06-the-museum-as-a-site-of-unlearning/»](http://www.traces.polimi.it/2018/10/08/issue-06-the-museum-as-a-site-of-unlearning/)

This questionnaire is intended as an aid for museum and gallery educators when approaching an exhibition, looking for thematic points of connection and forming an attitude towards the exhibition that could serve as a basis for guided tours, workshops and other educational formats. It might also assist curators seeking to adopt a critical, reflexive praxis of exhibition-making.



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The views expressed here are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

¹ > This questionnaire was developed as part of an action research project by Stephanie Endtner and Nora Schön addressing the exhibition *The Common Thread - The warp and weft of thinking at the Weltkulturen Museum*, and was expanded collectively during the research process.

- 1 Who is telling stories about whom? Who are the subjects of the statements and who is the story about?**
- 2 Whose stories are being told, whose are being left out, and why?**
- 3 What can I learn about the items in the exhibition from the labels, the wall texts and the accompanying booklet? What will I not learn from it, what is missing?**
- 4 Is information provided about who wrote the labels, the wall texts or the booklet? Is there (any degree of) multiperspectivity(different speakers or voices)? If so, what effect does this have?**
- 5 Is the methodology of the research that generated the information on display explained? Are the sources disclosed?**
- 6 What are the sources of the knowledge about the objects? Are these sources biased (e.g. by a Eurocentric perspective)?**

- 7** How did the exhibited objects end up in the museum?
- 8** What are the effects of the specific mode of display of objects or images? Should the items be displayed in this way if we consider the vulnerabilities of the viewers, their risk of being re-traumatised, etc.? Should a specific object (e.g. human remains) or image be displayed in this way if we take into consideration the people from its original context? Would not exhibiting the object/image solve the problem? What precautions must be taken when displaying the object/image?
- 9** What (other) questions come to mind when viewing the items in the exhibition?
- 10** What effects do installations, display arrangements, lighting and space have on me?
- 11** What is the current concrete spatial environment of the items? What settings might they have been in before?

- 12** In which context, in which narrative, are the objects currently positioned? In which other contexts might they have been previously positioned?
- 13** Are there any current political debates that can be connected to the exhibition? Are they incorporated into the exhibition itself, or does it include items – ›threshold objects‹ – that could serve as bridges to these debates? Does the exhibition contain thresholds or transition points that would be suitable points for stopping to reflect, to change the subject, etc.?
- 14** Do I know/are there people or groups that could provide additional perspectives on the exhibition theme or on questions that occur to me? And how can these voices be included?

Reference

Endter, Stephanie/Schön, Nora, with contributions by Berit Mohr and Karin Schneider: ›Questions for an Exhibition‹. In: Endter, Stephanie; Landkammer, Nora; and Schneider, Karin (eds.): *The Museum as a Site of Unlearning: Materials and Reflections on Museum Education at the Weltkulturen Museum*, 2018, available at: <http://www.traces.polimi.it/2018/10/08/issue-06-the-museum-as-a-site-of-unlearning/>

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