"MaX - Museums at public access and participation", Project

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1. Exhibition Concept and Technology

"Max is a cultural, innovative research project supported by the European Commission. It aims at collaboration between cultural activists, institutions and the citizens of the European Union."[1]

„European Corner" in MaX. In each museum a so called European Corner is installed: Via a multi touch screen visitors are able to exchange information, photos, videos and experiences"[2]. Exhibitions and data bases are shared virtually. The multi touch screen and the menu navigation facilitate the access to the data content so that learning becomes a playful and intuitive process among European museum visitors. Main aims to fulfill through this new media as a cultural infrastructure   in the museum: exchange of work results; exchange of the museums common aspects of history and presence; regional aspects of the European early textile and industry culture can get explored; exchange of virtual exhibitions; cultural use of new media in the knowledge society; creation of sustainable tools that can be used long over the project duration; link between early industrial culture, textile culture and actual culture; support of views on the common history and growing of European identity.

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[1] http://www.m2c-bremen.com/nordwolle/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=27&layout=blog&Itemid=3&lang=en
[2] http://www.m2c-bremen.com/nordwolle/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=27&layout=blog&Itemid=3&lang=en

2. Reception

MaX integrates interactive media technologies, which enable a direct participation of visitors and citizens in cultural processes. It is essential to provoke public to participate in the discovery of cultural meanings to support an intercultural exchange, to grow a common identity and share transcultural activities. The technology takes a back seat and initiates a process where emotional and cognitive knowledge, communication and creativity are linked together: display of common European history and local history; participation of citizens in cultural processes, e.g. creation of exhibitions, communication; exchange and intercultural dialogue between cultural activists, institutions and European citizens; cross linking of historical facts; display of parallels in the history of industrialization beyond boundaries; discovery of common cultural roots.

3. Exhibition Design

The National Polytechnic Museum, Sofia gave the opportunity for choice of theme and active participation in its implementation to a group of students in "Fashion" and "Textile" from the New Bulgarian University in Sofia. The result of this common work was visualized in an exhibition including interactive textile installations, presenting the five human senses – sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. Made from different textile materials, these installations were exhibited at the permanent exhibition of the museum, where visitors were implicated into a play with the museum exhibits and offered new approach to museum activities. All stages of the process – research, choice of materials and technologies, production, arranging in the museum area, opening of the exhibition and reaction of visitors have been documented as digital pictures and videos and presented at the European Corner of the museum.[3]

The museum of MIAT in Gent decided to provide opportunities to its public to learn more about various textile fibers. A special focus is given on textiles that may affect people's lives in the immediate and more distant future, especially functional and eco-friendly textiles.

"Time travel" and "Café for telling stories" are the two accents of the project of the textile museum in Delmenhorst, Germany. It will represent two exhibitions at the European Corner: the first one – with pictures of children, dressed in costumes dating from 100 years ago, that re-enact scenes from authentic pictures of a rich textile family from the region. The second one will include objects of utility, brought from the habitants of Delmenhorst to the museum.

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[3]3 http://artmuse.eu/sofia.html

The second German partner – the textile museum in Bocholt works upon the creation of digital fashion "history" – collections of fashion designs on a mannequin, as along with it, they will develop the idea for "Label Culture".

The format of the Danish presentation at the European Corner is a mobile role play. The textile department of the National Museum of Denmark will perform the spirit of the long strike in the textile history from 1905 in the country.

4. Visitors Approach - Activation/Participation

Participation

Each museum arranges its own typical participation project that allows the visitors to explore the local history, to create contents of exhibitions or to give comments. Each museum transfers a selection of their project results into exchange over the European Corner: oral history; local (cultural) archaeology; interactive "leap in time"; real time communication with museum visitors among Europe; visitors participation; participation projects; integration of visitors in the museums information building process.

The installment and functioning of the European Corner is the task of the partner from Bremen - Institute of Applied Media Technology and Culture M2C. The Corner implements functions with the following features: developing of virtual exhibitions by visitors or curators – local or global galleries view virtual exhibition exchange and digital media-archive for exhibitions. There are also social media features like- participative access and interaction by visitors, video / photo guestbook, forums and opinion blogs, Twitter, Facebook connection. On the other hand there will be Media Features - Art channel (Textile art, media art, smart textiles, etc.), video channel, games, etc.[4]

Main result, that project partners expect is the installment of the European Corners at many museums, which would support the activity of public's interest, as also to give an extra ability for knowledge and exchange of ideas and intercultural dialog. This permanent possibility to organize promotional events also, that will present alive and with visitors participation the functioning and the abilities of this modern museum communication system.

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[4] http://www.m2c-bremen.com/nordwolle/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=27&layout=blog&Itemid=3&lang=en

5. Conclusion

Toolkit 1: **Max integrates different social groups**. Max is an interactive permanent installation in the museum. Furthermore it is an intelligent instrument to start up processes for acquiring knowledge and playful learning. New historical aspects are linked with real sites and depicted in oral history. There is a European corner in every participating museum. It is a cultural port for visualization of the European dimension and the integration of artists, cultural activists, cultural volunteers and citizens into the museums activities: European museums exchange; Visitors exchange over the European Corner; Communication between different part of the populations of the participating countries; European Corner as point of exchange between visitors/citizens and museums professionals; Support the cultural exchange and intercultural dialogue; Cultural professionals workshops; Integration of of local partners; Collaboration between cultural activists, cultural institutions and European citizens; Support of European mobility of cultural activists; Integration of local media into the project work; The Art Line Project, co-funded by the South Baltic Programme of the EU Regional Development Fund; artMuse, co-funded by the Culture Program of the EU; Think BETA, co-funded by the BMBF Germany; NYC-Bremen in Beta R&D project, co-funded by DFG Germany; Rememberti Art Project Bremen; Cooperation with and between international and local artists; International Conference Participation e.g. EXPO2010 und ISEA2011.

Toolkit 2: **Project presentation**. By the use of the European Corner, visitors and guests will not only be enabled to achieve insight into the work of the museum beyond the current exhibitions, but also in other partner museums in Europe and their subjects. The European dimension of common history, the synchrony of historical developments, their similarities and specific differences are directly experienced in the European Corner. The video guest book, part of the multiple touch screens allows the visitors to explore the European industrial heritage and culture just as to interview contemporary witnesses and visitors exchange. Visitors can browse the European history of the textile industry and culture on several multi-touch screens, see eyewitness interviews and interact with visitors of the other museums through the video guestbook.

6. Bibliography

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