



Star Wars: Identities

<http://www.transmediale.de/content/open-signs-curated-heather-kelley>

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1. Exhibition Concept

The *Star Wars: Identities* exhibition explores the formation of human social and psychological identity through the lens of the familiar Star Wars characters and worlds. The interactive exhibition contained:

- A vast collection of *Star Wars* props, costumes, models, and artwork from the Lucasfilm Archives, including iconic items like Darth Vader's costume, the Millennium Falcon model, and Anakin's full-sized Podracer.
- An insightful investigation into the science of identity, developed by the Montreal Science Centre and a committee of scientific advisers, shedding light on what can make fictional characters who they are and what makes us human.
- Multimedia Identity Quest inviting visitors to create their own unique and personalized *Star Wars* identity.
- Behind the scenes insight into the creation of the characters of Star Wars and details from the movie-making process.

2. Reception

Naturally (given its popular culture theme) the exhibition has been hugely successful and is currently on tour around North America, and is eventually coming to Europe. Beyond the easy Star Wars appeal, visitors have been very pleased with the interactive character building experience (See section 3). Photography inside the exhibit is permitted, and many visitor-created photo galleries have been posted online since the show opened.

3. Exhibition Design

Upon entering the exhibit, each visitor is greeted by an introductory video and given an RFID-embedded wristband which allows them to interact with game stations throughout the space and save their choices. The visitor is then sent on their personal “Quest” – to discover who they are in the Star Wars universe, and learn something about the creation of identity in the real world, by creating a unique Star Wars character with detailed personality attributes.

Each station explains and reveals the core components of human identity such as place of origin, family style, mentors, careers, and personal values. A visitor can touch her RFID bracelet to the display to choose the aspects that she would like her Star Wars identity to have. In the end, each visitor must each make the ultimate choice – will he follow the path of good, or join Lord Vader on the Dark Side? Finally, visitors can see their created character projected in the space, created from any one of over 50 million possible identity combinations. Each visitor can print out their Star Wars identity, and are given a unique web site access code in order to visit their character later, and share it on social media.

4. Visitors Approach-Activation/Participation

The exhibit has seen a huge percentage of visitors in families, with parents who connect to the original movie trilogy, and children who are more familiar with the newer films and TV show. The Quest is a core element of the exhibition and its participatory nature is at the heart of the narrative that visitors experience together and talk about as they engage with the content.

5. Conclusion in respect to the COP1 and COP2

Toolkit 1 – to make Europe visible (COP1) – Not applicable.

Toolkit 2 – integrating cultural Europe (social arena): (COP2) – Due to its origins in bilingual Quebec, the exhibition was created simultaneously and natively in two languages, French and English. This allows the existing exhibit to travel easily in a wider variety of locations, and the careful design of the two-language audiovisual experience enables it to be more easily translated and developed for other regions. For instance, all video content was created without on-screen text; synchronized language content is delivered in the individually-delivered audio track.



Toolkit 3 – activation, participation and & role modification: (COP2) - One extremely important element of the exhibition design is the introductory experience to the RFID bracelets and location-specific audio headsets. The delivery, explanation and recovery of these technological gadgets was a process designed and tested in advance by the exhibition team, and is crucial to the successful flow of thousands of visitors per day through this extremely interactive timed-entry exhibit.

Toolkit 4 – synesthetic translation of perspective (COP1) – Not applicable.

Toolkit 5 - Social web and interaction: (COP2) – The exhibition has an active Facebook group and Twitter account as well as a dedicated informational web site. Museums hosting the exhibition often have their own social media outlets which are used in service of promoting the exhibit there. And most uniquely, the Star Wars characters which the visitors create, including additional background information on the psychological and social elements of identity which they represent, can be saved online, emailed, and shared. Example: <http://sw-id.com/5197ad0c790c2>

Focus on COP 1 + COP2

Image 1: *Star Wars : Identities* at the Montreal Science Center. Lucasarts Ltd 2012.

Image 2: *Star Wars : Identities* web site showing visitor-created identity story. Lucasarts Ltd 2012.



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ZUNA

FEMALE EWOK

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I was raised on the lava planet Mustafar, where members of my community made their living in lava mining. On holidays my best friend and I would traditionally go rock-hopping through the lava fields.

My parents required discipline from me but gave me support when I needed it, and I inherited my natural abilities from them. Later on I spent some time with the great Rebel leader Leia Organa, whose guidance left me with knowledge I still use every day in my job as a Jedi Knight.

I remember this one time when I won an entire city in a game of chance. I didn't let this affect me too much, though; instead I became the best administrator the city has ever seen and governed with justice and integrity.

People often tell me I'm a generally organised and prepared person, I also tend to be energetic and social. But the most important thing to me is benevolence: after all, helping is its own reward, as they say.

The Force is very strong with me, so I wasn't surprised when the Emperor tracked me down. When he offered me limitless power in exchange for my allegiance, I fought the urge to join him and his evil minions and rejected his offer.



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