
Investigation of the Exhibition "Im Takt der Maschine" (In Time with the Machine)

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This is a report on work in progress. Our investigation started in Spring 1995 at Exhibition Unit 3, "Im Takt der Maschine," of the Deutsche Arbeitsschutzausstellung (German Exhibition for Safety on the Job, abbr. DASA) run by the Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsschutz und Unfallforschung (Federal Institution for Worker Safety and Accident Research, BAU) in Dortmund. The exhibit under study is divided into eight rooms or zones, each with its own theme, which together form a textile factory from the early twentieth century.

The primary purpose of this exhibition unit is to graphically familiarize visitors with important problems of worker safety in industrial production. The visitors should be able to gain a concrete understanding of work conditions by viewing demonstrations of the machines.

An important question under investigation was to determine whether the visitors would recognize the safety problems or whether the historical and nostalgic aspects of the unit would overshadow them.

The second focus of the investigation concerned the use of media. For visitors not taking part in guided tours, DASA makes available a headphone tour. The principal question here was to what extent the headphones would harmonize with the other media employed, such as videos, touch screens, texts, and the machine demonstrations, or would compete with them.

A third area had to do with a basic aspect of the presentation, which included not only original and reproduced objects, but artistic objects as well. It was our goal to discover how the visitors received and dealt with these artistic objects.

The investigation was based upon guided group discussions following a 40-60 minute viewing of the exhibit. The groups consisted of 6-14 participants. Altogether 60 people took part in the discussions. Group members were selected either for anticipated prior knowledge in the area of worker safety or for belonging to visitor groups described by DASA as "typical" for its clientele.

The design of the study was conceived on a quasi-experimental basis, while the qualitative methods used left rather uncontrolled cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions and judgments on the part of the visitors. This

somewhat odd design was developed as a consequence of general problems in evaluation of museum exhibitions, namely, the lack of precise, finite, and unchanging goals of curators, and the researchers' need to include "unexpected" effects of a visit in their model.

As a result of the preliminary analysis we may note that the visitors fell into two rough groups, yet this did not correspond to their prior knowledge of worker safety but to their relationship to the contents. The crucial factor for understanding the exhibit was not prior theoretical knowledge but concrete practical experience working in industry.

Critical or disapproving remarks regarding the display of original machines were made both by laypersons in the area of worker safety and by experts who themselves had no experience with industrial work. In contrast, the impression of realism, comprehensibility, and comparability predominated among persons working in industry, whether they were apprentices or worker safety commissioners.

The visitors' perception of the artistic objects corresponded perfectly with the intentions of DASA in putting them on display.

A Comparative Study of European Health Promotion Exhibitions

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Planning and implementing a health promotion exhibit which effectively provides information on a specific topic that challenges public attitudes and achieves understanding is a formidable endeavor. We have planned a study to continue the momentum of the seminar "Traveling Exhibitions and Health Promotion" and build upon the issues raised by its participants. Capitalizing on the experience of several European countries gained on a national level, this European Commission sponsored project proposes to carry out a comparative study of four health exhibitions and assess their effectiveness as a method of health promotion.

The study will take the form of a summative evaluation. This kind of evaluation will be able to provide information about how the four exhibitions are working overall, how people use them, what they learn, and/or possibly how they are changed by them. The emphasis of the study will be on exploring the interplay of learning about health and the

ffective reactions to health exhibitions which address attitudes, hopes, fears and other emotional issues. The results of the study should provide important insights into the characteristics of an exhibition which can communicate complex information and motivate its viewers to alter their attitudes and perhaps to change their behavior in order to lead a healthier life.

The project has selected specific research methods for this comparative study. A steering group with experienced professionals in the fields of health policy, health education, exhibition design, and visitor research will meet regularly during the course of the project and critically review its development. The varied make-up of the group will ensure a pluralistic point of view. Each member's specific knowledge about expert practice throughout Europe will provide an important dimension to the monitoring of the project's relevance and its implications for practicing professionals. An initial pretest of the research instrument will be made to check its usefulness and indicate where improvements are needed prior to the final data collection at the four exhibitions. The final data collection will be made by a native speaker on site and will emphasize qualitative data by using personal interviews and moderated group discussions, while quantitative data will be collected via a standardized psychographic survey.

The documentation of the results of the comparative survey will be presented in the form of a narrative report. It will thoroughly document the planning, methods, and data analysis. The report will be so written that the significance of the results will be accessible to a broad spectrum of potential readers. While the publication will be largely directed at health professionals involved in the planning of exhibitions, it will also be of interest to health policy makers, exhibition evaluators, and exhibition planners in other fields.

Visitor Studies Association New voice mail toll-free number

**Please note that the toll-free
number for voice mail has changed.**

The new number is:

**1-888-JOINVSA
or (564-6872)**

What's QuAM?

What is QuAM or Qualifizierung und Austausch in der Museumspädagogik (Qualification and Exchange in Museum pedagogy)? It is a project organized by a team from the Association of Museum Educators and the Federal Academy for Cultural Education at Wolfenbüttel, Germany. The project's goal is the dissemination of both theoretically-based knowledge and practical skills among people working in the field of museum communication with a focus on East German museum staff. The program offers a number of three-day seminars and workshops on marketing, public relations, advertisement and mediation techniques in exhibitions. The project is sponsored by the Robert-Bosch-Stiftung (Stuttgart).

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The Study of Museology in Leipzig

Although the lights went out for many institutions in the former East Germany after the German unification, responsible individuals of the German Association of Museums vehemently fought for the maintenance and upkeep of an academy dedicated to a practically oriented education in the museum sciences. The reason for this pleading was that this school, founded 1954 in Leipzig, is the only place where interested students can acquire an allround-knowledge of everyday practice especially for smaller and middle-sized museums. The curriculum is planned for four years. In the first two years, students get acquainted with principles and methods of documentation, conservation, and various questions of administration. Later the focus is on education and exhibition management, including evaluation, visitor research and public relations.

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