Routledge Studies in Heritage

HIP HERITAGE AND MUSEUM PRACTICES IN CONTEMPORARY HYBRID MARKETS

Lizette Gradén and Tom O'Dell

ROUTLEDGE

Hip Heritage and Museum Practices in Contemporary Hybrid Markets

Focusing on how museums prioritize and produce content, *Hip Heritage* demonstrates how economic issues play an ever-larger role in determining how cultural heritage is being framed and presented in contemporary heritage museums.

Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted by the authors at seven museums over the course of seven years, this book offers an in-depth analysis of heritage museums in Nordic, Scandinavian, and North American contexts. It investigates how economic realities, coupled with the cultural contexts in which museums operate, affect how these institutions organize, manage, and develop their collections to make themselves relevant in society. Once charged with the primary task of educating citizens about their cultural identity and history, national museums and heritage organizations are also under pressure to re-think their market demands and meet stakeholders' increasing interest in growing visitor numbers and expanding economic returns. Simultaneously, many museums are part of a cultural sector with diminished public funding and increased competition for the existing financing. Against this background, this book asks: "When the budget is tight, whose heritage counts most?" It considers museums as arenas for heritage politics in action on the local, national, and international levels, as well as at the institutional level.

Hip Heritage will appeal to scholars and students engaged in the study of ethnology, heritage, museum studies, marketing, leisure and tourism, public folklore, and sociology.

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2024
by Routledge
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-032-35620-4 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-032-35621-1 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-1-003-32770-7 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003327707

Typeset in Times New Roman
by MPS Limited, Dehradun

Tom O'Dell : I would like to dedicate this book to my daughter, Matilda O'Dell

Lizette Gradén: I would like to dedicate the book to my sons Måns and Edvin Gradén, and to my transatlantic Beck family

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Acknowledgments

Numerous people have contributed to the book's publication and the research on which it is based. We would like to express a heartfelt thank you to the individuals who volunteered their time and shared their profound knowledge, experience, and anticipations with us: all of which derived from their positions as museum professionals, stakeholders in the field of museums, visitors, and community members. Thanks for your engagement.

The pandemic made it clear how vital the role of museums is during times of crisis. In the wake of museums closing, staff were furloughed and volunteers lost their daily footing. When we returned after the pandemic a good portion of staff had left museums altogether, older volunteers had quit coming or even passed, while remaining volunteers recognized how much they appreciated having their routines back. For museumsthat managed to stay open to the public, albeit with restrictions, these became places for staff and community to revert to, tap for strength, and build resilience.

We are incredibly grateful to the museums that trusted our process, as we approached operations from different angles than what most scholars do. Repeatedly we ran into preconceptions that studying heritage making in a museum meant focusing on collections, exhibitions, and public programs, not the financial circumstances, stakeholders, and priorities, and processes that had made museums' offerings come about.

We would also like to thank our colleagues in Ethnology, Museum studies, Artistic practice, and Business Management in the Nordic countries and in Europe, and our colleagues in Folklore and Scandinavian Studies, in the United States. Your input to conference papers, and comments on previous texts, has now matured into the book at hand. In addition, we extend a heartfelt thank you to museum leaders, staff, and entrepreneurs who have read and commented on the book's final draft, including careful proofing of terminology of agricultural equipment.

We are deeply grateful to our friends for hosting us and cheering us on, and for teaching us about their relationships with their local museums, before, during, and after the pandemic. Moreover, the research on which this book is based was supported by Erik Phillip-Sörensens stiftelse, the Swedish National Heritage Board, and Riksbankens Jubileumsfond. Thank you for your trust.

Lizette Gradén & Tom O'Dell

1 Introduction

Challenges and opportunities for museums working in contemporary hybrid markets

In the past decades, museums around the globe have been increasingly impacted by "new public management," resulting in stakeholders' demands for measurable performance. Consequently, museums have increasingly focused on boosting visitor numbers and increasing ticket sales, writing grants, and securing donations for exhibitions, programs, and educational activities, all the while expanding gift shops, rental facilities, cafés and restaurants (Gradén & O'Dell 2020b:163–194). The role of museums has grown into institutions expected to engage with multifaceted societal issues in exchange for their municipal, state, and governmental grants. This shift in focus has influenced how museums consider their activities and present their visions and missions. In many cases where collection and curatorial work paired with knowledge development was considered a museum's primary task, the hunt for financial resources and larger numbers of visitors has disrupted and upended this priority. The availability of financing and collaborative possibilities determine which areas will be developed (Gradén & O'Dell 2018; 2020; Johnson & Sobczak 2021:269–295). This situation poses new questions regarding what a museum might be and what it may no longer be. And for some, it raises questions as to whether or not museums are worthy of taxpayers' support.

Consequently, society's understanding of the role museums play in generating knowledge could be more robust. Beyond this, museums increasingly suffer arbitrary closure proposals and draconian austerity packages. These have left their mark on the last decades' museum work. The COVID-19 pandemic made this change urgently visible, but the reduction phenomena are far from new.

Ongoing research points to the importance of considering the links between resource allocation and the conditions of cultural heritage making. The connections between the financing and management of cultural heritage is a highly complex question dealing with how national, regional, municipal, and private sources allocate funds to museums (Gradén & O'Dell 2017:48–67, 2018:45–61; 2020:163–194, cf. Ekström 2020). The aim of this book is to analyze how the production of cultural heritage in museums is affected by market forces and the cultural context in which museums work today. It focuses on

DOI: 10.4324/9781003327707-1

two central questions. First, how are culture-economic pressures met and perceived by museums, and in what ways do they affect how heritage museums perceive the framework of their activities and ultimately choose to produce new exhibitions, programs, and events? Second, when numbers "count" and demands to attract significant publics increase, whose heritage counts most in practice, and how does the need to account for large numbers of visitors impact the priorities museums make to produce and assemble exhibitions?

The Museums

The cultural analysis of this book is based upon the study of seven museums that all work with notions, understandings, and representations of "heritage," particularly heritage that they label as "Swedish." We shall discuss and problematize the conceptions of "Swedishness" and "heritage" in a moment. However, before doing this, it is necessary to provide the reader with a better understanding of the museums this book most systematically focuses upon. Two museums, the National Nordic Museum, and the American Swedish Institute, are in the United States. The other five museums, the Hallwyl Museum, The Museum of Movements, Skokloster Castle, Kulturen, and Kulture's Östarp, are all based in Sweden. In what follows, we extensively draw upon information taken from each museum's homepage to give the reader a brief description closely bound to how each museum envisioned and presented itself to the public in 2022. This material is complemented by observations we have made while doing fieldwork. These descriptions will be further developed, analyzed, and discussed in the following chapters of this book.

The Nordic Heritage Museum was founded in 1979 to celebrate the heritage of the thousands of immigrants from the Nordic countries who moved to the Pacific Northwest in the 19th and 20th centuries. The museum found a home in the repurposed 1908 Webster School building at 3014 NW 67th Street, and the facility opened to the public in 1980 under the name of the Nordic Heritage Museum. At its opening, the building served as a community center and was the only museum in North America to represent the culture and heritage of the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. The core exhibition, "Dream of America," from 1985, told the story of Nordic immigrants coming to the United States, and particularly the Pacific Northwest, while temporary exhibitions celebrated Nordic culture, arts, and history. In addition to serving as a community center, the facility offered public programs, Scandinavian folk music, a series of classical music, literature, and film, and contemporary and folk arts programs. Annual recurring events included Tivoli (later called Viking Days), Julfest (formerly called Yulefest), and the Northern Lights Auktion fundraiser.

The lease that the museum held from Seattle Public Schools for the Webster School building was temporary, and it became increasingly clear that the museum would have to find a new facility to conduct its activities.

In 2003, the Nordic Heritage Museum's board and Executive director launched a capital campaign to raise funds for a future move. That same year, the museum completed the first land purchase, a 55,000-square-foot area on 2655 NW Market Street in downtown Ballard. The site selected was the old Fenpro Building, a former munition factory during World War II, adjacent to a working shipyard and dock areas. After hosting several businesses, Fenpro Properties turned the building into a warehouse and leased space to artists and craftsmen.

The launch of the capital campaign to raise an estimated $44.6 million for the planning, design, and construction of the new Nordic Museum (Figure 1.1) coincided with a transition in the museum's leadership. In spring 2007, after operating the museum for 27 years as the first paid staff in 1980, Executive Director Marianne Forssblad retired and moved back to Sweden. In October 2007, *the Seattle Times* reported that Eric Nelson, "a California native," would succeed Forssblad as the new Executive Director in 2008, "overseeing what many hope will be the museum's rise to national prominence as it moves and expands" (Emily Heffter October 8, 2007:B-2). Conceptual plans for the museum were completed in 2009 with the Seattle/San Francisco-based architectural firm, Mithun (www.Mithun.com), led by Mithun partner and lead architect Richard Franco, with Juhani Pallasmaa from Finland as consulting architect. The architectural team and the museum worked with Ralph Appelbaum Associates of New York to complete permanent exhibition designs. In 2018, the new purpose-built museum was opened to the

Figure 1.1 *The National Nordic Museum* in Ballard, Washington, a neighborhood in Northwestern Seattle opened its new facility in 2018, following decades of fundraising. The founding of the museum, however, dates to 1979. Prior to the move, the organization was known as the Nordic Heritage Museum, located in a repurposed schoolhouse from 1908.

Photo: Tom O'Dell.

public, and in the following year, in 2019, through an act of congress, the museum was recognized as the National Nordic Museum.

The museum emphasizes that "The National Nordic Museum shares Nordic culture, values, and ideas with people of all ages and backgrounds to create connections, generate dialogue, and inspire new perspectives" (http://nordicmuseum.org/about, read on August 11, 2022). It then summarizes its vision as follows: "Through the history we illuminate, the stories we tell, the connections we make, and the values we promote, we inspire our visitors to create a more vibrant, more just, more sustainable world" (https://nordicmuseum.org/mission-vision-and-values, read on August 11, 2022). In line with this vision, they assert that the museum's values emphasize openness, sustainability, social justice, and innovation (ibid.)

Since 2012 The American Swedish Institute (ASI), Located in Minneapolis, Minnesota, has consisted of two primary facilities, together referred to as the ASI campus (Figure 1.2). This should read, The first facility, the Turnblad Mansion, was built in the years between 1904 and 1908 by Swan J. Turnblad, who emigrated as a child with his parents from Tubbemåla in Sweden, and as an adult, amassed incredible wealth as the founder of the

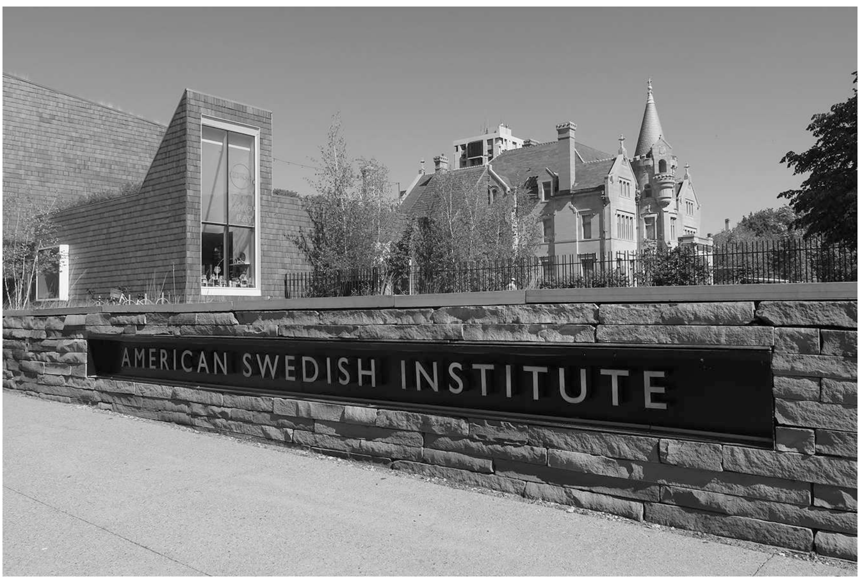

Figure 1.2 *The American Swedish Institute* (ASI) is located at 2600 Park Avenue in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It opened it's new purpose-built facility in 2012, expanding on the original Turnblad mansion. When looking through the floor-to-ceiling windows, significant for the social area of the new building, the mansion comes forth as the largest piece of the ASI past, with a *vårdträd,* connection between the two.

Photo: Lizette Gradén.

Swedish language newspaper, *Svenska Amerikanska Posten (SAP)*. With the help of these resources, he raised a significant three-story, 33-room, chateau-like home for his family in Phillips, back then, one of the most affluent neighborhoods in the city.

Today the Turnblad Mansion is accompanied by the Nelson Cultural Center, a modern, architecturally striking facility that opened in 2012. The facility is named after its donors, Carl and Leslie Nelson. Carl Nelson was a longtime patron of ASI, a former board president, and a financial advisor to the CEO, (email correspondence with the CEO and President of ASI, July 2022.) The Nelson Cultural Center contains an extended Gallery, made possible by a donation from Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation. The Nelson Center functions as the primary entrance to ASI. As visitors enter the Nelson Cultural Center, the admission desk faces them, followed by the gift shop and the Fika restaurant. Moreover, visitors and staff alike are offered a view of the Turnblad Mansion, which, framed by the large floor-to-ceiling pane-glass windows of the cultural center, comes forth as ASI's largest museum object.

On its homepage, ASI states that its vision is:

> The American Swedish Institute will be a leading museum and cultural center that invites all people to connect their pasts to their shared future, to understand their heritage in relation to others and to discover their role as neighbors and global citizens. Vibrant, ongoing ties to Sweden will illuminate and inspire all these endeavors (https://asimn.org/about/mission-values/, Read on August 11, 2022).

The values they promote are stewardship, hospitality, learning, difference, innovation, and sustainability.

Since 2018, the Hallwyl Museum (Figure 1.3) is part of the National Historical Museums, a government agency with six museums, whose mission is to "promote knowledge of and interest in Sweden's history combined with preserving and developing the cultural heritage that the agency administers" (www.shm.se). The museum is located in one of the wealthier areas of central Stockholm. The building, popularly referred to as a palace (*palats* in Swedish), was built by Wilhelmina and Walther von Hallwyl between 1893 and 1898. When it was built, it was a luxurious home (one of the first buildings to be fully equipped with electricity) in which the Hallwyls lived. The home was opened as a museum in 1938. Today, the Hallwyl Museum holds a so-called finite collection of 30,000 accession numbers, from Asian bronzes and ceramics from China to European silver and fine art. With a few exceptions that relate to the building or the family, the museum collection is not added to.

The National Historical Museums agency briefly describes its mission as that of promoting knowledge about Sweden's history as well as preserving the cultural history under the agency's auspices (https://hallwylskamuseet.se/om-oss/en-del-av-statens-historiska-museer/, read on August 12, 2022).

Figure 1.3 The Hallwyl Museum or Hallwyl Palace, at Hamngatan 4 in Stockholm. When the Hallwyl Palace was finished in 1898, it was a luxurious home. Wilhelmina's and Walter's new home was one of the first buildings to be fully equipped with electricity, central heating, and a bathroom with a tub and a shower among other novelties. The home was opened as a museum in 1938.

Photo: The Hallwyl Museum.

Figure 1.4 *Kulturen* lies in Lund, in the Southern Swedish province of Scania, and is considered the second oldest open-air museum in Sweden. The collections were generated through the organization *Kulturhistoriska föreningen i Södra Sverige*, established in 1882. The museum opened in 1892, one year after the open-air museum Skansen, and has evolved and morphed ever since.

Photo: Lizette Gradén.

The cultural history association was founded in 1882 by Georg J: son (for Jansson) Karlin (together with many associates) as a collection of artifacts which was folded in under the auspices of the Cultural Historical Association for Southern Sweden (which is still actually the museum's formal name, although it is seldom used) that same year (Figure 1.4). Under Karlin's leadership, the nonprofit association accumulated several Southern Swedish cultural historic buildings, and accumulated them on a large plot of land in Lund. Finally, in 1892, Kulturen opened its doors as one of the world's first open-air museums: opening just a year after Skansen in Stockholm.

Over the years that followed, Karlin and his colleagues continued to collect culturally historic buildings from Southern Sweden, and culturally historical artifacts from around the world. At present, Kulturen is responsible for operating eight different museums and destinations. It is organized as a nonprofit membership association with multiple stakeholders financing it, including regional and municipal sources, donations from private persons, membership fees, and income from admissions fees.

Kulturen defines the objective of the museum's activities in the following way:

> The objective of Kulturen is to collect and preserve the material cultural heritage, mainly that which is oriented towards Southern Swedish cultural history, and in connection with this, promote research and education in society as well as to conduct activities that fall in line with this (https://www.kulturen.com/om-kulturen/verksamhet-och-styrdokument/, read on August 11, 2022).

In 2018, there was a transition in leadership. Following this transition, there have been many changes, such as a smaller board of trustees and more emphasis on volunteer engagement, particularly in public programs and garden maintenance. In addition, Kulturen emphasizes their following of ICOM's ethics rules and, beyond this, works in a way that advances democratic values, equality, diversity, and accessibility (Ibid.). However, these concepts are not explicitly defined and thus interpreted differently across the museum departments. For example, when educators consider accessibility in terms of serving people with various disabilities in the open-air museum and exhibitions, the collections department thinks of access in terms of the public's access to collections and archives.

Georg J: son Karlin purchased Kulturens Östarp (Figure 1.5) in 1922 through a generous donation he received from Wilhelmina von Hallwyl, the founder of the Hallwyl Museum. At the center of focus at Kulturen's Östarp is "Gamlegård" (the old farm), a traditional four-sided 19th-century Scanian farmhouse. Upon purchasing the farm in 1922, Karlin decided not to move it to Lund. A common practice at the time for open-air museums in Scandinavia was to buy farmhouses and other types of buildings that were thought to represent fading traditional peasant society or, in the case of Sweden, the four social estates which officially ceased in 1865, and move them to an open-air museum grounds where they were put on display. Kulturen in Lund, Skansen in Stockholm, Norsk Folkemuseum in Oslo, and Bymuseum in Copenhagen are similar 19th-century examples. Instead of moving the farm, Karlin established a living museum in its original cultural landscape. Perhaps Wilhelmina von Hallwyl's idea of an on-site living museum inspired Karlin, or maybe it was von Hallwyl's requirement in exchange for funding? Other buildings that are a part of Kulturen's Östarp include an early 20th-century farmhouse, a watermill, and a windmill. The museum works with 19th-century agricultural methods and flora to educate visitors about past centuries' folk traditions and techniques. Indeed, in the late 1990s, Kulturen's Östarp members worked with faculty and students in the Department of Human Ecology at Lund University to recreate the 19th-century fauna and flora that would have existed on the farm then. In line with this, older forms of rye that are no longer deemed economically feasible by modern agriculturalists are sewn, planted, and harvested, and even older forms of farm animals that were commonly associated with the 19th-century Swedish peasantry, such as Linderöd's pigs, and Ringamåla Cows,

Figure 1.5 *Kulturen's Östarp* is an open-air museum operated under Kulturen's auspices. Georg J: son (for Jansson) Karlin purchased Kulturens Östarp in 1922 through a generous donation he received from Wilhelmina von Hallwyl, the founder of the Hallwyl Museum. It was not to be moved from its location to the open-air museum in town, following the same in-situ logic as Wilhelmina von Hallwyl had applied to her Palace on Hamngatan 4 in Stockholm.

Photo: Tom O'Dell.

which are no longer commonly found on modern farms, are put on display and used as part of the museum's backdrop. Personnel at the museum wear traditional 19th-century peasant attire and, on special occasions such as the hay harvest day, teach visitors how to work with a scythe and hang hay to dry as would have been done 100 years ago.

Kulturen's Östarp does not list or describe any specific vision or values for the museum. Still, the work and programming at Östarp align with the vision and values that Kulturen describes on its homepage.

The origins of *The Museum of Movements* (Figure 1.6) date back to December 2015 when the city of Malmoe in Southern Sweden sent a letter to Sweden's Ministry of Culture expressing an ambition and desire to be the host of a national museum focusing on questions concerning democracy and migration. As a result, the city was awarded one million crowns (approximately 100,000 dollars) to conduct a pilot study concerning the potential development of such a museum. The study worked primarily with dialogical meetings with scholars, municipal civil servants, diverse groups of citizens, and people working in other museums

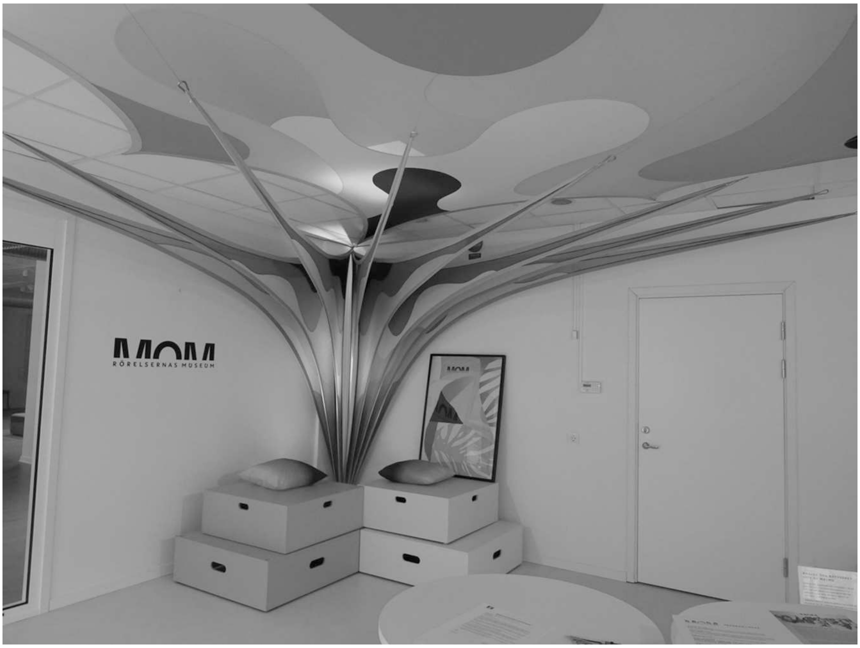

Figure 1.6 The Museum of Movements in Malmoe opened its test operation in a repurposed facility on Möllevången in Malmoe in April 2019. Due to a change in the government's budget, the museum closed in 2020.

Photo: Lizette Gradén.

throughout the country. Based upon the results of this pilot study, the Ministry of Culture decided that a museum focusing on migration and democracy would be developed in Malmoe. Five million crowns (500,000 dollars) were earmarked for this endeavor. During 2017 and 2018, museum personnel were hired. They began testing a series of preliminary activities to learn how they could best work with the local community and address questions and issues they thought were important.

In contrast to most of Sweden's other national museums, the leadership and personnel of the Museum of Movements strove to work closely with the local community in a grassroots manner to maximize the museum's relevance for the people of Malmoe and beyond. The Museum of Movements officially opened in April 2019 and worked committedly with a bottom-up approach to its activities and programming. Following a national election in 2018 and the appointment of a new Minister of Culture priorities changed as to which cultural institutions that were to receive to receive support. Museum leadership, was informed in September 2020 that the museum would no longer receive national funding from the Swedish government. As a result, the museum's doors were permanently closed in December of the same year.

Skokloster Castle (Figure 1.7) was built between 1654 and 1676 by Baron Carl Gustaf Wrangel, who had established a reputation for himself as a

Figure 1.7 Skokloster Castle, known as one of the most well-preserved Baroque castles in Europe, is situated in the municipality of Håbo, approximately 65 kilometers (40 miles) northwest of Stockholm.

Photo: Tom O'Dell.

highly successful military leader in the Thirty Years War, in which Sweden rose in military prominence and temporarily made significant land gains in Central Europe. Alongside his military career, Wrangel was also an active collector of arts and valuables, accumulating a vast collection of furniture, art, books, weapons, and the most refined instruments and tools of his day (Boström 1975:5). To house his collection and create a summer residence for his family, he began the construction of Skokloster Castle in 1654. However, Wrangel died in 1676 before the construction of the castle was fully completed, and the third-floor ballroom (which would have been one of Northern Europe's largest ballrooms had it been completed) remains unfinished to this day. Upon his death, the castle was inherited by his oldest daughter Margareta Juliana who converted it into an entailed estate in 1701: an act that forbade the selling, giving away, or transference via inheritance of any of the castle's belongings. While many European castles' furniture, art, and contents were sold off over the centuries to finance those properties' upkeep, such was not the case at Skokloster. As Skokloster's homepage points out, this is the reason why Skolkloster is considered one of Europe's best preserved and intact baroque castles.

Skokloster Castle was purchased by the Swedish government in 1967 from the von Essen family, who lived in the castle but no longer found it economically feasible to maintain the estate. The castle and its inventory of approximately 50,000 items were converted into a museum. One of the museum's main attractions is its armory of early modern weapons that Wrangel collected over his military career. Like the Hallwyl Museum, Skokloster Castle is incorporated into the National Historical Museums Agency. The vision and values the museum strives toward are, for this reason, identical to those of the Hallwyl Museum.

The seven museums that are the primary focus of this book are different in many ways. The National Nordic Museum has a broader perspective than the other six museums to the extent that it highlights a cross-section of Nordic experiences, or what they refer to as Nordic culture and values. However, like ASI, they focus on the experience of migration. Skokloster tends to concentrate upon a 17th-century slice of aristocratic history, while Hallwyl frames a segment of early 20th-century life amongst a component of the Swedish (and European) economic elite. Kulturens Östarp, in contrast, focuses exclusively on the peasant life of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Kulturen, for its part, houses collections of artifacts from around the world, but the open-air portion of the museum focuses upon a cross-section of buildings that reflect life amongst the peasantry, bourgeoisie, and clergy that had their roots in preindustrial Southern Sweden.

To have Swedish Heritage under one's auspices—What does that mean?

They share a focus on something they all call "Swedish." However, this raises the question of what the term "Swedish" means, in this case to the museums. To be sure, Carl Gustaf Wrangel and any of the aristocracy living at Skokloster after him had very few life experiences that would be familiar to anyone who ever lived in Gamlegård at Kulturen's Östarp. And most people living in Sweden today would probably be more apt to describe the permanent exhibits at any of these institutions as exotic and peripheral to their daily lives rather than intimately familiar and integrated into those lives. Against this background, it is vital to remember that when we use terms such as "Swedish" or "Swedishness" in this book, we are not inferring the existence of any form of static, bound, integrated, or distinctly defined and enclosed identity. Thus, while certain nationalist groups and right-wing movements strive to lay claim to the concept and attempt to define who and what belongs to it, we regard the term as open, fluid, and relational. This perspective falls in line with how ethnologist Orvar Löfgren has argued that national and ethnic identities should be understood. He argues:

> If there is a certain chameleonic vagueness about the concept of nationalism, it is still usually contained with the field of meanings denoting

ideology, doctrine, or political movement. The use of the concept *national identity* is, however, more ambivalent and it is probably in the development of this concept that ethnicity theory can make its most fruitful contribution, namely in the focus on identity as a dynamic process of construction and reproduction over time, in direct relation or opposition to specific other groups and interests…

And he continues:

National identity can thus be seen as a specific form of collective identity. Like ethnic identity, it can be both latent and manifest: activated in particular situations, confrontations, or settings, dormant in others (1989:9).

As Löfgren argues, the context in which forms of identity are performed and come to expression is of central importance for understanding them. The museums that primarily stand in focus in this book are located in the United States and Sweden. In Sweden, the notion of Swedishness is primarily thought of as a national identity aligned with a majority group who self-identify as (or are framed by others as) Swedes, with ethnic identities ascribed to minority and immigrant groups. In the museums in the United States that this book discusses, the processes are a bit more slippery. The term "Swedish" can refer to processes and objects emanating from the nation-state of Sweden and, in this way, ride on the coattails of a Swedish national identity. However, more often, the term "Swedish" distinguishes a group of people and cultural phenomena existing in the United States (or the museum in question) in relation to other groups in the United States. In this case, it assumes more of an ethnic quality. Important to bear in mind is the fact that we are dealing with a fluid form of identity (and identification process) that is malleable and highly dependent upon its contextualization and relation to others (see, for example, Gradén 2003; Österlund-Pötzsch 2003; Klein 1980).

"Heritage," for its part, is a concept that is used and defined in many different ways. It is a concept that has grown and developed over time. As Marilena Vecco (2010) has pointed out, the concept of heritage has roots in the French term *Patrimoine*, dating back to the late 18th century, which initially indicated wealth and goods inherited by children from their parents but which evolved to include "the goods and property of the king (which were) nationalized and therefore considered public goods, the ownership of which was public" (Vecco 2010: 321). Successively the concept of "cultural heritage" as something "belonging" to a nation or group of people developed. By the mid-20th century, and on the heels of two world wars that destroyed many historical buildings and monuments, several international organizations began to espouse a need to recognize and protect historical buildings, monuments, and artifacts. During this period, heritage was understood as a material culture with tentacles into the past. This changed in 1972 when UNESCO passed a convention that lifted forth the need to appreciate natural geography as a form of heritage, and in 2003 UNESCO recognized the need to protect intangible forms of heritage that included performances, storytelling rituals, and festival events, categories also referred to as folklore (cf. Hafstein 2018; Kuutma 2015). In this way, the concept of cultural heritage has expanded from an original focus on material culture to one that includes natural environments and immaterial forms of folklore or performative culture.

Within scholarly literature and between disciplines, there are very different ways of thinking about what heritage is. Debates have raged and continue about whether heritage is discovered and found or created through cultural and political processes. The former perspective of heritage as that which is found has had stronger roots in specific folds of archaeological research. The thinking is (somewhat simplified) that if an object is old or is dug up, it is heritage, per se because it is created by humans and historically aged. This thinking has lost ground in recent decades but resurfaces occasionally. Archaeologist Brit Solli argues, for example, for a need to think of heritage in a manner of "mitigated essentialism" (2011:47). Solli uses Stonehenge as an example and contends that some things have a materiality that cannot be ignored. She asserts that "… they constitute something tangible, durable, an essential heritage, a 'gathering or sedimentation of the past' (Olsen 2010:160)" (2011:47). In this sense, objects have a physical and material weight of their own, that has been perceived and understood through time which cannot be ignored, and which in some way makes them *ipso facto* "heritage." This is one way of understanding heritage that focuses on the fact that it has a nmateriality and historicity that imbues the status of "essentially" being heritage upon it. We acknowledge this perspective here. However, this is not an understanding of cultural heritage that this book builds upon.

In what follows, we align ourselves with a strong tradition within ethnology and folkoristics that views cultural heritage (tangible and intangible) as a series of processes and "attitudes" (Harrison 2013) through which the past is used and invoked for purposes of the present to impact the future (Aronsson & Gradén 2013; Anttonen et al. 2000; Gradén 2003; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998:7; Lowenthal 1996:41–60). Cultural heritage should be understood as an embodied performative practice that individuals, communities, and societies engage in, and their selections influence their and others' futures. We understand intangible and tangible heritage as intertwined and that stories invoke things, and things elicit stories (Hafstein 2018; Kuutma 2013).

Finally, cultural heritage is a phenomenon that has all too often become intimately entangled in identity politics. As David Lowenthal points out, few phenomena can so readily move people to arms to protect one's patrimony (1996:2). However, work with heritage can also be pushed in the opposite direction and be mobilized to facilitate inclusive and democratic processes. Driving the field of heritage studies in this exciting and vital direction, Torgrim Guttormsen and Grete Swensen (2016) have pulled together a large group of Nordic researchers to investigate the question of how heritage can be mobilized to serve in the name of democracy and to facilitate senses of participatory engagement in society. As Guttormsen argues:

> Issues concerning democracy and the public will further direct attention to heritage as a tool for societies to promote community development, shared identities, and public engagement. How heritage contributes to building democracies is a core issue in current environmental and cultural policies, where it is believed to be a positive force for achieving, among other things, social cohesion, sustainable development, and multiculturalism … (2016:2).

In short, the contributions to Guttormsen and Swensen's edited volume, *Heritage, Democracy and the Public* (2016) acknowledge that cultural heritage is a phenomenon that is highly politically charged, and they ask in many different ways how it can be mobilized to promote democratic processes and feelings of inclusion.

Museums and the hybrid space of knowledge, curiosity, and entertainment

Bearing this understanding of cultural heritage in mind, this book focuses on forms of heritage linked to particular places and spaces: museums. There are many types of museums: art museums, science museums, museums of technology, museums of broken relationships, museums of disgusting foods, and indeed, one could even consider zoos and aquariums as types of museums. However, our interest here is upon a type of museum that we and others have referred to as heritage museums (Nofal et al. 2018; Trunfio et al. 2022). These are places that highlight the display of heritage artifacts (objects from the past), and which can also function as stages for the performance of diverse forms of intangible heritage, such as dance, music, handicrafts, and traditional celebrations. As Trunfio et al. explain, these are cultural heritage organizations that:

> (T)ransform the visitor into a proactive explorer of cultural heritage, by combining valorisation and preservation with innovative experiences such as escape, entertainment, and socialisation (2022:2).

An important aspect of the work that heritage museums engage in is the manner in which they harken to a group's past and bring it to life in the name of education and entertainment in the present. This, however, does not mean that these are institutions that only work with phenomena from the past. As the coming chapters in this book demonstrate these are museums that innovatively align the past with contemporary trends in order to attract ever larger numbers of visitors.

Heritage museums are not the subject of a vast field of study, but museums more generally are the focus of an ever-growing field of academic study. And to the extent that there are many different types of museums, it should be noted that they also come in various sizes and forms, from large monumental national institutions of natural history, art, and heritage, to small-scale community-based organizations focusing on local identity and history. In addition, most people worldwide have personal experiences of having been to a museum and have some understanding of what a museum is through their everyday life experiences. However, before proceeding, we would like to address the question of what a museum is and what we mean by this term in the book at hand.

First, it is important to remember that the phenomenon we call "museums" is not a static entity or institution. It has changed over time. In his book, *Museums: A History* (2016), John E. Simmons emphasizes the link between museums and their collections. As he argues, museums have always been involved in the act of pulling things (tangible and intangible) together, organizing them, and imbuing them with meaning. In line with this, he finds some of the roots for the modern museum in the Temple of the Muses, built in Alexandria, Egypt, around the 3rd century BC. This was a place whose origins are spun in mythology, and for which there are few reliable first-hand accounts, but in which it was said that scholars could come together, conduct research and benefit from the knowledge gathered in the Library of Alexandria, which was a part of the temple (Simmons 2016:34). However, he and others also lift forth the cabinets of curiosity, which became popular in Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries as another significant development in the history of the modern museum (Simmons 2016:64ff.). Cabinets of curiosity were privately owned collections of objects deemed remarkable and assembled from around the world. They were organized and housed in the rooms and halls of European homes, manors, and castles and displayed in a manner that spoke of their owners' transnational networks and connections, as well as their wealth and status. Cabinets of curiosity tended to highlight that which was exotic and spectacular and, in this way, worked as a form of entertainment. However, they also informed viewing guests of how life could look in distant corners of the world and were educational.

The modern museum took the idea of collecting and displaying objects and pushed it from private ownership into an orientation toward public display and communication. While there are examples, such as the Vatican Museum which dates back to the 16th century, it was in the 17th and 18th centuries that the institution of the modern museum most rapidly developed and expanded worldwide (Simmons 2016: 141ff.). The Age of Enlightenment was crucial to the institutional evolution of museums and, at this time, focused mainly on the collection of objects. Items would be collected, preserved, organized, and later displayed for viewing. The Royal Armoury in Sweden, established in 1638, is an example. Initially, owners and keepers of such collections presented them to a small circle of royal and noble visitors. The "riffraff" were not welcome in these galleries. The conception of a museum diversified during the 19th century as museums highlighted and showcased different social classes (Bäckström 2012:34–45). Scandinavian cultural history museums cast and presented peasants as idealistic people of the past (ibid.:71–78, cf. Frykman & Löfgren 2019; Hellspong & Löfgren 1994) primarily by highlighting their material culture and folk art. When museums emphasized the people of the countryside as the good old life, museums futuristically cast industrialism and urban life as societal progression. Thus museums' fostered an image of Sweden as a nation with a rich history and a prosperous, democratic future.

Indeed, as Tony Bennett points out, building upon Michel Foucualt's discussion of governmental power (1995: 21), by the mid to late 19th century, museums around the world were ascribed an extraordinary role as institutions of cultural governance that could fortify good Christian morality providing the general public with a Sunday alternative to the bottle. As the museum transformed into a public arena, it was geared to instill middle-class values and dispositions into the bodies and minds of working-class men, Bennett argues. Its disciplinary power called forth proper bourgeois forms of dress and speech in which working-class men could stroll hand in hand with their wives and children in a learned atmosphere of restraint. In contrast to the rowdy atmosphere of the tavern, the museum assumed the role of the institutional educator, an instrument in producing good productive citizens (Bennett 1995: 32). It was, in this way, part of a more extensive societal civilizing apparatus.

However, to the extent that it worked this way, it shifted from the cabinet of curiosity's emphasis on entertainment to a much stronger focus on producing knowledge and education. Bennett explains:

> Rather than merely evoking wonder and surprise for the idly curious, the museum's representations would so arrange and display natural and cultural artifacts to secure 'the utilisation of these for the increase of knowledge and for the culture and enlightenment of the people' (Goode 1895:3) (Bennett 1995:21).

To these ends, museums from the late 19th century and through much of the 20th century specialized in the production of knowledge, the provisioning of education, and the advancement of that which is cultural. It seems common sense to assert that museums are cultural institutions that produce knowledge. However, it is vital to bear in mind that as a consequence of this development, the museum, as a concept, has historically become associated with institutions that are characterized by trustworthiness and competence in matters of protecting and preserving material and immaterial testimonies about humans and their surrounding world (Macdonald & Fyfe 1996:1–20). Beyond this, research on the role of museums in society in the late 20th and early 21st century has demonstrated that to maintain their credibility, they increasingly need to maintain a degree of institutional flexibility and a readiness to sensitively attend to contemporary challenges (Dewhurst, Hall & Seemann 2017).

The need to be flexible necessitates, in turn, an adaptive disposition on the part of museum leaders to constantly reflect on, and rethink, what the institution of the museum is and can be in many different contexts. As a consequence of this, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) has repeatedly worked to refine its definition of what a museum is. As late as August 24, 2022, meeting in Prague, the Extraordinary General Assembly of The International Council of Museums (ICOM) adopted the following definition of the term museum:

> 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. (https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/)

This new definition of a museum differs from that which ICOM adopted in 2007, which framed museums as:

> Non-profit, permanent institutions in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquire, conserve, research, communicate and exhibit the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study, and enjoyment (ICOM 2007).

One of the most significant changes was the addition of the emphasis on being open to the public and working with the participation of surrounding communities. The change reflects a growing international discussion of how museums can and should be relevant. Where museum directors and staff once had complete (or near complete) control of the planning and implementation of a museum's activities, there is now a much stronger agreement (or at least an engaged discussion amongst museum leaders and personnel) that a museum's activities should be integrated with the needs, concerns, and interests of local communities. The movement in this direction is also witnessed in how the 2022 definition refers to "knowledge sharing," whereas the 2007 definition spoke of "study." The word "sharing" in the 2022 definition indicates a movement toward a greater emphasis upon a relational back-and-forth learning process than the word "study" did in the older definition. In this sense, there is a growing agreement that rather than being institutions organized with a top-down leadership style, museums must work to be more inclusive and open to their surrounding world, acting in ways that promote and facilitate democratic values and processes.

Beyond this, enjoyment is highlighted in this definition from 2022 and 2007. This is a point that we will be returning to throughout the book. It could seem uncontroversial to assert that museums are cultural institutions focused on knowledge production for educational benefit. In that case, it is interesting to reflect upon what an emphasis on enjoyment may mean in this context and how it might affect museums' choices as they strive to be relevant. As the discussion above underscores, the development of the modern museum consists of a path that includes elements of the curiosa, that which is entertaining, and that which is knowledge and learning based. These are pillars upon which all museums of heritage rest in contemporary society. Again, we will return to this.

However, before moving on, it is vital to acknowledge that museums are cultural institutions that have been richly studied and theorized about, particularly in the 1990s and first decades of the new millennium concerning questions such issues as the politics and contestations of cultural heritage; the cultural processes behind the marginalization of cultural identities at heritage sites, the gendering of heritage collections; and the methods through which exhibitions and displays of material culture provide agency to specific ethnic groups or local communities (Alzén & Hillström; Aronsson & Meurling 2005; Conn 2010; Forsberg & Sennefeldt 2014; Jackson 2002; Jenkins 2016; Karp, Mullen & Lavine 1991; Knell 2007; Levitt 2015; Macdonald & Fyfe 1996; Merritt 2002; Smith 2006). A strong emphasis in much of this research comes down to a strong focus on cultural and identity politics.

How museums are entangled in processes of identity politics will be a theme that underscores large portions of the analysis in this book. However, a final detail in the ICOM definition 2022 that we want to highlight and which also constitutes a base upon which this study rests is the assertion that "a museum is a not-for-profit" institution. It is an assertion that may be accurate but can also be misleading. It places museums in a category outside the realm of business and private enterprises that strive for profits. It aligns them more closely with the realm of religion and such institutions as churches, volunteer associations, and charitable organizations, which are usually not profit oriented. However, a central point that this book focuses upon is that *museums are businesses and places of work*. They are cultural institutions oriented toward providing the public with knowledge in more or less enjoyable manners. Still, museums constitute a colossal industry highly dependent upon making money—and we would argue more so now than ever. According to the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), museums in the United States contribute over 50 billion dollars to the U.S. economy annually. More people visit museums, aquariums, and zoos than go to professional sporting events. Seventy-six percent of all the people traveling in the United States for reasons other than business participate in cultural or heritage activities, like going to museums. (https://www.aam-us.org/programs/about-museums/museum-facts-data/ read on December 19, 2022). In other words, these institutions are defined as not-for-profit, but they are very much focused on obtaining funding and income in different forms. Their livelihood depends on the economic equation they meet daily. At the end of the year, they have to report to stakeholders what they have done and optimally how they have grown in bringing in a more extensive and diverse public. Museums, culture, and economy are not separate and isolated spheres but are tightly integrated. Our aim in this book is to show how the work of heritage museums is affected by this integration of culture and economy.

Museums and the cultural economy

Bearing this in mind, an important question that we ask is, "When the budget is tight, whose heritage counts most?" Yes, the work heritage institutions engage in is politically inflected and sharply focuses on the cultural sphere. However, we argue that it is also strongly affected by the economic circumstances in which heritage institutions develop. Unfortunately, the question of how economic and cultural processes have been entangled in and affect one another on the plane of daily life and activities of these institutions remains underdeveloped. To address the lack of scholarly attention that has been given to the entwining of economic and cultural processes in the world of heritage institutions, we take inspiration from the work done in the field of cultural economy.

Discussions of the cultural economy often focus on the movement of signs, media images, fashion, and their entanglement in economic processes, but museums and the materiality of their facilities and collections are noticeably missing from this literature (see Amin & Thrift 2007; Callon et al. 2002; du Gay & Pryke 2002; Lash & Urry 1994; Nixon 2002; Ray & Sayer 1999). As du Gay and Pryke argue, thinking in terms of, and doing, cultural economy:

> involves a reversal in the relationship between the vocabularies used to describe things and the things themselves. Instead of viewing a market or firm as existing prior to and hence independently of descriptions of it, the turn to culture instigates a reversal of this perception, by indicating the ways in which objects are constituted through the discourses used to describe them and to act upon them (2002:2).

When applied to museums, the above suggests that museum facilities, collections, and the heritage they emblematize cannot be considered separate from the economic realities faced by those same institutions (or vice versa).

They are instead mutually constitutive of one another. Thus, how the economy is understood by museum leadership depends on how that leadership perceives and describes its facilities, collections, programs, staffing, and audience. It is also contingent on how those variables are understood to frame the institution's economic parameters and the realm of possibilities. Phrased more pointedly, "doing cultural economy means acting on the assumption that economics is performed and enacted by the very discourses of which they are supposedly the cause" (du Gay & Pyke 2002:6).

In line with this, Doreen Massey has strongly argued for social and cultural theorists to analyze the economy. She writes:

> What appears to have happened is that while recent years have witnessed a healthy critique of economism, there has also been a much *less* healthy shift away from looking at the economy at all. The result is, in fact, an unnoticed economism: for "the economy" is still present in our studies, but present as a taken-for-granted context, pre-given to our subsequent analysis (1999:8).

Following in Massey's spirit, the analysis we conduct in this book appreciates that the heritage museums we are studying are not only cultural institutions, but they are also businesses competing with similar businesses (as well as a broad field of diverse actors in the cultural sector) for limited economic resources and public attention. To be clear, we are not economists or schooled in marketing or business administration. However, we do take Massey's call that "we should be actively engaged in deconstructing it (the realm of economics, authors note)" Ibid.:9) to heart and apply cultural and social theory to the business of stewarding, preserving, exhibiting, and organizing cultural heritage.

In their book, *Enrichment: A Critique of Commodities* (2020), Luc Boltanski and Arnaud Esquerre offer a new way of thinking about the juncture in which cultural heritage, museums, and the economy are entangled and which is of direct relevance to the subject of this book. Theirs is a lengthy, detailed, and complex argument in which they push forward a new theoretical framework they describe as pragmatic structuralism, which works to appreciate the role the experiences of individual actors play (and the factors that motivate them to action) in shaping the world, while simultaneously taking into account the structures and asymmetrical power relations that are intrinsic to capitalism. This is a theoretical perspective that calls to attention the fact that:

> Experiences and structures alike are anchored in the 'plane of existence' – provided that we conceive of structures not as absolute predecessors of all experience but, rather, as operators capable of being mobilized to interpret experience when the latter runs up against obstacles that prevent it from being absorbed into the flow of life (2020:341).

What is of particular relevance for our work and what we want to call to attention are a series of economic shifts that Boltanski and Esquerre point to, which have accelerated since the 1970s. These are shifts that they identify as being aligned with the deindustrialization of Western Europe and processes that deemphasize wealth creation through producing material goods and commodities. In their place are new trends (or what they call a new economic form) which seize aspects of the past in the name of heritage creation to endow them with enhanced value, mainly through the production of new narratives about elements of the past (Boltanski & Equerre 2020:3). This is an economical form they call "the enrichment economy."

> The enrichment economy relies principally not on promoting new objects but, rather, on enhancing the value of existing ones, objects often drawn from deposits of outdated things that may have been forgotten or reduced to a state of trash. These "found" objects are supplemented by newly created ones whose value is indexed to the past (Boltanski & Esquerre 2020:71).

The bulk of their argument emanates from materials drawn from the French context. However, it also pulls in other materials from the Western European context and has strong relevance for the situation we find developing around the world. Parts of their argument are familiar and uncontroversial. The deindustrialization of the West has led to the movement of commodity production to other parts of the world, primarily Asia and Africa. As this has happened, however, they witness how Western European governments and other actors have gone in and found new modes of wealth creation based on building new narratives around, among other things, national patrimony, collectible goods, art, and brands with a history of being "exclusive." What is at issue here is an economy no longer focused on producing new goods or commodities (an industrial economy) but on repackaging and finding new narrative structures for existing commodities and utterances of patrimony.

At this point the processes of *heritage creation* come into play as components of the past (in the form of places, sites, buildings, etc.) are reframed as being of particular interest. Wealth, Boltanski and Equerre argue, is generated as tourism attracts visitors and produces revenue. Museums and cultural centers (the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao is one of the best know examples they refer to) built in places that have lost their luster play a unique role as driving motors in this enrichment economy as they attract visitors and create a new buzz and vibe around places on the verge of being forgotten (2020: 21). In addition to this, museums and cultural centers have the capacity of placing elements of the past on display and providing them with new value and revitalized appreciation on the part of paying viewers.

Beyond this, the enrichment economy they outline has a rather treacherous backside. Where the industrial economy produced a tension between employers and employees that Marx and generations of economic, cultural, and social scientists after him have written about. Such is not the case with the enrichment economy. Rather than developing tension between employees and their employers, the opposite occurs. This market Boltanski and Esquerre show comprises well-educated employees who accept relatively low wages (compared to their education level and the salaries paid in other sectors) because they identify with the institutions in which they work and the goals their institutions work toward. Had Marx been writing today, he may have described this as an intellectual, culturally enlightened proletariat (cf. Boltanski & Esquere 2020:307). They do not protest often, but nor do they often prosper very well. This is particularly true of the large cadre of young people who work in museums as guides, gift shop staff, ticket sales, reception, etc. All too often, these people volunteer their time or work for low wages, hoping to make a career. They love their jobs and get by economically as best as possible, sometimes by having a second job. One incident which we observed in our fieldwork and which put this into sharp focus was when we partook in a discussion between two receptionists in a museum speaking about their work and one peson explained that they were considering an employment move to working behind the counter of the coffee chain Starbucks because it paid much better. As we argue in this book, this is not a condition that museum leadership like or supports but a reality of the challenging economic situation in which museums work and compete. On a less pessimistic note, we want to highlight that, based on our research, we have heard many stories of people who make careers for themselves and acquire sound, satisfying, and comfortable living conditions.

There is much of great value in Boltanski and Esquerre's work to which we shall return. However, we want to move cautiously. We align ourselves with Nancy Frazer, who, although also very appreciative of the arguments made by Boltanski and Esquerre, cautions that they may be overstating their case for the power of the enrichment economy as a new dominant force. As she points out in reaction to the original French edition of the book:

> Are we living now in the era of "enrichment capitalism"? I doubt that would be the view from Guangzhou, which is "the world's factory," nor from New York, its citadel of finance. I worry, accordingly, that Boltanski and Esquere overestimate enrichment's importance. Perhaps the latter is best understood as an exotic corner of present-day capitalism, a marginal niche where powers (France, Italy, and Spain), shut out from the principle action, devise ingenious ways to live off their former glories, much like cash-poor aristocrats who turn their chateaux into tour stops and B&Bs (2016:312).

Industrial and financial centers are still of great importance for the global economy. And not all aspects of daily life are shrouded in processes of enrichment. However, as this book will demonstrate, heritage museums are firmly anchored in enrichment, even if it may only be a marginal aspect of the global economy.

Studying Museums

This study is based upon materials collected through ethnographic fieldwork, and netnography, as well as text and document analyses. Throughout the course of the project, Gradén and O'Dell have conducted fieldwork together. When speaking about the reserach team or "we", we are refering to our shared process and analytical work. We started collecting material in 2014 by conducting netnography, and interviewing a few Swedish curators in 2015. Fieldwork in the United States consisted of shorter but intensive periods in Seattle and Minneapolis. In August 2016, we conducted two weeks of fieldwork in Seattle, including participant observations at the Nordic Heritage Museum. Among other things, we worked as volunteers alongside staff and other volunteers at a weekend-long fundraising event, "Viking Days." In addition to participant observation, we interviewed museum leadership, staff, volunteers at the museum, and local community members. In May 2017, 10 days of fieldwork were conducted in Minneapolis at ASI. In addition to participant observation, interviews were conducted with the leadership and staff of the museum and people living in the local community. In October 2017, one week of fieldwork was completed in Seattle. This followed the same work pattern as the previous period of fieldwork, focusing on participant observations made at the Nordic Heritage Museum. In addition, we attended programming events and conducted qualitative interviews with museum staff and members of the local community.

After the week in Seattle, we did similar fieldwork at ASI in October 2017. In addition to interviewing the museum's leadership, we interviewed board members, took guided tours of the museum, and conducted a group interview with the museum leadership and most of the heads of departments at the museum. In addition, we held a special seminar at ASI in which we presented preliminary research results of our ongoing project to the museum leadership and many staff members. We also organized a session at the American Folklore Society's Annual Meeting in Minneapolis in October 2017. This session included a presentation of our ongoing research and even a presentation made by ASI staff on the museum's work at the time.

In Sweden, fieldwork and interviews have been conducted more regularly and fluidly since the Spring of 2016. It involved day trips to each museum and repeated interviews with museum leadership and staff. On occasions, we have conducted group interviews with the heads of departments at the museums and with the entire personnel of departments, such as the curatorial department at Kulturen. In addition, we have participated in exhibition openings, programming events, and guided tours. Early in the project (during the spring of 2016), the head curator at Skokloster was gracious enough to drive us around the rural community where Skokloster is located, presenting us to people in the area who had connections to the castle.

We have also arranged workshops where the leadership from all the Swedish museums involved in the project participated and discussed their challenges and plans for the future. As a result of this work, many people in these museums know us well and are highly familiar with the research project that is the basis for this book. Beyond ethnographic fieldwork, however, we have studied annual reports and previous publications generated by the museums, partaken in digital newsletters and information sent to members, and followed each museum's activities via their homepages. In addition, friends and museum members have spontaneously shared material with us that has touched them in some way, brought joy or provocation. This material has helped us stay intune with community reactions to museum efforts.

COVID-19 changed the rhythm of everyday life worldwide during the spring of 2020. This had a dramatic impact on our research as well as on the museums in this study. All the museums we worked with were forced to close for varying but often dreadfully long periods. We will discuss the effects of COVID-19 later on in this book. Here we briefly mention its impact on our research process. Travel from Sweden to the United States became impossible for large portions of 2020 and 2021, and even travel in Sweden with public modes of transportation became precarious. And since the seven museums this study focuses upon were closed for much of that period, there was little reason to travel or to visit these museums. They were more or less empty. They had no visitors, and extensive staff segments were laid-off, furloughed, or working from home. The fieldwork portion of this study was paused, but digital opportunities quickly appeared. We conducted Zoom interviews with leadership at many of the museums involved in the project and, in particular, discussed the implications of COVID-19 with them. We participated in "webinars" that museums arranged or participated in. We continued to follow all of the museums (and the activities they could arrange) via their homepages and digital footprints. And we continued to print out screenshots and the information listed on those home pages. By monitoring the websites regularly, we learned about the Nordic Museums' increased focus on their relations with the Nordic embassies and the growth of business relations. ASI took another route by developing creative ideas such as digital handicraft and language classes, a Lutfisk drive-in dinner, and online cocktail hours. Hallwyl and Skokloster, who were able to maintain staff, used the time for staff to develop new skills that generated new offerings in the form of programs and products. Leadership and staff at Hallwyl Museum moved their daily morning coffee online, which proved to support social connectivity and care among the team. These are all materials that are included in the following analysis.

During the summer of 2022 and onward, we resumed ethnographic fieldwork with the pandemic under control. We expanded upon it to include participant observations with external entrepreneurs that some museums involved in our research work with. Among other things, we conducted participant observations for several weeks with a master thatcher enlisted by many of Sweden's open-air heritage museums to repair old thatch roofs or lay new ones. In May 2022, we could finally return to Seattle to experience the new facility that the Nordic Heritage Museum moved into in 2018. At this point in time, the museum had gone through several name changes, dropping the name Nordic Heritage Museum in favor of New Nordic Museum, and then to the National Nordic Museum. In the spring of 2022, we had planned to conduct interviews with museum leadership and staff to learn more about how they experienced and worked with the new facility, and their plans for the future. In addition to this, peer reviewers for this book requested information about the strategies these museums had used to meet the challenges that COVID-19 had presented to the entire museum and heritage sector. Unfortunately, leadership at the National Nordic Museum told us they were too busy with daily work to grant us interviews and suggested we would meet via Teams or Zoom when things were calmer. We complied with their wish and sent them a request for an online meeting in early August. Leadership from the museum then said they would rather receive written questions that they could respond to in writing. We sent them a small set of questions about the pandemic and the future they envisioned before them. We received a terse response in which they said the only quote they wanted us to use from them was, "The National Nordic Museum declined to participate in this study." (Email correspondence August 20, 2022). We received no other explanation or motivation for their sudden change of heart and reaction to our questions. As we indicated above, we had done extensive interviewing with the leadership and staff at the museum before the pandemic and wished to follow up on their situation. However, we will not quote from any interview materials out of respect for their collective wish not to be included in this book or future publications. In the following, the National Nordic Museum materials that we refer to and quote emanate from public sources such as their homepage, other internet sites, newsletters to members, newspaper articles, and YouTube videos, as well as our onsite observations.

Ethical considerations

As Charlotte Aull Davies (2018) contends, reflexivity and ethics are essential in ethnographic work. However, the degree of importance can vary depending on the project's sensitivity level. For this project, the level of ethics had high priority due to the history of cultural museums' capacity to influence entire societies, shape the public, and serve ideological means. Therefore, our ethical awareness was ubiquitous throughout every step of the process. When doing walk-along interviews, interviews with museum personnel, and work-along with the entrepreneurs delivering to museums, it was always with the professional role, not the private individual. We always informed the organization's leadership about our research. They, in turn, selected to bring us together with staff, often in a group setting and individual interviews, to learn more about specific areas that the museums were dealing with. Our opening questions meeting leadership and staff for the first time were the same: please tell us about your museum and the area of your responsibility. What are your recent successes and challenges, and what are these as you look ahead? These questions opened up discussions about the museum's overall mission, the specific successes and challenges within departments, the diversity of interests among managers, tensions within the organization, and perceived challenges in meeting the expectations of communities, stakeholders, philanthropists, and funding agencies. It also shaped the relationships between us and the participants and among the participants. As two managers of departments and one of the museum directors contended, they never took the time to discuss these issues at their staff meetings. To them, we became facilitators of discussions that they claimed helped them reflect upon their priorities and make more informed choices.

As mentioned above, the pandemic amplified the conditions for museums that we had already noted, and much of the challenges we had seen coming emerged with full force during the pandemic. Thus, the pandemic years clarified what we had perceived as significant challenges within the museum sector and the different strategies the museums used to tackle challenges and stake out a future for themselves. The effects of their priorities and choices were painful for some museums while they were assuring to others.

Ethics in ethnographic research come in two forms. The first is operational and consists of GDPR, informants anonymizing, and consent collection. We have anonymized all participants working in the museums and categorized them based on professional positions. However, all museums faced financial challenges during and following the pandemic. As a result, there were layoffs and re-configurations of departments and personnel, some of which involved adding consultants rather than permanent staff.

The other part concerns reflexivity and our position as researchers, acknowledging the power imbalance that can occur when someone is interested in and studying someone else's actions. Historically, cultural history museums have conveyed facts and stories that have been built on research from within the museums and university scholars. However, in recent years, we have seen a growing tendency among museums in America to contract scholars to produce research that, more than problematizing, serves a museum's private funders' and stakeholders' needs and thus amplifies particular perspectives.

Reflexivity about power imbalance and the position between informant and researcher is essential when working with humans. However, we experienced that reflexivity almost took over once we had reached deeper into our fieldwork and analysis process. A vital turn was when a leadership team of one museum wished for us to stop speaking to staff. In another instance, the director requested that we should not use staff or volunteer interviews, even with their consent. As presented, the rationale in both cases was the importance for the museums to speak as one voice, to control the story. Implicitly, this request meant silencing diverse organizational perspectives, insights from which leadership could learn. Moreover, it meant hampering research that intended to shed light on the conditions facing museums of cultural history in the contemporary cultural economy. Although, as we had learned through AAM, many museums in the United States were forced to close, we interpreted the wish for silencing as a fear of being lost in oblivion.

However, after more thought and consideration in line with the Swedish Research Council guidelines and the rise of cancel culture, we realized that the long-term humanistic benefits of doing the study surpassed the disadvantages. Thus, in one case, we used only public sources such as annual reports and interviews from various media, observations from site visits, and interviews with visitors and community members, but no interviews with staff or leadership that we had recorded. In the other case, where the museum director saw the benefits of research that his team did not, he agreed to read the parts of the book that involved his organization. Our approach and intentions throughout the project have been to understand the conditions for these museums as positioned in a current cultural economy, and our choices are benign, but always, culturally analytical. The research has shown that museum leadership and heritage work aim to serve the public. Still, our work with Hip Heritage shows that priorities are closely tied to what is perceived as ideologically timely and financially lucrative at a particular time. The fact that we have pointed this out, has, unfortunately, caused a negative cancel culture reaction at times. There are strong reasons to be concerned about what freedom of speech, and open democracy imply, as well as what academic investigation is allowed to communicate under the increasingly repressive yoke to bear of market forces and business/enterprise interests. This is particularly alarming in light of the fact that we are studying museums.

Overview of the book

Following this introductory chapter, the book consists of four empirically based analytical chapters and a final concluding chapter that sums up the arguments made throughout this volume.

The following (second) chapter of the book, *Hip Heritage: Rethinking heritage in the museum,* problematizes how museums as elements of history and identity are being re-thought, re-framed, and re-fashioned in the cultural and economic context of the museum markets in which they operate. This chapter asks: how is heritage affected when increasingly framed as a marketable commodity? How are new and developing ways of thinking about heritage re-fashioning museums? As part of the analysis, the chapter presents the concept of "Heritagelore," and discusses how this phenomenon works to inhibit museum leadership and staff to re-imagine their museums in new ways. The chapter concludes with a definition and discussion of the concept of Hip Heritage and shows why museums engage in such heritage-making.

The third chapter in the book, *Exit Through the Gift Shop: Commercial curating and the packaging of Swedish culture for the heritage market,* focuses upon the question of what happens when museums of cultural heritage are no longer defined solely by their collections and cultural environments, what strategies do they use to claim a place for themselves in the world of heritage? This chapter takes its point of departure in a cultural analysis of four museum gift shops and gift offerings. It asks, "How are new and developing ways of curating gift shops re-fashioning museum audiences?" In doing this, the chapter discusses how museums are consciously striving to position themselves in the competitive market of Hip Heritage by engaging in a phenomenon we call *commercial curating*. By the concept of commercial curating, we mean the selection, exhibiting, and crafting of stories about objects and collections in ways that resemble traditional curatorial work. The chapter illuminates the manner in which museum galleries and gift shops work together to attract visitors to museums, while items in the galleries enrich products for sale in the gift shop with extra cultural and economic value.

The fourth chapter, *Mandatory collaboration: Consultants, craftsmen, and other heritage makers*, explores the role entrepreneurs play in providing museums with support and content. The chapter begins by referring back to previous chapters in the book and reminding readers of the multitude of different types of entrepreneurs that work together with museums on a contract basis. Most of these entrepreneurs specialize in modern fields of knowledge such as marketing and digitalization. In contrast, others that this chapter focuses upon specialize in more traditional forms of intangible heritage such as thatching and older forms of agricultural practices. Building upon interviews and ethnographic fieldwork, this chapter situates two groups of specialists and their works in the heritage-making of their museum communities. What does it mean to work on a temporary contract to craft a museum's daily activities as well as its future profile, while simultaneously providing it with long-term curatorial content? How does everyday life evolve for the human ecologist and traditional herbalist who operates a farmstead under the auspices of a cultural history museum? And what role does the single craftsperson play in shaping and communicating traditional knowledge and skill to visitors and museum staff members?

The fifth chapter, *Not hip enough? The opening and closing of the Museum of Movements* problematizes the concept of Hip Heritage in relation to attempts to establish a new national museum, the Museum of Movements, located in the Southern Swedish city of Malmoe. Between 2015 and 2020, the Swedish Government, the Southern Swedish city of Malmoe, and a mixture of regional actors explored the possibility of establishing a museum whose mission was to highlight questions of cultural heritage linked to processes of migration and democracy. This initiative led to the opening of The Museum of Movements in Malmoe in 2019. The museum leadership knew that they had to quickly create a buzz around the museum that would gain the attention of the citizens of Malmoe and hopefully the world beyond. Despite their efforts, the project was terminated in the fall of 2020. The chapter analyzes the events and processes behind the rise and fall of the Museum of Movements. It asks what the limits of Hip Heritage might be and what types of challenges do new heritage institutions face as they strive to establish themselves at the juncture of a series of highly competitive cultural markets with purse strings that are often not very generous or forgiving of miscalculations.

The final concluding chapter of the book underscores the fact that while heritage museums are cultural institutions, they are also businesses operating in highly competitive markets that are swiftly changing. The chapter critically discusses the effects economic thinking and market forces are having on the framing of cultural heritage in contemporary museums. It does this by analyzing and discussing museum managements' decisions against the cultural context they find themselves working in. Included here is an analysis of the effects the COVID-19 pandemic had upon the museums studied in this book. Beyond this, the analysis lifts forth the fact that museums are places in which multiple voices, opinions, and ambitions compete to impact the daily activities taking place in each museum. The main questions that the concluding chapter addresses are, "What strategies are museums of heritage working with today to meet their mission goals and remain viable and attractive visitor destinations, and what risks do they face as they do this?"

2 Hip Heritage

Rethinking heritage in the museum

As a young child growing up in a small town in Massachusetts, I (Tom) recall my parents taking me to a museum of natural history in the Boston area. It is one of the first museum memories I have. The museum, as I remember it, was a large red brick building. The interior was dimly lit with walls and floors in subdued beige and pale brownish colors. It was far from flashy, but I loved it and after the first trip I asked my parents to take me there several more times. In all honesty, it was the museum's collection of dinosaur bones and skeletons that attracted me. However, beyond this, the museum was full of objects in glass cases as well as animals and organic materials in fluoraldehyde-filled jars with short little notes beside them explaining what they were. These were things that piqued my curiosity, perhaps in much the same way that the European cabinets of curiosity of the 17th century awoke the curiosity of viewers of that day.

From my perspective, as a child, the museum had an aura of permanence. It was brick and mortar on the outside and had a very conservative institutional feeling on the inside. It was clearly an old building, it had been there a long time, the exhibitions were locked in glass cases … and well, the dinosaur bones, fossils, and molds were my main attraction … and they were REALLY old! This was my introduction to the world of museums: arenas of solid knowledge anchored in long-existing institutions. Perhaps from today's perspective that iteration of that museum would seem like a fossil in and of itself (it looks very different today, at least on the inside). But the times have changed.

In this chapter, we intend to work with a series of thick ethnographic analyses problematizing how four museums focusing at least partially on Swedish cultural heritage have worked and changed to adapt to the shifting cultural, economic, and political times in which they exist. The two museums from the United States that we first address here are interesting, at least partly, because emigrants from Sweden and other Nordic countries played an important role in establishing and developing these institutions. More than just being museums of cultural heritage, they tell stories of migration and heritage on the move. The approach works to highlight further and problematize the question at the heart of this chapter

DOI: 10.4324/9781003327707-2

concerning how we can understand cultural heritage in terms of change and adaptation. As we are arguing, museums are not only educational and entertainment-oriented entities; they are businesses that have had to meet new and shifting challenges throughout their existence. So how do they morph in rapidly changing and competitive markets which are part of the phenomenon that some have called the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore 1999)? In order to address this question, we will first turn to two museums in the United States, The National Nordic Museum and the American Swedish Institute, and then move on to two museums in Sweden, Skokloster Castle, and the Hallwyl Palace.

Creating Nordic Heritage in Ballard

The Nordic Heritage Museum, founded in 1979, opened its doors in the spring of 1980 with Marianne Forssblad, a Swedish citizen who served as a lecturer at the University of Washington at the helm working as the museum's first appointed director. The museum was founded for the purpose of collecting, preserving, protecting, and exhibiting material that reflects the life and cultures of the immigrants from the Nordic countries. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the museum found its first home in a building which had been the Webster elementary school, built in 1908. The school, located in a residential neighborhood in Ballard, Washington, was surrounded by single-family homes with small green plots of land and trees shading the museum and streets around the museum. The museum itself was a red brick building that looked like an older American school building, but over the front doors of the building were tiles inserted among the bricks featuring the flags of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. Looking around the residential neighborhood and at the building, it was not difficult to imagine a time when children would have been running around the premises and attending classes.

However, inside, the museum's creators made something else happen, morphing classrooms into exhibition halls. With meager economic resources, but an enthusiastic group of staff, members, and volunteers, Forssblad led the development of the museum from a grassroots initiative to an increasingly professionalized institution. From the beginning, the museum's collection was built upon artifacts that local supporters, founders, and volunteers donated to the institution to celebrate their cultural heritage and history. An essential factor facilitating the emerging museum lies in the fact that the region around Seattle consists of a large population of people who identify themselves in census surveys as Nordic or Scandinavian. The exact numbers differ from census to census, but approximately 12% of the Washington State population self-identify as having a Nordic or Scandinavian background (Grøngaard Jeppesen 2011). After Oslo, Norway, Seattle is home to the second most significant celebration of Syttende Mai, the Norwegian national day, May 17. Ballard has been and still is a particularly vital area of Nordic identification with deep roots in the fishing and foresting industries. The Nordic Heritage Museum came into existence out of a strong desire of these community members to tell the story of their journey to this area of the United States, their struggles to get there, and the successes they achieved once there.

Upon entering the museum in 2017, the first core exhibition visitors encountered was "The Dream of America." The exhibition told a generic story of what it was like to move from the Nordic region to the Pacific Northwest. The exhibition itself had a migrant history. It was first created and displayed at Moesgaard Museum in Hørjbjerg, Denmark, before being put on tour in the United States and ultimately purchased by the Nordic Heritage Museum in the 1980s. The exhibition consisted of buildings and environments that worked to show the hardships and successes immigrants met as they moved across from the Nordic countries to the United States. At the outset was a small red cabin, a tight quarters home, and an environment with apartment buildings and cobblestone roads. These depicted the countryside and the city environments that several millions of migrants left between the 1860s and 1930s. Following this was a depiction of the transatlantic journey, telling the story about what people would bring regarding food, clothing, tools, and things when they moved. Massive piles of trunks illustrated not only the number of migrants leaving but also the number of trunks in the museum's collection. After passing a depiction of Ellis Island, the exhibition rendered the environment in America, urban slums in Chicago, and log and sod houses of the Midwest. Labels and photographs posted to the walls gave the exhibition a more personal touch, such as a photograph of a woman sitting in front of a sod house accompanied by a text that read, "Norwegian immigrant, Beret Hagebak in front of her sod house, Lac Qui Parle County, Minnesota, c. 1896." However, there were also buildings representing drug stores, post offices, and churches inhabited by paper maché mannequins made by a local artist, clothed in period garb, and surrounded by items donated to the museum by folk from the local community. In this way, "The Dream of America" may have had its roots as an exhibition in a Danish museum, but it was adapted to reflect the experiences of the Nordics living in the Ballard area.

The second floor was dedicated to permanent exhibitions displaying folk art, fishing, and logging industries. These exhibitions were richly informed by objects the Nordic community brought with them. The folk art exhibition was rich in textiles, traditional dress, chests, spinning wheels, weaving looms, furniture and grandfather clocks, and hand-carved furniture sets. Each item had a short label explaining what they were, their provenance, and who had donated them. The exhibition on fishing gave visibility to the Norwegian and Icelandic communities that grew the crab and halibut fleets in the 20th century. The logging section told the story of Swedish and Finnish immigrants' contribution to the lumber and building industry in the Pacific Northwest. These exhibitions emanated from local donations of objects, labor, and money.

However, in addition to these permanent exhibitions, the second floor also contained galleries for temporary exhibitions. The temporary exhibitions tended to be more flashy, artsy, and fashion-oriented than the permanent ones. Among the exhibitions featured in these galleries from the 2010s and onward were "Scissors for a Brush" which introduced paper-cut artist Karen Bit Vejle to an American audience, "Danish Modern" highlighting Danish modern design (of furniture, glass, and other household objects), paintings by Olaf Opdal, Eight Seasons of Sapmi, or "The Weather Diaries" exhibiting Western Nordic fashion with inspiration from designers and artisans from Iceland, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands. However, the temporary galleries could even work as platforms for local artists and craftsmen, such as the photography exhibition "The Color of Time: Ballard from Dusk to Dawn," featuring photographs that local artist/photographer Tod Gangler had taken of local buildings and environments in Ballard or the paintings of Seattle area artist Susan Ringstad Emery. These were exhibitions that worked in a different manner than most of the Nordic Heritage Museum's core exhibitions as they focused to a lesser extent upon the particular heritage-making of the museum's members and volunteers and highlighted aspects of Nordic art, fashion, and design in a manner that was intended to attract visitors interested in more contemporary aspects of Nordic culture, without necessarily having Nordic roots of their own. In order to enhance the exhibitions, involve partners, and introduce Nordic art and culture to more comprehensive cohorts, the museum often organized programs and events to accompany temporary exhibitions.

On the third floor were galleries that again turned their attention back inward to the local Seattle area community and the cultural heritage and history of each of the five Nordic groups. These galleries were curated, organized, and periodically reworked by volunteers from the local area. As with the other permanent exhibitions, they featured furniture, chests, and household items that people brought to the Seattle area. Dioramas depicting church life or staged scenes of everyday life (priests behind pulpits, children playing in a wooden cabin, a couple drinking coffee in a local Swedish café) in the past were populated by mannequins wearing religious robes or period dresses.

Much of the permanent exhibitions and third-floor Nordic galleries predominantly featured low-tech exhibitions implementing traditional museal modes of exhibiting artifacts. The exhibitions did not include any digital virtual or interactive elements. However, for many of the museum's members, volunteers, and donors, the exhibitions represented a collective project in which they had participated and invested their time or other resources. It told the emigration story of the Nordic community in Ballard and Seattle, and it did so in a way that engaged them and even acted as a second home for many. Indeed, it housed and exhibited artifacts from the homes and families of many museum members and volunteers.

In recent years, a small but growing number of scholars have been calling attention to the critical role community engagement plays in facilitating museums' success and viability. As some scholars have argued (Munro 2013; 2014; Morse & Munro 2018), museums are not only sites of social interaction, but they can also work as spaces of care to the extent that they can be places in which people come and "feel safe, welcome and able to talk and listen without fear of reprisal" (2013:57). By the mid-2010s the Nordic Heritage Museum did that by functioning as an open, home-like space in which hundreds of volunteers and members could meet, help at events, feel needed and appreciated, and make friends. Programming attracted visitors from the general Seattle area. However, it was also an important point and focus of social engagement for many locals living around the museum. Some members and weekly volunteers would walk to the museum. The importance of the feel of the museum as a home is significant. While the museum had a staff of under 30 people, it engaged more than 200 volunteers and upwards (Wong 2006).

However, the Nordic Heritage Museum's existence in the Webster School was on a lease basis with the Ballard School district, and the lease would ultimately expire in 2018. Therefore, in 2003 museum leadership initiated a capital campaign drive to begin accumulating the resources the museum would need to purchase land and build a new facility (https://nordicmuseum.org/about). In 2006, community engagement activities were launched to help the museum leadership identify an appropriate direction to move and further develop the museum. The museum was now less than $500,000, away from raising the 6 million needed to complete the purchase of the Fenpro property which at the time housed many artists and their studios. In the 2005 annual report (published in February 2006), board president Allan Osberg (1914–2019) announced the further raising of funds to secure an additional 19,000 (to a cost of $1.4 million) square feet of land, bringing the total size to 75,000 square feet. In 2009, the museum purchased a third part (to a cost of $1.5 million) east of the property, a building that would serve as storage and rental property for the new museum.

Early funding for the project was directed toward a very well-reputed architectural firm awarded the task of developing a spectacular facility to attract donor attention. While it functioned to operate as a dream catcher for the endowed, the drawings produced by the architectural firm also raised questions among many volunteers, museum friends, and members, as to what would be left of the charm and ambitions of the old museum. Focus group interviews amongst groups who had been active in the original museum's development voiced their fears. As the local newspaper reported:

> The focus groups did not want the feeling of the early Nordic Heritage Museum to be lost so people do not forget (sic) its roots. However, on the other hand, architects and designers want to keep the younger generations interested (Wong 2008).

For those who had helped establish the museum and volunteered their time over the years, hopes remained that the exhibitions each of the five

Nordic groups had been allowed to produce on their own would be given space in the new museum. Similarly, volunteers, active museum members, and the local community anxiously wondered if "The Dream of America" exhibition, with its dioramas, traditional mannequin-based format, and theatrically dramatic presentation, would survive the move to the new harbor front location. As it turned out, "The Dream of America" may have been a low-tech exhibition, but it was held dearly by many in the museum's community. It was generated by their volunteer work and object donations. Museum leadership promised at the time that the exhibition would be included in the new museum "in some form" but could not promise more (Wong 2008).

At issue here lies the question museums always face, how can collections be mobilized in new contexts to draw in new audiences and thus increase resources? In the case of the Nordic Heritage Museum, these resources would cover higher costs of operations that would face the museum in its envisioned expanded form. This was not a challenge to the cultural heritages of the Nordic groups per se. However, the challenge posed by the cultural economy forced the question of how heritage assemblages can be re-invented to meet new emerging contexts. As Jane Bennett has pointed out, assemblages are always bound in time by their historic preconditions (2010:23). She says:

> Assemblages are living, throbbing confederations that can function despite the persistent presence of energies that confound them from within. However, they have uneven topographies because some points at which the various affects and bodies cross paths are more heavily trafficked than others, so power is not distributed equally across its surface (2010:23).

As the Nordic Heritage Museum anticipated its future, the assemblages of its collections were dreamed of in very different ways. At times these envisioned assemblages included similar groups of volunteers and museum friends who had always attended the museum. However, the assemblages envisioned by the museum leadership increasingly included new and broader publics actively participating in the museum and its activities.[1]

The cultural energy of the displays and artifacts in the museum became charged in new ways as multiple groups endeavored to leave their mark on the envisioned museum of the future. This posed a delicate and vital issue for the museum leadership to address and negotiate. The local community and museum members were an essential base for funding the new museum. Donations from this group were significant for the museum's move and development. However, as architectural plans for the new museum took form, the architectural firm's renderings, sketches, and blueprints also impacted the assemblage of the museum's artifacts and how they would or would not come together.

As the museum moved forward with its relocation plans, a three-story, 57,000-square-foot facility took form featuring a large undulating floor-to-roof corridor, the Fjord Hall, which divided the museum into two. This great divide runs through the museum, architecturally shaped to resemble the Norwegian fjords and alluding to the Atlantic that separates and connects the Nordic countries and the United States (Mithun architecture workbook 2013). Next, looking upward, the visitor sees several bridges that connect the two halves of the museum, symbolizing both means of transportation crossing the ocean and the transnational cultural connection that has emerged in its wake. The corridor symbolically represented a fjord with several second-floor bridges connecting both sides of the museum. On one side, visitors could experience the Nordic countries through archeological objects on loan from the national museums in the Nordic countries and design objects from companies such as Knoll. To tell the story about the old world context were trunks, furniture, folk dress, spinning wheels and other 19th and 20th century objects from overseas derived from the museum collection. Indeed, many of these were objects that had been on display in the museum's former location. On the other side of the fjord, visitors entered the Nordic American context, emphasizing life in the Pacific Northwest. Displays at the center featured objects and photographs selected from the museum collection, a sample of what was displayed in the old location. Along the walls, visitors could follow the immigration story of 19th and 20th centuries as well as the history of how Nordic immigrants established churches, schools, civic organizations, and businesses in the Midwest and the Pacific Northwest. Moreover, the exhibition illuminated holiday celebrations developed in America, including the Norwegian National Day, *Syttende Mai.*

However, for the architectural firm involved in designing the new museum and for the museum leadership itself, it was essential to create a space that maintained an open and welcoming sense of inclusion for the volunteers, members, and people of the local community. Outfitted with an aesthetic of wooden walls which were accompanied by a large fireplace, the architectural firm designed the lobby for social gatherings. This issue was addressed to focus on the museum's entrance area that included an auditorium, café, gift shop, and classrooms. As one of the architects involved in the project explained:

> I know many museums have gift shops, cafés, or things like that at the entry, but this felt like it was much more sociable, and another thing that was unique about this was the volunteer community. It was really different from the other museums we have worked with … the number of volunteers. The social aspect … I mean, it's kind of a miraculous story that you have this old school and that people come together around Marianne Forssblad (the first museum director, authors' note), and they're fixing the windows. They (the museum, authors' note) are bringing in a lot of exhibitions per year, the number is kind of amazing for an early volunteer thing, turning into a professional staff. They're really unique and we really wanted to try to make a place that honored those volunteers (Interview conducted August 12, 2016).

The construction, production, and mobilization of heritage is about asserting a group's collective identity. The architectural firm's way of envisioning the new museum is interesting as it takes its point of departure with a community view. The entire entrance area of the new museum paid homage to the community and, in essence, put the community on display. That is, community, at least for the architects involved in the project, was a central aspect of the Nordic's heritage that they wanted to highlight and forefront at the new museum. As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has argued, "Heritage is created through a process of exhibition (as knowledge, as performance, as museum display). Exhibition endows heritage thus conceived with a second life" (1995:369). Where the museum's community of volunteers and members had spent decades behind the scenes helping staff, the architects saw an opportunity to make the community itself visible, providing it with a new life as a quality of the museum's heritage. In this way, the community, or at least the architects' envisionment of a community was put in motion as an aspect of the assemblage of what the museum would potentially display as a part of the Nordic heritage of the Pacific Northwest.

However, as Emma Waterton and Laurajane Smith have noted (2010), the concept of community heritage can be problematic. A community is seldom a homogenous, integrated, and bounded group of individuals with shared values and a united manner of understanding the world. On the contrary, Waterton and Smith point out that "communities are run through with divergent interests" (2010:8), and such was the case with the Nordic Heritage Museum's community. For example, as plans for the new museum developed, some in the Norwegian community pointed out that they constituted the largest group in Ballard; shouldn't they be allotted more space in the new museum to celebrate their heritage? Some of those in the fishing industry had amassed relatively large fortunes, as did others in forestry; how much should those willing to donate be allowed to influence the museum's future? Moreover, the Finns were eager to know where the museum's outdoor sauna would find a home in the new location. The questions were many and never developed into insurmountable hurdles, but they had to be handled delicately for everyone involved in moving the museum forward.

One way this was done was through a slight shift in orientation. During the museum's construction in 2017, new posters began popping up in Ballard and on a tall wire fence temporarily separating the public from the construction site of the new museum. These posters celebrated the coming of "The New Nordic Museum." The word "heritage" had been removed from the museum's name. The history of the lives of the Nordic people who came to the Pacific Northwest would still have a place in the new museum. However, it would be complemented by a stronger focus on themes and events that could attract more extensive groups of visitors that went beyond Ballard. Some fixed their eyes on a new generation of younger visitors (Wong 2008). As it turns out, Seattle was home to a large and rapidly growing cadre of young tech employees working at Amazon, Microsoft, Expedia, and Boeing in and around Seattle.

With a construction price tag of 50 million dollars and upward, the new museum needed to draw people who perhaps did not self-identify as Nordic. Rather than focusing intensively on heritage issues, the new museum used its homepage, among other things, to assert a set of four values it aligned with the Nordic countries and cultures: openness, sustainability, social justice, and innovation. Perhaps these values could be parlayed to attract a younger generation from downtown Seattle or even liberals from across the nation who were prone to identify positively with such values and the image of the Nordic region. Working to procure funding for a project of this economic size, and ultimately doing so, bore with it a shift in perspective in which the museum's profile was reframed and more firmly embedded in an international experience economy (cf. Pine & Gilmore 1999; Hannigan 1998) for a creative class (Florida 2002) whose boundaries far exceed the local community. It succeeded by calibrating itself into the experience economy through an imagined Nordic moral value landscape meant to track well with a broad young, well-educated middle-class group of potential museum visitors.

The museum also worked to tap into themes that trended well with a broader American public. It continued to host some of its traditional events, such as the annual Christmas market called "Julefest." However, a year after its opening, in 2019, the Annual report pointed to the museum's success with "Nordic Sól," highlighting a commitment to the Arctic and a Pecha Kucha presentation focused on environmental issues. The museum also tapped into the popular and widespread interest in Vikings by securing a spot on the extensive tour of the traveling exhibition entitled "The Vikings Begin," which drew over 140,000 visitors to the museum. The Gustavianum Uppsala University Museum produced the exhibition, which began touring the United States in 2018; the Swedish government supported its extensive archeological research and production. In preparation for the US tour, the director of Gustavianum explained:

> *The Vikings Begin* is an ambitious and professional production, new for Gustavianum and Uppsala University. It is a finished exhibition with walls, lighting, pictures, films, and security displays, which can be set up and torn down and packed away in a week. (www.gustavianum.uu.se 20180410, authors' translation)

The exhibition, which premiered at the Nordic Museum on October 20, 2018, and closed on April 28, 2019, was a success in terms of easy installation, anticipated audience, sponsorship, and revenue. This temporary exhibition deepened the messaging of the Nordic Museum's second-floor core exhibition, comprising artifacts from the national museums in the Nordic countries. The Vikings Begin was presented as follows:

> Uppsala University's museum, Gustavianum, has produced this exhibition of original artifacts, reconstructions, and archaeological discoveries from early Viking Age society using cutting-edge research done by Uppsala

> professor Neil Price and his team. These objects tell the story not only of the person buried with them, but also of the world they inhabited: its social and economic makeup, its religions, and its culture (www.nordicmuseum.org read October 20, 2018)

Moreover, the exhibition expanded on the transnational connections with significant museums in the Nordic countries. In that same year, 2018, the Nordic Museum morphed one more time. It transitioned into "The National Nordic Museum" as it celebrated President Donald Trump's signing of a bill providing the museum with national status (National Nordic Museum Annual Report 2019). The reception of temporary exhibitions increased, and these were financed by overseas and local funders combined, and they were part of national tours to various Nordic museums in the United States. Among the temporary exhibitions the museum hosted in 2020 was one featuring the clothing of Swedish fashion designer Gudrun Sjödén entitled "A Colorful Universe," and a photography exhibition, "Legacy: Social Justice in Contemporary Danish Photojournalism." Moreover, 2021 offered such exhibitions as "Amongst Forests and Lakes: Landscape Masterpieces from the Finnish National Gallery" and "Paper Dialogues: The Dragon and Our Stories," which featured paper cuttings by returning Norwegian artist Karen Bit Vejle along with Chinese artist Xiaoguang Qiao. Investing in these types of temporary exhibitions, the National Nordic Museum strove to reach out beyond the local community and emphasize Nordic art, fashion, culture, and design, as well as themes that could be associated with the Nordic countries and National museums overseas, and thus attract a broader audience from far beyond Ballard's borders.

Creating and sustaining a home for Swedish culture in the American Midwest

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the American Swedish Institute originates in the work of a Swedish immigrant, Swan Turnblad, who came to the United States as a child in 1868. He came from modest means but succeeded in accumulating a large fortune and became the owner of the *Svenska Amerikanska Posten*, one of the largest Swedish language newspapers in the country at the time. Pulling together impressions from European castles and fairy tales, Turnblad and his wife Christina (also a Swedish immigrant) began planning the mansion in 1903. The following year, they then began assembling master wood carvers, stone masons, and plasterers who formed large teams of newly immigrated craftsmen. They proceeded to build a monument over Swan J. Turnblad and of the immigrant dream fulfilled: a castle-like stone mansion that would come to be known as the Turnblad Mansion. The mansion was completed in 1908.

In an article in the *Minneapolis Tribune* in 1929, Swan J. Turnblad explains:

> I had this idea in mind when I first began to build the home. I wanted it to endure for a hundred thousand years. And I wanted to have it so arranged

> that it might be easily converted to its later uses (*Minneapolis Tribune* Dec. 1929, p. 2, as quoted in Gillespie 1999:40-41).

On another occasion, he went on to explain:

> My lifelong ambition has been to foster and preserve Swedish culture in America. I hold dear many things that are Swedish – although I am an American now – and it seems to be desirable for both countries if some of the products of Swedish culture might be shown here. (former ASI manager Lilly Lorenzén, The Institute: a short history, in *American Swedish Institute Bulletin*, vol. 9 No. 3, Autumn 1954, p. 4. As quoted in (Gillespie 1999:41)

On November 30, 1929, formal papers were filed with the State of Minnesota that converted the Turnblad residence into *The American Institute of Swedish Art, Literature, and Science*. The initial intent was to promote Swedish high culture, consisting of music, art, literature, and science. Soon after the mansion was turned into an Institute, it was to accommodate community clubs and programs. In 1949, the name was changed to the *American Swedish Institute*. Since the institute's founding, the uses of the mansion have taken numerous turns, working in alignment with the tastes of the day and what was understood to be Swedish or considered contemporarily modern.

In the early 1930s and 1940s, the rooms on the first floor were covered with wallboard. Polychromic ceilings were painted white to accommodate traveling exhibitions from organizations in Sweden. These ranged from textiles and folk art to military strategies. From the late 1960s, membership grew (from 975 in 1959 to 7,000 in 1981 following an agreement with SAS for discounted trips to Sweden). As a result, space was needed to arrange membership meetings and activities. The lower level of the mansion held a lounge where visitors could read Svenska Dagbladet and a *kaffestuga* (a Swedish word for a quaint and folksy place in which to socially drink coffee). In 1983, ASI built an addition in the back gardens of the properties to accommodate a new auditorium, and commissioned Swedish artist Bengt Engman to paint a 190-foot mural, a galore in Dalapainting depicting the great emigration from Sweden to Minnesota. By the late 1980s and early nineties, changes in the mansion reflected an appreciation of more traditional Swedish folkways. The interest in folk art could also be seen in merchandise sold in the ASI shop and bokhandel. Popular objects ranged from the traditional red-painted wooden advent candle holders and wood carvings to books by John Bauer and Viktor Rydberg. In these ways, the identity and a phenomenon which we call the "heritagelore" of the institute shifted from that of being a highbrow meeting place for a cultural elite to being a more folksy meeting place for individuals interested in celebrating a specific form of what was described as a "more traditional" Swedish heritage which here meant folk music, folk dance, wood carving, folk dress, and kurbits painting refered to as dalapainting.

Heritagelore is a term we will return to in this and the following chapters. As we advance the concept here, heritagelore comprises the discursive practices within the walls and the organizations of museums and other heritage institutions. The lore shapes and partially structures the stories that directors, museum boards, curators, programming staff, and other museum personnel tell one another about their institutions. It is the lore that employees pass on to volunteers and visitors about the museum, its contents, and its collections. The heritagelore of a museum legitimates particular curatorial perspectives while making others more difficult to imagine. In the case of ASI, the heritagelore of the institution, as it led up to the 1990s, continuously framed how ASI envisioned itself and its activities, refracting them through a cultural lens of Midwestern American notions of what traditional Swedish culture was and how it should be represented.

In 2023, the director and collections manager estimated that ASI's collection comprised about 7,633 cataloged items, of which 165 originated from the Turnblad family and mansion: furniture, decorative arts pieces, jewelry, rugs, and some textiles (not including archival documents or books). Collection staff believes that furniture owned by the Turnblads was removed during three periods: first when the family moved from the mansion to the *Svenska Amerikanska Posten* newspaper building in downtown Minneapolis. Second, after Swan Turnblad donated the mansion to ASI and moved into the Park Avenue apartment building (across the street from ASI). The final removal of belongings occurred when Swan Turnblad died in 1933. His daughter Lillian moved to Holy Angels Convent in Bloomington and donated fine art and other objects from the mansion to the Minneapolis Institute of Art.

The shedding of the material heritage of the Turnblads represents a step-by-step erasure of aspects of their lives. As Daniel Miller has argued in connection with the cultural processes of moving house:

> … the objects of the home are the mementos of the past, and so the decision to discard some and retain others when moving house becomes the active management of one's own externalized memory (2001:8).

In part, Swan Turnblad was responsible for how the inventory of the house and the memory of his presence were dispersed. However, this process of materialized memory editing continued long after Swan Turnblad's death as others continued to remove the material culture of his life out of the mansion or into the basement for storage. One of the last sheddings was a collection of books in the Swedish language printed in the United States. These were donated to the Swenson Center at Augustana College in 2017/2018. These small movements of the assemblage of material culture at ASI were, in all likelihood, undramatic and perceived as part of the trivial daily events of running an institute. However, when seen from a different perspective, they also communicate the changing priorities of an upwardly mobile immigrant with the needs of a malleable Swedish community. By the end of the 20th century, knowledge about the Turnblads, how long they lived in the mansion, and what they did there was limited. At the time of our reserach the Turnblads remained an enigma to leadership, staff and volunteers at ASI. Thus, rather than ever evolving into a monument of a single person's life, the mansion increasingly aligned with notions of Swedishness. Consequently, the institute tended to attract members of a very particular community of people, those with Swedish linkages, rather than speaking to the broader general public of the Minneapolis area.

This presented a problem for ASI by the early 1990s, as the institute found it increasingly difficult to attract new groups of visitors. As ASI's director explained:

> I suppose, since 1990 … ASI was experiencing a gradual decline in membership and interest. Attendance was not terribly robust, no matter what we tried to do. Whatever the exhibitions and special programs were. It was pretty flat. Attendance was primarily, historically comprised of 75% members and 25% non-members. And that just never changed. And with the declining membership … that's ¾ of your attendees … you know (Interview conducted October 16, 2017).

To revitalize the institute and create more excitement, leadership decided to invest in developing a new state-of-the-art facility and what they called a campus. In 2012, The Nelson Cultural Center was opened, featuring dynamic, modern, and award-winning architecture. Incorporated into the center was a modern gallery, the Osher Gallery, a new auditorium, meeting rooms, the Wallenberg Library, a sleek gift shop, and a prize-winning restaurant named FIKA.

Temporary exhibitions of art, craft and design filled the gallery spaces, and programming was re-oriented toward younger groups of professionals and families. In many cases, the production of these exhibitions and programs was preceded by research and partnerships overseas or through partnerships with the Swedish Embassy or museums in the United States, such as the Nordic Heritage Museum in Seattle, the Museum of Danish America, and Vesterheim, to mention a few. Investing in the Nelson Cultural Center proved successful because it helped draw in new visitors. However, it also created new challenges for ASI's leadership and staff. As one staff member explained:

> I guess one thing that I return to, going back to success and challenges (referring to a question they had been asked earlier in the interview, authors' note), is obviously a huge success of the past couple of years has been this building and what we have been allowed to achieve through it. (But now), we have individuals asking us, you know, "What's next?" And I think some of them may expect a new building, but there are many options for what's next that may be more subtle than an entirely new building. So, the challenge is deciding what is next … (Interview conducted at the American Swedish Institute on May 15, 2017).

Although the development of a new state-of-the-art facility created a lot of initial buzz and interest in the institute, the novelty of such a building does wear off after a while, usually within two to three years, and economically, it is not feasible to create new interest by continually creating new architecturally exciting facilities. Therefore, to answer the question of "What's next?" it was necessary to find strategies for developing projects that could attract robust groups of visitors. However, in museums, *one size usually does not fit all*. Thus, while striving to figure out "What's next?" it also proved important to understand who the institute's potential future visitors could be.

In order to replace the aging core members (a majority of whom identified as having Swedish ancestry) and meet external demands to be more relevant to a broader community, ASI set out to identify future core audiences that were financially robust, culturally interested, socially active, and well connected. Ultimately, five audience categories were identified and defined: Heritage Brokers (people interested in Swedish/Nordic culture, Socially Active Adults, Visitors with Children, Makers (foodies and people interested in crafts), and The Neighborhood (the local community). With these groups identified, leadership and staff worked intensively with programming activities and events to further attract visitors to exhibitions or get them through the doors and engage them. Exhibitions included "Scissors for a Brush" by Karen Bit Vejle, and the "Weather Diaries" (the same exhibitions that had been to the Nordic Heritage Museum, but curated in a new way in the mansion), "Fluidity: Identity in Swedish Glass" which drew, in part, from ASI's Swedish glass collection and aligned it with the work of a contemporary Swedish glass artist. But they also included exhibitions such as one exhibit on the paintings of Karin Broos, and another one featuring Lars Lerin's work with watercolors. Events that attracted visitors ranged from the arrangement of midsummer celebrations in June, to "Cocktails at the Castle" gatherings in the evenings. However, visitors could even take language classes in Swedish or "Makers Mornings," a virtual program that encouraged people to link in digitally and bring a handicraft project to the meeting to work on and socialize.

All the while, ASI increasingly strove to open its doors to the neighborhood community. A problem that the institute faced lay in the fact that the demographic make-up of ASI's surrounding community, the Phillips neighborhood, had changed dramatically since Swan J. Turnblad's days becoming increasingly diverse in terms of self-identified ethnicity, nationalities and income (https://www.city-data.com/neighborhood/Phillips-Minneapolis). One underlying challenge to engaging the diverse community surrounding ASI was the architecture of the mansion itself—a castle surrounded by a tall iron fence. The construction of the Nelson Cultural Center was seen as a way to leave such a hindrance. As ASI's director explained:

> The front door of the Turnblad Mansion wasn't welcoming … It's not terribly hospitable, and it was clear, and I had lots of evidence of that through anecdotal conversations with people. 'I have never been. I've driven by it. It looks more like a place to be admired from afar rather than

> walking in the front door.' So a good design was essential for the Nelson Cultural Center. You have glass doors, you walk in, there's lots of activity, you don't feel trapped, you can walk around (Interview October 16, 2017).

In this way, the architecture of the New Nelson Center was not only diverging from the large 19th-century buildings (many turned into apartments) in the neighborhood. Primarily the Nordic-style architecture and large glass windows intended to be more open and welcoming than the heavy and closed-looking doors of the Turnblad Mansion. However, beyond architecture, the museum leadership and staff also strove to rethink their disposition toward the local community. ASI's director continued:

> We talked a lot about this in preparation for the opening, about the concept of radical hospitality, which is borrowed from churches, mostly. With an assertive effort to be welcoming and hospitable. Not only, 'It's nice of you to be here,' but to actually go forward and introduce ourselves and say, 'Thank you for coming!' (Ibid.)

Indeed, like many 19th-century churches that had added fellowship halls with kitchens and social facilities, the ASI expansion served a similar purpose. This form of "radical hospitality" went beyond architecture and envisioned social space and extended into how ASI proceeded to work with artists, craftspeople, and other members of the local community. ASI wished to complement temporary exhibits brought to ASI with the work of people in the local community. This shift of focus is interesting in relation to the previous discussion of how the Webster school building, which housed the Nordic Heritage Museum, had developed into a second home for members and volunteers, endowed with a sense of low-key openness and warmth for those individuals. It can be argued that the Turnblad Mansion long lacked the feeling of home, even though it was built to be the Turnblad's home. The little known about the Turnblads point to the fact that the family did not live in the mansion for more than brief periods. However, with the Nelson Cultural Center and ASI campus in place, an orientation toward radical hospitality was an intentional effort to make the institution feel safe and welcoming to broader and more diverse groups of people, not least those who lived in the institute's neighborhood.

Working in this way, ASI strove to open its doors wider to the local community but also to other new groups of visitors. They continued offering activities they had provided for a long time, such as language classes in Swedish. However, they moved beyond this to attract new groups of visitors beyond the Swedish community and local neighborhood. The mansion features ornate stone and wood carvings and colored glass windows made in the early 20th century by some of Europe's most skilled artisans. These gained new significance in the first decades of the 21st century as ASI leadership and staff identified the considerable interest in handicrafts in the Minneapolis area (and people they called "makers") as a potential target demographic to attract to the museum. They shifted from being interesting architectural features of the mansion to being vibrant materialities that worked well to frame handicraft programs. Other groups of people, such as socially active adults, were drawn to the institute through events such as cocktails in the castle, exhibitions focusing on art, design, and fashion, among other things, and by vamping up their Nordic programming activities in conjunction with the temporary exhibitions that they hosted as part of increased collaboration with museums such as the Nordic Museum in Seattle, Museum of Danish America, and Vesterheim Norwegian museum in Decorah Iowa.

The Hallwyl Museum

The Hallwyl Palace in Stockholm was constructed at the turn of the 19th–20th century by Wilhelmina von Hallwyl (1844–1938), raised in Stockholm and her husband, Count Walther von Hallwyl (1839–1921) raised in Bern, Switzerland. From the very beginning Wilhelmina von Hallwyl's intention was to create much more than just a palace; she wanted to create a museum that would in part highlight cultural artifacts and pieces of art from around the world, but would also provide coming generations of visitors with insight into what daily life in an upper-class environment in Stockholm was like in the first decades of the 20th century. To this end, she amassed a collection of 30,000 items including Asian bronzes, ceramics from China, an armory of antique weapons, leather-bound books from around the world, and European silver and fine art.

Beyond this, however, she organized and cataloged thousands of items from her everyday life. She explained her actions in this way:

> I want everything to be included, such as brooms, dust brushes and such, because one day, when everything is being done by electricity, these will be the most remarkable things of all (Wilhelmina von Hallwyl's annual notes 1844-1930)

In a room behind the art gallery on the top floor, is a space that used to be Wilhelmina von Hallwyl's gym but which now contains a glass display case. In it are not-so-everyday pieces such as the cast in which her arm was fixed after a car accident, clippings from Walter's mustache, and frosting from a cake. In Walther von Hallwyl's smoking room is a wastepaper basket still full of crumbled-up letters and notes that he "threw away" nearly a century ago. The cellar contains shelves and display cases filled with hundreds of opened and now emptied bottles of wine.

Walther and Wilhelmina von Hallwyl donated their home to the Swedish government in 1920. It opened as a museum in 1938. However, the Hallwyl Palace did not thrive as a museum during its early years. Between 1940 and well into the 1970s, tours of the building were limited and the number of staff employed was very small. Beyond this, however, the museum was shrouded in rumors about Wilhelmina von Hallwyl herself. As the current museum director explained:

> Wilhelmina was interpreted as a bit crazy. Stories about how she moved around in Stockholm in patched clothes flourished. She was portrayed as eccentric and the museum had an air of the bizarre over it. It was almost scary. You know, she saved sponges, toilet paper, and baby teeth. Still in the early 1990s, we just opened the doors, sold tickets and gave a short tour (Interview with the museum director, February 3, 2017).

For decades the Hallwyl Museum operated under the shadow of a woman who was portrayed as an eccentric and a hoarder. In this way, she fit into the gendered genre of "the mad woman in the attic" (Gilbert & Gubar 2000), and little was done to challenge or question this interpretation.

The 1970s were a time in which growing numbers of Swedes identified with the political left. From these segments of society came voices wondering why the Hallwyl home was relevant as a museum. The museum's director reflected on the situation in this way, "In the 1970s, the entire aristocratic lifestyle was brought into question in Sweden. Why did the palace become a museum, why build a monument to affluence?" In a sense, the story of Wilhelmina von Hallwyl as an eccentric, out-of-touch aristocrat played well to the spirit of the times. She was a very wealthy person with the means to do things that her detractors portrayed as very odd, such as collecting nail clippings, and putting them on display. At the time, those in Sweden who wrote off this behavior as bizarre could also frame it as an amoral aspect of the effects of excessive wealth. From the 1940s to the 1970s, the heritagelore of Wilhelmina von Hallwyl as the eccentric upper-class woman dominated how personnel and staff at Hallwyl thought about the heritage under their auspices. It was in many ways understood to be an immutable truth that enwrapped the Hallwyl Museum in a very particular aura of the "bizarre" and "almost scary" as the current director describes it. This would change in the years around the new millennium.

In the years following the new millennium, museum leaders throughout Sweden faced new demands from their stakeholders. In this context, it was no longer enough to open the doors to the museum and hope people would file in. As a national museum, the Hallwyl Museum had to answer to and follow the directives of the Swedish Ministry of Culture. The ministry, for its part, demanded that museums annually account for how they had worked to democratize their institutions. For the museums, this demand meant constantly increasing the number of visitors they received and showing how they worked to pull in new groups of visitors and larger numbers of school classes.

These demands forced the leadership of the Hallwyl Museum to rethink how they worked and the types of messages they wanted their museum to communicate.

The heritagelore surrounding Wilhelmina von Hallwyl's eccentricities still exists today, but these stories are subordinated to more personal lore focused on her work as a museum builder and professional. Today's museum leadership emphasizes that the Hallwyl Museum is not a biographical museum, a term that museum scholars use to describe such institutions as the Strindberg Museum or Thiel Gallery (Bohman 2010). However, the staff continuously refers to Wilhelmina von Hallwyl by her first name. The biographical details remain the brick-and-mortar of the tours and the shaping of the museum's story. As the director explained:

> Wilhelmina is still at the center of every tour. The visitors want to hear about her and her family. They are fascinated by her person and ask questions about her personality. (Interview with the museum director, February 3, 2017.)

Even if the Hallwyl leadership attempts to offer stories that fit with social trends and meet the current expectations of the museum stakeholders and funders (the Ministry of Culture and collaborating organizations), the audiences who come to the museum tend to behave as museum visitors in general, they want the museum and its staff to confirm what they think they already know (Smith 2015; 2020). The story about a home begs for a story of the people living there. Even if recent stories offer new approaches to the heritage of Hallwyl, the palimpsest of stories that make up the museum's heritagelore is difficult to challenge. Referring to Wilhelmina (and Walther) by their first names rather than their full names in tours and conversations is a performance of familiarity. This story creates an intimate relationship that reduces their temporal and social distance. More than this, however, refering to the Hallwyls on a first name basis demonstrates an interpretative shift, in which the story's protagonists are at the narrator's (that is, curatorial staff's) disposal. The familiarity close to an intimate family relationship is apparent in dramatized guided tours offered by the museum in which staff members take on the roles of servants, curators, and scholars working with Wilhelmina to organize the collections, and establish the museum. The relatively informal way of referring to both Wilhelmina and Walther and their servants positions the contemporary curators not only as cultural brokers, mediating between institutional and vernacular culture before an audience, but also between an in-house past and present. In the voices of their narration, the curators and long-gone owners of the Hallwyl Palace co-inhabit the museum.

When the curatorial team prepared an exhibition celebrating the Hallwyl Museum's 80th anniversary that opened in May 2018, they decided to bring Wilhelmina von Hallwyl's role as a career woman and museum maker to the fore. The museum's catalog, comprising 78 printed volumes, became a source of knowledge about the collections and a document of the times that shows the level of ambition of Wilhelmina von Hallwyl's work to establish the museum. The curatorial team also emphasized her role as benefactress for major Swedish museums such as Skansen and Nordiska Museet, Gotlands Fornsal, Kulturen in Lund, Kulturen's Östarp, Nationalmuseum, and Schloss Hallwil in Switzerland. In this exhibition, the depiction of an eccentric woman and wealthy heiress had shifted to that of a professional who, through her cataloging, management of curators and staff, and the deliberate making of heritage (through donations to other museums, for instance), played an important role in Swedish museum history. This story had not been told previously. As stated on the museum's website during the exhibition,

> The exhibition emphasizes the cataloging of the collection that Wilhelmina initiated and then supervised for decades, which made her preservationist attempt unique. Take part in the stories about how the museum started and learn about the details of the objects. A new film shares how, in her role as a cultural benefactress, she left a legacy far beyond the museum. (https://hallwylskamuseet.se/sv. read on May 15, 2018)

In this exhibition, Wilhelmina was cast as a protagonist in the professional development of her museum and as part of the heritage of museum-makers in Sweden, more generally. Beyond this, the Hallwyl Palace took center stage in a story of feminist heritage-making. The contemporary story about Wilhelmina is presented as a progressive herstory, pointing out that her contributions were crucial for Artur Hazelius' and Georg J:son Karlin's work as Swedish museum founders (the former at Nordiska Museum and the latter at Kulturen in Lund). Reflecting on the time when the role of museums and cultural heritage was to provide a collective identity for emerging nations by providing them with origin stories and a folklife sphere (Klein 2006), the exhibition positions Wilhelmina von Hallwyl as the "Other" (a woman in a man's world). In order to do this, the assemblage of the museum's collections and archival materials were mobilized and put on display in new ways. These included letters to employees giving them clear instructions on how to go about their work and firm orders for those employees to follow her wishes and ignore the directions and agendas of male colleagues such as Professor Lithberg, the Hallwyl professor of ethnology at Nordiska Museum. If Wilhelmina von Hallwyl was once perceived to be an eccentric oddity in the heritagelore of the museum, that image was erased here and replaced by that of a decisive woman leading a squad of employees scattered around Europe with the determination of a general.

Although Wilhelmina von Hallwyl deliberately curated her home for future visitors and left her annual notes, the catalog, and the archive for future research, it has never been apparent how the story about life at the palace ought to be told. This is perhaps not strange since museums at the time of her death did not focus so much on telling stories as trying to communicate "truths." Everything in the household was cataloged from the start, or so the story goes. Interestingly, Wilhelmina von Hallwyl's primary focus was on cataloging the objects in her home and much less on cataloging her activities. While traces of her activity can be excavated from her archives, it was not the telling of her own story (or the cult of her personality) that she focused upon. Wilhelmina herself became the focus posthumously.

Assembling and cataloging the collection was a collective effort involving Wilhelmina, Nils Lithberg (the Hallwyl professor of European Ethnology), young museum workers, and numerous students. This work was a huge collaborative undertaking. However, in tours today, pedagogical staff often highlight Wilhelmina's solo effort but say little about the role of Lithberg, the curators, or the students. In addition, the heritagelore conveyed by staff today has a feminist emphasis. The image of a professional woman focused on her work has replaced the stories of an eccentric old lady. The emphasis fits in well with Sweden's current social and political atmosphere. However, it is also an emphasis that resonates well with the primary group of visitors to the museum: educated upper and middle-class culturally interested women.

The exhibition celebrating the museum's 80th anniversary highlighted Wilhelmina von Hallwyl's professional life as a museum founder. Producing temporary exhibitions has become part and parcel of the museum's work in recent years. Other exhibitions have, for example, included one featuring men's fashion and clothing, a second displaying costumes from films made by Ingmar Bergman, and a third designed for the Halloween season full of ghosts, werewolves, and elements from the occult. While the museum leadership had a difficult time explaining the connection between Wilhelmina von Hallwyl and costumes from Ingmar Bergman's films (or to werewolves for that matter), they explain that these exhibitions have been popular and fun. Arguably, they have a more robust entertainment value than an educational value, but they are essential sources of revenue. Since the Hallwyl Museum is a national museum, it had free admission between February 2016 and January 2023. Throughout this period, however, the museum was allowed to collect admission fees for those who wanted to visit a temporary exhibition. Thus, while there may not have been a close connection between Bergman costumes and the Hallwyls, this type of temporary exhibition filled the function of bringing in extra revenue and expertise at the same time that it dramatically increased the number of visitors to the museum and facilitated collaboration with universities, the cultural sector, and private actors. These factors can be recognized as measures of success by the museum director and staff when reported annually to the Ministry of Culture. However, the growing tendency to use temporary and traveling exhibitions in the museum sector also conceals processes through which museum staff (particularly at other museums we have studied) have indicated to us that they feel they are losing touch with their collections and their ability to work with their collections in new and innovative ways.

Skokloster Castle: Showcasing the 17th century

Skokloster Castle is considered one of the best-preserved Baroque castles in Europe (Figure 2.1). The castle is situated on the Sko peninsula, which reaches into Lake Malaren, strategically placed (at the time of its building) at the fairway between Stockholm and Uppsala. Although once located at the geographical center of Sweden, the castle was intended as a social hub to gather nobility; the location is today described as remote and rural, one hour's drive from Stockholm.

Castles have always been built for many different reasons. They work as defensive fortifications, symbols of power and wealth, and points of religious expansion/consolidation, among other things, and to varying degrees, these were all part of Skokloster's history. However, beyond this, Skokloster was a site for accumulating, collecting, and gathering members of the family on the first hand, but even objects that could consolidate that family's status and position. As a result, Carl Gustaf Wrangel and the castle's subsequent owners created a cabinet of curiosities featuring items like an armory, weapons, books, silver, and textiles, as well as artifacts from the Americas, Asia, and all the corners of Europe. In addition, the objects of Wrangel's collections were theatrically presented; two armories were assembled in two separate towers of the castle

Figure 2.1 Baron Carl Gustaf Wrangel had the castle built between 1654 and 1676, and upon his death the building process ceased. The unfinished hall remains an enigma, curated to look as if the craftsmen just left.

Photo: Lizette Gradén.

to house the war booty arriving at the castle in the 17th and 18th centuries, a ballroom that was never completed—due to Wrangel's death—was converted into a storage area, the tools left behind by craftsmen when construction of the ballroom ceased were stored and displayed in another tower, paintings, and mirrors came to fill the castle's walls. In short, as the bricks and mortar of the castle were laid, objects came to fill its interior, and as they did, the castle and its objects took form together.

Ultimately, Wrangel died in 1676, and his oldest daughter Margareta Juliana converted the castle into an entailed estate in 1701: an act that forbade the selling, giving away, or transference via inheritance of any of the castle's belongings. While many European castles' furniture, art, and contents were sold off over the centuries to finance those properties' upkeep, such was not the case at Skokloster. Moreover, although items have been added over the centuries as new generations of owners, such as the Brahe family and, later, the von Essen family, have lived there, the castle, with its 77 rooms, houses over 50,000 items. The Swedish Government purchased the castle in 1967, and it was subsequently converted into a museum, opening all of the castle's 77 rooms to the public in 1972. In the decades preceding and immediately following the castle's conversion to a museum, the castle was a source of employment for local community members who worked there, for example, as docents, cleaners, maintenance specialists, gardeners, and technical staff. They, in short, had a vested interest in the castle, but the situation has changed since the beginning of the new millennium. As one of the museum's curators recalled:

> Many people who lived out here were linked to the castle, and those who worked there consciously strove to employ people from the local community. That does not happen anymore. The castle has lost contact with them now. The new generation has (of people working at Skokloster, authors' note) no contact with those living out here. Then again, many have moved, so it is not like before (Interview conducted February 25, 2016).

The museum's workforce has been increasingly professionalized in recent decades. Today, most staff commute from Stockholm and Uppsala. A consequence of new demands on the museum and its staff is the rift between the museum and the local community. Following the pandemic, working remotely has impacted the amount of staff in place on a daily basis. The museum is more of an island with ties to Stockholm and Uppsala and similar museums of cultural history in Europe than an integrated meeting point in the local community. The engagement of the local community in the castle is minimal, and volunteerism is nonexistent, except through the association of museum friends.

However, since the Swedish state purchased the castle, Skokloster has been seen by its director, board members, and staff as a place to present and problematize elements of cultural history emanating from the 17th century.

Over five decades, the heritagelore of Skokloster bound the castle and all the core and temporary exhibitions to the 17th century, even though Skokloster Castle had private owners from the time of its building and up to 1967, and owners in the 19th century built display cases and organized home exhibitions for the public. The interpretations of the castle were anchored solidly to the 17th century and were undoubtedly reinforced by the absence of electricity and heating in the castle. Indeed, only a tiny apartment, now used as office space for the museum's staff, on the first floor that the von Essen family had renovated and inhabited in the mid-20th century was equipped with heating, electricity, and running water. The building is dark and brutally cold throughout most of the year. When staff members have to leave the museum's office space and work out in the museum during the long and very dark Swedish winter months (December days only offer a few hours of sunlight), they have to bundle up as if on an expedition to the Arctic, and bear flashlights with them. Heavy boots with robust soles are encouraged to prevent the cold from seeping into one's body from the stone floors. An embodied sense of being thrown back into the 17th century is not far from hand or mind. Concerning the programming and activities schedule, this is a limiting factor as the museum is only open during the summer and for short periods around holidays such as Halloween, Christmas, and Easter.

Nonetheless, the linkage of the museum to the 17th century was shaken up in the summer of 2017 when the museum director and staff organized a temporary exhibition which proved to be the museum's most successful exhibition ever in terms of the number of visitors it attracted. It featured clothing from Jane Austen movies, provided by the British costume and prop company Cosprop. At one level, the introduction of Jane Austen to Skokloster, while highly popular, confused some visitors who wondered what Jane Austen had to do with a 17th-century castle. The honest answer was, "Nothing at all." However, for museum leadership, it seemed like it could be an exhibition that could draw large numbers of visitors, particularly in light of the popularity that such shows as "Downton Abbey" had around the time of the Jane Austen exhibition.

Interestingly, the introduction of late 18th and early 19th-century clothing destabilized the symbolic framing of the rest of the museum and its artifacts. Working with the Jane Austen exhibition gave the museum staff pause to take a step back and re-imagine a small castle section as it might have appeared in its 19th-century guise. In this way, the opportunity to work with the exhibition had a startling effect on the museum personnel as they realized that they had always framed the castle as belonging to the 17th century. However, the castle was used and lived in (at least periodically) right up until 1967, the day the Swedish state purchased it. However, this was an insight that the heritagelore of the castle as bound to the 17th century had made it challenging to see and acknowledge. This exhibition, in short, altered how the museum and its collections could be imagined concerning new themes or topics. Since the Jane Austen exhibition, staff at the museum have increasingly drawn upon artifacts and phenomena from the 19th century when developing exhibitions and programs. Vistors' feedback to the museum indicated a strong interest in understanding life at Skooster in periods after the 17th century. The staff has a difficult time seeing any more profound and sustainable quantitative impact of the Jane Austen exhibition (in terms of increased visitor numbers in the years following the exhibition). However, they do claim to have experienced a qualitative impact as the castle has fallen into a new 19th-century light since they worked with the exhibition (Information on the effects the Jane Austen exhibition has had on how the staff at the museum view it and its collection is based upon e-mail correspondences with the museum curator, and the project manager of exhibitions on March 11, 2021).

Hip Heritage and a developing heritage paradigm

We opened this chapter by pointing to the manner in which museums can on the surface of things project the appearance of permanence and stability. The heavy brick and mortar facades of places like the Natural History Museum in London, The Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C., or those of the museums addressed here, the Turnblad Mansion, The Hallwyl Palace, Skokloster Castle, provide them with a sense that these are all places which have a rock-solid anchoring in history. This in turn works to reinforce the impression of them as stable bastions of scientific knowledge and historic truth. To be sure, other scholars have pointed to the fact that these are institutions that have to be flexible to meet the questions and spirits of the time in which they operate (Dewhurst, Hall & Seemann 2017; Edson 2015:9). Our intention here is to argue that there is a need to more astutely understand how this "flexibility" is affected, perhaps one could say "driven" by economic demands and considerations.

As we have pointed out, all four museums we have addressed in this chapter have their origins as homes, or community initiatives with a hominess of their own (with the Nordic Heritage Museum in particular as working as an open, welcoming space for the local community, volunteers, and museum members). Their origins are somewhat different than those of such national institutions as the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C., or the Natural History Museum in London which were established from the start as national institutions meant to educate citizens and contribute to nation-building processes. The Nordic Heritage Museum began as a home for a community. The Hallwyl Palace and Skokloster Castle became national museums, but they started as homes. ASI started as a home in the weakest sense of the word, as the Turnblads do not seem to have ever really felt at home there, but became a cultural institution in 1929.

In order to become the institutions they are today, all of these institutions went through processes of *professionalization*. This is not a single linear trajectory that they have gone through, but this involves a series of processes that have increasingly focused on "the bottom line." Instead of speaking about stability and change in this context, it might be more appropriate to speak of stagnation and growth, stakeholder expectations, expense control, earned revenue sources, Capital Campaigns, development strategies, event management, visitor numbers, destination development, and operational budget. These are at least some of the words and concepts that are prevalent today in the annual reports of the museums in focus here. This is a very different disposition than that expressed above by the director of the Hallwyl Museum when explaining that in the 1990s, the museum basically just opened its doors in the morning and let people in.

The museums we are focusing upon here are institutions that see themselves as playing important cultural and educational roles for the people visiting them, but in order to survive, they have to be increasingly business savvy. This is a phenomenon that is partially reflected in the new forms of occupational roles and titles that one finds in the museums' annual reports and home pages. Where museums were once primarily organized around a museum director and a staff of curators, docents, and perhaps a few pedagogues, one now finds an array of new positions and competencies. These include such occupational roles and titles as: Marketing and Communications, Press Secretary, Communicator, Development Director, Development Associate, Visitor Services Manager, Human Resources Manager, and Engagement Strategy Manager (*American Swedish Institute, Report to the Community Fiscal Year 2021* (2022); *National Nordic Annual Report 2021*(2022) Statens Historiska Museer https://shm.se/kontakt/kommunikation-och-utstallningar/ read March 19, 2022). As we and other scholars argue, these occupational categories and employment positions reflect the diversity of new competencies that are needed if a museum is to flourish in today's competitive market of cultural offerings (Boltanski & Esquerre 2020; Ekström 2020). It is no longer possible to simply open the doors in the morning and wait for people to stroll in.

Beyond the expansion of administrative staff, we see the expansion of positions for project leaders, often hired on a one to two-year basis to develop websites, research, or new externally funded exhibitions. Most of all, we see an expanded number of pedagogues in museums. Amongst staff at the Hallwyl Museum in the spring of 2023, for example, one finds 1 conservator, 5 curators, and 21 pedagogues. The pedagogic emphasis is in large part a reflection of the degree to which the museum is investing in programming activities, but also that most of them work part-time, in some cases 20%. The staff numbers are a bit harder to interpret at the other museums because they are different in organization and more reliant on consultancy and volunteers. The Nordic National Museum only lists three to four people who work with curatorial and programming, but the museum has traditionally worked with the help of volunteers, members, and part-time employees. Skokloster, due to its short season, only lists five employees. However, Skokloster and Hallwyl, are part of a larger organization of six museums, with experts in collection and research as well as an exhibition project organization. During the summer, Skokloster's payroll swells as it employs a larger number of guides on a temporary basis, and invests heavily on programming based around guided tours. ASI for its part, lists its staff as working with "engagement" or "experience," rather than more traditional categories such as curatorial and programing (although some individuals do hold such titles) but in addition to this they list the names of over 100 instructors involved in their handcrafts, foodways, language, and culture programs.

There is no doubt that museums all over the world are changing in the 21st century. As Peggy Levitt points out, museum budgets are tightening almost everywhere, and curatorial departments in particular find themselves hard-pressed with the choice of either working with their collections to produce knowledge or focusing more on attracting larger audiences (2015:44). As she explains:

> Curators felt tremendous pressure to attract tourists. There is so much competition for people's attention and there are so many other places to learn about the world. People interested in Native Americans, for example, can just stay home and watch the Discovery Channel.
>
> Philosophical differences about the kinds of punch lines museums should deliver and how they deliver them, also abound. Often these debates are about whether to treat objects as art or artifact, should something be showcased for its aesthetic values or because of what it can teach us about the people who made and used it (2015: 44)?

This is part of a larger trend that other scholars in the field of critical heritage studies have pointed to, in which "museums must look beyond the traditional focus on collections" and more to the production of engrossing experiences (Camarero, Garrido, and Vicente 2014:229). The trend that we are pointing to here is that it is not just that curators are feeling more pressed to maintain and research collections while also attracting visitors, but their numbers are diminishing in relation to those of pedagogues. One reason for the diminishing number of collection curators hinges on resources and time. Costs can be cut by buying into traveling exhibition tours such as The Viking Begins, or Gudrun Sjöden's productions. They are prefabricated, come with careful instructions on how to install them, and in some cases, they even come with staff and couriers who will execute the installation. The receiving museum becomes more of a theater, where plays change.

The second reason dove-tails with the first. In-house curated exhibitions require ideas, time, and labor. An in-house production based on a museum's collection may take one to three years to plan, organize, and execute. Still, museums invest to develop new "permanent exhibitions, or core exhibitions," which are the bedrock exhibitions that, once produced, stay in place for years. These are important exhibitions that help execute a museum's mission and define a museum's profile. However, a problem with these is that they do not work well to continuously pull in visitors. Once they have been viewed by museum members or people in the local community, their novelty expires.

In order to attract large numbers of visitors, it is not enough to produce a few "high quality," educationally enriching exhibitions. Museums need to create buzz. An important way in which they do this at present is through investments in the phenomenon we call *Hip Heritage,* a term that indicates a disposition to heritage that increasingly focuses on its potential as a commodity with a broadly marketable aura, rather than its potential as an identity marker with ties to the past and linkages to a delineable group of people (Gradén & O'Dell 2020a:130; 2020b: 183). Scholars have repeatedly asserted that heritage can be understood as uses of the past in the present for the purpose of shaping the future (Klein 2000:25; Siikala, Klein & Mathisen 2004; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998; 2004, Smith 2006; 2021; Holtorf 2021). Such a perspective is important to appreciate. However, Hip Heritage, as we argue, is reactive. It implies a focus upon showcasing, mobilizing, and lifting forth that which is trendy, "hot," and interesting in the present for the purpose of creating attention in a highly competitive and crowded series of cultural offerings and markets. Hip Heritage can involve the mobilization of the past but it often mobilizes contemporary phenomena in heritage contexts, and here there is a particular propensity to focus on exhibitions and programs that highlight fashion, design, and art (Ekström 2020). In line with this, exhibitions like the "Weather Diaries" or the paintings by Karin Broos, are not actually activating the past in the present to any larger degree, but they are aligning art and the realm of that which is contemporarily interesting with an institutional heritage context. In a similar manner, when the past is invoked, it is elements of the past that are trending hot in popular culture which come into focus, such as a temporary exhibition on Vikings at a time in which satellite channels such as HBO air a popular fictitious television series on the Vikings, or the exhibition of clothing from Jane Austen films in a context in which Jane Austen films have nothing to do with a 17th-century castle.

Hip Heritage, as we see it developing, is largely based on work with temporary and touring exhibitions as well as programming offerings, due in large part to the fact that these are ways in which museums can work nimbly, flexibly, and more rapidly than is possible with larger collections based exhibitions. Hip Heritage does not necessarily lack an educational component, but it places a significant emphasis on entertainment and affective value. It is fun, moving, inspiring, and engaging in the first place, pulling people in through the doors of the museum, and then it also provides an educational experience as a secondary outcome. Hip Heritage has a strong focus on revenue, attendance numbers, and the ability of an institution to draw in new visitor groups. In this way, it is much more than a question of identity politics, which is the way so many of the discussions of cultural heritage have been framed in the last few decades; instead, Hip Heritage is market and stakeholder-focused.

Hip Heritage is not just a contemporary trend. It is fueled by the demand that museums draw in income (while maintaining their nonprofit status), and in meeting the expectations of stakeholders who want to see on an annual basis that the museums they have an interest in engage broader and broader publics. It is a paradigm that museums are expected to meet and which they are at times confronted with. Skokloster is an example of a museum that sits in the claws of what could be called a paradigm of Hip. A complicated problem that the museum faces lies in the fact that the grounds on which the castle is located, and the actual castle (the physical structure) do not belong to the museum. They are under the auspices of the National Property Board (SFV), an authority that has the responsibility of managing a wide array of historical buildings and environments that are considered to be of importance for a collective Swedish cultural heritage. Consequently, the curatorial responsibility at Skokloster the museum, actually starts with the wallpaper and then consists of all the artifacts in the castle. The maintenance of the building (from the floorboards and walls to the roof), and care for the park and the grounds around the castle are the concerns of the National Property Board (SFV).[2]

When the museum needs to add toilets to accommodate growing numbers of visitors, or expand the parking lot, or make changes to the park and gardens to lure more visitors, museum leadership and staff are required to turn to SFV. However, Skokloster is approximately an hour away from the nearest city, Uppsala, in which SFV has offices. As a result, Skokloster is perceived as an expensive object to maintain, involving long and costly travel times for personnel.

Exasperating matters, SFV's budget faced national funding cuts in the years since the mid-2010s. As the representative of SFV who is responsible for managing Skokloster explained, this meant that the agency needed to prioritize which properties could and would receive funding for renovations and developmental projects. As he saw matters:

> We need to be better at making priorities, and we are working on it. Where do we have the best potential in our organization? Which destinations should we invest in and focus upon, instead of throwing a little bit of money to every facility… // … In places in which we do not see a willingness and drive to cooperate, 'Sorry, we don't have time anymore to sit in meetings. Over here we have ten others who want to sit down and talk to us.' That's how self-interested we have become (Interview March 16, 2017).

As he continued speaking, he presented an image of Skokloster as a place, in his opinion, in which nothing changes, and in which history could be packaged and presented in a manner that more strongly evoked what he called, a "Wow! effect." And he concluded his reflection by tersely saying, "I think Skokloster could be a lot cooler, if I may express myself in that way" (Ibid.)

Skokloster, in other words, needs to compete with other heritage properties for limited resources from SFV, and in order to succeed they had to become "cooler" to attract more visitors. The exhibition of clothing from Jane Austen films was not a response to this critique, it was staged the summer before we spoke with SFV's representative who appreciated the Jane Austen exhibit; however, he was calling for more work in this spirit. For Skolkloster the challenge lay in finding a way to be hipper and more attractive to visitors within a rather short window of possible activity: June to September, which is a period of time in which many Swedes leave the country, or retreat from Stockholm to summer homes, while foreign tourists tend to focus on cities such as Stockholm or the country's vast woodlands and forests. Despite these conditions growing attendance numbers are crucial for obtaining funding from the Ministry of Culture and services from SFV. Being hip in this context is essential for driving the museum forward.

At the same time, working to be hip has its challenges and problems. As museums are pushed by market forces, and become platforms for art, fashion, design, and popular culture, they tend to move in similar directions, toward that which is trendy and temporarily popular. This is a movement in the direction of conformity rather than diversity. Beyond this, museums that seek to succeed through the hip factor that guides market forces have to be on their toes and in constant tune with their public's current desires. They become increasingly more reliant on trend analysts, focus group interviews conducted by hired consultants, and flexibility based on gut-feelings than on in-depth knowledge of their collections and the history of which the museum itself is a part. In some ways, it can be argued that the movement toward that which is hip is a question of becoming more relevant to potential visitors. But it also raises questions about diversity, and how the market of future visitors is imagined by hired consultants and museum leadership. Exhibitions and programs featuring Jane Austen movie costumes, clothing from Ingmar Bergman films, or cocktails in the castle have successfully tended to attract members of the educated middle class, but this is a demographic group that is already a significant base of museum visitors. Hip Heritage does not have to work in this direction, temporary exhibitions on pinball machines or mopeds (which one of the museums we studied chose to put on exhibition) can attract younger crowds or larger numbers of male visitors. Working in this way to attract new audiences or larger numbers of underrepresented visitors is a potential advantage of working with Hip Heritage; however, it requires a great deal of critical reflexive awareness on behalf of museum leadership and their staff.

Engaging in Hip Heritage, in other words, necessitates more than just investing in a growing array of temporary exhibitions and an expanding cache of programming, it necessitates a rethinking of what a museum is and can be. In the following chapters, we shall show how this drives efforts to find new sources of income or further develop existing sources of income. In this context, rentals of space, cafés, restaurants, and gift shops all gain new significance.

Notes

1 For a more extensive discussion of the significance volunteers play economically and socially in museums and museums' abilities to engage and activate the local community in gentrification processes, see Jackson (2002).

2 SFV manages approximately 2,300 properties with a total of 4,000 buildings in Sweden, as well as embassies, ambassador's residences, and institutions in more than 60 countries, and participates in the management of Swedish World Heritage Sites on the UNESCO list. For further info about SFV responsibilities, see www.sfv.se)

3 Exit through the gift shop

Commercial curating and the packaging of Swedish culture for the heritage market

In 1970s Sweden, museums did not sport gift shops. Throughout my (Lizette) school years, our class made several trips to museums. One of the highlights was traveling by bus to the small mountain Tossebergsklätten, or *Gurlita klätt*, as Nobel Prize winner Selma Lagerlöf called it in *The Wonderful Adventure of Nils Holgersson* (*Nils Holgersson underbara resa genom Sverige (1906))*. Our teacher insisted the Gurlita served like a museum; it gave life to a story. As we traveled north, we listened to our teacher reading aloud from the book, conveying Lagerlöf's story about the fictitious boy Nils and his humbling and educating travels from Skåne through Sweden on the back of the goose named Akka. As we arrived at Gurlita, we would stop, enjoy our sandwiches and hot chocolate, and share the same view as Nils when resting at *Gurlita klätt*. During this trip in 1974, I spent 3 SEK (about 2 dollars today) on a small ceramic goose made by a local artist and sold in the rackety timber cottage on top of Gurlita. In hindsight, it was the closest to a museum gift shop I visited as a child in Sweden in the 1970s. It was my first experience of materialized storytelling at the nexus of education, tourism, and local craft.

As we have learned from the previous chapters, museums are organizations in flux, changing, and adaptive. Although most museums pride themselves on their uniqueness in history, venues, collections, exhibitions, and programming, they demonstrate needs and aspirations similar to fellow museums in their field. In recent years, stakeholder pressure has increased to supplement diminishing government support and grants by attracting new donations, sponsorship deals, and new revenue-generating modes (Romolini et al., 2020). This pressure has generated adaptations in mission statements, ticketed visiting exhibitions, many ticketed programs, rentals of museum space to other organizations, and a stronger focus on secondary services such as restaurants, cafés, and gift shops.

Against this background, it is misleading to argue that museums compete with other cultural institutions in a highly competitive market of cultural offerings (Granér 2021). Instead, taking inspiration from Michel Callon, we argue that, in reality, museums operate in a *series of hybrid markets* that involve "an ever-growing, ever-more-varied cast of characters" (1998:260).

DOI: 10.4324/9781003327707-3

As we saw in the previous chapter, they are hybrid, involving many museum actors, from curators and pedagogues to marketers, press secretaries, and development directors. Other actors behind the scenes in the museum that we did not mention are academic scholars from anthropology, ethnology, museology, archeology, folklore, and business management (cf. Callon et al. 2002:195). In addition, museums are located in hybrid markets to the extent that they simultaneously operate in markets at the cross sections of education, entertainment, cultural interest, restaurants/cafés/eateries, tourist attractions, gift shops, and retail destinations. Each of these markets comprises a competitive area of business of its own.

To illuminate the implications this has for museums, the focus of this chapter is on the role that gift shops play in a series of museums that have deliberately worked in the last five years to hone their gift shops and foster audiences through sales but have done so in ways that differ from one another. First, the chapter takes a point of departure in a cultural analysis of these museums' gift shops. Next, the chapter discusses how museums deliberately strive to position themselves in the competitive market of hip heritage by engaging in a phenomenon that we call *commercial curating.* Finally, the chapter addresses the question, "How are ways of curating museum stores and gift shops re-fashioning museum audiences?"

Let us begin by looking at two examples from the United States, The National Nordic Museum and the American Swedish Institute (ASI), which included easy access to gift shops when constructing new purpose-built structures in 2018 and 2012.

The National Nordic Museum in Seattle

> Following the stairs from the National Nordic Museum's core exhibition on the second floor to the first floor, the visitor leaves behind a story that spans centuries: from Viking adventures to modern-day challenges and triumphs in the Nordic Region, as well as the story of the many emigrants that left the Nordic region to create new lives in North America. Halfway down the staircase, the visitor encounters a painting, and next to it - a foam board sign with block letters urging the visitor to continue down the stairs to exit. At the bottom of the stairs is the gift shop (Figure 3.1). In the decades around the new millenium many museums purpose-built or added new spaces to their facilities, and they did so in ways that often implied that there was no other way to leave, but through the gift shop. A second but simliar strategy used was to design the museum such that the store was the only way into the museum (fieldnotes May 15, 2022).

The above excerpt from our field notes reflects gift shops' central importance as integrated income generators in modern museums. At the National Nordic Museum, the shop is spacious with white walls and a large floor-to-ceiling window facing Market Street. Inside, the store features a curated

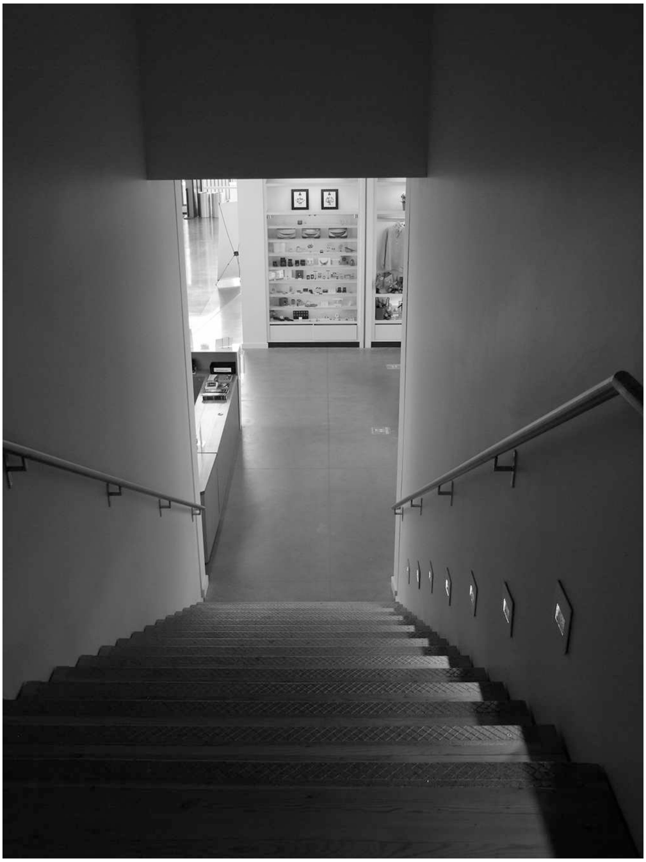

Figure 3.1 The stairway leaving the galleries, and leading visitors out of the museum, through the gift shop.

Photo: Lizette Gradén.

selection of products inspired by what the museum calls "Nordic Living," explained as "design trends that have taken root in America" (https://store.nordicmuseum.org/ April 18, 2023). Sparsely dispersed on built-in wall shelves and exhibit display cases, visitors find tea mugs, trays, drinking glasses, vases, water bottles, aprons, candleholders, pot-holder, and bowls. Featured Brands include "Royal Copenhagen, Iittala, Marimekko, and Georg Jensen." (www.nordicmuseum.org April 18, 2023). On another shelf, closer to the window, we find museum profile products, mugs, and drinking glasses with the current National Nordic Museum logo. A small selection of books featuring Nordic presence in the Pacific Northwest sits on a cubical stand near the store entrance. In addition, there are books on Nordic cuisine from American authors and authors from overseas. Several books reflect popular

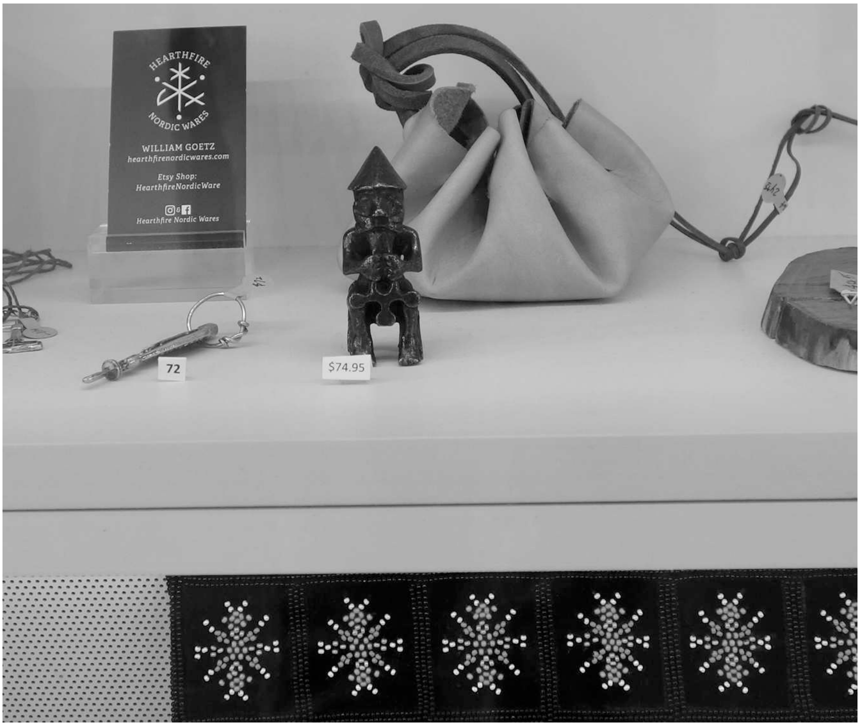

Figure 3.2 Thor on the shelf at the National Nordic Museum.
Photo: Tom O'Dell.

programs held at the museum, such as Swedish chef Magnus Nilsson's cookbook reflecting his visit in 2019. Except for children's books, there is little merchandise in the store geared toward families and children.

While looking closer at the individual items, there is a lot more. A glass case on the left-hand side features replicas of archeological objects lent by the National Museums in the Nordic countries and shown in the Nordic section of the museum's core exhibition. The replica of the National Museum of Iceland's three-dimensional image of Thor is highlighted (Figure 3.2).

The archeological replicas are placed close to the floor as if symbolically indicating their archeological reference of being dug from the ground. The products produced for sale raise questions about origin and appropriation, the skills to create replicas, and what it takes to put such work on the market. The small Thor figurine, selling for $74.95, exemplifies how Hip Heritage and commercial curating piggyback upon one another. The purpose-made object for sale receives much value by harkening back to the museum's permanent exhibition and a thousand-year-old heritage object (cf. Boltanski & Esquerre 2020) while tying into a contemporarily popular theme: Vikings. However, the object displayed on the bottom glass shelf in the museum gift shop is not just any object referencing the past or a museum's collections that come into a museum retail manager's focus. It is an example of commercial curating, which involves selecting, producing, exhibiting, and crafting stories about objects and collections through practices that resemble traditional curatorial work. The difference is that these objects are commercially produced to be sold in museums. A factor of direct importance is how merchandise ties into visitors' interests and cultural capital.

Another example of commercial curating is handcrafted jewelry of various kinds higher up on the shelves. Among the handmade jewelry for sale are leather bracelets decorated with braided pewter thread, described as "Sami-inspired" but without an artist's name. Even though it is not explicit, by labeling the bracelets "Sami-inspired," the gift store retail manager seems aware of the ongoing discussion about the craft industry and the appropriation of indigenous art and craft among first nations in the Pacific Northwest. This parallels the discussion about Sami Doudji (north Sami: *duodji*, Lule Sami: *duodje*, south Sami duedtie), which means sloyd, handicraft, and arts produced by Sami minorities and rooted in Sami tradition. Since 1993, the Samisloyd Foundation has used Duodji certification to protect Sami sloyd and handicrafts from appropriation. This term describes the taking over of creative or artistic forms, themes, or practices by one cultural group from another, generally used to describe Western appropriations of non-Western or non-white forms. It carries connotations of exploitation and dominance (Guttorm 2007; Joy 2020; Mathisen 2010). In addition, to protect and market genuine Doudji, the foundation operates a store of its own (www.sameslojdstiftelsen.com). At the same time, the items on display in the National Nordic Museum speak to the supposition that visitors to the museum are interested in crafts and traditional forms of indigenous and folk culture, and they align neatly with a cultural capital oriented in this direction (Boltanski & Esquerre 2020; cf. Bourdieu 1984). What emerges from the gift shop display of "Sami-inspired" bracelets could be interpreted by activists for indigenous people's art and creative rights as somewhat problematic, but which the museum carefully tries to navigate.

As in most museums, there is no admission to enter the museum restaurant or the museum store. The gift shop at the National Nordic Museum has three entrances, one from the exhibit, one from the main entrance and one directly from Market street. In that sense, the museum shop, accessible without paying admission, can potentially be a destination of its own. The items at the National Nordic Museum are selective and are aligned with a Nordic theme, with prices ranging from sweets and candies selling for around ten dollars to a comprehensive collection of apparel, jewelry, and designer items for the home going for several hundred dollars. The gift shop offers design items from brand names including Iittala, Georg Jensen, Marimekko, Royal Copenhagen, and even Kay Bojesen, Eva Solo, and Moomin. The choice of merchandise the gift shop offers, with its clear Nordic theme and emphasis on chic design, gives the appearance of being carefully planned and thought through and reflects to a large extent the audience the museum aims to foster. At the same time, except for the replicas of archeological finds from oversees, the museum shop resembles, both in design and content, the gift stores found in Scandinavian airports or the tourist districts of the Nordic capitals.

Visiting the gift shop in the Webster School building

It can be interesting to reflect upon how the museum gift shop has developed since it moved from the old Webster School building to its modern facility on Market Street. The fact that the museum was located in an old school building had implications for how it was formed, as the design of the existing school building placed limits on how the museum space could be used and developed. The primary goal, after all, was to create a museum celebrating the Nordic Heritage of those who moved to the Pacific Northwest. The inclusion and development of a gift shop was of secondary importance and came after the museum had been established.

Visitors passed the front desk on the first floor when entering the building. It was here that they purchased tickets and were allowed access to the museum. To get to the gift shop, they would either have to pass the front desk and take the elevator to the second floor or else go by the entrance of the core exhibition, "The Dream of America," and take the stairs to the left and walk up the wooden steps to the second floor. There, they would come to the galleries for visiting exhibitions, the core exhibition of traditional arts, and the core exhibitions on fishing and forestry in the Pacific Northwest. They would also find an information desk, and the gift shop was across from it.

When we last visited this gift shop in 2017, it had a color scheme resembling the Nordic countries' flags, including the Sapmi flag—floor-to-ceiling shelves stocked with many merchandises. Books, novels, and nonfiction were on the shop's left-side brackets. The gift shop served the Scandinavian Language Institute, which rented space and held classes there. The store was also a destination for students in the Scandinavian department at the University of Washington, seeking books in Scandinavian languages. Small trays, Eklund's towels, mugs, Hardanger stitch runners, and knick-knacks were interspersed with books. On the right-hand side of the store sat piles of T-shirts: light blue with three golden crowns, or shirts bearing a "Viking Days" print (Viking Days being a famous weekend-long festival and market arranged annually by the museum). Viking helmets made of plastic suitable for children and adults filled an entire shelf. A few of the helmets even featured built-in blond braids. On the frame immediately to the left was a children's section with Pippi Long stocking dolls, books, and posters featuring Maja in Monet's garden, wooden Viking swords, and miniature Moomin figures. Yet another shelf featured many Norwegian troll figures.

In the middle of the store was a large table with a display in plateaus, holding. This featured Marimekko pot holders and purses, more Moomin mugs, and more Eklund towels—all of which were popular items. Moreover, there were tealights, napkins, and candle holders. On a shelf across from the cashier's desk were immense amounts of foodstuff: lingonberry jam, gingerbread cookies, Swedish fish (the red herring), Finnish licorice, tins with Danish butter cookies, and Marabou and Freia chocolate. A basket of pins with Norwegian-American and Swedish-American joint flags was jumbled with the food. At our visit in 2017, the gift shop also had two tables outside the shop for featured items – one seasonal such as Easter, Midsummer, Harvest, and Christmas, and one to reflect the current visiting exhibitions.

Honing a new audience: Commercial curating for change

There are three significant differences between the new and old locations regarding design and content. First, the new gift shop is spacious and minimalist. Its content has been honed more toward high-end select design items and merchandise speaking to the loaned exhibition items for the National museums overseas. At the same time, the new gift shop contains a less extensive array of merchandise explicitly geared toward families and children. The new shop has been further professionalized to the extent that the old shop had a part-time manager and volunteers. The new one is overseen by a retail manager who works to develop the gift shop's profile.

In contrast, the older gift shop was more crowded and included items found in Scandinavian-American stores nationwide. However, a second difference is that the old gift shop had a more significant propensity to feature craft items on commission. Among the things for sale in the old building were knitted fingerless gloves, wrist warmers, and creative berets and hats. These were items crafted by avid knitters within the museum community. The commissions emerged organically from within the Ballard neighborhood, propelled by the Nordic knitting conference. In this way, the old gift shop had a slightly stronger linkage to the local Ballard community.

Whereas the old gift shop was tucked away on the second floor of the museum, the new one is located on the entrance floor, easily accessible without paying admission to the museum. There is no need to talk to front desk staff about the reason for visiting. It eliminates a layer of interaction and communication between visitors and staff. The architectural layout facilitates the ability of the gift shop to function as a destination of its own. The architectural design allows the museum to attract different categories of visitors, gift-store customers, event or rental participants, and museum visitors. This, in turn, enables gift shop customers to become inspired to pay the admissions fee and enter the museum.

Visiting the gift shop in the old location often resulted in seeing exhibitions or participating in programs. But only sometimes. If a visitor's destination were solely the gift shop, it would take a brief conversation with the front desk volunteer, who would not charge the museum admission of 6–8 dollars. Instead, the front desk would notify the information desk on the second floor via telephone that customers would be coming up. The shop's location, a relatively small space on the museum's second floor, was undoubtedly detrimental to its ability to work as a destination. When designing the new museum, the placement of the gift shop was more thoroughly thought through, as the architects explained. This reflects the shifting significance in the past decades, as gift shops have gone from being a second thought to being understood as potentially strategic economic assets for a museum's financial success.

American Swedish Institute (ASI)

When entering the American Swedish Institute (ASI), the museum shop is located immediately to the right, and the restaurant, "FIKA," is to the left. A few steps into the entrance hall, painted white, with tall ceilings, the visitor reaches the information desk that sells tickets to museum exhibitions, mansion tours, and events. When ASI expanded in 2012, the museum shop was moved from the breakfast room to the right of the 19-century grand hall, on the entrance floor in the Turnblad Mansion, to the new building bearing the name of Carl and Leslie Nelson in honor of their generous donation, which enabled the construction of an addition that launched ASI into the 21st century. As a result, visitors can enter the shop without passing museum admissions. Once in the shop, music sets the ambiance, as works ranging from Sofia Jannok's "This is my Land" to"Jazz på Svenska" ("Jazz in Swedish") hum from the speakers, while a faint scent of cinnamon rolls seeps into the store from the FIKA restaurant. This is music that many visitors can identify as Swedish, and in this way, it helps to create the sense that this is not just any gift shop, but a Swedish gift shop.

In documentation and on its website, The American Swedish Institute describes itself as a museum, a historic house, and a cultural center. Like the other museums in this book, ASI has changed its mission statement over the years, reflecting the organization's changes to participate in the ever-changing hybrid market that museums simultaneously adapt and contribute to. In 2019, ASI's mission was to serve as "a gathering place for all people to share experiences around themes of culture, migration, the environment, and the arts, informed by enduring links to Sweden" (www.americanswedishinstitute.org May 2, 2019).

The retail manager at ASI has a background in product design and sales. He explains:

> My goal is to make the store more of a destination store. I want more people to see *the store* and not just see kurbits paintings and small hand carvings. I want to make the store more cutting-edge, reflecting current Scandinavian culture, exclusive in home décor and gift-giving. (Interview, May 15, 2017)

In the past years, the retail manager has worked deliberately to reach new goals for the store, and the museum has hired an Inventory Specialist. This is significant, especially in finding ways to increase revenue. The "Gudrun exhibit" took care of this.

> In 2018 ASI hosted an exhibit by Swedish Fashion Designer Gudrun Sjöden. We were given the opportunity to sell her collection of clothing, and it sold exceptionally well, increasing our sales dramatically. Turns out that she has a huge following of customers, and people drove from as far away as Chicago & Milwaukee for the exhibit. (E-mail exchange April 1, 2019)

The exhibit of Gudrun Sjöden's clothes was part of a nationwide promotional tour that occurred a couple of years after the opening of her New York store in 2013. Sjödén produced the traveling exhibition, including watercolor paintings, handmade textiles, and garments from her 40-year career. As part of the exhibition, visitors learned about Sjödén's journey as a woman, artist, and entrepreneur. The gift shop at ASI engaged in the phenomenon we call commercial curating by setting up an entire display of her clothes, which could be touched, tried, and purchased. The gift shop worked as an extension of the exhibition. It did so by commercially displaying items that echoed the curatorial content found in the museum's galleries. This is an important role that gift shops are expected to play in museums (Ekström 2020:140). As the planning team at Sjödén and ASI had hoped, Gudrun Sjödén attracted a similar group of followers in Minneapolis as in Stockholm, urban, culturally interested primarily white middle-class women, known in Sweden as "kulturtanter." Indeed, part of the Minneapolis cohort were women who identified as Swedish-Americans with previous experience in Sweden. However, it can be argued that in this context, the gift shop did more than just echo the Sjödén exhibition and sell objects that could be associated with Sweden. It functioned as a destination in and of itself, allowing visitors to purchase culturally enriched things because they were similar to those on display in the museum. More than buying fabrics and clothes, visitors could buy items of value that they aligned with (by referring back to and aligning with the originals that had preceded them) worthy of collecting and displaying in a museum.

Beyond this, in addition to seeing more customers, ASI also saw a younger customer base in the store, which the manager described as "the clean Nordic style." He said,

> As I get to know our customers better and better and who I would like to attract to the store, the array of products also evolves. (E-Mail exchange April 1, 2019)

The ASI retail manager continues:

> In 2018, crystal & high-end design, & textiles were the classifications that saw huge sales. Our biggest seasonal sellers were paper snowflakes I purchased through a modern art museum; glögg mix and cookies are always sought after; and SOCKS-both merino wool and cotton, natural materials many Americans *experience* as Swedish (E-mail exchange April 1, 2019).

But some of the top selling products in the shop were at times rather modest in price, but could still be important for a gift shop. ASI's retail manageer gave this example:

> What is the top selling item? Gosh that is a tough one.We have these branch coasters... I am excited because my margin is good. I paid 4 dollars for a set of little birch coasters, that are sliced wood and put on pieces of felt. You get 4 for 10 dollars and I pay 4 dollars for them. (Interview May 15, 2017)

The selection of merchandise reflects the museum's intention to create profit, but perhaps more impotantly to provide an experience of Swedishness and cultivate enduring links to Sweden. These features also shape the audience. The gift shop has the potential to function as a platform that can attract visitors from the Swedish or Nordic community in the USA, providing them with a space in which to socialize and congeal into Swedish or Nordic cohorts. However, it also has the potential to allow residents of Swedish communities outside of Sweden, regardless of origin, to stage themselves as Swedes or Swedish-Americans for themselves and others.

Skokloster Castle: Aura for sale

When entering the Skokloster castle museum shop on the ground floor and accessed from the courtyard and at a distance from the museum entrance, the colors are soft and subdued, and there is a faint smell of milk soap and lavender. Antonio Vivaldi's four seasons plays gently from a loudspeaker and, interspersed among merchandise displays, sit glass bonbonnieres with small pieces of fine Swiss chocolates. Along the walls are antique bookcases (not replicas) filled with books about the castle and its collections, written by several generations of curators and researchers. In addition, there is literature that conveys the aristocracy's history in Sweden. The store's location and ambiance invoke a sense of sophistication and privacy—like a comfortable den (Figure 3.3).

We learned from the retail manager, who has a background in sales, that the wider public recognizes milk soap, the scent of lavender, and Vivaldi as symbols of nobility. The retail manager also highlights fine craftsmanship as a

Figure 3.3 The ambiance is deliberate. Skokloster Castle's gift shop has focused on the unique, exquisite story of Sweden's nobility.

Photo: Lizette Gradén.

symbol of affluence and points especially to jewelry on sale. In a glass case, sit select pieces. At the center is a ring priced at 8,000 SEK (about 800 USD)—a wearable object inspired by the museum collection, accompanied by a piece of family history. Next to the display case is a label, "The romantic legend of the beautiful young countess Ebba Brahe (1596–1674) and King Gustavus Adolphus (1611–1632 Lutzen) romantic affair remains in the form of the beautiful, modern collection of jewelry." This label is formatted like the object labels found in the displays of the temporary exhibits held at the Skokloster castle.

The staff who curate the museum shop items connect the ring with the story of Ebba Brahe by attaching a contextualizing label and informing visitors about Ebba Brahe's now-living relative, Charlotte Ramel. When Ramel was a little girl, she learned the romantic story of Ebba Brahe and King Gustavus Adolphus from her grandfather, the last private owner of Skokloster Castle. Ebba had not been considered noble enough to marry into the royal family. However, she eventually married Marshal of the Realm (*Riksmarsalk)* Jacob de la Gardie and became the manager of the family estates and a driven businesswoman.

Today, Charlotte Ramel owns and operates the company Ebba Brahe Jewelry, described as "exclusive jewelry for the contemporary woman."

Ramel sells her work at Nordiska Kompaniet (NK) Jewelry and Svenskt Tenn in Stockholm, stores that shape their audience by emphasizing exclusivity through high craftsmanship, tradition, and exquisite displays. By highlighting Ramel's work, Skokloster's museum shop launches the museum's past into contemporary practice. The storytelling at work here activates a form of what Boltanski and Esquerre call "memorial power" (2020:303) in which a significant portion of the jewelry's value is generated from the degree to which its lineage is aligned with the past and ties into Skokloster's history. Furthermore, it emphasizes women of nobility as having agency and being avid businesswomen by blurring the borders between museum collections of unique objects and high-end shops that tap into a high-end tier of customers.

However, Skokloster's gift shop even works extensively with less pricey forms of merchandise that fall into the category of "profile products." These products are more closely bound to everyday use, such as key rings, refrigerator magnets, and napkins. They allow visitors to bring home a token memory of the museum. These more mundane profile products have become increasingly popular in the past decade at Skokloster. Particularly prominent is merchandise bearing the image of Giuseppe Archimboldo's Vertumnus. Skokloster owns (and has on display) Archimboldo's Vertumnus, an allegorical portrait of Rudolf II in which Rudolf II's bust comprises vegetables, fruits, and flowers. In Roman Mythology, Vertumnus is the god of seasons, change, growth, and gardens. The profile products at Skokloster are produced with international visitors in mind. Vertumnus has been replicated on lightweight kitchen-related merchandise, particularly apt for visitors who pursue long-distance travels; napkins, potholders, aprons, trays, and matchboxes. The vision from a management point of view, in general, is that a store that operates close to its customers is a winner.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that Skokloster Castle is one of Sweden's most prominent monuments of aristocratic culture. As discussed in the previous chapters, the castle was owned by Wrangel, Brahe, and von Essen, families of nobility, until 1967, when the Swedish government purchased the home and turned it into a public museum overseen by the Ministry of Culture. As such, the museum's mission has been altered over the years. The current mission is to "promote the knowledge about and interest in Swedish history and to preserve and develop the heritage under the museum's auspices." (www.shm.se May 17, 2020).

The gift shop at Skokloster Castle is interesting because, to the extent that it offers a selection of books written by curators and other scholars, it aligns with the museum's mission. However, to be hip and relevant to museum visitors, it aligned its merchandise with aristocracy, which was elegant, of high quality, and somewhat luxurious. While most visitors were not likely to buy jewelry for 800 dollars, they were more apt to splurge and buy the delicate white china vases and flower pots for sale, or the exquisitely packaged soaps, bottled oils, and sculptures of a galloping horse. More than just the 17th century, the gift shop at Skokloster dealt (and still deals) in distinction: peddling an essence of the cultural capital of refinement visitors could take home with them (cf. Bolanski & Esquerre 2020:304; Bourdieu 1984).

Paradoxically, Skokloster's gift shop obtains many items from *Museum and Gift Design Scandinavia*, founded in the early 2000s. This company in Sweden specializes in merchandise for museum gift shops. They began by selling magnetic bookmarks and magnets and have grown their repertoire to include trays, teacups, and cutting boards, and during the pandemic, they expanded with puzzles (https://www.museumgiftdesign.com/). However, this new professional category dealing in enrichment for museums also fosters a new category of museum products by streamlining the uniqueness. For example, the printed images vary while the tray or the cup is the same to produce their revenue. The existence of similar products, brands, and companies is also indicative of the American Museum Store Association's vending conferences. These companies' ways of capitalizing on heritage resonate with merchandise found in Louisiana, Denmark, and other Fine Art Museums that encourage visitors to extend their art experience by exiting the gift shop. Although the museums in this study differ, their stewardship and engagements are similar to more prominent museums. Commercial curation resembles exhibition curation, and it is interesting to note how museum shops focus on engaging people's aesthetic and sensory understanding of the world. Whereas museum curation often includes the visual, audible, and touch, commercial curation invites visitors to engage it sensorially.

Kulturen in Lund

The shop and admissions share a desk close to the museum entrance at Kulturen in Lund. When entering the shop, the ambiance is set by lavender and sage, the shuffling of people's shoes interrupted by a loudly ringing phone, as all phone calls to the museum go through the shop's office, separated from the retail area only by a partial glass door.

In the museum shop in 2019, most items reflected the museum collections and activities, and some had a clear local connection. The retail manager of the gift shop explained:

> We purchase items from local textile designers, woodcarvers, jewelry makers, and ceramicists but also articles from other sources that reflect our collections, such as the Asian flower pots that resemble those found in more affluent homes such as Thomander's (a 19th-century professor's house built in classist style, authors' note). Besides these items, we engage with temporary exhibitions. (Interview April 14, 2019)

Moomin and Alice's products reflect the temporary exhibitions for children and families.

> Families with children are an important target group for Kulturen. We market things that last for generations and something that people reuse. For example, books on folk art sell well, as they reflect core exhibitions. (Interview April 14, 2019)

The museum shop works deliberately with commercial display techniques; temporary items at the center of the store—on low-set display cases, on wheels, easily movable. Jewelry is found in glass cases against the wall, and handicraft items are on crafted wooden shelves. Jewelry and profile items representing Kulturen's archeology collection are located as close to the ground as possible at the bottom bracket of displays.

A staff member at the museum shop in 2019 strove to shape its profile by combining her skills drawn from the arts and business. Having worked in the creative industries in the United States for numerous years, she viewed museum stores as essential vehicles for engaging museum audiences, a view that she thought had further potential in Sweden and explained:

> Sweden has had a very immature market for museum retail. Even ten years ago, only some cultural history museums had full-fledged stores. Museum shops were still associated with postcards, pamphlets, and candy, but it is changing (Interview April 14, 2019).

At Kulturen, she tried to nudge the leadership in new directions. She spoke about her need for patience, indicating that the process could be faster. She wished to work closely with the exhibition manager to shape profile products and more eyecatching displays in the shop.

"Retail and education are usually the last groups to be involved when a new exhibition is planned. Nevertheless, I have gained some traction," she said, pointing to the section of merchandise relating to temporary exhibitions such as Katja of Sweden. She brings us to a display featuring seasonal items; garden tools, books, envelopes of seeds, gloves, soaps, and pots. These items are selected to echo the open-air museum exhibitions and everyday life in the homes and gardens of priests, nobility, burghers, peasants, and workers between the 18th and 20th centuries in Southern Sweden (Figure 3.4).

Kulturen's staff and current retail managers continue moving down this path, working with the seasons and adapting the store's merchandise and color schemes to seasonal changes. For example, in May, the shop is usually designed for spring and includes displays of seeds, garden tools, gloves, handcrafted ceramic flower pots, and literature on historic gardens. In the fall, this display case shifts to teacups, teapots, and assortments of teas. Moreover, small brown bags with walnuts from Kulturen premises are for sale.

Figure 3.4 Temporary exhibitions and programs are reflected at the shop at Kulturen in Lund.

Photo: Lizette Gradén.

The current store manager has a background in retail and has managed specialty stores in Lund, as well as the Marimekko store at the Copenhagen airport. At the Copenhagen airport, "the trick is to appeal to a wide variety of customers, both the passer-by and the regulars." She says, and continues that she early on "figured out that there was a niche in Lund that had not been filled, the go-to store for handcrafted gifts and books about crafts and heritage preservation." Over only a few years, she and her staff have grown this niche through careful curation and attractive displays. Like the staff at Skokloster Castle, she and her team work with object labels for more high-end items: jewelry and more costly handcraft.

Since November 2021, the museum store has expanded, and the store has spilled out into the nearby garden room, commonly used for group tour introductions. While the event coordinators have struck agreements with vendors who come and sell their crafts at tables they manage in the garden room during Julstöket, the retail manager set up the Christmas shop in the same room in December. This new pop-up shop method "increased revenue without taking significant economic risks.", she explained.

When visiting the store in December of 2021, shelves were packed with merchandise, and the latest addition, the Christmas shop in the garden room, was well stocked. On December 3, several vendors were in the garden room, including a woman from Belarus selling knitted socks for the benefit of a specific orphanage. It was the second year that she participated, and people had lined up at her table. (fieldnotes December 3 and 15, 2021). When visiting again in January, on the 13th day of Christmas, *Tjugondag Knut*, the store manager, was packing away the Christmas shop in the garden room. Goods that must be wrapped and boxed include products brought directly from craftsmen or sold on commission, including knitted socks. As the manager dismantled the display of Christmas socks, she suddenly stopped, held up a pair knitted in two-plymulti-colored wool yarn, reflected for a moment, and then summed her thoughts by saying, “Quite ok, if a little wide.” She then moved the socks out of the temporary store and into the regular shop’s spring assortment of craft items. In her view, commission sales were essential and helped the gift shop to remain in touch with local artisans. As she moved the socks from the temporary Christmas store to the leading gift shop, she explained that she saw the potential for the socks to sell when singled out from other socks for sale at Christmas time.

As we saw in the previous chapter, temporary exhibitions have become essential in museums’ efforts to create buzz around their institutions and attract visitors into their facilities (Gradén & O’Dell 2018; 2020a). The form of commercial curating taking place in Kulturen’s gift shop incorporates this philosophy into its management strategy. In some ways, this reflects a retailing strategy that has been in business for ages. The interiors of stores and the products they have offered consumers have long reflected the rhythm of the holiday season. However, what is different is that Kulturen’s gift shop manager does not simply redecorate the gift shop at Christmas time (or in conjunction with any other holiday) and does not just add a few Christmas items to her inventory. Instead, she stages an entirely new seasonal shop as an exhibition and attraction in and of itself in the garden room. This is done rapidly and repeatedly throughout the year, and in conjunction with Swedish calendar holidays such as at Easter and Midsummer. Commerical curating allows new displays to flow through Kulturen’s gift shop in the same way that temporary exhibitions move in and out of the museum’s galleries.

For museums that are increasingly focused on being trend-sensitive and producing Hip Heritage, the role gift shops play in helping museums make their financial ends meet, is growing. The American Alliance of Museums, which has a special section for museum shops, states:

> Museum goers know that one of the best places to find distinctive, cherishable objects, books, and apparel is in a museum store. With their connection to their institution’s educational mission, these special stores boast a well-considered assortment of products with a unified theme. They are a great way to support a favorite museum while adding a dose of joy to your (or a lucky giftee’s) life. (www.aam-us.org. December 16, 2022)

Therefore, the design of shops and work of tailoring heritage for sale can work to facilitate audience development. Furthermore, a cult of the new and the desire to have the latest is encouraged by the rapidly changing inventories of gift shops; where heritage was once marked by longevity, it now embraces the latest trend.

Having worked for the Marimekko store in Kastrup, Kulturen's retail manager emphasized that she is a fast-paced, stress-resistant employee who likes to make things move. She explained: " I am used to thinking about space management and measuring sales per square meter. Operating the museum store is no stress" (Interview Janunary 13, 2022). So instead, she tried to get the store to gear up.

> For years, Kulturen has seen the store as a service rather than an income-generating driving unit. This perspective began to change with my predecessor, but it needs to change even more. I want the store to be a destination. Interview January 13, 2022)

The store manager continued:

> Today, the store is becoming a destination, but it is still multifunctional (admission, switchboard, tourist office, authors' note). I want to focus on sales! I desire to sell more carefully selected items with a fascinating history. (Interview January 13, 2022))

The manager brings up the example of profile products, which she develops with the staff's communication officer, and discusses the difficulties of getting buy-in from staff in other departments. Then, strategically, she works with the museum director on budgeting and explains that the store will go from 1.1 million to 1.9 million Swedish crowns (approximately 110,00 to 190,000 US dollars) in the next round for the upcoming year. "It is a big step. Usually, you take steps of 4%," the manager says, but with the director's trust, the manager aims to deliver. Ultimately, the manager wants the store to become an independent entity that bears its costs, also for staff. She envisions an entity where she has the museum store profile, budget, and staff at her disposal, not as part of a department like now, where the store pays for less financially successful activities, such as the summer theater productions, that education staff write and produce; from playwriting, casting, costume- and prop-making to rehearsing and staging on the open-air museum grounds.

Another move toward the manager's goal is that she now sits in on meetings with the curatorial project group for exhibitions. Involving staff from several departments in curatorial engagement may seem trivial. However, as Brian Hogarth has argued, museums (and most organizations) benefit from investing more time in empathic listening (Hogarth 2017:37), skills that facilitate understanding and various perspectives, as well as building teams that work. Thus, such skills generate more grounded and sustainable decisions, which in turn, help the organization stand out in a competitive market. In addition, these meetings, which occur before each new show, and which the retail manager now participates in, facilitate dialogue between the shop and exhibition production staff. This, in turn, plays a crucial roll in integrating the gift shop more fully into the museum's offerings and profile. The manager explained:

> Profile products are becoming increasingly crucial to our museum. These do not cost much to produce, are unique to the museum store, and the entire profit goes to the store. The least profitable products are commission goods—they only generate 20% for the store. (Interview January 13, 2022)

Having said this, she continued to explain the difference between a regular gift shop and a shop in a nonprofit organization.

> The shop is VAT, tax-exempt when a museum is listed as a non-profit member association. The rule of thumb is that these stores must refrain from competing with regular stores. To offer a unique range of goods is essential. (Interview January 13, 2022)

The vision is that when someone in Lund wants to buy gifts or fine goods for themselves, Kulturens shop should be "the to-go-to place." For example, Klippan blankets (high-end woolen coverings often associated with Swedish folk culture) sell well but are available in other places, including Åhlens, a department store. The manager asks rhetorically: "Why do we have the Asian flower pots? They are replicas, they are expensive, and they are made in China." The manager signals quotation marks when talking about China-made/made in China.

The term symbolizes poor quality, less attractiveness, and perhaps even low status. As with the Klippan blankets, she wants to refrain from investing in these goods solely because Kulturen has had them for years, and as merchandise, these generate little profit. As an avid shop manager from outside the museum, she is meticulous about price points. Some items can be reasonably priced, causing a higher gain for the store. Books are often met with suspicion among museum staff. A good selection linked to the museum's profile, however, enhances the museum profile, she reasons. Commission sales, she believes, are only to maintain the connection with craftspersons. These goods cost more in labor time than they generate income. However, it is crucial for Kulturen's profile as a museum to have the contact. To make these items work, she simplified the administration around these goods to increase profit.

Exhibiting with purpose: Commercial curating and the shaping of audiences

In addition to merchandise to stock and sell, some museum stores encourage visitors to design their personalized products, using the museum's resources, such as the Rijksmuseum's (located in Amserdam) invitation, via their Rijksstudio, to "take our stuff and do anything you want with it" (https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/rijksstudio). The museum store becomes a point of access to the museum's open resources.

When we think with Erving Goffman's dramaturgical perspective, we understand how people, regardless of social or cultural background, seek to present themselves and profile themselves in a certain way, depending on the circumstances (1959). Goffman's perspective is a fruitful way to approach the museums' manner of forming an audience of visitors aiming to create a following and community out of these groups. Speaking with Goffman, a person's profile, image, or persona emerges out of a flow of social interactions. According to Goffman, profiling is interested in influencing the environment to gain social power. In this case, gift shops become stages on which commercially curated items are offered for purchase, allowing visitors to bring a piece of the museum (and its profile) home with them. This allows people to work with museum items and present themselves as culturally active individuals in contexts beyond the museum. In addition, museum stores extend the brand of the museum institutions, helping them amplify their experiences to the public. When a patron wears jewelry, reads a book, or drinks from a cup purchased from the museum store, these products subtly communicate the museum's marketing message. How people present themselves to themselves and others depends on the context; in the case of ASI, for example, purchases at the gift shop and uses of items from there reinforce processes of identifying with and being recognized by others as part of an ASI, a Swedish, American-Swedish, Swedish-American or a more fleeting community interested in what may be temporarily offered.

When stakeholders expect museums to increase their core funding through commercial activities such as commercial curating in gift shops, retail managers think in entrepreneurial terms. Most museum managers want the store to mirror the museum's profile, making the act of selecting items for the gift shop a curatorial concern. If stocked unwisely, the gift shop fails to contribute to the museum's running costs. Moreover, it ceases to be a means of supporting exhibitions and heritage-making in those institutions, which is a primary role they are expected to play (Ekström 2020). What can be observed in gift shops such as ASI's and Kulturen's is that retail managers seek new visitors through re-developed facilities and increased attention to designing spaces for display.

Thus, the museum shop emerges as the epitome of museum development in the hybrid market, where commercial curating comprises the strategic development of products that, in one way or another, connect with the museum's mission or collections. It also establishes and reinforces relationships with artisans and craftspersons that sell their goods on commission in museum gift shops. Furthermore, museum gift shops create value exchange, as they are arranged as heritage stages on which artists' and artisans' crafts and cultural capital are marketed. Simultaneously, from the museum's perspective, such value exchange and staging allow the museum to take low financial risk. There is no need to keep merchandise in stock, and if items do not sell, they are circled back to their makers.

Determining the boundaries between a museum's curated narratives and the commercialism that museum gift shops inhabit is tricky, particularly since the term museum has been re-defined and stretched (www.icom.org). Defining a museum can be difficult; its gift shop is interconnected and significant. As museums open and ease their pandemic restrictions, the gift shop and commercial curation role emerge as more than a commercialist afterthought. However, commercial curation in the gift shop enhances what museum exhibits already do: they sell and privilege selected stories while revealing meta-cultural stories about their roles and producers.

Hip Heritage, through commercial curating

Hip Heritage and commercial curating are intimately entangled: cultural in design and financial in aim. While Hip Heritage aims at bringing paying people into the museum, commercial curating encourages people to pay to enhance that experience by bringing select items home. Museums curate collections for various purposes, such as for permanent and temporary display and for educational handling (Brenna et al., 2018). These curatorial practices intend to bring people to a museum. Commerical curating, however, is different as it is all about products for sale. By being cultural in design, but commerical as a curatorial process, it involves the production of select profile products: replicas of museum objects or objects that allude to object in the museum's collection. Moreover, commercial curating merges with the careful architectural design of physical shops and an online presence to attract constituencies and stakeholders and drive more sales. The intention, above all, is to grow revenue by enhancing an experience of accessibility to a particular heritage.

When museums ask visitors to exit through the gift shop, they shape visitor experiences by providing tangible accessibility to merchandise of various qualities in ways that museum exhibits do not. As a result, this chapter argues that the boundaries between traditional and commercial curating are blurred. Beyond this, gift shop managers are increasingly encouraged by museum leadership to develop their shops into destinations of their own, not only fostering audiences to enter and exit through the gift shop but, in many instances, converting the shop into the visitor's sole museum experience.

Commercial curation, as we see it, is a rapidly emerging practice developing as museums move into idea-based entrepreneurship. On a deeper level, we argue the importance of understanding that commercial curating of cultural heritage participates directly in a consumerism phenomenon. The museum shop takes the museum's most famous collection items, and temporary loans, and brings them to the masses. At the same time, they provide them with an enriched quality by embedding them in a sensory field that provides merchandise with a heightened sense of quality. For example, the smell of lavender in Skolkloster's gift shop and the sound of Swedish music in ASI's gift shop are important components in providing merchandise with an aura of authenticity that is important in helping to move these products from museum shelves to visitors' homes.

In this chapter, we introduced the gift shop as a locale of Hip Heritage and part of the museum enrichment economy. The gift shop draws upon the museum's atmosphere and reputation, but it also works to contribute to that very same atmosphere. In this sense, gift shops are no longer just an added part of contemporary museums. They are expected to work as destinations that attract visitors, and push them through the museum gates and into the galleries. As demonstrated, museum gift shops perform an array of integral and multi-faceted work, from extending mission-related programs to generating the added value of income produced through the multisensory experience of purchasing merchandise and profile products.

Boltanski and Esquerre define value as an arrangement justifying a price (2020: 92). They contend we must consider that rather than a single price, there are always at least two; one belongs to the event when a thing changes ownership, such as a visitor purchasing merchandise from the museum shop. The second price relates to commercial curating and the conditions under which the object is selected, performed, exhibited, and sold. Therefore, this price must be understood as performative. As museums are a trusted resource for communities, museum gift shops are designed, curated, and operated to co-produce the mission, collections, and programs of the museums to which they belong. These meta-cultural acts shed light on the museum's profile and values and help draw in new categories of visitors more interested in shopping than anything else.

The value of things is the result of valuation that belongs to the order of events rather than the order of facts. Alternatively, as Arjun Appadurai has it, material things can move between different regimes of value (1986); when an item becomes outdated and considered trash in one regime, it may move onto the second-hand market, thus continuing to feed the process of commodification. When a set of 4-dollar birch-bark patterned coasters in the museum gift shop have made the journey from the wholesale regime into the museum shop, this movement is part of an enrichment economy. The 4 dollar coasters are the same material objects. However, the operation of events rids them of a wholesale status and gives them a sense of finer quality. At ASI, such coasters are carefully curated as Swedish and priced at 10 dollars in the museum shop. When the 4-dollar birch bark patterned coasters are selected from the warehouse, repackaged, marked to 10 dollars, and performed as Swedish (rather than made in China), they have been released from the industrial production regime and entered into a regime of handicraft sold through the enrichment of a nonprofit organization.

Through singularization, the selection and cultural process that transforms a thing into a unique object and commodity (Kopytoff 1986: 64–91, cf. Karpik 2007, Boltanski and Esqurre 2020) gift shop merchandise is further enhanced through the performances taking place in the museum setting. By being singularized, selected, framed, and highlighted as connected to Skokloster's slott, the Ebba Brahe ring, made in contemporary times, is enriched by history and association with the Brahe family. These trajectories (and spun stories) show how museum shops are part of the enrichment economy that moves objects from one regime of value to another, shaping commercial curating and contributing to the production of Hip Heritage. At the same time, as gift shops steadily focus more on working with curators to engage with temporary exhibitions, they introduce an element of planned obsolescence into their inventories. Where museum gift shops were once content in selling identical blankets, magnets, coasters, and books for years and years, they now introduce seasonal commerically curated exhibitions, and even commercially curated temporary retail collections to fit the museum programs and temporary exhibitions, further feeding, in this way, the trend-sensitive Hip Heritage cycle.

4 Mandatory collaboration

Consultants, craftsmen, and other heritage makers

Museums are popularly understood as cultural institutions in which creative and well-educated professionals work in collections, exhibitions, programming, education, and leadership, working together to play a pivotal role in a society's heritage-making. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, museums also rely on people with retailing experience who can come into a museum and create shops and stores that are destinations in and of themselves inside the museum. Similarly, museums rely on entrepreneurs capable of running restaurants and cafés that can also work as magnets to draw people into the museum. For example, having a restaurant like the award-winning *Fika* at ASI is an invaluable asset that creates buzz and media publicity that engages the local community.

What we find important to address is that beyond permanent staff, museums also hire entrepreneurs who are not based in-house or are part of the regular crew. These specialists are not on the permanent payroll but are crucial in moving the museum forward and shaping its future. The types of specialists in question here include consultants such as those who worked with the leadership of ASI to identify target demographics (persona) whom they could focus their planning activities upon. Or, those employed by the Nordic Heritage Museum who organized focus group interviews to help the museum as it transitioned from the Webster School building to its 57,000 foot state-of-the art structure. Indeed the specialists we are drawing attention to here include the teams of architects who worked together with the museum leadership, staff, and local community to draw up conceptual plans for the museum. It includes core exhibition speciallists who received feedback from consultants and focus groups, and re-conceptualized the museum over a period of several years as the museum went from being an idea to a visualized rendering, to a construction site with concrete, cranes, and scaffolding (Figure 4.1).

Moving from an old schoolhouse to a modern museum is a dramatic transition and a once-in-a-lifetime adventure for most museums that undergo these types of developments. However, even in more minor, mundane daily activities, other entrepreneurs and specialists work alongside museum leadership and staff. They can be people with different managerial skills who help museums identify new demographic groups that a museum can strive to

DOI: 10.4324/9781003327707-4

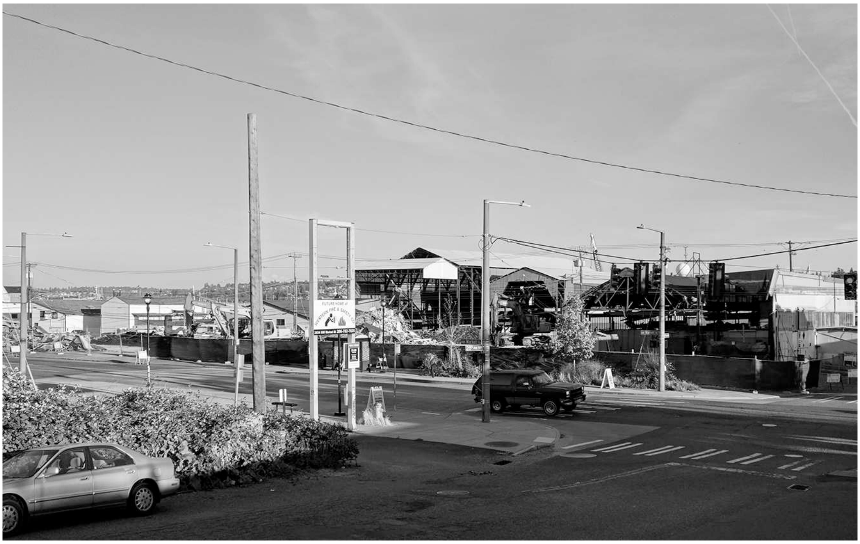

Figure 4.1 National Nordic Museum construction site in Ballard.
Photo: Tom O'Dell.

attract to its venue, or even consultants specialized in assisting organizations in identifying contributors or funders or solving tensions between departments or occupational categories. This is a category of people with business and managerial skills who are often off the permanent payroll and not visible in name in annual reports, but whose expertise is vital for the development and growth of these cultural institutions.

However, there is one more category of specialists who collaborate with museums who are not usually framed as entrepreneurs or consultants and who usually would not discuss their services and trade in these terms, but who play an essential role in maintaining the cultural heritage under the auspices of many museums. These are craftsmen and craftswomen specializing in traditional skills, *forms of intangible cultural heritage*, some of which that have been largely forgotten and are practiced by very few people today. This group of entrepreneurs includes thatchers, black smiths, basket weavers, timbermen, tradition-bound agriculturalists, and ecologists, to name a few. In this chapter, we shall discuss the critical role craftspeople and heritage makers—masters in diverse forms of intangible cultural heritage—play in providing museums with content, preserving this content, and keeping the museums on their feet and in functional order.

Entrepreneurs are usually understood to be individuals possessing leadership and problem-solving skills. These are people who are attributed with the ability to flexibly create new products and services to meet the demands, risks, and uncertainties of rapidly changing business contexts (Oliva Abacra 2018:7). Entrepreneurs are increasingly seen as important actors working in small to medium-sized businesses devoted to the promotion and development of cultural products and services (Orihuela-Gallardo et al. 2017:393). As Oliva Abacra points out, drawing upon Howkins (2013):

> In an economic system in which ideas and creativity are the most valuable resources and the goal is to innovate (Howkins, 2013), entrepreneurs have acquired a starring role because they are supposed to accomplish the creation of new products and services which in turn will carry out both new cultural and financial values (2018:9).

Against this background, it is important to consider how forms of intangible heritage are moved creatively in an entrepreneurial spirit to give museums life.

This chapter focuses on entrepreneurs possessing knowledge and skills in crafts and traditional agricultural forms and who, in this case, serve two museums in Southern Sweden, Kulturen in Lund and Kulturen's Östarp. The latter is an open-air museum with agricultural environments and a focus on the 19th- and early 20th centuries. The study draws on on-site fieldwork over a period of four years (2019–2023), which included interviews, photography, observations, and participant observation. The aim is to describe and analyze the conditions under which agricultural heritage and traditional knowledge at these museums are put into play and presented to museum visitors. Furthermore, the chapter discusses potential directions for developing and sharing knowledge about cultural heritage (tangible and intangible), by discussing the challenges that museums and their employed staff face when communicating traditional and tacit knowledge to visitors. Most importantly, the chapter shows how traditional knowledge has been maintained mainly outside of the museum contexts and how museum staff with little experience in agriculture, craft, and other forms of traditional knowledge are learning from consultants in these professions as their museums wish to adapt and position their institutions in the relation to the circular economy and contemporary discussion of sustainability.

The entrepreneurs of tradition and heritage at Kulturen's Östarp

It was a warm sunny day in late July 2022 when we arrived at Kulturen's Östarp to partake in the hay-harvest festival. When approaching the open-air museum, one first encounters rolling hills covered in billowing green grass. Up to the right on the top of one hill stands an old wooden windmill (*Möllan*) built in the early 19th century (Figure 4.2), and behind it sits *Möllegården* (The mill farm). *Möllegården* was built in 1924 in a half-timbered style that was common in Scania in the 18th and 19th centuries. A dirt path snakes by the hill on which the windmill stands and through a small grove of beech trees curving to the left. To the left, stands a watermill with a large paddle wheel dipping into a stream that slowly flows

Figure 4.2 Kulturens Östarp, the open-air museum as a repository for sustainable agriculture with an emerging hip factor.

Photo. Lizette Gradén.

by the mill. Continuing along the path, one comes up a small hill to *Gamlegård* (The old farm) from 1812. *Gamlegård* is the primary attraction for most visitors. Still, those who continue another half kilometer down the path will pass through agricultural fields in which 19th-century technologies and older strains of rye are being used to recreate a sense of how the environment and farming conditions could have appeared two centuries ago. Eventually, those who continue to follow the path arrive at Alriksgården, a farmhouse built in 1907 and named after the man who lived in the house until the mid-20th century.

There are no fees for entering the grounds at Östarp. Even when the museum is closed, visitors can stroll around the grounds, enjoy the landscape and historical buildings from the outside, or use the area for recreational purposes such as family outings, dog walking, or jogging. The museum opens officially on May 1, and up until June 18, it is only open on weekends from 11 in the morning to 4 in the afternoon. The same opening hours are in place from August 18 until the end of August. During the summer months between June 22 and August 13, Östarp expands its hours and is open to the public from Thursday to Sunday, 11 am to 4 pm. When the museum is open there are daily docent tours of *Gamlegård* at two in the afternoon. The museum has, in other words, an abridged season in which it is open and offers a relatively limited amount of programming for visitors.

Most people who visit Östarp come to take in the natural environment with its unique biodiversity and to get a sense of the cultural heritage of rural 19th-century Southern Sweden. As a result, the museum area is rarely crowded, but Midsummer and the hay harvesting festival are popular events at Östarp. Over the years, Midsummer has attracted large numbers of visitors to Östarp (thousands of people in the 1970s, several hundred more lately), as the museum offers an idyllic 19th-century pastoral environment to celebrate midsummer, sing and dance around a *Midsommarstång* (a Maypole), and enjoy a picnic lunch or reserve a table at the inn on the site to enjoy traditional classic Swedish dishes (such as äggakaka, meatballs, and Swedish pancakes) commonly called *husmanskost* in Swedish. Even though the hay-harvesting festival is one of Östarp's more popular events, in 2019–2022, there were seldom more than a few dozen visitors on the grounds at any one time over the day. Beyond these events, the only additional programming Östarp planned to offer in 2023 were two half-hour long time slots, in May and June, where visitors could "meet" the museum's farm animals, and a closing event on the last Sunday in August.

Östarps Gästgiveri: More than just an inn

Kulturen's Östarp has not always offered its visitors such a limited amount of programming. Throughout our fieldwork with Östarp, we learned about several conditions that hamper additional programming. One major hurdle is that Östarp operates under the auspices of Kulturen in Lund with no permanent staff on site. Instead, personnel from Kulturen in Lund travel by car to Östarp periodically to oversee and maintain the site, the buildings, and the interiors. In addition, for operations and development, Kulturen in Lund has relied upon cultural entrepreneurs from outside the museum to handle the daily functioning of the museum in general. For example, *gästgiverie*t, the on-site inn with a restaurant, ice-cream stand, and hall for weddings and events, has been a destination operated by a member of the local community with an extensive network for resourcing local foods. The couple in charge of the inn rented and operated it for decades, building a following of loyal customers and drawing visitors to Östarp. However, when these entrepreneurs decided to move on with their lives, Östarp lost its only food venue (and ice-cream stand) and modern toilet facilities. With the restaurateur having left and not yet replaced in the summer of 2023, the museum was left only with an outhouse behind *Gamlegård*. This facility reflected the time of the farmstead but could hardly handle hundreds of visitors a day. Planning more significant events under these conditions was vastly daunting.

Complicating matters further, the Midsummer celebration (which at Östarp dates back to the 1920s and is the event that drew most visitors to Östarp every year) had always been organized by the entrepreneur of the inn, and not by Östarp or Kulturen. With the departure of the inn entrepreneur, Östarp lost a significant amount of its connection to the local community.

In describing the situation that Östarp was facing in 2023, a staff member from Kulturen reflected, “Just imagine, we don’t even own the Midsummer pole, and we fall short of connections with the folk dancers and all the local civic organizations that help organize the celebration.” The void left after the departure of the long-term restaurateur, with their connections, and tacit knowledge of the local area and community, is evident. Moreover, having developed the inn into a reliable destination that served several generations of local families for weekend meals, birthdays, weddings, or business gatherings, the inn’s leadership and personnel had become familiar with both their own customer base as well as heritage-makers in the area. In this capacity, the inn had not only functioned as a destination in itself (attracting customers for a meal who could then include the museum as part of their gastronomic experience) but it also worked as a bridge that at times helped link Kulturen with entrepreneurs serving Östarp.

Contract dependency: The implications of running a museum without permanent employees

The daily routines of caring for the animals at Kulturen’s Östarp, leading the guided group tours at the museum, as well as some of the grounds work, were designated on a contract basis to two other entrepreneurs: Emma, who has a background in human ecology, was hired as the primary entrepreneur in charge of Östarp, and she, in turn, was assisted by her husband. She explains:

> I have a contract with Kulturen, so I bill them once a month… // … Kulturen has chosen to do it this way, and it works very well because I have a contract and an agreement. So there is a kind of freedom, being on your own. But we noticed that when our son was sick for a half-year, that it was like … There is no one to take over in my place. Yeah, Johan. I have my family. But then we noticed this is fantastic as long as everything goes according to plan (laughter). But then there is another side of things that is a bit scary. And that is the challenge of being a small business (Interview conducted August 5, 2019).

As Emma points out, being on her own and being able to draw up a contract annually allows her to adjust things every year, at least to some extent. As the years go by and she realizes there are more tasks and challenges that she has to engage in, she can change her contract and adapt it to the reality she encounters. Kulturen always has the possibility of saying “No.” But Emma is not all that easy to replace; she has a unique knowledge set on traditional modes of conducting agriculture and caring for animals. A problem with having animals is that they must be cared for daily. She has little backup if health problems or other issues arise, and Kulturen does not have the resources to back her up; on the contrary, they are highly dependent upon her.

Kulturen's dependency on Emma is not just due to the unique knowledge and skill set she brings to Östarp. It is also due to the social network she has established around her in the local community. For example, the farm animals at Kulturen's Östarp do not belong to Östarp or Kulturen. They are brought into Östarp on a seasonal basis through contacts that Emma has with animal breeders throughout the region. And the farm animals she brings to Östarp are not "just" horses, cows, and pigs. All the animals are very particular native breeds of animals with a long cultural, historic anchoring to Southern Swedish agriculture. Unfortunately, they are not that easy to find, and you have to be a special kind of person to convince a breeder of these animals to provide you with the responsibility of caring for them for nearly half the year.

As we speak in the interview, Johan turns to Emma and explains to us all:

> It is a big advantage that you are very knowledgeable about animals and nature. And I mean, with both that which is wild and tame. It is terrific that you can lecture about wild plants, animals, and cultural history. So you have a broad knowledge, and you can teach both young and old. And you know how to talk to people, and it is vital with this issue of collaboration that you were talking about. It's not just about the animals and caring for them, but even our contact with our neighbors (Interview conducted August 5, 2019).

Emma and Johan are not from the local community, but they have won the trust of the people around them over the years. And this has been important in solving problems that can arise in their day-to-day life. If they need to find new tires for a car or other vehicle, their neighbors gladly suggest to whom they can turn. When a newly stamped dirt floor was going to be made in Gamlegård, their neighbors could tell them where to find the best kinds of soils and sands to get the job done and even offer them materials from their properties. A key to success for cultural entrepreneurs such as Emma and Johan lies in their ability to build informal networks with the local community and other craftspeople and be able to work collaboratively with them (cf. Strandgaard Pedersen et al. 2006). The leadership at Kulturen in Lund would be very hard-pressed to break into and integrate into this social network. The physical distance between Lund and Östarp is only a 20-minute car ride, but the cultural distance is enormous.

As the hay-harvest festival unfolds Emma and Johan are in place leading and organizing the activities. However, they have also drawn in another entrepreneur whom they met while taking a course at another 19th-century farmhouse. This entrepreneur gives courses in which participants learn how to properly, and safely use a scythe. This course takes place one week ahead of the hay-harvest festival. At the hay-harvest festival, course participants, and enthusiasts whom Emma and Johan have gotten to know over the years cheerfully volunteer their help, and provide visitors with suggestions on how to better work with the scythe. Emmas parents and other relatives make a point to travel to Östarp to help out too. Both Emma and Johan are dressed in traditional clothing and look like they come from the turn of the 20th century. At the time of the festival, the grass stands thick and two and a half feet high (75 cm). Cutting acres and acres of grass with a scythe is strenuous work, but with the correct technique that work becomes significantly easier. Emma and Johan take turns helping visitors learn how to hold the scythe, and swing it properly by working with their hips rather than their arms. On this day several different models of scythe are available, including Austrian, Norwegian, and Swedish variations. There is enough equipment for about eight to ten people to work simultaneously, and there is a great deal of enthusiasm as visitors work to perfect their technique and experiment with the different models of scythes available. All through the day one of the volunteers comes and sharpens the scythes with a special sharpening iron. Keeping the scythes sharp is very important for maintaining their effectiveness, but this is not a skill that is discussed or talked about during the day's activities. The implicit message is that visitors are there to learn how to handle a traditional tool, more than to learn how to maintain it.

As the day progresses visitors come and go from the field. When one individual leaves the person hands over the scythe to the next, and the volunteers come to offer instructions. Some people stay for only a short time, while a smaller group of visitors stay for hours. Their bodies sway and rotate rhythmically when trying to master or perfect the skills; their clothes become drenched in sweat under the warm summer sun. We, as researchers, are engaged in the same activity, working next to them, learning along with them, and after a few hours, the rhythm of the activity provides a sense of being somewhere between dance and meditation. Participants comment upon their activities, laugh, joke, and all the while one hears the sound of "Whoosh … shhhhh" as scythes first slice through the air, and then through the grass.

One can wonder what is hip about the events of the day, but the activities fit in well with contemporary discourses on sustainability. In Sweden, there is a growing interest in re-learning skills from the past that are fossil-fuel-free. As Emma explains:

> By cutting the meadows every year you really enhance and boost biodiversity. And I would say that the scythe has come back as a pretty efficient non-fossil tool to keep the landscape open, and it is taught by a growing array of organizations (Comments received via e-mail May 14, 2023).

The day's activities are enshrouded in a sense of the value of re-learning and recapturing knowledge from the past. Eje, a master thatcher who is periodically contracted by Kulturen to care for some of its buildings' roofs points out in relation to his work with the Scythe, "It's still the case that this skill is the only way to preserve wetlands without destroying them." Beyond this, the act of learning to work with traditional tools neatly dovetails with a rapidly growing interest among Swedes for “prepping” (preparing one’s life and home for possible crises in the future that could disrupt the availability of water and/or electricity, as well as foodstuffs): an interest which increased rapidly and exponentially with the war in Ukraine, and a nervous fear that events there could spread and have implications for daily life in Sweden.

Against a backdrop of discussions about global warming, sustainability, and the war in Ukraine, forms of intangible heritage embedded in the traditional knowledge and skills of something as unassuming as working with a scythe not only gained new significance but even seemed to be wrapped in an aura of being highly relevant in a contemporary context: in this context, it could be cool to tell one’s middle-class neighbors, “I learned how to work with a scythe.” At the same time, few people were taught how to sharpen a scythe and care for it, as that was a skill provided as a service. Sharpening a scythe was a necessary activity that may have been considered a little more instrumental than cool. In the context of hip heritage, the distinction is subtle but important. As Des Griffin, former president of *Museums Australia* has argued, a reality that museums in contemporary society face lies in the fact that, “it is highly likely that visitors to museums seek engagement with major issues rather than knowledge of specific sets of “facts” (2003:11). At Östarp, learning some of the basic principles of harvesting with a scythe placed visitors in a direct embodied dialogue with larger public concerns about questions of sustainability and prepping, whereas the details of learning to sharpen the instrument were apparently of lesser importance.

Intangible heritage is a phenomenon that, as Hafstein points out, “suggests practices and expressions that do not leave extensive material traces” (2018:3). However, intangible heritage is more than this. Indeed, it is perhaps helpful to think of it in line with Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s position. As she argues, “Like tangible heritage, intangible heritage is culture, like natural heritage, it is alive” (2004:53). And if we appreciate intangible heritage as being alive, this opens for an understanding of it as performative, social, and always potentially engaging.

Östarp has a tangible heritage that does not do much on its own. The farmhouses and other buildings appear quaint and nestled into an idyllic country landscape. Their current appearance harkens back to the 19th century. However, since Kulturen’s Östarp is open only during the summer season the building are closed and locked for most of the year. This contributes to the fact that the museum grounds attract only small numbers of visitors for most of the year. It is the intangible heritage that attracts people when they have the opportunity to learn how to cut hay, celebrate midsummer, or listen to Emma when she explains how Linderöd pigs, Blekinge ducks, and Ringamåla cows and peasants worked together to sustain agriculture and family farms in the past. In this sense, it is the dynamics of the intangible heritage that is performed at Östarp that gives life to the physical and natural heritage of the museum. And the inn, the *gästgiveri*, contributes to the production of Östarp as a stage for intangible heritage by specializing in the skills of making older traditional forms of the working class and peasant foods (*husmanskost*) such as *äggakaka* (a thick oven-baked egg pancake which is a specialty for the southern Swedish province of Scania) served with slices of fried pork. Sourcing the ingredients and cooking this type of food for restaurant guests shapes and sustains an edible traditional heritage.

Economic constraints always force museum leaders to prioritize and make choices. This is seldom an easy process, but in the case of Kulturen, they have chosen to operate Östarp without having any permanent staff on site. Emma, Johan, and others we will be discussing momentarily are all employed on various forms of temporary contracts. And while the buildings and physical heritage located at Östarp are steeped in the past and a 19th-century agricultural economy, as are the traditions and practices of intangible heritage that are reproduced at the museum, they are simultaneously locked into a very modern economy. It is a post-fordist economic mode that geographer David Harvey describes as "flexible accumulation," which involves, among other things a, "move away from regular employment towards increasing reliance upon part-time, temporary or subcontracted work arrangements" (1990:150). From a management perspective, the advantage of working in this way, as Harvey argues, is that it allows organizations to move quickly, to meet the rapidly changing conditions they meet in contemporary markets. As we are arguing throughout this book, the museums we are studying do exist in a series of highly competitive hybrid markets, so working within a regime of flexible accumulation is in many ways a sound managerial strategy.

What is interesting to note here, however, is that while museums around the world are full of different forms of cultural heritage, the intangible heritage at Östarp exists on an annually contracted basis. And this is a rather fragile arrangement. Intangible heritage requires its masters in order for it to have a life. And while one can ask if intangible heritage (the singing of a song or the dancing of a dance) can be owned by anyone, and if so, how (Kapchan 2014:4), we do want to point out that there is an entrepreneurial market for it. And there are entrepreneurs who can be contracted to make it a part of a museum. This is a situation that creates challenges and opportunities for museums as well as the entrepreneurs they enlist, but before discussing this further, we would like to turn to one more master craftsman that Kulturen's Östarp works with regularly.

The thatcher in the rye

It is afternoon in August 2019, and the research team is about to leave Östarps-Dagen, the closing day of the Kulturen Östarp season. We stop to talk with the curator of agriculture, who has traveled to Östarp from Kulturen in Lund to convey 19th-century threshing. Dressed in clothes that are made to represent a 19th-century farmer's dress, he performs threshing to museum visitors. Standing on a plastic tarp, he swings the wooden thresher in a rhythm that forces the grain out of the hay, landing on the plastic tarp that the curator stands on. The tarp is spread out to

> catch the grain, which the curator will use to plant rye for the next season. Beside him stands a man dressed in blue overalls, a tattered denim shirt, and a baseball cap. The thatcher, we learn, has taken a break from his work thatching the roof of *Gamlegård* and is now nudging the museum curator performer to engage even more profoundly in his act, to engage with the threshing instead of performing threshing. We serve as an audience for this brief but intense moment of interaction that offers insight into the nimble difference between the curatorial and entrepreneurial practice when traditional knowledge and agricultural traditions are converted into heritage-making in the museum setting. (from fieldnotes August 2019)

For most visitors to Kulturens Östarp, threshing appears as an exotic act. As we stand by the tarp, watching the curator's threshing performance, we overhear a grade-school-age boy asking his dad if these are nunchucks (weapons used in martial arts, authors' note). The curator hears the question, pauses, turns to the boy and responds with patience that this tool is called a "slaga" (Trotzig 1943) and that the beating separates the grain from the straw. The grain would then be taken to a mill, to be ground to flour, which would thereafter be used to bake bread. The straw, the curator explains, could be used to stuff mattresses, to make baskets, or pointing toward Möllegården on the hill above, to make roofs.

The general public may once have viewed craftspersons such as thatchers (and timbermen) as people with odd and outdated skills. However, with the growing interest in traditional crafts, traditional building techniques, small-scale farming, and forestry, they are increasingly sought-after entrepreneurs who need help to keep up with the demand for their work. Consequently, with the burgeoning (political and educational) dedication to circular economy and sustainability, the relationships between these craftsmen and the museums they work with are changing, as a growing group of craftspeople finds they now, more than ever, can choose who they work with and under what conditions.

Gamlegård, Kulturens Östarp, von Echstedtska Manor Värmland's Museum, Oktorpsgården, Skansen. These are disparate farmhouses scattered across Sweden whose histories have very different trajectories. Nevertheless, they are all buildings understood to be expressions of Swedish cultural heritage with thatched roofs. For museum visitors, the farmhouses and their thatched roofs constitute a picturesque and somewhat romanticized representation of the Swedish past. For the thatcher, roofs mean a livelihood and a crafting process that has been used for thousands of years worldwide. For an increasing number of customers outside museums, thatched roofs are sought after as a sustainable and environmentally friendly manner of covering a home. What unites them are their roofs, a craft, and one man.

Master thatcher Eje Arén, in Sweden, has tended to museums' roofs over the past 40 years and is continuously hired to do inventory, make repairs, and replace roofs. When on-site, he also takes every opportunity to share his knowledge with curious visitors, and museum staff (such as when he jokingly nudged the curator from Kulturen to really engage in threshing rather than in performing threshing at *Östarps-dagen*, the Östarp day).

He learned the skills to grow, harvest, prepare rye, and create roofs from farmer and master thatcher Harry Jansson, born in 1899, in Southern Sweden. Having operated his thatching business since the 1960s and used his own home as an experiential learning workshop, Eje Arén has not only thatched and repaired roofs. He has paid the knowledge forward to new generations of young men and women from Sweden and other countries. Since our first meeting at Östarp in 2019, he has also invited us into a process of mutual exchange and learning, and at the center of this learning process, and the art of his trade, lies an intimate knowledge and understanding of something that deceptively seems so simple and unpresuming: straw.

Beyond objects to materials: Straw

Straw is a material with an extremely long and intimate connection to humanity. We have been living with it, and under it, for tens of thousands of years. The disconnection with the material is a phenomenon of the 20th century. When the Swedish magazine *Gård & Torp* ran an article on Swedish Christmas traditions and decorations in November 2020, it was without surprise that the article opened with a lengthy description of the uses of straw to decorate the home. It explained:

> A custom which was maintained from the pre-Christian era long into the late 19th century was that of covering the cabin floor with straw. In part this protected from the cold by seeping down into the cracks in the floor. And in part the straw had a symbolic value pointing to a rich harvest. Beyond that, straw functioned excellently as an extra sleeping place for guests. And not just living guests – according to old folk beliefs, dead relatives came to visit the living around Christmas time. The soft straw was a way of showing them reverence and hospitality (Tirén 2021:127, authors' translation).

Indeed, the very smell of straw in the home significantly marked the presence of an important holiday. And while straw on the floor could symbolically point back to a rich harvest, Eje points out that in some areas of Sweden, threshed straw on the roof also worked as a food reserve—in waiting—for animals, which could become a food source, if times became hard. However, in museum settings, in the 1960s, straw suppliers to the museums started harvesting the rye before it was ripe, before midsummer, which animals and birds used as food, which makes the roof less sustainable or even led to it being quickly destroyed. Eje began threshing his straw according to Eskeröd's studies, where the sheaves are left to rest before threshing (1947). Where most agriculturalists regard the kernels of rye as a primary product, it is a bi-product of little use to Eje; he needs large amounts of straw, not rye. Consequently, he saves some to sew for the next season, and he may bake with a very small portion of what he threshes, but in general, he has no real use for most of the rye. In his eyes, rye is not just a plant or a food source. It is a multi-componential organic material whose different components can be put to use in very different ways.

Material culture has long been a center of study for ethnologists, anthropologists, and folklorists. As anthropologist Daniel Miller points out (2010), central questions which have attracted the attention of scholars include, how objects frame the activities we engage in, help constitute identity, and enter circulation through consumption. However, anthropologist and craft scholar Tim Ingold argues that understanding material culture in this way is not enough (2013: 21). He stresses that things can be objects, but they are also materials, and understanding the material is understanding both its production and the skills needed to make use of it. Inspired by Ingold, the focus upon straw as a material (as well as an object) is important to our study, because while the thatch roofs that we are interested in here are part material objects and essential to making homes, they become homes through the union of a material, a maker, skills, and an imagination.

The material is by no means inactive and it also invites action. As Tim Ingold argues, materials offer resistance, and a realm of possibilities. The kernels of rye could be used as a food source, although most of what Eje does use will be sewn in order to produce a new crop of straw. It is the straw that captures Eje's attention. In Eje's hands, this material is formed, manipulated, and pushed in cultural directions far beyond the ground it came out of, and in ways that are not even imaginable for a couple of academics like us, but it does so by harkening back to what it has done in the hands of other people over many generations. The memory of those generations' knowledge lies in Eje's hands, passed down from his teacher Harry and honed by experiential learning and decades of practice. "Thatching a roof (he tells us one day as we are working with him in the fields harvesting straw) isn't particularly hard! I could teach you to do it in a couple of days!" He then shrugs and laughs. The truth, however, is that the knowledge in his hands cannot be transferred to our hands via his telling us what to do for a few days. For our hands to learn what his hands know, would take hours and hours of our hands and rye straw engaging in one another. It implies hands learning from the material, working with the material, not against it.

However, procuring the material is not as simple as one might think. Reed and rye are the most common thatching materials—with reed being the most commonly used material today. It is a sturdier and more durable material than rye straw. However, most of it is grown in Chinese wetlands and shipped by Dutch firms around the horn of Africa before being distributed throughout Europe. This is an industry that supplies materials for the building of new homes, and a growing trend in Holland as well as in Sweden. Today, the majority of all thatchers in Sweden work almost exclusively with reed and have their set of suppliers and customers.

At a professional thatcher's meeting in 2023, three thatchers are identified as masters, all of them with different backgrounds, ideals, and professional specialties. Among them, Eje Arén is the one who has specialized in the reconstruction of old roofs, inventories, repairs, and restoration of thatched roofs of private homes and museums. In the round of introductions, Eje says "I work with museums and I thatch roofs for family homes with a traditional orientation." In this situation, at the thatcher's meeting, the statement distinguishes him from colleagues who are in the business of thatching new luxurious homes, importing straw, or supplying other thatchers with straw. The meeting demonstrates the diversity of approaches that exist to the craft of thatching. (Fieldnotes from the branch meeting of thatchers in Mariestad on February 2, 2023).

The growing of material, and material culture

Eje has a small piece of land on which he grows Miscantus, a traditional Japanese thatching straw that grows in dry lands, but rye is the primary crop that he grows on 25 hectares, and works with. The choice is intimately connected to his craftsmanship, traditional thatching which today involves thatching roofs of older private homes, cultural monuments, and buildings with a rich cultural history. It is on his farm on a hillside in Skåne that Eje grows the material that will become someone's roof. Very little fertilizer is used in cultivating *långhalm* (long straw), thatching rye. It has to grow slowly in meager soil. His hands know much more than how to work with straw. They know how to produce it, and this implies another level of corporeal knowledge that is embedded in the roofs he makes.

Wishing to understand his craft and the processes behind thatching, we have followed Eje´s rhythm of work over several years. To gain a deeper understanding of the knowledge that lies at the base of the thatcher's entrepreneurial work we have worked with him, his business partner Anette, and several helpers from 2020 to 2023. We have spent weeks in late July harvesting long straw and bringing it in and several days in the fall threshing it. On colder days in the winter, the team has joined him on roofs helping with the thatching. And finally, we have participated in meetings with other thatchers. In order to convey the depth and complexity of forms of knowledge involved in the craft of thatching, we present below an ethnographic account of the cycle of Eje's work.

Harvesting

The process of harvesting the material began with Eje driving a McGormick tractor with a self-binder behind it, a Westerås Morgongåva. The tractor being of an American brand and the self-binder was a Swedish brand, both from the

1950s and 1960s. The self-binder cut the straw, bundled it, bound it, and spat the sheaves to the left of the tractor. The binder was of the kind found in the Nordiska Museet in Stockholm, Kulturen's collections in Lund, and Friland's Museum in Denmark. There were no safety features, which made instructions on how to approach the machine key. Eje demonstrated how it worked, and instructed Lizette to wait until the binder released the sheaf and it hit the ground, to gently put her foot on it until it was fully released from the binder. Aiding the binding process appeared as an easy enough job, but proved to pull Lizette into a quite strenuous process of walking up and down the hilly field, keeping a rather quick pace and when the binder failed, pulling the sheaf out, and throwing it to the ground. The sheaves that got stuck in the machine and which Lizette had to pull out were unbound. They would have to be bound by hand later on. As ethnologist Albert Eskeröd emphasizes in *Årets äring* (1947) binding sheaves was a woman's job in the past. Lizette was in a sense following their path. Women before her bound sheaves using straw, she used 1 meter pieces of organic twine and nylon string.

The binder left sheaves of rye scattered over the field, which then were organized into "streets." A street is in essence two rows of straw bundled placed 2.20 meters apart, just enough space for the tractor to move between them, pulling a sled. When it was time to bring the straw into the barn, we work as teams on both sides of the sled stacking the straw onto the sled. It took six days for Eje to cut the field and then two and a half days for six people to cut, bind, and organize the bundles into streets (Figure 4.3).

The sleds were invent, homemade contraptions that Eje had designed and built. The material used comprised scraps of flat iron rod, bolted together to make a frame. Attached to these were thick plastic piping of the sort used for outdoor irrigation. As part of the sled construction they functioned as runners under the sled, enabling the sled to slide on the ground. The sleds were too large to store indoors once they were assembled. Consequently, at the end of each season, the sleds were taken apart and the parts was stacked on cinder blocks outside of the barn. Putting the sleds back together was like putting a puzzle together. No two sleds were identical, and the parts from one sled did not fit into another sled. One needed to know how to do it, and the knowledge sat with Eje, who made them. Tom spent the better part of a day trying to figure out which parts went with which sleds, but the task proved to be impossible. Making matters worse, over the course of the winter of 2020, some of the bolts had rusted into place and refused to budge, and the holes Eje had drilled into the iron slats did not line up properly making it impossible to bolt them together. The only solution was for Tom to use an angle grinder to cut bolts off the sled frame, and a heavy drill to bore new holes in the iron slats. For the better part of one afternoon, the area around the barn looked like a mechanical workshop with sparks flying through the air. By lunch of the second day, three sleds were assembled. Once the sleds were assembled, the rye could be brought in. For the remainder of that week, Eje sat behind the wheel of the tractor and slowly pulled the sleds down the

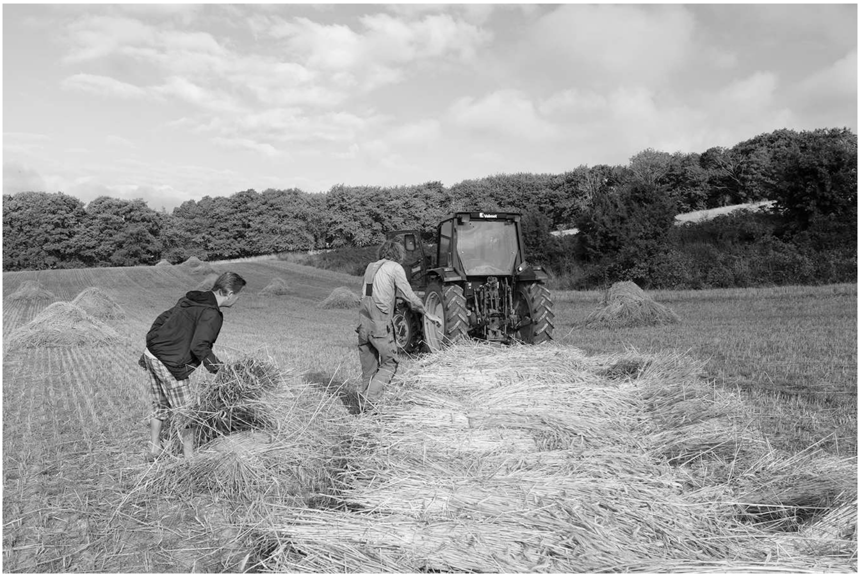

Figure 4.3 Stacking sheaves on sleds that are purpose-built to effectively transport sheaves of long straw into the barn. Using sleds instead of wagons on wheels enables more sheaves per load and easy management of the load's weight on a hilly piece of land.

Photo: Tom O'Dell.

streets of straw. The rest of the crew fell into a smooth rhythm of walking along beside the sled, bending down, grabbing a bundle of straw, carefully placing it on the sled, moving on to the next bundle of straw, and doing it all again. In order to get the job done, we ultimately did this 9,000 times.

When a sled was full, it was pulled into the barn. The bundles of straw were then thrown by pitchfork from the sled to one of the crew members who neatly stacked the straw in the barn. By day six of the week, we had reached the roof of the barn. Tom and Eje used pitchforks to throw each bundle of straw 4 meters up into the air to Lizette and Anette (Eje's partner). With an even rhythm, the straw found its way into the barn—9,000 bundles of straw, one at a time. Once the harvest had been brought into the barn, it needed to rest for a period of time before threshing. Eje builds his practice on older studies of farming and refers to ethnologist Albert Eskeröd when stating that 19th-century farmers often threshed after Christmas, wishing for the straw to "rest and ripen" in the dark to make better grain (Eskeröd 1947). Eje's own experience is that the level of protein is higher in "*långhalm*" that has been cut early and rested in the dark, but today, the manner in which they ripen in the loft of the barn has to be considered in relation to damage by rats and mice, but it's always been that way.

Threshing

The morning of October 27, 2021, is cold when we arrive at the farm to participate in and learn about the art of threshing straw for roof thatching. Eje has prepared the threshing machine, a Bøje Olsens *langhalmsmaskinen Fakse Aps* from Denmark (Figure 4.4). The red machine measures 7 by 2.5 meters and looks monstrous and mechanical, at least to us. Eje explains that this machine is "just as rare as it is superior." It is one of a handful machines that Bøje Olsens made by hand. There are only three or four of them still around. Eje explains that owning one has made a huge difference for his business. What follows is an on-site lecture or introduction to a machine in the same range as the McGormick and the self-binder. Thatched roofs were more common in Denmark than in Sweden in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and up until the early 21st century it was profitable to produce straw using large-scale threshers. Olsens specialized in large-scale mobile threshing from the 1950s to the 2000s, with threshers able to produce up to one thousand threshed sheaves a day.

"This is the way it works," Eje says and motions for us to get closer, but without starting the combine. He explains that he stands on top of the machine, one person throws up the bound sheaves to him, one at a time. He unbinds them by cutting the twine with a knife, and then opens the sheaf

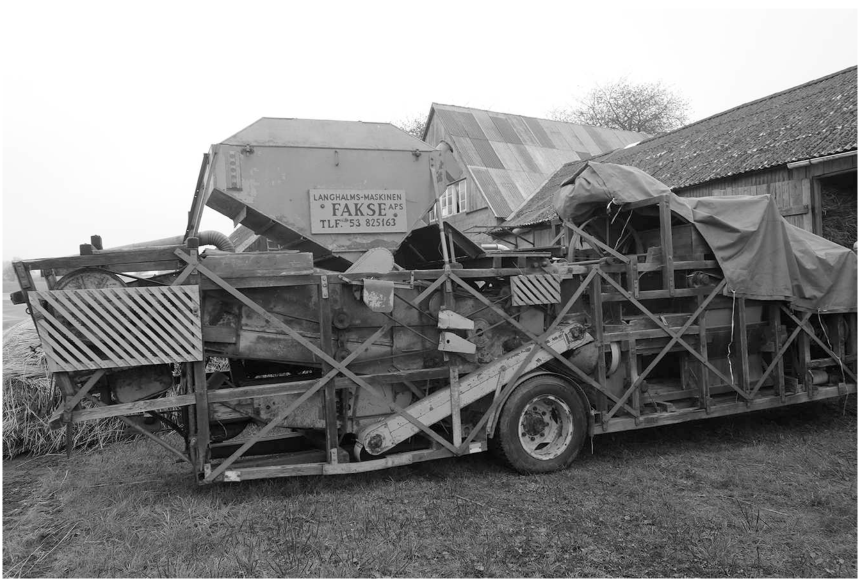

Figure 4.4 Eje has prepared his threshing machine, a Bøje Olsens "langhalmsmaskinen Fakse Aps" from Denmark, which he has adapted to fit his needs. In the production of long straw for roof thatching, the grain is a by-product.

Photo: Lizette Gradén.

on a conveyor belt, which feeds it into the machine. Inside the machine, the grain is "combed" out from the top, and the roots are also "combed" so that short straw and weeds are removed, leaving a nice and clean sheaf. Thereafter the machine turns the straw upright, and shakes it so that surplus grain is removed and the bottom is even. Finally, the machine ties the sheaf and spits it out. Threshed sheaves are fetched and stacked into a van, where the sheaves are stored, awaiting the next thatching project. This procedure takes at least four people to make the threshing smooth and safe. As we will learn from experience, each step of the process needs manual monitoring, and on-site repairs when parts break.

This monstrous red machine used for threshing straw that will become roofs at Skansen, Kulturen, Kulturens Östarp, von Echstedska, and other museums, has no safety features, no insurance, no parts to buy when it breaks down … and it does. "But it makes a job which takes thirty people to do, and makes it possible for three people to do," Eje says with a smile. After just a few hours of work on the first day of threshing, one of the Fakse's four-meter-long belts comes apart. Eje and Tom work for an hour and a half mending the belt with special tools and repair kits Eje has purchased through the years. They then have to climb into the belly of the machine with its spiked combs, conveyor belts, and a plethora of moving parts to remount the repaired belt. It is heavy work as parts of the machine weighing up to 20 and 30 kilograms have to be moved around to put the belt in place, and as this is done one needs to be mindful of where the spiked combs are, and that one does not do anything to set them in motion and potentially impale someone.

In 2023, there is no equivalent of road assistance to call to fix the machine. This is a part of the entrepreneur's challenge. Eje needs to know a traditional craft (the craft of thatching a roof), but he also needs to possess mechanical maintenance skills and knowledge to fix a machine that is almost one of its kind. The Fakse relies on its owner's handed-down skills and experience to continue functioning. While Fakse chews rye grown in meager soil, and draws Eje and Tom into its dangerous gut for repairs, it also feeds museums throughout Sweden, by way of a craftsman's entrepreneurial skills, a specialized tangible as well as intangible heritage-making product: straw for thatched roofs.

A month later Tom and Eje stood on the roof of a private home in Southern Sweden fastening straw to that roof. The actual procedure of attaching the straw was not very complicated, but doing it correctly demanded a high degree of fingertip skills. The wooden rib-like structure under the straw was prepared as meticulously as a modern home's wall framing, with ribbing spaced appropriately to hold the straw. Sheaves of straw were evenly spread out across the roof one row at a time and bound to the ribbing. This was done without the use of a tape measure or exact measurements. It was all the result of Eje's muscle memory and visual judgment as he placed the roof's anchoring rails across the span of the roof and bound straw to it by wrapping a metal thread around the ribbing and the sheave of straw, and jerking it into a knot that would sit there for the next 30 years. At one point in the process, he comes back and checks Tom's work and calmly states, "You are not binding the sheaves tight enough." He steps back and watches as Tom works and notes, "You don't have any gloves!" Tom looks at Eje and says "No." Eje shakes his head and responds, "That was my mistake. You need a glove on your right hand to pull the binding tight enough." And with that, he pulls a glove out of his pocket and extends it to Tom. The exchange was brief but revealed the subtleties of a craft and how a small detail that a craftsman has embodied in her/his mind and daily trade, can be hard to be consciously aware of, and consequently, hard to communicate to others. The devil, as they say, is in the details. But this is what makes a craftsperson a master, and ultimately, a sought-after entrepreneur.

Emma, Johan, Anette, and Eje are a special type of entrepreneur who deal in tradition. The knowledge they bear with them can only partially be learned by reading books. The factor that makes them unique lies in the experience of years of practice. The services they provide to museums are highly specialized and not easily replaced. As Emma explains, she is very much on her own, and this places her in a somewhat vulnerable position. If she or someone in her family becomes sick, there are not a lot of people who can help her out. However, since entrepreneurs with the types of masterly skills that Emma, Johan, Anette, and Eje have are far and few between, this also puts them in a position of power that allows them the ability to place certain demands on the museums they work with.

Eje, for example, speaks of the problems of decaying roofs at one of the open-air museums he serves. Over several decades, he has argued for the building department at the museum to take down some oak trees around a few farmhouses. The problem is that the oak trees generate shadows and sap, the latter of which drips from the tree onto the straw roof. The sap in turn attracts insects, and the insects attract birds. As the birds pick through the straw to find the insects to eat, they destroy the roof. As he finishes telling us the story he shrugs and says, "It's called an ecosystem!!! I've told the museum that if they don't take down the tree, I'm not coming back to fix the roof again. What's the point? It will be destroyed in a few years again!" Whether or not Eje will make good on his threat is uncertain, but it does give museum leadership something to think about: take down the trees, or start trying to find a new thatcher who potentially winds up importing reed from China as a material instead of the homegrown materials Eje uses, with the museum losing some of its credibility in relation to questions of sustainability. Indeed, if the museum does not take down the trees it ultimately will have to pay the extra costs of continuously rethatching the roofs.

Conclusions

The relationship between the individual craftsperson, the material, the crafting of traditional knowledge, and the stories that emerge from these are central to the dynamics of culture, implied in studies of the humanities and lucid in studies of anthropology, ethnology, and folklore (Cashman, Mould, & Shukla 2015; Glassie 1999; Ingold 2011). More recently, these connections are linked to the antropocene and environmental studies. In *Staying with the trouble (2016)*, eco-philosopher Donna Haraway employs the term Sympoiesis meaning "making with" to emphasize "that nothing makes itself" or is "self-organizing." She says:

> *Sympoiesis is a simple word; it means "making-with." Nothing makes itself; nothing is really autopoietic or self-organizing. / … /Sympoiesis is a word proper to complex, dynamic, responsive, situated, historical systems. It is a word for worlding-with, in company (2016: 58).*

Haraway's point is that creative and generative activities are entangled with dynamic, responsive, and situated historical systems. Within this context, we draw attention to the fact that museums are becoming a burgeoning market for independent contractors and entrepreneurs, some of whom specialize in traditional knowledge such as farming and thatching. We have learned about the circumstances of everyday life for the human ecologist and traditional herbalist who operates a farmstead under the auspices of a cultural history open-air museum. We have followed the work that the craftsperson plays in shaping and communicating traditional knowledge and skill to museum staff members, and museum visitors. 19th-century farming and roof thatching, we argue, serves as an entry points into the sympoietic systems of sustainable living in the world. Engagement with traditional knowledge is a complex sympoietic affair. As we have demonstrated, it connects humans, family, groups, individuals, and non-humans, objects, materials, animals, birds, insects, the landscape and the stories about it. It connects in ways that differ from curatorial practice, but are increasingly entangled with museums, impacting their operations and role in society.

As a making with, sympoiesis also shapes and re-shapes stories about such making, which resonates with Anna Tsing's concept "becoming with," as she uses in illuminating the lives of people involved in the Matsutake mushroom industry in the North American Pacific Northwest (and Japan and Finland). In the study Tsing endeavors to fathom this industry as a "contact zone" where human, and nonhuman entities, as well as processes, and beings meet. She states:

> The term "multispecies" is only a stand-in for moving beyond human exceptionalism. Sometimes individual organisms make drastic interventions. And sometimes much larger units are more able to show us historical action.

Like in the case of the mushroom industry that Tsing analyses, the farmstead at Östarp and the rye used for the roofs harken back not only to a pre-industrial peasant past in which some might romantically imagine that we lived more sustainable and closer to nature. Thatched roofs, for example, go back thousands of years and are found all over the world. At the same time, the tractors, trucks, and assortment of tools used are carefully selected from the mid-20th century. As Eje explains, "It just happens to be my time's best machines that I can work with, for the lowest cost to use. The total production cost is 1 SEK (10 cents in US dollars) per sheaf, of which energy is below 40 öre per sheaf. Older equipment does not have airconditioning, servo steering and so on" The straw that Eje produces to repair and generate roofs on traditional buildings is still probably a more environmentally friendly and cost-efficient material than any equivalent being grown and shipped from Eastern Europe or China.

With the help of Eje, we think that the process of growing, harvesting, and refining material to create and re-create roofs with an ancient history, wakes questions about what we today mean when we talk about such things as sustainability and social engagement. How do rather modest ambitions, tacit knowledge or one person's attempts to stick to old traditions, and then turn them over to new generations, play into all of this? Tim Ingold has argued for the need for us to understand the act of making things as a process of growth (2013: 21). And he explains, "… even if the maker has a form in mind, it is not this form that creates the work. It is the engagement with materials" (2013: 22). If we think with Haraway's making with and Tsing's becoming with, in conjunction with the entrepreneurs dealing in traditional knowledge, serving museums which no longer have this knowledge on staff, we are moving toward novel stories about the becomings of traditional knowledge-based entrepreneurship. Eje has spent several months speaking to us about straw, one might even say he has lectured a lot. But periodically he would pick up a handful of straw, twist it, and all of sudden convert it into a piece of rope to tie a bundle of straw together with. What he sees in the straw is beyond our imagination. But after working *with* the straw and becoming with him, we understand the material and the profession through experience, and this is an understanding that is very different than would have been possible if we had simply spoken *of* it for a week.

As this chapter shows, the role of the entrepreneur is not only about the what, but also about the how— the tacit knowledge of practicing and passing on the skills of 19th-century farming methods and thatching. These skills and traditional knowledge have become part of an entrepreneurial market, with a new hip factor of their own, that museums increasingly are dependent upon. While museums are places of brick and mortar, with walls and roofs, as well as employed staff, they are far from self-contained entities. Instead, they rely upon different markets and sympoietic systems including traditional knowledge and heritage entrepreneurs, that play important, but often unrecognized roles in shaping museums.

In addition to this, the manner in which Emma and Eje work together in a broader set of communities that stretch beyond Östarp and the museum sphere is important to appreciate. Des Griffin writes, “A board is made effective not by the rules and regulations but by the way in which people work together” (2003:8). Griffin goes on to emphasize the need to build trust. And the significance of building relationships based on deeper trust is a phenomenon that Emma tells us cannot be overemphasized. Emma and Eje are not involved in boards or museum administrations, but part of their strength as entrepreneurs comes from their ability to work together in informal networks. These are networks that, on the one hand, draw in elements of the local surrounding rural community when needed, and on the other hand, engage circles of craftspersons and practitioners of traditional knowledge throughout Scandinavia. This is not a competency that Kulturen has in-house in the same way as Emma and Eje have it in their mere presence after years of being in the local community. There is something very important for museums to be cognizant of which is an integral part of Emma’s and Eje’s entrepreneurial skill, and this concerns the manner in which these types of entrepreneurs in intangible heritage are incorporated into different kinds of social and occupational networks that museum leadership has weaker access to, but which can be very important when it comes to filling heritage institutions with forms of knowledge content that are tradition based.

5 Not Hip enough?

The opening and closing of the Museum of Movements

In November 2020, we walked by the Museum of Movements in Malmoe. Over a period of five years, the idea for a new national museum located in the South of Sweden went from fantasy, to reality, to closure. The large front window of the museum still bears a painted text that communicates the museum's intention, mission, and activities. "Throughout history, societies around the world have been built by people in movements. Here, we are building a museum together. The Museum of Movements uses oral history to examine democracy, migration, and the struggle for human rights." The goal was to establish a national museum with a strong grassroots orientation and strong ties to local communities. As we peer through the window, all is dark and quiet inside the workshop space on Bergsgatan, in Malmoe's Möllevången district. We see a stage, with rows of seats and an empty exhibition space in the middle of the room. At the far end of the premises, we glimpse a kitchen, with two large pots visible on the stove and a dining table with room for at least 20 guests. The popcorn machine on the left was used at the museum's film screenings. The street windows are filled with advertisements for dance performances, language cafés, workshops, and more. It is November 2020, and the initiative that took the form of a museum of the people has ceased to exist (Figure 5.1).

This chapter analyzes how representations of cultural heritage at museums are affected by market forces and cultural contexts in which museums operate today. In this particular chapter, we focus on the concept of *movement*. We use it as an entry into the Museum of Movements—a museum about migration and democracy, initiated in 2015 and shuttered in 2020. What forces set the museum in motion, and why did they suddenly stop?[1]

The concept of *movement* in ethnology

The word movement itself is on the move and thus has different meanings and connotations in Swedish and English. For example, the Swedish Academy's dictionary lists the following definitions for the Swedish noun *rörelse* (movement): 1) migration, 2) corporate and popular organization,

DOI: 10.4324/9781003327707-5

Figure 5.1 The museum kitchen, a space where groups have fika, share recipes, cook together, and meet over a meal.

Photo: Lizette Gradén.

and 3) emotion. Likewise, Merriam-Webster offers the following three definitions (among very many) for the word "movement": 1) the act or process of moving, 2) the quality (as in a painting or sculpture), 3) representing or suggesting motion, a series of organized activities working toward an objective.

In the book *Being Alive: Essays on movement, knowledge, and description*, Tim Ingold emphasizes that "wherever there is life, there is movement" (Ingold 2011, p. 72)—that is, we can understand the concept of movement as a part of life itself. The concept of movement has grown in importance within ethnological research, both in research on popular movements and in research on people's ways of moving physically, not least through migration. However, the concept of movement is also significant for the museums, which have been transformed as the cultural policy map in Sweden has been redrawn (Jacobsson 2014; cf. Svensson & Tomson 2016). As Bengt Jacobsson points out, the task of Swedish cultural policy in the 1970s was to counteract the commercialization of culture, then considered to overshadow democratic and civic interests. Since that time, a movement has been underway. Commercial culture has taken on an increasingly important role, contributing to diversity in the field of culture. At the same time, demands on publicly funded culture have been politicized and transformed. Over the past ten years, the demands of seeking external project funding has increased as a cultural-economic tool in Sweden, influencing the role and conditions of museums (see, e.g., Swedish Agency for Cultural Policy Analysis 2019; 2021). When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, these questions became pertinent and urgent. However, they were not new (Gradén & O'Dell 2017; 2018; 2020c; 2021). Through steadfast selections and financial prioritizations, museums create cultural heritage and museums of the future in their own time. Museums are constitutive of society.

Museum of Movements in Malmoe

Work on the Museum of Movements began in December 2015, when the City of Malmoe submitted a letter to the Ministry of Culture expressing their desire for a national museum of democracy and migration.[2] The letter included a request for funding of 1 million Swedish kronor (approximately $100,000) to conduct a feasibility study that would determine whether Swedish museums and civil society needed such a museum and, if so, whether it should be created on the national level. This feasibility study was carried out through a dialogue method, in which a combination of academics, municipal officials, and NGOs together with actors, such as the Red Cross, Roma associations, and private citizens, attended dialogue meetings to discuss the need for a new museum, and how it might be designed. Over 640 people were interviewed and participated in these dialogue meetings, and the idea of starting the museum was positively received. An important point that emerged in the feasibility study was:

> The opportunity to create an entirely new museum without inherited structures and considerations, in which new methods and working models can be developed in broad participation, has also attracted interest. In several of the dialogues conducted in the feasibility study, the need for a place that dares to address complex democracy issues was highlighted (Lundgren & Elg 2017, p. 6).

From the get-go, the ambition was to create a nationally-funded central museum that could challenge current trends in the Swedish museum sector, as described above. The goal was to set aside and downplay the recreational, or enjoyment aspect of the museum (and museum visit), to give space to in-depth work with issues and activities that engaged people in the museum's surroundings, both locally in the Möllevången district and throughout Malmoe. In addition, there was an interest in the museum among groups in other parts of Sweden and at other museums, such as the Museum of World Culture in Gothenburg and Ajtte in Jokkmokk.

The Project Manager and Unit Director at the Museum of Movements envisioned a long-term process in which the museum slowly and carefully built relationships with many different groups (regionally and nationally), which would lead to a responsive and dialogic relationship. The museum's work was initiated and inspired by interested parties at the grassroots level, from the voluntary sector and civil society in the form of civil and public organizations such as the Roma Information and Knowledge Center (RIKC), the Jewish Community of Malmoe, the National Afro-Swedish Association (ASR), the Swedish Sami National Association (SSR), the Association of Unaccompanied Minors, the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights (RFSL) and the Swedish Red Cross. The goal for the Project Manager and Unit Director was for the museum to engage different groups and not be afraid of challenges.

> Inclusion requires a long-term perspective. A museum must be able to offer that. We talked about building an 'institution for future centuries.' There must also be diversity in diversity—no single individual or organization can or should represent a specific 'group' or issue. When someone, after an activity, makes themselves heard and says that they haven't been represented, we must be able to answer with, 'Thank you for letting us know about this; let's talk about how we can do something together. There is time.' (Interview with Project Manager and Unit Director, May 21, 2021).

Unlike most national museums in Sweden—which work according to appropriation directions and a top-down perspective in which experts, curators, educators, and museum management, take primary responsibility for planning the museum's activities—the Museum of Movements aimed to hand over much of the responsibility for the museum to the public. The source of inspiration came from *community-based museums* in Canada, the United States, and France. The Project Manager and Unit Director explains this ambition as follows:

> I thought then that we can't be a homogeneous group that sits and defines how we intend to be inclusive. Transparency and openness must be there from the very first day. Otherwise, we have missed the chance to cooperate right from the start. This was key;/ … /I often jokingly say that departments of culture, in general, usually recruit the same people, so you get an understanding that they are like this (makes a silo shape with his hands): narrow but high. The cultural sector in Sweden has the challenge of reflecting the surrounding society in its recruitment. One problem with organizations that consist of a very homogeneous group, apart from the justice aspect, of course, is that they lack perspective. The organization can have a high level of competence in some matters but still be narrow if the employees have too-similar backgrounds and networks. But if we instead prioritize breadth, the collective competencies and networks provide quick results and lead to more complex problem-solving. We get a completely different face and very likely open the door for a broader recruitment base. (Interview with Project Manager and Unit Director, May 21, 2021).

Recruitment of personnel for the Museum of Movements prioritized reaching out to new groups and bringing in new knowledge and skills. The museum would thus be open to a broad public where people could recognize themselves and see the museum as a potential arena for exploring and talking about themselves while also working to ensure the right to represent themselves. Moreover, at the museum, people could confront problematic issues in which they were engaged. The Ministry of Culture favored this goal and granted 5 million Swedish crowns (approximately 500,000 dollars) annually to build up testing activities. As a result, trial programming was conceived in 2017 and 2018, and the museum opened in one of the City of Malmoe's leased premises on Bergsgatan, in the Möllevången district, in April 2019.

Is a museum without collections a museum?

The Ministry of Culture decided as early as 2016 that a museum for migration and democracy would be created and tested in Malmoe. The idea of an Ellis Island-like museum in Malmoe had existed for at least a decade. However, it was finally realized with the large influx of refugees in 2015, when over 160,000 migrants from the global refugee crisis (many from Syria and Afghanistan) of that year first arrived in Malmoe. Against this backdrop, the term *museum* was chosen over *the cultural center* or other proposed names. As the Project Manager and Unit Director explains, this choice of words was necessary for the groups the museum would represent. The impression of the premises was also important:

> It was amazing how many of those we spoke with said they wanted it to be a museum, not a cultural center or a dialogue forum. It became clear that it was important for many people speaking from a marginalized position that the institution would have the importance, the scientific weight, and the dignity of a museum. The same also applied to the discussions about future premises for the Museum of Movements. Those working in the cultural sector maybe expect a slightly dilapidated industrial building. But in the dialogue meetings, it was pointed out that the museum needed to be housed in nice premises to show that these issues and people are taken seriously and have the same value as other subjects at other museums. We discussed creating situation-adapted premises where certain areas could signal more relaxed and welcoming accessibility while others could be used for more formal occasions. (Interview with Project Manager and Unit Director, May 21, 2021).

The term *museum* was attractive because it was perceived as stable, credible, and scientifically grounded and signaled continuity in a time of extensive change. According to museum management, the name Museum of Movements encompassed the paradox of change and continuity.

Within the City of Malmoe's Department of Culture, the ambition was decidedly long-term: the City of Malmoe would form an organization demonstrating how national resources could be combined with municipal and regional support for such a project. The combination of stakeholders and financial support appeared necessary for the long-term preservation of migration experiences and migration heritage that characterized Sweden as a whole, but southern Sweden and Malmoe in particular. That the museum would be nationally funded and nationally anchored would guarantee stability and prevent the museum from eventually being reduced to a local museum with regional significance rather than a matter of national concern. Because it was about migration and democracy, about *movements*, the ambition of museum management also crossed boundaries. They, therefore, sought an accountable authority with great engagement and connections to the significant pivotal organizations in the area: the UN, UNESCO, and the EU.

When the Museum of Movements established its testing activities in the Möllevången district premises, the question arose whether the museum would have a permanent collection. After a series of workshops, dialogue meetings, and a study of collection inventories at other museums, it was decided that the Museum of Movements would initially collect oral histories according to a model developed in Canada. The collection efforts took place under the direction of the Museum of Movements Project Manager, recruited from a Canadian museum that dealt with issues related to human rights. The collection and the construction of an oral history archive took place in collaboration with a few individuals at Malmoe University.

They initially focused on collecting oral narratives rather than objects, which was considered economical and practical. By consciously refraining from amassing its collections during the museum's early days, space was created for collaboration locally, nationally, and internationally. A study by Eva Hansen, Senior Advisor at the Department of Culture and a former museum director, showed that museums around the country had collections related to migration and democracy but would benefit from more competence or opportunity to contextualize and exhibit them (Hansen 2018). With the establishment of the Museum of Movements, the idea was to act as a platform, borrowing objects from other museums and re-interpreting them by merging them into new temporary collections, exhibiting them in new constellations, and making new interpretations of them, rather than expending effort to manage its own collections. The museum's proximity to the universities of Lund and Malmoe would ensure research collaboration. The decision to not immediately invest in collections was also economical. Without physical collections of objects, there was no need for storage or object-based line operations with object handling and preservation. Instead, work would proceed project-based and in collaboration with others to seek funding for factual programming within the organization in Malmoe. The Museum of Movements would function as a physical space for collaborations with established institutions, civil society organizations, and nonprofits. The plan also included a physical space for collaboration among museums and with nearby universities and researchers and with museums and researchers abroad. Through collaboration, the Museum of Movements would function as a stage for other museums throughout the country to reach a new multifaceted audience.

The City of Malmoe aimed to create a national museum that highlighted issues of democracy and migration. However, the discussion of how the museum would be developed and operated was in a constant state of movement. The decision to forego material objects, permanent collections, and permanent exhibitions reinforced a procedural mindset that would focus on the intangible. Rather than objects and their stories, the museum management focused on storytelling and doing. In turn, this influenced management and staff's idea of a museum. The Project Manager and Unit Director, explains that what he saw in front of him was an open, accessible space, with the sidewalk just outside and the whole city just beyond that.

> The method that we developed—the Museum of Movements method—was based on starting cautiously along with partners who sometimes didn't have any experience in cultural production. And, conversely, we might lack insight into their contexts. However, by starting small, maybe with a joint event, we get to know each other and can comfortably rev up to an oral history project or an exhibition. A museum—a museum for future centuries—can incorporate this type of ongoing, in-depth work. We also made a strategic decision in that the first person we hired was an outreach manager so that outreach activities would be incorporated into the very DNA of the museum. (Interview with Project Manager and Unit Director, May 21, 2021).

Instead of a large institution, the Project Manager and Unit Director envisioned an "accessible space" with proximity to the sidewalk and, implicitly, the local population walking on the sidewalk. He describes a museum that recalls existing organizations in Sweden, such as the Museum of Work in Norrköping, the Institute for Language and Folklore, which has sites in several large cities, and even the Multicultural Centre (MKC) in Botkyrka. Yet the Museum of Movements also differs in its location and way of working. The museum as an accessible space is also a figure of speech, a mental image and rhetorical trope that the Project Manager who was brought in from Canada highlights when he describes his working process, in contact with many groups in Malmoe, as Head of Museum Development.

> Let's talk about what else we can do. Can we start talking about some other type of programming? "What needs do you have? Do you need the space to do, for example … " So, the pan-African movement would say we are hosting our pan-African café. Which was like every month, and they would have a brunch. And, they would say, "We have this, but we don't

> have a space." And we were like, "Well, use it, use the space, that's what it is for." There was the Theater Interact; they didn't have a place to do their rehearsals. So, they were using the space for their rehearsals. There was another group. I think they were from SQI (Swedish Queer Initiative). It was a group of transgender-asylum-seeker dancers who wanted to come and use the space. So, this is what made that space and what made it so popular and so well received by communities but also around the world. (Interview with Project Manager, October 29, 2020).

The Project Manager describes the museum, again and again, as a "space." But as a space, the museum is also in constant movement and transformation. As Henri Lefebvre has argued (1991), the ability to define, shape, and produce space is a crucial power source. Not one of the museum management representatives we spoke with referenced Henri Lefebvre. However, their struggle to engage diverse groups in the museum's immediate environment to define how museum space should be designed and used indicates a clear awareness of the process of spreading power in such a way that it "seeps out" beyond the museum's walls and into its surroundings. Museum management worked to create a museum about movements and democracy, which was organizationally movable and democratic at its core.

The difficulty of working democratically

An attempt was made in Malmoe to create a central museum in a way that deviated from how most central museums in Sweden operate. However, as the Director of Culture for the City of Malmoe points out:

> In many countries, museums and cultural heritage are no longer seen merely as institutions focused on the care of collections and preservation of memories. Instead, museums are increasingly viewed as a form in which civil society is represented and as an engine for societal engagement, with inclusion and social sustainability as pronounced goals. The management of such museum institutions constitutes shared power between the profession and the groups represented. Exhibitions and programs are produced in collaboration with those whom they concern. The purpose is to increase awareness of the value of cultural heritage among different communities and to use cultural heritage as a resource to empower different communities. (Interview with Director of Culture for the City of Malmoe; May 27, 2021).

The Museum of Movements management team pointed out that they worked in this spirit. The goal was to flatten power hierarchies, which they asserted often existed within established museums and between the museum's organization and their various engaged groups. The operative group for the museum focused on building relationships with the museum's immediate surroundings, the nonprofit sector, and residents of Möllevången and Malmoe, as well as on building up the museum over the long term with interested parties in Sweden and abroad. The idea was to let the museum evolve with the people involved. This effort included initiating a close collaboration with Árran, a Lule Sami center in Norway, which works throughout Sapmi and with Sami groups in North America and elsewhere. However, by not focusing on material collections and permanent exhibitions from the beginning, the museum created several problems for itself, not least in clearly defining its profile and goal orientation for politicians and officials in the City of Malmoe and at the Ministry of Culture in Stockholm. "What is a museum without collections of objects?" was a recurring question. The Project Manager (brought in from Canada) explains:

> We knew how to make it work. We made it work with the communities, but what was happening here on the ground could not be translated to other organizational layers, like the city or the government. I think if people had understood what was happening . The work taking place, and how important it was to people who shared their experiences at the museum. It other members of the museum leadership had been able to translate that. But, I always felt that the articulation of the work and the thought really wasn't quite there. So, they could not transfer those ideas, and I think that was a big part of the problem. (Interview with Project Manager (brought in from Canada), October 29, 2020).

From the project manager's point of view, the Museum of Movements management team's attempt to include civil society organizations in planning the museum's activities led to several difficulties. First, it was difficult for the management and staff to clearly define and articulate the museum's mission, area of responsibility, and future for its stakeholders, including potential partners and financiers. Both the Project Manager and Unit Director and the Project Manager (brought in from Canada) point out that they did not have a definite plan for how the museum would be developed. However, by relinquishing power and inviting civil society to take part in planning the museum's activities, it became difficult to explain clearly and in detail to politicians and officials precisely what the museum would be doing three, four, or five years ahead.

In the spring of 2020, some of the museum's management team began to feel uncertain about the museum's future. Nervously, they began to wonder whether the Ministry of Culture had lost interest in the museum. Several individuals involved in the museum's activities attempted to contact the Ministry to gauge the situation but were met with silence. Finally, on September 15, 2020, museum management and staff were called to a meeting in which they were told that the Ministry of Culture had decided to stop funding the project. The Project Manager and Unit Director describe the situation as follows:

> In the end, what happened was that we were informed late. And that was a huge difference from how we worked in the first years. So, it was really strange to be in that situation. (Interview with Project Manager and Unit Director, May 21, 2021).

For the Project Manager and Unit Director, the Project Manager (brought in from Canada), and others working operatively with the Museum of Movements, it is still unclear why the Ministry of Culture decided to cut funding to the museum. All have their speculations, but no one has received a clear answer to the question. the Project Manager and Unit Director explain:

> I don't know. That is what I think is most problematic. Public administration organizations often hesitate to "promise too much" because it can be difficult to guarantee anything long-term. But the risk is that external parties are not brought in until the goal has already been described. As a result, the opportunity for genuine participation has been lost. The Museum of Movements deliberately decided to do the opposite and invited participation right from the early phases. Since we had running contracts during the first period of the process with the administration's management, a reference group on the municipal board, and the Ministry of Culture, we communicated the process openly and quickly, even with the staff and the surrounding community. It was also easy to navigate and make strategic decisions when we were in the middle of the action. We were then gradually excluded from discussions and decisions apart from the museum's operation. Even if our open stance didn't change at all, our insight and transparency were diminished. This, of course, led to concern among both staff and partners. Hundreds of people and organizations had openly participated in constructing the Museum of Movements, but its closure was quiet and anonymous. It brought an imbalance that put us in a very strange situation. I think the lesson here is that you must dare to be consistent. We were confident that everyone who contributed to the work would understand and accept the logic we created together, regardless of the process's paths. However, the openness must then continue for the entire path ahead. It's bewildering. Who decided this? (Interview with the project manager and unit director, May 21, 2021).

Why did the Ministry of Culture stop financing the Museum of Movements? Was it because of the financial problems that the cultural sector faced in 2020 due to COVID-19? Was it because of difficulties defining the museum's mission and activities? Was it some political bargaining? Or were there other factors at play? No answer was given to the Project Manager and Unit Director, the Project Manager, and those responsible for and engaged in the museum's activities. They worked for several years to share and distribute power in a way they felt was democratic and inclusive. In their eyes, the

Ministry of Culture's actions was a movement in the opposite direction, power striking clearly and surprisingly from above.

For the Director of Culture for the City of Malmoe, the decision to close the testing activities of the Museum of Movements was explained as a consequence of both the 2018 general election and the local election. The elections meant a new Minister for Culture was appointed as well as a new Culture Committee Chair, thereby changing political priorities. She explains:

> I met with the Ministry of Culture's administrators and officials, who were also very excited about the assignment [with the Museum of Movements], I have to say. I would say that the playing field changed drastically during the time after the feasibility study and when this was to be actualized. It was about … well, there was an election in between. There was a new Minister for Culture with a completely different profile. Furthermore, she also inherited issues. But I didn't feel that she was as engaged. As I experienced it, we've communicated this to Alice Bah Kuhnke (The previous Minister of Culture who was involved in initiating the Museum of Movements project, authors' note). This was a matter and a project that was close to her heart.
>
> Moreover, I couldn't feel this same engagement from the Ministry of Culture. It was also connected with the replacement of various actors in the Ministry, administrators, and other staff who didn't have this history. They hadn't been involved in starting the project. There was also a new Chair here in the Culture Committee. Furthermore, I was new in my role. So the playing field quite suddenly became very different. (Interview with Director of Culture for the City of Malmoe, May 27, 2021).

The Director of Culture, who works in a similar role in Botkyrka Municipality in Stockholm County, says that a museum of national importance being launched must be financed with national, not municipal, funds. She continues:

> We're talking one-hundred-percent funded! That is our overall goal! If a Museum of Movements comes to be, we will be very happy. It is understood here that it could also be something else. However, we all thought this was a good idea and fun.
>
> Moreover, it was to be a national museum. When the Ministry and the national government eventually announced that they were withdrawing their involvement and not moving ahead with this idea, it wasn't feasible for the City of Malmoe to go in with any rescue operation or say that we could shoulder the cost. It was a matter of principle. (Interview with Director of Culture for the City of Malmoe, May 27, 2021).

The Ministry of Culture did not close the Museum of Movements. Instead, the Ministry withdrew financing for the project. Government funding of the

Museum of Movement with 5 million crowns ceased in 2021 when the museum ceased to be a temporary, tentative operation. The Ministry of Culture refers to the budget propositions of 2018 and 2021 regarding the government commitment to the museum.[3] If the City of Malmoe had been eager for the Museum of Movements to continue operating and develop further, the Ministry of Culture did not intend to interfere. However, funding was required to come from the City of Malmoe or another external source in that case. The City of Malmoe never considered "covering the cost," as the Director of Culture said. The amounts were too significant, and the City of Malmoe was most interested in establishing a nationally funded organization that could also "be something else" than the Museum of Movements. A shift in interests and priorities came with a new Minister for Culture and other new officials after the 2018 election. The national funding disappeared, and an economic vacuum opened, leaving the City of Malmoe unprepared and unwilling to provide the resources needed to continue the Museum of Movements and to scale up the museum according to plan.

For the people who were immediately affected by the museum, the museum management and staff, and the various groups in Malmoe engaged in making their museum, the financial rug was torn out from under their feet. From a top-down perspective, the shutdown seemed a logical consequence of democracy. However, from a bottom-up perspective, those involved didn't understand what had happened, what many saw as a vital and meaningful initiative being taken away from them. No one was sure why or how it had happened. From the national government's point of view, the decision was made based on documentation submitted by the City of Malmoe. The Ministry of Culture made an assessment and a reprioritization according to the rules of democracy. The City of Malmoe also affirmed the decision. According to the Director of Culture, the City of Malmoe never considered independently financing a large museum project. The museum's project management team said they had done the right thing. They worked in close dialogue and collaboration with their co-producers and target groups, a spirit that increasing numbers of museums worldwide share. District Six Museum in Cape Town and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg were dialogue partners. The Museum of Movements management team received much positive feedback from museum colleagues abroad and much praise from various local groups. Some of the co-producing groups perceived their involvement as activistic and even a conscious challenge to the dominant museum form in Sweden (Zabalueva & Perla 2019). The museum staff and many people and groups involved felt on their way to creating something new, unique, and democratic: a museum shaped from a bottom-up perspective (cf. Yozturk 2021).

What happened was like black magic in today's cultural economy. Even when everyone seems to be doing the right thing, an entire organization can abruptly cease to exist. No answers were forthcoming to the questions posed by relevant stakeholders, NGOs, and civil society co-producers. Furthermore, in all likelihood, their trust in the Swedish state shrank more.

Museums, project culture, and the heritage economy

The brief life of the Museum of Movements exemplifies how issues of democracy mobilize civil society and its political structures. The knowledge of people's movements and mobility is vital for all cultural heritage production. Movement is about becoming. Improved methods for museums' working with movement and diversity in society should be one of the highest prioritized political goals. Our analysis shows how the decision-makers for the Museum of Movements underestimated the complexity of the concept of movement and its many physical and metaphorical expressions, of which migration heritage is one. In explaining the museum's rise and fall, the Director of Culture in Malmoe focuses on how the political shift in the City of Malmoe and at the Ministry of Culture came to obstruct, rather than affirm, movement. With staff changes in several posts, the movement within the Government Offices and the Department of Culture became an obstacle to prioritizing the movement outside. There was no time for in-depth handovers, and priorities changed along with political governance. Finally, decision-makers avoided the critical challenge. The vision of a museum with international role models, based on participation and deeply anchored in civil society, encountered obstacles in national and municipal organizations. Despite aiming to broaden the view of museums and diversify Sweden's cultural heritage, the work with the Museum of Movements came to a standstill.

Previous research has shown that work with cultural heritage is always closely intertwined with politicized processes. Such work is about people's attempts to use the past in the present to impact the future (cf. Harrison 2020; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998; Klein 2000; Lowenthal 1996). The case of the Museum of Movements shows how vulnerable such forward-looking work can be and how sensitive a groundbreaking process is to political games and political movements, and shifts from below.

In this chapter, we have sought to emphasize the need for cultural scholars to consider and examine in greater detail the economic aspects of cultural heritage production, in addition to its political aspects. When a museum chooses to focus on a restaurant or bring in a temporary exhibition about pinball, it is easy to underestimate the economic processes (and calculations made by museum management) driving these new cultural heritage frameworks. The Museum of Movements was a largely politicized project, but its Achilles heel was the unclear economic conditions and circumstances which formed an underlying part of the political process. Several local groups in Malmoe were involved in the museum and used "the space" (the museum) differently to frame and represent their cultural heritage. However, the political fluctuations of the national government were difficult to see or interpret from below, and the flow of funding was even more challenging to decipher and predict. Nevertheless, engagement was not only local but also national and international.

The new public management governance model imposes quantity measurements regarding the museum's operations and profitability, mainly for museums under national and municipal administration. Such measurements mean that cultural heritage's intrinsic value and significance are systematically re-assessed. Just as liberal arts education and scholarship are politicized through increased governance of grant allocations and temporary national funding (Swedish Agency for Cultural Policy Analysis 2021a), museum activities have come to be standardized under the terms for retaining national (and even private) funding. When success is translated into budgets and balance sheets, it politicizes and influences the content of cultural heritage institutions. What is politically viable sells, and what sells becomes politically viable. The museums follow the forms of financing.

If we return to Tim Ingold (2011), who argues that where there is life, there is also movement, the question arises: are museums that receive government funding expected to solely preserve memories of a time gone by? Is the idea of what a museum can be, bound by a museum's own cultural heritage and, like 19th-century museum founders, obliged to operate mainly by rescuing cultural heritage, which the current political majority fears will disappear? There seems to be a risk that societal trends determine which museums justify financial investment at present.

Project culture, which developed in Sweden in the late 20th century (Gerholm 1985), has been on the move, forming what we call a hip *heritage economy*, a term that draws on both the financing of cultural heritage and its content. When reviewing annual reports and conducting interviews with museum management, it becomes clear that management performs a sensitive balancing act. In a time in history when government appropriations tend to fund staff, premises, and certain core operations in Sweden's national museums, activities serving the public and building knowledge are increasingly grant-financed and thus secured solely through competition. Much money in cultural heritage production is deeply embedded in several markets. However, such a business is also fickle and trend sensitive. A question for the future is: how can research and museums work democratically and inclusively with cultural heritage? The Swedish Museums Act (2017:563) states that a museum must operate at arm's length from politics (SOU 2015:89). The question raised by the rise and fall of the Museum of Movements case is whether this is possible and, if so, through which cultural and economic models?

Notes

1 Please note that this chapter builds upon the following materials and interviews: *Material* Participant observations at dialogue meetings and workshops in Malmoe 2018; 2019.

Hansen, Eva (2018) A review of Swedish museum collections related to migration and democracy. The survey showed that many museums had collections that were likely related to these themes but had been cataloged otherwise.

Emails with the press secretary and registrar of the Ministry of Culture, as well as the study of Ministry of Culture documents concerning the Museum of Movements.

Interviews Recorded interview with project manager via Zoom, October 29, 2020. Recorded interview with project manager and unit director via Zoom, May 21, 2021. Recorded interview with director of culture in Malmoe city via Zoom, May 27, 2021.)

2 The letter was submitted earlier in the year – see the footnote in the feasibility study: *Letter to Minister of Culture and Democracy Alice Bah Kuhnke from the Malmoe Municipal Board through Luciano Astudillo Carbonell, February 27, 2015.* However, the assignment to conduct a feasibility study was given to the Department of Culture in a meeting with the Ministry of Culture at Malmoe City Hall in December 2015, with attendees including the former director of culture in Malmoe city and project manager and unit director.

3 The correspondence with the press secretary of the Ministry of Culture in January 2022, combined with budget propositions from 2018 and 2021 and documentation of the process, shed light on the project's initial stages to closure.

6 Conclusions

Writing in the introduction to a *Museum International* thematic number on "Museums as Wonderful Places," museologist Gary Edson reminds readers that,

> Fulfilling their unique roles, museums are fantastic places of interesting objects. They are grand conveyances for wonderful and exciting journeys of the mind, and spiritually uplifting temples of culture and learning. They may be seen as palaces of the cerebral – the heart and soul of civilisation and things in life. Cultural material in the collections tells life stories and reflect the genius of the human spirit (2015:10).

Edson's words celebrate museums when they are at their best. Indeed, one of the reasons we have been inspired to write this book, and perhaps you, the reader, have chosen to engage with it, is because, on so many occasions, we have had very similar euphoric feelings when leaving a museum having engaged with an inspiring or thought-provoking exhibition. However, as we have tried to illuminate in this book, a great deal of hard work goes into making remarkable exhibitions and programs. This is work that museum visitors usually understand as being cultural. Moreover, we would never deny this, but in addition to this, we strive in this book to emphasize the fact that museums, are also businesses (in non-profit markets) that have to think in terms of economy and managerial strategy. One of the strategic models that museums are working with is that which we have called Hip Heritage.

In these last few pages, we will highlight some of the main points we argue in this volume. Before summing up the main arguments, we will address two questions. When did Hip Heritage first appear? And how were the museums we studied as well as those who invested in Hip Heritage affected by the Covid-19 pandemic?

Hip Heritage: A processual development, not an epoch

Establishing starting and finishing points for cultural, economic, and political events and phenomena is always tempting. It creates order and clarity in the

DOI: 10.4324/9781003327707-6

world around us, making it possible to order and align things to gain an overview of what is happening. The Berlin Wall fell in 1989. The "Black Monday" market crash of 1987 occurred on October 19, 1987. Having dates like these make events feel concrete and anchored in time. Nonetheless, the processes leading up to them were years in the making. In much the same way, it is often asserted that we live in an economic period called "Neo-liberalism," and in an administrative era many call "New Public Management." When was the start date of these periods and eras? There are many suggestions in the academic literature. Rather than nail down dates, we believe thinking in terms of process and continuous change is more productive. Hip Heritage as a phenomenon has no other origin than the name we give it here in this book and several more recent publications. What we are pointing to is an intensification of strategies and tactics in the world of museums.

One significant sign of the museum industry's movement towards a Hip Heritage disposition can be found in museums' growing interest in creating "blockbuster" exhibits. As museum scholars Kajsa Jurcisinova, Marline Wilders, and Janneke Visser explain:

> The main conditions that the blockbuster should meet are: first, it should attract large numbers of visitors … Second, a conventional blockbuster uses marketing tools, as well as an attractive exhibition title that refers to something familiar but with a sensational 'masterpiece' quality (Jurcisinova 2022, p. 22).

An example of such an exhibition that Jurcisinova and team point to is the British Museum's *Treasures of Tutankhamun* exhibition which opened in 1972 and was then put on the road (and shipped across the Atlantic to the United States) until 1981. As they interpret the phenomenon, the drive to organize and stage blockbuster events increased in popularity in the 1990s with the primary goal of attracting large groups of visitors to generate financial profit for the museum while simultaneously strengthening its reputation and brand (Ibid.).

This emphasis on creating events out of exhibitions coincides with changes in consumption practices that David Harvey identifies as intensifying in the early 1970s as an aspect of flexible accumulation. These changes increasingly paid "much greater attention to quick-changing fashions" (1990:156). In his thinking, this was a time in which:

> The relatively stable aesthetic of Fordist modernism has given way to all the ferment, instability, and fleeting qualities of a postmodernist aesthetic that celebrates difference, ephemerality, spectacle, fashion, and the commodification of cultural forms (Ibid.)

Harvey's view of the changes in the late 20th century is more epochal in approach than we are comfortable with (cf. du Gay & Pryke 2002: 6).

Rather than seeing instances of historical juncture and disjuncture (i.e., a jump from a Fordist to a Post-Fordist economic order), we would like to point to the changes in consumption practices he identifies and emphasize the degree to which these are continuously developing. These processes led to the development in the late 1990s of what economists Joseph Pine and James Gilmore described as an "Experience Economy" in which it was no longer enough simply to provide people with goods and services. To succeed, businesses, from museums to retail stores, needed to *engage* people in a manner that was not only educational and entertaining but ultimately even escapist (Pine & Gilmore 1999).

Against this background, museums worldwide increasingly left a mode of thinking and working in which artifacts were housed in closed glass cases, accompanied by descriptive texts and labels. As we entered the new millennium, new forms of technology, such as touch screen displays, filled museum halls (and often still do) in the hopes that they would activate visitors and entertain them while providing them with some form of new knowledge and experience. Framing Hip Heritage in this way, we see it as something that has been developing over the last half-century.

The pandemic

Hip Heritage is visitor and experience-oriented and is consequently inherently sensitive to circumstances that negatively affect people's desire or ability to visit museums. Against this background, Covid-19 was not surprisingly a considerable challenge for the museums that this study focused upon and the world of museums in general. As the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) reported, almost all the museums in the United States closed early in the pandemic, and a third of all museums (12,000 museums) polled by AAM feared that their institutions faced the risk of having to close permanently if they did not receive extra financial support. Moreover, a follow-up survey from 2022 showed that revenues in American museums were, on average, still down by 38% compared to pre-pandemic levels. (https://www.aam-us.org/programs/about-museums/museum-facts-data/). The situation was very similar in Sweden and throughout much of the world.

The Swedish national museums (Hallwyl and Skokloster) fared the best among the museums we have followed. Although they could, prior to the pandemic, pull in economic resources through gift shop sales, rent from entrepreneurs running restaurants or cafés in the museum, or ticket sales to temporary exhibitions, a bulk of their budgets were based on governmental funding which they continued to receive throughout the pandemic. Nonetheless, like all other museums in Sweden, the government also instructed them to close by the spring of 2020, and they remained closed for much of the following 18 months. However, Hallwyl, for example, never had to lay off or furlough their employees. The museum had long planned to increase its digital tours, but the everyday routines of their daily activities never provided them with the time to learn how to produce such tours. Moreover, while the museum was forced to close to the public, a limited number of employees were always allowed to work on the premises. Under these conditions, the pedagogues began experimenting with digital film production and, by the late spring of 2020, were offering short digital tours every day at 13:30 via Instastory. Skokloster, for its part, adopted a strategy of not hiring many of its summer personnel but did turn its attention to converting the large park surrounding the castle into an exhibition in its own right. This allowed the museum to welcome visitors to its grounds, even if they could not congregate in large numbers in the castle.

In contrast, other museums that had no, or minor national governmental funding were hit hard by the pandemic.p Kulturen in Lund, for example, responded by furloughing large portions of its staff and cutting down on activities at the museum. However, the outdoor grounds were opened to the public, creating an open-air oasis for many local residents who longed to leave their homes and apartments and enjoy the fresh air. Undoubtedly for much the same reasons, the number of people who visited Kulturen's Östarp increased amid the pandemic, as it proved to be an ideal site for family and friends to get together and do something in a socially distanced manner.

The fate that met ASI and the National Nordic Museum had parallels to that of nongovernmental, regional, or municipal funded museums in Sweden. In order to cut costs, they were forced to implement furloughs and lay-offs to bring down expenditure costs. According to an article in the *Seattle Times,* the National Nordic Museum faced a situation in which "pandemic closures washed away admissions, program fees, event rentals, gift shop sales, and café sales amounting to about 30% of its budget, which is 4.5 million dollars (Gorenflo 2022). In order to compensate for part of this, the museum received PPP (paycheck protection program) loans for nearly 750,000 dollars. In addition, it strove to strengthen its virtual programming with events like book talks and photography exhibits. They even converted a multi-day conference the "Nordic Innovation Summit," into a digital webinar which received funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers as well as corporations, sponsorships, and paying visitors. While the in-person summit usually attracts about 250 guests, the virtual summit draws 6,000 visitors. Nonetheless, as of November 2022, admission was still down by 25%, and operating revenue was down by approximately 30% compared to pre-pandemic numbers. The light in the tunnel came in the form of increased philanthropy, up by 43% (Ibid.).

The situation for ASI was somewhat different. They, too, were forced to furlough staff and close the museum for more extended periods, spurring them to make investments in new virtual programs. They strove to find new ways to engage the community. One of the innovative events was the annual ASI Lutfisk dinner which was converted into a Drive-thru event. Preparing and eating lutfisk (dried ling soaked in potassium carbonate [potash] or sodium carbonate [soda] and slaked lime) through online handicraft sessions, and language classes with consultant instructors is a tradition that dates to the Middle Ages in Sweden and Norway. In contrast, the concept of Christmas food was introduced in the mid-20th century. Prior, the food served at Christmas was the best permitted by conditions such as class and geography. In the Scandinavian countries, Lutfisk today is often sold vacuum-packed, ready to stick in the oven. In the Swedish-American context, Lutfisk is a tradition and a heritage food with solid symbolic meaning.

Nevertheless, for many Scandinavian Americans, Lutfisk also falls into the category of "disgusting foods," Consequently, there are many jokes about the dish, which is notorious in America for its smell and texture. In this context, ASI's Lutfisk drive-thru dinner on November 15, 2020, proved to be a sold-out and joyous event. Museum staff members sporting masks, face shields, and gloves elicited giggles from many present as they shuttled Lutfisk dinners out to visitors waiting in cars. Jokes were made about the fact that masks and face shields were appropriate gear for anyone handling lutfisk. For a bit, pandemic anxiety and fear faded into understanding, fellowship, and hope—as one of the people serving the dinner joked, "a little *lutfisk* can go a long way." The event can be understood in terms of ritualized play," the act itself alludes both to Scandinavian America's oft-expressed love-hate relationship with *lutfisk* and to the four Gospels (e.g., Mark 6:35-44), which tell of Jesus feeding thousands of people with five fish. In both cases, the act transforms the American Swedish Institute into a benefactor of the people during an existential crisis" (Gradén 2023:73-93).

The Covid-19 pandemic was a tough time for the world of museums. None of the museums in our study were forced to close permanently due to the pandemic, although they were all greatly challenged by it. What is interesting to note is that they all found creative ways to work despite forced closures. The pandemic forced the museums to look at themselves in new ways to figure out what they could do when people could not come to them. Parks and outdoor facilities took on new significance, pre-existing traditional events, such as a lutfisk dinner, were rethought playfully in an attempt to continue to engage the local community, and efforts and plans to digitalize museum activities were pushed forward more quickly than would have been the case without the pandemic. Identifying any specific or common factor that facilitated this degree of adaptability is difficult. However, in working with Hip Heritage, these were all museums that had developed the capacity to plan and arrange programs and exhibitions quickly and to be increasingly alert to developing trends and opportunities that they might use advantageously to attract visitors. These were all factors that, in all likelihood, helped these museums to make the best of a bad situation.

Access to education and culture has always been critical in times of crisis, and the need for routines and places to gather increases during such times. During the pandemic, schools and museums closed in the United States. In Sweden, schools remained open, and museums were also allowed to operate for the first few months of the pandemic in the early spring of 2020. However, restrictions were put in place limiting the number of people who could congregate in the museum facilities at any time. Ultimately, as the pandemic worsened in the spring of 2020, even museums were recommended to close, and most did. Larger gatherings, such as releasing the farm animals into the fields at Östarp and the National Day celebrations at Skokloster and Kulturen, were canceled due to the fear that it would be impossible to provide visitors with enough space to remain socially distanced. As a result, the number of people visiting museums in Sweden decreased dramatically (as was the case worldwide). Indeed, the number of museum visits recorded in Sweden in 2020 decreased by 60% compared to pre-pandemic levels (Granér 2021, p. 20). However, it should be noted that the museums that were able to open their parks and grounds to visitors in a manner that still allowed for social distancing witnessed an increase in the number of visitors to these outdoor areas. Museum leadership and personnel underscored the critical role of public trust in museums during societal challenges and crises. As part of this, they emphasized in conversations with us how much the public and local communities came to appreciate having a safe and caring place to visit during times of existential stress. In 2022, museums in Sweden had returned to their regular open hours.

Hip Heritage: Navigating dangers, challenges, and opportunities

As shown and discussed in this book, museums today operate in several market contexts, sometimes defined in terms of identity, heritage, diplomacy, and education, and sometimes expressed in terms of popular appeal and sometimes described as being part of the creative industries, among other definitions. Rather than viewing these markets as enclosed and describing them in such terms as "a cultural market" or "a cultural sector," this book has advocated a perspective that understands the markets in which museums operate as hybrid forums. These markets do not exist a priori to museums. To the contrary, they are always under formation and are composed of very different types of actors ranging from visitors looking for forms of cultural entertainment, educational experiences, or a family outing to managerial consultants enlisted to give museums an edge or craftspersons and individuals with forms of traditional knowledge who provide museums with content, to academic scholars who use museums as research sites, to name just a few. Beyond this, museum markets are established at the juncture of various stakeholders' discursive and performative practices entangled in the different expectations these actors place on museums and their activities. Indeed, a need to appreciate the degree to which museums work across many hybridized cultural and economic forums is underscored by the vast array of revenue sources they need to work with and seek financing from, including state and federal funding, corporate sponsorship, and privatized forms of income generation.

As argued in the introductory chapter, museums developed rapidly as modern institutions in the 17th and 18th centuries (Simmons 2016: 141ff.). In the late 19th century, they played an important role in fostering morally upstanding citizens instilled with productive middle-class values (Bennett 1995:32). Having had some of their origins in the entertaining halls of the 17th-century aristocracy's cabinets of curiosity, they increasingly developed into bastions of knowledge and education. This educational component remains a significant feature of the aura surrounding museums. However, as we demonstrate here, it is only one of the activities that museum leadership and staff engage in daily. For example, a shift in the National Nordic Museum's and ASI strategy has become evident in the past few years. From producing their exhibitions, they now often hire temporary exhibitions, often made in the Nordic countries and co-funded by Nordic governments, philanthropists, and state or national grants for nonprofit organizations which they compete for.

Furthermore, ASI has launched a set of programs in language and crafts involving independent instructors, not on the ASI-pay roll. In addition to this, classrooms, auditoriums, and courtyards belonging to the museums are available for rent. Relying on consultants, entrepreneurs, and other organizations fosters collaboration. It shapes new markets and does so in a manner that is geared to increasing a museum's ability to work flexibly. At the same time, the shift toward working with external entrepreneurs and temporary exhibitions bears the risk of reducing content specialist employees on behalf of staff that manages museum content and projects.

In speaking of Hip Heritage, we point to a series of processes, strategies, and managerial modes of thinking that are actively geared to draw in more significant and broader groups of visitors. A central goal is ensuring the museum's financial stability and optimally widening its profit margins. Moreover, even if museums are, per ICOM's definition of a museum, "not-for-profit" institutions, they need to generate revenue to make new investments in future exhibitions, programs, and events.

One way of how they do this is by investing in temporary and traveling exhibitions and programs. The degree to which these relate to the museum's overarching profile is of secondary importance to its ability to draw crowds. Thus, when Kulturen, for example, arranges exhibitions on pinball machines, mopeds, circuses, or knitting (as they have done in the past), it is not necessarily due to the degree that they relate to the local cultural history of Southern Sweden, but due to an underlying hope that these types of exhibitions will draw paying crowds. Of course, once at the museum, these visitors can partake in the permanent exhibitions on cultural history, but this becomes a secondary outcome of the visit. These are sleekly arranged exhibitions, often produced by entrepreneurs outside the museum. They are hip in aligning with popular societal trends and designed to be fun, inspiring, and engaging.

Working in this way, Hip Heritage, as the examples we have presented in this book demonstrate, has a great deal of its focus on clothes, fashion, design, art, and popular culture. This includes the clothing exhibition from Jane Austen movies at Skokloster (and later at Kulturen) to costumes used in Ingmar Bergman films. When the Royal Armory in Stockholm chose to create a temporary exhibition of its katana and tachi collection (a collection of antique Japanese swords), they did it in conjunction with a local comic book shop. They featured posters from films such as *Kill Bill* and *Deadpool* and adorned the floor with what looked like a blood-splatter pattern, hoping to attract young visitors. The exhibition was intended to have a "cool factor." Unfortunately, it featured very little informative textual information because, as it turned out, museum staff had limited knowledge about the items they were displaying. Indeed, the museum even received complaints from some visitors because they had broken with traditional Japanese etiquette and hung some of the swords upside-down.

If a primary objective for a museum was once to educate the public, Hip Heritage is different. In saying this, however, we do not intend to disparage or belittle work with Hip Heritage. On the contrary, we argue that it is an important phenomenon and part of the development of how museum leadership and staff think about museums as a concept: not just primarily as educational institutions, but as businesses competing for public attention and striving for relevance in the eyes and minds of potential visitors.

By drawing attention to this, this book has shown how idea-based entrepreneurship is growing among museums in the United States, propelled by an increasing need to position themselves in a series of competitive hybrid markets. The book also shows how museums in Sweden are following this path. From government-operated museums such as the Hallwyl Palace and Skokloster Castle to private membership organizations such as Kulturen in Lund, we witness a growing expectation from stakeholders that museums should work with diverse financial sources as well as to develop patron relations and expand on audience sizes. Along with this, museums are expected to engage those audiences through revenue-generating events, exhibitions, programs, and gift shops. In this context, collaborations with other nonprofits, media, businesses, and philanthropists are essential to creating buzz, driving people to the museum venues.

Gift shops play a vital role in augmenting museum economies and potentially strengthening their outward profile. It is an axiom that museums are trusted as heritage hubs, guardians of traditions, and repositories of collective societal memory. When material goods are composed and displayed in the gift shop, they are enriched with the value derived from the museum (cf. Boltanski & Esquerre 2020). Most often, the shop works both as a commercialy curated exhibition and as a window into the museum. More than the oft silent gallery spaces of a museum, void of other scents than what the room displays and visitors generate, the museum store speaks to as many senses as possible—to simultaneously engage emotions and thought, to spur and encourage action, and to propel visitors to complete a purchase. They smell like lavender, sound like ABBA or Vivaldi, often feature large pane glass windows allowing sunlight to pour in, and offer the taste of gingersnaps and exclusively boxed chocolates. As we see it, the artistic and financial competency of linking visitors' emotions and thoughts in an ongoing dynamic process is the bread and butter of commercial curating. The strategies we are pointing to represent an intensification in how museums try to play to broader audiences through the production of Hip Heritage that increasingly focuses upon heritage's potential as a commodity with a broadly marketable aura rather than its potential as an identity marker with solid ties to the past of a particular and delineable group of people (Gradén & O'Dell 2018).

Being an integral department of museums, shops or stores operate as nonprofit retailers (in the United States under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code). The items they sell are, thus not subjected to VAT. They are a critical earned-revenue actor of the museum. According to the Museum Store Association, museum gift shops usually generate between 5% and 25% of a museum's overall revenue (Madden 2020). Revenues generated by museum stores are deposited directly into the operating budgets of the museum organizations, providing economic sustainability for the institution and cultural engagement for the community. The organization's nonprofit status and earned revenue status of the shop fosters what we coin enrichment entrepreneurship. This is a phenomenon that capitalizes on heritage in the nonprofit sector and which aids in the growth of idea-based entrepreneurship in these hybrid markets.

On the flip side of things, however, as the pandemic demonstrated, increased dependency on restaurants, cafés, and gift shops can make museums very vulnerable financially. A museum's focus on Hip Heritage productions and commercial curating may be a successful strategy in times of financial stability. Still, it may become problematic when times get tough. For example, suppose a museum's budget is based on the expectation that 10% of its revenue will come from gift shop sales. In that case, its financial problems will be exacerbated when the gift shop is forced to close, as was the case during the pandemic (or if the shop should start to fail for other reasons).

Working in the spirit of Hip Heritage bears other problems with it. First is the risk of homogeneity; it tends to draw museums in similar directions. When fashion is hot, fashion fills the museums. When Modern Scandinavian Design is hot, Modern Scandinavian Design fills the museums. Exhibitions produced to be put on the road mean that museums are ultimately exhibiting the same thing and telling very similar stories, just at different times. To the extent that such exhibitions and programs are intended to be broadly enjoyable, they leave little room for more minor, less trendy niche subjects. Moreover, when gift shops order trays, mugs, and napkins from *Museum and Gift Design Scandinavia* or *The American Museum Store Association's* vending conference, they sell the same items, only with collection-specific printed patterns and images differentiating them. Secondly, Hip Heritage is trend-sensitive, but conducting trend analyses and trying to determine what will be in vogue one, two, or three years in the future (which is the planning time frame most museums work with) has the potential of being a precarious business. A mistaken calculation that leads to an unpopular exhibition or program will create problems for a museum dependent on a positive buzz to allure visitors … and these types of miscalculations are made. Finally, the more museums work similarly and chase similar trends, the less distinctive they become, and the more difficult it may become to win public attention and attract visitors.

Finally, in closing, we want to emphasize that by focusing on Hip Heritage as we have done in this book, we intend to draw attention to the fact that there is a need for a greater understanding of how cultural and economic processes are entangled in one another and affect how museums work with heritage. We acknowledge that heritage and identity politics issues as museums perform them are important phenomena to study and be aware of. A great deal of attention has been devoted to them in museum and heritage studies since the 1990s. However, as we argue here, more focus needs to be applied to understanding the cultural and economic preconditions that underlie those politics and how they affect, challenge, and create possibilities for museums to operate and engage public and communities around them.

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