

# Chapter 1

## Introduction: The Future of Museums



Gerald Bast, Elias G. Carayannis, and David F. J. Campbell

**Abstract** This book focuses on the *future of museums*. Several questions are being addressed: What is the role of museums for art and society? How will museums change, and how do they have to change? How do museums refer to new modes of art production, and how is this being influenced by shifting and radical technology and technologies? How does the communication between museums and the recipients of art develop further? To which extent will virtual reality change museum, and what is the status of museums in “real place”? How will the reception and representation of art evolve in the coming period and years, and which implications may this have for museums? The different chapters to this book, written by a diversity of authors, who are all renowned and respected experts in their fields and disciplines, create and offer a broad view and spectrum, inquiring on options, routes, and benefits that arise with and for the *future of museums*.

**Keywords** Art · Future · Future of museums · Museum

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This book is part of the book series *Arts, Research, Innovation and Society (ARIS)* that was recently launched in cooperation with *Springer*. Gerald Bast and Elias G. Carayannis are the editors in chief, and David F.J. Campbell acts as the chief associate editor. The first book of the ARIS series (released in December 2014) discussed the whole spectrum of topics and themes related to ARIS:

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## Concept of the New Book

When you go back to the etymological origin, the *Mouseion* at Alexandria, it was a place where—supported by the knowledge stored there—art and science were developed: a place of interdisciplinary research and networking, as you would call it today. *The word from the Ancient Hellenic language for museum (ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ) means the “house of the muses”: where the arts and sciences find their berth and cradle.* With the *Wunderkammer*, the museum was reinvented as an amazing place for the purpose of representation of dynastic power, followed by the establishment of museums as a demonstration of bourgeois self-consciousness. In the twentieth century, the ideal of the museum as an institution for education received a strong boost; the museum as a tourism infrastructure became more and more the institutional, economic, and political role model.

## Questions to Be Addressed by This (New) Book Volume

What is next? In the following, some of the possible key questions are being addressed:

1. What is the role of museums for art and society?
2. How will museums have to change, given the dynamic developments in art and society, to gain or rather regain relevance—in the sense of a power to influence?
3. Which answers do museums have for the challenges that arise in the production of art through the use of permanent and rapidly changing technologies? And which answers do museums have for the increasing importance of artistic disciplines, which refuse to use classical or digital artistic media in artistic processes, such as performance art or social interactive art?
4. How to keep museums in contact with recipients of art in a world in which the patterns of communication and perception have changed dramatically? Will the reception and dissemination of art to a broader public still be a domain of museums in the future?

5. Can the art museum, as a real place, be a counterpart in a virtualized and digitalized society or will museums need to virtualize and even globalize themselves virtually?
6. How do the reception and representation of art change, and what does this mean for museums?

Invited to participate in this international discourse, for which the book *The Future of Museums* acts as a platform, are directors of major museums and art institutions, curators, artists and scientists, and all persons interested in these topics.

### ***The Organization of Contributions to This (New) Book Volume***

There are 11 main contributions, written by a diversity of authors:

1. *Gerald Bast* presents an overview of the development of museums. His main propositions are that also museums are linked to new forms and definitions of “labor” and that the context of art and artwork should be more and better elaborated in museums.
2. What is the future of our future, is there a future without future, and what roles do museums have there? “From an accelerationist theory perspective, the sooner we arrive at the future that has already become our past the better, so that we can move beyond the capitalist-planetary apocalypse.” In his analysis, *Joshua Decter* relates future developments of society and economy with (possible) future developments of museums. He sees museums at the intersection and consolidation of cultural tourism that relate to “attention/experience/distraction economies.” The funding of or the fundraising for museums may also represent a growing challenge in the future.
3. The word museum is Greek in origin. *Eleni Mavragani* demonstrates the important role that museums have for the Greek economy, because Greek economy is based on tourism to an important extent. At the same time, the environment is changing, in which museums are operating. “It is believed that public museums could become one of the central axes of cultural development and the central axis of tourism development.”
4. *Peter Weibel* engages in proposing a “Manifesto for a New Museum.” For him, museums should be placed and located at the overlapping areas of interdisciplinary research and networking. He emphasizes that museums of the future should become a “laboratory for the citizens to explore new worlds.”
5. Museums are at the center of a continuing transformation. “They still have a physical place, but they have become global communicators in different media.” Therefore, *Virgil Widrich* is asking the question, what approaches are here available? Museums (also) could be characterized as “public long-term storage devices for knowledge,” but as “keepers of humanities’ dreams” as well.
6. In her poem, *Yoko Ono* refers to deconstructing and reconstructing museums.

7. In reference to the dynamic flows of the Internet, *Boris Groys* emphasizes that museums (museums of the future) should reflect on how to represent such characteristics also in the context of museums. “Now the Internet itself is also a curatorial project, a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, because it is in a flow.”
8. Media and communication are changing society and economy. However, they also change museums and their possibilities, and furthermore, they may also alter the interchange and interconnectedness of museums with their visitors. These are the questions that *Harald Kraemer* is addressing, and also how to balance in the future (for museums) the digitalization with the “intangible cultural heritage.”
9. *Zsófia Ruttkay* and *Judit Bényei* elaborate how digital technologies are changing in a radical way how young people communicate, learn, and use their free time. This also puts pressures and demands on museums, what the possibilities here are, so that expectations of visitors are being met better. Digital technologies structure the interface and interaction between visitors and museums.
10. *Martina Griesser-Stermscheg*, *Christine Haupt-Stummer*, *Renate Höllwart*, *Beatrice Jaschke*, *Monika Sommer*, *Nora Sternfeld*, and *Luisa Ziaja* present an overview of different discourses and how the future of museums has been discussed so far, stretching the spectrum from *The Museum of the Future* to *La Fin des Musées*. With the concept of the “para-museum,” they emphasize the importance of museums being connected (and still connect) to “change” and “social struggle.”
11. In “Imaginary Bauhaus Museum,” *Danica Dakić* and *Ulrike Bestgen* discuss how art, art production, artistic research, and museums may be changing currently and in the future through engaging in a discursive dialogue and exchanging images.

In the conclusion, the main key questions again are being reviewed. For further discussions and discourse, different propositions are set up, connecting and leading to the next possible steps in inquiry and analysis.