NEGOTIATING EXPERIENCES

Visiting Statens Museum for Kunst

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By

Mette Houlberg Rung

Department of Museum Studies

University of Leicester

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This thesis deals with museum experiences and how they are continuously negotiated between the museum and its users and between the users themselves. Centred on one case study, Statens Museum for Kunst (The National Gallery of Denmark), it asks: How does Statens Museum for Kunst understand and progress the experience of adult visitors in the permanent galleries and how does this relate to actual visitor experiences? Throughout the thesis, the history of the Museum and its conceptual framework are revealed, discussed and compared to the user experiences that take place. This provides insight into the complex relations between users, artworks and the museum space.

The thesis investigates five historic scripts at Statens Museum for Kunst in order to understand the rationale on which the Museum was founded and the current script developed. These scripts are compared to the results of detailed empirical studies, which reveal how users together form a highly personal and exploratory script.

It is concluded that museum experiences at SMK have an inherent social dimension, which has fundamental impact on how the aesthetic experience and the development of the self take place in the galleries. Via bodily conduct and diverse conversations, users establish a unique experience in which they negotiate and shape the aesthetic experience together. This, the research demonstrates, is done through a re-framing of traditional aesthetic categories and a new type of self-formation. Thereby a discrepancy between the museum script and the users' performance is detected: where the museum script mainly embraces knowledge, intention, structure and solitary contemplation, many users practise curiosity, spontaneous attraction and social negotiating. Thus, the Museum develops a script for 'Bildung' in which the enlightenment and education of users are in focus. However, the users themselves are engaged in a self-formation process where personal responses to art and dialogue with one another stand as the overall purpose of the museum experience.

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Abbreviations

© Foto SMK – credit line: Statens Museum for Kunst Photograpy

ANT – Actor–network theory

SMK – Statens Museum for Kunst (the National Gallery in Denmark)

U.l.k. – Unges Laboratorium for Kunst (Art Labs for Young People)

Translations

All translation from Danish to English was carried out by the author unless a published English version of the source exists.

Archive material

Archive material without an author is referenced as it is organised in the archive at Statens Museum for Kunst. When an author of a document is registered, the placement in the archive is given in the bibliography under the author's name.

Visual sources, photos and copyright

All copyrights have been cleared for research purposes. Where the copyright holder is not given, it has not been possible to locate the source.

Research participants

All names have been changed in order to ensure anonymity for participants and the people whom they may refer to in their conversations.

Introduction

This thesis deals with museum experiences and how they are continuously negotiated between the museum and its users and between the users themselves. Centred on one case study, Statens Museum for Kunst (SMK), and focused on adult users engaging with the permanent collections, the thesis asks: How does Statens Museum for Kunst understand and progress the experience of adult visitors in the permanent galleries and how does this relate to actual visitor experiences? Throughout the thesis, the history of the museum and the conceptual framework employed by the institution are exposed, discussed and, in particular, considered in relation to actual user experiences that take place today.[1]

SMK is the Danish National Gallery. It is located in the centre of Copenhagen and comprises a monumental, historicist building designed by architect Jens Vilhelm Dahlerup in 1896 and a modern, white extension by architect Anna Maria Indrio, added in 1998.[2] The Museum houses the largest art collection in Denmark, with more than nine thousand paintings and sculptures dating from 1300 through today. The collection is subdivided into European Art 1300–1800, Danish and Nordic Art 1750–1900 and Danish and International Art after 1900. In addition, the Museum holds the Royal Collection of Graphic Art, containing 240,000 artworks on paper, and the Cast Collection, which includes around 2,500 plaster casts of sculptural masterpieces from antiquity to the Renaissance. Today, the latter is not found in the main museum but in the West Indian Warehouse on the harbour front in Copenhagen. The Museum employs approximately two hundred people engaged in a range of professions such as art historical research, curation, educational work, conservation, security and administration.

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[1] Throughout the thesis the terms users, participants and visitors are used interchangeably. These terms define the interaction between visitor and museum as active and constructive; i.e. the visitor, participant or user is not seen as a passive consumer but as an active individual constructing their own knowledge in interaction with the museum. For more on this discussion, see, for example, Hooper-Greenhill, 2004 or Doering, 1999.

[2] Jens Vilhelm Dahlerup was one of the most popular architects of his time. Among other buildings he created were Det Kongelige Teater, Copenhagen (1872–74), Hotel d'Angleterre, Kongens Nytorv, Copenhagen (1873–75) and Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek (1891–97). Anna Maria Indrio is an Italian-Danish architect and partner in the company C.F. Møller. She has also designed, for example, the extension for Arken Museum of Modern Art in Ishøj near Copenhagen (2007).

In this introduction, the rationale and literature behind the research are presented, the research questions established, and the overall theoretical and epistemological frame of the thesis explained. Moreover, the structure of the writing is introduced along with definitions of essential terms and concepts.

Background for the research

A substantial amount of international research concerning the interaction between museums and their users has been carried out. Museum historiography, which looks at museums as symbolic, representative institutions, considers how people are instructed and educated in the museum. The field of experiential learning in museums applies various learning theories to the museum experience, and studies in material culture deal with the relationship between people and objects, all contributing to an increasingly nuanced and complex understanding of the connection between the museum and the people who use it. In addition, the growing body of research in the field of visitor studies adds an empirical dimension to museology.

In general this literature has moved from an understanding of the museum as a neutral site where meaning is transferred to passively receptive visitors, to the idea that museums are highly ideological institutions where active users shape their own experiences (see, for example, Bennett, 2011, 1998a; Black, 2012; Duncan, 2004; Falk and Dierking, 1992, 2000; Hein, 1998; Hooper-Greenhill, 2011, 2008, 2000, 1999; Silverman, 1990; Simon, 2010; Vergo, 1989a). In this light, the understanding of the museum as well as the user experience has changed, and it is within the dialectic frame of this literature that the thesis must be seen.

In the following sections, I review the literature most relevant to the thesis. It is not an attempt to introduce all the literature that I draw upon in the thesis, nor will it present in detail the different theories that I use. It will, however, serve as a background for understanding the field of writing to which this research contributes. The review is divided into three sections: The first, in which the literature is based mainly on theory, has the overall aim of critically describing the museum as ideological, i.e. an institution that is never neutral in its way of presenting histories. The second looks at aesthetic

theory and the tradition of 'Bildung', which is fundamental for the development of the art museum. The third section considers literature based on empirical visitor studies.

The ideological museum

The thesis draws on literature concerning the development of the museum and its role in society. In this regard, Tony Bennett, in his renowned book *Birth of the Museum* (1998a) as well as in a number of other publications, established a multifaceted and critical foundation for understanding museums and the practices that take place within them. Much of Bennett's thinking employs a Foucauldian perspective, thus exposing the power relations between museum, society and people, exploring, for example, how museums serve not only as educational sites but also as ideological instruments of the state (Belfiore and Bennett, 2006; Bennett, 2011, 2010, 2005, 1998a, 1998b, 1990). This critical perspective is also taken up by Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, who is especially concerned with the educational purpose of the museum, the way users are perceived, and how they interact with the objects on display. Of particular relevance for this thesis is her work regarding the active museum user and how personal meaning making is constructed in the museum (Hooper-Greenhill, 2011, 2008, 2006, 2004, 2000, 1999, 1993, 1991).

Another scholar who has examined the use of museums on a theoretical level is Carol Duncan. Her influential writing about the art museum as a site where users perform and engage in specific rituals depicts the museum as a place where cultural norms and principles are generated and reproduced. In addition, her analysis of museum architecture and presentation structure, especially her concept of the universal survey museum, stands as an important reference for this research. Duncan also applies the notion of script to her investigations of the museum. As I will explain later in this introduction, this is a central concept for my research, although my use of the term is significantly different from Duncan's (Duncan, 2004; Wallach and Duncan, 2012).

Andrew McClellan and James Sheehan contribute to the field with their art historical and philosophical research into the development and the purpose of the art museum. From a Danish perspective, Sheehan's publications are highly relevant, since the Danish museum tradition shares many characteristic with the German, both in terms of drawing upon the same philosophical and educational theories, and also because of the

frequent exchange of intellectuals and other influential people between the two counties. In his book *Museums in the German Art World*, Sheehan (2000) gives a detailed account, both theoretical and practical, of the rise of the modern art museum in Germany, and parallels are to be found in relation to SMK. McClellan (2008a, 2008b) uses the same method when exploring American museums but includes a focus on museum users and traces the developments within this field up through today.

Museum users, and in particular their actions, are also the topic of Helen Rees Leahy's book *Museum Bodies*. Here she investigates, from a British perspective, how regulations on body movement from early modern museums to the present day encourage and determine specific museum experiences. In this way, she analyses how the museum interior, as well as formal and informal rules, produces certain behaviour and practices in the user (Leahy, 2012). Without maintaining a strict focus on the body, this is also the purpose of Julia Noordegraaf in her book *Strategies of Display*. Here she analyses how methods of display in Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam, along with other museum practices, form a frame in which the users act (Noordegraaf, 2004). Noordegraaf's book, despite fundamental differences regarding structure, focus, method and data, stands as an important inspiration for this PhD research.

Aesthetic theory and 'Bildung'

Another field of literature related to this thesis is that of 'Bildung' and aesthetic theory. When trying to understand the development and the purpose of the art museum, this theory is imperative as it investigates the benefit people can receive when engaging with artworks in museums. As will be demonstrated when considering SMK, the German tradition of 'Bildung' and its understanding of aesthetic experiences is of particular importance as Denmark was in close contact with and strongly influenced by Germany in the 1800s. This means that authors such as Fredrick Schiller and Wilhelm von Humboldt serve as important references in this thesis (Böhm and Schiller, 1927; Humboldt, 1999). Moreover, Humboldt's notion of 'Bildung' is also presented through the writings of social analyst Lars Geer Hammershøj, who investigates how we develop ourselves in late modernity. With his concept of 'self-practice', he argues that the way we develop ourselves has changed over time, which can be seen in the way we 'practise' ourselves in the social arena. Hammershøj's concept is used throughout the

thesis when discussing the experience that SMK designs for its users, and also when analysing how the Museum is actually being used.

Roger Fry (1925), Clive Bell (1914) and Clement Greenberg (1980) are aesthetic thinkers whose ideas are vital for understanding the development of the art museum. During the twentieth century, the formalist approach to art had a significant impact on the changing structure of the art museum and on the way artworks were and still are presented. But in order to understand the aesthetic practices which take place in galleries today, the work of Sianne Ngai (2012) is relevant. This research builds on and adds to her newly defined aesthetic categories, revealing how contemporary aesthetic experiences take place.

User experiences

The literature presented above is based on theoretical and conceptual analysis. For example, when considering the ideological analysis of the museum, both Duncan and Bennett make assumptions about museum experiences and the role of the museum in society, but in most cases these rest on a theoretical frame rather than on empirical investigations. In the same manner, considerations concerning aesthetic theory and discussions about 'Bildung' are mostly based on a theoretical rather than an empirical perspective. This gap is widely acknowledged within the field. For example, as established by Volker Kirchberg and Martin Tröndle and others, empirically based visitor studies remain highly underrepresented in the museological literature (Heath and vom Lehn, 2004: 44; Kirchberg and Tröndle, 2012: 436).[3] Kirchberg and Tröndle argue that this is due to several reasons. First and foremost, museums, especially art museums, are apprehensive about visitor studies, worrying that complying with the wishes of users will consequently steer the museum in a populist direction. Moreover, the time, budget and human resources needed to carry out empirical studies are difficult to prioritise and find. Finally, Kirchberg and Tröndle (2012: 436) mention the difficulty in empirically investigating the aesthetic experience, since it is perceived as a fleeting and introverted type of experience.

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[3] Kircberg and Tröndle (2012) researched a range of museum studies publications from 2004–10, counting the number of articles that deal with visitor experiences.

There have been, however, a number of significant studies that have combined theoretical and empirical approaches to examine the museum experience. These are significant to this thesis. The first worth mentioning is fundamental to the study of visitors in art museums. In 1969, sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel published their well-known study of art museums, *The Love of Art* (1990), concluding that educational and cultural background has strong impact on whether people choose to visit an art museum . Furthermore, this led to Bourdieu's publication *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Bourdieu and Nice, 2000), where he developed his ideas on how social class determines personal interests. Despite that fact that Bourdieu's research is more than thirty years old, his ideas are important for this thesis. First of all, he is one of the first scholars to base theories about art museum visitors on empirical data, which is also the aim here. Second, I discuss his reflections concerning the background and educational qualifications of visitors in relation to the empirical data collected for this thesis.

Other influential theorists are John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking, who have been studying the museum experience for more than twenty years. This has led to their well-known 'contextual model of learning', which establishes how experiences in the museum are based on a personal context (the user's expectations and predispositions), a social-cultural context (the cultural background and social group the user visits the museum with) and a physical context (design, architecture, display etc.) (Falk and Dierking, 1992). Falk and Dierking (2000) explain how user experiences are strongly connected with these three contexts and must always be seen in relation to them, as well as in relation to each context over time, as their revised 2000 text emphasises.

A group led by Zahava D. Doering from the Smithsonian Institution in the US, following Falk and Dierking's thoughts, published two articles regarding the 'entrance narrative', which documented how users' backgrounds, expectations and prior experiences had a great impact on how satisfied they were with the museum experience. In addition, Doering (1999) and Pekarik and colleagues (1999) produced a list comprising fourteen different museum experiences divided into four main groups: object experiences, cognitive experiences, introspective experiences and social experiences. These all take place in museums and can be of different importance to the user, according to her entrance narrative and what type of museum she engages with

(Doering, 1999; Pekarik et al., 1999). This list of experiences remains relevant for museums today and will be discussed in relation to the experiences that take place in the galleries of SMK.

Other researchers, for example María del Carmen De Rojas and María del Carmen Camarero (2006) have also looked at how expectations and (particularly for their research) prior feelings and emotions towards the museum affect the outcome of a museum visit, thus confirming the findings of Doering, Karns and Pekarik. This focus on emotions led to an interest in other types of experiences, beyond cognitive learning, that the museum can offer. This field has expanded considerably since 2005. For example, Jan Packer verifies the different museum experiences defined by Doering but adds another one to the list: the value of the 'restorative' museum visit. This means that psychological well-being, which includes elements such as relaxation, thoughtfulness and happiness, is also a valued experience in the museum (Packer and Bond, 2010; Packer, 2008). These different conceptualisations of experience contribute to my empirical studies of SMK.

While these researchers have explored what a museum experience is, and what makes it satisfying, another branch of visitor studies has investigated how meaning is constructed and what benefits can be provided by museum experiences. Here researchers such as Beverly Serrell (1998), with her early observations of user behaviour in museums, demonstrate how visitors only partially explore an exhibition, not spending a very long time engaging with objects. Lois Silverman (2006, 1990) explores visitor talk in museums and concludes that meaning making in museums is both personal and socially grounded.

This route was followed up by Gaea Leinhardt and Karen Knutson in two books *Learning Conversations in Museums* (Leinhardt et al., 2002a) and *Listening in on Museum Conversation* (Leinhardt and Knutson, 2004a). Here the sociocultural construction of meaning between users is emphasised: 'Talking is a tool for socially constructed thought, not just evidence of it; and that talk supports the gradual alteration and development of goals during the course of a visit' (Leinhardt and Knutson, 2004a: 159). In this way, Leinhardt and Knutson confirm the relevance of Doering's results regarding entrance narratives, but at the same time argue that the social frame of the

museum visit is, to a higher degree than was believed before, a determining factor for the museum experience. These results are also confirmed by other studies using different methods. For example, Christian Heath and Dirk vom Lehn use video recordings of users in museum and galleries to investigate the social nature and interaction between museum users. They conclude that the museum visit is not just determined by personal expectations or entrance narratives; it is to a large extent also a process (Heath and Hindmarsh, 2002; Heath and vom Lehn, 2004; Lehn, 2006; Vom Lehn et al., 2001). They emphasise that

> it would seem inappropriate to suggest that abstract perceptual principals, cognitive models, or socially constructed dispositions predetermine the perception and experience of the picture. Rather, it emerges progressively through a complex configuration of action, bodily and spoken, through which the participants come to discover, see and experience the painting in particular ways. (Heath and vom Lehn, 2004: 52)

This shift towards an understanding of the museum experience as personal and process-based led to more empirically-oriented research concerning how users create meaning and eventually also to considerations about how the museum functions as a site for personal and social identity work (Falk, 2009, 2006; Fienberg and Leinhardt, 2002; Leinhardt et al., 2002a, 2002b; Paris and Mercer, 2002). Both the studies relating to the social nature of the museum visit as well the role of identity work are crucial for this thesis.

Finally, many of the researchers above have studied direct engagement with objects. In several of these studies, empirical models of engagement are developed. For example, Fienberg and Leinhardt (2002) identify four types of interaction with objects when analysing museum conversations: listing (identity), analysis (concept), synthesis (comparison) and explanation (helping). This model describes how interaction with objects can be characterised as steps ranging from simple identification of the object, to applying abstract ideas and knowledge from different fields, when engaging with objects (Fienberg and Leinhardt, 2002: 170). This corresponds to the different types of talk identified in another project carried out by Sue Allen (2002). She develops a list consisting of perceptual talk, conceptual talk, connecting talk, strategic talk and

affective talk, the three first roughly corresponding to Fienberg and Leinhardt, and the last two adding reflections about how visitors use the exhibit and their emotional responses to the objects (Allen, 2002). These different ways of engaging with objects is also central to the ideas developed in this thesis, although the linear progression that is fundamental to some of these models seems too rigid in relation to the experiences users have at SMK.

One last group of researchers that I wish to include here is the *eMotion* research group from Switzerland. Employing a psychogeographical approach, they investigate user reception and study the interaction between people, environment and art. Their research documents the levels of engagement of various groups of users and investigates the aesthetic experience in relation to the environment in which it is experienced (Kirchberg and Tröndle, 2012; Tröndle et al., 2012b). Their results, despite having different aims and contrasting findings, are relevant for my empirical findings.

Danish literature

The museological field in Denmark, to a large extent, has drawn upon the international literature presented above and reflects the same movement towards a more critical and nuanced understanding of museums and their users. However, Danish research material in this area, both theoretical and empirical, still remains sparse. Nevertheless, there are some important initiatives to mention to which this research relates.

In 2005, Bruno Ingemann and Ane Hejlskov Larsen published the anthology *Ny dansk museology* (New Danish Museology). The book compiles articles that deal with the critical and theoretical aspects of museum studies, as well as introducing topics such as the active user, the blockbuster exhibition, experience economy etc. in a Danish museum context. In the same vein, the subject of exhibitions is looked at from a new perspective in the book *Udstillinger – mellem focus og flimmer* (Exhibition – between focus and flickering) (Bodin and Lassenius, 2006). Here a more active and performative exhibition experience is presented.

Other authors such as Bruno Ingemann, Bjarne Sode Funch and Inge Merete Kjeldgaard have engaged empirically with the topic in Denmark in more detail. Bruno Ingemann (2012, 2006), for example, draws on Falk and Dierking when developing a

method called 'the video hat', where he asks visitors to wear a hat with a built-in video camera, recording their conversations, movements and directions of sight. Kjeldgaard (2005) and Sode Funch (2006) have also conducted other controlled experiments within both a university and a museum setting (Ingemann, 2006; Ingemann and Gjedde, 2005).

A series of new initiatives indicates that the field of museology is developing and expanding fast in Denmark. The project DREAM (Danish Research Centre on Education and Advanced Media Materials) is a collaboration between a range of Danish museums, Roskilde University and University of Southern Denmark, as well as a series of international partners. DREAM explores how digital technologies and new media are changing engagement and learning in museums (DREAM, 2013). This project has produced a range of publications dealing with interaction and digital media (Drotner, 2013; Drotner et al., 2011; Løssing, 2009). Moreover, innovative approaches to education, such as the book *Dialogue Based Learning* (Skoletjenesten and Dysthe, 2012), the initiative *Dansk Center for museumsforskning* (Danish Centre for Museum Research) (Dansk Center for Museumsforskning, 2013), as well as an increase in museological research at both Aarhus and Copenhagen universities, show that museology in general, and user engagement in museums in particular, are steadily becoming important research topics in Denmark.

There is still a need, though, to further explore the relationship between the museum and its users in a Danish context, especially to combine the theoretical and empirical approach and take into account the specifics of Danish museum culture, as well as the particular experiences that users of Danish museums have. In her report for Nordiska Akvarellmuseet, Helene Illeris (2004) concluded that systematic, interdisciplinary and empirical research into visitor experiences in Nordic museums is much needed – a conclusion that was also underlined and expanded in the report *Udredning om museernes formidling* (Review of the Museum's Interpretation) written by a committee under the Ministry of Culture in 2006 (Kulturministeriet, 2006). Both of these reports called for detailed analysis of visitor studies taking into account the national/local context. Since these reports were published, an increase in visitor studies in Denmark has been seen, both locally at different museums and also nationally, especially with the *Den Nationale Brugerundersøgelse* (the National User Survey), which started in 2009 and runs until 2014 (Kulturstyrelsen, 2013). This large, quantitative survey reveals the

specific user profiles of different museum types and, in addition, exposes to a certain extent why people choose to visit museums. Without a doubt this is valuable information that will help to develop the museum sector in Denmark, but qualitative studies that also explore the Danish museum context are still very much needed. This, with SMK as the main focus, is the aim of this thesis.

Empirical research at Statens Museum for Kunst

Finally, this thesis is connected to the empirical research previously done at SMK. This has mainly been centred on quantitative exit surveys, with a focus visitor satisfaction (see, for example, DISE, 2007, 2006a, 2006b, 2005; Gallup, 2009; Kulturstyrelsen, 2013; Statens Museum for Kunst, 2005a). This means that the Museum, based on data from 2000 up to today, has established well-documented knowledge about who visitors are and where they come from, but lacks information about how they use the Museum. Furthermore, these surveys have primarily been conducted in relation to temporary exhibitions, and not the permanent collection, and they have not looked at how users engage with the collections. Moreover, the data collected have been presented in short reports that lack critical discussion and deeper interpretation. Last, the empirical studies at SMK have not been subject to theoretical considerations or even put into the perspective of broader museological literature, which this thesis also aims to do.

Research design

Research questions

From the beginning, it has been my aim for this research to focus on one institution: Statens Museum for Kunst (SMK). The practical reason for this is that the PhD fellowship is connected to this institution, which, in collaboration with the Kulturarvens Forskerskole (Research School of Cultural Heritage), has also sponsored the PhD.[4] In this way, the thesis has been connected to SMK from the start. The advantage of this is that the limited perspective (by focusing on one museum) makes it possible to broaden and deepen the analysis of the interaction between museum and user, while continuously taking the local context into consideration. This, of course, binds and limits the findings to the specific location; however, as established in the literature

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[4] Kulturarvens forskerskole (Research School of Cultural Heritage) was founded by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Research and offered a range of PhD fellowships in collaboration with different cultural institutions, including SMK. Kulturarvens forskerskole was closed in 2011.

review above, this approach is also needed, since it will build a necessary bridge between the theoretical and empirical approaches towards an understanding of the visitor experience in museums. The study, therefore, will stand as an example, the findings of which will point towards areas for other Danish museums to investigate. However, in order to broaden this local framing, the findings and conclusions made will be consistently related and compared to other Danish findings, as well as to the international context.

Thus, the fundamental drive for this research is the quest to understand SMK's relation to its users better, as well as to generate data that will reveal how the Museum is used. In order to investigate this, one main research question forms the basis of the thesis:

How does Statens Museum for Kunst understand and progress the experience of adult visitors in the permanent galleries and how does this relate to actual visitor experiences?

Answering this question will reveal both differences and coherences between how, on the one hand, the Museum plans for its usage and, on the other, how visitors actually use SMK. To direct the research the following subsidiary questions are asked:

– How has Statens Museum for Kunst envisaged and planned the visitor experience?

– How is the collection used by adult visitors today?

– What do adult visitors gain from a visit to the SMK collections today?

Addressing these issues within one thesis requires a specific theoretical framework that takes into account the context for the experience as well as the experience itself. This will be outlined in the following section.

De-scripting the museum

The overarching theoretical inspiration for the thesis is found in script theory, a particular aspect of actor–network theory (ANT) presented by Bruno Latour and Madeleine Akrich in two publications from 1992 (Akrich, 1992; Johnson, 1988; Latour

and Akrich, 1992).[5] Overall, Akrich and Latour's theory explains how scientific knowledge is influenced by the social, cultural and material context in which it is produced but how, in return, this new knowledge also changes the context (Akrich, 1992; Arnoldi, 2006; Johnson, 1988; Latour and Akrich, 1992). Consequently, Latour and Akrich's theory is both relativistic and objectivistic (Fuglsang, 2009: 423), presenting an ontology and epistemology that acknowledge that knowledge and representation are constructed socially, but maintaining that objects exist outside this representational system (Latour, 1999: 146-47). It is, however, important to underline that this thesis does not embrace the whole ANT theory and thus is not an ANT study as such. It relates only to the specific publications mentioned above and the vocabulary and approach derived from these. ANT involves much more than the concept of script and, in addition, has developed significantly since the early 1990s, when Akrich and Latour wrote the two publications. This means that authors such as Michel Callon and John Law, as well as Bruno Latour himself, have different perspectives on what ANT is and how it can be used (Arnoldi, 2006; Fenwick and Edwards, 2012). Because of this, I do not address the general controversies and issues concerned with ANT as a whole, but only deal with the concerns in relation to the specific part of script theory that the thesis employs. Moreover, this thesis also draws on other theories that supplement and challenge Akrich and Latour's idea of script.

The reason for framing the research questions within Akrich and Latour's theoretical thinking is twofold. First, following Akrich and Latour, the opposition between humans and non-humans – between people and objects – is dissolved. This is relevant for a museum setting, which by definition consists of a meeting between humans and material objects in an architectural frame. Akrich and Latour comprehend these elements as equal actors, each contributing to and shaping the possible actions that can take place within a certain context (Akrich, 1992; Johnson, 1988).

Second, all actors are understood as active. Akrich and Latour stress the interaction between all elements in an environment. This means that not only humans generate and perform meaning; objects, equipment, architecture etc. are also active agents. It is therefore imperative to take into account the museum as a framework that exercises

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[5] ANT as a theory has developed since Latour published his book *Laboratory Life* in 1986.

limits and encourages specific meanings and actions, while at the same time examining how the user interacts with this framework (Akrich, 1992; Johnson, 1988). This means that Akrich and Latour take us beyond social constructivism and include not only humans in the meaning-making process but also objects/architecture. Akrich states (1992: 206),

> Objects participate in building heterogeneous networks that bring together actants of all types and sizes, whether human or non-human. But how can we describe the role they play within these networks? Because the answer has to do with the way in which they build, maintain, and stabilize a structure of links between diverse actants, we can adopt neither simple technological determinism nor social constructivism. […] We constantly have to move between the technical and the social.

By this, Akrich and Latour present a frame that can be used to bridge the gap between the theoretical analysis of the museum and empirical studies. It is necessary to look at both the way the museum has been designed (the technical) and how it functions (the social). Thus, Akrich and Latour outline a theory that establishes a specific view of the research field. To carry out an analysis of this field, they have developed a vocabulary that directs attention to various elements that need to be considered when identifying a script and its use. The relevant elements and the vocabulary will be presented in the following section, while the more detailed methodology will be presented in chapter 1.

Akrich and Latour's vocabulary includes the idea of *script* when analysing, or better, *de-scripting* objects and their use. The notion of script enables us to understand how any presentation or production of objects is not neutral or random, but has been arranged by *designers*. These designers have *inscribed* a use into the design, which invites and limits certain ways of engaging with the object. In this process, the designers also envisage a user: a so-called *projected user*. A *de-scription* is the process of revealing the designer's intentions with the object (and the background for this), and uncovering the profile of the projected user, as well as the *framework or program for action* within which the user performs their meaning (Latour and Akrich, 1992: 259-261).

In this way, it is recognised that meaning is performed by the users, but the physical characteristics, the design and environment, influence this performance qua the designer's built-in script. Latour and Akrich, therefore, introduce a more active role of the object and develop a language that enables a nuanced and critical perspective on the relationship between people and objects. Akrich (1992: 207-208) explains that

> when the technologists define the characteristics of their objects, they necessarily make hypotheses about the entities that make up the world into which the object is inserted. Designers thus define actors with specific tastes, competences, motives, aspirations, political prejudice, and the rest, and they assume that morality, technology, science, and economy will evolve in particular ways. A large part of the work of the innovators is that of 'inscribing' this vision of (or prediction about) the world in the technical content of the new object. I will call the end product of this work a 'script' or a 'scenario'.

Thus, Akrich looks at how designers inscribe a specific use of objects, and thereby also a projected user, into designs. But Akrich and Latour also recognise that it is important to acknowledge *real users*. In contrast to projected users, who, as described above, are defined by designers, real users *perform*, or act out the script, according to their own free will. This use can differ from the designers' understanding of the script, as

> it may be that no actors will come forward to play the roles envisaged by the designer. Or users may define quite different roles of their own. If this happens, the objects remain a chimera, for it is in the confrontation between technical objects and their users that the latter are rendered real or unreal. Thus like a film script, technical objects define a framework of action together with the actors and the space in which they are supposed to act. (Akrich, 1992: 208)

Thus, it is the *performance of real users* that determines whether a script actually exists or not.

Even though Akrich and Latour develop their understanding of the script in relation to technical objects and not museums, it is valuable to use the term when looking at the interaction between people and museums. A museum is a physical space that is arranged in a specific way by designers – the museum staff. Display strategy, floor plan, architecture, rules for admittance, interpretative material, educational activities etc. are all products of decisions that the staff, consciously or not, have taken regarding what to include in the overall script. The decisions taken when developing the museum script are, following Akrich and Latour, determined by the social and cultural context in which script has been developed, and from the materials and technology available at the time. Regarding art museums, these contexts can be the museological tradition and the philosophical, aesthetic and educational theories in use at a given time, but practical circumstances, such as the invention of electric lighting or the increasing population of cities, can also influence the context in which the museum has developed.

This also means that previous stages of a script are relevant in order to understand the current form of a script. The different contexts and circumstances have shaped the norms and traditions in the museum and are thus embedded within the script.

However, as Latour and Akrich explain, the framework influences the script, but the script is performed by real users, who make it come alive in reality. Thus, the real users have a strong impact on the script as well as the future development of it (Latour and Akrich, 1992: 206). This dialectical relationship is formulated this way:

> If we are interested in technical objects we cannot be satisfied methodologically with the designer's or user's point of view alone. Instead we have to go back and forth continually between the designer and the user, between the designer's projected user and the real user. (Akrich, 1992: 208-209)

This 'going back and forth' between the prerequisites and decisions of the designers and the experience of the real users is the frame in which this thesis is founded. This back-and-forth approach, along with Akrich and Latour's vocabulary, is also what distinguishes this thesis from other studies of museums that use script theory. The term has been applied to museums in recent years by, for example, Mary Bouquet (2006),

Carol Duncan (2004), Wallach and Duncan (2006) and Julie Noordegraaf (2004). Wallach and Duncan (2006: 47) explain their use:

> The museum, like other ceremonial monuments, is a complex architectural phenomenon that selects and arranges works of art within a sequence of spaces. This totality of art and architectural form organizes the visitor's experience as a script organizes a performance.

Agreeing with Mary Bouquet, I find Duncan's view of the visitors performing the script rather inactive (Bouquet, 2006: 179). Visitors are not puppets performing a pre-scripted performance. Instead they are, as Latour and Akrich and others argue, active; when responding to their surroundings, they act wilfully. This understanding of the script is underlined both by Bouquet and also by Noordegraaf. Both advocate for the use of Latour's theory within the museum setting. However, none of them apply the method of going back and forth between the designer's intentions and the actual user as suggested by Akrich; i.e. they do not test the script empirically. This is the aim of this thesis, thus following Akrich's statement that 'objects and people are brought into being in a process of reciprocal definition in which objects are defined by subjects and subjects by objects' (Akrich, 1992: 222).

Structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. The first, which deals with method and research design, is followed by a de-scripting of SMK through time (chapters 2–6), and an analysis of real users' performance of the museum script (chapters 7 and 8). The thesis ends with an overall conclusion.

Chapter 1 presents the methodological framework for both the de-scripting of the Museum and the performance of the real users. A historical research method is employed in order to select and engage with historical sources and materials, enabling an understanding of the museum script and its development (Egaa Kristensen, 2007; Erslev, 1975; Fellman and Rahikainen, 2012). The methodology applied for generating the empirical data is ethnographic and inspired by grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006).

Chapters 2 to 6 aim to de-script the Museum, thus exposing its prescriptions and its projected user profile. Said in another way, it looks at the circumstances, the limits and the invitations that inspire certain actions in the museum space. Entrenched in this is the discovery of the rationale of the designers or the Museum. The reason for looking at the development of the script in different times, as explained by Akrich and Latour, is that the script exists as continuations, improvements and reactions to previous scripts and therefore it is important to understand the background of the script. This is also why it is important to draw in sources that expose responses to the script, such as visitor numbers, newspaper reviews and letters from users, as these supply an understanding of the context in which the scripts exist and why they are changing and developing.

Thus, chapters 2 to 6 are structured around key moments in history during which the museum script has been transformed. The moments selected are when the Museum has been transformed physically, for example, when the collections have moved or the Museum has been expanded. The reason for investigating the script when changes in the building have occurred is because archive material has revealed that it is often during these transitions that the role of the Museum is discussed, and it is within these debates that different views of the projected user arise. Practically, it also gives the text a clear structure, and marks out certain points in history around which the analysis can unfold, keeping it rigorous and manageable.

Therefore, four historical phases, as well as a contemporary one, structure my analysis of the script as follows: Chapter 2: 1827, when the Det Kongelige Billedgalleri (the Royal Picture Gallery) was opened to the public; Chapter 3: 1896, when the current building was constructed and SMK was developed: Chapter 4: 1922, which was the year when a significant rebuild of the Museum was finished; Chapter 5: 1970, when extra exhibition space was constructed; and finally Chapter 6: 1998/2006, which deals with the time when a new extension was added. This last chapter also presents the script that will be analysed in relation to the performance of real users.

It is important to acknowledge that this linear structure pulls the development of the museum script together into neat points. Obviously, change happens gradually over time and is also implemented in museum practice along the way. It is my argument, however, that in the major refurbishments of the Museum, a clear manifestation of the

script can be seen and that these points in time serve as condensed statements of the developments that occurred between major renovations. As a consequence, the de-scription will not deliver a full and exhaustive history of the museum script over time. Rather, it aims to analyse and capture five moments in time that represent the major stages of scripting.

This de-scription of the Museum leads to an investigation of how this script is actually used, which is the aim of chapters 7 and 8. Here the performance of real users is analysed and continuously related to the script designed by the Museum. Chapter 7 presents the findings of the data generated during observation, while chapter 8, based on data from audio recordings, explores the conversations adult users have in the galleries of SMK.

Chapter 1 Methodology and Research Design

As explained in the introduction, Akrich and Latour's ideas serve as a framework for the thesis and offer a vocabulary that is useful for studying the museum script and the performance of real users. Nevertheless, it is still necessary to draw on a specific methodology when de-scripting the Museum as well as the empirical studies. It is, however, important that this methodology function within Akrich and Latour's framework. Consequently, this study applies a historical research method when dealing with a de-scription of the museum script, while for the empirical data generation concerning the performance of the real users, ethnographic research inspired by grounded theory is used.

This chapter will outline both of these methods and, in relation to the empirical data, describe the different data generation techniques – observation, review, audio recording and questionnaires – and explain how they stand on the shoulders of each other. Finally, the chapter considers the limitations of the study, describing how the methodologies and the data generation techniques can lead to certain findings but inevitably misses others. However, first a refinement of the specific group that this study deals with, namely adults, is presented.

1.1 Investigating adult museum users

When investigating both the de-scripting of the museum and the performance of real users, the research focuses on one specific group: free adult museum users. More specifically, 'adult' is defined as individuals between 30 and 65 years old and 'free' refers to adults visiting the museum on their own in their spare time. The reason for this is twofold: First, this group forms the largest group of SMK visitors (Gallup, 2009; Kulturstyrelsen, 2013; Statens Museum for Kunst, 2005), and thus they are the core group of museum users today. Despite the fact that this group is the largest, very little is known about their experiences in the Museum, especially in relation to their experience in the permanent collection. As explained in the introduction, visitors generally have not been the prime focus of historical research conducted at SMK. Furthermore, the empirical data collected at SMK up to now are mainly limited to quantitative exit surveys in the temporary exhibitions that focus primarily on visitor satisfaction rather

than their actual experience in the Museum. Hence, there is a gap of knowledge about adult experiences at SMK – a gap which this research seeks to bridge. The other reason for centring the research on adults is to limit the study. When examining both the Museum script and the performance of real users, restricting the analysis to adults will help keep a clear focal point. However, the research also takes into account and briefly discusses the development of activities for schools and visits by special institutions, and it also considers, especially when analysing the 2006 script, initiatives for children and youths. The reason for this is to show how adult users who visit the collections on their own have remained a largely unidentified and undifferentiated group.

1.2 De-scripting the museum – Historical research method

Chapters 2 to 6 consist of an investigation of how the museum users and their experiences have been imagined by SMK and what programme for action the designers have intended for the users. This serves to reveal the museum script and the way it has reached its contemporary form. The historical research provides a background for both the contemporary script and the empirical research and functions as an important reference point when real users' performances are interpreted. More explicitly, the analysis of how the Museum envisages the museum experience makes it possible to compare the museum script with the actual user experience, exposing the similarities and discrepancies between the two. For this a historical research method is used.

As we will see, the museum script can be revealed by tracing decisions about display strategy, floor plan, architecture, rules for admittance, interpretative material, general activities etc. Through these, SMK sets, unconsciously or not, a certain programme for action, thus presupposing the way users will act in the Museum and engage with the artworks. This engagement is not limited to the intellectual perception of the artwork and a specific way of viewing it, but also includes how visitors move through space – 'walking choreographs visuality within the museum', as Leahy states (2012: 75). Thus, bodily movement, perception and the aesthetic experience are interlinked and influenced by the museum script.

But as explained in the introduction, museum scripts are founded on practical circumstances and museological traditions, combined with scientific, philosophical and aesthetic ideas developed and implemented in a specific place and time. I shall

therefore also introduce the concept of 'Bildung' as well as fundamental aesthetic theories directly connected to the development of SMK. These theories have played a fundamental role in shaping the museum script and identifying the projected user, and are reflected in the museological practices and the physical and intellectual structuring of the Museum. A consequence of this is that the first reference year, 1827, is described in more detail than the other years. Here the rationale behind establishing a national museum in Denmark is reviewed along with aesthetic and educational theories that are relevant to the Danish context, theories that I will refer back to throughout the thesis.

Historical methods are concerned with how we, through different sources, reach an understanding of the past (Egaa Kristensen, 2007: 13). Different historical methods developed the past 150 years correspond to how our comprehension of knowledge has changed (Egaa Kristensen, 2007: 45). The classic methodology presented by Danish historian Kristian Erslev in 1888 is based on a critical approach to historical sources. In his publication *Historisk Teknik* (Historical Technique), Erslev introduced three steps for historical inquiry (1975: 8):

1) Locate the sources and make them available.
2) Test the sources through source criticism.
3) Draw conclusions about the past from the selected sources.

Thus, Erslev establishes a methodology in which he focuses first on the historical material: what sources exist and what they are. He then evaluates the sources, asking questions about their origin and place of finding, their materials and who made them, and comparing them with other known sources. From this the quality of the source is established. Finally, an interpretation of the sources is conducted: 'the interpretation', Erslev writes, 'is to explain what the speaking source says, i.e. what the knowledgeable reader in the past could have made from it' (1975: 37). This is done by understanding the words (or part of an image) in relation to the whole, taking into account the historical and cultural context (Erslev, 1975: 38). The sources are then, according to the object of inquiry, divided into primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are close to the object or situation of investigation, and secondary sources are further away (Erslev, 1975: 46-47).

To a large extent the historical research for this thesis is based on the Erslev method. Sources have been researched, found, tested, evaluated and interpreted. However, certain changes in the understanding of epistemology in the past fifty years have meant that his method cannot stand without comment. As Susanna Fellman and Marjatta Rahikainen explain in their publication *Historical Knowledge,* historical research changed radically with the linguistic turn and postmodernism: 'The linguistic turn and the postmodern challenge included an argument according to which historical research is nothing but a literary device, pure fiction, and that approaching the past is, by definition, impossible' (2012: 7).

With the understanding of history as subjective, the sources, it can be argued, became less important: 'Historians have reasoned that sources can be used indiscriminately, as one source is just as good as another, and all source criticism is pointless' (Fellman and Rahikainen, 2012: 2). Fellman and Rahikainen contend that these theoretical discussions have had a great impact on how historical research methods are practised today; most importantly, many historians have become more self-reflective and aware of and explicit in their theoretical and methodological position (2012: 1). However, they maintain that historical sources are the foundation of historical research and argue that sources can remain valid while, at the same time, the historian can 'learn what there was to be learned [from postmodernism] without renouncing the historian's craft' (2012: 8). This can be done using the methodology offered by Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier (2001). They build on the classic method of source criticism but stress the interrelationship between the sources and the historian or researcher who interprets them, claiming that the researcher never can re-establish the complete meaning of a text but, as long as she remains critical, can strive for it (Howell and Prevenier, 2001: 64-65). Comparing this to Erslev's statement above, where he asserts that 'the interpretation is to explain what […] the knowledgeable reader in the past could have made from it' (1975: 37), it is clear that writing about history has become more complex. Instead of claiming an objective historical truth on the basis of the sources, historical interpretation is depended on the researcher and her context. This means that the position and presumptions of the researcher impact her interpretation of history. As Howell and Prevenier (2001: 1) state,

> Historians do not discover a past as much as they create it; they choose
> the events and people that they think constitute a past, and they decide
> what about them is important to know […] History is not just there,
> awaiting the researcher's discovery. Unlike a forgotten poem, the ruins of
> a cathedral, or a lost law code that might be uncovered, history has no
> existence before it's written.

Where Erslev considered sources as evidence, Howell and Prevenier on the other hand argue that no sources are 'perfectly reliable' (2001: 2) as they cannot provide exact information about the past. This view is adapted by this research.

Primary and secondary sources about Statens Museum for Kunst
The history of SMK and its collections has in recent years been explored by a handful of researchers. However, its history beyond 1952 has not been considered, nor has it ever been investigated from a visitor perspective. Simple elements such as visitor numbers, educational activities or interpretative materials have not been mapped thoroughly, leaving both substantial and crucial gaps in the history of the Museum. This means that the de-scription of the Museum can be characterised as basic research that has never conducted before. It is therefore based mainly on primary sources found in the archives at SMK, as well as in the State Archives and in the Royal Library. The sources included in this research encompass architectural drawings, floor plans, photographs of the exterior and interior of the Museum, newspaper articles, letters, yearbooks, income lists and annual reports. Sources that are relevant for experience designed. Together they form the museum script and, when analysed, reveal the approach the Museum has taken towards its visitors.

There are, however, also secondary sources that I can draw upon. Former Director of the Museum Villads Villadsen (1998) documented the history of the Museum through 1952, and senior researchers in art history Hanne Kolind Poulsen and Eva de la Fuente Petersen, among others, have explored the early history of the collections. Britta Tøndborg's PhD thesis, *From Kunstkammer to art museum: Exhibiting and cataloguing art in the Royal collections in Copenhagen, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries* (2004), applied contemporary museological theory to explore the development of the Museum in the nineteenth century. Besides these publications, which use SMK as their

main focus, a small body of literature about Danish museums in general also exists. I have drawn on these when appropriate. However, none of this research has looked at how education, audience research and display practices have been implemented in the Museum, nor has it combined the moments of change, pulling them together and creating an overview of how visitors have been perceived at SMK. Last, as SMK and its history do not exist in isolation, relevant theories presented in international museum studies literature will place the development of the Museum and my analysis concerning visitors in a museological context.

In this way, this thesis will begin to map SMK's perception of users, a task that has never been done before. However, it is important to take into account the limitations proposed by the historical research method. It is clear that the history presented in this research is directed and influenced by the research questions and the sources used, as well as the overall theoretical frame that is employed.

1.3 Performance of real users – follow the actors

The sections above have outlined the historic research method used when de-scripting the museum with the aim of understanding how the museum script has developed and taken its contemporary form. However, as Akrich and Latour remind us, the investigation of user experiences shapes other crucial dimensions of the understanding the script (Akrich, 1992; Johnson, 1988; Latour and Akrich, 1992). Therefore, chapters 7 and 8 look at how real users perform the script designed by the Museum. This needs to be done because, as Akrich argues, if the script is performed in a significantly different way from the designers' intention, it will remain a 'chimera' (1992: 208). It will be a fantasy, a creature that does not exist in reality.

This is also what Latour means when he states that there is no pre-existing social reality, that it is always performed in practice: 'I am going to define the social not as a special domain, a specific realm, or a particular sort of thing, but only as a very peculiar movement of re-association and reassembling' (2007: 7). This quotation is taken from Latour's book *Assembling the Social*, where he presents a 'travel guide', as he calls it, into the social (2007: 17). Here he explains the duties of social scientists (2007: 12):

Your task is no longer to impose some order, to limit the range of acceptable entities, to teach actors what they are, or to add some reflexivity to their blind practice. Using a slogan from ANT, you have 'to follow the actors themselves', that is try to catch up with their often wild innovations in order to learn from them what the collective existence has become in their hands, which methods they have elaborated to make it fit together, which accounts could best define the new associations that they have been forced to establish.

This describes an approach of exploring the performance of the actors from their perspective and demonstrates the view that the social is produced in the interaction between actors (including objects and architecture) (Latour, 2007: 22). In a museum context this approach establishes the social, the museum space, as coming into being through the interaction between the actors, including users, objects, environment etc. Latour's understanding enables a nuanced way of perceiving users' experiences, since it primarily focuses on the interaction and the performance that is carried out in a specific local setting.

To be more concrete, following Akrich and Latour, the methodology and research design for generating empirical data must be based on an exploratory and inductive approach. As far as possible, pre-existing assumptions, expectations and theoretical categories need to be discarded; the structure and coding of the data will be produced from the performance itself, not attached to the data beforehand. The intention must always be to 'to follow the actors themselves' (Latour, 2007: 12). However, Latour's idea that it is possible to discharge any preconceptions or pre-existing frames is problematic. First of all, it can be asserted that Latour's own theory is a theory and therefore a framework that exists prior to the study. In addition, this theory offers a vocabulary and a structure; it might not present categories that dictate the findings in the data, but it does direct attention to specific interactions and therefore also affects the outcome of the analysis. Last, it can be argued that research, despite the methodology, cannot be neutral and without preconception. Just as stated in regards to the historical method, we as researchers are grounded within a specific context and this will always shape the way we view and interpret the world.

Nevertheless, with this in mind, I still find Latour's approach rewarding and thought provoking because it aspires to 'reassemble' the actions in the museum space from the perspective of the users, and it underlines the importance of developing new categories for analysis as well as constantly questioning whether the findings really are founded in the data. This creates a new way of approaching the museum space, while at the same time endorsing a reflective process of data generation and analysis.

1.4 Ethnographic research inspired by grounded theory

In order to comply with Akrich and Latour, a method of ethnographic research inspired by grounded theory is used when investigating the performance of real users. This methodology works well in relation to Akrich and Latour as it focuses on the interaction between actors, while also maintaining an inductive technique. In accordance with the method of 'going back and forth' between the design of the script and the real users' performance of it, comparison with the script will be presented concurrently to the analysis and in the conclusions to each chapter.

Ethnography has many definitions attached to it (Atkinson et al., 2001: 1-4). In this research it is broadly understood as 'a systematic approach to learning about the social and cultural life of communities, institutions or other settings' (LeCompte and Schensul, 2010: 1). Thus, 'ethnography takes the position that human behaviour and the ways in which people construct meaning of their worlds and their lives are highly variable and locally specific' (LeCompte and Schensul, 2010: 1). Data is therefore generated in the social world, in 'the field' (LeCompte and Schensul, 2010: 2), and the aim is to understand what is happening there from the perspective of the users.

Ethnographic research can be carried out in a number of ways using different methodologies (Atkinson et al., 2001). In this thesis, ethnographic research is inspired by grounded theory. This is a particular way of gathering data from the field. The theory was initially outlined by sociologists Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* from 1967. Here they developed a method guided by certain fundamental principles: First of all, the researcher should be engaged in data generation and analysis simultaneously and the categories identified should emerge from the data, not from the hypotheses. Moreover, a practice of constantly rechecking data with the analysis should be employed and this should lead to progression in the

development of the theory. This means that grounded research seeks to combine the inductive process with deduction, thus establishing empirical data as the starting point from which theoretical categories are constructed, which are then tested against more empirical data (Bryant, 2010; Charmaz, 2006; Corbin and Strauss, 1998).

This ongoing process of engaging with the data, Kathy Charmaz argues, 'fosters seeing your data in a new light' (2006: 2). Charmaz, who has contributed to the development of grounded theory, has adapted Strauss and Glaser's initial ideas to contemporary research methodology, while stressing the flexibility of grounded theory. Charmaz underlines that the method can be applied to a number of settings and used in combination with other methods (2006: 9). She explains that grounded theory 'consists of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for generating and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories "grounded" in the data themselves' (2006: 2). The main difference between Charmaz's understanding of grounded theory and Strauss and Glaser's is based on the criticism that I raised in relation to Latour's inductive approach to understanding the actors' performance of the script. Charmaz explains how grounded theory is always constructed; i.e. the analytic categories are not discovered within the data but constructed by the researcher: 'We *construct* our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices' (2006: 10).[6] It is Charmaz's version of grounded theory that I will be following in my empirical studies, since it recognises the researcher can never be completely neutral but is inevitably active in her fieldwork.

1.4 Qualitative research

Since this study is based on ethnographic research, it is natural to generate data using qualitative techniques. This is also the case with the main part of the data generation; however, in order to triangulate, and thereby put the qualitative findings into perspective, questionnaires based on a quantitative approach are also used.

The main difference between quantitative and qualitative research is that while quantitative research focuses on constructing an understanding of the area that is

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[6] Other researchers have acknowledged that it is not possible and not even desirable to pursue data with no preconceptions. However, they still argue that constant dialogue with the data and the use of data as the starting point provides a productive reflective framework. For more see, for example, Thomas and James (2006).

statistically valid and can be generalised, qualitative research aims to understand a specific opinion, action or area in depth (Thisted, 2010: 220). For many years a battle between qualitative and quantitative research has existed (Silverman, 2006: 20-22). This is mainly because the two approaches draw on different epistemological positions: constructivism, which believes that the world in constructed through interpretations, and positivism, which argues that an objective reality exists outside the subject. Today much research operates across the two research approaches. This is a way of both triangulating the data and dealing with complex research questions (Creswell and Clark, 2010; Goertz and Mahoney, 2012).

The essentials of qualitative research are explained above in relation to ethnography. There are, however, some guidelines that need to be followed to ensure the quality of the research.

Qualitative techniques are used when the study is concerned with understanding how people describe or experience something. It is not a question of calculating the statistical average of something but of gaining an in-depth understanding of how people 'think, feel, act, learn or develop' (Tanggaard and Brinkmann, 2010: 17). There are fewer rules and programmes to follow when conducting qualitative research; however, there are ways to make the study more stringent and usable, ensuring the quality of the research (Dahler-Larsen, 2008: 21). This is not because the research needs to prove itself as a reflection of an outer world, but because the construction of the data is an investigative process that can vary in quality. Dahler-Larsen describes, for example, how the issues such as *authenticity, inclusion,* and *transparency* are significant when dealing with qualitative techniques. He explains how it is good practice to use data in its original form – for example, using transcripts instead of memories (Dahler-Larsen, 2008: 39). This is also emphasised by Silverman, who argues that in qualitative research the concept of *authenticity* replaces the notion of validity, which, in quantitative research, is concerned with the question of whether the survey measures what it is supposed to (Silverman, 2006: 9). It is also important to *include* all data generated in the findings, and to ensure that the process of generating the data is *transparent* (Dahler-Larsen, 2008: 42-45). These issues will be dealt with when explaining the research design for the empirical studies.

1.5 Empirical research design

Informed by the methodology discussed above, the empirical study followed the procedure of grounded research and thus was guided by a specific process: 'Seek data, describe observed events, answer fundamental questions about what is happening, then develop theoretical categories to understand it' (Charmaz, 2006: 25).

In order to remain focus on the studied 'phenomenon' and 'process', the research adapts a list of questions from Charmaz (2006: 22-24). The list was adapted to the two research questions regarding the performance of real users: How is the collection used by adult visitors today? and What do adult visitors gain from a visit to the SMK collections today? Charmaz's procedural questions ensure a nuanced and reflective answer to the two questions, thus driving the research forward from a broad understanding of where the action takes place (What is the setting of the action?) to an exploration of what goals the actors have with their performance and what they gain from it (What reward do various actors gain from their participation?). This also ensures a reflective mind-set and produces the motivation to go back and forth between empirical data and the conceptual thinking. The list of questions is as follows:

- What is the setting of the action? When and how does action take place?
- What is going on? What is the overall activity?
- How are actors organised?
- What do actors pay attention to?
- What practices, skills, strategies and methods of operation do actors employ?
- What goals do actors seek?
- What reward do various actors gain from their participation?

Following this process and answering these questions, the research design developed into steps, each step giving way to the next and determining the next method of data generation. Moreover, the various steps also functioned as methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1978: 304) and tested the interpretation of the prior step. In this way, one technique grew out of the analysis of the prior data and so forth. The result was a data chain that constantly tested and triangulated the interpretation of prior data.

During data generation and analysis, the following steps developed:

1) Framing the research through initial observations
2) Observations
3) Review of existing visitor surveys
4) Audio recordings including follow-up interviews/questionnaire
5) Questionnaires for all visitors

Framing the research

In order to start the investigation of the adults' performance of the script, I worked with the first question from the grounded research list: What is the setting of the action? In this process I carried out informal observations and wrote field notes. My aim was to narrow the research field and find an appropriate area of the Museum where the research could be carried out.

On the basis of these initial observations, the Modern Collection in the Museum was selected as the research field. The reason for this was that there were several hanging techniques represented in the section, and a variety of interpretative material was offered. In this way, the specifics of the 2006 script were present in the collection. Moreover, the observations showed that while the collection contained popular areas where users stayed for longer periods of time, there were also areas that users walked through quickly. Last, the collection was in a confined space (fig. 1.2), with a central way in and out, but the area was still large enough (approx. 1200 m^2) for users to explore the collection in different ways. From the observations, I could gather that users spent roughly between ten minutes and an hour and fifteen minutes in the collection.

Observations

Having decided on the specific area in the collection, I moved on to answer the next procedural questions: What is going on? How are actors organised? Based on the informal observations, I decided to explore this method of data generation in more detail. The setting that was chosen for the observations was the large (453 m^2) central space in the Modern Collection (fig. 1.1). This was chosen because of its centrality and because it was a space that drew in many users.

Fig. 1.1 SMK, Room 201

Observation is a traditional ethnographic research technique and has been used in museums extensively. However, at SMK it has never been conducted, and thus there is no information available about how users move in the Museum. Therefore, in order to answer the research question 'How is the collection used by the adult visitors today?', detailed observations were appropriate as this would provide a basic understanding of how users behave in the collection, an understanding which is fundamental for investigating the performance of real users.

Observation generates rich and detailed data gathered in situ and first-hand by the researcher (Silverman, 2006: 9; Tanggaard and Brinkmann, 2010: 82). However, it is also a time-consuming method and has its limits in regards to explaining why certain actions happen (Kothari, 2004: 96; Silverman, 2006: 32-33). The type of observation employed in this study is direct unstructured observation. In contrast to participant observation, where the researcher participates in the actions that are observed (Denzin, 1970: 185), direct observation means that the researcher does not participate in the actions, thus aspiring to a detached and unobtrusive position (Kothari, 2004: 96). Whether this unobtrusive position is possible is debatable. It can be argued that no matter how discreetly observations are made, they will always affect the field that a

researcher has entered. This needs to be taken into account when analysing the data. However, it was my experience that hardly anyone noticed my presence. This might have been due to the fact that while conducting the observations, I positioned myself in a corner with a book. This position was similar to the many gallery guards whom the actors saw in the Museum.
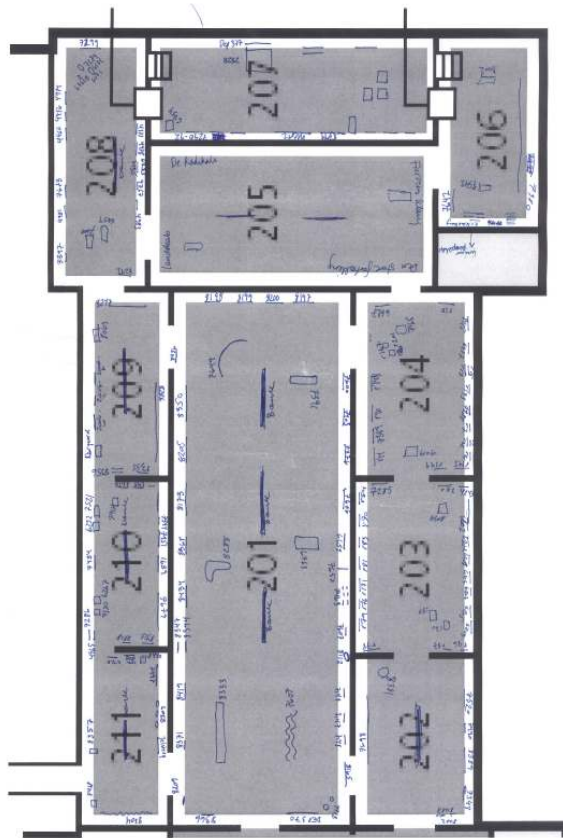
Fig. 1.2 Tracking sheet

Before observing, I developed a basic tracking sheet, which consisted of a floor plan where I had plotted the different artworks in the space. (fig. 1.2) While observing, I drew in the users' paths and continuously developed a series of codes for the movements and actions of the actors. The codes were very basic and when fully developed, the list consisted of five different actions:

S – Stop
F – Focus
D – Dialogue
L – Reading (P – Panel, V – Label)
O – Orientate

Thus, the observations were unstructured until saturation was met and no new categories could be added, and from that point on, they became semi-structured (Kothari, 2004: 96).

In total seventy-five observations were made in January 2008; fifty-six of them were conducted after the theoretical saturation was met, and therefore these form the basis for the analysis. Despite the fact that the observations were conducted in a qualitative manner, a system of random sampling, where I tracked the first user who came into the space and every other user/group of users who entered, was employed in order provide transparency to the process and prevent bias in the data generation (Dahler-Larsen, 2008: 42-45).

After generating the data, the tracking sheets were analysed using the grounded theory approach suggested by Charmaz. Coding is, as Charmaz explains, a crucial part of the research process, since 'coding is the pivotal link between generating data and developing an emergent theory' (2006: 46). I started by analysing each sheet (initial open coding), applying simple codes in order to define what was happening. Afterwards, I used a more focused approach where I structured the codes and, to gain an understanding of the relationship between the codes, constructed a hierarchy (Charmaz, 2006: 46-48). To support the coding, the average user time spent in the room was also calculated, as was the average time spent looking at artworks.

The findings of these observations will be explored in detail in chapter 7, but here I will just state one basic fact that emerged from the data: hardly anyone visited the collection on their own. In general, adults arrived in pairs and their movements followed the same pattern. They would enter the space together, maybe split up for ten to twenty seconds, alert each other to specific artworks, have conversations and then leave the room together. Thus, while coding and analysing the tracking sheets, it became clear that the museum experience for the actors was a very social activity and that their experience could not be isolated from their companions'. Instead they continuously created, recreated and negotiated their experience in collaboration and interaction with their companions.

Review of existing visitor surveys
In order to test the findings from the observations, I studied the quantitative visitor surveys conducted at SMK in the previous eight years (2000–2008). The surveys carried out in the collection showed that an average of 75% of all adults visited the Museum with another adult (Danmarks Turistråd, 2003; Statens Museum for Kunst, 2006a, 2003). A similar pattern was evident in the temporary exhibitions, where an average of 74% visited with another adult (DISE, 2007, 2006a, 2006b, 2005, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c). This confirmed the social nature of the museum visit. The review also showed that across a number of years, the main reason for visiting the Museum was given as 'to have a good experience with my companion' (DISE, 2007, 2006a, 2006b), once again underlining that social interaction is at the heart of the museum experience.

But the review also showed what had not been explored. The existing surveys did not explain the social nature of the museum experience in depth, nor did they demonstrate how the social experience unfolded in the collection. Thus, a more detailed exploration of why and how the collection is used as a site for social experiences was needed.

The review of the existing visitor surveys will be used throughout the analysis of the performance of real users in order to contextualise and nuance the findings in the empirical data.

Audio recordings

Analysing the observations showed where users walked, stopped, focused and talked, but did not reveal what made them stop, what they talked about or how they engaged with the artworks. Therefore, a different data generation technique was applied. An in-depth study was carried out in situ in order to both complement and retest the data from the observations.

The aim was to answer in more depth these questions: How is the collection used by the adult visitors today? What do adult visitors gain from a visit to the SMK collections today? Again, to ensure a nuanced and reflective answer, Charmaz's last four procedural questions were followed: What goals do actors seek? What do actors pay attention to? What practices, skills, strategies and methods of operation do actors employ? And finally, what reward do various actors gain from their participation?
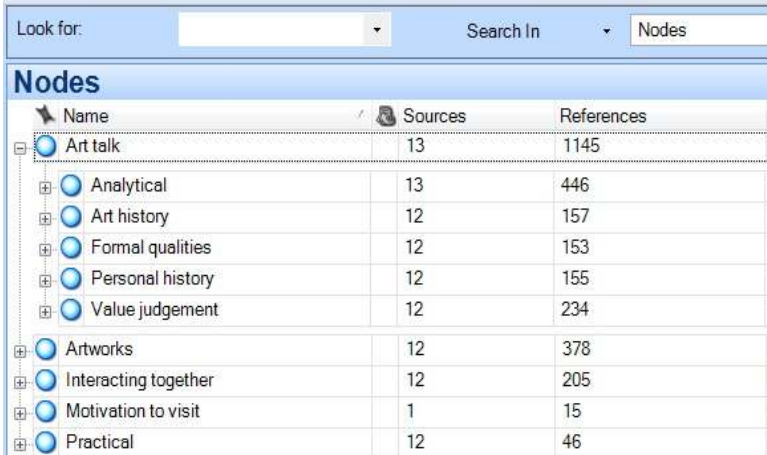
The method decided upon was audio recording of pairs walking through the collection on their own while wearing a wireless microphone. Prior to the data generation, which took place in February 2008, the equipment was tested extensively and adjustments made. Participants were recruited as they entered the Modern Collection. Selecting users that met the age requirements and were in a social group of two, I asked every third pair that came through the door. Before participating, they were asked to sign a consent form (appendix 2).

Following the recordings, users were asked to fill out a questionnaire in order to establish demographics, education, previous art experiences, their view of art museums and their relationship to their companion (appendix 3). This was filled out together with

the researcher. This was necessary since personal background and interpersonal relations had to be taken into account when analysing the dialogues. In total, thirty-two pairs were asked to be recorded and fourteen agreed, a participation rate of 43%. Thus, the data set consists of twenty-eight people, arranged in fourteen pairs. Two of the pairs proved to have problems with the recording device, so they had to be removed. In the end, twenty-four people in twelve pairs participated in the recordings, producing approximately thirteen hours of conversation.

An important consideration when deciding to use audio recording as a data generation technique is the influence of the technique on participants' behaviour. In the same way as described regarding observation, gaining unobtrusive access to the experience of the user is impossible. As demonstrated, the observations were as discreet as possible. In contrast, my direct contact with the participants, as well as their wearing the microphone, was far from discreet. It is clear that the recording had an impact on the way the users acted in the collection. However, as Leinhardt and Knutson argue in relation to their recording of museum visitors, 'people cannot easily change certain fundamental features of their behaviour [...] nor can they suddenly increase or alter their vocabulary or sensitivity to object and display issues' (2004: 164). During the audio recording, I was aware of this, and my conclusion was similar to that of Leinhardt and Knutson. I could see, however, if I compared the behaviour of the recorded participants with the ones I just observed, that more talk and extra stops occurred. This means that while being recorded, the users were on their best museum behaviour. Therefore, it can be expected that the recorded users spent a longer time in the collection and looked more at objects than they would have done normally. They probably also engaged in more talk regarding artworks and less in personal conversations than they would have. Nevertheless, my recordings also include long stretches of personal talk, revealing that participants did engage in that type of conversation. In addition, in the questionnaire that the participants filled out at the end of the recording session, they were asked how they felt about being recorded and how it had affected their behaviour. Here eighteen of twenty-four (75%) answered that they forgot the microphone was there, four (17%) said they spoke less than they would have done, while one stated that she talked more than she would normally have done.

After generating the data, the audio recordings were transcribed and the first round of coding began. Following Charmaz's process, I started with 'initial open coding'; using printed transcriptions, I identified, named, categorised and described how the

Fig. 1.3 NVivo coding

participants interacted, what they talked about and what strategies they employed (Charmaz, 2006: 47-49).

The conversations were also divided into segments related to specific artworks or to a particular type of conversation. After this, I started on a more 'focused coding'. Due to the large amount of data, the programme NVivo was used at this stage (fig. 1.3). Here the initial codes were structured and patterns and themes began to be generated (Charmaz, 2006: 55-60). The coding proceeded until theoretical saturation was met and no new categories arose. When theoretical saturation was achieved, the transcripts were once again looked through and coded. Simultaneously, 'axial coding' was carried out, relating the categories and subcategories to each other (Charmaz, 2006: 60-61). During the process of coding, short memos for each pair were also written, prompting a first analysis of the data. As Charmaz states, 'Memos catch your thoughts, capture the comparisons and connection you make, and crystallize questions and directions for you to pursue' (2006: 72).

Questionnaires

After the observations, the review and the audio recordings, one last data generation was conducted. This was done to triangulate the main findings, thus putting the core data into perspective. In addition, while the observations and audio recordings were traditional ethnographic techniques, where the lived experience in the field was analysed, it was considered beneficial to broaden the perspective and hear the users'

comments in regards to their motivations for coming to the Museum, as well as their understanding of what a good museum experience was. Here the age group was widened to include all visitors above 18 years old, as this would enable comparisons between the 30-to-65–year-olds and the younger visitors.

The technique used was an extensive questionnaire. It was designed as an exit survey similar to the one the participants in the audio recording had filled out (appendix 4).

A first version of the questionnaire was tested in a pilot study, during which twenty users filled out the questionnaire (Nørregård-Nielsen et al., 2012: 188). Thereafter, the length of the questionnaire was adjusted and a few of the questions rephrased. It was then handed out in the front hall of the Museum to a total number of 120 users. Of these, 96 filled out the questionnaire correctly and were included in the sample. The main reason for excluding the other 24 was that the questionnaire was not completed sufficiently, which indicates that despite the reduction in questions after the pilot study, the questionnaire was still too long for some people.

After the data generation, the results from the questionnaires were entered into the program Surveyxact (Rambøll Management Consulting, 2013), by which the data was analysed.

A number of initiatives were taken in order to ensure that the questionnaire would be representative. First of all, it was taken into account that certain user profiles visited at specific times during the week (during morning and early afternoons, many older people visited, while weekends and Wednesday evenings attracted working adults and families). The data were generated at different times during the week, and to ensure that the number of questionnaires collected at a given time reflected the number of users who would normally visit, more questionnaires were collected at the weekend, as it is at this time that most adults visit. In addition, an eye was kept on how many men and women filled out the questionnaire. Normally, the Museum sees around 60% women and 40% men (Gallup, 2009). The same was identified in the questionnaire, with 38% of completers being men and 62% women. In order to be transparent when using the data from the questionnaires, the number of participants will always be noted in tables or in the discussion of the data.

Judging the questionnaire in terms of validity, there are a few questions that seem to be less valid. Some respondents, when asked to remember what they had read in the collection, seemed to confuse wall text with labels and vice versa. This indicates that, despite there being no problem in the pilot study, these two questions might be less valid. In terms of reliability, the percentage of users between 18 and 29 years old was surprisingly high compared to other surveys. One circumstance which could have influenced this was that while generating data, there was a large temporary exhibition at the Museum. This exhibition attracted a large number of young people (DISE, 2008). It is therefore reasonable to assume that this exhibition affected the age spread in the data generated and therefore also influenced the reliability in this area. Both of these issues concerning validity and reliability will be taken into account when analysing the data.

1.6 Ethics

The empirical research process was cleared ethically with the University of Leicester as well as with SMK. All data generation processes were kept anonymous, and for the audio recording, a written consent form was filled out by the participants (appendix 2). In addition, an information sheet describing the research was available to all participants (appendixes 5 and 6). Here they could read more about the project and find contact details for the researcher.

1.7 Limitations of the study

There are, of course, limits to both the methodology and the research design. This research applies a methodology that, to a large extent, is based on in situ techniques. It is the lived experience that is prioritised, as opposed to the reflective account that, for example, interviews provide. Only the questionnaire gave the participants the opportunity to reflect back on their experience. Thus, the main part of the data was interpreted by the researcher, who was not able to confirm these interpretations with the participants. This is, on the other hand, also a strength of the data, since participants often do not do what they say they do.

In addition, while the observations generated data that help us understand how users move in space, both in relation to themselves and in relation to others, the audio recordings focused on the spoken word and on how meaning is developed in the interaction between the user, their companion and the objects. Hence, with the present

data, it is not possible to gain an understanding of the unarticulated or the emotional experience of art. This we only see indications of when associations and value judgements are detected within the conversations.

Also of importance is the influence of the data generation techniques on the findings. As described in regards to both observations and audio recordings, it should be expected that these techniques will have an impact on the behaviour of the users. This has to be taken into account when considering the limitations of the study.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the target group and the methodology of both the description of the museum and the performance of the real user. In addition, it has explained the research design for the empirical studies and the practical issues connected with data generation.

As the research questions state, the focus of this research is on how the Museum's perception of the museum experience relates to the experience visitors actually have. However, not all visitors are examined, as the target group for the research was defined as free adults between 30 and 65 years old.

The adults' experiences were to be investigated both from the perspective of the museum and from an empirical point of view. In order to generate data that can be used to investigate both, a historical research method and ethnographic research inspired by grounded theory have been applied. These were chosen because they support and concretise the theoretical frame that Akrich and Latour have outlined. Thus, the methodology supports the theoretical vocabulary. The historical research supplies data that testify to the background and the practical design of the museum script and reveal how the script developed and reached the form it had in 2006. It was described how the critical source approach presented by Martha C. Howell forms a foundation for the historical method. The ethnographical research also works within the frame of Latour and Akrich. For example, the concept of 'following the actor' corresponds to ethnographical research, which focuses on actions in the field. In addition, grounded research maintains that research should be inductive; i.e. the theory is generated on the basis of data. This supports Latour's assertion that no order or structure should be

imposed on performance of the actors, but that the social should be 'assembled' in a new way, without any prejudice (2007: 12).

In order to ensure a strong methodological anchoring of the empirical study, Charmaz's method of ethnographic research inspired by grounded theory was applied. This called for a combination of an inductive and deductive approach. The research process, guided by Charmaz, pursued the following steps: What is the setting of the action? What is going on? How are actors organised? What do actors pay attention to? What practices, skills, strategies and methods of operation do actors employ? What goals do actors seek? And finally, what reward do various actors gain from their participation? These questions guide the answering of the research questions in a nuanced and reflective manner.

The chapter also described how the data were generated mainly in the Modern Collection at SMK using different techniques: observations, reviews of existing surveys, audio recordings and questionnaires. The techniques grew of out the coding and analysis of the previously gathered data; thus, the first coding and analysis led to more data generation, coding and analysis, which again led to the next. The result was a continuous chain of findings that were continually tested and reframed by a new technique. During the process, theoretical concepts were drawn into the analysis and applied to and supplemented by the findings in the data.

Chapter 2 1827: Between Science and Aesthetics

This chapter undertakes the de-scription of the museum script as it was laid out for visitors in 1827. This is the first of the five scripts that the thesis addresses before investigating the performance of real users. In this way, the chapter contributes to answering the research question: How has Statens Museum for Kunst envisaged and planned the visitor experience? The chapter explores the physical architecture and structure of the Museum, but also presents the philosophies that lay behind the foundation the Museum. Issues concerning 'Bildung', aesthetic theory and nationalism are discussed, since they form the context for the development of the script.

The history of SMK is reminiscent of many other national art galleries in Europe but with its own national characteristics (Bennett, 1998a; Duncan, 2004; Hooper-Greenhill, 1993; Sheehan, 2000). The collections date back to the sixteenth century, and in the following centuries, the Danish royal family gathered art objects and curiosities in a Kunstkammer. In 1821, it was decided to move the Kunstkammer and separate the paintings from the rest of the objects, leading to the establishment of Det Kongelige Billedgalleri (the Royal Picture Gallery), which opened in Christiansborg Castle in 1827 (Jørgensen, 1882: 41-43). In 1849, when the absolute monarchy in Denmark fell, the collections were handed over to the state. However, the collection remained in Christiansborg Castle until a fire in 1884 led to the decision to build the present SMK (Villadsen, 1998: 22-43). In 1896 SMK was opened. Almost immediately after the opening of the Museum, the lack of sufficient space became an issue, and during the twentieth century, the Museum underwent various architectural changes to solve this problem. In 1998 an extension was added (Dirckinck-Holmfeld, 1998).

When Det Kongelige Billedgalleri opened on 11 June 1827 in Christiansborg Slot, it was the first time the royal collections of paintings had been made available for the general public. It was also the first time that the paintings had been separated from other objects and hung in a scientifically structured manner based on nationality, art schools and chronology. This was the culmination of several years of work with objects from the Kunstkammer by manager Johan Conrad Spengler. The collections had grown and needed more space, and in addition, the building required restoration, so the objects

had to be moved into a temporary building. This was done in 1824. Three years later, in 1827, the collections had been categorised, the Kunstkammer officially dissolved and Det Kongelige Billedgalleri opened on the top floor in the main building of Christiansborg Slot. Spengler was announced as inspector and later director of the Gallery.

But it was not just practical circumstances that motivated the transformation from Kunstkammer to Picture Gallery: the decision was also influenced by the rise of the modern museum taking place in Europe during this time. Denmark was especially influenced by the developments in France and Germany. Around 1800, A.W. Hauch (1755–1838), who was lord high steward for the Danish court and responsible for the royal collections, had looked to France and the establishment of the Louvre and was inspired to develop a Danish museum system (Villadsen, 1998: 21-22). From 1819 and onwards, influential German art historian Karl Frederick Rumohr (1785–1843) was in close contact with Prince and later King Christian VIII (1786–1848), advising him in the development of the gallery. In this way, Det Kongelige Billedgalleri was guided by the ideas that created the wave of European museums that were established in the midst of the French Revolution and were part of the Enlightenment's concept of civilisation and general education of the public (Bennett, 1998a; Hooper-Greenhill, 1993; Sheehan, 2000).[7] Here museums with their objects would be used as educational vehicles to strengthen national identity and develop civic pride. As such, the royal collections went from symbolising the king's material wealth to representing the cultural and spiritual heritage of the nation (Duncan, 2004: 21-46). This development coincided with, and was underlined by, the decision to start acquiring Danish contemporary art. Until this time the gallery had consisted mainly of international European art, but in the late 1820s, King Christian VIII asked for an increase in the acquisition of Danish contemporary art, emphasising the importance of presenting the cultural heritage of Denmark in the Gallery (Villadsen, 1998: 49). But what were the theories behind these educational goals and how did they develop? And how was the art object perceived in this context? These questions are central to understanding the script of 1827.

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[7] For example, the Louvre opened in 1793 and National Gallery in London in 1832.

2.1 Self-practices and 'Bildung'

In his PhD thesis *Selvdannelse og socialitet – forsøg på en socialanalytisk samtidsdiagnose* (Self-Formation and Sociality – an attempt at a social-analytical diagnosis of our time), Danish researcher Lars Geer Hammershøj (2003) considers how we form ourselves in late modernity. In this section, I will build on his ideas and present the notion of 'Bildung' in order to understand how Det Kongelige Billedgalleri was used as an educational tool in 1827. It is important to note that Hammershøj is not concerned with museums, but with how general education and formation of the self has taken place since around 1750. I will continuously return to Hammershøj's thoughts throughout the thesis, since self-formation is a central concept when trying to understand both the script and the real users' performance in SMK.

Self-practices

Hammershøj is inspired by French philosopher Michel Foucault when he conceptualises the so-called neo-humanistic self-practice (2003: 33-171). Previously, scholars such as Eileen Hooper-Greenhill have applied Foucault's theory of epistemes to the development of museums (Hooper-Greenhill, 1993). Here the concern was to understand the history of museums in the light of Foucault's classic and modern epistemes, focusing on the structures of knowledge and power in society. In 1982, in the final years of Foucault's career, he wrote the article *Technologies of the Self*, where he stated

> Perhaps I have insisted too much in the technology of domination and power. I am more and more interested in the interaction between oneself and others and in the technologies of individual domination, the history of how an individual acts upon himself, in the technology of self. (Foucault, 1988: 19)

Since it is the projected as well as the real user experience this thesis seeks to understand, Foucault's shift from 'system' to 'individual' is helpful, especially as interpreted in the writings of Hammershøj. In Hammershøj's view, self-practice is the way by which people have related to, developed and formed themselves in relation to society in different times. This is important for museums since the concept of self-

practice can help us understand what the role of the museum is, and why and how users are meant to engage with it.

With Foucault, Hammershøj looks at self-practices in order to investigate and reveal the structures and values that drive them. Self-practices can be identified and concretised, for example, by looking at ideal types, which constitute the 'perfect' person in a given time, thus presenting an ideal that individuals can mirror themselves in regards of ethical, social or religious values (Hammershøj, 2003).

Hammershøj describes Foucault's two self-practices as predecessors of the so-called neo-humanistic practice, which is important for the script of 1827. Briefly, the Greco-Roman self-practice (fourth century B.C. – second century A.D.) is an ethical self-practice concerned with 'a care of the self'. Through self-mastery and education of the self, higher moral and good judgement are obtained. The ideal is an individual who takes care of himself mentally and physically, educating his judgement by using reason (logos) and Greek deeds (Hammershøj, 2003: 34-42). With Christian self-practice, the Greco-Roman practice is restructured. Here the ideal is concerned with 'self-knowledge' or 'insight into the self' and is imperative for purifying the self of immorality and evil in preparation for salvation. The ideal is acknowledging sin, showing penitence and, by keeping oneself under constant surveillance, being alert for impure thoughts hidden in the soul (Hammershøj, 2003).[8]

However, it is the neo-humanistic concept of self-practice that is significant when trying to understand the museum script of 1827. It draws on the two prior self-practices, but interprets them in a new way. Here the individual is formed, not in the image of God, but in the image of humanity and, in particular, in the image of the Greek citizen of antiquity (Haugaard Jeppesen and Kristensen, 2002: 101).

The neo-humanistic self-practice was developed between 1770 and 1830, and was especially evident in the ethical and aesthetical theories of Immanuel Kant and Fredrich Schiller (Böhm and Schiller, 1927; Hammershøj, 2009; Haugaard Jeppesen and Kristensen, 2002). Hammershøj (2009: 547) describes it this way:

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[8] A paper based on this section has been presented. See Houlberg Rung (2007).

The basic assumption is that the formation of the personality can only occur through the process of a transcendence of the self into the social. In the Neo-humanistic notion, this process was envisaged as an 'elevation into the universal' in which the individual overcomes his or her particularity by engaging with a greater world.

In this way, developing the self means a transcendence of the self into something larger (sociality – art works, history etc.) and through this, the individual can acquire moral conventions and knowledge, thus making her an educated individual aligned with universal values, whilst at the same time remaining an individual. The two central concepts here, sociality and transcendence, need to be defined more clearly, as they are used throughout the thesis. Sociality is, following Hammershøj, the dialectical relationship between individuals and society. This is important, as the formation of the self is determined by the continuous input the individual gets from society (Hammershøj, 2003: 12). Transcendence refers to movement that the individual makes when she interacts with society. It is the process by which she moves out of herself into sociality, into something that is larger and more than herself, to then to return and internalise the experience (Hammershøj, 2003: 72-73).

How formation of the self takes place and what structures society needs to develop in order to stimulate the neo-humanistic understanding of self-practice is formulated in the theory of 'Bildung'.

Bildung

The German concept of 'Bildung' is influenced by philosophers such as Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), but culminates in the writings by German politician and philosopher Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835) around 1800. The concept is also reflected in the educational reforms Humboldt carried out. 'Bildung' is widely, if imperfectly, translated as 'general education' or 'self-development' in English.[9] The concept describes the process by which the individual transcends herself into sociality in order to develop herself. Martin Swale (quoted in Belfiore and Bennett, 2006: 108) states,

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[9] I have chosen not to translate the word 'Bildung' in this thesis, since the terms 'self-development' and 'general education' do not convey its meaning properly.

> The word Bildung implies the generality of a culture, the clustering of values by which a man lives, rather than a specifically educational attainment. [...] Bildung becomes, then, a total growth process, a diffused Werden, or becoming, involving something more intangible than the acquirement of a finite number of lessons.

Etymologically, 'Bildung' derives from the word 'Bild' and refers to the process by which individuals can mirror themselves in an ideal and become educated. Humboldt applied his theory to German cultural policies and played a major role in restructuring the Prussian school system. Moreover, he was involved in, for example, the development of Gemäldegalerie in Berlin, designing it as an institution for 'Bildung' (Sheehan, 2000; Tøndborg, 2004).

One text where Humboldt presents his theory of 'Bildung' is in *Theory of the Building of Man* (1792–93). He states (1999/1792-93:58-59),

> It is the ultimate task of our existence to achieve as much substance as possible for the concept of humanity in our person, both during the span of our life and beyond it, through the traces we leave by means of our vital activity. This can be fulfilled only by the linking of the self to the world to achieve the most general, most animated, and most unrestricted interplay.

It is through engagement with the world that we can develop ourselves. In practice this meant, for example, engaging with various subjects established with reference to classic languages and authors, making scholarly research accessible for more people, and uniting research and teaching at universities (Eckhardt Larsen, 2002; Sheehan, 2000).

2.2 Aesthetic 'Bildung': Humboldt, Schiller and Rumohr

It is interesting to note that Det Kongelige Billedgalleri was directly linked to Humboldt, since Humboldt and Rumohr had powerful connections, both being associated with developing German museums, and Rumohr, as mentioned above,

functioned as a consultant for the Danish king.[10] First, let us consider how 'Bildung' functions in relation to art – how was the interaction between art and the individual perceived? And how are Humboldt's theories reflected in the development of Det Kongelige Billedgalleri?

Humboldt and Schiller

In his *Theory of the Building of Man*, Humboldt (1999/1792-93: 61) explains,

> The sculptor, for example, does not actually wish to present the image of God, but to express and make fast the fullness of this plastic imagination in this figure. Every business of life has its own characteristic intellectual attitude and in this lies the true spirit of its perfection, in this alone lies the genuine spirit of its completeness.

This idea of an aesthetic is developed further in his *Aesthetische Versuche I* (*Essays in Aesthetics I*) of 1799. Here he lays out a theory of the imagination that enables him to explain the relationship between art and spectator: 'Aesthetic sense can serve as the true mediator between the deadly gaze and the immortal archetypal idea' (quoted in Wellmon, 2010: 259).

In both passages Humboldt describes art as a unique place where fullness, perfection and completion can be met, and it is through this interaction between the mortal individual (the deadly gaze) and the immortal ideal that development of the self can happen. He also states, 'The imagination is only a stronger memory. It reveals the original unity between world and the human being, upon which the possibility of all knowledge of the truth is based' (quoted in Wellmon, 2010: 261). By this, Humboldt explains that in art, people recognise themselves, since in every man exists a piece of the idea that art reflects. These spiritual thoughts on aesthetics reflect the philosophy of one of Humboldt's close friends, poet and philosopher Frederick Schiller. Explaining the role of the artist, Schiller (1909/1794: letter X) writes,

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[10] In 1828–29 Rumohr and Humboldt worked together with archaeologist Alois Hirt, director Gustav Waagen and architect Friedrich Schinkel on the Gemäldegalerie, which opened in 1830. For more, see Sheehan (2000) and Tøndborg (2004).

No doubt the artist is the child of his time, but unhappy for him if he is its disciple or even its favourite. Let a beneficent deity carry off in good time the suckling from the breast of its mother, let it nourish him on the milk of a better age, and suffer him to grow up and arrive at virility under the distant sky of Greece. When he has attained manhood, let him come back, presenting a face strange to his own age; let him come, not to delight it with his apparition, but rather to purify it, terrible as the son of Agamemnon. He will, indeed, receive his matter from the present time, but he will borrow the form from a nobler time and even beyond all time, from the essential, absolute, immutable unity.

Here the artist's connection with universal forms and the purifying purpose of art are described. In addition, Schiller emphasise the interaction between matter and form, and the dialectics between present time and timelessness. This, they claim, leads to a state of 'free play' where the personal, sensuous, and physical melt together with the essential, universal and intellectual (Böhm and Schiller, 1927). As Schiller puts it,

By beauty the sensuous man is led to form and to thought; by beauty the spiritual man is brought back to matter and restored to the world of sense. From this statement it would appear to follow that between matter and form, between passivity and activity, there must be a middle state, and that beauty plants us in this state. (1909/1794: letter XVIII)

The benefit of being in a state of free play is that what the individual desires is also what is morally good – feelings and morality merge:

The sensuous impulsion controls us physically, and the formal impulsion morally, the former makes our formal constitution contingent, and the latter makes our material constitution contingent, that is to say, there is contingence in the agreement of our happiness with our perfection, and reciprocally. The instinct of play, in which both act in concert, will render both our formal and our material constitution contingent […] In proportion that it will lessen the dynamic influence of feeling and passion, it will place them in harmony with rational ideas, and by taking from the

laws of reason their moral constraint; it will reconcile them with the interest of the senses. (Schiller, 1909/1794: letter XIV)

This 'reconcilement' of reason and feelings is at the core of 'Bildung' and underlines Humboldt's emphasis on freedom. 'Bildung' is not to be seen as something that individuals are forced into (Hammershøj, 2009: 548). On the contrary, a precondition for 'Bildung' is a free individual who, through the aesthetic experience, becomes educated and, on her own terms, recognises what is morally right. From this perspective, the task of the new art galleries was, first and foremost, to make artwork available for the public, offering individuals the chance to develop themselves.

It is interesting that from the perspective of 'Bildung', the aesthetic experience was comprehended as something personal. This means that by looking at the purpose of the museum through the lens of 'Bildung', a personal aesthetic experience is emphasised. Much literature concerning the development of the museum has emphasised the modern art museum as a didactic and authoritative institution (Bennett, 1998a; Hooper-Greenhill, 1993). But in applying the concept of 'Bildung', we can acknowledge the intuitive and free experience as part of the development of art museums. Here dialogue and interaction were placed in the centre of the meeting between art and the individual.

However, to appreciate this nuance, it is imperative not to consider 'Bildung' in isolation. Other concerns influence the development of the museum in the eighteenth century.

Rumohr and the development of art history
First of all, the classifying scientific culture, introduced by Enlightenment scientists such as Carl von Linné, also had its impacts on museum work in general (Bennett, 1998a, 1998b). Systems and relationships between entities became part of the professionalisation of the museum. Second, the continuous professional development of art history, which matured during the 1800s, was also important. As mentioned earlier, Karl Friedrich Rumohr played a central role in establishing Det Kongelige Billedgalleri as he functioned as Prince and later King Christian VIII's advisor. Rumohr is an important figure in the foundation of art history as a profession. He had a lasting influence on art history and connoisseurship in general, being the first art historian to

approach art history in an empirical way. He subscribed to a more objective view of art. Critically he scrutinised artworks, using primary historical sources, and from these he determined the authenticity and quality of the works.[11] In 1827, he published his *Italienische Forschungen* (Italian Investigations)*,* in which he described a new type of aesthetics. Rumohr agreed with Schiller and Humboldt that the uniqueness of art was the merging of matter and ideas and, through this, a harmony could arise that had in it a universal beauty. However, in addition, Rumohr saw artworks as productions of a social world where all types of decisions had an influence on the final artwork, for example commissions, religion etc. – decisions that were relevant to consider when looking at artworks (Hatt and Klonk, 2006: 43-45). With Rumohr, connoisseurship and scholarship in relation to artworks were emphasised, and it can be argued that a division between the public and the scholarly way of engaging with art slowly emerged.

These conflicting ideas between free aesthetic 'Bildung', the scientific mind-set of the Enlightenment and the development of professional art history all had an impact on Det Kongelige Billedgalleri and the script it developed.

2.3 The script in Det Kongelige Billedgalleri

In Det Kongelige Billedgalleri, 'Bildung' and the aesthetics described above played a part in the script in 1827, but it was especially when the display was improved thirteen years later that these theories were asserted. The 1827 script was instead dominated by the Enlightenment's scientific strategy. In this way, it is clear that different aspects of the theories considered so far in this thesis were applied gradually to the script and, as we shall see, were also influenced by and adapted to the Danish context.

When Det Kongelige Billedgalleri opened, the script was mainly based on an approach founded on rational scientific ordering. Spengler published the first catalogue raisonné of the collection (Jørgensen, 1882: 42; Spengler, 1827) and stated that it should be considered a 'scientific inventory' (Spengler, 1827: III). Thus, Spengler's main concern was to professionalise the handling and presentation of the collection. He elaborates, 'For the description to be scientific, the order of the collection should not be dependent on coincidences, but on scientific principles. Therefore the painters have been

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[11] Rumohr's writing is part of the so-called Berlin School of Art History, which also included Gustav Friedrich Waagen (1794–1868), Karl Schnaase (1798–1895) and Franz Kugler (1808–58).

structured according to schools and each school according to time' (Spengler, 1827: XI). The arrangement of the hanging strived to reflect this scientific system, separating schools of paintings from each other, providing an overall story of the development of painting. This also meant that copies and art of lesser artistic quality were included in the display in order to ensure that there were as few gaps as possible in the system (Tøndborg, 2004: 56). However, as Villadsen explains, the castle was never conceived as a museum and was consequently far from ideal as a public exhibition space (fig. 2.1).
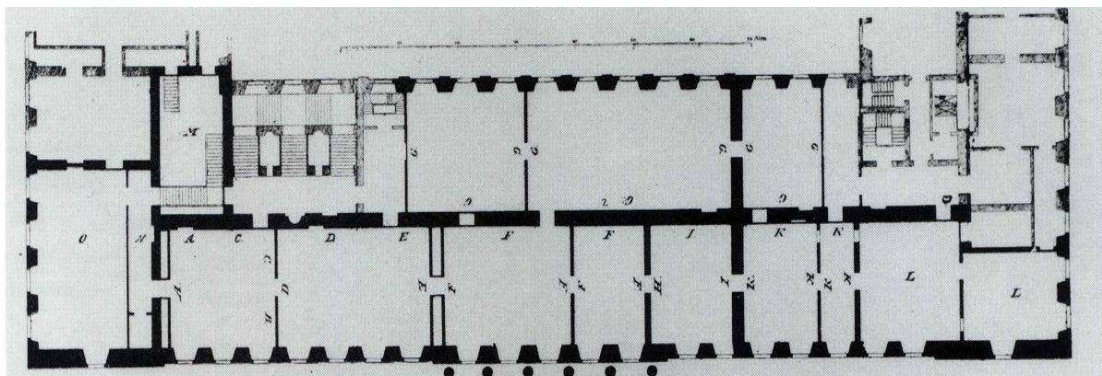
Fig. 2.1 Floor plan, Det Kongelige Billedgalleri, 1827.

To access and exit the Museum, visitors needed to climb steep staircases and pass through a narrow corridor. Moreover, the incoherent layout of the rooms did not support the scientific ordering of the art (Villadsen, 1998: 39). Therefore, the building and floor plan challenged the script that Spengler tried to design.

The script as a chimera

Until 1827, the royal collections had only been accessible by invitation to people with a special interest in the collection, for example, scientists or artists (Kolind Poulsen, 1992: 118). With Det Kongelige Billedgalleri, in theory, it became possible for a variety of people, including women, children and diverse social classes, to visit the Gallery. Before the opening this was eagerly anticipated. An 1823 article declared its hopes that Det Kongelige Billedgalleri would be like

> the greatest and largest picture collections abroad, where not only admirers of art of both sexes have free entrance to study and copy the present paintings, but anyone, native and foreign, is entitled to, at specific

times, without payment and without being hassled by a loud guide and a mixed company, as often as he pleases, in peace and devotion, enjoy these mute, but so eloquent and wonderful works of art. (*Politivennen*, 1823, cited in Villadsen, 1998: 41)

However, these requirements were not met at the beginning: In 1827, the Gallery was open Tuesday, Friday and Sunday from 10 am to 2 pm from April or May to October or November.[12] Moreover, Tøndborg describes how tickets were sold by a manager at another address at a cost of one *rigsdaler* (Danish currency in 1827) for four people, while two *rigsdaler* admitted ten visitors (Tøndborg, 2004: 55). It was indeed a major step forward for accessibility to the art when the collections were opened, but the brief opening hours, the difficulty in purchasing tickets and the entrance fee meant that, in reality, it was still difficult for users to visit the Museum. These restrictions correspond to the general difficulties most people had when visiting museums. For example, Leahy describes how visitors to the British Museum in the late 1700s had to apply for a ticket in advance and be accepted to one of the guided tours in order to visit the museum. This arrangement was finally relaxed in 1810 (Leahy, 2012: 23-26). For Det Kongelige Billedgalleri this change began slowly in 1840, when the admission fee was abolished, but continued well into the twentieth century, during which opening times were continuously debated. Consequently, despite the opening of Det Kongelige Billedgalleri being founded on a script that acknowledged the importance of engaging the public in art, the entrance difficulties meant that in reality, not many people had the ability to visit. For these people the script presented remained a 'chimera', to use Akrich's word: it did not exist in reality; it never came into being (Akrich, 1992: 208).

Between science and aesthetic
Nevertheless, a few visitors did manage to acquire tickets and what they encountered was a world of paintings categorised and structured into a rational system based on schools and chronology, displayed from floor to ceiling in a closely packed hang. As explained above, this first hang primarily reflected the need to professionalise the

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[12] Tøndborg argues that the Gallery was open Tuesday and Friday from 1827 to 1840. However, in the SMK Central Archives I have found original lists from 1830, 1838 and 1837. These lists state that the Gallery also was open on Sunday. For more, see Tøndborg (2004), Villadsen (1998) and Jørgensen (1882). Tøndborg also explains that the Gallery closed in late October; however, the early visitor numbers indicate that in certain years, the Gallery was open well into November. See, for example, visitor lists from 1837 in KMS brevarkiv XIII, 1824-1932.

handling of the collection, and thus followed the principles of the 'Enlightenment classifying culture' (Bennett, 1998b: 347). However, in his catalogue, Spengler did explain that he had included small texts about the works so that during their visit, users could acquire the information they needed, and after their visit, they would be able to read about the works that gave them the most enjoyment (1827: XII). In this way, Spengler clearly prioritised the scientific system, but he also used the word 'enjoyment' in relation to the artworks, which deviates from the scientific agenda.

It was also due to Spengler that the small pocket-book gallery guides were introduced. The first issues from 1834 and 1836 simply provided an index of the works with reference to Spengler's catalogue raisonné so visitors could link artists, titles and dates. Guide books were quite common in museums in the 1800s; for example, the Royal Academy in London provided guide books to visitors as early as 1821. In addition to basic data about artworks, these included extracts of poetry, which Leahy argues were used as inspiration for conversation amongst the visitors (2012: 40-41). Compared to the Royal Academy's use of poetry, Spengler's guide book focused on less creative interpretations of artworks, aspiring not to engage the visitors in emotional and personal conversations, but rather to inform them about fundamental details of the work underlying the scientific agenda of the hang. The guide books, Whitehead reminds us, 'embodied a learnable structure and […] visitors were provided with the recourses to develop meta-cognitively – to learn not just about the history of art but rather to learn how to learn about the history of art' (2011: 32). Thus, the guide books functioned as a lesson in how to engage with art, or from the perspective of this thesis, the guide book helped users to perform the script in the correct way.

In 1839, art historian Niels Laurits Høyen (1798–1870) together with collector and historian Christian Jürgensen Thomsen (1788–1865) jointly took over the post of inspector of the Gallery, and Høyen, who was later appointed director, insisted on reviewing the quality of the collection. This review became part of a larger refurbishment of the Gallery and also included a change of name from Det Kongelige Billedgalleri to Den Kongelige Malerisamling (the Royal Collection of Paintings). Høyen decided to raise the overall standard of the collection by sorting out copies and inferior works. In this process the collection was reduced from 1,021 to 580 works

(Tøndborg, 2004: 72).[13] In addition, the rooms were redecorated and the lighting improved, all to improve the aesthetic experience of the collection (Ussing, 1872).

Most importantly in relation to the visitor experience, Høyen abandoned the traditional way of hanging by splitting up, for example, Italian art. In a series of lectures in the winter of 1851 and 1852, Høyen explained his view on aesthetics, echoing Schiller and Humboldt and their view that art could improve a person's morals. 'Beauty [is] not only sensual – where it is an expression of spiritual and moral strength and will, it is also ethical' (Høyen and Ussing, 1871: 29). It was clear that Høyen valued the aesthetic experience more than the scientific order that Spengler had prioritised, and that he saw the educational potential of art not so much in the overall view of the development of art as in the individual artworks. His colleague Thomsen wrote to a friend about the new hang: 'We wanted less a strict scientific order and more consideration for aesthetic enjoyment, which is achieved when the best is shown in the finest light, on the most advantageous background and harmony is achieved in the juxtaposition' (quoted in Villadsen, 1998: 46). Along with this revision, a new gallery guide was printed, now extended with a floor plan and a small introduction to the collection.

Comparing the 1827 and 1840 presentations, the educational aim of the gallery shifted from prioritising an overview of the 'system of art' to including and making room for the individual aesthetic experience. This means that the theories of 'Bildung' reviewed above were introduced gradually in Det Kongelige Billedgalleri – a little in 1827, and more fully in 1840. However, when the ideas of 'Bildung' were implemented, they were supplemented by the focus on quality that Rumohr represented. Rumohr's practical impact on the 1840 hanging is difficult to pinpoint, but he functioned as a mentor for Høyen, and he was in close contact with the prince.[14] Villadsen argues that Rumohr was hired by the prince to plan the rehang, and it was his plan that Høyen worked from (1998: 45). I have not found material that supports this. But one thing is clear – when Rumohr visited the revised collection in 1840, he expressed his support

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[13] Evaluations of art collections, where copies and works of lesser quality were separated from the rest of the collection, also took place at other museums during this time, for example, in the Finnish National Gallery Ateneum, which opened in 1888 (Pettersson, 2011: 145).

[14] Research has suggested that the reason that Høyen was not appointed director of Den Kongelige Malerisamling was that the king preferred Rumohr for the post. This, however, is not true. For more, see Tøndborg (2004: 58).

for the revision: 'it is audacious, but it is well done, you have made an excellent collection out of it' (Ussing, 1872: 286).

Engaging the body and the mind

In the hangs of both 1827 and 1840, a specific way of looking and behaving in the gallery was inscribed in the script. This entailed equally the body and the mind. As Kirschenblatt-Gimblett reminds us, 'the disposition of things and personas in the space of the museum organizes the sensory experience of a mobile observer' (2004). Thus, the intellectual perception of the artworks and the structure in which they are displayed cannot be separated from the movement and emotions of the body. In both the 1827 and 1840 presentations, the hanging principle was the closely covered wall, which in reality meant that most pictures were hung too high or too low for visitors to see them properly, and thus interacting with them demanded good eyesight and flexible neck-bending on the visitor's part. This made spectatorship a highly bodily procedure, which influenced the engagement with the artwork.

For the visitors, this bodily movement provoked an unstructured and free way of exploring the pictures. Even in Spengler's scientifically based hang, eyes could wander freely across the wall, finding their own stopping points, since it was difficult to follow the scientific idea on the crowded wall. The experience therefore was determined by the individual's ability to see, bend and stretch. Thus, despite the fact that the script was inscribed with a particular viewing experience, and despite this being explained in the guide book, performing this script in reality must have been challenged by the close hang.

2.4 The nationalistic turn

With Høyen the aesthetic experience, along with an increasing focus on artistic quality, was introduced to Den Kongelige Malerisamling. However, he also advocated for a strengthening of Danish art. This had significance for the artworks that visitors could experience in the Gallery. In a lecture about national art in 1863 he said,

> Artists cannot work alone; the people must work with them. Is the urge
> for a nationality, to feel Danish, present, then it must also be reflected in
> art. Thus, it is not only because of aesthetic enjoyment, even though this

can be ever so important, that we dwell on art, but because it is one of the great means to strengthen, raise and draw out the people. (Høyen in Ussing, 1876)

Høyen argued that art should reflect Danish culture so it would become relevant for all people. He maintained that art should show that the Danes are one people. And he was not alone in this thought. A few years earlier, in 1838, German art historian Rudolf Margraff wrote, 'The work of art not only reveals, it also stimulates and enlivens the spirit of the *Volk*, and thus becomes [...] a means of cultivating [*Bildungsmittel*] the national spirit' (quoted in Sheehan, 2000: 110). This nationalistic aspect of 'Bildung' is embedded in the concepts in the writings of Herder as well as Hegel. They both identified the need for a shared culture that would bind a nation together. For example, Hegel writes, 'In our day the tie between members of a state in respect of customs, culture [Bildung], language may be loose or even non-existent' (quoted in McCarney, 2000: 155). I will not explain Hegel's or Herder's thinking in detail here, but focus on Høyen's version, as it was this that had an impact on Den Kongelige Malerisamling and its script.

The rise in nationalism in Denmark was influenced by the development of nation states that swept across Europe in these years. In 1849, Denmark became a constitutional monarchy and consequently the royal collections were handed over to the state. In the years before 1849, a consciousness of national belonging had grown. In 1807, Denmark was forced into the Napoleonic Wars. It was bombed by the British and later allied with France and Napoleon. The war had a big impact on the country's economy and bankruptcy was declared in 1813. In 1814, with the peace agreement in Kiel, Norway was separated from Denmark. However, almost as a reaction to the war and challenges to the Danish border, this was the period when the Golden Age of Danish art and culture flourished. This movement was characterised by the aesthetics of Romanticism, proponents of which included Schiller, as discussed above. But where Schiller found his ideals in universal forms and used classical Greece as a role model, national romanticism replaced this with national landscapes and specific national folklore traditions.

Høyen, as seen above, embraced this national romanticism and started to collect and support Danish art, while also lecturing about it (Villadsen, 1998: 45-46, 49-61). He prioritised an educational aesthetic experience in line with neo-humanistic self-practice, but to engage the public, he acknowledged the importance for people to be able to recognise themselves in the artworks. Art should reflect the people, while at the same time serving as a vehicle for a national homogenous identity.

These views led Høyen to acquire artworks by Danish artists for Den Kongelige Malerisamling and to encourage artists at the Art Academy in Copenhagen to seek inspiration in the Danish culture and landscape.

The next director of Den Kongelige Malerisamling, Baron Otto Rosenørn-Lehn (1821–92), who took over from Høyen in 1870, supported and continued this focus on Danish art. In 1874, he opened five extra rooms with Danish art, and judging from the painting by Danish artist C.C. Andersen (fig. 2.2), the collection attracted different types of visitors, including men, women and children from the bourgeoisie, soldiers, and people from the working classes. These strategies led to a very popular collection.

2.5 Visitor numbers to Det Kongelige Billedgalleri

In order to establish a profound understanding of the museum script, I have included an overview of visitor numbers in each chapter, as these indicate whether or not users actually came to the museum (see appendix 1 for a full overview of visitor numbers).

Fig. 2.2 C.C. Andersen, *Fra den Kongelige Malerisamling på Christiansborg* (One of the Rooms in the Royal Collection of Paintings at Christiansborg Palace), 1882, SMK.

The numbers do not reveal the nature of the performance of the script, but they can point towards discrepancies in the script. For example, as explained above, it is clear

from visitor numbers that Det Kongelige Billedgalleri only had a few users, and therefore it is reasonable to question how well the script functioned in regards to the principles around democratising access to art.

No prior research has been concerned with the development of visitor numbers at SMK, which means that my research in this area mostly has drawn on different archival material pieced together. In the archives it is possible to get an indication of the number of visitors who frequented the Gallery just after the opening and in specific years until the 1870s (KMS brevarkiv XII, 1824-1932). There are a few years, mainly in the early history of the Museum, for which data are missing. In my research, I have found lists in the archive dating from 1830, 1837 and 1838 (Statens Museum for Kunsts Central Arkiv. Arkivkasse 1.,1737). These are not actual visitor numbers, but they list the number of tickets sold. On the basis of this, a minimum and maximum of visitors can be calculated (between one and ten people could enter on one ticket). This is reflected in the figure (fig. 2.3). These numbers are, of course, uncertain, but are nevertheless included since they contribute to the overall view of visitors in the early days of the Museum.

Fig. 2.3 Visitor numbers 1830–1882. Numbers are based on documents from the central archives at SMK. (KMS brevarkiv XIII, 1824-1932; Central Arkivet Kasse I, læg 26). Years 1830–1838 show the number of tickets sold. Converted to visitor numbers, 1830: 4,954–24,777; 1837: 2,838–14,190; 1838: 3,068–15,340; 1844: 23,700; 1845: 22,390; 1846: 18,110; 1847: 17,560; 1848: 12,872; 1849: 13,820; 1850: 15,210; 1851: 20,230; 1852: 17,750; 1853: 12,520. Numbers from 1874–1882 are calculated on the basis of cane fees: 1874: 40,000; 1879: 70,000; 1882: 100,000 (Villadsen, 1998: 73).

Specific lists of visitor numbers from 1844 to 1853 can be found in the central archive of the Museum (Statens Museum for Kunsts Central Arkiv. Arkivkasse 1,1737). The documents are lists and notes that specify visitor numbers on specific dates as well as the income the tickets generated. All the lists must be taken as indications of visitor numbers only. They are handwritten, fragile and in places difficult to read; however, they are interesting and relevant since they suggest the extent to which the public made use of the Gallery.

From 1840 the entrance fee to the Gallery was abolished, but there was a cost if a visitor needed the Gallery to hold his cane. This income was registered and from these numbers, assumptions about visitor figures can be made. It is on the basis of this that Villadsen concludes that visitor numbers rose significantly in the 1870s (1998: 73).

As explained above, visitor numbers indicate the popularity of the Gallery, but they say little about the experience that visitors had in the Gallery, nor do they give any demographic data or point towards what kind of people frequented the Gallery. It is clear that when the financial as well as practical barriers were eradicated, there was an increase in visitor numbers. However, following Villadsen's calculations of the doubling of visitor number in the 1870s, it is also clear that the opening of the extra Danish sections in the 1870s was a major attraction. The visitor figures also reflect the Three-Year War, which ran from 1848 to 1850. During these years, visitor numbers dropped significantly.[15]

2.6 Conclusion

To sum up, it is evident that the links between Denmark and Germany played a significant role in the museum script in 1827. Rumohr, as an influential figure in the Danish court, promoted the newest thoughts on museology and art history in Denmark while acting as a mentor for both Prince and later King Christian VIII and for Høyen. However, his influence and the notion of 'Bildung' was adapted to the Danish context and implemented slowly in the script between 1827 and 1840. The Enlightenment's demand for scientific classification existed alongside 'Bildung' and its quest for a personal aesthetic experience. It is argued that the relation between these two agendas affected the early years of Det Kongelige Billedgalleri. Where Spengler employed a

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[15] Tøndborg also mentions this change in visitor numbers in her thesis (2004: 75).

strong scientific structure, Høyen also acknowledged a personal aesthetic art experience.

For users, the museum script involved purchasing tickets at another location and visiting the Museum during the brief opening hours. In reality, this made the performance of the script impossible for many people. But once inside, they were met by a scientifically ordered collection, where paintings were sorted into schools and each school arranged in relation to chronology. I have not found any evidence of direct guidelines on how to behave in Det Kongelige Billedgalleri, but indirect instructions existed.[16] For example, it is clear that users had to leave their canes outside and both the catalogue raisonné and guide books illustrated how to engage with art. This established a frame for a projected user whose experience should consist of looking, reading, focusing, enjoying and concentrating, whilst carefully moving through the display areas.

The building, the floor plan and the display strategy also influenced the script. These elements encouraged users to walk, bend, stretch and look at artworks. The mosaic-like hang especially made it impossible to view each individual work. What was positioned at viewing height reflected to a large degree the inspector's view of what should be seen. However, practical concerns, such as covering the whole of the wall and accommodating symmetrical hanging principles, seem to have played a significant role when the paintings were installed. Thus, users were largely expected to choose what they wanted to look at themselves. On the one hand, the script therefore dictated a scientific structure that invited an ordered experience of art, but on the other hand, it also included a freer experience based on intuition and personal interest.

The focus on a personal aesthetic experience is the foundation of the neo-humanistic self-practice discussed by Hammershøj and is connected to the aesthetic experience in 'Bildung', where engagement with artworks would lead to moral and enlightened citizens. In the script of 1827, this is reflected indirectly in Spengler's comments about aesthetic enjoyment and, consciously or not, this is also the consequence of the mosaic-like hang. In 1840, 'Bildung' is even more present. Høyen abandoned the scientific

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[16] Leahy describes how, for example, guide books provided direct instructions for visiting and viewing (2012: 7). She also demonstrates how museums such as the British Museum prohibited visitors from taking canes and umbrellas into the museum, as was the case at Den Kongelige Malerisamling (2012: 134).

ordering for a more aesthetic presentation where only the best artworks were shown. Høyen also introduced the nationalistic aspect of 'Bildung' to Det Kongelige Billedgalleri. By including national art in the script and thereby exposing users to motifs of the Danish culture and landscape, the projected user was made to feel like part of a nation.

Chapter 3 1896: A Script for the Nation

In 1884, Christiansborg Slot experienced a major fire and subsequently Den Kongelige Malerisamling needed a new location. This gave rise to a debate about the role of the Museum and the future plans for it. Chapter 3 will focus on these discussions and investigate how the museum script and the idea of the projected user stood to change. This involves exploring the architecture, display strategies and ways of communicating to the public. But first, the social and cultural circumstances that the new museum was part of are described.

3.1 Public visual culture and the decay of 'Bildung'

Concurrent to the debate about the new museum, Copenhagen was flourishing as an urban city with an expansive leisure industry. As we saw in the previous chapter, Den Kongelige Malerisamling experienced a significant increase in visitor numbers between 1865 and 1884 (fig. 2.3). This reflected the popularity of the collection, but also echoed the changes in the entertainment culture in Copenhagen in this period.

Steffen Linvald, in his book *København har moret sig* (Copenhagen Has Been Amused) (1966), describes how Copenhagen changed during the 1800s. The two main theatres, Det Kongelige Teater and Hofteateret, were supplemented by a variety of other theatres and entertainment sites, such as the theatre Casino (1848), Tivoli (1843) and Folketeateret (1857). Cafes, restaurants and the new patisseries flourished. In addition, amusement venues emerged, such as Gyldenløves Bastion (1860), where the public could encounter the spectacular 'kautschukmand' (Rubber Man), who could bend himself in any direction (Linvald, 1966: 55).

Copenhagen had transformed from a place where entertainment in private clubs and homes was the norm, to a city with a variety of diverse cultural and entertainment sites. Museums and art galleries were a natural part of this. Charlottenborg, where the art academy was and still is located, erected a new exhibition gallery in 1882, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek opened in 1897 and several smaller exhibition spaces such as Den Frie Udstilling also emerged during these years.

Bennett argues that the museum as an institution was part of the increasing development of public open spaces (1996: 109). However, he also states that the museum saw a need to distinguish itself from some of these new aspects of urban life: those that were based on 'the taste for sensationalist forms of entertainment' (Bennett, 1998b: 354). For the museum, this created a revived interest in establishing a more formal educative approach, where the eyes of visitors were directed and controlled (Bennett, 1998b: 354).

With the development of new urban spaces, the venues and the city became a stage on which social life was practised – a place to meet and be seen. This was emphasised when, in 1884, Danish museum professional Jens Jacob Asmussen Worsaae stated, 'Museums are not only scientific, they are also popular institutions' (Worsaae, 1884, cited in Lange, 1884). This is seen in Carl Christian Andersen's painting from 1882, which portrays visitors in Den Kongelige Malerisamling. The painting depicts the social interaction between visitors and shows the diversity of the audience (fig. 2.2). However, it is also clear that museums in particular attracted the higher social classes. Linvald describes how art institutions in particular were places for the bourgeois to meet and socialise and for ladies to show off their latest fashionable clothes (1966: 89).[17] In this way, the museum oscillated, as Leahy also reminds us, between high education and an 'attractive *mise-en-scene*' where visitors performed their social roles (2012: 118).

From this perspective, 'Bildung', once an idealistic concept for personal enlightenment, was transformed into a practice that identified the behaviour of a specific privileged group. This Hammershøj explains as a decay of the neo-humanistic self-practice or 'Bildung' as distinction (2003: 77). He argues that obtaining 'Bildung' became an aim in itself and that the practice of 'Bildung' became a tool to mark social distinction. Thus, it transformed into a superficial practice that was more concerned with correct manners, proper dress code and canonical knowledge than with moral and spiritual

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[17] Linvald compares the role of the art institution to the charity bazaars that the ladies of the bourgeoisie participated in. Here they could meet and socialise. Bennett also explores this and argues that the museum was one of the public spaces (along with, for example, the department store) where it was acceptable for women in the 1800s to meet and socialise (1998a: 30-31).

enlightenment (Hammershøj 2003: 77).[18] In Germany, this developed into a certain type of bourgeois, the 'Bildungsbürgertum' (the 'Bildung-bourgeoisie') (2003: 78), which is also reflected in Sheehan's following comment:

> In all its various meanings, therefore, Bildung manifested that tension between universality and exclusiveness which lay at the core of the nineteenth-century culture and society – the tension between the aspiration to have institutions that would be open to everyone and the structural inequalities that made these institutions inaccessible to all but a minority of the population. (Sheehan, 2000: 115)

This change in the practice of the concept of 'Bildung' reveals the inequality that, despite the ideological intention behind the concept, probably always existed in practice. This distinction between those who can perform the script in a proper manner and those who cannot is evident in the debate concerning the display at the new SMK.

3.2 From an aesthetic experience to the art historical gaze: Julius Lange

The discussions leading up to opening of the new National Gallery took several directions: first of all, the question of where to place it arose, and secondly, and more importantly for this thesis, was the question of how the collections should be presented and why.

Only a week after the fire, art historian Julius Lange started the discussion by writing an article about the future of Den Kongelige Malerisamling. He stated, 'The purpose of the public collection is to develop the senses, give the audience a clean and concentrated impression of good art' (Lange, 1884). Lange focused on the education of the people, but also on the responsibility of the museum to give the audience a qualitative experience and to function as a specialist when selecting and presenting works of art – to provide 'satisfaction for the knowledgeable and awakening and instruction for the more inexperienced' (Lange, 1893: 62).

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[18] This social distinction is also what Bourdieu and Darbel (1990) criticised through their empirical research on art museums.

Lange continued Rumohr and Høyen's quest to professionalise art history. His aim was to structure the collection tightly according to chronology, schools and artists in order to underline the coherence of the collection and the aesthetic development. To achieve this he argued for far more systematic ways of presenting art:

> The paintings are first and foremost led back to their masters, works by the same masters are held together; in a wider sense masters from the same school, time or nation are gathered together. This serves the in-depth, the more immersive contemplation of individual works and creates peace and unity in the perception of the whole. In this way many quiet and hidden favours are done for the spectator; his spirit is inspired to question and compare. (Lange, 1893: 52)

The way Lange comprehends the relationship between the individual work and the overall structure of display reveals how he envisions the projected users' spectatorship as a mission to 'question' and 'compare', thus placing an emphasis on the connections between the works. Hanne Kolind Poulsen describes how Lange to a certain extent subscribes to historical positivism, in which art history is viewed as one long chain of causes and effects and the art historian's job is to expose the logic of this chain of development (1992: 122). This means that Lange distanced himself from the more speculative aesthetic experience found in national romanticism described above. Poulsen argues that it is not that Lange discharges the aesthetic qualities of art; on the contrary, the quality of the aesthetic and the creative power of the artist was of great importance to him. However, he reasons that the museum should be built on objective (positivist) values that can be verified, and not on subjective aesthetic or decorative opinions (Kolind Poulsen, 1992: 143). Lange explains that the decorative ordering is superficial. Instead, he argues for the structure presented above, and to take this further, he looks towards the National Gallery in London, where he praises the initiative to hang works in one straight line instead of in the traditional hanging where the entire wall is covered with paintings.[19] He says of the National Gallery,

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[19] The concept of the serial display where paintings were hung in one straight line was introduced by John Ruskin in 1847. Ruskin argued that this way of hanging would give the spectator the opportunity to optimise his view of the paintings because all works would be at an eye-level frontal position and the progression of art would be emphasised (Leahy, 2012: 51-52).

> Here all desires to boast of excellent treasures are overcome, and everything is as far as possible organized for those who would acquire impressions of the great art. Here is the thought that a collection of paintings should not be a glorification of its owner, but first and foremost it should consider the guests. (Lange, 1893: 54)

This was a radical idea and introduced a whole new form of spectatorship that challenged the unregulated way of viewing described above in the hangings in Det Kongelige Billedgalleri in 1827 and 1840. In the floor-to-ceiling display, there was a risk of confusing the visitor. The development and the coherence of the artworks were difficult to detect, since spectators had to orient themselves both horizontally and vertically. The new serial display increased order, since it would form a straight line where paintings were presented at proper viewing height and installed in chronological order. It would leave no doubt about the development of art (Lange, 1893: 54). Thus, it would emphasise both the individuality of each work and the links between the paintings. In addition, the result of the hang would be a much calmer and steadier eye, as the visitor would only need to follow the linearity and look horizontally to focus on the works.

Compared to the tradition of 'Bildung' and the rationale that Den Kongelige Malerisamling was built upon, it is clear that Lange included in the role of the museum a responsibility and a stronger emphasis on educating people. This involved an awareness of expertise in relation to art – that there was a right way of perceiving an artwork and the context it belonged to. It also introduced more explicitly the view that the museum often knows more than its audiences, hence Lange's use of words like 'inexperienced' and his arguments for 'instruction' and 'awakening' (Lange, 1893: 62). Moreover, Lange emphasised the museum's responsibility to take into account the user and to design the museum so that 'confusing, tiring and dulling views for the eye are avoided' (1884).

These were not new thoughts – as we saw above, the educational potential of the museum was also stressed by Høyen – but with Lange the positivistic, educational rationale was emphasised even further. This was by no means a view that was easily accepted in contemporary society. On the contrary, Lange's writings, as well as the

criticism he received, were permeated by the tension between the positivistic vision and the more spiritual aesthetic experience that 'Bildung' and Romanticism subscribed to.[20] To counter his opponents, Lange argued repeatedly in his talks and writings that artworks are not mere illustrations of art history and that aesthetic and decorative qualities are important (1893: 45, 47, 50, 51), although it is clear in his detailed plans for the hanging of the collection that a systematic structure based on the development of art was his goal.

3.3 Architectural monumentality

In the end, Lange was not announced director of SMK. Instead, the title went to the less theoretical, and also perhaps less visionary, Emil Bloch, who had been inspector at Den Kongelige Malerisamling. This meant that the hanging and the interior design of the Museum did not reflect Lange's radical thoughts in detail. However, as Kolind Poulsen notes, Lange was an important voice in Danish cultural life in the 1870s and 1880s and it is more than likely that architects Wilhelm Dahlerup and George E.W. Møller, and the committee that decided on the design of the Museum, were familiar with Lange's ideas (1992: 129).

In the building committee's programme, several criteria were listed as essential requirements that the building needed to meet, for example, to be placed above street level to achieve a monumental effect and to have an impressive staircase and a spacious entrance hall (Kolind Poulsen, 1992: 125) – architectural features that were to underline the importance of the Museum and constitute it as a monument of civic pride. And this became perhaps the most noticeable change: the collection now had a monumental building of its own and received a new name that clearly signalled the transfer of the collection from king to state. When the collections were displayed in the castle, they were perceived as the wealth of the king; now, in SMK, they signalled the heritage of the nation (Bouquet, 2006).

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[20] Influential characters in the Danish museum world, such as the first director of SMK, Emil Bloch, and collector Carl Jacobsen, who founded the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, did not have the same academic interests as Lange. However, it was Karl Madsen, later director of SMK, who stated that Lange's ideas were 'too much principle, too educational, too much art history, too little art' (quoted in Villadsen, 1998: 114).

Fig. 3.1 SMK, Exterior, 1890s.

Located at the corner of Sølvgade and Nørrevoldgade and in the south-east corner of Østre Anlæg (also called Quitzaus Bastion), SMK was constructed just opposite the entrance to the King's Garden. Dahlerup designed a grand historicist building elevated above street level (fig. 3.1). This monumentality is at the core of the idea of the museum. Wallach and Duncan remind us that 'museums embody and make visible the idea of the state', and with its grand building, SMK signalled the importance of the state and connected 'state authority with the idea of civilisation' (2012: 47). To access the Museum, visitors needed to climb a staircase before entering the large, heavy doors. The architecture mimics the monumental museum buildings in the rest of Europe, which Wallach and Duncan (2012: 49) call 'universal survey museums':

> The Louvre, the National Galleries in London and Washington, and the Metropolitan Museum of New York exemplify the universal survey museum. Such museums present a broad range of art history. They are the indispensable ornaments of any great city.

In his 1893 lectures, Lange commented on the plans for the Museum, praising the façade of the building as both 'magnificent and elegant'. He also approved of the medallions on the either side of the main portal, which showed the Genius of Light (painting) and Icarus and Daedalus (sculptures), respectively, and revealed that the committee had asked him for advice about the ten smaller medallions that should

portray famous artists. Lange had returned a list of great international artists; however, it was decided to deviate from this and only show portraits of national artists (Lange, 1893: 17). In addition, the façade also displayed the national coat of arms, and a year after the opening of the Museum, the large, monumental sculpture *Danmarksmonumentet* (Monument of Denmark) was placed in front of the Museum (fig. 3.2).[21]
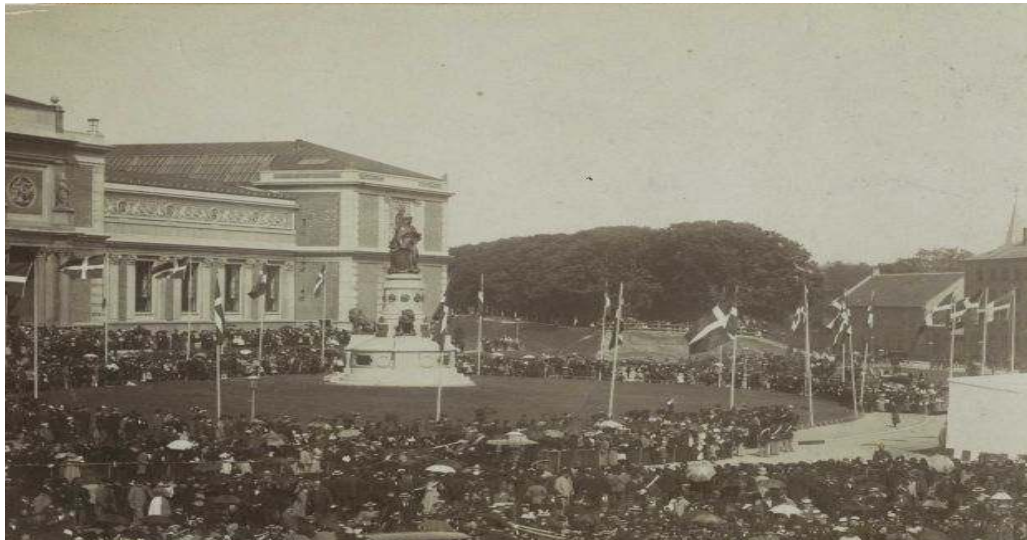
Fig. 3.2 SMK, Exterior, *Danmarksmonumentet*, 1897

Danmarksmonumentet, the national coat of arms and the medallions all emphasised the importance of the Danish nation and the national artistic heritage, but they also highlighted the special character of the Museum compared to many of its international sister organisations. SMK contained (and still does) both a view of international (Western) art history, typical for the universal survey museum, but in addition, actively collected Danish (and international) contemporary art.

3.4 Floor plan and hang

Once inside the Museum, Bloch arranged the collection in a manner that pointed more backward in time to Den Kongelige Malerisamling than forward to future museological theory in the new century. Den Kongelige Afstøbningssamling (the Cast Collection) was displayed on the ground floor, while the collection of paintings and original sculpture was placed on the first floor. The two storeys were bound together by a monumental staircase.

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[21] The sculpture was made by Louis Hasselriis in celebration of the golden wedding of King Christian IX and Queen Louise. It consists of a large female figure with golden horns and a shield in her arms, symbolising Mother Denmark.

In the entrance hall, visitors were met by plaster casts of sculptural masterpieces from antiquity to the Renaissance. They were displayed in chronological sequences showing how the human form in sculpture had developed, while as the same time underlining that civilisation had been born in antiquity. This art historical lesson continued on the staircase as visitors took themselves up to the first floor (fig. 3.3).[22] On arrival there, the collection was separated into two sections, one of Danish art and another comprising the Older International Collection. Bloch chose a densely packed traditional hang where chronology and art schools were considered, but not as systematically and rigorously as Lange would have liked.

Fig. 3.3 SMK, Front hall, 1896.   Fig. 3.4 SMK, Interior, 1896.

Instead, symmetry and practical solutions – for example, the principle of placing larger works higher up and smaller ones below them – seemed to guide the installation (fig. 3.4).

In relation to Lange's ideas and seen from the perspective of visitors, one criterion made by the building committee concerning the inner structure of the building is particularly interesting. In the committee programme it is stated that it was important that the building be designed so that people only needed to walk in one direction, and that they were led through the whole museum without having to move backwards (Kolind Poulsen, 1992: 125) (fig. 3.5).

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[22] Den Kongelige Afstøbningssamling opened in 1897, a year later than the rest of the museum.
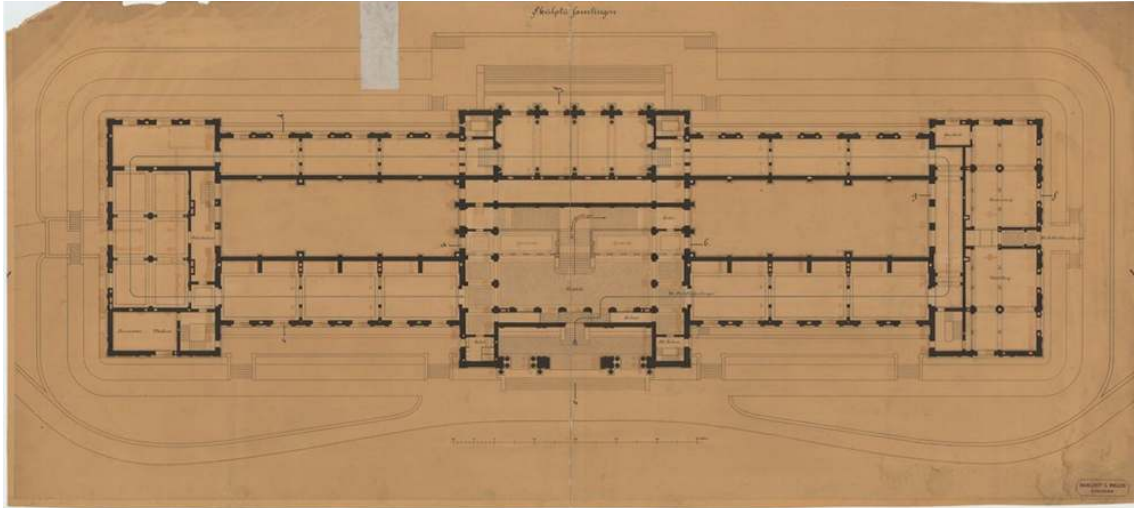
Fig. 3.5 SMK, Floor plan, 1896

This linear walk-through history complied with the ideals that Lange had expressed about the serial hang and underlined the educational role of the Museum that he had emphasised.

Bloch himself did not describe the rationale behind the new installation, but others were not shy to raise their voices. It was criticised by many, but artist and art historian Vilhelm Wanscher (1908) in particular attacked the hang for being 'meaningless' and 'chaotic'. He described the entrance to the collection this way:

> The first thing that meets the eye, when you arrive at the top of the staircase to the Danish collection, is Niels Peter Mols's realistic milking painting (from the time after 1880), which is placed above Carl Bloch's *Jairi Datter*. What contrast in subject and style! Bright and fresh, and rather intrusive, as the first painting is, it mars Carl Bloch's subdued romantic picture with the dark gallery colours. It is as if you were hit in the face; and you cannot believe your eyes! (Wanscher, 1908)

3.5 Access to Statens Museum for Kunst in 1896

Compared to 1827, the museum script had changed significantly. It was easier to access the Museum once it was placed in its own building and there were no entrance fees. Shortly before the opening of the Museum, Bloch addressed Kirke og Undervisningsministeriet (Ministry for Church and Education), under which the

Museum was administrated, to get permission to abolish the fee for holding canes and umbrellas. This was accepted (KMS brevarkiv XIII, 1824-1932). However, Bloch agreed with the Ministry that the existing brief opening times were to be maintained, which were Tuesday, Friday and Sunday, 12–2 pm in the winter and 12–3 pm in the summer (KMS brevarkiv XIII, 1824-1932). To gain access outside of these opening times, in keeping with the old tradition, visitors wrote to the Museum, asking permission to visit the collection. However, where it had previously been mainly scholars and artists who wished to gain access outside opening hours, in 1896 this had expanded to encompass a variety of visitors – for example, schools from Copenhagen and the provinces, congresses, tourists and companies of soldiers. Some of these groups requested guided tours (KMS brevarkiv XIII, 1824-1932).[23] In January 1912, the strict visiting hours were challenged by Den Danske Turistforening (Danish Tourist Organisation), who contacted the Museum asking for longer and more appropriate opening times. Subsequently, times were changed to 11 am–3 pm, and in 1914, visiting hours were extended further to 10 am–4 pm in the summer and 10 am–3 pm in the winter (KMS brevarkiv XIII, 1824-1932). Slowly the Museum became more and more accessible to the public.

3.6 Navigating Statens Museum for Kunst

The floor plan also became more accessible for visitors. There were no narrow corridors or confusing paths as there had been in Spengler's Billedgalleri. Visitors were guided through the Museum in a more or less chronological manner (fig. 3.5). This one-way system guaranteed a linear course through the Museum, thus providing a more controlled and structured experience for visitors. At the same time, this enforcement of linearity placed an accent on the development of art through time in favour of the individual artworks.

The symmetrically designed rooms ensured long gazes through the series of doors and inspired visitors to move on and stroll through the galleries. This corridor-inspired floor

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[23] For example, between 24 and 27 June 1903, Den Tekniske og Hygiejniske Kongres (Technical and Hygiene Congress) requested permission to visit. On 12 May 1905, a list of twelve schools wished to visit.

Fig. 3.6 SMK, Interior, 1896

plan underlined the museum experience as a walk through time (fig. 3.6). In this way, the structure and floor plan emphasised the educational role of the Museum, which demonstrates how the priority on a free aesthetic experience shifted towards a more didactic, educational one. This was achieved particularly well with the Cast Collection on the ground floor and perhaps less so with the paintings and sculptures on the first floor. Whereas the Cast Collection was displayed in chronological order, the artworks on the first floor were arranged with a larger degree of freedom. A separation of chronology and geography was aspired; however, within each room the eye could wander across the closely packed wall, and as critical voices had argued, the rationale behind the display could not be found in either art history or stylistic similarities. As Villadsen (1998: 171) points out, there was no 'schoolmaster' feel to Bloch's hanging: 'No one should feel guilty for liking horses more than other higher aesthetic expression. Everything was played out at once without preconceptions'.

A new type of inventory was also introduced in the museum space: large couches and smaller stools were placed in the larger rooms, inviting people to sit down, rest and enjoy the artworks (fig. 3.7).

Overall, this meant that the script for the visitors was somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, the architectural and structural script signalled an ordered and educational frame and envisaged an inexperienced user who needed to be guided. On the other hand, the actual hanging of the works invited a more personal and aesthetic engagement with the works.

Fig. 3.7 SMK, Interior, 1896.

3.7 Communicating to the masses

As both the monumental architecture and the floor plan indicated, the audience for the Museum was no less than the citizens of the Danish state. This means that the Museum from the beginning was conceptualised as a mass communication medium. The script was planned to accommodate large number of visitors, who, as they strolled through the Museum, would get acquainted with and enlightened by art and art history. However, this educational purpose was not formulated or backed up by substantial information about the works in the Gallery. What was available for the audiences was sparse information about artist, date and title. The guide books that were sold at Det Kongelige Billedgalleri were still produced, providing basic information regarding artist and title. The introduction to the collection that Høyen had added was left out, making the pamphlets a mere list of artworks.[24] They were separated into sections such as 'Older paintings', 'Danish painters' and 'New foreign art and sculpture', trying to follow the installation of the works.[25] In addition, artist and sometimes date and title were written on small metal plates mounted on picture frames or plinths (and if this was not possible,

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[24] The last edition of the guide book found in the archive is dated 1912.
[25] There is very little information about signage and information in the Gallery around 1896, but guidebooks from 1897 to 1912 have been found in the archives (*Kortfattet Fortegnelse over Kunstværkerne i den Kongelige Maleri- og Skoptursamling*, 1912, 1900-1908, 1897).

the plates were fixed to the wall next to the artwork). Larger catalogues with an introduction to the collections were also prepared. In 1896, Emil Bloch's edition contained a brief introduction to the collection followed by an alphabetically ordered inventory of works. Each artist was accompanied by a short biographical commentary and some of the works had small descriptions connected to them. Thus, basic material was available for interested visitors who were willing and able to purchase the booklets or catalogues, although the nature of the material was based on facts and art historical terminology.

SMK was therefore developed as a general mass communication institution, but once inside, visitors, unless they bought the catalogues or guides, were left more or less to make their own meanings. As both Sheehan and Noordegraaf explain, this dichotomy between the general and the exclusive was typically for the nineteenth-century museum (Noordegraaf, 2004: 80; Sheehan, 2000: 115). Sheehan takes this idea further by arguing that this is an example of what Pierre Bourdieu identifies as 'false generosity' – staging the institution as open for all while, in reality, it contains so many conventions and codes for perception that it excludes a majority of the population. Noordegraaf discusses Sheehan's points of view, proposing that the reason for this split can be found in the fact that the museum was visualised as a research institution as much as an institution with an educational purpose (2004: 80). The museum was, so to speak, born with this split between the general and the specialist. For SMK this is true only to a certain extent.

During the nineteenth century, research had a varying position of importance, depended on different directors and inspectors of the collection. Where Spengler, Høyen, Rumohr and Lange had been on the forefront of art historical research, Baron Otto Rosenørn-Lehn and Emil Bloch were perhaps less so. Interestingly, it was researchers who wrote and communicated most about the artworks, and thus there is no evidence that the more research-focused staff had less interest in communicating about the artwork. On the contrary, it was these people who wrote the catalogue raisonné along with the guide books. In addition, they were active in discussions about art and its educational potential. This suggests that the research-focused staff were actually more interested in the educational agenda, and the reason for this was precisely because they positioned themselves as experts in relation to the inexperienced public.

On the other hand, it is clear that the publications available for the audience were written from an art historical research perspective, providing information that was relevant for researchers rather than for first-time visitors. Thus, I argue, the information provided to some extent excluded many and was poorly designed for mass communication. However, the reason for the minimal contextual information in the Museum should not only be found in this rationale. The aesthetic experience as understood by 'Bildung' (and advocated by, for example, Rosenørn-Lehn and Bloch) had intuitive, free and personal engagement with artworks as its core. This entailed a subjective interpretation by the users and demanded no interference from the Museum or its experts. From the perspective of 'Bildung', the art museum should make artworks available, but it was personal engagement with art that would enlighten the audience. So at SMK, the research agenda might have affected the type of information provided for the audience, but leaving the visitors to their own free experience was more founded on the idea of the aesthetic experience, which emerged with 'Bildung' and which was still present in 1896.

3.8 Visitor numbers in 1896

Unfortunately no visitor numbers exist from the first years after the opening of SMK, but after 1912, regular reports to Staden Københavns statistiske Kontor (the city of Copenhagen's Statistics Office) were made (fig. 4.1). However, in correspondence between SMK and Staden Københavns statistiske Kontor, it is estimated that prior to 1912, visitor figures had been around one hundred on the most poorly visited winter weekdays, while in the summer on Sundays, the number would be around two thousand visitors (KMS brevarkiv XIII). This means that an average of around one hundred thousand annual visitors can be assumed. These numbers correspond to the number of users who visited Den Kongelige Malerisamling when it was housed in Christiansborg. Therefore, no significant rise in visitor numbers can be noted when the collection moved into the new building. It is not clear why there was no increase, but whereas SMK today is located in the middle of Copenhagen, in 1896 the surrounding neighbourhoods were still developing. In addition, as we have seen, the leisure industry grew rapidly in these years, creating a wide range of entertainment for people to engage with.

3.9 Conclusion

With the opening of SMK in 1896, a monument of the Danish state was created. As I have shown, the Museum functioned as a symbolic structure that marked the final transition of the art collections from royal possessions to civic collections promoting national pride. Architecture, decoration, ornaments and the large sculpture *Danmarksmonumentet* all underlined this, inviting projected users, even before entering the Museum, to be proud of their country and feel like part of a nation. Inside, the Museum was architecturally designed as a universal survey museum, scripting the visit as a walk through the development of art history and, importantly, inserting Danish art into this overall narrative.

The layout of the floor plan, with the corridor-like feel, was a structured choreography for visitors where they were led through all of the collection without having to visit the same room twice. While these layouts were influenced by art historians like Lange, the actual hangs were carried out by Bloch, who was more traditional.

Because of this, a tension in the script emerged: an art historical and didactic approach was mixed with a more aesthetic and intuitive hang. Hence, on the one hand, the projected user was perceived as inexperienced and driven by the need to learn from a professional and authoritative institution, but on the other, the projected user was also seen as a free individual who would have a personal and intuitive experience in the museum. In other words, to a large extent, the museum script became a hybrid between the middle and the late nineteenth-century ways of designing museums – a hybrid where SMK both envisaged the projected user as performing a self-practice founded on 'Bildung' (free aesthetic experience) while, in other parts, imagining a performance of the script that was far more structured, educational and affected by the expert and the art historical way of engaging with art.

Maybe because of this hybrid, the Museum and the hang were, as described above, criticised from many sides, and it did not result in a significant rise in visitor numbers compared to when the collections had been at Christiansborg Slot.

Chapter 4 1922: Focusing on Art

When Inspector Karl Madsen took over the title of director of the Museum from Emil Bloch in 1911, he immediately started planning a major renovation of the Museum. Another change of the script was underway. The work lasted eight years, beginning in 1914 and completed in 1922.[26] But this was not the only change made by Madsen. Bloch might have overseen the transfer of the collection into a new symbolic building, but Madsen was the one who conceptually changed the script of the collection and developed a new profile for the projected user. This chapter explores the transformation of the script and the projected user in these years by looking at the building, display plan and aesthetic communication, as well as the new educational and social practices taking place within the Museum.

4.1 Engaging visitors and the art community

One of the key things Madsen changed was the Museum's relationship with the audience, both towards the art profession and in relation to the public. He initiated a number of actions that opened up the Museum and developed it into an active contributor to Danish cultural life.

In 1914, a temporary exhibition of French art was curated and drew in thirty-five thousand paying visitors. At this point, temporary exhibitions were just starting to become part of museum practice, and Madsen saw this as an opportunity to generate activity and awareness about the Museum (Villadsen, 1998: 174-75). In connection to the French exhibition, a café was established and the exhibition experience was, in this way, acknowledged as being a social event. It was also Madsen who initiated *Kunstmuseets Aarsskrift* (the Art Museum's Yearbook). In a letter dated 9 November 1920 sent to the Undervisningsministeriet (Ministry of Education), Madsen argues for the yearbook to be sent to institutions, accomplished researchers and sponsors, and states that 'the yearbook has increased the awareness of the Museum, not only amongst friends in Denmark and abroad, but also for the general public' (Madsen, 1920). It is evident here that Madsen was concerned with stimulating interest in the Museum. In a similar vein, Madsen initiated the Museum's first friends association, *Dansk*

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[26] The rehang of the Danish part of the collection opened in 1917, while the European Collection opened in 1922.

Kunstmuseumsforening, recognising the need to draw visitors and, in particular, wealthy citizens closer to the Museum (Villadsen, 1998: 175).

Madsen's attempts to engage visitors and the art community were not directly reflected in the visitor figures. This is remarkable since substantial changes in the opening hours were made in 1914 and 1917, respectively, and again in 1923.[27] As shown in fig. 4.1 the average in the period between 1912 and 1930 was around eighty thousand visitors. Of course, there were also historic and practical circumstances that affected visitor numbers negatively, for example, the First World War and also the fact that the Museum underwent architectural changes from 1914 to 1922, which meant that parts of the Museum were closed. It can be argued that perhaps because of Madsen's initiatives, the Museum did not experience an even larger drop in visitor figures.

Fig. 4.1 Visitor numbers 1911–1930. From 1912 SMK reported visitor numbers to Standen Københavns statistiske Kontor (the city of Copenhagen's Statistics Office). In the first reports it is specified that no regular count of visitors had been conducted before 1 October 1911 (KMS brevarkiv XIII). The numbers are as follows: 1912: 10,014; 1913: 126,478; 1914: 97,518; 1915: 70,974; 1916: 56,385; 1917: 64,354; 1918: 79,161; 1919: 81,610; 1920: 82,935; 1921: 82,385; 1922: 90,303; 1923: 83,801; 1924: 86,768; 1925: 82,414; 1926: 94,753; 1927: 89,578; 1928: 121,890; 1929: 103,754; 1930: 89,938 (KMS brevarkiv XIII).

4.2 Architectural changes

When the Museum reopened in 1922, the public encountered a cleaner and simpler architectural frame for the collection. Outside, the large monumental sculpture

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[27] In 1914, opening times were changed to Tuesday, Friday and Wednesday 10 am – 4 pm in the summer and 10 am – 3 pm in the winter. From 12 February 1917, the opening times were changed to daily (except Monday) 10 am – 5 pm in summer and 11 am – 3 pm in the winter (KMS brevarkiv XIII).

Danmarksmonumentet (fig. 3.2) was removed, and inside, in the entrance hall, the principal staircase and the architecture in the hall were stripped of most of their decorative elements (fig. 4.2).

Fig. 4.2 SMK, Front hall, 1922

Moreover, to the sides of the staircase, walls were built to block passageways between the front hall and neighbouring spaces. The consequence was that the entrance hall seemed much smaller and narrower.

In the collection space, decorative elements such as curtains in doorways and heavy furniture were replaced with tables, chairs and other furniture. In general, the interior was given a cleaner look (fig. 4.3 and 4.4).
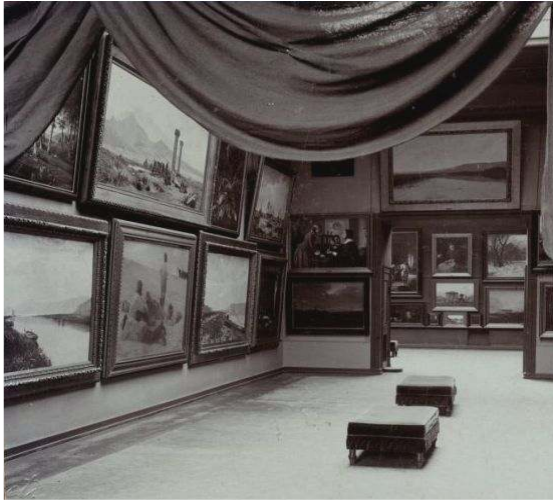
Fig. 4.3 SMK, Interior, 1890s

Fig. 4.4 SMK, Interior, 1922

Several of the smaller rooms were merged into larger and more spacious ones, side windows were replaced with roof lighting, and previous storage rooms were transformed into exhibition space (Swane, 1933: 85). It can be argued that the changes destroyed the originality of the building. Stripping down the staircase and the architectural elements was an attempt to erase the historicist features of the building, but not all elements could be removed, leaving the building's identity in a strange in-between state. However, Madsen did what he could to change the script of the Museum.

The architectural changes meant that visitors would have a less decorative impression of the Museum. As Michaela Giebelhausen writes, 'The architecture of the nineteenth-century museum embodied performance. It was designed to make a symbolic statement, at once civic and educational' (2011: 231). And it was this civic performance that was downplayed by the changes. The lavishness and the imposing elements of the building were, as far as possible, removed. The moving of *Danmarksmonumentet* signalled both the wish to tone down the heavy symbolic statement that the sculpture represented, and also the quest for and focus on artistic quality. The sculpture, from the time of its installation, was considered voluminous and out of proportion, both in itself and also in its placement in front of the Museum (Villadsen, 1998: 180). Inside, the elimination of many architectural ornaments made the hall less crowded and provided a simpler context for the sculpture presented there. The consequence was that the artworks displayed there were emphasised. Overall, the feeling of entering an impressive civic architectural space that connected the nation, civilisation and individual was subdued in order to give a more prominent role to the artworks.

In the collection spaces, the architecture was also restrained so the eye was less distracted and could focus on the art itself. The corridor-like feel was softened by the new larger spaces, and with the addition of roof lighting, the artworks were presented in a better manner. The new furniture had a homely feel, and photographs of the collection show plants placed on the tables. This was a way of creating a more personal and intimate space where visitors could relax and concentrate on the artworks (fig. 4.5).[28]

Fig. 4.5 SMK, Interior, 1922

Consequently, the architectural script for visitors created a frame in which, compared to 1896, artworks were increasingly at the centre. The projected user could focus on art instead of symbolic architecture. This can be seen as a step towards scripting a more 'neutral' museum setting, where the eye is not disturbed by anything but the artworks.

4.3 The ordered collection

The focus on art was, as previously mentioned, also underlined by the larger exhibition spaces, where the projected users, instead of hurrying through the series of doorways, were invited to stay longer and dwell on the artworks. This was emphasised by the way the collection was installed. In 1922, the collections were presented in a clear and ordered structure. Madsen kept the division of the Cast Collection on the ground floor and paintings and original sculpture on the first. In addition, the separation between

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[28] Domestic furniture was used widely in museums in the 1920s, for example, at Boymans Museum (Noordegraaf, 2004: 125).

Danish and international art was maintained. But within each collection, the structure was far more firm and concise than it had been in 1896. 'The different schools are separated in order to give visitors, in an easy and comfortable manner, an overview of the history of art', Madsen stated (quoted in Villadsen, 1998: 169). And both the public and the art community were impressed. Politician and commentator Gustav Philipsen wrote,

> This spring the rearrangement of our art museum will be completed, and thus the work, which has spanned through most of a lifetime is finished. The result is a transformation of our State Museum from a neglected, dusty and poor collection to a fully worthy representation of Denmark's older art, a comprehensive overview of its newer art and a cabinet of old European paintings that probably never will equal the big art centre's galleries, but for the savvy may well assert its place among the medium-large public collections and provide our own people with a wonderful lesson in what great art countries have created and what their art signifies. (Philipsen, 1922: 417)

Both Madsen and Philipsen emphasise in their statements above the overview of art that the collection now presented, and they both underline the educational role and responsibility of the Museum. However, in 1922 this model of museum making was under pressure. In 1912, Danish artist Carl V. Petersen wrote an article in the magazine *Tilskueren* about two different museum types that were benchmarks for museum development in the twentieth century and discussed the possibilities for the collections at SMK. The two types of museums that he contraposed were the 'art historical museum', represented by Wilhelm Bode and his work with the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin, and the 'aesthetic museum', represented by Hugo v. Tschudi and his installations in the National Gallery in Berlin and Alte Pinakothek in Munich. Common to both approaches was that they were carefully structured, each object placed with a clearly defined purpose, and had the objective of showing connections between artworks.

According to Petersen (1912: 297), Wilhelm Bode was an researcher of history and the principle he worked from was to 'provide the most complete and objective overview as

possible of the periods of art'. All the artworks were arranged according to their position in time and place, and the aim was to show coherence, continuity, development and transition in the universal history of art. The museum was a 'Lehrmittle' (learning medium) (Bode, cited in Petersen, 1912: 297) based on historical research and belonged, according to Petersen, to the nineteenth century (1912: 297-303).

The museum for the twentieth century was developed by Tschudi. He proposed focusing on contemporary art and structuring the collection in a manner that highlighted the connections between the new and the old, starting from contemporary points of view. He argued, 'As paradoxical as it may sound, the path from the art of the past to that of the present is difficult to travel. The natural way is to go from the present to the past' (quoted in Petersen, 1912: 299). By considering older art from a contemporary perspective,

> His [the Gallery Director's] interest has been turned towards what, with living threads, are connected to contemporary life. He feels less as the guard of a resting collection of art and cultural historic documents than as the facilitator of aesthetic values that have a connection to our time. (Tschudi, quoted in Petersen, 1912: 300)

According to Tschudi, the museum of the twentieth century must be a writer of history (as opposed to researcher of history) (Petersen, 1912: 303). It is the ongoing process of researching contemporary aesthetic values and letting them shed light on their relations to the past that should be placed at the centre (Petersen, 1912: 303). Petersen argued that SMK did not have the quality or the quantity of artworks to make a display according to Bode's ideas; there would be too many 'holes' in the history of art. However, Tschudi's model was also difficult because the Museum lacked modern masterpieces. However, Peterson stated that this model was more appropriate because it is not bound to certain artists or specific times, as the art historical museum is; it can be flexible, since the formal connections between older and contemporary artworks can be adapted to the available collection (1912: 304-306).

With this discussion in mind, it is clear that Madsen might have renewed the Museum and improved the display radically, but he still framed the Museum within what

Petersen called 'a nineteenth-century approach' (1912: 304). The script he presented to the public was founded on art historical principles and prioritised an emphasis on the development of art. In a sense he managed to carry out the ambitions that had been laid out by Høyen and Lange.

4.4 Aesthetic communication

Compared to 1896, the Museum in 1922 communicated much more, as we have seen; however, it can be claimed that this communication was aimed at the art community or art specialists rather than at the general public. When visiting the collections, people were still mainly left to themselves. After 1912, the small guide books containing the basic details of the artworks seem to have been replaced by lists displayed on panels in the doorways into all or some of the rooms.[29] Instead of the booklets, Madsen developed a smaller version of the catalogue. He changed its structure, emphasising in the introduction that the artworks were listed not in alphabetical order but according to school. This corresponded to the hanging and made it easier for people to use the catalogue in the galleries. He also took out most of the descriptions and biographical information that Bloch's catalogue had contained, making it less detailed, hence the new name 'inventory' instead of catalogue (Madsen, 1923, 1922).

It is important to understand that the lack of information was not at the time seen as something that would exclude certain people. On the contrary, as demonstrated above in the discussion of 'Bildung', art was perceived as a medium that all people could engage with directly. This idea that art was self-explanatory was still very much present in 1922. The argument, however, was not based on Schiller's ideas of art's connection to universal values; instead, the focus had shifted to the artist as a person to whom the visitor could relate to and identify with through the artistic idiom. Madsen wrote in the introduction to his book *Billedkunst* (Arts) (1901: 3),

> Only in art has Mankind retained a common language, which not like
> other languages gradually changes Glossary and Form, a language in
> which Man always means Man, the smile means joy and tears means

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[29] This assumption is based on the fact that it has been impossible to locate any of the small guide books after 1912. Also, scrutiny of photographs of the period reveal that no further information in terms of labels etc. was displayed near the artworks. Moreover, in a letter from the period, complaints about the lists in the doorways are made (KMS brevarkiv XIII).

sorrow and which therefore seems so easy and straightforward to understand for anyone who has two healthy eyes.

But experience shows that it is by no means all who have what is called 'The Eye for Art'. Highly educated and developed men, wise people such as doctors and professors of all Sciences – sometimes even of the 'Doctrine of Beauty' – can in terms of art strike regrettably low, often well below the woodcarver and the painter boys. Two things complicate the acquisition of Art. The first is that Art is a craft and against any craftsmanship professional insight is needed to be able to judge the work in full. The second is that the Art, however, is not only a craft. In the preface to an old French novel two pupils encounter a stone with the inscription: 'Below rests licentiate Don Garcia's soul'. One walks away with indifference, his comrade works to lift the stone and finds a treasure. 'Friendly Reader, you look like one of these pupils'. Any artwork houses a piece of a Human soul, it is then a matter of perception and understanding what was thought and wanted.

In Madsen's view, understanding and engaging with art demands experience, patience, sensibility and empathy from the user. From this perspective, designing a museum script where artworks stand out and are carefully arranged so the prerequisites for viewing are optimised seems rational. To cater to the visitors' needs was not to supply them with texts or engaging interpretative material; rather it was to show the artworks in a calm, structured and comfortable environment so that visitors had the best conditions for creating their own experience. Danish art historian Vilhelm Wanscher took this even further, proclaiming (1903: 125),

> Any interpretation, no matter how deep-felt it is, how perfect it matches the interpreter's own feelings and opinions, has the opposite effect of what it aims, since it obscures and confuses, can hinder us in seeing for ourselves.

Wanscher subscribed to an aesthetic view of art, not unlike Tschudi, and opposed 'the subject art critique' (1995: 54). Instead he urged people to observe art in an aesthetic

way, where composition, technique, colour and line form the basis for the experience – as he said, to acquire practical experience with the 'grammar' of art (1995: 12).[30] This means that Madsen's mission of cleaning up the architecture, presenting the collection in a more structured, less cluttered manner and adding a more homely feel to the collection space was founded on the belief that this would be beneficial to the general public and their experience of art. Nevertheless, in 1926 an anonymous letter was sent to the Museum indicating that this view might not have been in tune with how the users actually experienced art. Signed by 'many museum guests', the letter presented a wish for more information along with a complaint that the information provided was placed away from the artworks:

> A large number of museum visitors have repeatedly complained to the administration that the paintings are not labelled, as it is the case in the greatest collections abroad, with explanation of motif and, if it is known, date. [...] that there are lists on the door posts with artist names as well as explanations [titles] is far from satisfactory. (KMS brevarkiv XIII)

Unfortunately, the letter was sent anonymously, which means that there is no answer from the Museum in the archives. However, this is perhaps also symptomatic of the relationship the Museum had with its visitors in 1920s. The Museum stood as an authority and an expert, and doubting or complaining about its expertise was not seen as appropriate. On the other hand, this is the first evidence that people had dared to raise their voices and challenge the script that the Museum had designed. It is an indication that people saw the Museum as theirs and that they felt that the Museum should consider the needs of the users. It should be noted, though, that the letter is written by someone who is aware of museum practice outside Denmark. This means that behind the letter, there was probably quite an experienced museum visitor. Another example of visitors raising their voices and the Museum listening to their comments is found in one of the small catalogues from 1922, where Madsen states that he has changed the structure of the catalogue because it had been claimed by visitors that it

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[30] Wanscher and Madsen were not alone in this perception of art. This was a whole paradigm shift that took place in aesthetic thinking at the beginning of the twentieth century. Artwork came to be seen not as a representation of an idealised or external world, but as something in itself – an expression in a specific idiom. This led not only to new ways of engaging with art and new display methods, but also to a re-evaluation of older artworks seen from a formalist perspective. For more, see Bell (1914), Duncan (2004), Fry (1925), Grunenberg (1999), Wölfflin (1929), Petersen (1912), and Wanscher (1995).

was difficult to use as guide to the collection. Therefore, the aesthetic communication was, by 1922, scripted around a projected user who engaged in a personal experience of the carefully arranged art objects, but there are indications that this script did not always fulfil the wishes of real users.

Another way of visiting the Museum that was far less self-explanatory and free was through the increasing number of educational and social projects that SMK was involved in. Here a different and more didactic way of engaging with art was promoted, indicating a projected user who needed far more explanation and guidance.

4.5 Museum education and social work

As discussed above, in the section concerning Det Kongelige Billedgalleri, the educational role of the museum was woven into its core function from the very beginning. As Hooper-Greenhill (1991: 25) reminds us, 'During the nineteenth century, education had been the prime function of the museum. The ideal museum was understood to be 'the advanced school of self-instruction'. She continues to describe how, by the 1920s, this was challenged and many museums became more inward looking. However, she also notes that teaching within museums and loan services were established in England in this period (Hooper-Greenhill, 1991: 25).

Around 1922, SMK was still very much an educational institution. It was just a question of how this education was scripted and how the projected user was imagined. In the galleries a script for free visitors who were engaging with self-explanatory artworks was designed; however, correspondence in the archives demonstrates an increasing interest from schools and different social, political and professional organisations in visiting the Museum (KMS brevarkiv III Besøgstal 1911-47). They would still come to the Museum on their own but more and more as part of a programme. What is significant for the groups visiting is the slow move from 'self-instruction' to 'formal instruction'. Of course, guided tours provided by museum inspectors had been a service offered by the Museum even before it became a public institution. These continued in the public museum and also took place at SMK. However, from 1920s onwards, the tours happened more frequently.

The Museum became part of the programme that organisations offered to their members alongside other cultural organisations. For example, in October 1926, a visit to the Museum was part of a series of lectures for *De socialdemokratiske foreninger på Frederiksberg* (the Association of Social Democrats in Frederiksberg). Between 1910 and 1963, *Journalistforbundet* (the Association of Journalists) arranged a yearly day in Copenhagen, where they encouraged people to visit different cultural institutions, and from 1924, SMK was a fixed part of that programme (KMS brevarkiv XIII, 1824-1932). *Jounalistforbundet* discusses in their correspondence with the Museum that the reason for the visit was to widen knowledge about 'the spiritual and material life of Copenhagen' (KMS brevarkiv XIII, 1824-1932). A small catalogue for the event was sold and the profits went to socially deprived families in Denmark (Journalisternes humanitære arv, 2001).

What is also noteworthy is the use of the Museum services as part of a social work agenda. Since the purpose of the museum was to raise the moral and educational profile of citizens, it also implicitly meant encouraging and supporting the development of the lower social classes. In 1884, Henry Cole formulated it this way:

> Open all museums of Science and Art after the hours of Divine service; let the working man get his refreshment there in the company with his wife and children, rather than leave him to booze away from them in the Public-house and Gin Palace. The Museum will certainly lead him to wisdom and gentleness, and to Heaven, whilst the latter will lead him to brutality and perdition. (Cole, 1884: 368, qvoted in Silverman, 2010: 10)

It is highly questionable whether this mission actually succeeded. As discussed above in relation to the decay of 'Bildung' and the practicalities of a visit to SMK in the nineteenth century, it is more than likely that the average visitors were from the middle classes or the elite. However, in the 1920s, with the increasing visits from schools and organisations, new audiences were introduced to the Museum. In addition, during this time the Museum experimented with opening hours in the evenings, making the collections available to people who worked during the day (KMS brevarkiv XIII).[31]

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[31] SMK was open in the evenings (no exact times are listed) during the winter months of 1923, 1924 and 1925, 1928–1931 and 1939. The initiative generated an average of 400 extra visitors per month. The first

From the 1920s, the Museum also began working with, or, perhaps more correctly, was used as a setting for, actively empowering lower social classes. This development should be seen as a natural part of the evolution in educational practices described above, but also in conjunction with the social and financial crisis that Denmark experienced from 1920 and into the 1930s. The crisis culminated between 1930 and 1932, when the total number of unemployed in Denmark more than doubled. The reason for the crisis in Denmark, as well as in many other countries, was the aftermath of the First World War, the following labour reforms and, in particular, the economic world crisis that started in the US in 1929 (Bryld, 2002: 197; Kühle, 1994: 515).

For SMK, this contributed to the increase in visits from social groups in the 1920s and a further intensification in the 1930s. In March 1931, *Fagskolen for Boghaandværk* (the Vocational School for Book Craft) arranged a course for unemployed typographers (KMS brevarkiv XIII) for which a visit to the Museum was mandatory. Later a whole committee for organising museum lectures for the unemployed was established. They held lectures at, for example, SMK and Thorvaldsen's Museum in Copenhagen. In the winter of 1938–39, more than thirteen thousand unemployed attended the lectures (Christensen, 1941; Hartvig, 2009).[32] The lectures consisted of a talk supplemented by a slideshow and a tour of the galleries (Komitéen til Afholdelse af Museumsforedrag for Arbejdsløse, 1938). In relation to the lectures, the committee published a small booklet elaborating on the benefits that unemployed citizens would gain from visiting a museum:

> The aim was to turn participants into active employees. They should not only see and hear, but also contribute themselves. They should sense some of the life which was prior to their own and learn from this what joys and sorrows, struggles with victory and defeat, daily work and the strong ties of family history have meant for the development [of mankind]. They should feel some of the strength which has carried mankind forward in its efforts to make progression. In this way they

month of evening opening hours, November 1923, was the most popular, attracting 2,158 people (KMS brevarkiv XIII).

[32] In the beginning the committee arranged one lecture per week during the winter, but this was later increased to four lectures per week. In winter of 1936/37, 6,000 unemployed participated in lectures. This number rose steadily: 1937/38 had 8,500 participants, 1938/39 had 13,000 participants, 1939/40 had 15,600 participants and 1940/41 had 17,000 participants (Christensen, 1941: 39).

would not only acquire more knowledge themselves, but also get more strength to resist the hard struggle of time. (Komitéen til Afholdelse af Museumsforedrag for Arbejdsløse, 1938: 7-8)

This paragraph reveals that even though the notion of 'Bildung' had been developed more than a century earlier, and despite the decay highlighted by Hammershøj (2003: 77), it was still within the frame of 'Bildung' that the moral effect of an art experience was understood. The exposure to artworks was meant to connect the unemployed with a universal morality, thus enabling them to improve their own lives. The quotation also shows how an encounter with artworks is a transcendence of the self into something larger. Through the museum experience the individual is connected to history and can identify herself as part of a community, a nation and even humankind (fig. 4.6 and 4.7).

Fig. 4.6 and 4.7 Project for unemployed, 1941

An unemployed assistant clerk writes in response to a lecture at SMK,

Home on the table is the newspaper, a headline catches my eye – 4,000 more unemployed in the last week – one breaks out in a stark, jarring laugh – museum visits – stones for bread. Well, we can go and look at the things. At the entrance is an impressive person in red jacket with gold

braid and a black triangular hat with fringes. Then comes the moment
when you face these old masters, glorious things, beauty overwhelms us
in meeting with the images lines, shapes and colours and one surrenders
in mercy. (quoted in Christensen, 1941: 42)

The lectures were, it was argued, part of a larger attempt to empower the working class
population in Denmark through art (Komitéen til Afholdelse af Museumsforedrag for
Arbejdsløse, 1938). Another initiative in line with the lectures was *Arbejdernes
Kunstforening* (the Workers Art Association), which was started in 1936 and with the
motive that art should not be for the few but 'a cultural good, which can give joy and
strength in the struggle of life', as the first chairman of the organisation, Preben
Wilman, stated (Hartvig, 2009).[33]

Museums engaging in this type of social activism in the 1920s and 1930s were not
unusual. Andrew McClellan describes how the director of Boston's Museum of Fine
Arts, Benjamin Ives Gilman, in this period developed that museum's educational
profile extensively. The reason for this is, McClellan reminds us, is that in the first
decades of the twentieth century, 'the use value of museums lay in their ability to
transport the viewer from the here and now to a higher, abstract plane of essential
humanity' (2008a: 18). This corresponds well to the arguments presented by *Komitéen
til Afholdelse af Museumsforedrag for Arbejdsløse* given above.

Both in Copenhagen and in Boston, the social work of the museum was met with
appreciation but also criticism. McClellan describes how Gilman was accused of
patronising the working class and adding to the distinction between the social classes
(2008: 20). In Copenhagen several voices raised the same criticism. In her article about
Arbejdernes Kunstforening, Jette Harvig discusses how these attempts to educate the
working class in art, from certain perspectives, seemed paternalistic. It was argued that
art should adapt to the working class instead of indoctrinating the workers about fine art
(Hartvig, 2009).

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[33] Lois Silverman discusses in her book *The Social Work of Museum* how museums today play a role in
supporting people outside the job market (2010: 53). In Denmark, the discussion about how museums can
participate in social projects continues today. For example, *De Radikale*, one of the parties in government,
has proposed culture as a leverage for vulnerable people such as the homeless and unemployed
(Dannemand Jensen, 2013).

4.6 Conclusion

As I have shown in this chapter, SMK underwent great changes in 1922. Not only was the symbolic architecture toned down and the aesthetic experience of the artworks pushed forward, it was also a time when work with schools and underprivileged groups started to increase.

The architecture and the interior of the Museum were simplified, the installation of the works was structured more clearly and domestic furniture and plants were introduced to the museum space to make visitors feel at home – all of which should have enhanced the aesthetic experience. As demonstrated, both Madsen and influential art historians of the time, such as Wanscher, believed in optimising viewing conditions in order to improve people's engagement with artworks. It was not information that was needed but proper viewing conditions. In the tradition of 'Bildung', which also subscribed to this self-explanatory quality of artworks, the direct engagement between viewer and artwork was based on the essential and universal values present in both art and viewer (see chapter 2). In the beginning of the twentieth century, this relationship changed. Now the communication between viewer and artwork was perceived as a language that should be carefully read. The script the Museum provided for visitors included eliminating everything that could interrupt this reading. A consequence of this was also an increased emphasis on the projected user as an eye (not a body) that perceived the art – something which would be developed in the coming years.

While this aesthetic and self-explanatory understanding of art was present in art historical and aesthetic theoretical circles, an increase in social and formal educational projects was also seen. At SMK these projects were, in the 1920s and 1930s, initiated mostly from the outside of the Museum and a far more didactic approach was employed. This is evident, for example, in the information given to the unemployed. Here it was explained that this process of engaging with art needed to be done on an educated basis. The committee argued that lecturing visitors before their visit in the galleries would act as 'guidance, when they later walk around on their own' and, in addition, recommended that participants visit libraries and borrow books about the subjects that they heard about in the lectures (Om at gaa paa Museum, 1939: 4). This was also said explicitly by Holmer Christensen, secretary of the *Komitéen til Afholdelse af Museumsforedrag for Arbejdsløse,* and played a significant role in lectures held

during the 1930s: 'It is not enough to exhibit objects, an explanation of them must also be given' (1941: 38). From this it is clear that while the museum script was structured around an aesthetic and self-explanatory perception of art, a more educational and didactic script of art also existed.

In relation to the years 1827 and 1886, it can be argued that the script in these years revealed a split between, on one side, a free art experience based on the self-practice described in 'Bildung' and, on the other side, a more didactic and formal practice based on the values established by art professionals. In 1922, the script in general had become more didactic, but now two different educational approaches were practised that stood in tension to each other. One rested on the self-explanatory artworks, which demanded a neutral environment in order to provide perfect viewing conditions, and another increasingly used instruction and formal education as a method for engaging the users in the artworks.

Chapter 5 1970: A Museum for the Few?

In 1970, SMK reopened after four years of rebuilding. The lack of space, which had been a problem since the Museum's erection in 1896, had become pressing, especially as a result of continuous acquisitions and the desire to give more space to the artworks on display. Extensive changes were needed. Overall there were three demands attached to the rebuild: first of all, there could be no changes to the exterior of the Museum; second, Den Kongelige Afstøbningssamling should remain in the Museum; and third, a significant amount of display space should be gained (Westergaard, 1970: 13).[34] In addition, as the Museum was reaching its hundredth anniversary, a modernisation was also essential.

This chapter shows how developments in architecture, floor plan, display strategies and educational practices had a profound impact on the script and the profile of the projected user presented in 1970. It also considers how the script is inscribed with a certain type of meditative self-practice, which differs from the ones seen previously. Finally, the chapter deals with the growing public critique of the Museum script.

Fig. 5.1 SMK, Covering the courtyards, 1966

5.1 Architectural and structural changes

The architectural renovations to accomplish the changes needed were conducted by the architects Koppel, Edstand & Thyrring. They comprised removing the large staircase in the front hall and covering the inner

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[34] In the end Den Kongelige Afstøbningssamling was not moved back into the Museum after the refurbishment. Instead, it remained in storage until 1984, when it was installed in Vestindisk Pakhus on the harbour front in Copenhagen. For more, see Berner (1980).

courtyards, wherein an extra floor was inserted, creating ten new galleries to show the collection (fig. 5.1 and 5.2).[35] In doing so, the Museum almost doubled the size of display areas, allocated more space for Den Kongelige Kobberstikssamling, and expanded the room for storage (Westergaard, 1970).

Fig. 5.2 SMK, Covering the courtyards, 1966

The large staircase, which had been simplified in 1922, was replaced by a smaller, modern one, which was built in the eastern part of the hall. It gave way to a more open space. These changes meant that visitors would not experience the same grand, symbolic transition when moving into the sphere of the art on the first floor. Hanne Westergaard, who was inspector at the time, acknowledged that some people might not like these changes, but argued that there would now be room for sculptures and 'furniture for resting and conversation' in the hall (1970: 18). In addition, the rest of the decoration in the hall was painted over, providing the hall with a clean, white look (fig. 5.3 and 5.4).
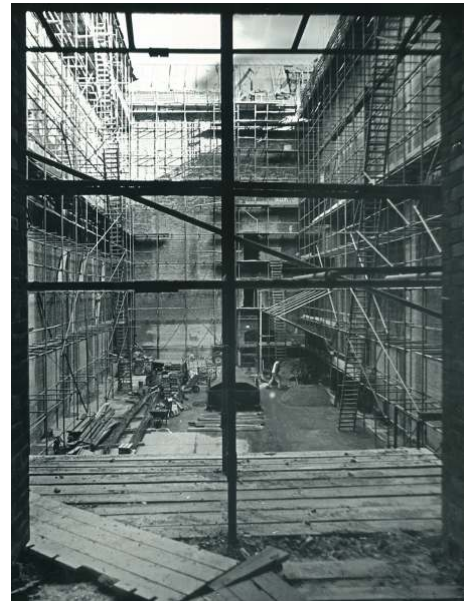
Fig. 5.3 SMK, Front hall, 1970

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[35] Covering over the inner courtyards was a typical way of gaining more space in nineteenth-century museum buildings. For example, the National Gallery in Oslo made the same alterations in the 1930s (Ekman, 2012: 150).

Fig. 5.4 SMK, Front hall, 1973

Besides the changes in the front hall, the renovation also included a modernisation of the way the collections were handled. A climate system in the display areas and a conservation workshop were developed, along with a general improvement of the lighting (Westergaard, 1970: 18). The same modernisation was seen regarding the service for visitors. Built into the staircase was an elevator, which for the first time would help physically impaired guests access the first floor. In addition, space was found for a cafeteria and lecture room (fig. 5.5) (Westergaard, 1970).

Fig. 5.5 Lecture room, Room 17 (Gl. Festsal), 1973

The consequence of the architectural changes was that the historicist exterior stood in sharp contrast to the clean, classic, modern look of the interior. The changes were a continuation and a completion of the work begun in 1922, where the interior architecture was given a less prominent role. The artworks was to be at the centre and everything else was to be neutral. For the front hall this meant that it became more pragmatic, with a focus on orientation and navigation alongside functioning as a display area.

This drive towards a 'neutral' and more practical frame for the art is not particular to SMK. It is seen across the museum sector, especially from 1930 onwards. This type of museum was named by Brian O'Doherty in his series of critical essays from 1976 as the 'white cube' (O'Doherty, 1999). O'Doherty mainly uses the term in relation to the display of modern and contemporary art, but as Giebelhausen has pointed out, the second half of the twentieth century was, in general, dominated by this form of display:

> Most previous forms of display had situated the work in precious interiors, be they princely palaces or the grand museum of the nineteenth century. Instead, the 'white cube' interior sought to focus attention on the object: it aimed to provide a space that invited aesthetic contemplation and immersion, without distraction. (Giebelhausen, 2011: 232)

For SMK this white cube space was not easily obtained as the building's appearance had been defined in another era. Major changes, such as the ones mentioned above, were needed and, in addition, significant architectural alterations took place in the display rooms. These included the removal of high panels and other ornaments, white or light wall painting for modern and contemporary art (the older collection had traditional coloured walls) and sparse and simple furniture.[36] The homely feel that Madsen introduced in 1922 had vanished. However, the quest to create a neutral frame did not make the museum building less symbolic. The clean space was, as O'Doherty convincingly argues, just as loaded with meaning as the old building (1999: 15):

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[36] This elimination of ornaments and other traces of historic buildings' interior is seen in many museums, for example, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and the Natural History Museum in Rotterdam (Noordegraaf, 2004: 161). In the UK, the interior of Tate Britain has been modified and simplified to comply to the aesthetics of the white cube (Spalding, 1998). It is also seen in the National Gallery in London, where the Victorian decorations were removed in the 1950s and 1960s (Whitehead, 2011: 33).

> A gallery is constructed along laws as rigorous as those for building a medieval church. The outside world must not come in, so windows are usually sealed off. Walls are painted white. The ceiling becomes the source of light. The wooden floor is polished so that you click along clinically, or carpeted so that your pad soundlessly, resting the feet while the eyes have at the wall.

This means that in fact, the clean and hygienic space signals just as much as the old ornamented and monumental one, but in a different way. Instead of pointing to the powerful and civilised nation, it signals a universal, sacred universe detached from time, which can elevate everything in it to artwork (O'Doherty, 1999: 14) and where nothing stands between the artwork and the visitor. The museum created an illusion of a pure perception of art, as Noordegraaf points out (2004: 161). In this way, the architecture presented a script for projected users to experience a smooth and satisfactory visit where their attention would be wholly on their undisturbed contemplation of the art objects.

5.2 Floor plan and display strategy in 1970

According to Westergaard, the aim with the floor plan in 1970 was to give an overview of art history for visitors. The hang was based on aesthetic principles, where the artistic qualities of each work were presented in the best possible way (Westergaard, 1970: 12). Compared to the change from 1896 to 1922, where the structuring of the collection was tightened and ordered but not completely changed, the 1970 hang was significantly different.

First of all, Den Kongelige Afstøbningssamling was not, despite the initial plans, included in the Museum, which meant that paintings, sculptures and prints were spread over both floors.[37] In the front hall, visitors were met by large paintings and a few sculptures, and in the first room (room 3), an information desk and stairs to the cafeteria in the basement were installed (fig. 5.6). The rest of the ground floor was allocated

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[37] The decision to expel the casts was a practice seen throughout the museum world from 1900 onwards. For example, Bennett refers to the 'battle of the casts' at Boston Museum of Fine Arts and Metropolitan Museum of Art, which in essence was a battle between the educational value of the casts against the quality and authenticity of the original artwork. That the originals won this battle is evident, since by the 1950s, the Metropolitan Museum of Art had placed its casts in storage (Bennett, 2011: 265).

mainly for art from the 1900s. On the first floor, European art was displayed in the west wing following a chronological and geographical order beginning with the fourteenth century. To the east was Danish art from the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, again divided by chronology and schools and with specific rooms devoted to single artists.
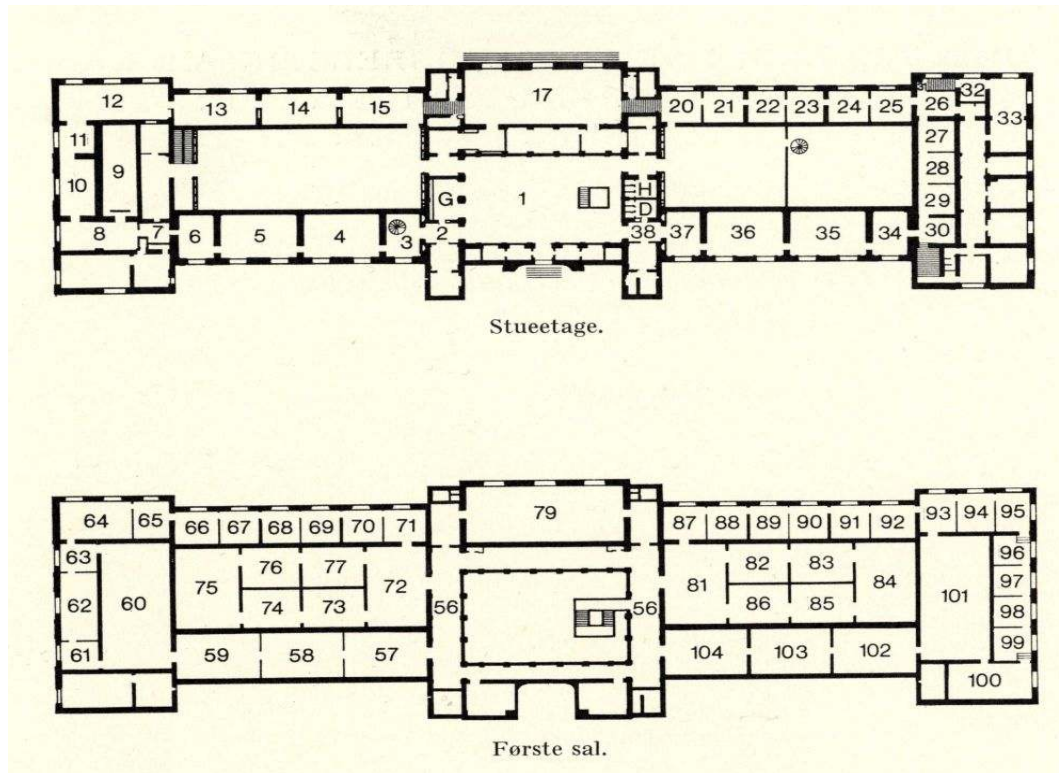
Fig. 5.6 SMK, Floor plan, 1970

The most notable change to the floor plan, in comparison with earlier versions, was that it delivered a script for visitors which started not with older art but with art from the twentieth century from both Denmark and abroad. It was not until visitors reached the first floor that they were presented with a more chronological structure. This was a step away from the typical arrangement in universal survey museums, and is a clear indication of the transition that SMK had gone through. Re-opening the Museum with newer art can be seen as a shift towards the aesthetic museum presented by Tschudi in the beginning of the century, underlining the idea that the older collection could be comprehended in a new way when seen in the light of contemporary art. This approach was also emphasised by the fact that even though chronology was an overarching principle throughout the first floor, schools with similar formal characteristics, and

especially separate rooms with individual artists, overruled this, providing a more dynamic and less restricted walk through history.[38]

Carol Duncan identifies this emphasis on formal aspects of artworks, which are then grouped into art movements or schools, as 'the museum's central narrative' where 'modern art unfolds as a series of moments, each involving a new and unique artistic achievement and each growing out of (or negating) something before it' (2004: 108). This looser approach to the timeline is also seen in the front hall, which in 1970, as previously mentioned, was treated as a regular display space. Here large-scale paintings and sculptures from different times and places met and, in a sense, provided a taste of what visitors could experience in the galleries (fig. 5.7).

Fig. 5.7 SMK, Front hall, 1970

However, there were critics of this way of structuring the collection. Art historian Gammelbo complained that the hang tried to embrace both a structure based on chronology and one based on individual artists. This, he found, was a new approach, but to his mind it was not ambitious enough: 'Chronology has not been followed consistently, but, however, not so inconsistently that surprises occur' (Gammelbo, 1970). He continues: 'This alternation between rooms with a presentation of an artist's life's work and rooms of works of art that have nothing to do with each other is

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[38] It can be argued that having rooms presenting a single artist enforces an ahistorical interpretation of art, which signals that art history consists of a series of individual geniuses who did not respond to or were not affected by society (Barker, 1999: 65).

confusing. It must be either–or' (Gammelbo, 1970). But looking more closely at Gammelbo's arguments, it becomes evident that he misses a precise account of art history:

> The communication with the artists is made more difficult by exhibiting the works as things at a flea market. The Museum Director is supposed to have said that he will captivate, not lecture, but surely it must be possible to both teach and captivate with the material held by the Museum. (Gammelbo, 1970)

This criticism echoes the harsh reviews of the first organisation of the Museum's collection by Emil Bloch almost hundred years earlier, where his aesthetic hang was found superficial and messy. Once again, this brings forward the debate about the Museum's role as a lecturer whose responsibility it is to provide an overview of the development of art. Gammelbo states, 'Separate hangings do not provide Museum visitors the opportunity to compare the painters, understand the painters' artistic struggle, which, despite their uniqueness, had common features in time' (1970). Summing up, Gammelbo found that the reinstallation of the collection lacked chronology and, in particular, failed to show coherence between artworks as well as the development of art history. In other words, Gammelbo felt that the presentation fell between two stools: it was not a universal survey museum (or an art historical museum, to use Carl V. Petersen's term), but neither was it an aesthetic museum where coherence between formalistic elements was sufficiently emphasised.

Another significant change in the arrangement of the artworks in 1970 was the amount of space each work was given (fig. 5.8). For the same reason as those given for the elimination of distracting architectural elements, artworks were placed so they would not disturb each other. This meant, compared to 1922, that far fewer artworks were displayed in each room. This change in display practices is acknowledged by Westergaard as one of the major reasons (along with acquisitions to the collection) for expanding the Museum (1970: 12).

Fig. 5.8 SMK, Interior, 1973

The reason for this type of hanging is found in the development of the aesthetic experience. As we have seen, a focus on individual artworks and their formal qualities had already gained significance by 1922, when Madsen and Wanscher discussed the grammar of artworks. During the twentieth century the issue of formalism was further developed. Roger Fry (1925) and Clive Bell (1914) and their writings about the formalist aspect of art paved the way. From the 1940s to the 1960s, art critics Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried continued the formalistic approach to art.

The overall purpose with this focus was that the artwork was interpreted and judged on line, rhythm, mass, space, light and shade and colour (Fry, 1925) and not on its representation of an illusion of reality. Instead, the artwork should, through a negation of the outer world, 'connect with an inspiring realm of purity and truth that lies beyond it' (Duncan, 2004: 109). These are the fundamentals of abstract art, but they also, as O'Doherty convincingly argues, lead to the development of the white cube display.

I will return to this idea of visitors' connection with a 'realm of purity' below. Here I will just reaffirm that the change in display practices was carried out because a silent, contemplative and serene space was needed in order for the projected user to engage with artworks in a formalistic manner. However, the formalistic perception of art did not only have an effect on the type of exhibition space that was desired, or the way displays were arranged; it also implicitly meant a change in the way the projected users in general were perceived by the Museum.

5.3 Eyes and minds only

As Bennett argues, 'eye-centred programs of "civic seeing" have dominated the museum's post-Enlightenment history' (2011: 279). While the display of the collections held by SMK in both 1827 and 1896 constructed a script in which the visitors' vision and movements were controlled, directed and regulated, there was, as we have seen, also a great degree of freedom and bodily involvement when engaging with the artworks. Vision involved choreography of the body, thus embedding it within the act of seeing: the bending and stretching in order to see artworks placed high and low on the walls and the corridor-inspired galleries that encouraged movement and strolling. However, the arrangements and decisions in relation to display methods made by the Museum in 1970 reveal that the act of spectatorship had changed. O'Doherty elaborates, 'The space offers the thought that while eyes and minds are welcome, space-occupying bodies are not' (1999: 15). In SMK, the unfettered access to the collections, the retracted architectural frame, the professionalisation of light, the spacious hanging in one line and at eye-level (for adults) and the general elimination of disturbing elements alongside the artworks all contributed to the negation of the body and the prioritisation of uninterrupted and perfect vision. And there were other initiatives that underlined this. Bente Skovgaard, another inspector at the Museum during the refurbishment, described what the Museum would provide a year before it re-opened:

> Here you can also find the loveliest pictures in well-proportioned rooms, presented in a delicious light and with, for the study of the arts […] an *absolutely necessary* but often overlooked fact: *adequate peacefulness*. I'm not saying that absolute silence must rein, and that one should be alone with the work of art, but it is certainly nice once in a while. (Skovgaard, 1969) [Italics in original text]

In order to guarantee the perfect contemplation of the artworks, not only did potential visual interruptions need to be removed, but also noise had to be minimised. Instead, conversations were to be carried out in the front hall (using the 'conversation furniture' mentioned above) or in the café. In the same article, Skovgaard argues that the Museum should be open to the public as much as possible, not to increase the number and diversity of visitors but to 'spread out the visits' since this would ensure 'favourable

conditions' for all visitors (1969). Thus, by limiting conversations and having fewer visitors in the galleries at one time, the engagement with artworks would be enhanced. This view is part of the development of formalist aesthetics described above, making Skovgaard and Westergaard's arguments closely connected to the spiritual art experience and the white cube.

5.4 A Museum for the few?

As we have seen, the aesthetic of the white cube positions artworks outside time and space. But just as the artworks are judged from mainly one perspective (the formalist aesthetic), so are visitors. The solitary focus on a uniform vision establishes the projected user as a universal human being, detached and autonomous from the social and political world. Thus, a script was developed that ignored the diversity of visitors. The consequence was the exclusion of visitors who did not comply with this script and who did not have the skills to engage with artworks in a formalistic manner. Staff at SMK were very much aware of the fact that the Museum mainly appealed to specific types of visitors. In January 1969, while the Museum was closed, Skovgaard wrote an article entitled 'What is the Purpose of the Art Museum?' This was a reaction to an ongoing political debate about the operation of SMK. She states,

> What we are less happy about is the well-intentioned, but at times strange, attempts of the central administration and the cultural politicians to make the Museum into something it is not. They probably think they do it for the sake of the people. Possibly they consider the larger consumer masses more than the special users such as the art historians, the artists, aesthetes of many kinds. Is there no one among the people who govern the country and donate money who still acknowledges that the minority can be of immense importance to the public interest? (Skovgaard, 1969)

Here Skovgaard argues that the museum's projected user is primarily a minority of art professionals and that there is no problem with this, since they, in return, will contribute to society and public debate. The reason that Skovgaard defends this position is because at this point in time, there was in Denmark a growing public dissatisfaction that SMK was too closed and withdrawn from the rest of society. Skovgaard's contribution did not bring the debate to an end. In February 1970, a few months before the reopening of

the Museum, Jens Kaastrup-Olsen, director of the company Louis Poulsen & Co., provokingly asked in an article about SMK, 'What is a museum for and why do so many museum directors prefer the museum not to be used?' (1970a).[39] In the archives, Skovgaard's response to this article can be found. She returns a letter to Kaastrup-Olsen with a list of exhibitions and activities, with the intention of refuting the accusation that the Museum does not provide activities for visitors (Skovgaard, 1970). However, Kaastrup-Olsen is not satisfied. In his reply, he thanks her for the lists, but asserts his discontent:

> There remains a feeling of a SMK that does not stand at the centre of today's art debate, but remains modest in the background and concentrates on its storage and restoration tasks. (Kaastrup-Olsen, 1970b)

It is clear from this correspondence that the Museum was fighting accusations that it was engrossed in itself and not aimed at the general public, and there was growing political and social interest in changing this. This led to a debate about the overall purpose of the Museum but also resulted in a more concrete discussion about how an inward-looking museum could be avoided. One suggestion that kept re-emerging was an increase in the number of temporary exhibitions. Kaastrup-Olsen argues:

> The refurbishment was to increase display space so more art could be on display. Moreover, it was to generate life in the Museum and this is best done through changing exhibitions. (Kaastrup-Olsen, 1970a)

This suggestion resonated with the political agenda, where the temporary exhibition also was seen as a way of activating the Museum. But Skovgaard was not satisfied: 'The Minister of Culture wants the Museum to be an exhibition house. It will mean a pace of work which is unnatural for an art museum. There will be no time to carry out museum work' (1969). What penetrates this argument is that the Museum feels misunderstood and frustrated that respect for the art and 'natural' museum work is lacking. This, Skovgaard complains, is partly because Danes need to be educated in how to use a museum:

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[39] Kaastrup-Olsen enters this debate since his company was the sponsor for a large Matisse exhibition that the Museum was planning in 1970 (Kaastrup-Olsen, 1970a).

In the Louvre and many other places, you lower your voice and dampen your steps when entering the solemn stone floors or the venerable parquet-laid high vaults. Denmark does not have quite as much style, but we are familiar with it, respect it, and have successfully imitated it through time. (Skovgaard, 1969)

The growing dissonance between the Museum and society, from the Museum's perspective, lay in the fact that people did not respect and appreciate the Museum's agenda. Moreover, visitors did not exercise the proper reverence for the artworks and failed to comply with museum etiquette. In other words, many people lacked an understanding of the script that the Museum provided, and when they entered the Museum, they did not follow it.[40]

It must be acknowledged, however, that in this period, despite the arguments presented above, SMK also tried in its own way to open up and cater to more people. An increase in temporary exhibitions and educational activities, as well as the initiatives to establish a lecture room and a café, must be seen as part of this. It is, therefore, not entirely justifiable to state that the Museum was only for the few in 1970, but it is clear from the debate that a part of society felt that this was the case.

5.5 'Bildung' and self-practices in 1970

Before looking at the educational activities SMK developed in 1970, which also contributed to the script, let us explore the relationship between 'Bildung' and the purpose of art as it was portrayed in the script in 1970. This is imperative for understanding the projected user of 1970. As I explained in chapter 2, the purpose of experiencing art in the nineteenth century was to develop oneself through a self-practice that entailed transcendence into something larger that would connect one with universal moral and values.

A way of achieving this transcendence was by experiencing the artworks in a museum. Schiller and Humboldt describe how this happens through the balance between feelings

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[40] It is interesting that the same debate takes place regarding the theatres in Copenhagen. On 20 January 1970, Karl Valentin wrote a sarcastic article in the newspaper *Information*, suggesting that the Danes should have 'theatre duty' in the same way as there was compulsory school attendance. It should be mandatory to visit theatres, since this seemed to be the only way to fill up empty theatres.

and reason. They hold Greek antiquity as ideal. With the progression of the formalistic view of art, the development of abstract art and consequently the exhibition practices enacted in the white cube, it is interesting to reflect on how the concept of 'Bildung' changed and how self-practice can be perceived from this perspective. While Hammershøj observes that a decay of 'Bildung' occurred at the end of the nineteenth century, his investigation does not take us to the 1970s, which was beyond his project. As the discussion presented above regarding the use of the Museum shows, it is evident that museums in 1970 still had a role to play in relation to society, and that the art museum was still perceived as a general good. But how were artworks seen as beneficial in 1970? This is fundamental for understanding the notion of 'Bildung' and therefore also the script presented to visitors. The previous section described how formalistic aesthetics played a key role in the way the projected users were thought to engage with artworks. Drawing on Michael Fried, Duncan reflects on this, explaining how modern artists reject the outer world while pursuing a purity that lies beyond reality and that evokes 'new universes of modern though and feeling' (2004: 108). Duncan connects this purity to a universal spiritual morality (2004: 109):

> Where the aesthetic reigns, the moral is presumably immobilized. In practice, however, the moral seems not so much vanquished as hidden inside the aesthetic, which, in the name of purity or some other artistic value, appropriates its function as an imperative.

With this, Duncan concludes that the ritual that visitors are invited to engage in within the modern art museum rests on the idea that through interaction with the artworks, 'viewers enact a drama of enlightenment in which spiritual freedom is won by repeatedly overcoming and moving beyond the visible, material world' (2004: 110), and are thereby shown a universal purity and truth.[41]

It can therefore be argued that the script was formed on a self-practice where the museum visit would allow projected users to immerse themselves in a process whereby they would gain spiritual freedom. In other words, artworks were seen to play a role in personal development by offering an experience through which spiritual freedom could

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[41] Duncan gives examples of how artists such as Mondrian and Miró in different ways work towards a transcendent realm (2004: 109-110).

be achieved. And in this state of freedom, the outer world would be rejected and the viewer would engage in a pure and universal condition that was both rewarding and stimulating for the individual. It is clear that the personal, subjective and almost meditative condition envisaged required a script that promoted intense concentration, peace and tranquillity. This is the inherent reason for the arrangement of the white cube and the reason for Skovgaard to restrict conversation to the front hall and argue for fewer visitors in the galleries.

Compared with the tradition of 'Bildung', we can say that instead of transporting the viewer to an ideal past and bringing a balance between reason and feelings, artworks, in the script of 1970, were seen to transport viewers into a spiritual timeless space, where it was more a question of finding peace within oneself than absorbing universal values.

From this perspective it is perhaps also possible to establish part of the rationale behind criticism of the museums raised by artists like O'Doherty, the Danish Ministry of Culture and people like Kaastrup-Olsen. The museum script insisted on a personal and apolitical experience. However, in the 1960s and 1970s, both the art community (with all its emergent types of art forms) and society in general were characterised by an increasingly active involvement, awareness and engagement with the social world. That the museum, consciously or not, insisted on being an apolitical and ahistorical institution outside society was at odds with the world around it. Regarding 'Bildung', this means that the self-practice that the Museum offered its visitors was seen to be out of tune with the self-practice people exercised elsewhere in society, such as in schools, where critical thinking, democracy, active engagement and challenging the power structure were at their centre.[42]

5.6 Developing educational practices

One area where the Museum did seem to recognise that active engagement with visitors was needed was in the education work it did in relation to schools and specific groups. As we saw, this began in the 1920s, but by 1970 this had increased even further. As the photographs of the collection show (fig. 4.5 and 4.6), the displays were not accompanied by any interpretive material. Only small labels with artist, title and date

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[42] I will not expand here on the general type of 'Bildung' which was in practice in the 1960s and 1970s as this is not directly linked with the development of the museum script. However, the shift is described in, for example, the writings of Professor in Education at Aarhus University Ove Korsgaard (2004, 2003).

were provided close to the works. However, parallel to this, an intense programme of activities, including guided tours, lectures and collaborations with schools and other specific groups, was developed. As previously mentioned, it was also in 1970 that space for the first lecture room was prioritised.

Hooper-Greenhill (1991: 33) describes how by 1920, the educational purposes of the museum and the close partnership between schools and museums had already been explicitly addressed in a report published by the British Association. She also discusses how Leicester Museum in 1931 appointed a schools officer and how a Schools Museum Service was established in 1941 by the Corporation of the City of Glasgow (Hooper-Greenhill, 1991: 45-46). Even further back, American museums had shown commitment and professionalisation in regards to educational work.[43] George Hein (2006), Terry Zeller (1989) and Elliott Kai-Kee (2011), amongst others, shed light on the historical development of museum education in America and argue that by the beginning of the twentieth century, many American museums already had strong education departments and worked closely with local schools.

Compared to this, the museum profession in Denmark in general was slower to professionalise educational work, despite the fact that guided tours and school visits were continuously increasing. Many local initiatives were implemented, such as the development of the Children's Museum at Louisiana, the Museum of Modern Art in 1958 (Jacobsen, 1994: 81), and the appointment of the first museum educator in Denmark at Frilandsmuseet (the Open Air Museum) in 1963 (Floris, 1994: 71). However, it was not until 1969 that museum education was included a cultural political report, *Betænkning nr. 517* (report number 517), which formed the basis of the new museum legislation in 1969, where it was stated that a professional museum educator was needed to plan the educational work of the museum (Adriansen, 1994: 9).

Another formalisation and professionalisation of museum education took place in 1970 with a collaboration between Zoologisk Museum and Københavns kommunale skolevæsen (Copenhagen Public Schools). Here the first formalised local school

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[43] Hooper-Greenhill describes how Britain in the 1920s and 1930s was inspired by educational work done in American museums. One example was the use of docents in the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences (Hooper-Greenhill, 1991: 34).

service, *Skoletjenesten*, was developed. This was expanded over the next few years (Staack, 1994: 117). In the early years, it was mainly cultural history museums that embraced the museum educational field in Denmark and it is also clear from the report in 1969 that the need to modernise museum education was seen as more appropriate to cultural history museums than art museums (Ministeriet for kulturelle anliggender, 1969: 154). The reason for this is explained in the section dealing specifically with SMK:

> First and foremost, education will occur naturally by the exhibition of the collection. Printed guides and guided tours by experts are important to support the public, but should the interest from a wider audience be maintained, offers in the form of arrangement of temporary exhibitions, lectures evenings, art films and related elements must be provided. (Ministeriet for kulturelle anliggender, 1969: 167)

As this quotation shows, there was an idea that art displays were self-explanatory and self-educational and therefore it was not imperative to develop educational material for this type of museum. However, despite this self-explanatory approach to art, which, as demonstrated, found its rationale in the aesthetics described above, it is clear the Ministry of Culture also advocated for active museum education in art museums.

Probably pressured by ongoing public critique, SMK, at the beginning of 1971, sent out a press release listing the activities which had taken place at the Museum between 15 December 1970 and 15 December 1971. Here it was shown that the Museum had received 145,093 visitors, given sixty-four public guided tours, eighty-one tours for schools and, in addition, held concerts (no number given). Moreover, seventeen special lectures were offered. Added to this were eleven temporary exhibitions (Statens Museum for Kunst, 1971). Even though the Museum clearly increased its activities, it was still quite traditional, with scholarly lectures and guides, written catalogues and no professional educational staff. The work concerning education was taken care of either by a secretary (bookings etc.) or by museum inspectors (catalogues, specific tours and lectures). Moreover, where education gradually found its way into the displays of the cultural history museums in the shape of wall texts, illustrations and Photostats, as well as visualisations and environmental constructions (Strandgaard, 1994: 33), SMK, like

other art museums, still maintained a strong separation between the educational activities and the galleries, which, as described above, were kept clear of everything but artworks.

5.7 Visitor awareness

By 1970, awareness about visitors had started to increase in the museum field, both in Denmark and abroad. Until this time, mostly sporadic and unsystematic studies of visitors had been conducted (Hooper-Greenhill, 2011: 363). There exist a number of publications which outline the history of visitor studies in museums in the US and the UK (Bitgood and Shettel, 1996; Hein, 1998; Hooper-Greenhill, 2011; Loomis, 1987). However, in the Danish context, audience studies before 1970 are very limited. In the *Statistisk Årbog* (Statistical Yearbook) it is possible to locate visitor numbers from the largest museums in Denmark from 1954 onward (Danmarks Statistik, 2013a)[44] and there are few indications that SMK tried to differentiate between or research its visitors.[45]

In the 1960s, larger studies such as the 1964 *Fritidsvaner i Danmark* (Leisure Time Activities in Denmark) were conducted for the first time. This study, which looked at the cultural habits of Danes and included a section on visual arts and museums, was repeated in 1975, 1987, 1992, 1998, 2004 and again in 2012 (Statens Arkiver, Dansk Data Arkiv, 2013).[46] If we look at the data generated from 1964 and again in 1975, it is clear that the proportion of Danes visiting art museums rose (Bille et al., 2005). It is interesting to compare this survey to the conclusions found in the visitor study conducted by Bourdieu and Darbel in 1969. As explained in the introduction to this thesis, the authors found that educational and cultural background were important factors in determining whether or not a specific group would visit an art museum (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1990). Not surprisingly, both *Fritidsvaner i Danmark* 1964 and 1975 confirm the results of Bourdieu and Darbel's study that the statistical probability

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[44] The visitor numbers are backdated; e.g. the yearbook of 1954 states visitor numbers from 1952 and 1953.
[45] One example is a small internal survey from 1947 regarding the age of visitors (Tælling af Besøgende på Museet, i aldersklasser, 1947).
[46] Audience research in radio and television was quicker to emerge than in the museum sector. In 1929 the so-called *Balalajka Undersøgelse* (the Balalajka Study) was conducted to map what Danes wished the radio to broadcast. As the name suggests, the study showed that listeners wanted more entertainment and Balalajka music (Madsen, 2010:12). In 1950, sociologist Theodor Geiger carried out a new study on radio audiences (Andersen, 1990).

of visiting an art museum increases if you have a higher educational degree. For example, in 1964, 56% of those actively interested in art were placed in the highest educational category (Kühl, 1966: 55). It is also concluded that for people with the lowest educational level, their salary could affect their interest in art, thus people with a high income were more likely to visit art collections than people with low education and low income. The same cannot be said for people with a higher level of education. Here income is not a determining factor (Kühl, 1966: 55-56). These survey results correspond well with the comment made by Skovgaard cited above, where she specifies that the typical museum visitor belongs to the cultural group that she calls 'aesthetes' – a group with high levels of education (Skovgaard, 1969).

Returning to visitor numbers, the trend that visits to all art museums increased in the period is reflected in visitor numbers at SMK (fig. 5.9).

Number of Visitors 1960 - 1977

Fig 5.9 Visitor numbers 1960–1977. The data are retrieved from *Statistisk Årbog1962-1979* (Statistical yearbook) (Danmarks Statistik, 2013a). The exact numbers are as follows: 1960: 129,057; 1961: 125,750; 1962: 133,614; 1963: 108,152; 1964: 112,393; 1965: 71,611; 1966: 22,253 (partly closed); 1967: 11,419 (partly closed); 1968: closed; 1969: closed; 1970: 258,000; 1971: 140,000; 1972: 139,000; 1973: 129,000; 1974: 132,000; 1975: 135,000; 1976: 277,000; 1977: 145,000.

Here it is evident that in the 1960s (1960–1964) the Museum had more or less stable visitor numbers, with an average of 120,000 visitors per year. From 1965–1969, the Museum was partly or entirely closed for refurbishment, which is reflected in the visitor numbers, and then in the 1970s (1971–1977), the number settles to an average of around 150,000 visitors after the popular re-opening year with 258,000 visitors. The reason for this general rise in interest in the arts is thought to be connected to the

increase in people living in or near cities. It is documented that the percentage of the urban population who attended art museums was higher than that of the rural population. Moreover, mobility increased between 1964 and 1975, so it can be assumed that people, when travelling to other parts of Denmark, visited art museums (Bille et al., 2005: 366-374).

In the light of the negative public debate regarding SMK, I have compared data from the other art museums in Denmark in the same period to see if the increase in visitors was less at SMK than at other art institutions. However, the proportional rise in visitors remains more or less the same across the sector.[47] This means that regardless of the critique of being too introverted, SMK saw its visitor numbers rise at the same speed as other art museums in Denmark. However, this says nothing about what the Museum could have achieved had it addressed the points of criticism and established a more open approach to visitors and the rest of society.

These broad statistical data sets reveal important patterns in the use of culture in Denmark, but it is difficult to understand the quality of the museum visits. Thus, despite the fact that the surveys were both professional and systematic and that they introduced an awareness of visitors around 1970, information about the actual museum experience remained hidden.

5.8 Conclusion

To sum up, the 1970 refurbishment of the Museum continued the 1922 process of establishing a script where the artworks were in the centre of the museum experience. But to an even higher degree, a neutral and practical frame for the arts was pursued. A space for aesthetic contemplation where distractions of any kind were eliminated was the aim. The consequence was an architectural remodelling, where architectural features such as panels, ornaments and the staircase were toned down, more space was added and a simple interior and a spacious hanging were prioritised. This meant that instead of pointing to the powerful and civilised nation, the Museum's architecture came to signal a universal, sacred universe detached from time, conceptualised by O'Doherty (1999: 14) as the white cube.

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[47] For example, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek experienced a rise in visitors between 1963 and 1975 from 106,462 to 133,000. This is an increase of 27,000 visitors, and equals the rise in visitor numbers at SMK in these years (Danmarks Statistik, 2013 Statistisk Årsbog 1964 and 1976).

Although aspiring towards the white cube, SMK did not represent a perfect one; the inflexible historicist building and the layout, as well as the use of coloured walls, did not fit the model of the white cube entirely, but the changes and the statements concerning the purpose of the Museum presented by the staff members demonstrate that it was this ideal that the Museum oriented itself towards. These thoughts were underlined by the presentation of the artworks manifested in the floor plan. Art from the twentieth century became the starting point for the museum experience, and overall the installation showed a move away from the universal survey museum towards a mix between an aesthetic, formalistic hanging, chapel-inspired rooms that focused on one artist only and a chronology of art history – a hang that, it can be argued, especially due to the two first display methods, emphasised an ahistorical view of art.

In total, the changes and the choices made in both architecture and hang shaped a script that envisaged the projected user as a universal, silent, contemplative eye, without a body and without historical, political or social characteristics – an eye which moved obediently from one artwork to the next, decoding the formalist aspects of each piece. The opportunity for self-development that the script encouraged occurred in a meditative act based on a self-practice, where it was possible to connect to a pure world of spiritual freedom.

Through archives, press articles and literature from the period, it is possible to find evidence that this script was out of touch with the rest of society. Intense debates unfolded regarding the purpose of the Museum and as this discussion makes clear, the Museum was increasingly frustrated with the surrounding society and the fact that its script and projected user profile was not accepted.

However, along with the script presented in the architecture and the display areas, the educational practice of the Museum did develop in these years. Despite the general assumption that art is self-explanatory, educational activities increased and quietly formed a contrast to the script presented in the display areas. Alongside these developments an awareness of visitors emerged and a change in the projected user profile could begin to happen. Large quantitative studies revealed who attended art museums and, combined with the continuous and systematic collection of visitor

numbers, pointed towards a need to understand museum visitors in a more differentiated and nuanced way. This should prove to be one of the central issues for the museum script in 1998/2006.

Chapter 6 1998/2006 Opening the Museum

> I was of the opinion that I could contribute something to the Museum which was lacking: contact with the surrounding world, contact to society outside the Museum, to the artists, to the business sector, to the schools and the pensioners, to the ordinary people who live in Denmark and keep the country going. (Helleland and Fibiger Andersen, 2007: 20)

These are the words of Alice Helleland, who was the director of SMK from 1994 to 2007. Even though it is not directly mentioned, her comment stands as a response to the debate which went on in the 1970s, clearly signalling the transition the Museum went through from the 1970s to 2006: a change towards a more open, engaging and approachable museum.

In this chapter the focus will be on these changes and how they were made manifest in the script when the Museum reopened in 1998 after the addition of an extension. However, due to essential fire precautions, a refurbishment of the old Museum building began just a few years later and a reinstallation of the collections was carried out once more. The Museum then reopened in 2006. These two major changes, which happened so close in time, were part of the same museum vision, and in many ways the work that was begun with the extension culminated in the script presented in 2006. I have therefore chosen to refer mainly to the 2006 hang when looking at floor plan, display practices and interpretative material, and also to include the other initiatives, such as the *Egmont Videnscenter* (Egmont Knowledge Centre), which were also finished in 2006. I will, however, mention the 1998 hang when it is relevant for the analysis. This approach is appropriate because the empirical studies, which will be dealt with in the following two chapters, were conducted in the 2006 presentation.

The chapter also deals with broader issues, such as the experience economy, increasing awareness of differentiated visitor experiences and changes that have occurred in the understanding of national art galleries. These have had an impact on the script and how the Museum envisages the use of the collection.

6.1 Spectacular architecture: between old and new

On 6 November 1998, SMK reopened after two years of closure to the public. A new extension by architect Anna Maria Indrio from C.F. Møller's studio had been added, and the structure of the whole of the Museum had been transformed.

Fig. 6.1 SMK, Exterior, 1998

Fig. 6.2 SMK, Sculpture street, 1998.

The extension consisted of a new, white, modernist building in a spear-like shape, which was adapted to the full length of the north façade of the Museum (Hornung, 1998) (fig. 6.1).

To join the two buildings, a panopticon-style space almost resembling a pedestrian street with glass roof and sides was constructed, providing views of the city and presenting a spectacular outlook to the park *Østre Anlæg*. This space is known as the sculpture street. Access between the old and the new

building takes place either through the opening in the old north façade or via one of the footbridges that connect the first floor in the old building with the first floor in the extension, spanning across the sculpture street (see fig. 6.2).

The new extension not only doubled the space of the Museum from around 17,000 m^2 to 30,000 m^2. It also transformed the building, which meant that the project was perceived not just as an extension but as a transformation of the whole museum (Hornung, 1998). It made room for new facilities such as a shop, a larger café, a multipurpose stage for events and a children's museum. In 2006, this was developed further with the addition of Egmont Videnscenter, which contained a library, a study room for prints and graphics and Unges Laboratorier for Kunst (U.l.k) (Art Labs for Young People). New wardrobe and restroom facilities were located in the renovated basement of the old building, and last, in the front hall, a new spiral staircase was built around the existing elevator tower (fig. 6.3). Behind the scenes, the extension provided new office spaces and additional storage areas.

Fig. 6.3 SMK, Front hall, 1998.

The extension of SMK can be seen as part of the trend where art museums expand or construct new, spectacular and innovative buildings. (SMK's extension is at the more discreet end of the spectrum).[48] With

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[48] Frank Gehry's Guggenheim in Bilbao (1997) and Daniel Liebeskind's extension to Denver Art Museum (2006) are some of the most spectacular museum buildings constructed around the same time as

its focus on aesthetics combined with a need to raise its profile and attract visitors, as well as signal innovation and quality, the art museum has become one of the most prestigious types of buildings where architects can unfold their creativity and architectural visions. This means that the architecture becomes something in itself. As Villads Villadsen, the director of SMK who initiated the extension, stated,

> Museum buildings are more than the optimal architectural framework for experiencing art. The buildings have become part of the attraction, both as an emblem and an object of attraction. (*Politiken*, 1991, cited in Keiding, 1998: 424)

Similar to the museum buildings of the nineteenth century, the structural design of the museum once again becomes a strong symbol and a landmark that interacts both with the city it which is it placed and with the art it contains (Giebelhausen, 2003: 7). Compared to the architectural changes SMK underwent in both 1922 and 1970, the 1998 extension from the outside does not try to create an illusion of a neutral space or to signal functionality. Instead it is designed as a more extroverted statement that becomes an important part of the overall museum experience.

The extension, with its modern look and slick limestone façade, stands in contrast to the old building, with its decorations and ornaments. Together they testify to two very different fashions in museum architecture – 'A successful sandwich', as a journalist called it after the opening (Estvad Petersen, 1998). Where monumentality, history and civic pride were celebrated in the first structure, creativity and originality, along with openness, are honoured in the new building. The meeting between the two makes visible the dialogue not only between past and present, but also between concepts such as stability and innovation, and history and change. For a national gallery to signify the merging of these concepts is interesting. It is no longer enough to send a message regarding the wealth, culture and history of the nation as we saw in the nineteenth century. New values such as innovation, change and adaptability are also seen as important. This corresponds to the changes in the role of national museums presented

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the extension of SMK. Other extension projects that should be mentioned include Yoshio Taniguchi's rebuild and extension of Museum of Modern Art, NY (2006), and Coop Himmelb(l)au's extension to Akron Art Museum (2007).

by the research project EUNAMUS (European National Museums). Here it is stated, 'National museums balance the stability of the old with the disruption of the new' ('eunamus: welcome to eunamus,' 2013). From this perspective the museum building still stands, as Aronsson from EUNAMUS has argued, as an utopian visionary project whose design functions as a symbol of the nation and its aspirations (2011: 3).

However, as Suzanne MacLeod rightly points out, museum architecture does not just reveal the changing contexts in which museums in general need to function; it can also point to more complex social and site-specific changes (2009: 72). The accusations that SMK was too introverted, which started in the 1970s, might be a general problem that art museums have, but in particular for SMK, it was a highly local discourse that architect, museum, stakeholders and politicians were concerned about when contemplating the extension. This means that being open and inclusive permeated most of the debate around the extension and its communication. In relation to the architecture, this is revealed in a statement made by the architect: 'First and foremost we have given it [the building] an openness, which it never had before. It was a very oppressive and introverted building' (Keiding, 1998b).

As we have seen, both architect and director demonstrated in their articulation of the rebuild a focus on the openness and accessibility of the building. This was achieved by the physical opening in the façade, the views towards the city and the park and the large spaces created inside the building. In addition, Helleland explains how new architecture can change staff's habits and working patterns, arguing that new spaces create opportunities for new processes and new goals and that architecture can thus be seen as an aid and support in organisational development (Helleland and Fibiger Andersen, 2007: 26). The architecture is therefore much more than just a setting for the artworks and an architectural experience. It creates a structure fundamental for achieving more open and dialogical museological practice, for both visitors and staff. In this way the architecture formed part of the new and more open script presented in 1998.

6.2 Statens Museum for Kunst and the experience economy

When analysing interviews with the architect, director and staff, along with reviews and articles concerning the rebuild of the Museum and, of course, the floor plan of the changed museum, it is clear that the interior is separated into two zones. The ground

floor was conceived as a public 'noisy' space, whereas the first floor provides rooms for private contemplation. In relation to the ground floor, the architect explains, 'It has from the beginning been our great dream that the whole ground floor in the new art museum should be a natural part of the public space, where people could freely walk in and out' (Weirup, 1998a). This means that the shop, café and the sculpture street with the central stage were together conceived as a place for diverse cultural activities, debate and conversation. It is also from this level that the temporary exhibitions can be accessed. In this way, the ground floor of the Museum was designed to accommodate the new demands to museum culture: changing exhibitions, cultural events, shopping and eating. In the museum programming, this was embraced by offering a series of activities and exhibitions not seen in the Museum before. For example, so-called special guides, famous Danish people such as actors or film directors, gave introductions to their favourite artwork. Helleland defends the development in this way:

> We need to recognise that museums are part of the event culture and experience economy. With our special guides we are trying to meet a whole new audience who may at first identify with the actor, but the second time around will, perhaps for the first time, visit the collections, where they can experience a real art historical guided tour if they want to. (Helleland and Fibiger Andersen, 2007: 32-33)

In Denmark, as well as elsewhere, the development of museums in the 1990s was characterised by a focus on the experience economy: 'The museums must navigate in an entirely new knowledge and experience society, so the basic tasks of museums, such as collecting, preservation, research and communication, are integrated into good experiences' (Copenhagen Business School and Skot-Hansen, 2010: 9). This is one of the main conclusions made in the publication *Museerne i den danske oplevelsesøkonomi – når oplysning bliver til oplevelse* (Museums in the Danish Experience Economy – When Information Becomes Experience). The publication was part of the research project *Kunst, kompetence og konkurrenceevne i den danske oplevelsesøkonomi* (Art, Competence and Competitiveness in the Danish experience economy) at Copenhagen Business School and is one of the Danish contributions to the international literature concerning the experience economy and experience society.

The concept of the experience economy was invented in 1999 by Americans B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore in their book *The Experience Economy*. Here they explain how companies, instead of just selling a product or offering a service, connect an experience to their product in order to give the consumer extra value by buying the product (Pine and Gilmore, 1999: 12). In relation to art museums it can be argued that experiences always have been the prime focus of their practice. The museum has always been an 'experience stager', to use Pine and Gilmore's term (1999: 16).

Nevertheless, the experience economy had a great impact on SMK, since expectations about the experiences it could offer and demands for its services were increasing. The Museum came under pressure from the increased competition from other experience attractions, from politicians who required more value for their money, and also from an audience that had grown increasingly accustomed to unique sensory experiences. With the ground floor of the new extension, SMK stepped into the age of the experience economy. Launching products such as gastronomy, shopping and music and cultural events, as well as an increase in large, temporary exhibitions, the Museum became much more than its collections and was now offering the extra value that Pine and Gilmore see as essential to a successful business (fig. 6.4 and 6.5).

Fig. 6.4 SMK, Interior, Café, 1998

Fig. 6.5 SMK, Interior, Stage, 1998

This was a radical change in museum practice that drew many critical voices both in Denmark and abroad. Skot-Hansen warns that there are great consequences for museums when they enter the experience economy. They become part of a cultural sector, she argues, subject to a never ending spiral that constantly demands new and better experiences, such as bigger and more spectacular temporary exhibitions, more attractive catalogues, innovative websites and extensive (often expensive digital) communication material. These products obviously require a constant increase in the expenditure of the institution and lead, as Skot-Hansen explains, to a commercialisation of museums (Copenhagen Business School and Skot-Hansen, 2010: 10-11). This is similar to Vittoro Magnago Lampougnani's argument from a more international perspective that art museums have entered a frenzied cycle of increasing growth. Due to their own success, more education programmes, more temporary exhibitions, more shops and restaurants have to be installed to earn more money and attract more people. This comes, Lampougnani states, at the expense of the museum visitor, who, despite being in focus, is also presented with a museum that tries to adapt to visitors' tastes instead of challenging and presenting them with new perspectives (2006: 255).[49]

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[49] One of the areas where the art museum has been criticised for not challenging visitors enough is in the temporary exhibition. In the quest to attract many visitors, temporary exhibitions often have the character of a blockbuster film. Ane Hejlskov and John Andersen discuss in the book *Ny Dansk Museologi* (New Danish Museology) this particular genre in the Danish context. They argue that the dangers of

SMK was also aware of these pitfalls of commercialisation and tried to create a balanced script for visitors where the experience economy was embraced but on the Museum's terms and in a way by which the visitors' contemplation of the artworks would be unaffected. Vibeke Petersen, who was museum inspector when the extension opened, stated,

> We live in an event culture and we are part of its pulse. But we would like to contribute to the defining of the frames in which we participate. In the art museum we have a foot in each camp and we must get the two things to merge. We cannot lock ourselves in the ivory tower anymore. We have to serve everybody. (Ring Petersen, 1998)

Helleland also focuses on this merging of the two oppositional purposes: the extra values which the experience economy requires and the contemplation of the artworks:

> We live on taxpayers' money and have to keep up with the times. The art must prevail, but the large, modern audience also requires service and comfort when they go to a museum. Therefore we have a large café and bookstore, and we have naturally placed both at the main entrance. This is done to create a clear separation between the commercial activities and the art. These two things must not be mixed. (Thøgersen, 1998)

Thus Helleland from her perspective solves the problem of commercialisation by imagining the Museum in two zones: a commercial one on the ground floor and a very different art zone on the first floor.

Whether this balancing act was achieved was judged very differently by the public. Helleland was accused by many critics of having transformed the museum into a well-driven multimedia venue that provides a frame for cultural events, and where 'art was reduced to fast food without nutrients' (Helleland and Fibiger Andersen, 2007: 16). In particular the temporary exhibitions of dress design and flower arrangements were criticised, along with the decision to offer the facilities of the Museum for business

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blockbuster exhibitions are that they are for pure entertainment and populism only, and thus they do not contribute with any new knowledge (Hejlskov Larsen and Andreasen, 2005).

dinners, weddings and other external events (Helleland and Fibiger Andersen, 2007: 16). In response to this, Helleland declared,

> Nothing is lost by letting the Museum be used by more people. Criticism comes from a tiny group of people who wish to preserve the Museum as it was – a silent art chapel. They do not approve that children are here, that there are music events, that there are young people here. They would like to have the Museum to themselves. That there would be business people here is a completely foreign idea to them. (Helleland and Fibiger Andersen, 2007: 29)

For Helleland the experience economy plays a part in opening the Museum to more people and it is this argument that justifies the new initiatives that contributed to the formation of the museum script in 1998–2006. This reveals the essential discussion: whether the added value that the experience economy introduces is a threat to the traditional museum script as we saw it in 1970. To explore this further we have to look at how the collections were presented and what other activities were offered.

6.3 Interior design and visual pulling

As both Charlotte Klonk (2009: 196) and Reesa Greenberg (1996: 362;) observe, museum architecture today is highly diverse and individual externally, but remarkably alike internally. This is also the case with SMK. This means that the rebuild of SMK more or less from the inside follows the principles of the white cube: calm, cool and stylish with wooden floors and many white walls. The display areas appear simple and clean, although the proportions in the rooms in the extension are in some cases asymmetrical, with high ceilings.[50] Overall the display areas, as we also saw in 1970, are constructed to accommodate a contemplative experience, which demands concentration and no interruption from sources other than the artworks. Helleland explains:

> We have worked a lot to remove the distracting elements in the rooms that are often encountered in significant museums abroad. Here the audience will not experience lamps protruding from the walls disturbing the

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[50] Coloured walls are used in the galleries containing older artworks.

pictures. Instead, we have, in collaboration with the manufacturer, worked with light that washes the walls so the experience will be as undisturbed as possible. (Helleland in Weirup, 1998b)

This passage shows clearly how Helleland is of the opinion that artworks cannot reach the projected user if there are too much noise and visual disturbance. She also explains that if necessary, the Museum will initiate further actions to ensure that users can concentrate and immerse themselves in the art. For example, she suggests so-called 'quiet compartments' where only a certain number of visitors are allowed in at one time (Helleland in Weirup, 1998b).

However, even though these statements resemble the aesthetic communication that we saw in 1970, there is evidence that the profile of the projected user has changed and is considered more when moving around in the collection. Special rooms designed for breaks have been prioritised. Here users can relax in between their engagement with the art, enjoying a view of the park or city (Keiding, 1998: 441). This means that besides dividing the Museum into a commercial zone and an art zone, the art zone is also separated into areas for art contemplation and areas for pauses. Furthermore, the Museum also developed a children's museum and a laboratory for young people, which function as separate zones.

These different zones and areas create a dynamic that is new to the interior design of the Museum. Compared to the script in 1970, where the visitor was perceived as a stable eye with a focus on the art, by 1998 the movement and activation of this eye between these different zones became a central part of the script. The architect stresses the importance of the views, both on the ground floor and in the break rooms, since they activate visitors and pull them visually and physically around in the building and at the same time bind together the inner and outer spaces (De Waal, 1998).

Visual circulation in the Museum is also investigated by Rosalind Krauss. Her analysis of what she calls the postmodern museum is founded on Hans Hollein's Municipal Museum Abteiberg in Mönchengladbach and Richard Meier's Museum of Decorative Arts in Frankfurt. These are two very different buildings, but her point is that the vista is the reigning principle in both. She writes,

Circulation in these museums is as much visual as physical, and that visual movement is a constant decentring through the continual pull of something else, another exhibition, another relationship, another formal order, inserted within this one in a gesture which is simultaneous one of interest and of distraction: the serendipitous discovery of the museum as a flea-market. (Krauss, 1996: 347)

The architecture of SMK is very dissimilar to the two museums mentioned above, but what they have in common is that the visitor is activated through the dynamics of different visual experiences offered by the Museum. The consequence is that the emphasis is placed not only on the singular viewing experience of an artwork, but also on the process and the sequence in which the viewing of the artwork takes place. Compared to the earlier layouts of SMK, it is interesting to note that the corridor-inspired spaces that continuously pushed the visitor along in 1896 (see chapter 3) seemed to return with the extension in 1998. The difference, however, is that in 1896 visitors were pulled through the history of art, and in 1998 this visual pulling is less controlled – less centred, as Krauss states above – and involves not only artworks and art history but also other zones of the Museum and views of the park and the city.[51]

In this way, Helleland's argument that the art zone remains undisturbed is true only to a certain extent. There is a significant contrast between the larger, open spaces on the ground floor and the quiet galleries on the first floor. Nevertheless, the art zone is not completely separate from the other zones in the Museum: the architecture and the interior design provide a script where breaks, views and visual pulling attract visitors' attention and continuously lead them on.

6.4 From art history to art histories

Besides the new architecture, the introduction of the experience economy and new considerations regarding the projected user, the conspicuous reinstallation of the collection also had a great impact on the script. Here chronology, themes and an ahistorical hang were introduced.

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[51] In the extension, balconies from the galleries enable visitors to get a view over the sculpture street. This can also be seen from the footbridges between the new and old building, with views to the Children's Museum and the multifunctional stage. Right through the middle of the extension, a long corridor runs, presenting views of the park and the city at each end.

Chronology in 1998

In analysing the floor plan from 1998 and the way the artworks were hung, it is clear that there are both similarities and changes compared to 1970. Vibeke Petersen stated in an interview just before the opening, 'An important collection, such as the one the country's national gallery possesses, commits. Revolution is impossible. But revisions are not' (Ring Petersen, 1998). She describes how chronology is the most important aspect of the collection's structure, followed by the historic-geographic division, along with the wish to bring forward specific artists who have had a major influence in art history. In addition, she refers directly to Julius Lange and his ideas for the 1896 museum when she specifies that the didactic function of the museum is just as important now as it was then and that the art historical development must therefore be emphasised (Ring Petersen, 1998).

Challenging the timeline

However, just a few years later, in 2006, the collection reopened after another major restructure, and it was in this presentation that the Museum significantly freed itself from the traditional ways of installing artworks. Besides having made the quite radical (at the time) decision to show the Modern Collection in the eastern wing of the old building and the Old International Collection in the new modern extension, the most noteworthy change was the principles behind the hang. The strict chronology where visitors were to follow the path of the development of art history was replaced by a heterogeneous and eclectic hang, which involved several types of structuring.

Overall the collections were still divided into three sections based on chronology and geography: Older International Art, Older Danish Art and Modern Art. However, inside each collection several principles were followed: chronology combined with ahistoric elements, thematic hangs, and focus rooms with individual or juxtaposed artists (fig. 6.6). The strategy was to have a centre room in each collection that would give a
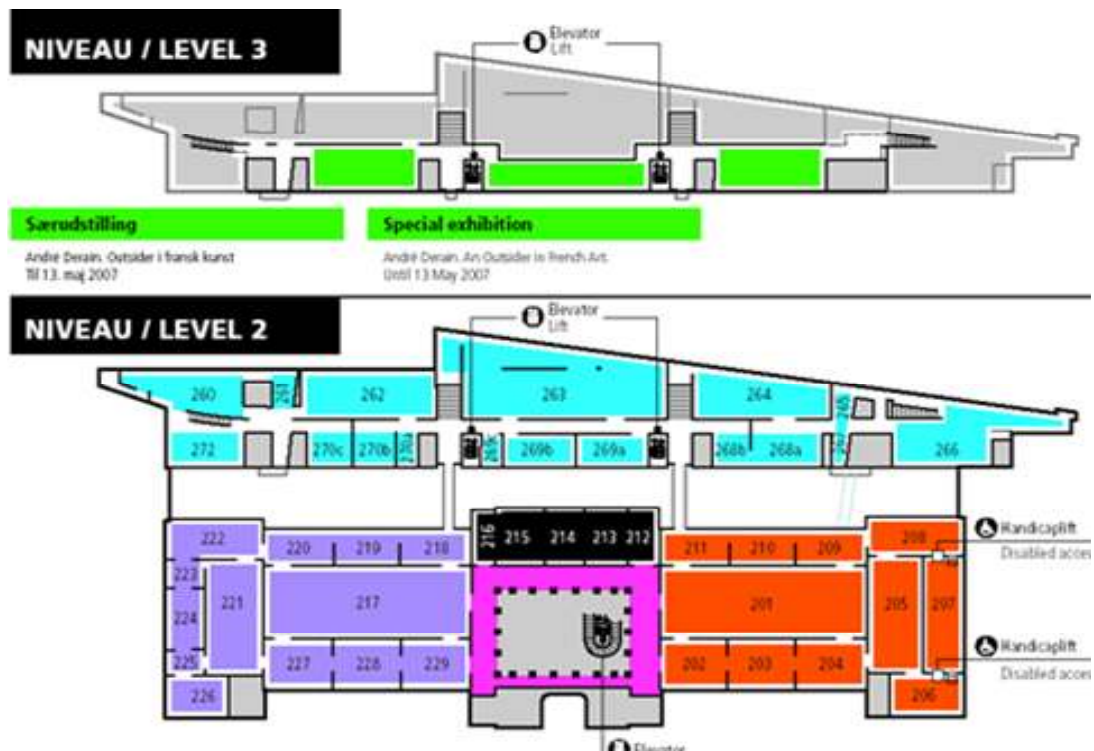
Fig. 6.6 SMK, Floor plan, 2006

chronological overview, put in perspective by the side rooms, which contained both traditional themes (for example 'Body') and more contemporary ones (for example 'The political material'). In addition, these were combined with rooms that focused on and juxtaposed two artists (for example Henri Matisse and Emil Nolde), as well as rooms focusing on specific art movements. This way of organising is what Maree Stenglin has called an orbital structure: 'With orbital structure, an exhibit is organized around a nucleus and satellite configuration. The nucleus establishes the reading position for satellites, which are thus dependent on the nucleus for their interpretation' (Martin and Stenglin, 2007).

In all rooms, interventions with artworks from different periods appeared (for example Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem's *Titanernes fald* (Fall of the Titans) from 1588–90, and Michael Kvium's *Kor* (Choir) from 1991) (see fig. 6.7). Furthermore, different hanging strategies were added to this mix of principles. This means that the traditional white cube hang, where artworks are hung in a straight line at viewing height, was, in certain rooms, supplemented with or substituted by, for example, the historic close hang with artworks displayed from floor to ceiling (fig. 6.8).

Fig. 6.7 SMK, Ahistoric hang, 2006

Fig. 6.8 SMK, Mosaic hang, 2006

In this period of time, SMK was not alone in testing new display strategies. For example, in 2000, Tate Modern chose to arrange its collection around themes rather than chronology.[52] The reason behind this move away from chronology can be found in the postmodern critique of the concept of history that has taken place the last thirty years. Here authors such as Michel Foucault (2006), Keith Jenkins (2003, 1997),

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[52] In 2000, Tate Modern arranged its collection around four themes: History/Memory/Society, Nude/Action/Body, Landscape/Matter/Environment, and Still Life/Object/Real Life (Heartney, 2000).

Hayden White (1990) and others have argued that history is a political, ideological and historic construct and by no means the truth about a given time.

This criticism also involves the museum since, as we have seen with SMK as an example, chronology was the fundamental principle for the universal survey museum (see chapters 2 and 3). Presenting history through a progressive timeline can be criticised for presenting a reassuring and seductive overview of history that falsely claims that this is the way history has happened. With this in mind, many museums started to question the chronological narrative, contesting its points of view and problematising that it holds objects and history in fixed sets of meanings (Lubar, 2013: 178; Witcomb, 2011: 576). Steven Lubar (2013: 169) sums up the main critique of the timeline:

> The timeline carries with it assumptions about the narrative structure of history, about progress. It makes it seem as though history is a path to the present. More to the point, it hides those assumptions remarkably well. Timelines seem natural.

Lubar argues that timelines are, however, *not* natural, despite their presentation as universal and without a certain perspective. There is always a storyteller behind them who has chosen what to include and what to leave out. From this point of view, the linear art historical timeline presented in SMK has never been neutral. Robert S. Nelson further explains, 'The map of art history is drawn by the modern, the national, and the Euro-American and by their culturally derived senses of order, classification and system' (1997: 40). With this in mind, art museums started to experiment with other ways of installing artworks and thus presented new histories that could belie chronology as the true story about the development of art. Tate Director Sir Nicholas Serota underlines this by stating in his book *Experience and Interpretation* that through different installation strategies, we 'explore the matrix of changing relationships' between the artworks and in doing so, users are encouraged to make their own interpretations (2000: 55).

However, altering the backbone of the art historical narrative in a national museum can be a contested move. This is reflected in Helleland's careful comments when reflecting on the 2006 rehang:

> As a national gallery we have arranged many of our rooms so visitors can experience art in a continuous line from the dawn of time onwards. But it is wonderful to be able to play a little. We have seven hundred years of wonderful works; in some certain areas we have allowed art from different eras to meet each other. (Helleland and Fibiger Andersen, 2007: 57)

In the press the rehang did not go unnoticed. Generally it was well received that the Museum wished to do something different: 'The new hang at SMK breaks with the idea of strict divisions. It leads to visual dialogues across time and to brave input to the political contemporary' (Ross, 2006). The method and the result, however, were discussed:

> It is refreshing […] to see works from different centuries together, the thematic umbrellas as 'National identity', 'The political material', 'The inner material', 'The modern breakthrough' etc. Such cross-chronological sections, however, require thorough professional art historical research in order to succeed, but unfortunately the dialogues between the works are lacking in quality in a number of rooms. (Bonde, 2006)

The main criticism was that it was harder for the visitors to engage with the artworks. It was claimed that certain rooms and strategies had the character of a 'visual steeplechase' and at worst, 'The works have become hostages in a bold, postmodern painting installation that mimics the past's great dense salon displays with a mottled patchwork expression' (Bonde, 2006). Others suggested that it was 'too pensive and diffuse' (Hermansen, 2006). This criticism echoes that given by Marlene Chambers (2009) in relation to Detroit Institute of Arts in 2009, where she also calls for a clear framework instead of many different strategies, which can confuse the audience.

Presenting a mix of principles and strategies might therefore disturb the clear structure of the development of art, but it may also destabilise the traditional art historical narrative, since it becomes evident to the public that there is not just one story to be told about the development of art but many. Nevertheless, it can be argued that many of these new stories are founded on the same values regarding the artwork as were the old ones. Debora Meijers states in her work on the ahistorical exhibition, which corresponds to the intersections between artworks from different periods used in at SMK,

> The aim is to reveal correspondences between works from what may be very distant periods and cultures. These affinities cut across chronological boundaries as well as the conventional stylistic categories implemented in art history. The classical classification is abandoned too, so that Einfühling (empathy) finally makes it possible to connect a fifteenth-century chair with a female portrait by Picasso and an installation by Joseph Beuys. (1996: 8)

This empathy, where the visitor is thought to feel an 'affinity', 'correspondence' or 'resonance' between the artworks, is founded on the modern concept of art, where artworks, and the connection between works, are self-explanatory and visitors can automatically decode them (Meijers, 1996: 14). The same criticism can be raised in relation to the juxtaposition of the pair of artists, which repeats the modern vision of an art history comprised of great (male) geniuses. Both of these strategies can be said to place the artworks out of context, allowing them to represent a universal story in which there are no question marks (Dam Christensen, 2002: 9-10).

Themes

In relation to the rooms arranged around certain themes, some of them presented contemporary themes such as 'Subjectivity as strategy – Internal material', 'National identity' or 'Visual methods in the Golden Age – The scientific gaze', while others were more traditional, such as 'The genres of art' and 'Portraits', the latter revitalising the traditional genres seen in academic art in the eighteenth century. Common to all themes were that they came out of an art historical discourse, whether traditional or contemporary, and therefore it can be argued that they still maintain the art historical

map that Nelson describes above. Nevertheless, the more contemporary themes reflected the new art history that has emerged in the last twenty years. Where art historical research traditionally has focused on the artwork itself from perspectives such as style, iconography, geography etc., the newer art history is aware that these perspectives promote certain answers, and therefore the interpretation of artwork is determined by the method used to investigate it. This has led to an explosion in the methods applied to artworks: feminism, post-colonialism and semiotics, just to mention a few (Dam Christensen, 2002: 7-8). Some of these new approaches were reflected in the new themes, for example in 'National identity' and 'Visual methods in the Golden Age – The scientific gaze'. Thus, many of the themes in the 2006 presentation still underlined traditional art historical discourse and reflected the art historical map, but there were new themes that tried to apply new methods, thereby challenging traditional approaches and offering new interpretations of the artworks.

Summing up, it can be said that by applying the different display strategies, the Museum aspired to a script that challenged the traditional one seen in 1970 in several ways. The heterogeneous and eclectic approach highlighted the multitude of entry points that could be utilised in presenting and interpreting art, and therefore indirectly stated that there was not just one truth about an artwork or about art history. As Neil MacGregor has stated, 'The museum is not a temple of eternal verity; it is at best a workshop for conflicting interpretations, a house of provisional truths' (quoted in McClellan, 2008b: 148). On the other hand, many of the strategies used in SMK still subscribed to a modern notion of the artwork as floating beyond time, place and context, thus complying with the concept of the aesthetic experience from the white cube. From this perspective the display strategies applied in 2006 were conflicting, or more accurately, they revealed the tension and the contrasts between the old and new museum script.

5.5 Engaging adult visitors – interpretative material in the collection

For the first time in the history of SMK, the 2006 presentation of the collection included consistent interpretative material besides the traditional labels, catalogues and guided tours. Each room now had a name and wall text presenting the theme or period of the room, and in addition visitors were able to find cards with detailed text about selected artworks. Moreover, one room had music in it (Concrete Art) and others had

quotes from different sources (both new and old) printed on the walls to provide a context for the artworks. Compared to earlier installations, this was a significant development (fig. 6.9 and 6.10). There had been, though, indications that this change would come.

Fig. 6.9 SMK, Interpretative material, wall text, 2006

Fig. 6.10 SMK, Interpretative material, quotations, 2006

Several years before 2006, isolated interpretative initiatives had been carried out, but in 2002 this work was intensified. This was the year when an adult education officer was employed to develop an audio guide for the collections, which was some of the first interpretative material for adults in the collection besides the catalogues and labels. Also in that year, a printed mini guide entitled *24 ikoner* (24 Icons) was developed, as well as the project *Månedens billede* (Picture of the Month), which consisted of a series of films in which a staff member talked about one specific artwork. The films were played in the collection near the artwork, thus acting as a substitute for a personal guide (Cederstrøm, 2013).

Alongside these initiatives, interpretative material in the temporary exhibitions was developed. This had started even before 2002. An example is the exhibition newspaper from 1994 for the exhibition *Dansk Guldalder – den amerikanske udstilling* (Danish Golden Age – the American exhibition) (Statens Museum for Kunst, 1994a).

Moreover, it was also customary to prepare wall texts, films and slideshows for temporary exhibitions, and from 2002 it became standard to have a small, free guide book for temporary exhibitions (Cederstrøm, 2013).

In this light, it is clear that SMK from 1970 to 2002, and especially from 2002 to 2006, moved away from a script where artworks spoke for themselves to a presentation where a need for further information about artworks was identified in order for visitors to engage with the artworks. There are several reasons for this. First of all, as we have seen, the changing demands to the museum sector in relation to increased competition and the experience economy forced and inspired the Museum to attract a growing number of visitors as well as ensure that they return. However, as the studies of Bourdieu and Darbel and the Danish national surveys have shown, it was by far the well-educated segments of the population who used the Museum the most. Others had difficulty in understanding the language and codes used by the Museum (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1990; Kühl, 1966). Alongside this, as we have seen, the new art history challenged the notion of the autonomous artwork, where the artwork contained a truth. Instead the artwork was seen as relative, its meaning arising from the method and the context in which it is presented. It slowly became evident that self-explanatory artworks were perhaps not so self-explanatory after all and in order to attract new audiences and democratise the Museum, as well as comply with the new art history, interpretative material that could offer explanations of the artworks and their context was needed.

Wall text

At the opening of SMK in 2006, the press was very positive about the new interpretative approach, claiming that the headings and texts in each room were relevant (Bonde, 2006). This was also widely argued in the museological literature at the time. For example, Margareta Ekarv states that 'we can use words to give a new, deeper dimension to our visual experience' (1999: 201), and Beverly Serrell (1996, 1985), Peter Vergo (1989b) and Philip Wright (1989) all agree that the rationale behind exhibiting the objects should be accessible to visitors.

Exploring the nature of the textual information can reveal the profile of the projected user. This will show whether the new interpretative material added to a more open and inviting museum script, enabling more visitors to feel welcome in the galleries.

One example of typical wall text has been selected for examination.[53]

Subjectivity as Strategy – The Political Material

Twentieth century art is characterized by a growing interest in the individual's experience, consciousness and memory. Artists create works that take their point of departure in themselves, in their private experiences and convictions. In these three rooms, the political, the personal and the inner material are examined as themes for art.

Can art be political? The question arises every time art becomes political. However, art history right up to our time is full of political pictures commissioned by those in power or created by artists who wanted to destroy power.

The youth rebellion of 1968 initiated a marked politicization of art in the 1970s. Artistic experiments were transformed into striking anti-capitalist statements aimed at breaking limits and changing society. Modern media like film, photography, happenings and actions were employed to make the message heard.

The artistic practice of the time was radical and has had importance for the critical investigations by present-day art of society's structures. It is particularly the involvement of the consumers as participatory actors in the artistic process that has become a central matter.[54] (Statens Museum for Kunst, 2006b)

To test readability one method which can be used is the Fry method. This method reveals how complex the text is to read, assessing it according to the average length of words and sentences (Fry, 1977: 80-81). As James Carter explains, the method has to be used with care, since it was not developed for museums; the motivation of the readers varies according to the subject in question, and the layout and the typeface also

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[53] Other samples show that this wall text is representative of the rest of the wall panels in the collection.
[54] This English version of the text was printed on a card and placed beneath the Danish wall text.

influence readability (1994: 211). However, these elements of the text can be used as part of its analysis.

A Fry test shows that the text had 193 syllables per 100 words and the number of sentences per 100 words is 7 (in the original Danish version) (fig. 6.11). This shows that the length of sentences is just above average (see the dotted line). The average length of words, on the contrary, falls outside the graph and is therefore not shown. This means that the readability falls well above a reading age of fifteen.[55]
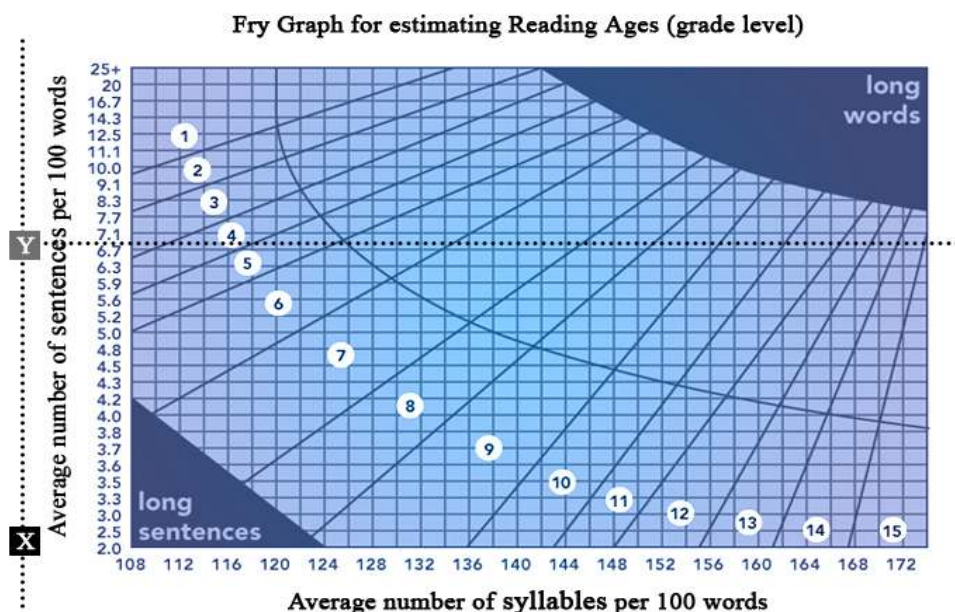
Fig 6.11 The graph was developed on the basis of the Fry Test calculation tool available on http://www.readabilityformulas.com/free-fry-graph-test.php.
To ensure this tool is functioning correctly a manual calculation was carried out, giving the same result.

A similar test which can be employed is the calculation of the so-called LIX number, which looks at the length of the sentences and the percentage of words of seven or more letters. Words and punctuation are divided, resulting in an average number of words in a sentence. Then the number of long words is divided by the total number of words. These two numbers are added and multiplied by 100, resulting in a number that can be compared to the LIX scheme (Björnsson, 1971: 62). For this example, the LIX number is 53 (in the original Danish version), indicating that the text is difficult to read, corresponding with academic publications.[56]

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[55] Ten other wall panels in the collection had similar Fry test results. All panels proved to be above a reading age of fifteen.
[56] The LIX scheme is as follows: > 55 Very difficult: literature on academic level texts, 45–54 Difficult: factual books, popular science works, academic publishing, 35–44 Medium: newspapers and magazines, 25–34 Easy: for experienced readers, magazine literature and light fiction for adults, < 24 Very easy: for

Thus the two readability tests show that the wall panel is well above the recommendations for museological text panels suggested by Carter, who proposes a reading age of twelve for panels aimed at the general public. It is important to state that this age is not an actual age, but when considering that users stand up when reading and that noise and other distractions can occur, the text needs to be fairly simple (Carter, 1994: 213).

Other issues that need to be taken into account when exploring the readability of the text can be found in the method of the Swedish author Margareta Ekarv, who has developed a series of recommendations in order for a text to be easily read. She gives advice such as be specific, avoid sentences with more than 45 characters (9–13 words), explain difficult words, let subjects come before the verb, divide the text into sections (3–6 sentences each), write rhythmically, avoid putting many adjectives together and tortuous sentence structure (Ekarv, 1991: 47). Looking at the text from this perspective, it is within the limit of 9–13 words per sentence (in the Danish version), but the length of the sentences is too long, between 30 and 64 characters with an average of 54.2 (in the Danish version). This is well above the recommended 45 characters and again signals that the words are long. The panel is, however, divided into well-proportioned sections, the sentence structure is clear and the subject is in most cases stated at the beginning of the sentence (in the Danish version).

In terms of the content of the panel, the tone of the text is formal and academic (coinciding with the long words). It puts the art historical development in a sociological perspective, which might be useful for visitors who are more familiar with history than art history. However, the abstract heading 'Subjectivity as Strategy' is very academic and as difficult words such as 'anti-capitalist', 'happenings', 'society's structures' and 'participatory actors' are used without explanations, it is therefore assumed this is common knowledge among visitors.

In the text a question is asked: 'Can art be political?' This use of questions, recommended by, for example, Hirschi and Screven (1999), is also employed in several of the other wall texts, signalling that a debate about art is taking place and that visitors

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all readers, children's literature (Björnsson, 1968). The LIX tests were carried out on ten panels in the Museum. The average LIX number is 50, i.e. the level of academic writing.

are invited to answer from their own perspectives. This indirectly highlights the fact that the views presented in the text are in flux and that knowledge can change. In other wall panels this is dealt with more explicitly. A text in the Modern Collection states, 'Chronology – that is, an order determined by the course of time – is typically the way in which history and thus also the history of art has been approached. Today, different views are often placed on the historical material' (Statens Museum for Kunst, 2006c). Here it is explained that the history of art develops and that it looks and presents artworks differently today than in the past. This text is also an example of how a difficult word (chronology) is sometimes explained in the wall panels, taking into account those visitors not familiar with the term.

Overall, the panels are difficult to read and are academic in both form and content. However, the use of questions, explanations and layout also indicate that the Museum is trying to present a script that acknowledges that not all visitors are art historians.

The texts also show that the Museum is trying to present new perspectives on art history to the visitors and thereby also position art history not as a fixed and universal truth but as a discipline that develops and changes all the time. It is clear, though, that in spite of the rhetorical questions inserted in some of the texts, the Museum holds authority when presenting this development, as well as the other information provided in the panel. In this sense, the wall panels do not present a softening of authority, but rather, they reflect the rationale behind presenting the collection in a new way. The old art history is replaced by the new one, but the Museum still has the right to tell the true story.

This authoritarian and academic voice in text panels was typical in 2004 and to some extent also today. In the article 'Your labels make me feel stupid', Gail Gregg criticises the use of difficult and abstract wording in labels, explaining that museums must (and are beginning to) realise that visitors do not want to 'feel bored, overwhelmed, confused, or stupid' when attending the museum (2010). This view is also presented by Chambers in remarks in relation to the new hang at Detroit Institute of Arts in 2009: interpretative material can, if it is too scholarly, alienate the visitor even more than if it were not present (2009). This was also acknowledged by Director Graham W. J. Beal just a few years later, when he explained that the aim was to move away from 'the

priestly voice of absolute authority' (quoted in Gregg, 2010). Chambers (2009) sums up the problem in this way:

> Ultimately, all three traditional sources for meaning making – the artist's intention, the features of the work, and its original context – rely on art history. Yet, with so many fragments of historical information on view, the unspoken message comes across loud and clear that to understand and appreciate what you see here, much less to find personal meaning in it, you must be in command of a body of knowledge both vast and complex.

Postcards, Quotations and Music
Besides the wall panels, other textual information in the rooms was made available. So-called 'postcards' were small cards placed on hooks below the wall panels (fig. 6.9) and visitors could take them and carry them around the gallery. Information about specific artworks was written on each card. The postcards varied in style and tone, but overall they resembled the wall panels and had similar LIX numbers and comparable Fry test results. The postcards testify that the Museum recognises that visitors might need help to link the individual artworks with the overall theme of the room.

Another type of text besides the wall panels and postcards was the quotations, which were mounted on the wall in several galleries. The quotes often had the function of transporting the visitor back to the time when the artwork was made or first exhibited, presenting a voice from the past. Here a historic artist or art critic would be used to add a personal perspective to the formal information provided by the wall panels and postcards. For example, 'At a stroke we were famous. The day before we had been almost unknown, but now our names were on everyone's lips, not only in Paris but also in the provinces and abroad' (artist Albert Gleizes on the breakthrough of the Salon Cubists at the Salon des Indépendants, 1911) (Statens Museum for Kunst, 2006d). Here the personal voice of the artist is made present in the room, bringing his view into account. The same happens here: 'I consider a machine gun or a rear section of a '75' cannon more valuable to paint than four apples on a table or a landscape from Saint Cloud…' (Fernand Léger, 1922) (Statens Museum for Kunst, 2006e). This more personal perspective engages visitors and presents another way into the narrative of the room. Nevertheless, the quotations also often underpin the traditional art historical

narrative in which the artist holds the key to the truth of the artwork. A different use of quotations was employed in the room of 'National identity' in the Older Danish Collection. Here a mix of voices from different times and different professions (art historian, sociologist, artist) was combined (Statens Museum for Kunst, 2006f). Instead of carrying the viewer to the past, mixing the quotations indicated that we stand in the present looking back, and that the history of national identity can be read from many perspectives and consists of many voices.

There is one interpretative initiative that was not based on text. In the room for Concrete Art, music and soundscapes by Edgar Varése, John Cage, George Antheil, Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen and Louis Andreiessen accompanied the artworks. Art historically, this adds another dimension to the period, since the musical compositions were part of the artistic expression in Concrete Art. As such, the musical pieces were artworks in their own right. However, presenting this new media is also a way of engaging other senses besides the eyes and thereby expanding and extending the experience of the artworks (Hooper-Greenhill, 1991: 104). The music was played aloud in the room, each piece lasting between fifteen and thirty-four minutes. After each piece, a twenty-minute break was inserted, taking into account that some visitors might find the music disturbing and wish to experience the artworks in silence. This use of music indicates that the Museum is aware that other senses besides the visual can be used in the Museum and therefore represents one of the first attempts (in the collection) to challenge the visual regime that we have seen in the museum script so far.

Exploring the interpretative material, the 2006 presentation provided a script for a projected user who was a well-educated adult with lots of time and a desire to read. It was a significant shift from the self-explanatory artworks and marked the Museum as a didactic institution, but also as an institution interested in engaging visitors. As we have seen, the texts were academic and difficult and, in most cases, presented with an authoritarian and formal voice. In this way, the script presupposed a user who was interested in art history, wanted learn more about it and was prepared to accept the Museum as an authority. Still, there were elements in this didactical practice that revealed that the script in certain ways tried to take the visitor into account. By making text available, the Museum showed that it had not assumed that the projected user knew about art history. In addition, art history was presented as a discipline that has

developed over time. Through the texts, it becomes clear that there are other ways to present the collection that add, although abstract, a meta-layer to the information given, inviting the visitor to reflect upon the museological practice. Moreover, the texts use questions, a clear layout and other strategies to engage the reader. The quotations and the music served to present different perspectives and evoke other senses besides the visual.

In this way both the script and the projected user profile seen in the interpretative material reveal that, despite the Museum presenting itself as an authoritative and didactical institution, considerations of the need of the visitor are gradually becoming of greater concern to the museum.

6.6 Experimenting with educational practices

One area where the Museum in 1998 and 2006 clearly showed that it experimented with the projected user was in two new educational initiatives. First, Børnenes Kunstmuseum (the Children's Art Museum) opened in 1998 and then Unges Laboratorier for Kunst (U.l.k.) (Art Labs for Young People) followed in 2006. Both initiatives were part of the new knowledge centre, Egmont Videncenter.

Background

The educational practices in art museums developed in the 1970s received a boost in 1991. The school subject 'formning' (forming or shaping) was changed to 'billedkunst' (visual art) for children age six to twelve in Danish elementary schools.[57] This had a big impact on collaboration between schools and museums, since it entailed an obligation not only to focus on children's practical art skills, but also to ensure that they experienced original artworks and gained an awareness about methods of visual arts (Cederstrøm, 1998: 7). Consequently, visits to art museums became an integral part of school for many children in Denmark. However, as Elisabeth Cederstrøm, who worked as education officer and later head of education at SMK from 1993–2009, explained in an interview conducted in relation to this research, many art museums, including SMK, were not prepared for this (Cederstrøm, 2013).[58] They did not have the facilities,

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[57] This was implemented in the 1993 School Law (*Folkeskoleloven*, 1993),
[58] Hardly anything has been written concerning the history of education and interpretation at SMK. This section is therefore based on governmental laws, statistics, archive material, an interview with Elisabeth Cederstrøm and the few articles that deal with the topic.

methods or staff to meet these new demands. In 1991, it was a museum inspector who was in charge of education, which at that point consisted mainly of guided tours and the preparation of art historical slideshows, which were sent out to schools and societies in Denmark (Cederstrøm, 2013). Cederstrøm undertook the new job of education officer while also dealing with marketing and press.

The necessity for professionalising the educational programmes was reflected in one of the political initiatives that came out of the increasing interest in children and art: *Kulturens børn* (Children of Culture). This programme, which started in 1993 and in 1994 was made a consultative committee under the Ministry of Culture, included funding for education officers to be placed in art museums. It was through this initiative that the first staff who worked exclusively with children were employed at SMK in 1993 (Cederstrøm, 2013; Nielsen, 1998). From this point on, interpretative material aimed at schools were developed for the temporary exhibitions, and planning meetings to design exhibitions and activities for children were scheduled. In the autumn of 1993, a brochure, the so-called *Indblik* (Insight), was prepared for the exhibition *Picasso & Braque – Kubisme 1907–1914* in collaboration with *Skoletjenesten*. This *Indblik* became the standard for the textual material designed for schools by SMK and is still used today.

A year later, in November and December 1994, the first exhibition aimed at children (both for schools and for children visiting outside of school) was launched. Entitled *Hvorfor holder vi jul?* (Why Do We Celebrate Christmas?), the exhibition presented a series of original artworks selected with children in mind and displayed at a child's eye-level. An *Insigt* brochure was created for the exhibition and a slideshow with further information ran in the museum cinema. The exhibition was a success, and the year after, it was followed by the exhibition *Engle* (Angels). Again, a version of *Indsigt* was developed and in addition, children were encouraged to wear angel wings to the exhibition (Cederstrøm, 2013; Statens Museum for Kunst, 1995, 1994b, 1993).[59]

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[59] These exhibitions were not the first art exhibitions for children in Denmark. For example, in 1978 Louisiana Museum of Modern Art displayed *Børn er et folk* (Children are a People) (Rasmussen, 2004).

Børnenes Kunstmuseum – children as competent art explorers

With the opening of the extension in 1998, children's exhibitions were properly formalised in the establishment of Børnenes Kunstmuseum. It included an exhibition space of the same quality as the rest of the display areas, as well as workshops where practical art experiments could be carried out. The aim was to show original art at the eye-level of children and present changing exhibitions with themes relevant for children while offering them the opportunity to be creative after visiting the exhibition.

Fig. 6.12 SMK, Børnenes Kunstmuseum, 1998

The design and structure of Børnenes Kunstmuseum were based in part on the children's exhibitions carried out in 1994 and 1995, but also on other initiatives for children in art museums in Denmark and abroad.[60] Its guiding principle was that children are just as capable as adults of experiencing art in all its complexity. As stated in the action plan, 'The exhibition may well inspire the child to wonder. Provoke questions rather than answers' (Statens Museum for Kunst, 1998a). This was also reflected in the first exhibitions, which dealt with serious and traditional art historical

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[60] Cederstrøm explains how from 1995 to 1998 she gained inspiration from, for example, the Ateneum in Helsinki, Finland and Moderna Museet in Stockholm, which had several years of experience with children and art workshops. In addition, Louisiana Museum for Modern Art in Denmark and several American museums who have also worked with children and art were also looked at while Børnenes Kunstmuseum was being developed. Moreover, cultural history museums such as Nationalmuseet (the National Museum) in Copenhagen and their museum for children, which opened in 1992, was looked at (Cederstrøm, 2013, 1998: 7).

themes such as *Jeg samler på…* (I Collect…), *En maler og hans saks – en Matisse udstilling for børn* (A Painter and his Scissors – A Matisse Exhibition for Children) and *Liv og Død* (Life and Death), but were installed and presented with children in mind (fig. 6.12).

The opening of Børnenes Kunstmuseum also meant that besides the education officer, first employed in 1993 and now a permanent staff member, and from 1997 a head of education in the new *Publikums – og formidlingsafdeling* (Department for Visitors and Education), two new education workers were employed: one in charge of the workshops, the other of the children's exhibitions. This means that the educational practices at SMK from 1993 to 1998 underwent significant development in terms of staff, physical space and professional practice, showing that the projected user profile in these years was widened to include not only well-educated adults but also children age six and older.

Unges Laboratorium for Kunst and active users

The work being done at Børnenes Kunstmuseum was taken even further in 2006–07, when another zone for a specific audience opened. This was Unges Laboratorier for Kunst (Art Labs for Young People) (U.l.k.), specifically aimed at youths between twelve and twenty years old. U.l.k. was founded on the principle that young people should communicate art to other young people. Hence, the content in the labs was developed by forty-five young people, called art pilots, who were hired by the Museum.

U.l.k. consisted of five elements: a U.l.k. web site, the U.l.k. art pilots, U.l.k. education workshops, U.l.k. exhibitions and U.l.k. events hosted by the art pilots (Nygaard et al., 2008) (fig. 6.13). The exhibitions and projects were the results of close collaborations between museum staff and the art pilots. As the project manager for U.l.k. explained, 'They [the young people] contribute with their knowledge. We contribute with ours. And there in the middle of it all, new knowledge is created. And that is what U.l.k. is about, creating new knowledge' (Borello, 2008). U.l.k. took interaction with visitors a step further, treating them as users who create their own content and communicate this content to other users. Nygaard states,

the museum becomes a space for activities, which are not necessarily based on the museum works, but more on user-based and user-created content… A space which is moulded by the content and the activities that take place there. The museum as a framework and facilitator. (Borello, 2008)

Borello's remark indicates that contrasting views on the role of the museum arose in these years, and reflects how educational practices require different approaches compared to the way in which collections are presented. As we saw above, the collections were communicated in a predominantly authoritarian and didactic manner, in the traditional white cube design supplemented by textual information. This is based on the idea of knowledge being transferred directly from the museum and artworks to the visitor. U.l.k., on the other hand, was founded on the principle that knowledge arises between the museum

Fig. 6.13 SMK, U.l.k., 2007

and the users who uses the museum, and takes this even further by allowing these users to present their knowledge to other users. Thus, the museum and its artworks become a framework for users to unfold their knowledge. This shift has been explored by numerous museologists in the past twenty years, led by researchers including Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, John Falk and George Hein (see Falk and Dierking, 1992, 2000; Falk, 2009; Hein, 2006, 1998; Hein et al., 1998; Hooper-Greenhill, 2008, 2001, 2000), and is essentially founded on a constructivist perspective of learning and experience, where meaning is constructed within the user on the basis of previous experiences (Hein, 1998: 34).

With Børnenes Kunstmuseum and U.l.k., SMK showed that new projected users were included in the script, and the script design introduced new ways of engaging with visitors. The idea of constructing different zones for different users testifies that the

Museum was aware that the public is not one large homogeneous group but consists of many different types of users who all have different needs and reasons for engaging with artworks. Thus, in relation to the script presented for the visitors in the galleries, Børnenes Kunstmuseum and U.l.k contribute with a more differentiated view of projected users, a view which constitutes the user as active and competent in her experience of art. And there are other indications that the view of users is developing.

6.7 Differentiating the users

As we have seen, with the interpretative initiatives in the collection, and especially with the establishment of Børnenes Kunstmuseum and U.l.k., the Museum increasingly developed an understanding of the art experience where users were not passive consumers but active agents in their own meaning making of the art. This also meant that different ways of connecting with the art were approved. In an interview in 1998, Helleland explains,

> It is not like a hundred or even just twenty years ago, where it was a house aimed at a special elite. It is also for people who just like to come here, like the rest of us as lay people can go to a concert and enjoy it without knowing everything about the composition in advance. There are people who take a meditative pleasure in walking around in an art museum […] they can leave without knowing the artists and titles and without – factually – knowing more than when they came. And it is okay. It is the entire country's art collection. (Weirup, 1998b)

And just a few years later, in the annual report, the initiative with the special guides was described this way: 'The idea of the campaign is to demonstrate that art does not require special prerequisites for all the personal and enriching experiences that it has to offer' (Statens Museum for Kunst, 2001). Both quotations show that compared to 1970, projected users, which the Museum had envisaged as performers of the script, were increasingly recognised as a heterogeneous group, with individual and personal experiences, when visiting the Museum.

Accepting this change in the user profile generated a growing need for knowing more about the experience people actually had. If, as the experience economy prescribed, the

Museum had to ensure the quality of the experience and had to comply with the increasing level of customer services, it was necessary to understand and explore the actual experiences the users had. And the only way to do this was to ask the real users.

Visitor studies

From 1998, SMK started to work consistently with user surveys, which indicates that the Museum was aware that there might be a difference between the projected and the real user profile and that there was an interest in knowing more about the real users. The surveys mainly took the shape of quantitative exit surveys, which had the main goal of finding out how satisfied users were when visiting the Museum. They were carried out and used largely by the marketing department. For example, in 1998, a visitor study was conducted along with an image survey (Statens Museum for Kunst, 1998b). In 1999 this was further developed by a quantitative survey in the temporary exhibition (Statens Museum for Kunst, 1999). This survey became a regular practice in the coming years and was slowly expanded with questions regarding interpretative material (Statens Museum for Kunst, 2000). The results from the surveys were used in planning new activities and to improve visitor facilities (Statens Museum for Kunst, 2001). From 2002, user surveys were also included as part of the performance contract with the Ministry of Culture: the Museum was obliged to conduct one survey per year (Statens Museum for Kunst, 2002). It was also in this year that the first formal quantitative analysis took place (Statens Museum for Kunst, 2002).

Looking back to 1970, when knowledge about users not was a priority at SMK and the little that was known was, as we have seen, obtained mainly from broad national surveys, a significant development had happened. In 1998 and especially 2006, the user experience was considered of far greater importance to the Museum and was explored in much more detail. This development followed the trend in the museum sector in other countries such as Canada, Norway and Sweden (Black, 2012; Kulturministeriet, 2006) and the area was developing rapidly. At SMK the focus in the surveys in 1998–2006 was primarily on the users' demographic data as well as how often they came to the Museum and how they got there. The overall pattern showed that the Museum by and large was visited by well-educated women between 45 and 65 years old from Copenhagen or the surrounding areas. As users they were generally happy and content with what the Museum had to offer (Statens Museum for Kunst, 2006a, 2005, 2003).

This profile was overall not uncommon to art museums (Black, 2012: 21-23). As explained in the main introduction to the thesis, a focus on qualitative visitor research also developed in these years (Bicknell et al., 1993; Hein, 1998; Hooper-Greenhill, 2011, 1999). This is also reflected in Denmark, where isolated studies by researchers such as Bruno Ingemann (2006), Bjarne Sode Funch (2006) and Inge Merete Kjeldgaard (2005) have been carried out. However, at SMK the primary focus remained on quantitative studies.

Visitor numbers

The focus on opening the museum to a broader range of people, while also meeting the demands of the experience culture, is echoed in the visitor figures. In general there was a small rise in art museum attendance in Denmark in these years, from 2,530,228 in 1998 to 2,767,115 in 2006 (Danmarks Statistik, 2013b), but for SMK the rise was far more significant. Before 1998, the average visitor figure was around 200,000 users, while after 1998, the figure was around 300,000 or more users per year (fig. 6.14).
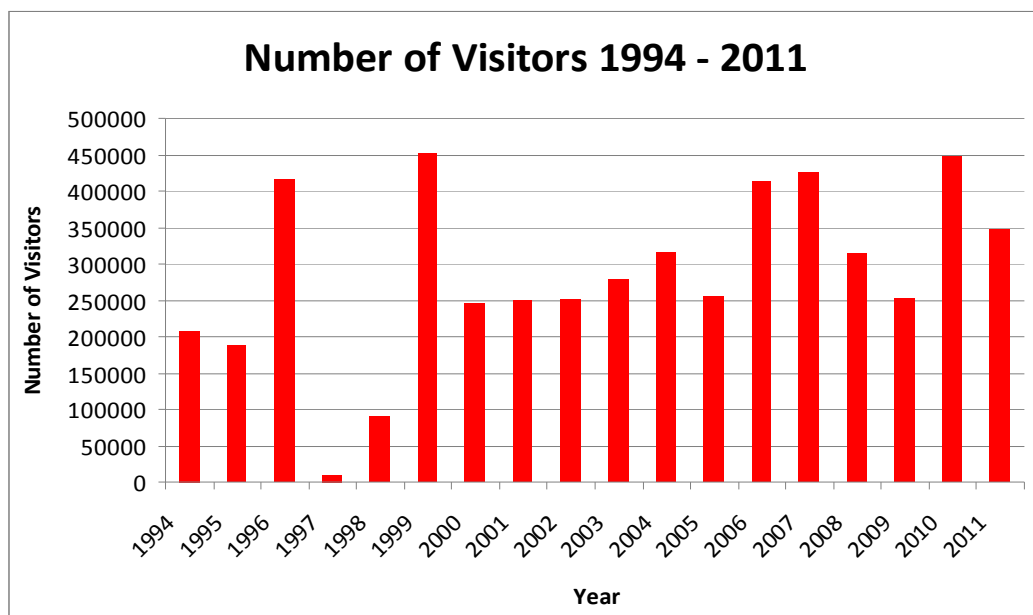
Fig. 6.14 Visitor numbers 1994–2011. The data are retrieved from *Statistisk Årbog 1995–2012* (Statistical yearbook) (Danmarks Statistik, 2013a). Visitor numbers 1994–2011. 1994: 208,000; 1995: 188,000; 1996: 415,000; 1997: 10,000; 1998: 91,000; 2000: 246,000; 2001: 249,000; 2002: 250,000; 2003: 279,000; 2004: 315,000; 2005: 254,000; 2006: 413,000; 2007: 425,000; 2008: 313,000; 2009: 253,000; 2010: 448,000; 2011: 348,000.

When considering these numbers, it is also important to note that in 1991, free admission was abolished and a fee was required to visit the museum. Later, in 1997, it was decided to make Wednesdays free (Statens Museum for Kunst, 1997), and finally,

in 2006, the entrance fee was eliminated again (Danmarks Statistik, 2013a). These decisions are clearly reflected in the visitor figures of these years, with a decline from 1990 to 1991 and a rise again from 2005 to 2006. 1999 also stands out due to widespread interest in the new extension.

The political decision to abolish the entrance fee for national museums in Denmark in 2006 was also connected to the idea of widening the profile of the museum users. The Danish minister of culture at the time, Brian Mikkelsen, explains,

> It will be very positive if one of the outcomes of this scheme will be that immigrants will visit museums to a greater degree. The museums can thus play a positive role in the integration and in the interaction between different groups of people that we want to promote. It is also our hope that low-income citizens, who may come from non-academic homes, will also increasingly visit the museums when access becomes free. Museums are for the whole population and not only certain social groups. (Mikkelsen and Larsen, 2005)

This initiative to make museums more inclusive and accessible with free access was based on similar plans in both the UK (in 2001) and Sweden (in 2004). Mikkelsen described how museums in these counties had doubled their visitor numbers and a greater part of traditional non-attending users were now coming to the museum (Mikkelsen and Larsen, 2005). This is also evident in the ten-year evaluation of the initiative, in which the National Museum Directors' Council in the UK stated that visitors from an ethnic minority background had increased by 177.5% and, in addition, a rise from lower socio-economic groups was detected (National Museum Directors' Council, 2011).

That free admission changed the visitor profile of the Museum can be seen in the various surveys conducted. In 2006, just a month after free admission had been established, the Museum carried out a quantitative survey to evaluate the change in the profile of visitors. Here it was shown that the educational level of visitors remained the same (60% had a moderate or high educational background, compared to 61.1% in 2005), women were still overrepresented (62%), and it was still the 46–65-year-olds

that were the largest age group of the users. However, the surveys show that young people had benefitted the most from free admission. A rise from 12% to 2003 to 33.5% was detected in the user group age 29 years below. Growth was also seen in first-time users from local areas. Last, the majority (72% of Danes and 87% of tourists) said that they would have visited the Museum even if they had to pay an entrance fee, but this still indicates that almost a third of the Danes and a tenth of the tourists would not have visited the Museum had there been an admission fee (Statens Museum for Kunst, 2006a, 2005). Because the survey was conducted so soon after the change in the entrance policy, it is difficult to say if the changes in visitor profiles were stable. To ensure that a comparison can be made in relation to the research conducted for this thesis, we can look at the general national user survey, which was conducted by the Ministry of Culture in 2009. Here the numbers show that the percentage of young people had remained more or less the same since 2006 (28%) and that the aim of including more less-educated people had still not been accomplished. In 2009, 74% of users had a moderate or high educational background (Gallup, 2009).[61]

In short, the visitor numbers of 2006 show an increase in visitors compared to previous years, and the profile of the users was younger despite the fact that the largest age group remained between 46 and 65 years old. The goal of changing the ethnic profile of visitors seems not to have been achieved, but there are no precise survey results regarding this. However, the discussions regarding free entrance and the focus on the user profile reveal that SMK and the overall museological politic in Denmark have a growing concern for the user and their experiences.

6.8 Imagining the nation – the National Gallery in 2006

Before summing up the 2006 script, I wish to look at it from the perspective of SMK as a national gallery. This has been an underlying theme in the arguments and in the

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[61] Only one survey was conducted in these years that included the question of ethnicity. It was the survey from 2005, where SMK, Vikingeskibsmuseet, Københavns Bymuseum, Nationalmuseet, Arken, Dansk Landbrugsmuseum, Eksperimentarium, AROS and Världskulturmuseet together conducted a visitor survey. The results showed that 26.8% of visitors were born or had parents that were born outside Denmark. Since the abolishment of entrance fees, no survey regarding ethnic profile has been carried out at SMK. A report published by the Danish government was in 2011 stated that 68% of ethnic Danes had visited a museum/art exhibition in the past year, whereas 47% of immigrants and 53% of descedents of immigrants had made use of museums. Another survey from 2012 stated that 24% of immigrants or descendants of immigrants had visited an art museum in the past year. It is difficult to compare the numbers from 2005, 2011 and 2012, but it is clear that SMK, despite the free entrance, still mainly attracts ethnic Danes (Danmark et al., 2011; Epinion and Bak, 2012; Statens Museum for Kunst, 2005).

composition of the changing script presented through the different periods. A shift in the role of the National Gallery can especially be detected in 2006.

As we have seen in previous chapters, the Museum has fluctuated and shifted between a focus on the personal aesthetic experience of single artworks and a didactic presentation of the development of art. Both of these were concerned from the outset with establishing a feeling of national identity. In the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries especially, the personal experience in 'Bildung' was tied to the development of moral, educated citizens, while the more didactic chronological presentation was the foundation for the universal survey museum. Here the overall aim was to show the development of art and connect national heritage with the universal narrative of art, thus inscribing the nation into world history and asserting it as a civilised society. Concurrently with these two agendas, the question of the quality of the artworks rose and the National Gallery, where the best artworks in the country could be seen, also developed into a symbol of national pride.

These strategies were different ways of representing the nation. In 1998, if we look back at the statements made by Helleland and Petersen above, they indicate that between 1998 and 2006 a new role of the national gallery developed in Denmark. Their comments reveal that the responsibilities of a national museum were still very much connected to representing the development of art history. In 2006, this continued to be acknowledged, but Helleland states that 'it is wonderful to be able to play a little' (Helleland and Fibiger Andersen, 2007: 57), indicating a loosening of the obligation to represent the art historical development. As we can see in the discussion of chronology above, concepts such as chronology and history were, in these years, theoretically revealed as both biased and political. They did not resemble the truth, neutrality and universality that they used to and therefore it became legitimate for museums to challenge these concepts. But despite these realisations, chronology and history were not abandoned all together. Scrutinising the rationale behind the idea of the free admission, it is also clear that these concepts, at least from a political point of view, still have a role to play. Mikkelsen has stated,

> Overall, we can say that the glue in the community is a common frame of
> reference. Only if we understand where we come from can we identify

ourselves as a population. This is what we have in common with all other populations; it is what creates the cohesion of a nation. (Mikkelsen and Larsen, 2005)

In this way, almost as a reaction to globalisation and the problematisation of history and the nation, a desire for nationhood and its connection to the past arises. This is also evident in the initiation of the large project Kulturkanon (Cultural Canon). In 2004–2005, Mikkelsen appointed professionals to select 108 of the best and most indispensable Danish artworks throughout time, spanning architecture, visual arts, design and crafts, film, literature, music, performing arts and children's culture. The artworks were intended to be a guide to Danish cultural heritage ('Kulturkanon', 2006). Kulturkanon was heavily debated in Denmark precisely because such lists were considered political and ideological. However, the rebuttal against this was that the debate about culture needed a foundation, which a canon could deliver (Skåning Mathiesen, 2006). Thus, despite the fact that the universal and neutral narrative about art and history had been abolished in theory, a need for the grand narrative as a starting point still existed in practice.

Simon Knell (2011) discusses this need, and the reason for museums to present history, when he describes the national museum as creating an 'imagined' nation. Knell explains how national museums always have represented an imagined nation; thus the nation has been symbolic and cultural rather than factual from the start (2011: 3-4). Taking this into account, and adding that museums are both political and by no means neutral institutions, Knell suggests that the national museum is 'a stage for the performance of myths of nationhood' (2011: 4). The national museum does not present an actual history but an illusion of one. He connects this myth with the need of a nation to be anchored in the past (Knell, 2011: 8). With this in mind, the perception of the national gallery can be said to have changed. Instead of presenting history or a nation to the public, it reflects an illusion, a hope or a dream of a nation.

This has also caused the National Gallery to revise its strategies and develop new ways of representing the nation. As we saw in 2006, the hang was based on chronology, themes and compilations of works from different periods, presenting an eclectic script that aimed to underline that no single truth about the history of art existed. It

acknowledges the illusion, so to speak. At the same time, as we have seen, the idea that the Gallery could be used in more personal ways emerged. In her elaboration on active users, Helleland described private use of the Gallery as just as valuable as professional use. Here artworks, and the feelings and the subjective memories they evoke, become the centre of the experience. In this way, rigorous historiography is replaced, or at least supplemented, by concepts of personal memory and heritage.

From this perspective, the museum script needs to encompass both presenting an illusion of the nation as well as allowing a personal interpretation of it. This creates a tension, as Knell (2011: 9) suggests, between the way professionals deal with history and the way museum users do. At SMK, this is seen in the uneven presentation of the script, which tries to take both perspectives into account. In 2006, the awareness of the illusion of historiography was presented through the eclectic hang and the explicit meta-reflections on, for example, chronology. On the other hand, many of the texts, and to a large extent also the themes, were based on the academic and professional art historical tradition, which does not account for personal interpretation.

This means that the National Gallery is balancing between presenting an illusion about a nation on one hand, and providing space for users' own memories and dreams of a nation on the other. The slogan for the 2006 hang at SMK reflected this: 'Statens Museum for Kunst – use it, it is yours'. By this, SMK implicitly invited all people to come and use the artworks in their own way, creating their own sense of nationhood.

6.9 Conclusion

The period around 2006 marked, in many ways, a new era for SMK. The developments in architecture, the interior design, the interpretative material and the use of surveys indicate that the Museum had become concerned with the experience of users and the organisation had started to transition 'From Being about Something to Being for Somebody', as Stephen E. Weil famously entitled an article in 1999. Fundamental to the change was an effort to present a more open and inclusive museum script. As we have themes such as openness, diversity and personal experiences are continuously repeated. However, we have also seen how these themes are difficult to put into practice and that changing a museum script is challenging for staff, critics and users. The script in 2006 was therefore, as we have also seen the previous years, marked by

antagonistic elements, some pointing back at the museum tradition, others pointing towards the future.

The extension itself added a new dimension to the script. The architecture not only supplied the museum script with additional space; it also stood as an experience in itself. Where the old building stood for stability and history, the new added creativity and courage and, with its views and flow, gave way to a more dynamic and engaging script. This was supplemented by an interior layout where different zones provided different experiences, giving the experience economy a frame in which to play its part. The new services, such as shopping, eating and broader cultural activities, added value to the museum experience but also motivated the debate on the museum's role and its balance between the commercial and cultural agenda.

In the collections, eclectic display strategies challenged the traditional chronological timeline and gave way to an ahistoric and thematic hang. A variety of interpretative material was introduced, some of which confronted the neutrality and universality of the history of art and were aimed at engaging and provoking users. They, in turn, were able to access the artworks in new ways, for example, through quotations from different times. Multisensory experiences, including music, were also tested. Simultaneously, new educational practices were developed. Børnemuseet and especially U.l.k. introduced new ways of working with users, regarding them as active agents producing their own knowledge. This work was supplemented by a growing focus on user surveys, which supplied the Museum with quantitative information about visitors and testifies that the Museum had begun to comprehend their visitors not as homogeneous but as a diverse group. In addition, these surveys reveal the Museum's willingness to evaluate and improve the user's experience of the museum script. All in all, the projected user profile was changing and becoming more nuanced and differentiated.

However, while all these changes were happening, large parts of the script were also repeating the traditional values of the museum. With a cynical perspective, one could argue that the main changes were happening on the ground floor. It was here that the experience economy, noise and groups of diverse, active users were focused, while on the first floor, in the collections, the traditional art experience was encouraged. Once in the collections, the interior resembled the white cube, and while the initiatives

regarding the active user were mainly unfolded in the zones for children and young people, the collections were reserved for the contemplative aesthetic experience. Despite the new views, the different zones and the interpretative material, priority was given to silence, visuality and the undisturbed art experience, just as we witnessed in 1970. Many of the display strategies were still founded on the art historical tradition and even though chronology was supplemented by new themes, these were presented in a way where the old truth was just replaced by a new one. The interpretative material was limited mainly to wall texts, which had the same length and graphic expression in each room, becoming an unobtrusive element in the rooms. Furthermore, the texts were mainly written in an authoritative, academic and didactic voice, which was aimed at a very well-educated, highly interested and passively receptive adult visitor.

Overall, the script contained contrasting elements and signalled that while the Museum had begun to widen the projected user profile in 2006, it still did not give it full priority. The intense debate concerning commercial activities related to the experience economy and its impact on the cultural responsibility of the Museum reveals that these changes were impacting the Museum's fundamental identity, even its role as a national museum, which also explains why these changes take time and need careful consideration.

Chapter 7 The Social Museum Experience

The next two chapters of the thesis focus on the performance of real users in order to answer the second part of the research question regarding visitor experiences. In particular, this chapter deals with the subsidiary question: How is the collection used? Chapter 8 focuses on the question: What do the adult museum users gain from a visit to the SMK collections?

As outlined in the methodology, the initial data generated were based on observations. This was done in order to begin to answer the research question of how the collection is
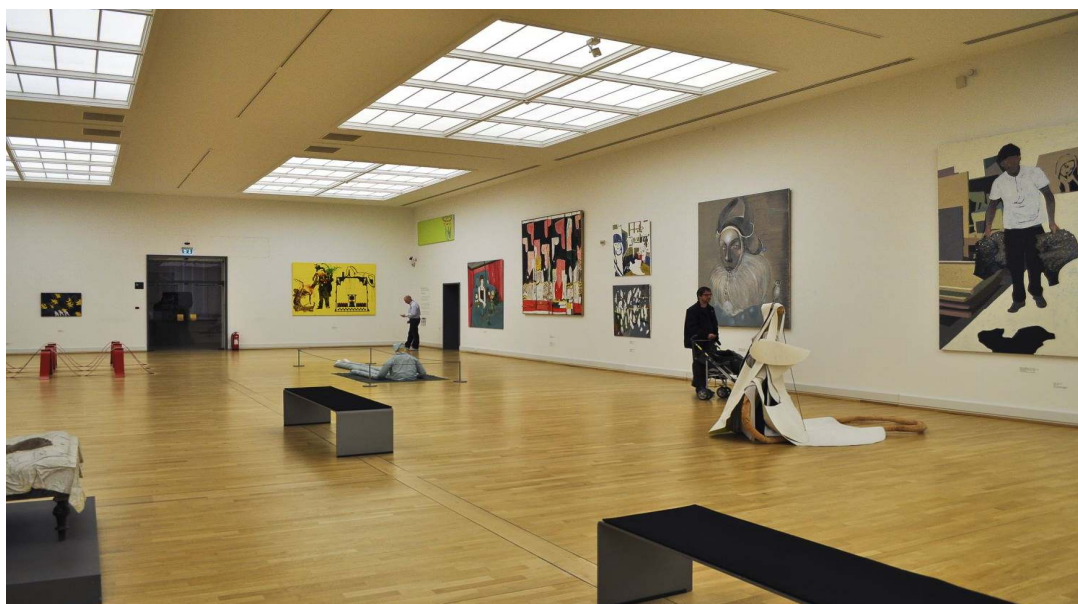
Fig. 7.1 SMK, Central room (201), Modern Collection

being used. Despite observations being a traditional and often used method in museums, it is a very effective and enlightening technique. With observations it is possible to gain the first basic insights into what is going on in the field of investigation. This is especially essential for this thesis as no prior research has looked at visitor experiences at SMK. The general use of the collection has therefore never been mapped. In addition, no Danish museological literature draws on observations and has concentrated on the way Danish museum visitors move in a museum. Beside this, there are also methodological arguments for the use of observations. As explained in chapter 1, Latour and Akrich as well as Charmaz specify that it is necessary to remain open when analysing actions in the field. This means that as far as possible, no prior assumptions about what is happening in the collection should be made. Therefore,

although results from observations conducted at other museums can be used to put the results from SMK into perspective, it is important to conduct the studies at SMK as well. This is also reflected in the process that Charmaz outlined and that was adapted for this research (see chapter 1). Here the investigation of the field should start with the broad questions – What is going on? How are actors organised? – questions that are best answered by observations.

This chapter is divided into sections that focus in detail on the data generated from the observations. The overall pattern of the performance of the script is investigated through issues such as navigation, time, focus, architecture and objects. This leads to an acknowledgment of how users establish their performance, and consequently the first exploration of the social nature of the performance. Finally, a critical view on the way the network is established in the collection is presented.

The setting in which the observations took place was the large, open, central space in the Modern Collection (453 m^2) (fig. 7.1). In total thirty-seven artworks were exhibited in the space. The title of the room was *Dansk maleri og skulptur efter 1960* (Danish painting and sculpture after 1960); thus the aim of the room was to give an overview of the art dating from this forty-year period. The display strategy strived to be chronological, starting from the left-hand side when entering the room from the main entrance, and then following the wall all around the room. However, as the room had five doors, and therefore five entry and exit points, the chronology was difficult to maintain.

7.1 Navigation in space

One of the first findings in the observations was an overall pattern performed by most users. First of all, forty-one out of fifty-six users (73%) entered the collection together with another adult. This is a significantly large percentage compared to art museums in countries other than Denmark.[62] However, this number is backed up by a number of visitor surveys undertaken in Denmark and also by the questionnaire in

[62] Tröndle et al. (2012b) demonstrate that user statistics of art museums often show that many users come alone. In the Art Museum in St. Gallen, Switzerland, where they conducted their research, 41% came alone and 40% arrived in pairs (Tröndle et al., 2012b).

How do you visit the museum?
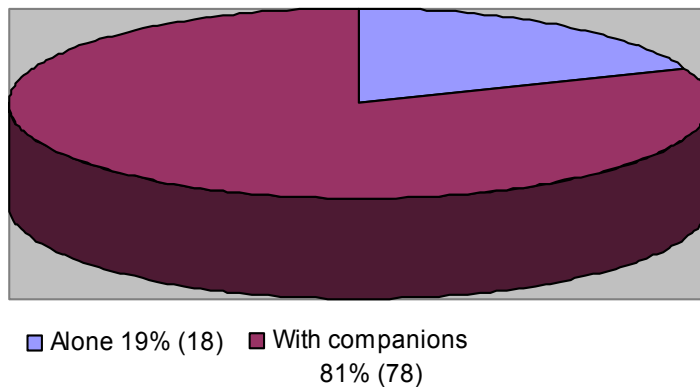
the front hall, on which only 19% stated that they visit the museum alone (fig. 7.2).[63]

Alone 19% (18)   With companions 81% (78)

Figur 7.2 Companions, Questionnaire, Front hall

Having entered the room, the couples would start off together, split up, and come together again either spontaneously or because one drew the other's attention to something in particular. Then they would leave the room together.

Looking in more detail at the coding of the observations, this pattern can be analysed according to the following aspects: navigation, time/pace and focus. When looking at user movement on the floor plan, it is clear that 'splitting up and coming together' forms the basic rhythm of the navigation. The pairs use language (call out in the room), body signals (gestures, point, wave) and actions (speed up, stand still) in order to establish themselves as a social entity and choreograph and orchestrate their common movement in space. The observations show three paths taken when navigating the room; first, where the actors follow one side of the wall; second, where the entire wall is followed around in the room; and third, where users walk through the middle of the room, perhaps taking detours to either side to explore artworks. The users typically take more or less the same path as their companion. At times, one walks more quickly or changes the route slightly compared to the other, although there always seems to be an awareness of where the other is. This awareness of the other means that the bodily movements of the individual user cannot be separated from those of their companion; they are intertwined with the conduct of their companion. There is therefore an inherent social dimension to the way users navigate through the space (fig. 7.3).

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[63] In Denmark the number of singular visitors is 11% in art museums in general and 19% at Statens Museum for Kunst (Gallup, 2009; Moos et al., 2009). That approximately 75% of the users visit SMK with another adult is confirmed in the following surveys: Danmarks Turistråd (2003), Statens Museum for Kunst (2006f, 2003a), and DISE (2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2007, 2006a, 2006b, 2005).

The social aspect of a museum visit is widely acknowledged (Debenedetti, 2003; Falk and Dierking, 1992; Leinhardt and Knutson, 2004a; Leinhardt et al., 2002a; Silverman, 1990; Tröndle et al., 2012b; Vom Lehn et al., 2002; Vom Lehn et al., 2001). However, as Christian Heath, Dirk vom Lehn and their colleagues describe (vom Lehn et al., 2002: 16) the social cultural approach to museums has to a large extent ignored the social organisation of bodies in space and has instead concentrated on social interaction through language. This neglect has also been identified by others, for example, Stéphanie Debenedetti, who states that while there are studies that acknowledge the social situation and take it into account when considering motivation and satisfaction in relation to the museum experience, only a few look at the actual function of the social interaction (2003: 53).

Figur 7.3 Tracking sheet with data

Vom Lehn and colleagues, in their video studies concerning the use of new media installation in science museums, have explored bodily interaction between users (vom Lehn et al., 2002). In line with the observations in this present research, Heath et al. show how the awareness of one's companion determines the coordination, movement and action of the user:

> Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of social interaction in museum and galleries is peripheral 'awareness' and participation. The conduct of others, even those at some distance, looking at a different exhibit can have an important effect on the conduct of a visitor. (vom Lehn et al., 2002: 21)

From this quote, it is clear that Lehn and Heath not only consider the movement of a user's companion, but also the movement of other users in the space. They identify this as an 'ecology of participation', where users are attracted to the same objects as other users, thus imitating the actions of others (vom Lehn et al., 2002: 21-22). The observations at SMK also show that the navigation and action of others besides one's own companion is influential. However, in contrast to Lehn and Heath et al.'s research, the present observations demonstrate that instead of duplicating a path or imitating an action, users who did not enter the room together try to avoid each other: they choose a different path or decide to stop at other artworks. This is not done in an explicit fashion but occurs intuitively as users spread out in the room. In this way, they try to maintain their own social entity and at the same time are concerned with not obstructing others'. The reason for this difference might be found in the fact that Lehn and Heath carried out their research in a science museum, with a focus on interaction with new media installations. This is a specific setting with specific norms and traditions, just as the art gallery has. As we saw in the first section, the museum script is to a large extent inscribed with a personal and introverted aesthetic experience, which takes place in silent space. This might influence the bodily conduct of the users in their not wanting to disturb others.[64]

The performance of users in relation to navigation can be compared with the aim inscribed in the script by the Museum. Here the projected user is supposed to gain an understanding of the developments in the history of Danish art and sculpture from 1960 until today. An analysis of the paths taken by the users shows that only a few users follow a path that encompasses the whole of the time period. Many users view one wall and then leave the room, which means that they could only have seen half the works. In total, twelve of the fifty-six users made it all the way around, which corresponds to 21%. As stated above, fifteen of the users observed did not have a companion. However, the observations indicate that there were no differences in relation to the chosen path whether users were solitary or accompanied. The percentage stays roughly the same (20% of solitary users and 21% of social users walk around the whole of the space).

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[64] Heath and vom Lehn (2004) in another article consider the social interaction between users in an art gallery. However, here the main focus is on the interaction between companions.

In a study carried out by Martin Tröndle et al., the researchers concluded that solitary users appreciate the art historical narrative presented by curators more than do users in the company of others (2012: 477). This finding, at least with regards to navigation and choice of path, cannot be confirmed by the present research. There are, however, differences between the two groups regarding the users' pace and focus.

7.2 Time/pace

Another dimension that is closely connected to the navigation of space is the speed at which users move and the time they spend in the collection. On average, observations show that users spent three minutes and forty-three seconds in the room. As it is a large space (453 m^2) with thirty-seven artworks, this does not seem very long. It would mean than the average user allocated six seconds per artwork. This number is, of course, not accurate, since it is clear that not all artworks were looked at by all users. However, from the total time spent in the collection, it can be concluded that each engagement with an individual artwork was not very long (see also the next section).

Similar to navigation, time and pace are dependent on and continuously negotiated with one's companion. Individuals under observation would stop and wait, catch up, go back or simply naturally meet up with their companion. None of the users observed left the room without their companion. This choreography of the users in its totality affected the time they spent in the room and the pace at which they moved.

Comparing the solitary users with the social users, who had a companion, the social users stayed a little longer in the room. The social users spent three minutes and fifty seconds, while the solitary users spent three minutes and twenty-four seconds. That social users stay longer is also the conclusion reached by Tröndle and his colleagues (Tröndle et al., 2012a). They compared users who did not converse during their visit with users who did. Thus, their focus was on whether conversation had an impact on the length of the stay, not whether the users were alone. They conclude that users who do converse remain longer in the collection but that despite their longer stay, they spend less time in front of each artwork (Tröndle et al., 2012a).

During the observations at SMK, dialogue was also noted. Here it was confirmed that the users who stayed significantly longer in the room also were the ones who conversed the most. However, small amounts of talk did not affect the time spent. This, I argue, is

because the time spent in the gallery is influenced by but is not solely affected by conversations. As the analysis of the navigation showed, social interaction between users is as much nonverbal as verbal, as much planned as intuitive. This means that even if they remain quiet, their companion will influence the pace at which they move together through space. Time spent is therefore dependent on a number of factors. Conversation is one, but the bodily coordination between social entities is another, as is the focus of the users.

7.3 Focus

In the same way as navigation, bodily movement and time are socially established, so are visual orientation and focus. The ongoing process of drawing attention to certain artworks or other elements by gestures, body language or verbal communication determines where the focus is placed. This type of visual alignment, where the users invite one another to a mutual orientation in the space, once again supports and confirms the social entity that is established between companions. The alignment takes place both when users are walking as well as when they inspire each other to stop.

As researchers such as Serrell have concluded, only part of an exhibition is explored by users, and users only stop at a third (33%) of the exhibition elements (Serrell, 1998: 49). The observations at SMK show that the fifty-six users on average stop six times during their stay in the room. This corresponds to users having stopped at 16% of the objects, as there are thirty-seven artworks in the room. This comparison is not fair, though; Serrell's observation is based on American museums and across different museum types. Moreover, she includes both permanent and temporary exhibitions (Serrell, 1998: 17-18). The observations at SMK were conducted in one large room in the permanent collection. Nevertheless, the overall pattern that users focus on only a minority of objects on display is confirmed.

In addition to this, the observations also show that most artworks are experienced while users are walking, and when they do stop, it is only very briefly. This supposedly rather superficial engagement with the objects forms a way of 'browsing' or 'drifting' through the collection, which also is evident in the apparent casual navigation of the space, as we saw above (Rounds, 2004). American museologist Jay Rounds (2004: 390) reminds us that museum users

meander about the museum, sampling randomly here and there, ignoring most of the exhibits, choosing in a seemingly haphazard manner those to which they do attend carefully. After having expended considerable effort to get to the museum, they fail to use the exhibitions in the thorough and systematic way that should reward them with the greatest educational benefits.

Rounds convincingly argues that this browsing behaviour is driven by curiosity, where users are attracted spontaneously to certain objects and therefore browse around until something catches their eye (2004: 394). This is also evident in the observations at SMK. This behaviour, Rounds states, is in contrast to the learning agenda that the museum normally subscribes to. Here a systematic use of the collection, as well as concentrated engagement with objects, equals more and better learning (Rounds, 2004).

The contrast between the browsing behaviour and the museum agenda is also seen at SMK; however, it is not only in relation to the learning agenda. Recall that SMK's script has a long tradition of didactic and authoritative learning, but also for envisaging an aesthetic experience that is based on an intense, personal immersion into the artwork. Both of these aims are, as we saw in chapter 6, inscribed in the script of 2006.

In the 2006 script the projected user was to move slowly through the collection while stopping, reading and looking. However, it is clear from observing users' navigation that only 20%, actually followed the layout of the display, and thereby had the chance to comprehend the overall narrative that the Museum tried to present. Moreover, on average, only ten out of the fifty-six (18%) read or glanced at the text in the room. None used the postcards that supplied additional information about the works.

If we compare the singular users with the social users, the singular users did read much more than the social users. Six out of the forty-one social users read or glanced at the text (15%), as did four out of fifteen (27%) singular users.[65] Therefore, as Rounds states, the didactic learning agenda of the museum stands in contrast to the users'

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[65] Tröndle et al. confirm this finding in their studies regarding conversations in art museums. They conclude that text panels are read more by singular visitors.

browsing behaviour. In other words, the performance of the script does not comply with the didactic learning experience that is inscribed in the script.

But the traditional aesthetic experience is also challenged by browsing behaviour. Høyen has previously described engagement with artworks as 'dwelling'. As described in detail in chapters 5 and 6, the aesthetic experience was, in the script of 1970 and 2006, envisaged to take place in a silent neutral space, where users immersed themselves in the artworks, exploring their formalistic qualities. For example, when Bell argues, 'The contemplation of pure form leads to a state of extraordinary exaltation and complete detachment from the concerns of life' (1914: 54), or Greenberg (1980) discusses the 'scrutinizing' of a piece, it is clear that, by their definition, the aesthetic experience could not happen in a quick glance. This, along with the debate concerning learning in the museum, has also led to issues such as 'dwell time' becoming an important measurement of success in art museums (Rounds, 2006; Serrell, 1998). Social awareness and interaction, as well as the brief focus on artworks, means that this type of concentrated and contemplative aesthetic experience is not possible. Therefore, this part of the script was not performed by the observed users either.

In this way, Rounds, with his browsing, curiosity-driven user, contributes persuasively to an analysis of the casual and spontaneous navigation of the collection and the apparent superficial focus on the objects. Where this present research can supplement his thinking is by stating that first of all, it is not only the learning agenda that is threatened by browsing; it is also the aesthetic experience, as this traditionally demands time and focus. Second, social interaction is what determines the actions of users. Therefore, constant awareness of the other and the alignment of visual orientation affect curiosity, which can then be understood as being negotiated through the social interaction of users. Curiosity is thus established between users.

The observations show what is going on in the field and how actors are organised. As we have seen, most adults arrive with another adult companion. The way they move, spend time and focus in the room is negotiated, verbally or not, between them, and the experience they have is established together. In general, the actors move through the space quickly and chose their path casually while taking into account other social entities that move in their proximity. The most common mode to engage with the

artworks is while walking. This social browsing behaviour is founded on curiosity and spontaneous interest, which arise within the social entity. How this takes place we shall see in the next chapter. However, for now, in relation to the observations, it is important to consider architecture and objects, as they form part of the network that is established in the room.

7.4 Architecture

As Akrich and Latour remind us, the non-human actors in the room are equally important to the humans. This means that the layout of the room and the architecture play an active role in shaping the network that the users perform. This is also reflected in Bill Hillier and Kali Tzorti's statement: 'Space not only reflects and expresses social patterns, it can also generate them' (2011: 286).

The room in which the observations were made was a large open plan 453 m^2 white-painted space, where the main part of the artworks were displayed on the walls. Seven sculptures were located in the middle, where a few benches were also placed (see fig. 7.1). As mentioned above, there were five entry points into the room. Combined with the open plan layout, this created a space where the users largely needed to establish their own path.

John Peponis et al. argue that 'the spatial structure of layouts arises as objects and boundaries are placed in space' (2004: 457). In this way, it is difficult to separate architecture and objects as the spatial structure is created in the interaction between objects, boundaries and the users who move through space.

Peponis et al. focus on cross-visibility between objects, or how users are driven from one object to the next by what comes into view when they stand at a particular location in space. In an open-plan exhibition in a science museum (where Peponis et al. conducted their research), this is significant because exhibition kiosks, which can be accessed from different sides, are distributed all around the gallery. Cross-visibility then forms a dynamic pattern that affects the movement of visitors. In SMK, the observed space is also open planned, but most objects are displayed on the walls, which means that when examining one object, users have their back turned towards the others. The sculptures, however, do form a point at which cross-visibility becomes relevant. In

addition, several investigations into museum layouts have established a number of rules. For example, users (from Western cultures) prefer to turn right when they enter an exhibition and then follow the right-hand wall, and users spend more time on objects presented at the beginning of the exhibition than at the end (Peponis et al., 2004: 472). This can all be related to spatial arrangement at SMK.

The observations in SMK show that when entering the space from any of the five doors, twenty-four out of fifty-six users (43%) turned left and then followed the wall down the left side. Fifteen (27%) turned right, while seventeen (30%) walked down the middle. However, looking closer at the observations, it is evident that cross-visibility is important. For example, most of the users who walked down the middle walked directly to a sculpture and from then on were drawn toward the other sculptures. In this way, the path down the middle of the room is driven by cross-visibility, which takes the users from sculpture to sculpture. The detours that the users of this path took were often to the paintings, which hang in the proximity of the sculptures.

In relation to the stops, there is no clear indication that users stop more at the beginning than at the end of the path. Comparing the singular users with the social, however, there is a tendency for social users to speed up and not stop as often towards the end of their path.

None of the previously discussed literature takes into account the emotional aspect of moving in a large space, but this seems to play a role at SMK. Looking at the paths again, it is clear that the majority of users choose a path that takes them around the wall. This is probably because they are attracted by the paintings, but it is important also to consider that 'spaces can evoke a range of vastly different emotions. They can delight, calm, awaken and overwhelm us', as Maree Stenglin states (2008: 425). Even though Stenglin does not consider museums, her description of how different spaces have a certain 'bindings', i.e. they can range from extremely open to extremely closed, is interesting to consider in relation to a large space such as the one observed at SMK. She describes how a too bounded space makes us feel claustrophobic, while a too unbounded space makes us feel vulnerable; i.e. the architectural structure has an emotional impact on how secure or insecure we feel (Stenglin, 2008: 444). The space at SMK is large and can be seen as too unbounded, and may evoke anxiety and insecurity

in some users (Stenglin, 2008: 439). This might be an additional reason why users stay along the wall and move more quickly through the room: it makes them feel more protected and less vulnerable.

7.5 The power of objects

One last factor to consider in relation to the observations is the power of objects, as these are a fundamental part of the network. As seen in the section concerning architecture, objects function as obstacles, which create a layout, as well as reference points for cross-visibility, which inspires movement. This creates a path where users move through space activating the objects they meet on the way. But the objects also make the users move. They are something in themselves and they exist in the network as independent actors, each with distinct physical qualities.

The observations show that there are particular objects that attracted many of the users. From the tracking sheets, it is evident that this is partly due to cross-visibility, where users engaged in one object were led naturally to another. However, there are also objects that gained significantly more attention without being in a path of cross-visibility.

As Sandra Dudley has underlined, objects are 'powerful items in their own right', and not just 'effectively, grammatical marks punctuating a story' (2012: 3). This means that the artworks in the space observed each play a part in the overall curatorial story about Danish painting and sculpture after 1960 but also, as we shall see in the next chapter, act as springboards for personal stories. In a way, they play the role of grammatical marks, in relation to both the museum script and the script that the real users perform. But in addition, without any connection to meaning and without the users knowing anything about them, the objects can also inspire, attract and repel us, just by their sheer physical presence (Dudley, 2012: 3-4).

In the observations, two artworks in particular attracted a lot of attention. One is a sculpture by Peter Land, *Uden titel* (Untitled) from 2003, and the other a large painting, *Tankens Magt* (The Power of Thought) from 1991 by Michael Kvium (fig. 7.4 and 7.5). Thirty-five out of fifty-six users (63%) looked/stopped by the sculpture, while twenty-

nine (52%) looked/stopped at Kvium's work. This is significantly more than other objects in the room.[66]

Fig. 7.4 SMK, Room 201, Peter Land, *Uden titel*, (Untitled), 2003

Fig. 7.5 SMK, Room 201, Michael Kvium, *Tankens Magt* (The Power of Thought), 1991

As Dudley also mentions, this spontaneous reaction to objects is often seen in relation to artworks that in some way shock or puzzle us (2012: 3). This is also the case with these two objects: the sculpture is markedly different from the rest of the objects in the

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[66] This is also seen in the audio recordings, where most couples also engage with these works.

room, and it therefore stands out. The painting is large (400x268 cm) and despite (or maybe because of) the traditional painting method, the motif is strong and quite radical.

The placement of the objects might also have an influence on the power they have to attract users. In relation to Peter Land's sculpture, its placement near the main entrance may be a determining factor, but this cannot be the only explanation, since users who arrive from other entrance points also focus on it. Kvium's painting, on the other hand, does not have a particularly prominent place within the gallery, and therefore it must be a quality of the work itself, rather than its placement in the gallery, that attracts users.

Christopher Wingfield discusses this charismatic quality of certain objects (2010). He concludes that several factors in combination make an object charismatic: its making, its scale, colour, materials, all of which are 'highly resonant with human perceptual experience of the world'; alternatively, its age might give it charisma, as well as its placement and installation within the museum (Wingfield, 2010: 67). This means that some objects, for reasons that are explainable, have a greater power of attraction than others. This is also seen with the two works in the observations at SMK.

However, there were a large number of artworks that did not receive attention from users; or rather, there were many works that seemed to attract certain users, while others ignored them. The distribution of the objects in the large space was fairly even. Most paintings were displayed, as we have seen in the script, in a traditional white-cube fashion, at adult eye-level and with the same amount of space between them. The lighting was general 'wall wash', which means that no works in particular were enhanced by lighting. This anonymous display strategy, despite the few charismatic objects, seems to have contributed to the random, personal and curiosity-driven engagement with the artworks we have seen in relation to both navigation and focus. This observation will be tested in the analysis of the audio recording. First, let us consider the performance of the real user and the structure of the network that is formed as a result.

7.6 Networks and meshworks

As Akrich describes, 'objects participate in building heterogeneous networks that bring together actants of all types and sizes, whether human or non-human' (1992: 206).

Perceiving the museum from this perspective means that the museum space, in this case the room observed, is the object. Within this space, a number of actants (humans and non-humans) come together by their actions: they form networks. As previously discussed, these actants are interwoven with and socially determined by each other. Their networks can be identified through the path they take, the pace of their movement, the focus they employ and through the boundaries and the material qualities they exercise. As Latour reminds us, 'network is a concept, not a thing out there. It is a tool to help describe something, not what is being described' (2007: 313). He lists three aspects that define a network:

> a) a point-to-point connection is being established which is physically traceable and thus can be recorded empirically;
> b) such a connection leaves empty most of what is not connected […]
> c) this connection is not made for free, it requires effort […].
> (Latour, 2007: 132)

This means that the network can be identified as the different lines that connect the actants and describe their mutual relations (Latour, 2007: 108). The network comprises these relations, which are formed through the different actions performed by the actants. However, as we have seen in the analysis of the observations, the lines made by users are not regular and it is often difficult to see a relation or pattern between, for example, the different stops users make or the artworks they look at. Most of the time, their paths and choices of focus seem random and based on wonder, sudden impulses and curiosity, all of which are largely determined by the social interaction between users and their companions and by other local circumstances in the network, such as the movement of other actors.

This means that the lines that are formed come into being as the users move. Exactly why users stop or focus on the artwork is difficult to explain: there is no logical relationship between the points in the network, so to speak. This means that to a large extent, the forming of lines is not related to the points themselves, but instead to the negotiations that take place between the points. Said in another way, it looks as if users do not chose to focus on a specific artwork because they intend to see it; rather, their focus is created spontaneously as they move through space and are under constant

influence of social factors and sudden impulses. In addition, what the users have focused on does not necessarily have any relation to what they will look at next.

This more creative and random version of the network is described in Tim Ingold's concept of 'meshwork', which is

> an entanglement of interwoven lines. These lines may loop or twist around one another or weave in and out. Crucially, however, they do not connect. This is what distinguishes the meshwork from the network. The lines of the network are connectors, each given as the relation between two points, independently and in advance of any movement from one toward the other [...] the lines of a meshwork, by contrast, are of movement or growth. They are temporal 'lines of becoming'. Every animate being, as it threads its way through and among the ways of every other, must perforce improvise a passage, and in doing so it lays another line in the mesh. (2012: 15)

This nuance between the network and the meshwork is important when analysing and theorising the observations at SMK, since, I would argue, both perspectives are important and shed light on different aspects of the users' performance. In some ways, the performance of the users can be characterised as networks, where relations and intentions can be identified, for example, in relation to charismatic artworks, which users seems to be most drawn to despite their heterogeneous explorations, or when cross-visibilities form a pattern that is repeated by several actors. Other performances can be characterised as a meshwork, as it is much more unpredictable and consists of entanglements, invention and creativity.

The combination of the network and the meshwork is what Carl Knappett addresses in *Networks of Objects, Meshworks of Things* (2011). Here he argues that the perspective of the network can be applied when investigating overall patterns ('zoomed out'), while the concept of meshworks is suitable when exploring micro-scale activities (Knappett, 2011: 47). As he explains,

Thus for all the strengths of the situated-embodied perspective on invention outlined by Ingold, it fails to address the zoomed-out scale, which I would argue is the scale of objects and networks; indeed it even sets objects and networks against things and meshworks. (Knappett, 2011: 45)

With regards to the present research, I find Knappett's understanding of the tension between networks and meshwork rewarding; however, I would add to his exploration of the concepts that it is not only a question of scale. It is also a question of acknowledging that not all parts of a meshwork can be gathered into a network. There is a point where it becomes absurd to 'zoom out' in order to establish meaningful patterns. There is simply no pattern. On the other hand, there are also relations and patterns that can be identified only on a micro-level. This is actually what Ingold himself practices in his investigation of 'attentional walking' and 'intentional walking' (Ingold, 2013). Here he establishes two modes of walking, one which is focused, direct, aimed and purposeful, and another which is characterised by attention, distraction, curiosity and creativity (Ingold, 2013). Applying these two types of walking to the users' performance of the script is enlightening, because it lets us further understand both the direct relations between users and their path and the explorative qualities in the walk. This is especially useful when comparing the real users' performance with the museum script, which the concluding remarks in this chapter will begin to do.

7.7 Conclusion

The observations have shown that the users' performance to a large extent is characterised by spontaneous impulses, browsing, quick stops and social walking, which is negotiated through social interaction. In this way, the observations showed a creative performance where the path came into being as users moved in space – a performance that had no intent and could not be predicted. But simultaneously, the performances did have elements in which patterns were more easily revealed. Here the influence of architecture and cross-visibility, as well as the charismatic aura of specific artworks, meant that a relationship between the points in the path could be found. In other words, the observations revealed performances that were both networks and meshworks.

However, the observations also showed that the performances, both those that had a stronger pattern and the ones that did not, were dissimilar to the performance envisaged by the museum. The patterns that did come up – for example, the social visit, the three paths determined by architecture and cross-visibility, (movement along one wall, around the whole wall or down the middle of the room) and the attraction to the charismatic objects – were not predicted or used as elements to support the Museum's script.

Instead, the Museum's script was inscribed with a projected user (see chapter 6) who came to the Museum alone and moved slowly with concentration through the collection while stopping and spending time on objects and texts. The programme of action consisted of a didactic or an aesthetic experience – an experience that largely proved chimeric, since it was never performed by the real users. In this way, most of the performance by the real users functions as an anti-programme (Latour and Akrich, 1992: 261), since it differs from the script inscribed by the Museum.

One significant difference between the museum script and the performance of the real users is that the museum script was far more 'intentional' than the performance of the users. The Museum envisage a user who wants to learn about art history or wishes to be immersed in artworks and to have a personal and introverted aesthetic experience. Instead, the users came to the Museum and created a social experience with no apparent intention and where path and focal points were spontaneously decided upon and negotiated as they walked through the room. In order to test the conclusions found in the observations and further explore the differences between the 'intentional' and 'attentional' performance of the user, more in-depth data were required. This will be explored in the next chapter, which deals with the audio recordings.

Chapter 8 Negotiating Experiences

In the analysis of the observations, I explained how the performance of the real users is based on social negotiations. In order to investigate this in more depth and from a different perspective, audio recordings of twelve pairs were collected as they explored the Modern Collection at their own pace wearing wireless microphones. The result was twelve unique recordings of user conversations lasting between eighteen and seventy-five minutes. The analysis of these conversations is the focus of this chapter.

Practicalities such as technique and coding, as well as the limits concerning this data generation method, are discussed in chapter 1, which presents the methodology of the empirical research. As I also demonstrated there, the intention of the audio recordings was to supplement the characteristics of the adult user experience already established in the observations. These questions guided this investigation: What do actors pay attention to? What practices, skills, strategies and methods of operation do actors employ? What goals do actors seek? What reward do various actors gain from their participation?

This chapter is therefore structured around the different ways the users engaged with the artworks and each other, while analysing why this took place. This requires a detailed investigation of what the users talked about and how they talked. First, the specific way they structured their conversations is looked at, after which the type of talk is identified. Here utterances categorised as formal, art historical, analytic, personal, emotional and practical are explored. Finally, the chapter considers the conversations with regards to 'Bildung' and self-practices in order to understand why the users perform the way they do. But first let us consider the demographics of the participants and the overall theoretical understanding of the conversations that took place.

8.1 Demographics and description of the pairs

The twenty-four participants were all between 30 and 67 year old.[67] Seven of the pairs were partners, two were friends, one pair was mother- and son-in-law, one were sisters and one were mother and daughter (fig. 8.1 and appendix 7).

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[67] Two of the recorded participants were respectively 66 and 67 years old, but had companions within the age range of 30 and 65. Therefore, these two participants were included in the research.

Overview of participants' background and motivation

	Gender, age and education	Motivations
Pair 1	2 x female, 46-65yr, friends, LE + MLE	To be social, see a temporary exhibition Learn about art, enjoy artworks
Pair 2	2 x female, 46-65yr, friends, LE + MLE	To be social, enjoy artworks
Pair 3	Male + female, partner, 46-65yr, VE + MLE	Learn about art, enjoy artworks We were in the neighbourhood
Pair 4	Male 46-65yr, female 65+, mother/son in law, LE + VE	Enjoy artworks
Pair 5	2 x female, 30-45yr, sisters, 2 x MLE	To be social, learn about art, enjoy the artworks
Pair 6	2 x female, 20-45 + 46-65yr, mother/daughter, MLE + SLE	To be social, learn about art, enjoy the artworks, we were in the neighbourhood
Pair 7	Male 65+, female 46-65yr, MLE + E	To be social
Pair 8	Male + female, 46-65yr, partners, 2 x MLE	See temporary exhibition, To be social, enjoy artworks
Pair 9	Male + female, 46-65yr, partners, VE + MLE	To be social, see temporary exhibition, enjoy artworks, We were in the neighbourhood, learn about art
Pair 10	Male + female, 46-65yr, partners, 2 x MLE	No answer
Pair 11	Male + female, 46-65yr, partners, 2 x MLE	To be social, learn about art, enjoy the artworks
Pair 12	Male + female, 30-45yr, partners, 2 x MLE	To be social, enjoy artworks, see temporary exhibition, see the architecture

Fig. 8.1 Overview of participants' background and motivation. LE: high education (5–6 years), MLE: medium high education (3–4 years), SE: Shorter higher education (2–3 years), VE: Vocational education, E: elementary school

Sixteen (67%) were women and eight (33%) were men. This corresponds to the general gender statistics of the Museum's visitors (Gallup, 2009). Moreover, the majority of the participants had received a medium high education (59%). This is a little higher than average for SMK users, of whom 32% have an medium high education (Statens Museum for Kunst, 2006g). Last, 64%, had not been to SMK in the previous year. This number echoes the percentage found in most of SMK visitor statistics (Gallup, 2011, 2009).

With regards to their reasons for visiting the Museum, each of the participants gave different motivations in the questionnaire that they completed after the recordings had

been made. The two main motivations listed were 'To be social' and 'To enjoy the artworks', which seventeen and fifteen respectively answered. In addition, eight said that their motivation was also 'To learn about art history', while five participants answered that their motivation for visiting was 'To see a temporary exhibition' (fig. 8.1 and Appendix 7).

From this, it is evident that the main reasons for coming to the Museum were to have a social art experience. As previously explained, other surveys have confirmed that this is the most typical motivation for coming to SMK (Gallup, 2011, 2009). This was further verified with the large questionnaire conducted in the front hall in relation to this research (see fig. 8.2).

Motivation for visiting the Museum

Motivations	Responses	Percent
To learn about art	28	31.1
To be social	45	50.0
To enjoy the artworks	37	41.1
To eat lunch or have a coffee	2	2.2
To see an event on 'Scenen'	5	5.6
We were in the neighbourhood	9	10.0
To see the architecture	5	5.6
To see the temporary exhibition	38	42.2
Another reason	13	14.4

Fig 8.2 Motivation for visiting the Museum (Front hall questionnaire)

In this way, although the audio recordings cannot be taken as representative, the participants did reflect the age group and the motivations of SMK's core audience.

8.2 Social conversations and dialogic utterances

After the initial coding and memo writing, it quickly became clear that the conversations of the twelve pairs were quite varied. Nevertheless, it can be said that overall, they were filled with personal narratives and often centred around value judgements, where participants explored each other's views regarding the specific artworks. Moreover, each pair had their own jargon and way of interacting. They could be serious, humoristic or sarcastic while engaging with the artworks and often one or

more themes were repeated through their exploration of the collection, establishing a unique approach to the artworks.

Common to the conversations was also that they unfolded in relation to individual artworks, while the overall art historical narrative of the room and the relation between the works were rarely discussed. The reason is that it was often personal views or private associations aroused by individual works that sparked off the conversations, not broader art historical considerations.

In this way, the artworks, or particular elements within them, acted more as springboards for sharing personal memories or histories than as gateways into an art historical analysis. Compared to the museum script, this means that where the museum focuses on the overall relationship between the artwork, users actually engage with the pieces one by one.

Another typical trigger for the conversations was that one in the pair read aloud the title of the work for their companion (Mcmanus, 1989). This is a way of inviting or provoking a response from the other. As we shall see, this works much in the same way as aesthetics judgements act as statements that can be backed up, challenged or elaborated by the companion.

These overall patterns in the conversations will be demonstrated and analysed in depth in the next section of this chapter, but on the basis of this general outline and initial analysis, a theoretical understanding of these conversations has been developed.

Considering the conversations within Latour and Akrich's frame makes us focus on how non-human actors impose certain actions, and thereby also conversations, on users (Latour, 2007: 232). However, how much influence the artworks actually have on the conversations can vary according to the interaction between users and the works. Latour underlines this by arguing that when an actor has power 'in actu', other actors take action in relation to them (Latour, 1986b: 265). As described above, the conversations between the users were personal, but most of the time, they were motivated and launched by the artwork. In this way, the artworks performed as central actors in the conversation. Yet as the conversations unfolded, the users became less

concerned with the artwork itself, and more concerned with each other. Consequently, the users' attention on the objects wove in and out: sometimes they were preoccupied with them, sometimes not. Latour and Akrich see this as an indication that the network is constantly shifting as different actors hold power and take action. This is an important acknowledgement in relation to the museum experience, since it explains how the museum experience is highly personal, while simultaneously greatly dependent on the objects. The two do not necessarily stand in opposition to each other. Therefore, by looking at the conversations from the perspective of Latour and Akrich, the two practices, engagement with the objects and engagement with each other, are revealed as intertwined and continuously related to each other, hence the equality of the human and the non-human actors.

However, in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the social language of the conversations, it is necessary to look beyond Latour and Akrich, who do not explain the processes and the logic of the conversations, nor look in closer detail at the dialogue – what is being said or being heard. In other words, they explain the network but not why the network was formed (Fuglsang, 2009: 223-225). Since this is an essential component of trying to comprehend the characteristics of the user experience at SMK, as well as the purpose of the conversations, another theoretical view is needed.

Here Russian philosopher Mikhail M. Bakhtin's understanding of language has proved useful, as he considered the social and situational aspects of conversations in great detail, while establishing that dialogue was essential for all communication (Bakhtin, 1986, 1984, 1981).[68]
There are many similarities between the thinking of Bakhtin and Akrich and Latour. Bakhtin recognised that dialogue between people/actors comprises networks, or 'chains' as he calls them, of traceable relations (see below), much in the same way that Akrich and Latour understand actions as revealing networks. Bakhtin only looked at the use of language, not the employment of technological objects. Thus, instead of focusing on individual cognitive experiences, Akrich and Latour as well as Bakhtin explain representation and interaction through socioculturally situated processes. In addition, Bakhtin acknowledged that language is always inscribed with a specific reply – an

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[68] In this research, Bakhtin's theories are used a means of understanding conversations, as done by, for example, Dysthe (2003), Scheuer (2005), and Skoletjenesten and Dysthe (2012).

expected answer from the other (see below) – much like Akrich and Latour, who argue that the script is designed for and inscribed with a defined use.

There are, of course, a number of fundamental areas where the two theories differ significantly – in particular, Akrich and Latour's conception of the agency of non-humans. Akrich and Latour, as explained in the introduction to their theory, move beyond social constructivism, arguing that objects are not merely social constructions but have a reality that exists outside of the social network (Latour, 1999: 146-47). Here Bakhtin advocates for a more pure social constructivist epistemology, identifying meaning as established not within the individual but between people (1986, 1984). However, in the analysis of the conversations in this present research, voice is given to the artworks. They are accepted as influential actors within the dialogue since, as both the observations and the initial analysis of the conversations has shown, they are active agents impacting the action of other actors.

Dialogue, polyphony and utterances
Bakhtin's thinking can be defined as dialogism as he does not contend that talk flows from one person to another. Instead, he maintains that talk or utterances, as he calls language in practice, is far more complex and actively constituted (Bakhtin, 1986: 60). According to Bakhtin, the speaker always expects a response from the other; in this way the listener also becomes the speaker (1986: 68).
Bakhtin explains,

> The word in living conversation is directly, blatantly, oriented toward a future answer-word: it provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer's direction. Forming itself in an atmosphere of the already spoken, the word is at the same time determined by that which has not yet been said but which is needed and in fact anticipated by the answering word. Such is the situation with any living dialogue. (1981: 179-80)

However, language is not just influenced by the future response to it. It is also embedded in its prior use:

Moreover, any speaker is himself a respondent to a greater or lesser degree. He is not, after all, the first speaker, the one who disturbs the eternal silence of the universe. And he presupposes not only the existence of the language system he is using, but also the existence of preceding utterances – his own and others' – with which his given utterance enters into one kind of relation or another (builds on them, polemicizes with them, or simply presumes that they are already known to the listener). Any utterance is a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances. (Bakhtin, 1986: 69)

This explains why Bakhtin comprehends all talk and utterances as dialogical and polyphonic. Utterances are always inhabited by many voices, and the person who is being spoken to is always co-participant (Bakhtin, 1986: 68-69).

Yet utterances are not always in flux. Through the use of practical language, certain speech genres develop between individuals: 'All words have the "taste" of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour' (Bakhtin, 1981: 293). These speech genres are relevant as the conversations between the actors in the museum space use different types of language belonging to, for example, art history, but at the same time employ a specific tone or approach that is particular to their social entity.

The other

In relation to analysing the conversations amongst the pairs, the relationship between the participants is also significant. Bakhtin argues that it is through interaction and dialogue with the other that we exist: 'To be means to be for another, and through the other, for oneself' (1984: 287). In this way, interaction between the participants (and the artworks, I would add, as they are viewed as actors in the script) becomes a situation where the subject is continuously constituted in relation to the other, since without the other, the individual cannot be fully comprehended (Skoletjenesten and Dysthe, 2012).[69]

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[69] Bakhtin distinguishes between I-for-myself and I-for-the other (1986: 146-47).

This ongoing shaping of oneself through interaction, conversation and conflict with others will prove to be essential when considering the self-practice that is unfolded through the conversations.

8.3 Speech genres and interactions

As mentioned above, each of the pairs constructed their own speech genre while exploring the collection. This is a distinct way of interacting that often consists of one or more themes around which the conversation is structured (Bakhtin, 1981: 293). Some of these themes and approaches are more obvious and clearer than others.

For example, Pair 6 continuously referred back to their neighbour's art collection when talking about the artworks, while Pair 2 structured their conversation around their own creative work, as well as – when discussing whether they liked the individual works or not – related each to where/what type of house they would fit it into.

Simultaneously, a specific way of interaction is employed. Here I suggest three categories: 'confirming' each other, where the companions back each other up; 'exploring' together, where they ask each other questions and encourage further explanations; and finally, 'challenging and disagreeing' with one another, where discrepancies between the two are highlighted. Almost all conversations include all three categories, but there is always one of them, which is used more than the other. An exploration of this interaction is important, because it relates to the self-practice that is performed during the visit to the collection.

In fig. 8.3, the different speech genres, along with the way each pair interacted, can be seen. See also fig. 8.1 in order to compare age, relationship and motivation for visiting. In addition, appendix 7 gives a detailed overview of each pair.

Overview of participants' speech genres and ways of interacting

	Speech genres	**Ways of interacting***
Pair 1	Colours and materials	Exploring
Pair 2	We are creative Shopping for a house	Confirming
Pair 3	Art teacher orientated Home and family	Confirming, exploring
Pair 4	Neighbour's art collection Modern art, too radical?	Confirming
Pair 5	Humour Identifying artists	Confirming
Pair 6	Emotional Art is strange	Confirming, exploring
Pair 7	Reading labels Finding way	Challenging, confirming (low percentages)
Pair 8	Sharing knowledge Prior art experiences	Confirming, exploring
Pair 9	Is this art? We like what we know	Confirming
Pair 10	Philosophical Provoke each other	Confirming, exploring
Pair 11	Doing the right thing	Exploring
Pair 12	Prior museum visit New and old art	Confirming, exploring

Fig. 8.3 Overview of participants' speech genres and ways of interacting
* If a pair uses two methods of interaction equally, i.e. there is less than 5% difference between them, they are both listed. See appendix 7.

Speech genres

The distinct themes or approaches that structure the conversations are highly diverse. They show how engagement with the artworks is based on personal experiences, such as with Pair 3, where the woman has attended an art historical course and is referring back to her teacher's comments during the conversations:

> F: This is Ursula Reuter Christiansen, we talked a lot with Erik (art teacher) about her
>
> M: Yes, yes
>
> F: There was one by her, he really liked
>
> (Pair 3, 2008)

> M: Is this Freddie?

F: Yes

M: He really upsets people

F: Yes… it is like when you see a work by Anders Kierkegaard. We have talked with Erik (art teacher) about this a lot; it tells a family tale almost…

(Pair 3, 2008)

M: This we have seen at lots of places – *Faun og Nymfe* (Faun and Nymph)

F: Yes, we have gone through it with Erik (art teacher). It was…

M: Yes…

(Pair 3, 2008)

Her repeated return to the art teacher almost places another person within the conversation and, in addition, creates a direct spatial link between the museum experience and the art classes that she has attended. However, the pair also refers to experiences in the home and their family life:

F: This reminds me of what Tina did for her graduation

M: Yes

F: When she did that in bubble wrap

M: Oh, was that was it was?

F: Yes

M: Wasn't it plastic bags she used?

F: No, no, bubble plastic. It is for protection when wrapping and sending things, with small bubbles in it.

M: Oh

(Pair 3, 2008)

F: Here is Robert Jacobsen, our local artist

M: Robert Jacobsen well…

F: Do you remember when we went to hear him speak?

M: I will never forget when we were in Ektved Community Hall

F: It was fantastic

M: Yes, and he died shortly afterwards

F: Yes, he did

(Pair 3, 2008)

In this way, the two speech genres are like two threads running through the conversation, intertwining and supplementing each other and dictating the next step the conversation takes. They function as an unspoken rule that both users comply with, thus dictating the comments and the replies that follow. As Bakhtin makes us aware, the utterances, which in sum make up the 'taste' of the speech genre (1981: 293), always encompass prior conversations that the users have had. This means that the speech genre that Pair 3 employs draws on the way the pair has conversed before in museums, supplemented with input they have from elsewhere. For example, the art teacher's views influence the way the woman responds to the artworks. The overall structure of the conversation is therefore negotiated and performed between the two participants having the conversation, but also includes other voices, in this case the art teacher and family members.

A different example of a speech genre is provided by the two sisters who make up Pair 5:

F2: Him… old Ole, who was having a shave, we haven't looked at him yet

F1: Hmm

F2: He is actually quite strange

(Pair 5, 2008)

F1: Typical Trampe (short for Trampedach)

F1: Is this one by him as well?

F2: I didn't know he did something like that…

F1: Well it looks like it

F1: It is his style, even though it is something different

F2: We recognise the hair!

F1+F2 (laugh)

(Pair 5, 2008)

F1: *Spildt mælk* (Spilt Milk)

F2: No need to cry over that!

F1+F2: (laugh)

(Pair 5, 2008)

Here humour is what binds the conversation together. Their continuous joking forms a way of structuring the conversation in quick comments and swift replies. It is interesting to see how this joking always springs from an artwork, almost as a judgement or an initial response from which the conversation unfolds. They are using jokes as an entry into the works and as a method for provoking a response from each other. In other words, using humour loosens up the conversation and makes the art objects more approachable. Compared to the charismatic art objects discussed in relation to the observations, it can be argued that the opposite is happening here. Instead of being the object that dictates the actions of the users, it is the users who, through humour, force action on the artworks, making them perform within a very particular discourse (a joke).[70]

One last example of a speech genre is demonstrated by Pair 2. These two friends are exploring the artworks from the perspective of what sort of house the particular piece would be appropriate for:

F2: Imagine it in a great functionalistic villa, on a white wall, in the hall or in the living room. It just needs the right place, right?

F1: Perhaps, if there is enough light

F2: If you had a great modern villa…

(Pair 2, 2008)

F2: That one is fantastic

F1: It could hang at my place

(Pair 2, 2008)

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[70] In his book *Rabelais and His World* (1984), Bakhtin explores humour and laughter as a specific genre. An analysis of Pair 5's conversation in relation to this would be interesting, as it would show how hierarchies between artworks and users dissolve; however, this lies outside the scope of this thesis.

F1: This is like Dalí

F1: (reading) Wilhelm Freddie

F2: I would become psychedelic…

F2: imagine how frightened you would be, if you had it in your

bedroom… when you woke up

(Pair 2, 2008)

F1: I like that. It is one of the old classics

F1: you know what; I would hang that in the kitchen

F2: (laughs)

(Pair 2, 2008)

In this way, they persistently relate the artworks to an alternative space other than the museum. These are value judgements (see more below), but at the same time, they offer a way of engaging with the artwork from different points of view; by imagining an alternative space for the work, they investigate its different qualities. However, they also explore how their own relationship with and judgement of the artworks changes according to the different contexts within which they position it. In other words, the different houses and rooms in which the artwork is imagined become different positions from which they judge the work.

One of the characteristics of a speech genre, Bakhtin explains, is the use of chronotopes. 'Chronotope' literally means 'time-space' (Bakhtin, 1981: 84). Thus, a chronotope is the specific way of dealing with time and space within a certain literary genre (Bakhtin, 1981: 84-85):

In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. The intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope. (Bakhtin, 1981: 84)

Bakhtin emphasises that several chronotopes are at work simultaneously, but a speech genre often has a major one around which it is structured (1981: 85). The term is interesting to transfer to the museum space and the speech genres employed there, since in museums, past, present and future have a distinct way of meeting. 'Museums are time transformed into space', as Pamuk has described (2010: 510). In the conversations at SMK, time and space are dealt with in particular ways. These ways are reflected in the speech genres. As Bakhtin states, there are many different chronotopes within a conversation, but the three examples above each have their own way of constituting time/space. In the speech genre of Pair 3, the artworks activate memories of home and the art class, lifting the past into the present. Through the speech genre, the script performed establishes an axis between the past and the present. In Pair 5, the joking approach is a way of maintaining a focus on the present, cementing actual space-time in the here and now, almost as a demonstration of taking control over the artwork's attempts to evoke other time-space chronotopes. Finally, Pair 2 incorporates an imaginary space into their conversations and constructs a future time or a dream time (If I had… I would hang this…). In this way, each of the speech genres operates with a specific way of dealing with time/space. The chronotope will later be explored further with regards to personal memory, but for now, I just wish to highlight its connection to the specific speech genres.

Confirming, exploring or challenging each other

While speech genres identify the overall pattern of the conversations – a pattern which structures and shapes the utterances and sets a frame for the development of the conversations – the way of interacting is also important. This can be seen as an aspect of speech genres because it adds to the specific tone characteristic of the genre (Bakhtin, 1981: 293), but it is also something in itself, since it contributes to the understanding of what goals the actors seek and what reward they gain from their performance. In addition, the method of interaction reveals the relationship with 'the other' and is thus also significant when exploring what self-practices are exercised in the Museum.

During coding, three categories were developed: confirming, exploring and challenging. These categories describe how users responded to each other's utterances. Most pairs had interactions that belonged to all three categories. This coding was then translated to percentages and the overall way of interaction established for each pair

(see fig. 8.3 and appendix 7). The coding shows that four couples were confirming each other, five were confirming and exploring, two were exploring, and one pair was challenging and confirming each other. It should be noted that when there was only 5% difference between the categories, both of them were considered important to the interaction, i.e. the category confirming/exploring.

Confirming indicates that the users agree with and support the majority of the utterances made by the other. This can be done by, for example, finishing each other's sentences, using 'we' in the utterance, simply agreeing to what the other is saying or inserting 'right?' at the end of one's statement to encourage the other to agree. Most of the time there was a combination of these:

> M: This is Jens Søndergaard. Him we like much better
> F: Yes
> (Pair 7, 2008)

> F1: The sculptures don't mean anything to us, right?
> F2: No (laughs)
> (Pair 2, 2008)

> F: Yes, these grey, black and white ones, those we like
> M: Hmm, who likes those?
> F: We like them
> M: Yes
> (Pair 9, 2008)

As evident from the coding percentages, this is by far the most common way of interacting. Ten out of the twelve pairs applied this as a main way of interacting. As the observations have also shown, the social entity seems very important for the performance in the museum. Through both bodily conduct and verbal interaction, the pairs are negotiating and establishing a common experience, which cements their relationship and adds to the feeling of cohesions. It is interesting to see how this strategy is carried out very explicitly. For example, in the last quote above, the use of

'we' is questioned by the male user, who is unsure of who 'we' are. The female answers directly that it is 'us' and he agrees.

The establishment of a relationship or a common view is also evident when the companions very clearly relate to common favourite artists:

> F: But see, here is *our* beloved painting
>
> M: Yes, that is Leger
>
> F: It is a great painting
>
> (Pair 10, 2008)

Or when after a conversation about the artist Asger Jorn, whom they both like, the woman proposes:

> F: Wouldn't it be fun, we could send a postcard to Else and Mark with Asger Jorn, if there was a new one? That would be funny
>
> M: Yes
>
> (Pair 10, 2008)

Here it is suggested that they confirm and make concrete their like of Asger Jorn and share this with friends by sending them a postcard. In this way, the utterance containing a positive view of Asger Jorn is not only related to the 'the other' but, via the postcard, broadened to include their friends as well.

Another conversational tendency caused by confirming behaviour is the need and desire to explore more of what users already agree on. For example, the two women in Pair 2 have a long conversation about an artwork that they both admire and agree that they would like more information about in order to develop their conversation even further:

> F1: It would be great with a description, just a little… some…
>
> F2: To get an explanation behind it, right?
>
> (Pair 2, 2008)

This is a way of dwelling within the feeling of confirmation and, through this, sustaining the image of oneself and 'the other' that has already been established. This is

very similar to Doering and Pekarik's arguments about how many users approach the museum with an urge to have their persistent views confirmed, not challenged. They want a confirmation of their 'entrance narrative', as they call it:

> The most satisfying exhibitions will be those that resonate with their experiences and provide information in the ways that confirm and enrich their existing view of the world. It also acknowledges that a visit to an exhibition or a museum is but one event in a larger flow of thoughts and experiences. (Doering and Pekarik, 1996: 47)

Exploring is another way of engaging. As seen in fig. 8.3, seven out of twelve pairs use this method. Rather than just relating to each other's statements, the pairs explore the views and preferences of the other. This is often done by asking questions, following up on the other's views or making utterances that provoke an answer from the other, which can then be explored together. In these conversations, it is easily seen how meaning is constructed collaboratively and often results in longer conversations than the confirming ones:

> M: Do you think this is photography?
> F: Yes, it looks like it, oil in some water and then bubbles…
> M: Yes
> (Pair 12, 2008)

> M: There are those circles again; it is like Damian Hirst
> F: But who has made those?
> M: Yes…
> F: It must be…
> M: I was just thinking that it would be fun to see the date on that
> F: Yes
> F: Maybe it's by Paul Gernes, it must be
> M: Yes
> F: Silver paint and acrylic on hardboard
> F: Yes, yes
> M: Yes, it's funny it is repeated

F: It's actually very funny, it's wildly exposed in fashion, those circles

M: Yes, yes

F: And as decoration on… contemporary potters use them all the time

M: Yes, it's a little like, he is also German, the one we saw

F: Yes

M: Andreas Golder

(Pair 12, 2008)

In both of these quotes, each member of the pair helps the other find information and together they construct an understanding of the work. However, the exploration can also have a more personal character, in which the views of the other are investigated:

F: You like the abstract one?

M: Yes, actually I do, when you can't see what it is

F: So you have to search for the motif, I actually like that as well

(Pair 9, 2008)

By reflecting on the previous statements of her husband, the woman asks if her understanding of his general preference in art is correct: whether he likes abstract art. When her understanding is acknowledged and explained, she establishes a confirming relationship with him by agreeing with his preference.

The same personal exploration is seen in a long excerpt from Pair 10. The conversation unfolds in relation to the work *Selvportræt* (Self-Portrait) by Kurt Trampedach (fig. 8.4):

Fig. 8.4 Kurt Trampedach, *Selvportræt, hel figur, gående* (Self Portrait, Full Length, Walking), 1970

M: If you had to describe the image photographically, wouldn't you say that the composition is poor? That there is too much air behind the

person?

F: Not in that picture. It is a clean surface, a very flat painting, right? But there is a balance in it

M: Yes, yes there is, because of the foot pointing backwards

F: Yes probably because of that

M: It's the one that creates lines downwards, and makes sure that it doesn't fall over

F: Yes

M: So, you cannot make excuses for it?

F: See here, right here is an amazing balance, despite the air

M: There is a tension, but I would not photograph it like that

F: No…

M: No, then I would think there was too much air behind

F: Yes, yes you would probably think so, but here it's actually right, can you see it?

M: No… I'm not sure I can. Just wondering if it is a plausible explanation because you know it's a work of art

F: No, no now stop

M: I'm just being provocative…

F: But just exactly, there is balance in the picture even though there is so much air

M: All right, then we say so (laughing together)

F: But you're very good at asking questions… (kisses) Uh they will get many funny sounds, when we are walking and kissing too (laughs)

(Pair 10, 2008)

Here the man is prompting the women to explain her views to him. He knows she is a photographer and wishes her to argue about the composition of the painting, so he strategically asks the question of whether there is too much air around the figure. By the end of the conversation, they both accept that this was a way of exploring her views, and they reassure each other by laughing, kissing and moving on. It can be argued that the category of exploration is truly dialogical in Bakhtinian terms, since here 'the other' and the self are explored in a respectful way, where both similarities

and differences become visible between the pair. It is also here where changes of oppositions happen.

The last category is challenging each other. Here it is clearer that contradicting views exist, and attempts to explore and resolve them are unsuccessful. This is the only category that not all the pairs used. Seven out of the twelve have utterances in which they explicitly disagree with the other:

> F1: I think this is fantastic, the skin is also alive… it is like an orange, don't you think?
> F2: No I don't think so
> F1: No?
> F2: No, it's quite flat
> F1: But as a material, if I touched it I would almost think it was warm. It creates an illusion of being alive
> F2: Not for me…
> (Pair 1, 2008)

> F: I have to say, I am more impressed by this art than the older paintings
> M: I have to say I'm not
> F: It is more fun to exhibit
> M: In a way yes, but…
> F: Because it makes one curious, in there [older Danish collection], you are at peace with yourself, when you look at the art
> M: But to me it is too simply made, that's what I think, far too simple
> (Pair 9, 2008)

Where the confirming interaction was a way of establishing a common and cohesive social entity, the challenging/disagreeing interaction functions to do the opposite; here, 'the other' is seen not as similar to oneself but as different. In all three categories, Bakhtin's notion of the other is in play: 'To be means to be for another, and through the other, for oneself' (1984: 287). In the confirming interaction, a cohesive relationship with the other is established: a 'we' is constructed, which confirms that we support each other's values and that we belong together. In the exploring interaction, we meet 'the

other' in relation to ourselves, investigating 'the other's' opinions and, through this, see and develop ourselves. In the challenging interaction, a difference between 'I' and 'the other' is established: 'the other' is something different to me. In this way, both the speech genres and the strategies for interacting that are present in the conversations support a formation of the relationship between the users and also a formation of the self. I will return to this later in the chapter, but for now, let's take a closer look at the type of utterances which are employed when performing the script.

8.4 Way of engagement

We have now established that the real users together negotiate the space, and by their bodily conduct, they establish a social entity that determines the movement, pace and focus of the performance of the script. Moreover, through their conversations, actors create speech genres and strategies for interaction that are particular to the individual pair, drawing on previous understandings as well as the responses they expect from each other. This is the frame that shapes the content of the conversation and the context in which they unfold. But what do the pairs talk about?

As mentioned in the literature review, several studies have looked at how people speak about museum objects. The most common way of dealing with this aspect is to divide how people speak into different types of talk (Abu-Shumays and Leinhardt, 2002; Allen, 2002; Fienberg and Leinhardt, 2002; Silverman, 1990). For example, Leinhardt and Knutson divide conversations into these themes: objects, personal matters, management of the visit and other issues (2004b: 80). In another study, the object talk was separated into four levels of engagement: listing (identity), analysis (concept), synthesis (compare) and explanation (helping) (Fienberg and Leinhardt, 2002: 170). These levels signify the progression from simple statements about the object to more complex interpretations. However, many authors do not claim that the conversations are a linear progression from description to understanding. For example, Abu-Shumays and Leinhardt (2002:55) state:

> Visitors generally engage in these four discourse activities in an informal and unconscious manner as they view museum objects; that is, they do not expressly list, analyze, synthesize, and explain with reference to every object or exhibit component that they approach, but their overall

discussion within a particular exhibition tends to contain all four kinds of conversational elaborations.

These levels are also reflected in Allen's study, where the content of the conversations is described as perceptual, conceptual, connecting, strategic and affective (2002: 275-76). The studies referred to here are all in search of learning in relation to the museum visit (even though Allen includes the 'affective' category in her analysis). The only exception is Silverman, who identifies three primary ways of meaning making in the art museum; thus she is not looking for learning but for broader engagement with objects. She establishes three modes of making meaning: subjective (personal memory and evaluation), objective (knowledge and competencies) and a combination of the two (1990: 180-181). The last category in particular is relevant for this research. Silverman describes this as a particular frame employed mostly by female friends in art museums. Here they

> combine both subjective and objective ways of relating to artwork, acknowledging and seeking access to the artists' intention, yet sharing and valuing their own personal reactions and subjective responses as well. (Silverman, 1990: 180-181)

While coding the conversations in this present research, it became clear that thinking about the content of the conversations in relation to levels or even splitting them into subject/object categories did not make sense. They were far too heterogeneous and based on individual speech genres, revealing how the objective and subjective are so intertwined that they cannot be separated. For example, when the female in Pair 3 shares her knowledge about an artwork, it is in relation to her personal experiences with her art teacher; the 'objective' knowledge and the words she uses to talk about it are infused with her prior experiences, as well as with her expectations of her partner's response. Hence, 'objective' knowledge is highly subjective. I will therefore not propose categories that divide the subjective or objective, or look at them as levels of engagement or learning. Instead, following Bakhtin, I wish to explore subjective utterances and their relationships. In practice, they are interlinked and closely related to the speech genre in which they are framed, but in order to explore them in depth, they can be separated into six distinct types of utterances:

1. Formal utterances   4. Personal utterances

2. Art historical utterances   5. Emotional utterances

3. Analytic utterances   6. Practical utterances

In fig. 8.5 it can be seen how the coding of each pair is spread across the different types of utterances. In relation to the art historical utterances, two numbers are given: the first includes instances when the name and the title of the work were read aloud from the label. As this is a type of art historical information, this was initially coded as that. However, it quickly became clear that the method of reading aloud for each other was much practised, and thus, in the coding, it came to hide the actual art historical conversations which took place. Therefore, the second number demonstrates the art historical conversations in which the label was not read aloud. I will return to this when analysing the art historical talk.

Overview of coding percentages

	Formal utterance	Art historical utterance	Analytic utterance	Personal utterance	Emotional utterance	Practical utterance
Pair 1	20.4	27.64/15.1	26.38	9.57	22.23	1.01
Pair 2	30.92	20.05/14.83	23.76	11.16	19.95	0.91
Pair 3	12.62	29.27/16.65	34.81	39.73	10.47	3.01
Pair 4	11.92	45.48/29.63	34.58	38.39	42.66	4.49
Pair 5	27.19	55.61/20.05	28.27	35.6	33.56	8.12
Pair 6	19.44	57.81/38.42	28.27	4.23	63.08	5.35
Pair 7	12.18	64.61/21.81	28.75	2.48	25.15	8.17
Pair 8	36.44	63.76/42.66	47.32	31.09	29.93	3.12
Pair 9	35.11	41.18/30.24	45.07	34.46	60.82	4.51
Pair 10	14.58	49.81/31.78	53.7	26.15	13.96	0.48
Pair 11	25.42	55.94/30.24	31.73	20.01	31.67	5.14
Pair 12	44.08	54.47/41.86	55.55	34.97	14.31	0.81

Fig 8.5 Overview of coding percentages. For example, 20.4% of the conversations of Pair 1 were coded as formal utterances.

This figure shows how heterogeneous the utterances are. There are no clear patterns between the utterances used, thus no connection between, for example, those who make many personal utterances and those who do not. In addition, it is also difficult to relate

the type of utterances to educational level, prior experience or the type of relationship between the users.

The only pattern that can be seen is that all couples consisting of friends not surprisingly state that 'To be social' is important for their visit (Appendix 7). Moreover, there is a tendency for users who stay longer in the galleries to have a more exploratory approach, with their conversations consisting of a high percentage of analytical and personal utterances. It is also noteworthy that the couple who have visited the museum most before, i.e. very experienced museum goers (Pair 3), are also the pair with the most personal talk; it is the highest percentage compared to the others, but it is also the type of utterance that they use the most (appendix 7). This is also seen in Pair 8, who has not been to SMK for the past year but, as their speech continuously refers to prior museum visits, are clearly experienced museum goers. They have the longest stay in the galleries, and also show the highest analytical percentage as well as high art historical and personal percentages. In comparison, Pair 7, who have the lowest educational level and have not been to the Museum the past year, have the shortest stay and the lowest percentage of personal utterances. Instead, this pair is concerned with practical issues such as finding their way, and they also have a high art historical percentage, due to the fact that they read many labels aloud to each other.

The indication is therefore (without claiming to be representative) that the most experienced museum goers, who in general have high educational levels, are also the ones who explore the galleries in the most personal way. This is interesting in relation to, for example, the conclusions of Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel in *The Love of Art* (1969). Here they demonstrated how educational and cultural background enabled visitors to understand and comply to the art historical agenda (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1990). In the present research it looks as if this group is the group least interested in art history; they are more concerned with personal conversations. Instead, it is more inexperienced visitors who are concerned with complying with the museum script. But now, let's take a closer look at the different types of utterances.

Formal utterances

> F2: That is Asger Jorn again
> F1: He just has a fantastic way of coordinating colour

F2: Yes

F1: Sometimes, I try to do something like that, but it is impossible to do
it. The structure in the blue colour…

(Pair 2, 2008)

Colour, technique, materials, shapes, composition: the formal utterances in the
conversations show that the actors are concerned with the way the artworks are made.
Not surprisingly, Pair 2, who established the speech genre 'Being creative', also uses
this type of utterance the most. In this way, the speech genres and type of utterances
influence each other.

Often, the formal utterance is used as a way of 'opening up' the artwork, leading to a
more analytic and emotional utterance:

F1: Look at this orange, it is almost sweating

F1: He is good with the colours, they are almost tactile

F1: Also this one…

F2: Is she sad?

F1: I don't know

(Pair 1, 2008)

Or here:

M: See the paintings with shapes, squares, triangles and circles, which are
thrown over one another, I get a little confused by them… or not
confused, a restless… can you can follow me?

F: Yes, easily

M: Of course it's because you're frantically looking for coherence

F: Yes

M: Try to complete the puzzle

(Pair 11, 2008)

Both of these quotes demonstrate how artworks are being explored by users together
from the formal perspective, and how this develops into a more emotional and analytic
response to the work. It is interesting how a formal utterance is also socially
determined. The last quotation in particular displays a formalistic reading of an

artwork, which corresponds closely to the way Bell and Fry described the aesthetic formalistic experience. However, this it is not done through contemplation of the colours and shapes in silence and solitude; rather, the formalistic engagement is shared, constructed and confirmed together.

The formalist utterance can also be connected to personal utterances:

> M: This is mica
> F: Mica?
> M: Yes
> F: Oh
> M: It is a type of stone which, in the old days, was used for the windows in stoves. Because they are stone
> F: Oh
> M: The really small windows in stoves, mica was used there
> F: Where is that found?
> M: In mountains, I can't remember in what country
> F: Oh
> M: I have been, I can't remember, maybe it was Norway, I am pretty sure it was Norway, where I actually found mica
> (Pair 8, 2008)

Here a discussion of the material prompts a conversation that first allows the male to demonstrate his particular knowledge of mica and that also connects to a personal memory of a trip to Norway.

Art historical utterances

Art historical utterances are here defined as utterances that deal with artists, titles, movements and periods and the links between them. This means that when a specific artist or artwork is recognised spontaneously, this has been coded as art historical. This is also the case for when names and titles of works are read aloud by the participants to each other. This is a common practice and therefore naturally accounts for a large percentage of the conversations (Mcmanus, 1989).

The labels in the collection are used extensively. This is also confirmed by the overall questionnaire that was carried out in the front hall after the recordings. Despite many visitors did not read them, 46% (36 out of 78) stated that they used the labels (Fig. 8.6).

Did you read any of the small texts by the artworks?
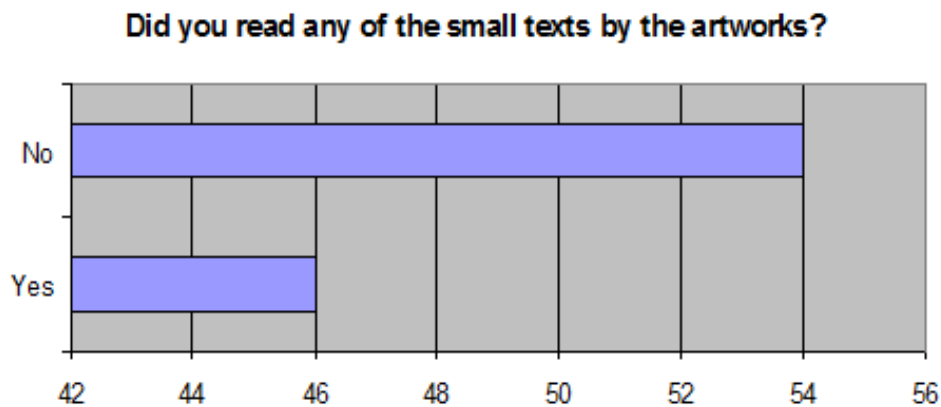
Fig. 8.6 Use of labels, front hall questionnaire

This must be related to the overall use of text in the gallery, where 84% (75 out of 89) answered that they used the text, since, as explained previously, some participants might have confused the different types of text with each other. It is interesting to look at how users acknowledge their use of the labels. Overall, 51% (37 out of 72) said that they used the text a lot or a little in their engagement with the artwork (fig. 8.7).

Did you use the text to experience the artwork with?
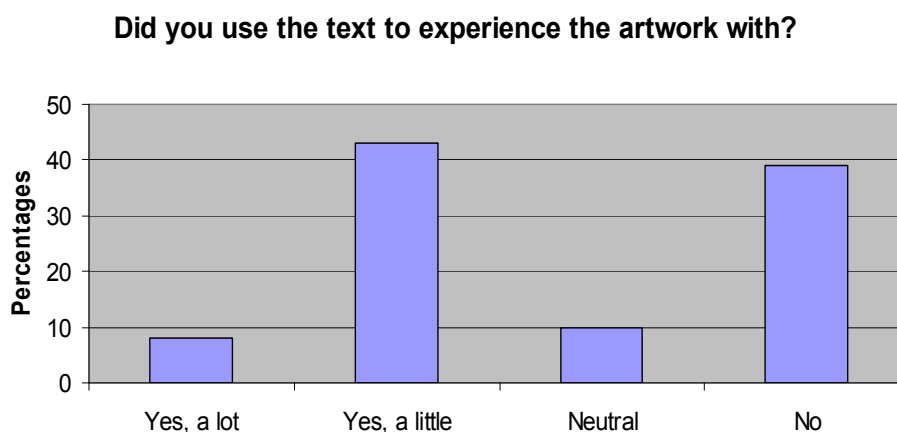
Fig. 8.7 Use of text, front hall questionnaire

The labels are used to start a conversation:

F2: Guess what this is called.

F1: No, I can't

F2: *Brev til en ung pige* (Letter to a Young Girl)

(Pair 1, 2008)

and to initiate an interpretation of the work:

M: Linda Lovelace – it is by Erik A Frandsen. It is a porn star

F: Might be…

M: Yes, it is an artist name for an American porn film star

(Pair 10, 2008)

This quote also shows, as we saw in the formalist utterances, how reading the label often acts as a springboard for sharing and displaying knowledge and aspiring to further explorations of the work. This is taken even further here. After reading the label, one of the users elaborates:

M: Listen, in Ølstrup church, I think it is, there is an alter piece that Nolde has made

F: Oh

M: This might be a study for it

F: Yes, perhaps

M: It is a very famous alter piece, in Ølstrup

F: Where is it in Jylland?

M: Near Ringkøbing

F: Oh

(Pair 10, 2008)

Here the male shows his specialist knowledge of Nolde, which makes him eligible to make assumptions about status of the work.

However, sometimes the reading of the label also corrects an initial reaction to the work:

M: I could be convinced that this was Kirkeby, he also paints in this way

F: Yes, but in different colours… compared to what I have seen anyway

M: It is very close to what I have seen

M: Maja Elise Engelhardt

(Pair 8, 2008)

This means label reading serves several functions and connects to different explorations of the work.

Other art historical utterances show how they stand in relation to prior utterances forming, in a Bakhtinian way, a dialogue with other utterances. These could have been said by the user herself, but also made by others:

F2: There is one from the front pages of art books (Matisse: *Portræt af Madame Matisse* (Portrait of Madame Matisse)

F1: Yes, it is quite amazing that we have it here

F2: Yes, actually it is

(Pair 5, 2008)

F2: This picture I know

F1: It is a very famous one

F1: I have seen it several times in books

(Pair 6, 2008)

M: There is lots to recognise in these, a lot of time has been spent on them

F: Yes

F: It is a sort of school picture; they have been used in school books

M: Hmm

(Pair 12, 2008)

From these quotes it is clear that art historical utterances can sometimes be traced back to utterances found in books often used in schools. This means that within these art historical utterances exists a chain that links back to formal education.

The pairs also make connections to art historical periods and movements. These are often made when a wall panel is read and related to a specific artwork:

> F: George Braque
> M: Do you know him?
> K: Nah
> M: I don't
> K+M: (read wall panel)
> M: It's not about reproducing the photographic, but to reproduce a situation, it can be said
> K: Yes…
> M: Or it comes out of the…
> K: It's an extra dimension, at least
> M: Yes, yes
> (Pair 8, 2008)

The pair here use words from the wall panel (reproducing, photographic, situation), but end up concluding that it is an extra dimension. In relation to the de-scripting of the museum script, it was shown that the intellectual level of the wall panels is quite academic. This is a concrete example of how difficult it is for some users to apply what they have read to the actual work. Instead, the art historical agenda seem forced on the works. Sometimes it is also seen how one user is familiar with art historical terms, while the other has a different approach:

> M: Lovely colours
> F: It is Expressionism… the expression in form and colours
> M: Hmm
> K: From the beautiful to the expressionistic
> M: Hmm
> (Pair 11, 2008)

Here the male is responding intuitively, making an aesthetic judgement, while the female takes the conversation in an art historical direction.

This way of assimilating and conducting an art historical discourse while performing the script is, of course, interesting: as we saw in chapter 6, this is a fundamental part of the museum script. I will return to the comparison between the museum script and the real users' script in the concluding remarks, but here highlight that it is evident from some of the utterances that the real users have a desire to comply with the museum script (which some do naturally). In other words, some of the art historical utterances indicate that the users are aware that this is the way they ought to perform the script, but the utterances also show that for some, this is difficult or perhaps not an interest of theirs.

Analytic utterances
Both the formal and the art historical utterances are often characterised by leading to other and longer explorations. Some of these are connected to actual works, but some are more general:

> F: It is a bit difficult with this type of art isn't it? It is so varied
> M: Yes
> F: It is a bit funny, it is much more varied than the landscapes we saw before, isn't it?
> M: Yes
> F: They looked so much more like each other… one could say it is an expression of creativity
> M: Yes, yes, and it is not because they have a larger time span than the other.
> F: No, no, it is interesting to perceive them as people
> M: Yes
> F: They have greater…
> M: much greater variation
> F: Yes, don't you think so
> M: But that is how the world is [today]
> F: Yes
> (Pair 10, 2008)

The example above shows how the presentation of the collections inspired this pair to reflect on wider issues in our society. By comparing these works with the Museum's collection of older Danish art, they discuss how society today is much more diverse and agree that art reflects this. They continue:

> M: When you think about the diversity as means of communication, it is not surprising that the variety is so much larger
> F: No, but you say communication, it is also the development
> M: Well, it is linked, right?
> F: Yes of course
> M: It is not surprising that people are so stressed and so torn, there is no actual anchor in this. It is wild and crazy.
> F: Yes
> (Pair 10, 2008)

This quotation shows how art works have inspired an analysis of contemporary society and how this ends up as a judgement of both society and art: it is wild and crazy. Other analytic utterances are more related to specific artworks:

> F2: Did you see the title of this one? *Tankens Magt* (The Power of Thought)
> F1: Hmm
> F2: You can say that thoughts don't matter that much when you are drowning in mud, right?
> F1: Or if thought has too much power, then you end up being destroyed. That's what I think. If our heads end up being too large then we drown. That's how I see it.
> F2+F1: (laugh)
> (Pair 1, 2008)
>
> M: This is Kvium… it is mad
> F: And Lemmertz as well, they are really 'wild'
> M: *Tankens Magt* (Power of Thoughts) – swimming around without their heads in a pool of mud

F: Like you, don't have your head with you?

M: Well, I don't know

F: It is just men

M: Look at the frame, it is also brain mass, can you see it?

(Pair 10, 2008)

Both of these quotes relate to the same artwork, which was also one of the two pieces in the observations characterised as charismatic (fig. 7.5). Out of the twelve pairs, nine of them had conversations about it, confirming its status as charismatic. It was the most spoken-about work in the audio recordings.[71] Both of these interpretations try to decode a hidden message in the work, but while the first does only that, the other combines the analytic utterance with both an emotional utterance and an art historical utterance. The male starts off by judging the work to be 'mad' and the female follows this, transforming his emotional utterance into an art historical one. She corrects or supplements his judgement with the term 'wild', which can be seen as a judgement but is simultaneously a reference to the Danish group of artists to which both Kvium and Lemmertz belonged in the 1980s: *De unge vilde* (the Wild Young Ones).

This last quote is a good example of how most utterances in the museum are highly complex and have not one but several agendas simultaneously. They are a combination of personal and emotional judgements, art historical facts and analytic explorations. And the function of the utterance is also manifold. It is a performance of knowledge (the female demonstrates that she knows of the Young Wild Group) but also a value judgement, showing how the users approve of this type of work (it is mad but not, for example, disgusting). Both users are in this way performing for the other, signalling who they are and what values they hold. Moreover, the utterance shows that they together shape the conversation and thereby the experience of the work, listening to each other, continuously backing each other up and ultimately confirming the experience of the other.

One last type of analytic utterance I want to highlight is how an analysis can be orientated towards personal memory:

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[71] Seven of the twelve pairs spoke of the other charismatic work by Peter Land.

M: It is funny with Matisse, I mean, when we were young, I had a poster like that on the wall and it was still modern. But today oh no

F: No

M: It seems suddenly really old

F: It is such an 80s thing

F: It is funny what it makes it so… the interest is suddenly elsewhere, but it is as if, as we talked about downstairs, art today is far rougher

(Pair 11, 2008)

Here the artwork has triggered a memory of a teenage room with a specific poster. This is combined with an emotional judgement (it seems old) and then connected to an overall analysis of how art today is rough. Again, it demonstrates the complex ways in which users negotiate experiences and underlines how different the real users are from the projected users inscribed in the museum script.

Personal utterances

Personal utterances reflect private memories and dreams and focus on personal histories. This is one of the utterances that seem to weave in and out of the other utterances. Often they take form as associations, which are frequently evoked by artworks; sometimes they are short statements, sometimes longer stories about personal life:

F2: These are wonderful

F1: Hmm

F2: I went to see a large exhibition at D'Orsay, with the French impressionists. I could have been there the whole day.

F1: Yes, I'm usually amazed there as well

(Pair 2, 2008)

F: This is *Hesteslagtningen* (the Horse Sacrifice), the famous *Hesteslagtningen*

F: You know, it is strange, when they did *Hesteslagtningen,* I went to Krogerup Højskole. It was a chaos, I will never forget it… people were

M: Yes, people were very upset, but it was an old horse

(Pair 3, 2008)

F: Ærtebjerg, I have come across someone called Arne Ærtebjerg, in Bogense

M: Oh

M: It must have been a parent or someone

F: I think he was an artist as well

(Pair 8, 2008)

F: I think this is by Trampedach

M: Is it?

F: And I also think this one is a Trampedach too

M: Yes, I can see that

F: There was one like this in Aalborg, have you been to Aalborg?

M: Yes

F: Yes

M: I lived there

F: Yes

(Pair 10, 2008)

These quotations all display how an artwork can trigger a personal memory of a past event: a trip, a place, a meeting with someone or a particular experience. The artworks function almost like a wormhole, where the immediate response to the work consists of a personal association and often leads to totally unpredictable conversations:

F: Ah, what is the name of this? (reading label) John's wife… she was descendent of Gauguin

M: Was she?

F: Yes, and at some point she inherited a lot of money, then they went on a great trip

M: Really?

(Pair 10, 2008)

These responses to the works that by no means can be controlled or foreseen by the museum are strongly present in most conversations. There were even pairs for whom this seemed to be the overarching mission of visit. Pairs 3 and 5, for example, talked more about themselves than about the artworks, when performing the script (fig. 8.5 and appendix 7).

Personal utterances can also reflect the memory of other people. For example, as mentioned in relation to speech genres, Pair 4 continuously referred to their neighbour's art collection. This also takes form as a personal utterance:

> M: Our neighbour across the street has a lot of modern art
> F: Hmm
> M: Not as extreme as this
> F: Oh, do they have room for that?
> M: Well, they make room
> (Pair 4, 2008)

> F: This is Trampedach
> F: There is something about him, it touches one
> M: They (the neighbours) have something similar to this, one of these boxes with treads. Every time they move it, it breaks, but that is okay, they say
> F: (laughs)
> (Pair 4, 2008)

In this way, the artworks trigger a memory of the neighbours, which is shared with the companion. But it is evident that the association with the neighbours is also used as an exploration of the couple's own feelings towards contemporary art. This means that the personal utterance has an additional function; it becomes an indirect aesthetic judgement, as it is clear that the user sees himself as different from his neighbours. This is directly expressed in this quote:

> M: This is awful isn't it?
> F: Yes, but

M: They have something like it, the neighbour, not exactly like it, but similar

M: I would never dream of having that, never

F: No, I wouldn't either

F: This looks like an Arne Haugen Sørensen, right?

M: Yes, a little

F: But it is very gruesome, of course it touches one, but I could not stand looking at it, every day I mean…

M: No, they (the neighbours) have a large Kvium in their living room

F: Are they happy with it?

M: Well, it cost several hundred thousand

F: Yes

(Pair 3, 2008)

Personal utterances can also take form as dreams and plans for the future:

F: Haven't we visited Sollergaard, no Søndergaard museum? I mean Jens Søndergaard? In the northern part of Jutland? I can't remember where it was… ah… near the west coast. I'm just thinking… for Easter break … it was such a small town…

M: Yes

F: By the sea…

M: It might be fun for the kids

F: Yes, exactly, a trip

M: Yes

F: Maybe it is not so far north, maybe by Lemvig or Thorsminde…

M: Yes, there are more in here

F: Yes

M: But let's think about it

F: Yes

(Pair 12, 2008)

Engaging with the artworks by Søndergaard sparks a personal utterance, which consists of a memory of a prior visit to his museum, but is carried further and turns into a plan

for a future family trip. However, the contrary is also seen. Here the artworks remind the user of something she wishes she had done:

> F: Ah, I actually think, I really regret not have this done [looking at an artwork that consists of casts of a pregnant stomach]
> M: No, I don't think so
> F: I think it is great
> M: No…
> F: There is a whole family here
> F: It is made from fibre glass
> (Pair 9, 2008)

The casts remind the woman about her own pregnancy and make her wish that she had had a cast of her own stomach made.

In this way, the personal utterances show how the users relate themselves to the objects, and how this enables them to share stories of their lives with their companion. According to Bakhtin, this also makes them see themselves. As Mercer and Paris also conclude,

> Museum visitors discover bits and pieces of their own lives in the objects they encounter […] the information becomes meaningful through reference to representations of who they are and who they want to become. (2002: 407)

However, personal stories can also be uttered without any relation to artwork. For example, a bodily feeling can trigger a personal utterance, here an awareness of one's foot:

> F2: Wow
> F1: Stop it…
> F2: This is '70s art to be sure
> F1: Yes
> F1: It is the first time I'm wearing these shoes

F2: The first time?

F1: Yes, since the operation

F1: And I can walk around…

(Pair 2, 2008)

Emotional utterances

As we have seen, personal utterances are highly diverse and include memories of the past and dreams of the future. Another type of utterance that is strongly connected to the personal utterance is the emotional utterance or value judgement, as we could also call it. This type of utterance is intrinsic to the aesthetic experience and therefore also particular to the art museum. As we saw in chapter 2, the aesthetic experience is based on the beauty and harmony of the artworks (Schiller, 1909/1794, letter X) and it is this experience that is the foundation of the art museum.

Emotional utterances are often strong expressive statements that are made both as part of a longer argument but also as brief declarations, uttered while passing an artwork. This means that spontaneous and seemingly superficial value judgements form a significant part of the participants' conversations. This is one of the most common type of utterance made by the pairs: it is the main way of conversing for Pair 6 and 9. It is interesting to see how these emotional utterances are made by all pairs and have no relation to age, educational level or number of prior visits to the Museum. Even motivation does not seem to have an impact on the number of emotional utterances made (fig. 8.5 and appendix 7). There is, however, a difference in the types of value judgements made.

When investigating the utterances in practice, we are engaging with 'empirical aesthetics', as Kirchberg and Tröndle say (2012: 236). As explained in relation to the limits of the study, it must be taken into account that it is only part of the aesthetic experience that is spoken out loud. However, on the basis of the frequency of these utterances, it can be assumed that many of the aesthetic experiences are articulated and, as we saw in the formalist utterances, they are more socially shared and negotiated than is the traditional understanding of the aesthetic experience, which only involves a singular user. In the audio recordings, typical aesthetic judgements concerning whether an artwork is beautiful or ugly are evident:

F1: This is beautiful

F2: Yes, very beautiful colours

(Pair 6, 2008)

F: Hmm Christian Lemmertz

M: Yes, this one

M: It is awful

F: Terribly, ugly

(Pair 3, 2008)

(while walking)

M: Something like that is ugly!

F: Yes, this one

F: But those two over there,

M: Yes, they are great

F: Yes

(Pair 3, 2008)

These are utterances that are connected to the classic understanding of artwork as being beautiful. In the questionnaire following the audio recordings, participants were asked to describe what makes good art. Here eight out of the twenty-four answered that a good artwork should be beautiful and not surprisingly, this view is reflected in their utterances.

Associated with the notion of beauty is the comprehension that an artwork should be well made. Fourteen participants in the audio recording answered that this was important if they should like the artwork. If this criterion was not met, dissatisfaction would occur:

M: A sculpture like that, made from foam for insulating windows and 'Rockwoll', no, it is beyond my comprehension,

F: [laughs] It is too easy or what?

(Pair 9, 2008)

(while walking)

F1: Something like that

F2: That is not my cup of tea

(Pair 5, 2008)

F1: I don't know what to say

F2: No

F1: It could look like some shapes, but I don't know

F2: I don't know

F1: And this one… it is spaghetti in large format

F2: No, I don't like it, I really don't…

(Pair 6, 2008)

M: This is Claus Carstensen. I think it is nonsense

F: I really don't know him

M: No

(Pair 8, 2008)

From these quotations it is evident that the utterances reflect the classic aesthetic experience; however, the data also show that there are other ways and new categories by which to judge artworks. As Sianne Ngai reminds us, the aesthetic categories that we use today are different from those developed in the eighteenth century. She identities three categories that are significant for contemporary culture: cute, interesting and zany (Ngai, 2012).

These three categories, she claims, are 'equivocal' and when used as judgements, they are ambiguous, involve contrasting feelings and defy any real judgement. 'Cute', for example, does not signify actual actions or feelings but makes the object powerless. 'Zany' signals a non-stop performance and action that cannot be explained. 'Interesting' is when something is felt, but we are not sure what to think of it (Ngai, 2012). Ngai clarifies,

I am drawn to these weak or equivocal aesthetic categories because precisely in *not* being experiences of conviction, they foreground the question of their justification outright. Indeed, judgements like 'interesting' seem to demand justification, much in the same way that all aesthetic judgements (including even 'interesting') demand concurrence. (Jasper and Ngai, 2011)

Ngai means that an aesthetic judgement like 'interesting' is not just a way of judging something. For example, when we utter that something is 'interesting', in reality, we are asking our companions to join the conversation and explore the object with us. In this way, these types of aesthetic judgements become more than evaluations of whether an object is beautiful or ugly; they become social events (Ngai, 2012).

In the audio recordings, many 'weak' judgements are seen. Ngai's 'interesting' and 'cute' are used, but terms such as 'strange', 'special', 'friendly' and 'funny' also appear as new aesthetic categories that the users' judge the artworks by. These, I argue, can supplement Ngai's categories.

Let's start with 'interesting':

F: It is not like the old self-portraits

M: No, no… but they are interesting

(Pair 10, 2008)

M: Then this one, that is interesting, I haven't seen it before

F: Baselitz – do you know him?

M: Yes he is good. He always makes the portrait upside down

F: Yes, it is. I like him too

(Pair 10, 2008)

M: This is interesting

F: Um, yes, it is, the colours are more… delicate

(Pair 10, 2008)

The first quote shows how 'interesting' is used as a judgement in itself, or at least that is where it ends, since the woman did not pick up the invitation to explore the work with her male companion. In this way, it comes to function as a weak version of the classic judgement.

In the last two quotes, the term is used to encourage an examination of the work, and here the invitation is accepted, but in different ways. In the second quote, the exploration leads to a more direct judgement, 'he is good' and 'I like him', while in the third, it inspires a more concrete account of the colours of the work.

Analysing 'interesting' as an aesthetic category makes us aware of the explorative and social aspect of the aesthetic experience that takes place in the museum today. It emphasises, as we have seen throughout the observations and the audio recordings, the continuous negotiation between the users, and it explains how this is directly linked to the core of the art museum practice: the aesthetic experience. In other words, employing 'interesting' as an aesthetic category means that the aesthetic experience is changed from taking place in solitude to being a social concern.

Where 'interesting' invites social interaction, 'cute' – and I would also add the term 'friendly' – function in a different way. Both categories signal, as Ngai also mentions, a way of taking over power. Stating that something is cute or friendly is to make it harmless; it is another way of saying that it does not affect me much, but I like it anyway:

> (while walking)
> F1: This is cute
> F2: That one, I would never have it on my wall
> F1: No
> (Pair 6, 2008)

> M: I would like two of those Ejler Bille
> F: Yes, they seem friendly…
> (Pair 3, 2008)

This vague judgement is also related to the term 'funny'. This is an even softer and more blurred category than Ngai's 'zany'. Again, it is related to making a quick judgement that signals that the work does not affect me in a major way, but nevertheless I see something positive in it.

> F1: Hmm this is funny
> F1: Strange art
> F2: Yes
> (Pair 6, 2008)

> M: This is a funny picture
> K: Yes
> (Pair 8, 2008)

> F1: It is quite funny this one, but it is nothing I would have on my wall at home… but it is quite funny
> (Pair 2, 2008)

In this way, 'cute', 'friendly' and 'funny' are categories that are used quickly, and that do not demand a long and complicated explanation. There are judgements that may be passed while walking and browsing, and thus they fit very well with the movement and the type of focus revealed in the observations. In this way, these categories might not inspire discussion, but they function well in a social setting. Moreover, they are still ways of judging artworks, and despite their harmlessness, they still display the self in relation to 'the other' and thereby signal who you are and what you like.

Another new aesthetic category that emerges in the emotional utterances is 'strange' or 'special'. Whereas 'cute' and 'friendly' take power away from the object, these two do the opposite. They signal that we are drawn to the object, that there is something in it, but we cannot articulate precisely what it is; it stirs and unsettles us, but we cannot decide if we like it or not:

> F1: This I think is strange
> F2: It is a question of getting the idea, right?

F1: Yes

F2: But it's very special… besides this blue and black one here by

Richard Mortensen

(Pair 8, 2008)

F1: This is strange, right?

F2: It looks like a little troll

(Pair 6, 2008)

F1: He is strange that artist (Baselitz)

F2: Yes

F1: Very strange

F2: I don't understand why someone paints like that

F1: No

F1: That is what I mean, it is wrong

F2: But there is a meaning behind it…

(Pair 6, 2008)

This category functions more as 'interesting', as it invites social investigation of why the work is 'strange' or 'special'. However, where with 'interesting' we saw that this could lead to more traditional value judgements, 'strange' often lets the judgement hang in the air, so to speak. It is more diffuse and complex, and as we see in the three quotations above, they do not reach any conclusions or clear judgements.

In this way, the audio recordings reveal a range of emotional utterances that are employed when users judge artworks. As shown, the classic aesthetic judgements such as 'I like it', 'I don't like it', 'it is beautiful' and 'it is ugly' still exist; however, these are supplemented, and to a degree also replaced, by a range of new aesthetic categories, for example, interesting, funny and strange. These categories are weak or equivocal compared to the classic ones, and are therefore used in different ways and with different consequences. They are often uttered while walking and browsing, and largely because of their ambiguity, they invite dialogue and negotiation between users.

Practical utterances

The last type of utterance that occurs in the audio recordings is the practical utterance. It is concerned with finding a way, but it also includes talk that involves issues regarding the research. This is the least used type of utterance. It is also the only type of utterance that directly states an intention to do something in particular: going in a certain direction or handing in the wireless microphone.

As already explained, utterances regarding way-finding are, not surprisingly, made mostly by the pairs who are not experienced museum goers:

> F: We should have gone the other way around
> M: Why?
> F: Because we are walking backwards in time
> M: That doesn't matter
> M: As long as you know you are doing it
> F: Hmm
> (Pair 11, 2008)

Some of them express a worry about not complying with the museum script or a concern that they will miss something if they do not know where they are going. Implicitly, it can also be anxiety about not living up to the expectations of the researcher, thus not fulfilling the task that they have been given:

> F2: Now I am completely lost – do we go this way or the other?
> F1: This way
> F2: I'm completely lost
> (Pair 5, 2008)

In addition, the practical utterances entail specific references to the research and the research equipment. This mostly takes place at the end of their tour around the Modern Collection, where they agree to go to the researcher in order to stop the recording:

> F1: Now I think we have seen it all

F2: We forgot completely we were wearing this

(Pair 3, 2008)

8.6 From 'Bildung' to self-formation

In the previous two sections, we saw how the conversations between the users consist of heterogeneous speech genres and various utterances that are negotiated and shaped through a social museum experience. Before concluding on how the real users' conversations contribute to an understanding of the performance of their script and begin to explore the relations to the museum script, I wish to reflect upon the nature of 'Bildung' and self-practice as it is expressed and unfolded in their talk. This will add to a nuanced comprehension of how the museum script differs from the script of the real users, which will be unfolded in detail in the overall conclusion of the thesis.

Social vs. contemplative experience

The conversations show in detail how the users together negotiate their aesthetic experiences. This we have seen in formalistic utterances, where a social decoding of colours and shapes leads to common analytic discoveries on a more general level, but it was also evident in emotional value judgements, where new aesthetic categories such as 'interesting' and 'strange' defy closed judgements and instead open up an aesthetic discussion.

From the questionnaire that followed the audio recordings and the large questionnaire conducted in the front hall in relation to this research, it is evident that users aim for both a contemplative and a social experience. Eight out of twenty-four recorded users stated that a good museum experience means that they have time to reflect. Eight also say that that a museum should be a place for contemplation. But at the same time a majority of these, six out eight, state that they come to the museum to be social. In the larger survey, the pattern is repeated. Here 50% come to be social, 36% come to have time to reflect and 43.3% state that a museum should be a place for contemplation. This means that in the view of the real users, there is no contradiction between being social and having time to contemplate and reflect. On the contrary, for at least some users, this seems to go hand in hand.

The aesthetic experience is therefore far more socially constituted than the museum script envisages it to be. This necessitates a revision as to how we comprehend the role of the museum. Instead of maintaining that there are two distinct reasons for visiting the art museum, as Debeneditti, for example, does by arguing that 'sociality (the bonding experience) and self-actualization (the personal museum experience)' are separate and the visitor must choose between these two poles or degrees of them (2003: 61), data from the present research show that for many users the two aspects meld together. This means that social interaction and self-actualisation cannot be separated, but rather, they underline and support the type of aesthetic experience that users come for. It is the same dialectic that Tröndle and colleagues establish when they comprehend social behaviour and utterances as a disturbance to the aesthetic experience, and ask how this could be resolved (2012a: 482).

I would rather turn the perspective around, and look at why the aesthetic experience is transforming and what users gain from this new type of aesthetic experience. In other words, what is the relationship between the traditional contemplative aesthetic experience envisaged by the museum, and the newer social one practised by the users through their movements and conversations? One way to consider this is by looking at it from the perspective of 'Bildung' and how this concept is unfolded in the users' utterances.

Bildung and Self-formation
As explained in chapter 2, Humboldt launched the concept of 'Bildung', where the individual became an educated and enlightened human being by entering into sociality, discovering universal values and morality. In this process, the aesthetic experience plays an important role, since it displays a harmony between matter and mind, feeling and reason, a harmony that the individual could dwell in, recognise herself in, and thus become enlightened by. Hammershøj (2003) describes how this was a specific self-practice, the neo-humanistic self-practice, where the human being, in her own free will, became educated and adapted to universal values.

The development of this self-practice was seen in the museum scripts analysed at different times. These reveal how the free aesthetic experience to a certain extent was replaced by the decay of 'Bildung', where it was transformed into an outer practice,

which meant complying with specific norms and traditions. These norms and rules became fundamental in order to behave correctly in the museum space. At the same time, the aesthetic experience also changed. From the museum script of 1970, it is clear that aesthetic experience entailed a contemplative and meditative practice, which was based on the formalistic view of art. This involved a self-practice where, in the same way as in traditional 'Bildung', the individual gained access to universal values and morality. However, now it was not a harmony between matter and form, along with the ideal of antiquity, that constituted the experience; it was a visual contemplation of colour and form. This, as we saw in the script of 2006, is to a certain extent what the museum script is based upon today.

Common to the type of 'Bildung' and self-practice that have been envisaged for the projected users in the museum is that they take place in contemplation and in solitude. But the way people form themselves has changed. According to Hammershøj, the concept of 'Bildung' has developed into so-called self-formation (2003).[72] The reason for this development, Hammershøj argues, is due to two conditions:

> The first condition has to do with the radical individualization process and the second could be called culturalization. These conditions seem to fit in well with the late modern concept of formation of the personality. Firstly, formation of the personality is per definition 'without authority' and is therefore interesting in relation to the 'self-socialization' of the late modern individual. Secondly, formation is an aesthetic practice of the self, concerned with the unfolding of the personality. This happens today as the individual's transgression of itself, and the experiences made in various culturalized communities. (Hammershøj, 2003: 443-444)

This means, according to Hammershøj, that today the individual uses sociality to form herself, but her individual integrity is sustained to a far greater degree, whereas in 'Bildung' the individual assimilates universal values and becomes part of something larger – she becomes a universal human being. In self-formation the individual experiences something larger in sociality and then returns to her own particularity again. This means that whereas 'Bildung' was founded on universal values, self-

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[72] A conference paper has been given on this topic. See Houlberg Rung (2007).

formation involves the individual establishing her own values and morals. In other words, the universal ideal type, which in neo-humanistic self-practice was identified with the Greek citizen, is in self-formation dissolved and it is now the individual's own task to build up her own unique self.

This is further illustrated by one of Hammershøj's colleague, Lars-Henrik Schmidt, when he explains that today we should not ask our child, 'What did you learn in school today?' Instead, we should ask, 'What did you say in school today?' (Schmidt in Vesterdal and Dehlholm, 2002). What knowledge is acquired is not so important; what counts is how the individual responds to this knowledge. The interesting aspect of this quote is that it places the focus on the response. This means that in self-formation, the utterance made in relation to what we experience is central; we need to respond to it. This places an emphasis on the social dimension of experiences; thus, a response only exists when it is heard and commented back to the respondent by someone else.

Self-formation at SMK

When analysing the audio recordings and trying to answer 'What goals do actors seek?' and 'What reward do various actors gain from their participations?', it is interesting to consider these in relation to self-formation.

As we saw in the first chapters of the thesis, the museum is intrinsically linked to 'Bildung', but it is clear from both the observations and the audio recordings that the performance of the real users does not comply with this traditional concept. The performance is not based on silent and concentrated experiences, nor do users seem concerned with acquiring a certain type of art historical knowledge. Instead, performance is characterised by being heterogeneous, personal and socially negotiated and is, to a certain extent, based on a browsing behaviour where focus sometimes changes swiftly. In addition, new aesthetic categories are developed, categories which, compared to the traditional ones, are more ambiguous and displace the actual judgement to a social discussion. Instead of defining this as a failure, the theory of self-formation can help us understand why this type of performance has developed and what it serves to do.

The museum space presents a sociality that users can transcend into. Here they can be attracted to the artworks that appeal specifically to them, letting their curiosity lead

them while conducting an 'attentional' type of walking. Moreover, the museum space is a social setting that enables users to respond to the experience immediately, negotiating their experience with their companion. It this way, it can be argued that the users at SMK are engaged in, amongst other things, self-formation when visiting the galleries and the reasons for their movement and behaviour can be found in this.

Other studies have looked at how identity work is performed in museums (Falk, 2009, 2006; Falk et al., 2008; Fienberg and Leinhardt, 2002; Ingemann, 2006; Paris and Mercer, 2002; Rounds, 2006; Stainton, 2002), but none, to my knowledge, in relation 'Bildung' or self-formation. Jay Rounds, who in 2004 wrote concerning visitor curiosity in museums, developed his thoughts further and came to understand curiosity as a type of 'identity work' that happens in the museum (2006:134). Here he argues that the museum, with its ordered collections and stable environment, presents a perfect place where users, according to their specific interests, can browse and engage in 'reflexive activities' (Rounds, 2006:134). The seemingly random focus and overall browsing is part of this since

> identity work includes both the ways that we strive to establish identity as part of some-thing larger than ourselves – to meld ourselves into some form of structure offered by our socio-cultural environment – and the ways in which we assert agency and try to escape from the constraints of those same structures. (Rounds, 2006:138)

What this research adds is an empirically based understanding of how social interaction as well as shared utterances are an important part of this, both through the Bakhtinian understanding of presenting the self to the other, but also as responses and social interaction as part of the process of self-formation.

Challenging or confirming an identity

Another issue evident in audio recordings that influences the aspect of self-formation, as we have seen, is the largely confirmative nature of the utterances. As Rounds suggests, the users display an active agency in relation to the structures of the museum, as it is part of their identity work to detach themselves from these (2006:138). However, in relation to the social interaction and the utterances, it looks like the self-

formation process at SMK has more to do with sustaining and confirming existing identities than challenging and establishing new ones. As we saw in the audio recordings, users spend more time on and search for more knowledge about the artworks that they like than the ones they feel challenged by. In this way, Rounds's ideas about both curiosity and identity seem somewhat idealistic. This might happen in certain cases, but the empirical study for this research places emphasis instead on the demonstration and performance of an already established identity. Following Bakhtin, the users' performances reveal the museum as a place where value judgements and utterances are heard, and thus we are coming into being for 'the other' and therefore also for ourselves.

8.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen how the audio recordings made in the galleries of SMK support the data generated and theory established on the basis of the observations. The initial understanding of the museum as a social space where user performances were spontaneous and came into being creatively as they moved was confirmed and further explored.

The recordings displayed a range of heterogeneous talk. However, patterns with regards to the structure and the interaction between the users could be identified, and a theoretical approach based on Bakhtin and his concepts of speech genres, utterances and 'the other' was created. These were applied to a detailed analysis of the conversations, enabling an identification of the different types of speech genres and their functions. Three basic ways of interacting were generated from the data: confirming, exploring and challenging. From the coding it was possible to establish the 'confirming' method of interaction as the most common of the three, proving how the establishment of a social entity, as we also saw in the observations, is an important part of the users' performance.

The users' utterances were also looked at in detail. Here six types of utterances were classified: formal, art historical, analytic, personal, emotional and practical. These utterances were all highly personal and, in practice, mixed and intertwined with each other. However, by separating them, the analysis was able to shed light on how the conversations happened as social negotiations, even in regards to the aesthetic

judgements that were made as part of emotional utterances. As the exploration of the emotional utterances developed, it became clear that the reason for the social nature of the aesthetic judgements should be found in the new aesthetic categories. Here a Sianne Ngai's concepts of 'interesting', 'cute' and 'zany' were presented in order to understand how aesthetic categories function today. Not all of Ngai's categories were relevant for this research, but other categories such as 'strange' and 'funny' were suggested instead.

Finally, the chapter explored how the conversations reflected a new type of 'Bildung' and self-practice. When trying to comprehend the 'attentional' way of exploring the museum, it was seen how the conversations were directed towards what appealed to or interested the users the most. This, combined with a demonstration of the social nature of the aesthetic experience, led to extending Hammershøj's writing on 'Bildung' with his thoughts of self-formation. By doing so it became clear how the users perform their identity through the conversations, making them visible not only to the other but also to themselves.

In relation to the museum script, the personal, heterogeneous and interest-based conversations stand in contrast to the knowledge-based script presented by the museum. As the audio recordings showed, a lot of art historical utterances were made, but often in form of reading labels aloud for each other, and often combined with personal memories or anecdotes. This will be further explored in the overall conclusion of the thesis.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored the compliances, tensions and discrepancies between the museum script and the way users perform in the galleries. The focus has been on Statens Museum for Kunst, the National Gallery of Denmark, seeking to answer the research question: How does Statens Museum for Kunst understand and progress the experience of adult visitors in the permanent galleries and how this does relate to actual visitor experiences? In this way, the heart of the research lies in an examination of the intersection between the Museum and its users, investigating the relationship between the two in all its complexity.

This task was in need of a strong framework, which was found in Akrich and Latour's concept of script (Akrich, 1992; Latour and Akrich, 1992; Latour, 2007). Their acknowledgement of a twofold analysis of the script was transferred to the museum: first a de-scription of the museum, followed by an empirical investigation of the users' performance of the script. By conducting this double analysis, a back-and-forth movement between the intentions of the Museum and the actual use of the Museum was achieved. In practice, this also became a dialogue between desk-based research and empirical study, between overall strategies and visions and situated, personal experiences.

Five museum scripts were analysed. This led us through a detailed and nuanced de-scription of how the different museum scripts were manifested in the architecture, display strategies, interpretative material and other activities at SMK. From the investigation of the script, a history of SMK emerged that has largely never before been written as it has been hidden in archive material, newspaper articles and other documents. The de-scription revealed how the scripts were based on different philosophical and aesthetic theories and how they were influenced by international as well as local social and cultural circumstances. In other words, de-scription exposed the complexity that forms museum scripts. The de-scription also drew our attention to how the different scripts have projected user profiles inscribed within them. By tracking the projected user profile, it became clear who the Museum understood to be the main user of SMK. The de-scripting also revealed how users' expectations for and dissatisfaction

with the script in return effected and provoked changes in the script. Another significant point was that not all elements within the scripts complied with or supported the script in its entirety. Each script contained discrepancies and contradictions, which signal that the scripts always were in flux and was never a stable and complete entity. In other words, consciously or not, the designers of the script did not all work towards the same goal.

The scripts explored were from the years 1827, 1896, 1922, 1970 and 2006. The reason for conducting a historic analysis of the museum scripts was that previous scripts and reactions to these scripts play a fundamental role when a new script is developed. Older scripts are embedded within the new.

In 1827, it was clear that the script entailed an educational mission for the users. This shaped the experience that the projected user was supposed to have in the Museum. But how the educational mission was to be carried out quickly became an ongoing duel between different forces in the script. The competition between the Enlightenment's rational scientific script, where a systematic overview of art is a priority, and a freer aesthetic experience based on the German concept of 'Bildung' came into play. We saw how the practices of Det Kongelige Billedgalleri were linked in the nineteenth century to the German museum tradition, but it was not possible to make a direct transference. The influence of Rumohr, Humboldt and Schiller was filtered through a more local and national context, and with input from significant people, such as Høyen and Lange, Det Kongelige Billedgalleri transformed into SMK in 1896. Here the new symbolic architecture underlined the nationalistic function of the collection. Combined with the development of art history as a profession and therefore also an increasing awareness of expert and amateur ways of engaging with artworks, the educational purpose became more explicit, and the aesthetic experience less free and more didactic. The 1896 script reveals these issues, but it is also clear that an intuitive engagement with art was still employed by certain designers. This was evident, for example, in the discrepancy between the intuitive structure of the hang in 1896 and the controlling architectural layout and frame in the new museum building.

In this way, it was shown how the scripts of 1827 and 1896 were both complex and contradictory, fluctuating between a free aesthetic experience and a didactic educational

practice. Thus, the imagined user shifted between being perceived as a competent individual who could engage with the artworks herself, and an amateur who had to be guided through the galleries and familiarised with art history in order to understand the artworks.

The educational function of the Museum in these first two periods was seen in the light of the concept of self-practice, i.e. the way individuals develop themselves in specific times. The reason for applying this term to the museum experience is that it nuances the thinking of how the Museum is educational and in what way users benefit from their engagement with artworks. The self-practice found in the thinking of 'Bildung' established a free relation between the artwork and the user based on the process of throwing oneself into sociality and discover universal values that would form and educate one as a human being (Hammershøj, 2003). At the end of the nineteenth century, decay of this self-practice was detected and the word 'Bildung' gained a different meaning from the one Humboldt had anticipated. The free relationship between the artwork and the subject was, for many, replaced with a set of specific norms based not on free 'Bildung' but on rules. These norms became a way of distinguishing between specific social groups and between amateur and professional engagement with art (Hammershøj, 2003: 78). It is in light of this development of 'Bildung' that the duel between free aesthetic experience and didactic instruction in art history can be seen.

The same complexity and ambiguity was detected in the scripts of 1922 and 1970. On the one hand, the Museum designed a script that was based on self-explanatory artworks and a formalistic aesthetic experience. Here the user was imagined as a universal contemplative eye. On the other hand, educational practices were also developed and the social role of the museum explored. This entailed a projected user who was conceptualised as passively receiving knowledge from the museum and the objects within it. Common to both scripts, however, was that through art, users would become enlightened. The two scripts in 1922 and 1970 revealed how the art experience gradually became more based on formalistic aesthetics, where contemplation and purely visual interaction between the user and the artwork were in focus. Both scripts demonstrated how architecture and national symbols were toned down, and the art was increasingly communicated in an abstract time and placeless universe, lacking concrete

temporal or spatial references. In 1922, we saw how this was still done with the aim of engaging the general public, but during the second half of the twentieth century, the profile of the projected user was increasingly established as a well-educated and aesthetic user. This was a valid user profile since, as Bente Skovegaard argued, this group will be enriched after the museum visit and contribute in different ways to society. The rationale is therefore that despite the fact that it is only certain people who use the museum, their experience will be evident in the public debate and, through this, the museum becomes beneficial for all (Skovgaard, 1969).

But scripts are more than just the architecture, collection space and display strategies. Both the 1922 and 1970 scripts revealed how social and formal educational practices developed at SMK. This means that a move towards presenting a more exclusive museum script in the collections and practices that applied more didactic methods existed simultaneously. This can be seen as a new version of the duel between free aesthetic experience and didactic instruction in art history. Before, in 1827 and 1896, there was a more initiative-driven and aesthetic hang versus a strict chronological arrangement of the artworks. In 1922 and 1970, contemplation of the artwork in the collection was seen as primarily a decoding of the formal aspects of the work. Therefore, the hang was structured around formalist qualities, while chronology, to a certain extent and especially in 1970, was loosened. The formalistic engagement with art was based on an understanding of the artwork as self-explanatory and therefore it was up to the individuals themselves to experience the work. In contrast to this stood the didactic social and educational programmes, which were primarily based on the history of art and thus structured around the development of art history. Here talks and lectures explained the 'correct' way of engaging with the artworks.

Both the didactic and the formalistic approaches were reflected in the self-practices that formed the projected user profile in 1922 and 1970. The didactic approach seen in the social and educational programmes was based on the concept of 'Bildung', which by the late nineteenth century had become a set of rules and norms that were associated with good and educated behaviour. However, in the collections it was a contemplative and meditative self-practice that was inscribed into the script. As Duncan reminded us, the formalistic approach was a new way of accessing a universal moral realm (2004: 109). Through contemplative engagement with abstract forms, the self could be formed

in a new way. Compared to the self-practice in 'Bildung', where the subject enters into sociality with inspiration from, for example, the Greek ideal type, self-practice in 1970 was shaped around an individual who looked within herself and found a connection with universality in the formal language of the artwork.

But neither the self-explanatory understanding of art nor the exclusive projected user profile were accepted by society in 1970. Archive material suggests that the relationship between the Museum and the public was tense. The Museum was accused of being introverted and self-satisfied, and in return, the Museum accused the public of being not accustomed to the rules and regulations of the Museum, and underlined that both the public and politicians were ignorant of the real purpose of the SMK. As the research has shown, this frustration was founded in a discrepancy in the way the script had been designed, the expectations the public and politicians had for the script, and the performance of the script by the real users of the Museum.

It was therefore not surprising to find a script in 1998/2006 that had openness as its central concept. But it was not just the reactions to the 1970 script that caused the changes; a variety of other factors, such as the development of the experience economy and the theoretical deconstruction of the grand narratives of art history, also contributed to the initiation of the new script. SMK started to widen its projected user profiles, seek knowledge about the real users and offer more interpretative material in the collection. The result was a script that signalled not one art history but several, and the eclectic hang underlined that there were many ways of engaging with art. In addition, with the introduction of interpretative material, the script moved away from the self-explanatory understanding of art. As seen in the other scripts, there were, however, also contradictions within this script. Despite the intention of openness, which was signalled both in many of the museum practices and in the articulations of the staff, the script was also characterised by an authoritarian voice, and many of the new initiatives were isolated in specific zones or framed within a traditional view of art history.

This means that in relation to self-practices, the way that the projected user was expected to educate herself during the museum visit was once again ambiguous. In some areas of the Museum, silence, timelessness and piousness dictated the visual interaction between user and artwork, inspiring a self-practice based on the

contemplative model of 1970. In contrast to this, the projects in U.l.k. and Børnenes Kunstmuseum encouraged a far freer self-practice. Here meaning and knowledge were co-created with the users, inviting a new kind of self-practice where personal interpretation came to be the main focus. This was further underlined by the clear separation of the two self-practices in the layout of the museum: The experience economy ruled at ground level, with a shop, a café, temporary exhibitions etc., and it was here the various active users, such as youths and children, had their specific zones. The other self-practice was upstairs in the galleries. Here silent contemplation reigned and despite efforts to introduce interpretative material and experimental display strategies, the overall user was comprehended as well-educated and ready for a contemplative art experience.

However, the users' relationship with the museum script proved to be full of discrepancies, redefinitions and displacements. As the analysis of the performance of the real users demonstrated, the visitors' use of the collection was multifaceted, heterogeneous and highly personal, thus in many ways dissimilar to the projected user imagined by the Museum. Through cautious interpretation of observations and scrutinising the recorded conversations, it was seen how a reframing occurred of the essential functions of the art museum, such as the aesthetic experience and the concept of 'Bildung'.

Detailed observations were used as a technique to determine what was going on and how the users were organised. Looking at navigation, time/pace and focus, it was concluded that the users' performance, at least from the perspective of observation, was characterised by being socially negotiated both with companions and with other users in the space. Moreover, the bodily conduct appeared somewhat random or based on initial curiosity; it consisted mostly of walking, interrupted only by quick stops and brief focus on the artworks. However, it was also seen that both objects and architecture played an active role in determining users' movement and focus. This required an acknowledgement of the agency of the non-human actors, identifying them not as passive elements, subject only to the users' decoding, but as actors in their own right. Moreover, the observations proved that the performance was not always carried out as rational networks based on cohesive relations, but also as meshworks, as Ingold

describes, where shifting attention and distractions influenced the performance (2012: 15).

The findings of the observations were tested against existing visitor surveys conducted in the previous eight years by the Museum as well as by external companies. The results of this review were written into the analysis of the qualitative data as it unfolded, confirming, for example, the social nature of a museum visit. However, in order to investigate the performance of the users in depth, and to understand the social interaction more thoroughly, audio recordings of their conversations were carried out. Here the data revealed how the social nature of the museum was practised and generated findings that demonstrated just how personal, heterogeneous and complex the users' performances were.

The data showed how users presented themselves to each other through interaction with the work. This was done via specific speech genres, certain ways of interaction and different type of utterances. These Bakhtinian concepts helped nuance and detail the study of the conversations. Each recorded pair demonstrated one or more themes that, like threads, ran through their conversations, giving them their own individual characteristics – a speech genre.

This was supplemented with a unique way of interaction in each pair. Most would confirm the other's values and comprehension, but many also explored and investigated the views of the other. Only a few disagreed. Both the speech genre and the confirming and exploratory nature of the museum conversations underlined the importance of establishing and stabilising a social entity and coherent connection to the other during the visit.

This was further explored in the six types of utterances developed on the basis of this research: formal, art historical, analytic, personal, emotional and practical. The utterances were all based in social negotiations; even the emotional judgements were often constructed between the users. This led to an exploration of so-called empirical aesthetics, where new concepts of aesthetic categories were added to more classic ones. Here a presentation of Sianne Ngai's concepts of 'interesting', 'cute' and 'zany' were supplemented by new categories found in the data, such as 'strange' and 'funny'.

Finally, along the analysis of the aesthetic categories, the findings were compared with the answers from the questionnaires from the front hall, as well as from the recordings. It became evident that the social nature of the museum visit was integral to the contemplative and reflective motivation that many of the users stated was an important aspect of the museum visit. This led to an exploration of how the findings could be considered in relation to the users' self-practice, thereby reflecting on the goals and the rewards users gain from their museum experience. Drawing on Hammershøj's updated version of 'Bildung', it was seen how 'attentional' walking and personal and interest-based conversations could be seen as part of a self-forming project. In the traditional 'Bildung' process, the individual would be attracted to beauty and immerse herself in the artworks. However, as Hammershøj explained, today it is personal interest and a motivation to become a unique individual that drives the self-formation process. Here the social dimension is important, since it is the response to what an individual finds interesting that is central. Applying this to the present research's findings of a social aesthetic experience, where reflection and contemplation are coupled with social utterances, it suddenly makes sense why the aesthetic experience changes and why new aesthetic categories are being formed.

Comparing the de-scription with the performance of the real users showed several complex relationships between the two. The most concrete discrepancy revealed itself in the initial observations. The museum script in the galleries was primarily designed as an individual experience. A solitary, contemplative and silent experience was envisaged, however, one which remained, as Akrich would describe, a 'chimera' (1992: 208): it never came into being. On the contrary, adult users' experiences in the galleries were highly dependent on their companion. It was evident from observations, recordings and questionnaires that this was not just a practical circumstance for their visit: it was essential to the whole purpose for visiting and was fundamentally constitutive for their experience. Throughout their visit, adults interacted and negotiated their movement, focus and aesthetic judgements, shaping their experience together.

The museum script also predicts that users will have a specific focus on artworks. These are carefully hung at eye-level, well-spaced on the wall and generally placed on white backgrounds in order to minimise any visual noise that could disturb the immersive experience that users are imagined to have. However, the empirical studies

showed how users moved swiftly through the galleries, gazing at artworks while they walked, stopping only momentarily at works that attracted them. Their movements proved difficult to predict. In the investigation of the observations, this was related to Ingold's concepts of meshworks and 'attentional walking'. Where the museum script imagined the users as moving intentionally from work to work, with a specific aim, the real users employed a far more creative bodily conduct, which, based on social negotiations, improvisations and curiosity, unfolded spontaneously as they moved through the galleries.

The way of engaging with art also stands as a discrepancy when comparing the museum script with the real users' performance. The hang, the names of the galleries and the content of the wall texts revealed how focus is placed on the art historical relationship between works in the museum script. However, both observations and recordings showed how rarely users made these connections. Instead, they considered the artworks that attracted them on impulse as individual pieces and perceived, judged and interacted with them one by one. However, relationships and connections were formed in the galleries. From one artwork a whole range of personal associations and private histories unfolded. Some touched on art historical issues; some did not. As demonstrated in the recordings, artworks function as wormholes, springboards for conversations where memories and stories are shared and values and opinions negotiated. This means that while SMK imagines the connections to be between the works, users focus on the connections between themselves and the individual work.

The performance of the real users also showed that the interaction between users and artworks is different from what the Museum envisaged. Instead of the contemplative or art historical approach on which the museum script was founded, users' conversations proved to be very diverse. As both the different speech genres and utterances demonstrated, art history was used as a strategy to engage with the artworks but never stood alone. The different utterances were all interconnected; they were highly subjective as well as negotiated socially between companions. The utterances revealed, amongst other things, complex approaches to and redefinitions of traditional categories within the art museum. For example, formal utterances, which traditionally constitute the solitary and contemplative aesthetic experience, attested an inherent social dimension. This, along with new aesthetic categories such as 'interesting', 'strange' or

'funny' that emerged from the data, suggested how social interaction has become fundamental to the aesthetic experience. In other words, the conversations showed how formalistic contemplation was negotiated between the users, while value judgements such as 'interesting' defy an actual evaluation, instead displacing the judgement to a social area, where it can be debated.

Comparing these strategies with the purpose of the museum as it was envisaged by the 2006 museum script enabled a further understanding of the complexity of the museum space. Where the museum mainly embraces knowledge, intention, structure and solitary contemplation, most users practise 'attentional walking', spontaneous attraction, entanglement and social negotiation. From a different perspective, it can be said that the Museum develops a script for 'Bildung', a script where the enlightenment and education of users is in focus. However, the users themselves are engaged in a self-formation process where personal responses to the artworks and the dialogue with the other stand as the overall purpose of the museum experience.

Appendices

1. Statens Museum for Kunst, Visitor numbers 1830–2011
2. Consent form, audio recording (translated)
3. Questionnaire, audio recording (translated)
4. Exit survey, Front hall (translated)
5. Information sheet for audio recordings (translated)
6. Information sheet for exit survey, Front hall (translated)
7. Overview of participants, Audio recordings

Appendix 1. Visitor numbers 1830–2011

Number of Visitors 1830 - 1945

Number of Visitors 1952 - 2011
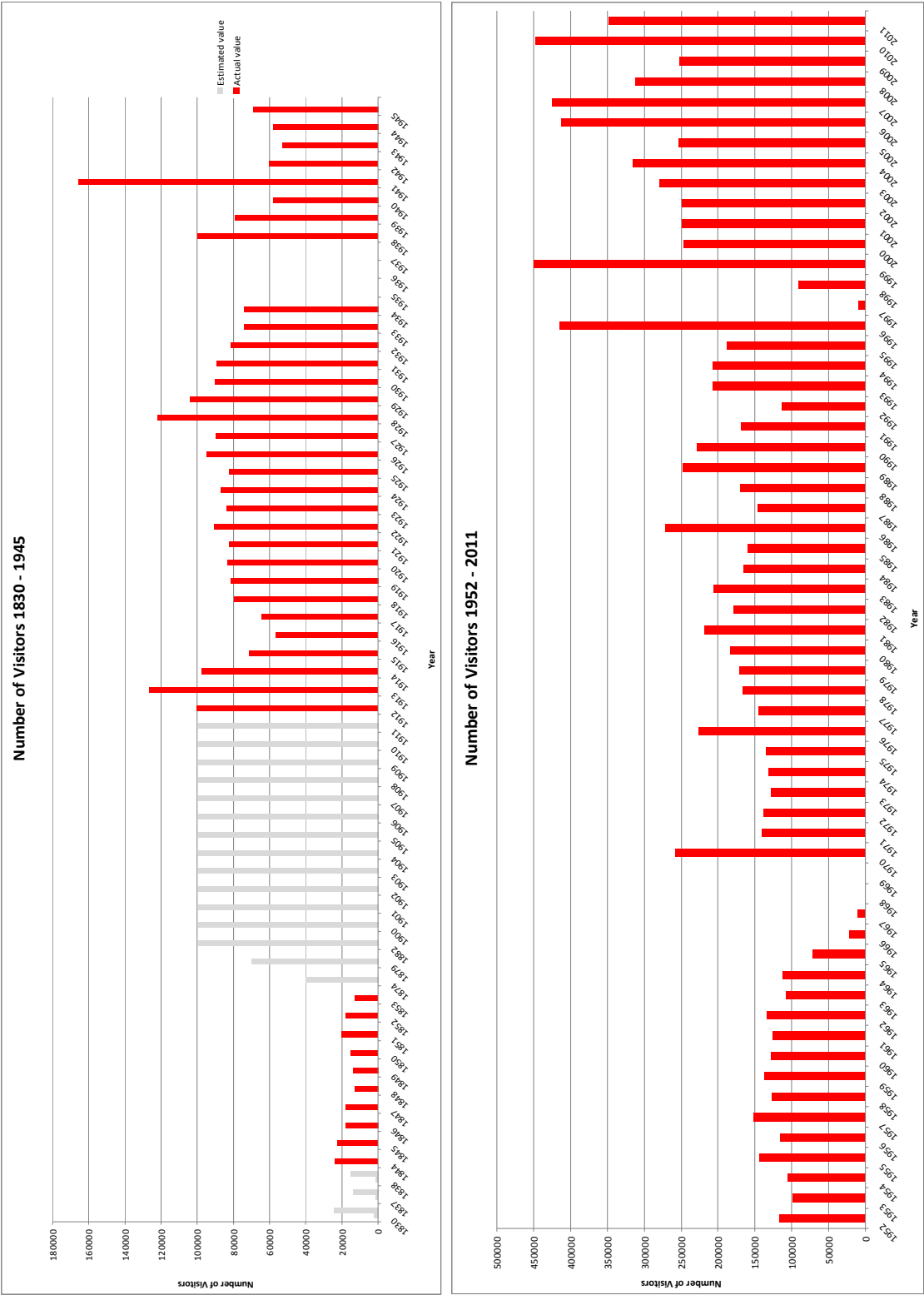
Appendix 2. Consent form, audio recording (translated)

Questionnaire
To be signed before participating in audio recordings

Consent form for adults

Project title: Museum Dialogues: An investigation of adults' experiences in the permanent collections at Statens Museum for Kunst

Material gathered as part of this study will be treated as confidential and securely stored. All participants will remain anonymous.

I have read and understood the information sheet.	Yes	No
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and they were answered to my satisfaction.	Yes	No
I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time.	Yes	No
I agree to being recorded and my words being used for research purposes.	Yes	No
I agree that my actual words can be used in any subsequent publications or use, including publication on the World Wide Web (Internet). I understand that my real name will not be used or attributed to any words that I have said.	Yes	No

Name (PRINT) _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Please contact me if you have any more questions.

Mette Houlberg Rung
Statens Museum for Kunst
T: 33841404
E: mette.houlberg@smk.dk

Appendix 3. Questionnaire, audio recording (translated)

Questionnaire
To be completed by the visitors after their recorded tour in the collection

1. General information

1a. What is your age?
(1) ⃝   18–29
(2) ⃝   30–45
(3) ⃝   46–65
(4) ⃝   over 65

1b. What is your post code?
(1) ⃝   1000–2500
(2) ⃝   2600–2791
(3) ⃝   2800–2990
(4) ⃝   3000–3660
(5) ⃝   3670–3790
(6) ⃝   4000–4690
(7) ⃝   4700–4990
(8) ⃝   5000–5985
(9) ⃝   6000–6990
(10) ⃝   7000–8990
(11) ⃝   9000–9990
(12) ⃝   Other country _____

1c. Are you a man or a woman?
(1) ⃝   Woman
(2) ⃝   Man

1d. Whom did you visit the museum with?
(1) ⃝   Partner / Spouse
(2) ⃝   Girlfriend / Boyfriend
(3) ⃝   Mother / Father
(4) ⃝   Son / Daughter
(5) ⃝   Friend
(6) ⃝   Other _____

1e. Why did you choose to visit the museum with another adult?
_____
_____
_____

1f. What is your educational background?
(1) ⃝   Folkeskole
(2) ⃝   Studentereksamen/HF/Handelsskole/teknisk skole
(3) ⃝   Erhversfaglig uddannelse
(4) ⃝   Kort videregående uddannelse
(5) ⃝   Mellemlang videregående uddannelse
(6) ⃝   Lang videregående uddannelse
(7) ⃝ Other _____

1g. What is your job? _____

2. Your Visit to Statens Museum for Kunst

2a. How many times have you visited Statens Museum for Kunst in the last year, besides your visit today?
(1)　ⅰ　0 times
(2)　ⅰ　1–2 times
(3)　ⅰ　3–5 times
(4)　ⅰ　6–10 times
(5)　ⅰ　More than ten times

2b. Why did you come to the museum today?
Please select one to three main reasons for visiting the museum today and number them with 1, 2 and 3, according to what reason was the most important. If you can only choose one or two, that is fine.

(1)　__　To learn more about art
(2)　__　To be social
(3)　__　To enjoy the artworks
(4)　__　To eat lunch or have a coffee
(5)　__　To see an event on 'Scenen'
(6)　__　We were in the neighbourhood
(7)　__　To see the architecture
(8)　__　To see the temporary exhibition
(9)　__　Other _____
Comments _____
_____
_____

2c. What is your overall impression of Statens Museum for Kunst?
(1)　ⅰ　Very Good
(2)　ⅰ　Good
(3)　ⅰ　Neutral
(4)　ⅰ　Bad
(5)　ⅰ　Very bad
Comments _____
_____
_____

2d. How would you describe a good museum experience?
Please select one to three statements below and number them with 1, 2 and 3, according to what is the most important. If you can only choose one or two, that is fine.
(1)　__　It is fun
(2)　__　It gives new perspectives on life
(3)　__　I learn about art history
(4)　__　I have good discussions with the person/people I am with
(5)　__　It is provoking and challenging
(6)　__　It is stimulating
(7)　__　I have a quiet, reflective time
(8)　__　I learn about contemporary issues
(9)　__　I become inspired to do my own creative work
(10)　__　It is a good place to be creative, such as drawing, painting, participating in workshops
(11)　__　Other _____

Comments _____
_____
_____

2e. What should a good art museum do?

Please select one or two statements below and number them with 1 and 2 according to what is the most important.

(1)   __ Challenge fixed ideas
(2)   __ Engage in contemporary debates
(3)   __ Teach art history
(4)   __ Be relaxing
(5)   __ Be a place for contemplation and immersion
(6)   __ Display beautiful artworks
(7)   __ Other _____

Comments _____
_____
_____
_____

3. The Modern Section

3a. Which part of the section did you find most interesting?
(1)   i   Large contemporary room, Danish painting and sculpture after 1960 (201)
(2)   i   Baselitz – Brandes (202)
(3)   i   Nolde – Matisse (203)
(4)   i   International modernism 1900–1930 (204)
(5)   i   Danish modernism 1900–1960 (205)
(6)   i   Minimalism (206)
(7)   i   Linien II and concrete art (207)
(8)   i   COBRA (208)
(9)   i   The political material (209)
(10)   i   The inner material (210)
(11)   i   The personal material (211)

Why? Was it because of the artworks, their hanging, the interpretative material, the conversation you had, the atmosphere in the room etc.?
_____
_____
_____

3b. Which part of the section did you find least interesting?
(1)   i   Large contemporary room, Danish painting and sculpture after 1960 (201)
(2)   i   Baselitz – Brandes (202)
(3)   i   Nolde – Matisse (203)
(4)   i   International modernism 1900–1930 (204)
(5)   i   Danish modernism 1900–1960 (205)
(6)   i   Minimalism (206)
(7)   i   Linien II and concrete art (207)
(8)   i   COBRA (208)
(9)   i   The political material (209)
(10)   i   The inner material (210)
(11)   i   The personal material (211)

Why? Was it because of the artworks, their hanging, the interpretative material, the conversation you had, the atmosphere in the room etc.?
_____
_____
_____
_____

3c. Did you read any wall panels?
(1) i Yes
(2) i No

3d. Which wall panels did you read?
(1) i Large contemporary room, Danish painting and sculpture after 1960 (202)
(2) i Baselitz – Brandes (202)
(3) i Nolde – Matisse (203)
(4) i International modernism 1900–1930 (204)
(5) i Danish modernism 1900–1960 (205)
(6) i Minimalism (206)
(7) i Linien II and concrete art (207)
(8) i COBRA (208)
(9) i The political material (209)
(10) i The inner material (210)
(11) i The personal material (211)

3e. Did the wall panels help you to engage with the artworks?
(1) i Yes, a lot
(2) i Yes a little bit
(3) i Neutral
(4) i No

3f. Did you read the text for specific artworks?
(1) i Yes
(2) i No

3g. Which texts did you read?
(1) i Det personlige materiale (211): Kirsten Justensen, Omstændigheder
(2) i Det personlige materiale (211): Claus Carstensen, Nom de Guerre
(3) i Det indre materiale (210): Wilhelm Freddie, En families genvorligheder
(4) i Det indre materiale (210): Asger Jorn, Forår
(5) i Det indre materiale (210): Michael Kvium, Rodeoscene
(6) i Det politiske materiale (209): Lene Adler Petersen og Bjørn Nørgaard, Den kvindelige Kristus
(7) i Det politiske materiale (209): Ursula Reuter Christensen, En stemme der aldrig forstummer
(8) i Cobra (208): Asger Jorn, Røde Synes/Vision Rouge
(9) i Cobra (208): Nicolai Abildgaard, Ymer dier koen Ød
(10) i Minimalisme (206): Gerhard Richter, Gråt Spejl
(11) i Minimalisme (206): Donald Jodd, uden title
(12) i Minimalisme (206): Robert Smithson, Eight-Part-Piece
(13) i Minimalisme (206): C.W. Eckersberg, Liniærperspektiv
(14) i Dansk Modernisme (205): Wilhelm Lundstrøm, Det andet bud
(15) i Dansk Modernisme (205): Jens Adolf Jerichau, Evas Skabelse
(16) i Dansk Modernisme (205): Edward Weie, Faun og Nymfe
(17) i Dansk Modernisme (205): Erik Hoppe, Figur på en plæne
(18) i International Modernisme (204): Georges Braque, Træerne
(19) i International Modernisme (204): Fernand Leger, Kvinde med Vase
(20) i Matisse og Nolde (203): Henri Matisse: Portræt af Madame Matisse
(21) i Matisse og Nolde (203): Emil Nolde, Nadveren
(22) i Brandes og Baselitz (202): Peter Brandes, Die Winterreise
(23) i Brandes og Baselitz (202): Gerhard Richter, Guilderstern

3h. Did the text for specific artworks help you to engage with the artworks?
(1) i Yes, a lot
(2) i Yes a little bit
(3) i Neutral
(4) i No

3i. Do you like that older and newer works of art are shown together?
(1)   i   Yes, a lot
(2)   i   Yes a little bit
(3)   i   Neutral
(4)   i   No

Why?   _____
                    _____

3j. Do you have any suggestions to improve the text in the exhibition space?
_____
_____
_____
_____

3k. What do you generally think about text in the exhibition space?
_____
_____
_____
_____

3l. How do you engage with an artwork?
(you can tick several boxes if you like)
(1)   i   I look at it for a long time
(2)   i   I read the interpretative material
(3)   i   I discuss it with my companion
(4)   i   I use my art historical knowledge
(5)   i   I use what I know about history
(6)   i   I use contemporary debates
(7)   i   I use my personal background such as where I have lived and the places I have been
(8)   i   I use my own personal emotional experiences
(9)   i   Other _____
Comments_____
_____
_____
_____

3m. What artwork did you enjoy the most and why?
_____
_____
_____

3n. What qualities does a good artwork have for you?
(1)   i   It is beautiful
(2)   i   It is well made
(3)   i   It provokes me
(4)   i   It gives me a new perspective on an issue
(5)   i   It breaks with the art historical tradition
(6)   i   Other_____

3o. Did you hear the music in the concrete room (207)?
(1)   i   Yes
(2)   i   No

If yes, did you find it useful in your engagement with the display?
_____
_____
_____

3p. Please describe your experience of the modern section of Statens Museum for Kunst.
_____
_____

4. This study

4a. How did you feel about being recorded?
(1)   ⅰ   I forgot the microphone was there
(2)   ⅰ   I spoke less than I normally would
(3)   ⅰ   I spoke more than I normally would
(4)   ⅰ   I went more quickly through the displays than I would have done without being recorded
(5)   ⅰ   I went more slowly through the displays than I would have done without being recorded

Comments_____
_____
_____
_____

4b. In January next year, four 1-hour group interviews will take place. The aim is to talk about what adults experience in an art museum and how they engage with artworks. Would you be interested in participating in a group interview in January?

(1)   ⅰ   Yes
(2)   ⅰ   No

If yes, please provide contact details. Contact details will only be used to inform you about time and place of the group interview. Full confidentiality is promised and contact details will be deleted after the interviews. Names will not be used in publications.

Name:
Address:
Phone:
Email:

Appendix 4. Exit survey, Front hall (translated)

Questionnaire
To be completed by the visitors before leaving the museum

Your visit at Statens Museum for Kunst

1a. How many times have you visited Statens Museum for Kunst in the last year, besides your visit today?
(1) ❑ 0 times
(2) ❑ 1–2 times
(3) ❑ 3–5 times
(4) ❑ 6–10 times
(5) ❑ More than ten times

1b. Why did you come to the museum today?
Please select one to three main reasons for visiting the museum today and number them with 1, 2 and 3, according to what reason was the most important. If you can only choose one or two, that is fine.
(1) __To learn more about art
(2) __To be social
(3) __ To enjoy the artworks
(4) __ To eat lunch or have a coffee
(5) __ To see an event on 'Scenen'
(6) __ We were in the neighbourhood
(7) __ To see the architecture
(8) __ To see the temporary exhibition
(9) __ Other _____

1c. How would you describe a good museum experience?

Please select one to three statements below and number them with 1, 2 and 3, according to what is the most important. If you can only choose one or two, that is fine.
(1)   __ It is fun
(2)   __ It gives new perspectives on life
(3)   __ I learn about art history
(4)   __ I have good discussions with the person/people I am with
(5)   __ It is provoking and challenging
(6)   __ It is stimulating
(7)   __ I have a quiet, reflective time
(8)   __ I learn about contemporary issues
(9)   __ I become inspired to do my own creative work
(10)   __ It is a good place to be creative, such as drawing, painting, participating in workshops
(11)   __ Other _____

1d. What should a good art museum do?

Please select one or two statements below and number them with 1 and 2 according to what is the most important.
(1)   __ Challenge fixed ideas
(2)   __ Engage in contemporary debates
(3)   __ Teach art history
(4)   __ Be relaxing
(5)   __ Be a place for contemplation and immersion
(6)   __ Display beautiful artworks
(7)   __ Other _____

2a. Which part of the collection you visit today?
(1) ❑ Moderne samling
(2) ❑ Ældre dansk
(3) ❑ Ældre udenlandsk

Comment_____
_____
_____

2b. How long did you spend in the collections?
(1) ❑ 0–30 minutes   (4) ❑ 2–3 hours
(2) ❑ 30–60 minutes   (5) ❑ more than 3 hours
(3) ❑ 1–2 hours

2c. Which part of the collection did you find MOST interesting?
(1) ❑ Moderne samling
(2) ❑ Ældre dansk
(3) ❑ Ældre udenlandsk

Note down an area which you found particularly interesting.
_____
_____
_____

Why?
(1) ❑ Because of the artworks   (5) ❑ Because of the discussion I had with my companion
(2) ❑ Because of the theme   (6) ❑ Other _____
(3) ❑ Because of the hanging
(4) ❑ Because of the texts and the quotes

2d. What part of the collection did you find the LEAST interesting?
(1) ❑ Moderne samling
(2) ❑ Ældre dansk
(3) ❑ Ældre udenlandsk

Note down an area which you did not find particularly interesting.
_____
_____
_____

Why?
(1) ❑ Because of the artworks   (5) ❑ Because of the discussion I had with my companion
(2) ❑ Because of the theme   (6) ❑ Other _____
(3) ❑ Because of the hanging
(4) ❑ Because of the texts and the quotes

2e. Did you read any of the wall texts?
(1) ❑ Yes   (2) ❑ No

2f. Can you remember what they were about? Note down cues.
_____
_____
_____
_____

2g. Did the wall texts help you to experience the art works??
(1) ❑ yes, a lot   (3) ❑ Neutral
(2) ❑ Yes, a little (4) ❑ No

2h. Did you read any of the small texts about specific art works? (printed on plastic cards)
(1) ❏ Yes   (2)   ❏ No

2i. Can you remember what they were about? Note down cues.
_____
_____
_____

 2j. Did the wall texts help you to experience the artworks?
(1) ❏ Yes, a lot   (3) ❏ Neutral
(2) ❏ Yes, a little   (4) ❏ No

2k. Did you notice any of the quotes on the walls in the collection? (fx in National identity)
(1) ❏ Yes   (2)   ❏ No

2l. Did the quotes help you to experience the artworks?
(1) ❏ Yes, a lot   (3) ❏ Neutral
(2) ❏ Yes, a little   (4) ❏ No

2m. Do you think that text in general improves your experience of artworks?
(1) ❏ Yes, a lot   (3) ❏ Neutral
(2) ❏ Yes, a little   (4) ❏ No

Why? _____
_____
_____

2n Did you notice that new and old works of art are shown together? (fx in National identity)
(1) ❏ Yes   (2)   ❏ No

2o. Do you like when new and older art works are shown together?
(1) ❏ Yes, a lot   (3) ❏ Neutral
(2) ❏ Yes, a little   (4) ❏ No

Why? _____
_____
_____

2p. How do you engage with an artwork?
(you can tick several boxes if you like)
(1) ❏ I look at it for a long time
(2) ❏ I read the interpretative material
(3) ❏ I discuss it with my companion
(4) ❏ I use my art historical knowledge
(5) ❏ I use what I know about history
(6) ❏ I use contemporary debates
(7) ❏ I use my personal background such as where I have lived and the places I have been
(8) ❏ I use my own personal emotional experiences
(9) ❏ Other _____

2q. What artwork did you enjoy the most and why?
_____
_____
_____

2r. What qualities does a good artwork have for you?
(1) ❑ It is beautiful
(2) ❑ It is well made
(3) ❑ It provokes me
(4) ❑ It gives me a new perspective on an issue
(5) ❑ It breaks with the art historical tradition
(6) ❑ Other_____

<div style="text-align:center">

General information

</div>

3a. What is your age?
(1) ❑ 18–29
(2) ❑ 30–45
(3) ❑ 46–65
(4) ❑ over 65

3b. What is your post code?
(1) ❑ 1000–2500
(2) ❑ 2600–2791
(3) ❑ 2800–2990
(4) ❑ 3000–3660
(5) ❑ 3670–3790
(6) ❑ 4000–4690
(7) ❑ 4700–4990
(8) ❑ 5000–5985
(9) ❑ 6000–6990
(10) ❑ 7000–8990
(11) ❑ 9000–9990
(12) ❑ Other country _____

3c. Are you a man or a woman?
(1) ❑ Woman
(2) ❑ Man

3d. Whom did you visit the museum with?
(1) ❑ Alone
(2) ❑ Partner / Spouse
(3) ❑ Girlfriend / Boyfriend
(4) ❑ Mother / Father
(5) ❑ Son / Daughter
(6) ❑ Friend
(7) ❑ Other _____

3e. What is your educational background?
(1) ❑ Folkeskole
(2) ❑ Studentereksamen/HF/Handelsskole/teknisk skole
(3) ❑ Erhversfaglig uddannelse
(4) ❑ Kort videregående uddannelse
(5) ❑ Mellemlang videregående uddannelse
(6) ❑ Lang videregående uddannelse
(7) ❑ Other _____

3f. What is your job? _____

Appendix 5. Information sheet for audio recordings

Information Sheet for Participants
To be handed out before audio recording

Project Title: Museum Dialogues: An investigation of adults' experiences in the permanent collections at Statens Museum for Kunst (working title)

Contact Address: Mette Houlberg Rung, Statens Museum for Kunst, Sølvgade 48-50, 1307 København K.

T: 33748414
Email: mette.houlberg@smk.dk

Date:

Dear participant,

I am very grateful that you are willing to take the time to participate in the research project 'Museum Dialogues'. I would like to take this opportunity to tell you more about the nature of the project, who I am and why I am undertaking this research, and how you were selected for the project. I would also like to inform you about how the data you supply to us will be used and the protections for your privacy and confidentiality that are in place.

What is the project/survey for? To develop a better understanding of what adults experience when they visit the permanent collection here at Statens Museum for Kunst and how they engage with the artworks. The results will be used in a PhD thesis and in the continuous process of improving the displays and the interpretative material at Statens Museum for Kunst. If you wish to know more about the study, more information is available on www.smk.dk

How you were selected? You were selected because you and/or your companion are an adult between 30 and 65 years old and are visiting the Modern Collection at Statens Museum for Kunst.

Your role in completing the project/survey. I will ask you to wear a small microphone and transmitter and record your conversations as you walk through this section of the museum. You can talk about anything you like, take as much or as little time as you wish and behave as you would normally. There are no good or bad ways of engaging with the displays, and the main aim is to get a genuine picture of how adults interact with the displays and how their conversations are. The perfect recording would be one where you forgot you were wearing the microphone. I will be observing you from a distance, logging your path though the displays.

Who is doing the survey? I am conducting this research as part of my PhD studies at University of Leicester and on behalf of Statens Museum for Kunst. If you have any questions regarding this please contact Dr Vivien Golding, University of Leicester

or Elisabeth Cederstrøm, Statens Museum for Kunst
. Full contact details can be found on
www.smk.dk/mettehoulbergrung

Obtaining informed consent. Your participation in the project/survey is entirely
voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the project at any point. If you are
uncertain or uncomfortable about any aspect of your participation, please contact me to
discuss concerns or request clarification on any aspect of the study.

Protecting your confidentiality. Any information you supply will be treated
confidentially. All participants will be kept anonymous in any written assignments or
publications and the recordings and questionnaires will be securely stored. Every effort
will be made to keep participants' anonymity by giving a code number.
After your visit to the Modern section, I will ask you to fill out a questionnaire. Here
you can, if you are interested, write your name and contact details if you wish to be part
of a group interview in January 2008. Your name and contact details will deleted after
the group interview and not be used in any published material.

Thank you very much for participating.

With best wishes,

Signature

Appendix 6. Information sheet for exit survey, Front hall

Information Sheet for participants
To be handed out with the questionnaire

Project Title: Museum Experiences: An investigation of adults' experiences in the permanent collections at Statens Museum for Kunst (working title)

Contact Address: Mette Houlberg Rung, Statens Museum for Kunst, Sølvgade 48-50, 1307 København K.

T: 33748414
Email: mette.houlberg@smk.dk

Date:

Dear participant,

I am very grateful that you are willing to take the time to participate in the research project 'Museum Experiences'. I would like to take this opportunity to tell you more about the nature of the project, who I am and why I am undertaking this research, and how you were selected for the project. I would also like to inform you about how the data you supply to us will be used and the protections for your privacy and confidentiality that are in place.

What is the project/survey for? To develop a better understanding of what adults experience when they visit the permanent collection here at Statens Museum for Kunst and how they engage with the artworks. The results will be used in a PhD thesis and in the continuous process of improving the displays and the interpretative material at Statens Museum for Kunst. If you wish to know more about the study, more information is available on www.smk.dk

How you were selected? You were selected because you are an adult between 30 and 65 years old and are visiting the Modern Collection at Statens Museum for Kunst.

Who is doing the survey? I am conducting this research as part of my PhD studies at University of Leicester and on behalf of Statens Museum for Kunst. If you have any questions regarding this, please contact Dr Vivien Golding, University of Leicester vmg4@leicester.ac.uk or Elisabeth Cederstrøm, Statens Museum for Kunst Elisabeth.c@smk.dk, Full contact details can be found on www.smk.dk/mettehoulbergrung

Obtaining informed consent. Your participation in the project/survey is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the project at any point. If you are uncertain or uncomfortable about any aspect of your participation, please contact me to discuss concerns or request clarification on any aspect of the study.

Protecting your confidentiality. Any information you supply will be treated confidentially. All participants will be kept anonymous in any written assignments or publications and the recordings and questionnaires will be securely stored. Every effort will be made to keep participants' anonymity by giving a code number.

After you have filled out the questionnaire, I will ask you if you are interested in being part of a group interview. You are welcome to note down our name and contact details on a separate piece of paper.

Thank you very much for participating.

With best wishes,

Signature

Appendix 7. Overview of participants, Audio recordings

	Pair 1		Pair 2		Pair 3	
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	Male	Female
Age	46-65	46-65	46-65	46-65	46-65	46-65
Relation	Friend	Friend	Friend	Friend	Partner	Partner
Education	Long higher education	Medium higher education	Medium higher education	Long higher education	Medium higher education	Vocational (Erhvervsfaglig uddannelse)
Prior visits	0 the past year	1-2 the past year	1-2 the past year	1-2 the past year	10+ the past year	6-10 the past year
Motivation	To be social, to see a temporary exhibition.	To learn about art, to be social, to enjoy the artworks.	To be social, to enjoy the artworks.	To be social, to enjoy the artworks.	To learn about art, to enjoy the artworks.	We were in the neighbourhood.
What is a good museum experience?	I have good discussion with the person I am with, it gives new perspectives on life, it is provoking and challenging.	It gives new perspectives on life, I have good discussion with the person I am with, I have time to reflect.	It gives new perspectives on life, I have good discussion with the person I am with, it is stimulating.	It gives new perspectives on life, I have good discussion with the person I am with, I learn about contemporary issues.	It gives new perspectives on life, I have time to reflect, I become inspired to do my own creative work.	I have time to reflect.
Time	33 min.		37 min.		53 min.	
Personal utterance	9.57		11.16		39.73	
Formal utterance	20.41		30.92		12.62	
Analytic utterance	26.38		23.76		34.81	
Value utterance	22.23		19.95		10.47	
Art historical without labels	15.1		14.83		16.65	
Art historical utterances	27.64		20.05		29.27	
Practical utterance	1.01		0.91		3.01	
Speech genre	Colours and materials		We are creative Shopping for a house		Art teacher oriented Home and family	
Interacting	Confirming: 26,69, Challenging: 23,60 Exploring: 54,75		Confirming:46,57, Exploring: 18,56		Confirming: 30,08, Challenging: 5,13, Exploring 34,03	

	Pair 4		Pair 5		Pair 6	
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female
Age	65+	46-65	30-45	30-45	30-45	46-65
Relation	Son in law	Mother in law	Sister	Sister	Mother	Daughter
Education	Vocational (Erhvervs-faglig uddannelse)	Long higher education	Medium higher education	Medium higher education	Medium higher education	Short higher education
Prior visits	1-2 the past year	1-2 the past year	0 the past year	0 the past year	0 the past year	0 the past year
Motivation	To enjoy the artworks	No answer	To be social, To enjoy the artworks, To learn about art	To be social, To enjoy the artworks	To enjoy the artworks, We were in the neighbourhood, To learn about art	To be social, To enjoy the artworks, To learn about art
What is a good museum experience?	I have time to reflect, it is stimulating, I learn about art history.	No answer	It is provoking and challenging, it is stimulating, I learn about art history.	It is stimulating, I become inspired to do my own creative work.	I learn about contemporary issues, it gives me new perspectives on life, I learn about art history.	It is fun, it gives new perspectives on life, I learn about art history.
Time	18 min.		32 min.		31 min.	
Personal utterance	38.39		35.66		4.23	
Formal utterance	11.92		27.19		19.44	
Analytic utterance	34.58		28.27		28.27	
Value utterance	42.66		33.56		63.08	
Art historical without labels	29.63		20.05		38.42	
Art historical utterances	45.48		55.61		57.81	
Practical utterance	4.49		8.12		5.35	
Speech genre	Neighbour's art collection Modern art, is it too radical?		Humour Identifying artists		Art is strange Emotional	
Interacting	Confirming 36,46, Challenging: 3,95, Exploring 14,52		Confirming 18,38, Challenging: 5,31, Exploring 4,75		Confirming 14,23, Exploring 9,80	

	Pair 7		Pair 8		Pair 9	
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Age	46-65	65+	46-65	46-65	46-65	46-65
Relation	Partner	Partner	Partner	Partner	Partner	Partner
Education	Elementary school (Folkeskole)	Medium higher education	Medium higher education	Medium higher education	Medium higher education	Vocational (Erhvervsfaglig uddannelse)
Prior visits	0 the past year	1-2 the past year	0 the past year	0 the past year	0 the past year	0 the past year
Motivation	To be social	To be social	To see a temporary exhibition, to be social, to enjoy the artworks.	To be social, to enjoy the artworks, to see a temporary exhibition.	To be social, to see a temporary exhibition, to enjoy the artworks.	We were in the neighbourhood, to learn about art, to be social.
What is a good museum experience?	It is funny	It gives new perspectives on life.	I have good discussion with the person I am with, I have time to reflect, it is stimulating.	I have good discussion with the person I am with, it gives new perspectives on life, I become inspired to do my own creative work.	It gives me new perspectives on life, I have time to reflect, I learn about contemporary issues, I become inspired to do my own creative work, I use it in my professional work.	It is funny, I learn about art history.
Time	18 min.		75 min.		24 min.	
Personal utterance	2.48		31.09		34.46	
Formal utterance	12.18		36.44		35.11	
Analytic utterance	28.75		47.32		45.07	
Value utterance	25.15		29.93		60.82	
Art historical without labels	21.81		42.66		30.24	
Art historical utterances	64.61		63.76		41.18	
Practical utterance	8.17		3.12		4.51	
Speech genre	Finding way Reading labels		Sharing knowledge Prior art experiences		Is this art? We like what we know	
Interacting	Confirming: 1,63, Challenging: 5,31, Exploring 1,15		Confirming: 33,53, Exploring 21,98		Confirming 22,0, Exploring 11,38	

	Pair 10		Pair 11		Pair 12	
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Age	46-65	46-65	46-65	46-65	30-45	30-45
Relation	Partner	Partner	Partner	Partner	Partner	Partner
Education	Medium higher education	Medium higher education	Medium higher education	Medium higher education	Medium higher education	Medium higher education
Prior visits	0 the past year	0 the past year	0 the past year	0 the past year	0 the past year	0 the past year
Motivation	No answer	No answer	To be social, to enjoy the artworks, to learn about art.	To be social, to enjoy the artworks, to see the architecture.	To be social, to enjoy the artworks, to see a temporary exhibition.	To be social, to enjoy the artworks, to see the architecture.
What is a good museum experience?	No answer	No answer	I learn about art history, it gives me new perspectives on life, I have good discussion with the person I am with.	I have good discussion with the person I am with, I have time to reflect, it gives new perspectives on life.	I have good discussion with the person I am with, it is stimulating, I have time to reflect.	It gives me new perspectives on life, I have good discussion with the person I am with, I have time to reflect.
Time	40 min.		39 min.		28 min.	
Personal utterance	26.15		20.01		34.97	
Formal utterance	14.58		25.42		44.08	
Analytic utterance	53.7		31.73		55.55	
Value utterance	0		31.67		14.31	
Art historical without labels	31.78		30.24		41.86	
Art historical utterances	49.81		55.94		54.47	
Practical utterance	0.48		5.14		0.81	
Speech genre	Philosophical Provoke each other		Doing the right thing		Prior museum visit New and old art	
Interacting	Confirming: 27,38, Challenging: 12,61, Exploring 24,47		Confirming: 8,42, Challenging: 3,81, Exploring 26,36		Confirming: 31,91, Exploring 27,19	

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