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Editors: Halina Gottlieb, Hans Öjmyr



Mariana Salgado

Fly High: Collaborate!

Strategies to Engage the Museum
Community



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Strategies to Engage
the Museum Community

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Editors:

Halina Gottlieb / Interactive Institute Swedish ICT, Digital Heritage Center Sweden AB

Hans Öjmyr / Stockholm City Museum

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TABLE OF CONTENTS:

SECTION I — Professional Profile

1. About Mariana Salgado and Significance in the Field	5–7
2. Initiatives and Accomplishments	8

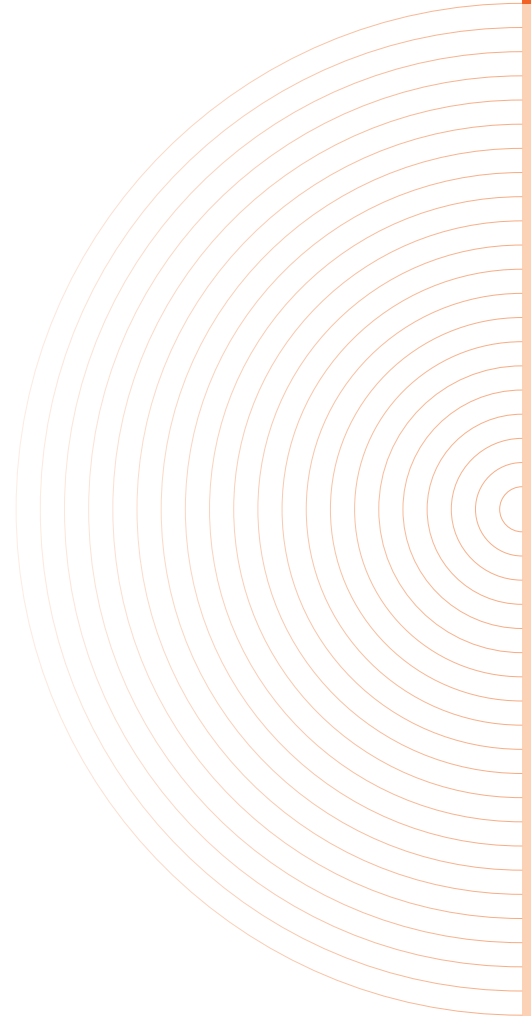
SECTION II — Research Work

1. Fly High: Collaborate!	11–21
Abstract	11
Who Should Read This Book?	12
Research Brief of Three Case Studies	13
A. SoundTrace (Äänijälki)	14
B. Conversational Map (Keskustelukartta)	16
C. The Secret life of Objects (EsineidenSalatutElämät)	20
2. How to Collaborate?	22–27
Execution and Implementation	22
Advantages	26
3. How to Collaborate in the Preservation of Heritage?	28–30
Execution and Implementation	28
Advantages	29
4. Conclusions	31–32
5. References	33–34

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Without you all, this work could not have been possible.



SECTION I

Professional Profile



FIGURE 1. MARIANA SALGADO



1. ABOUT MARIANA SALGADO AND SIGNIFICANCE IN THE FIELD

Mariana Salgado is a design researcher working as a post-doctoral researcher in Arki Research Group, Media Lab, Media Department, ARTS, Aalto University.

Previously, Mariana worked as the Head of a Master in Business Administration in User Centered Design at Laurea University of Applied Sciences in Finland. During 2001–2009 she has been collaborating, with museums and other cultural organizations as part of her work in the Systems of Representations research

group at the Media Lab. The methods in her research and development projects have been co-designed and with a special interest in participatory practices. Working together with end-user communities, especially in the implementation of digital services, has been the main focus of her research. Her interests are in participatory design approaches and inclusive solutions that weave new media into cultural sites. Lately, she has been involved in discussions about open cultural heritage and social inclusion.

2. INITIATIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mariana Salgado's research deals with cultural heritage materials and design and she has been involved in co-designing participation in museums through the use of interactive pieces. Some of the research projects in which she has participated are: 4G Design (2000-2002), Digital Facsimile of the Map of Mexico 1550, Sound Traces (2005) in collaboration with Ateneum Museum, Conversational Map(2006) in Taidehalli, and The Secret Life of Objects (2008) at the Design Museum, Helsinki. In these projects there is an active participation of visitors leaving in-depth comments at the exhibition. She is co-author of the project: BodyMaps: a multi-sensory interactive exhibition and database package– done in collaboration with Helina⁰¹ Rautavaara Museum (2010). The project got funding from the Ministry of Education as part of the program for innovative projects at museums.

01 Helinä Rautavaara Museo (2008). Retrieved on June 21, 2009, from www.helinamuseo.fi/elaomaelamasi

Her doctoral dissertation entitled Designing for an Open Museum: An Exploration in Content Creation and Sharing through Interactive Pieces arguments for the need of open and democratic access to public services, and formed the basis from which she has developed her theoretical knowledge and expertise, (both at home and abroad) in the areas of design research, participatory design and media practices.

Mariana is an active collaborator of AvoinGLAM (Finnish version of OpenGLAM) network. This is an official group of OKF FI (Open Knowledge Foundation Finland). She conducted workshops with experts working in cultural institutions in which they held in-depth discussions about inclusion, participation and openness. Some preliminary documentation can be found on the blog www.avoinglam.fi. Mariana, together with her colleagues Andrea Botero, Sanna Marttila and Joanna Saad-Sulonen, have won two design

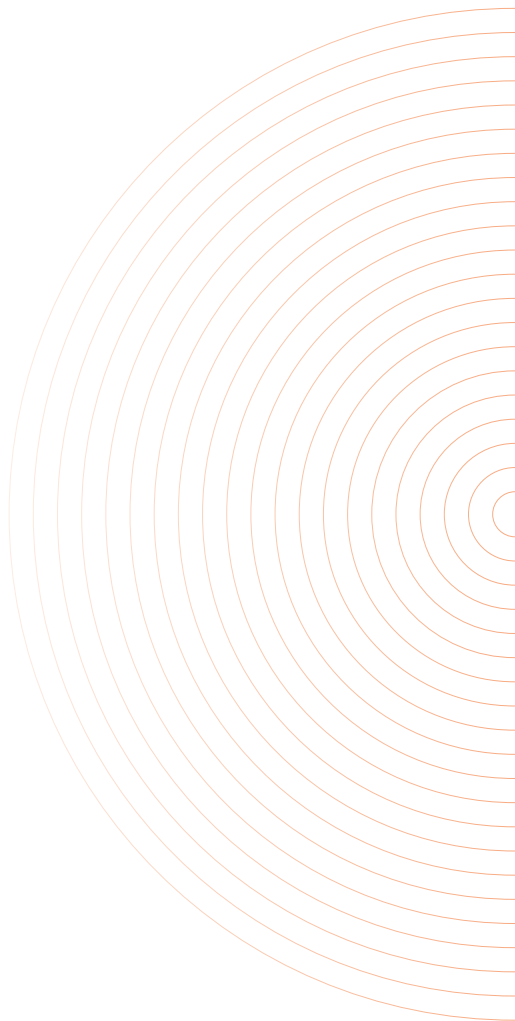
competitions in 2014. This spring Helsinki City Library organized an Idea competition named Idea Nuggets to stimulate and seek new ideas for developing the library and its services. Their idea: Skill Circle was selected as a winner. The same team also won another competition organized by the Ministry of Interior and the Finnish Innovation Fund (Sitra). It was a service design competition in which participants were asked to submit design solutions to improve the process of making claims in cases of crimes related to racism.

Here you can find more information and a list of publications by Mariana Salgado: www.mendeley.com/profiles/mariana-salgado.

This booklet serves as an introduction to Mariana Salgado and her research findings to museum professionals and creative industries.

SECTION II:

Research Work



Abstract

Participation in the museum has been analysed from different angles. In this publication I investigate into commenting on an already existing exhibition. This is a form of participatory curating which gives voices to the whole museum community. Participants are creating content on their experiences of the exhibition. In three case studies, Mariana Salgado has designed interactive pieces and mechanisms geared towards involving the visitors, the staff and the designers or artists with pieces in the museum so that they create content that is later displayed in the museums based on an already created exhibition.

Salgado's interactive pieces in the museum were research tools for discussing on participatory and open practices. By looking into these pieces after five years of being displayed in the museum, we can say that they are out-dated in terms of the technology in use, they work as reminders of experimental practices in the museum

context. These reminders offer an arena to discuss new and current issues in museology, such as collaboration and agency in relation to audience participation.

Museum community created content could become an integrated part of the exhibition; before, during and after it takes place in the form of exhibited material. Research work in this field, including Salgado's, tries to help in the dissemination and acceptance of open culture at museums and exhibition venues. Museums and exhibition venues will in the future value audiences' contributions and adopt peer production as a means to enrich and complete the documentation on their collections as well as to enhance the visitor experience.

Based on three case studies, this booklet offers recommendations on engaging the museum community in technically mediated exhibitions. The recommendations for the museum are:

- to listen to and trust the community by promoting community created content,
- forming alliances with external partners, such as universities, for long-term collaborations,
- taking risks by involving experimental research work in the exhibitions.

The recommendations are intended to support the museum community by offering insight into involvement as a part of the whole museum experience. This publication is an abridged version of the doctoral dissertation results with a particular focus: collaboration. This publication shows research on the impact of interaction design in museum exhibitions and reframes collaboration. The research questions are how to collaboratively motivate and preserve content (gathered through interactive pieces) in the museum? The aim of the book is to motivate museums practitioners to collaborate with a wider set of actors interested in the museum and to uplift the nuances of this collaboration.

Who Should Read This Book?

This book is intended for the museum community. Mostly the term ‘museum community’ is understood as the community to which the museum belongs, and not the museum personnel. Museum studies typically show a clear division between museum personnel and audiences. This is not adequate. Through Salgado’s work it is possible to understand the importance of the inclusion of other members of the museum community such as museum personnel, the artists and / or designers that have pieces in the exhibitions, museum friends, external collaborators, online visitors and others interested in the museum collection, in exhibition formation. This is why, Salgado proposes to talk about community created content, when she refers to the audience, external collaborators and the staff’s comments related to the pieces in the exhibition.

The team in the museum is this community. The museum is one team that includes all the actors that collaborate or could collaborate in building the museum. By

Case Studies	Sound Trace (2005)	Conversational Map (2006)	The Secret Life of Objects (2008)
Museums	Ateneum Art Museum, The Finnish National Gallery	Kunsthalle	Design Museum Helsinki
Exhibition	Permanent Exhibition	Young Artist Biennale: Small Heaven	The Secret Life of Objects, An Interactive Map of Finnish Design
Art and design pieces	5 artworks	All the artworks in the exhibitions (installations, drawings, paintings and sculptures)	Comments were made on 40 of a total of 50 objects

TABLE 1:

This table presents the three projects in chronological order from left to right taking into consideration the museums, the exhibition and the art and design pieces.

understanding all these actors as part of the museum's team, it is possible to create richer exhibitions, open the museum towards more democratic places of collaboration and by doing so, widening the influence of museums in our society.

Research Brief of Three Case Studies

Salgado created and participated in projects that encouraged people to comment on exhibitions, whether on online or onsite formats, through interactive pieces. In these cases, she observed her own design process while implementing these projects, the collaboration with the museum staff, and the digital content gathered during the installation of the interactive pieces in two museums and one exhibition venue.

The following table presents the three projects in chronological order from left to right.

In all these projects people from the museum community were leaving digital comments related to the exhibition material in an interactive piece. Each project was done in a different museum and in conjunction with an exhibition. In some cases people could comment on all the art or design works in the exhibition, as in the case of *Conversational Map*, and in others, only a few artworks could be commented upon.

The time spent on each project varied, as did the level of the museum's involvement and the scale of its contribution. In these three cases, the time the project was installed in the gallery (onsite) and the length of the planning phases are compared. The longer the participative pieces were in the exhibitions, the more data was gathered. A longer installation also meant more time for conversations and collaborations among the visitors, staff and artists/designers.

A. Sound Trace⁰² (Äänijalki)

AIM

This work focused on certain art pieces that were part of the permanent exhibition in Ateneum Museum. Ateneum is one museum of the Finnish National Gallery and it has the largest collection of classical art in Finland. In the context of this art museum, the aim of this project was to design a participative audio tour and a website for visually impaired people and their community. We wanted to gather and share digital comments (sound traces) online and onsite related to the pieces in the permanent exhibition and to navigating the physical premises. Our aim was that the website would contain all existing information on Finnish museums' services for the visually impaired, as well as audio traces connected to the exhibition that they had left in the museum.

02 Further information on this project can be found in Salgado & Kellokoski 2005





Picture by Anna Salmi

FIGURE 2.

Visually impaired visitors touching one sculpture in Ateneum Museum

Sound Trace attempted to enhance accessibility and the visit experience at Finnish museums. At the same time, it intended to provide a platform for collaborative sound gathering. Visitors and pieces in the exhibition were to open up a pre-existing dialogue by making it audible. The *Sound Trace* project clarified the challenges and benefits that audio content made by the museum community could bring to the museum, emphasising the possibilities for the visually impaired community.

DEVELOPMENT

The group developed the concept for the service. We also designed a prototype for a texture-touchable screen for a P.D.A. (Portable Digital Assistant), a logo, and the layout for the website. To implement the prototype, we used an Apache web server, MySQL database, PHP programming server side and a simple Flash application on the client side. We tested our initial ideas for the interface. Later, to continue the evaluation of the concept and to provide content for the service, we did two walkthroughs at the Ateneum Art Museum with a tour guide and a visually impaired

person. To further develop the concept, we coordinated two workshops using participatory design approaches geared towards the visually impaired and their community. We reported on them in three articles (Salgado & Salmi, 2006; Salgado & Salmi, 2008; Salgado & Botero, 2008).

OUTCOMES

While in the following cases Salgado did not consider the inclusion of visually impaired people, she realised that listening to other people's personal comments could enrich the visit experience. On the one hand, Salgado understood that she wanted to focus her research on the possibilities for interaction designers to motivate and support an exchange of comments amongst people that do not know each other. On the other hand, the idea appeared that this exchange of personal comments could validate an emotional connection with art and design work.

B. Conversational Map (Keskustelukartta)⁰³

AIM

This second case study took place in Kunsthalle, an art exhibition venue in the center of Helsinki that focuses mainly on contemporary art. Conversational Map was an interactive piece part of the Young Biennale Exhibition. The goal of Conversational Map was to test the concept of a participative digital board for comments on an art exhibition. Most of the comments gathered in a common guest book respond to the question, “Did you like the exhibition?” Most answers are variations on a simple “Yes, I did” and “No, I didn’t.” We therefore did not want to call this device “a feedback board” or “a guest book” because the comments we hoped to collect were the reflections, questions and memories that connect the visitors to the artwork. At the same

time, we also aimed to open a dialogue between visitors who were not at the museum. We tried to collect digital comments about the works or the exhibition as a whole. Visitors in the museum interpret works of art or design and in this way they enact a dialogue with the collection. Our proposal includes making this dialogue public by sharing these interpretations. Visitors enacted this dialogue by leaving text comments supported by any external link on the Internet. We imagined comments that could be linked to, for example, a piece of music.

DEVELOPMENT

For Kunsthalle, a participative installation was set up in the main entrance hall, near the ticket office. It consisted of a keyboard and a mouse placed on the top of a white cube, a hidden computer, and a projector that cast images of the map on one wall. There was also a stack of leaflets with a short description of the project and a link for accessing the digital board at home. A two-dimensional compiled image of the exhibition was used to form a map of the exhibition. Visitors could recognise the ex-

hibition space and the art pieces in it, since their positions were analogous to where they were in the real exhibition space.

Conversational Map brought to the conversation the possibility of supporting comments with links to external resources on the Internet. Inspired by the possibilities of the software ImaNote (Image Map Annotation Notebook⁰⁴), digital comments took the shape of audiovisual material that related to the objects in the exhibition.

Developed at the Media Lab, the software was used to navigate the map and to annotate the pieces in the exhibition. Due to the nature of this software, visitors’ comments took the form of text and could be complemented with external links.

For most of the time the installation was in the museum, Salgado was there, explaining the project, inviting visitors to participate and helping them to leave comments, as well as talking to visitors and artists about the possibilities of a digital board. The presence of a person performing these tasks at

03 Further information about the project can be found in Salgado & Díaz-Kommonen, 2006.

04 <http://talk.fi/imanote/>



FIGURE 3:

The map of the Young Biennale Exhibition.



FIGURE 4.

Screenshots from the Conversational Map. Kunsthalle

the stand seemed crucial to the number and variety of comments collected. Fifty-five comments were collected from visitors, and one comment from a museum staff member. Comments were varied in terms of content and length.⁰⁵ Only four comments had an external link to the Internet, and the visitors that added them had to be specifically encouraged to do so.

⁰⁵ A detailed description and analysis of the comments can be found in Salgado (2009).

OUTCOMES

The primary opportunity missed in this project was not having planned how to involve the young artists and the staff of the exhibition venue. The “Conversational Map” was simply placed in the exhibition with no explanation. During the days the stand was up, the artists, as well as the staff, were busy with workshops, and the exhibition venue was crowded. Therefore, they had neither the time nor inclination to post a comment on the map. A proper introduction to the staff and an invitation to leave comments could have improved the content gathered on the map. Comments from the staff and the artists could have been interesting points of departure and could have geared the discussion towards common concerns. Had Salgado encouraged staff and artists to participate in the piece beforehand, it could have been more fertile and effective at the exhibition itself.

Although we did not get comments connected to external music as we would have liked, we received some comments with links to other visual and informative material that complement the content of

the exhibition by tracing resources on the Web. Visitors might have to be explicitly encouraged to make connections to other art forms, such as music.

The short period at the exhibition venue, only four days, did not allow in-depth exploration of the possibilities offered by online contributions. However, these four days were days in which the institution organised special activities and were very productive: workshops, parties, talks, etc. and generated a good flow of people around the interactive piece and with it a good sample of comments.

In the context of a biennale of mostly young Finnish artists, the map could have been used as a tool for discussion between artist, visitors, art historians, critics and staff. This idea of encouraging various persons from the community to leave their own comment in a common interactive piece was re-defined in the next project, *The Secret Life of Objects*. In this project Salgado could take more time to motivate and facilitate the inclusion of more people such as the designers that have their pieces in the exhibitions and the museum's guides.

C. The Secret Life of Objects (EsineidenSalatutElämät)⁰⁶

AIM

The Secret Life of Objects took place in Design Museum Helsinki. First the interactive piece was part of the permanent exhibition and then, a special exhibition with part of the permanent collection was specially designed. The aim of *The Secret Life of Objects* was to develop services for the permanent exhibition of the Design Museum Helsinki. Salgado's research goal was to further develop the concept of a participative digital board by co-designing practices and content material with the staff and the visitors. Digital content was redefined to include material that came from workshops and events held in the museum in the form of images, videos, sounds and texts.

⁰⁶ The article Using Online Maps for Community-Generated Content in Museums (Salgado et al, 2009) describes this project in detail.

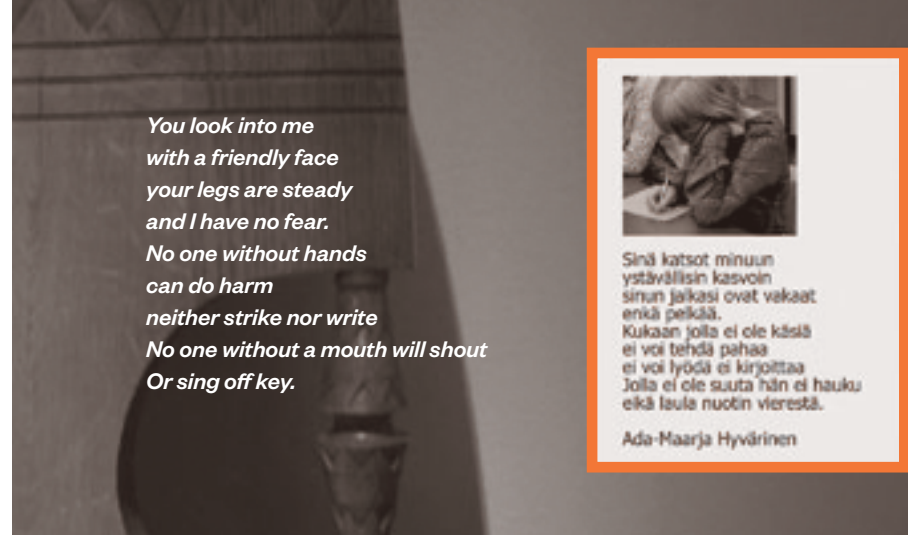
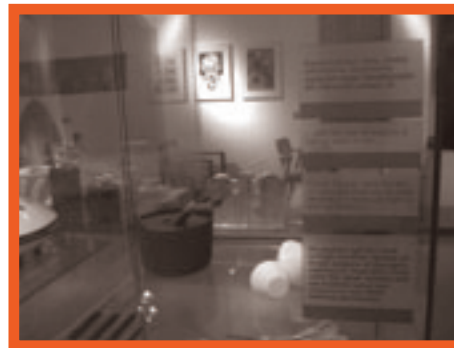


FIGURE 5.

**A poem displayed in the exhibition by Ada-Maarja Hyvärinen.
In English: Ode to a Chair.**

Translation by Mike Garner



This material was included as links on the map of the exhibition; these links intended to encourage visitors to make comments on the exhibition. “Visitors could join conversations that had been started by participants in the workshops or events” (Salgado et al 2008). We tried to demystify the role of the expert curator by presenting comments made by children and youngsters. In this project, there was a clear intention to elicit visitors’ creativity by showing artistic multimedia comments such as poems, videos and pieces of music. Furthermore, this project tried to show how, through digital technologies, intangible digital heritage such as recordings of poetry readings and children’s workshops could enrich the tangible, the design and art pieces of the exhibition.

DEVELOPMENT

The Secret Life of Objects explored creative uses for the museum’s collection through partnerships with artists, in this case, children and teenagers who play music and do creative writing. Much work was done to coordinate the participating parties and to reach a common understand-

ing about the overall project and the activities to be organised. The team working on the project consisted of people from the Media Lab and the Design Museum, as well as an external sound designer. One of the primary achievements of the project, then, was creating bonds within the team involved in the project.

As part of *The Secret Life of Objects*, three workshops and two events were organised and documented, and the resulting material was edited and added as links to the interactive map. The first of these workshops, “Esa and the Objects,” consisted of five sessions with the same group of kindergarten children. Each session concentrated on exploring one design object that was part of the museum’s permanent collection. The second workshop, “Sound of Objects,” was designed for eleven- to twelve-year-old students learning the guitar. The students improvised music based on six objects from the permanent collection. Later, they developed the improvisation, coming up with a song, and we organised a short concert by the students in the museum’s hall. The third workshop, “Odes for Objects,” was designed for teenagers in-

involved in creative writing. There were two sessions in which they wrote short stories, advertising slogans, and odes inspired by six objects from the collection.

Furthermore, Salgado conducted one group and one individual interview on the 26th of May, 2008. All the designers that had their objects in the exhibitions were invited to these interviews, but only three came to the museum: Yrjö Kukkapuro, Sirpa Fourastié and Tani Munhonen. They were asked to give feedback to the comments left by visitors in the museum, to leave a question for the visitors, and to tell some stories about the object that they have in the exhibition.

The Museum staff wrote texts about the historical contexts of the pieces and selected pictures of the designers and artists. This content was included as comments on the interactive map. Booklets containing the material in three different languages were available at the exhibition.

Text comments left by visitors to the stand were printed and placed near the objects to which they referred. Other

comments, such as the poems written by workshop participants, were displayed as part of the exhibition, in one case along with a picture of its author.

A weblog⁰⁷ was started to communicate the developments of the project and to gather material from the workshops, as well as from other activities related to the project. We implemented a new, simplified version of the ImaNote software to facilitate its use by the visitors of the museum.

OUTCOMES

The Secret Life of Objects explored creative uses for the museum's collection through partnerships with artists, in this case, children and teenagers who play music and do creative writing. The participative digital board created as part of this project used the museum collection as a resource for inspiration and creation of personal comments coming from the museum community. As in the previous project, *Conversational Map*,

we regarded as successful the idea of having a participative board that has an exhibition map as an interface that could be navigated with the same software, ImaNote.

The first clear missed opportunity was not including in the participative digital board the voice of the designers or artists with their work in the exhibition (this was largely due to a lack of resources and time).

Although Salgado did interviews with the artists and designers and had videos and audio recordings, this material was not on the map during the exhibition. Including the designers' voices could have been a way to start new collaborations, and make others involved in making collaborative exhibitions.

07 www.thesecretlifeofobjects.blogspot.com

2. HOW TO COLLABORATE?

External collaborators include design researchers, artists or designers whose work is part of the exhibition; researchers whose topics are closely related to the exhibition's theme; students, teachers and guides organising workshops or tours around the exhibition; volunteers, friends of the museum and possible others. In some cases, curators and guides are external collaborators to the museum, because they are not part of the permanent staff but hired for one particular exhibition or collaborating on a voluntary basis.

Execution and Implementation

The most important aspect is to be aware that collaboration with one specific external partner cannot be under the responsibility of only one team in the museum. In order to explain how to collaborate with different actors in relation to the exhibition, Salgado presents the concept

of *ecology of participation*. This concept permits us to understand elements, groups and connectors in the museum and exhibition context and reveals areas for intervention in the design domain.

The concept of *ecology of participation*⁰⁸ is not geared towards finding one solution for mapping influences and opportunities but, rather, towards widening the frame of action for the people involved. The ecology of participation is a conceptual tool used in this booklet to understand the specific mechanisms at play in designing for participation in museum communities. The groups involved in the ecology of participation are the community, the interactive piece, the places and the practices. For the ecology to come to life, all members of those groups need to work as an entity.

⁰⁸ Other authors have referred previously to *ecologies*. For example Nardi and O'Day (1999, p. 60) use information ecology and the components are people, practices, values and technologies.

People in an ecology of participation can be described according to their role in the team such as designer, educator and exhibition architect, or according to their relationship to the project in question. The two parameters are related: in designing for public participation, educators would likely be more eager to explore this area than others whose job description has not historically included a relationship to, and inclusion of, the visitor.

Nardi and O'Day (1999) identify *keystone species*: skilled people whose presence is essential to the effective use of the technology in place. In the ecology of participation, one keystone species might be the persons that support the practice of participation. In the previously presented case studies, the person who served as a hub between the technology implemented and the institution was the interaction design researcher. Another keystone species was the educator, who in the case of *The Secret Life of Objects* invited the designers to participate in the

FIGURE 5.
Cc by Avoinglam



project. She was the person in charge of introducing the external partners from Media Lab to the museum's practices and staff. Salgado proposes that one of the roles of a keystone species is to be a hub between, for example, technology and people, and that this role could be assigned to a person or to an artefact. In the case studies presented this role was the one of the interactive piece.

Salgado has used the term *interactive pieces* to refer to the three pieces done as part of the case studies presented here. Though the term gives space for other forms of interaction, the participative element is already given by the overall topic of this work. Values are an intrinsic part of the practices and people involved and also connected to technical decisions. In the specific case of the ecology of participation, the values that the whole ecology promotes are democratic and geared towards involving the entire museum community. To this end, co-design practices and user studies take place with the aim of facilitating collaboration. Other practices could convey and reinforce this value, for example,

practices involving how comments are selected for display.

The following diagram (Figure 7) shows the ecology of participation and demonstrates the groups included in the three case studies.

The diagram clearly contains many more black dots than orange, or empty dots. Each of the projects can be seen as a continuation of the previous one, and Salgado intended to create interactive pieces capable of including many groups. In that sense, each trial was more inclusive than the one before.

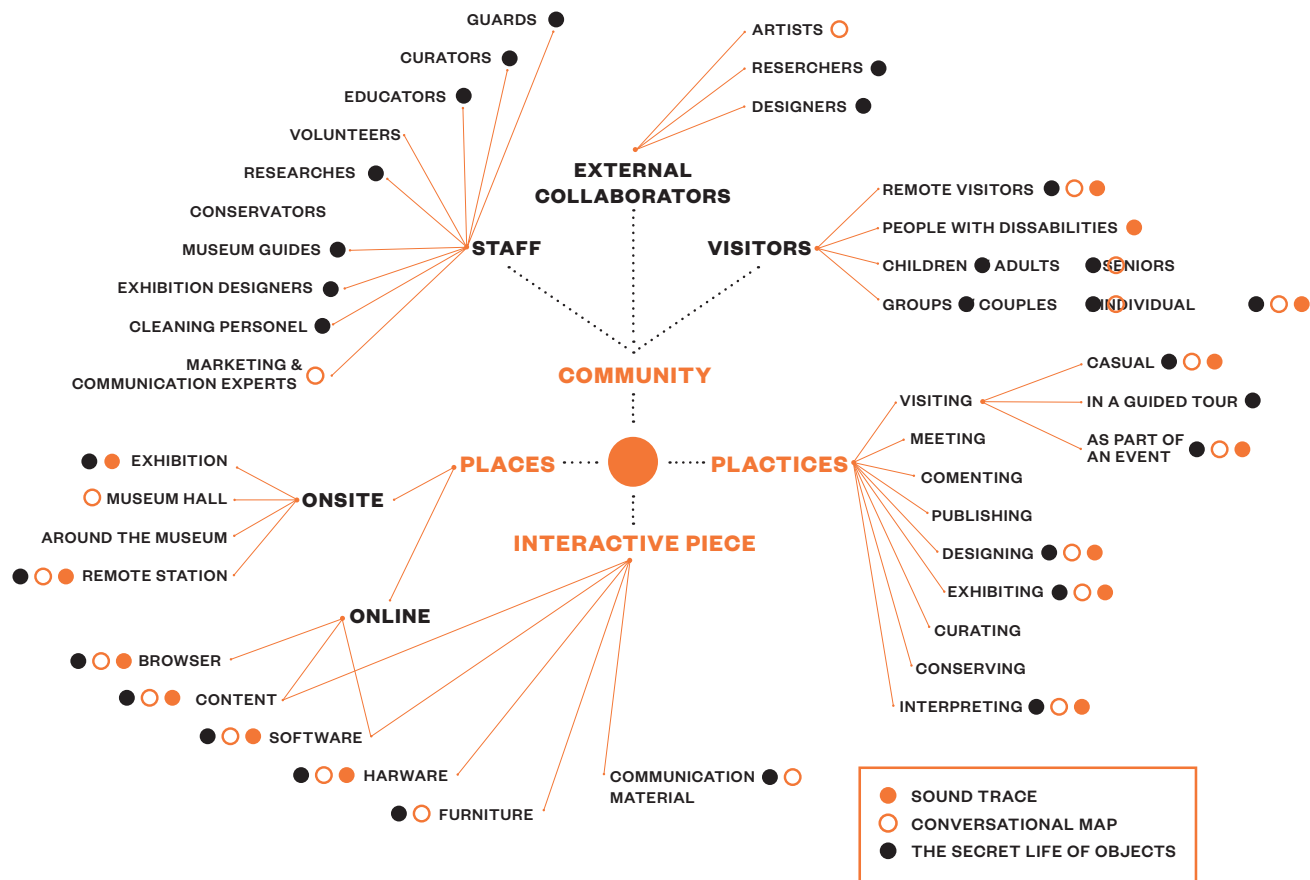
There is no single answer to the question of how to collaborate with external partners towards people's involvement in museums and exhibition venues. The ecology of participation does, however, offer two clues towards a solution. Firstly, **it is absolutely necessary to understand and think about people, their practices and places in which they interact.** Secondly, **only through the integration of the groups in the ecology and through understanding them as parts of a single ecology is it possible to achieve the desired partici-**

pation. In fact, the idea of ecology serves to highlight all the relationships in which a certain design solution takes place. In terms of participation, this work deals with issues related to people (different actors in the museum community), with material (the place and the artefacts) and also with the participation of the immaterial (the practices). But the aim of this mapping exercise is to understand that including new instances in the ecology of participation could be a resource to enrich the content material gathered and therefore the exhibition.

Mapping the practices, actors in the community, interactive pieces and places of a particular museum might be a useful way to begin using the concept of ecology. Framing a project not only by thinking of it as a standalone "design object" but rather as a solution that is integrated with the ecology requires a strategy. Since this special type of participation is a new practice within the museum community, **more time and resources need to be devoted to its integration with the other parts of the ecology.**

FIGURE 7:

Ecology of participation diagram



To summarize, the answer is that when designing for museum community involvement in exhibitions, there is a need to understand and embrace the ecology in which the interactive pieces are immersed. The ecology of participation could be used as reminder of the possible collaborations that could enrich a certain project. It is merely a way to map possibilities and to take into account as many groups and forms as a certain project requires in orchestrating a practice of participation that promotes openness.

Advantages

Suzanne Keene is the one that instigated museums to open up collaboration possibilities. According to her, “museums need to be much more active in forging partnerships with universities and colleges” (Keene, 2005, p. 62). Long-term collaboration with university departments is key to furthering digital design projects in museums. Each case in this research was carried out in a different museum, and sometimes it was difficult for people involved from each institution to under-

stand the others’ agendas, goals and needs. Cross-institutional collaboration is a challenge but, by creating a common long-term agenda, research projects in which both universities and museums are involved could be developed. Museums could benefit from the inclusion of interaction designers and their capability in the design and development of new media projects. Participation and motivating it is a part of interaction designers’ area of expertise. Furthermore, museums could proactively influence the development of technologies to be used in their spaces, thus encouraging design and research that meets their specific needs.

In these cases, the design and development was free of charge, the design researchers working in the museum were external, and no one was paid by the museum. However, there was a concern with the time these projects consume. This question was formulated in the workshop with museum experts organised at the Design Museum Helsinki in the context of the exhibition “The Secret Life of Objects, An Interactive map of Finnish Design”. In fact, though the software did not require special maintenance while

it was in the exhibition, it did imply a significant time investment on the part of the museum staff involved. Yet, due to that investment, the result was in keeping with their needs and expectations.

One challenge was to get different museum departments to collaborate on the project and not leave it in the hands of a single group of staff members. As in mapping groups in the ecology of participation, the goal is integrating practices to support and enrich participation.

The external parties, in the cases here the interaction designer, during the exhibition could provide material for researchers working in fields related to the exhibition’s topic. Ideally, work with these researchers would start at the very beginning, even planning the exhibition together. This would provide cues to guide the audience’s comments towards researchers’ concerns. Two more examples related to the case studies illustrate alternative uses: artists could use the material that people left on their pieces to better understand the perception of their artwork; industrial designers could use an exhibition like

The Secret Life of Objects to examine the emotional issues that link people with a certain object.

The advantages in a nutshell are:

- Long-term collaborations with external partners allow better understanding of each others' needs and goals.
- Museums could benefit from the inclusion of know-how and expertise of diverse collaborators that are nowadays not part of the museum staff in many small to medium museums, e.g. interaction designers.
- Motivate design and technology development that meets museums' needs.
- Artists or designers having their work in the exhibition could enrich their understanding of the museum community perception of their work.

3. HOW TO COLLABORATE IN THE PRESERVATION OF HERITAGE?

Execution and Implementation

Preservation of heritage has to be thought about from the beginning of the project. It cannot come as an afterthought. If we really care about audience's comments preserving this contextual information should be a priority. The audience team has traditionally been in contact with the audience, but nowadays we need the whole museum community to join forces to reinforce this connection. Community created content for an exhibition needs to be preserved and catalogued in the same way and with similar respect to how museums preserve curators' materials, and other experts' contributions.

Significantly, questions about the preservation of this digital material were not discussed in these cases. It was taken for granted that there are resources to update and maintain on the servers and hence, that the material would be preserved.



FIGURE 8:

Screenshot The Secret life of Objects



FIGURE 9:

Screenshot The Secret Life of Objects. Text in the image: *The phenomenon of the furniture by Eero Arno has prompted a particular fan club: the “eero-nauts”. All around the world, they have incorporated his work not only into everyday life, but also into pop culture, from sci-fi to Playboy, these signs cover magazines, videos, movies, etc.*

According to the experience during these case studies, it is crucial to design for participation not only before and during the exhibition, but also after it, in order to ensure that the audience's contribution can be retrieved, re-used and made available to future researchers. Saving, preserving and collecting the material gathered is one way to show interest in listening to the community, and it is essential throughout the whole process.

In addition, preservation experts in the museum would benefit from the collaboration with external parties because they might imagine future uses of the collection that they have never imagined. This future re-use of materials could give insights to experts in preservation on how they should catalogue and preserve the audience's contributions. The possible future uses of these digital comments discussed above, support one of the main arguments of this publication: community created content represents the people's interests and inspirations in a moment in time in relation to museums and, therefore, it should be considered an important component of the local knowledge that should be preserved for the generations to come.

Advantages

During the course of this research project, we promised to preserve them during the time the project was on-going, but beyond that, their future is uncertain. This content is valuable insofar as the museum community is committed to it. The more time and effort the museum staff is able to invest, the better the content. Therefore, more interest could arise for its preservation. The audience has contributed to the exhibition by giving their time, creativity and knowledge about the exhibited objects, why then should the preservation of these materials only be defined by experts? The audience could be consulted on how they would like these materials to be preserved for future re-use.

In relation to the community created content the concerns on authorship are important to discuss. People did not seem concerned about the fact that their comments would be open to the general public online. Comments were mainly anonymously granted for sharing, and no ethical concerns about future use were expressed. In the case of the *Secret Life of Objects* comments prepared beforehand

by staff members were not signed, but they were placed in a certain area on the map to distinguish them from the others. In addition, the fact that they had a more formal voice and a photograph made them easy to recognise. Many members of the museum staff left personal comments on the interactive map, but with the exception of one guide they did not identify themselves. This seems to suggest that, in this context, authorship is not relevant. In the future, if participatory practices are implemented in every exhibition and the number of contributions increases, the issue of authorship could become important to the community.

Even though the audience apparently grants the museum with content material, the issue of the conservation of this content is important because it relates to how the museum staff perceives it. Several researchers in the museum field have spoken of the need to gather local knowledge related to the collection. Temporary exhibits could serve as interfaces to gather materials to enrich the permanent collection. Many comments spoke of the context of use. All the following comments, for instance, refer to the same containers.

Water collection

We always had some for water and gas collecting at the summerhouse, starting in my childhood. No well and three kilometres to the mainland⁰⁹. Comment left at The Secret Life of Objects.

Plastic containers

Plastic containers are reminiscent of childhood. I collected water from a fountain. Those colourful objects create art and shouldn't be thrown out. Comment left at The Secret Life of Objects.

So is this Finnish design? It can't be true?

This is a learning experience. I thought that such containers were almost a universal model, used all over the world. These can be found at my retired parents' home, let's say... in MULTIPLE!! Comment left at The Secret Life of Objects.

In the words of Keene (2005), "Many objects or even collections are poorly documented, and people can identify them or provide information about them, or contribute memories or knowledge to enrich

the context for them. There are many ways in which museums can (and some do) facilitate and enable people to contribute to the richness of the collections (...)" (Keene, 2005, p. 97). Salgado adds that through allowing people to comment, a dialogue can emerge between museum staff, visitors and external collaborators, and that in such dialogue all the participants make contributions valuable to the museum. In *The Secret life of Objects*, the collection was not only used as the point of contact between people and the material culture but also as a means of research. People discussed the objects and their meanings through their created content. They investigated connections to their own life and to their environment. Involving the audience in preservation efforts is a way to respect their contributions, enrich the conversation with others in the museum community and propose a longer commitment for collaboration.

The advantages in a nutshell are:

- By motivating the community to leave their contributions, it is possible to enrich the collections.

- By involving the audience in preservation efforts, it is a way to respect their contributions, promote more transparent practices and open the stage for future uses of the preserved material.
- By being clear about the terms and conditions in which community created content could be used in the future, the museum community would eagerly contribute to the exhibition and engage in a dialogue with the museum collection.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Once again, giving visitors the possibility to comment on the exhibition is a means to valorise their knowledge and experience, but also a way to make visitors feel like external collaborators or part of the museum community. It is also relevant that Salgado was not a member of the museums' staff but an external collaborator. Sometimes, this afforded her a useful distance and perspective. Other times, her limited understanding of the dynamics of the institutions gave rise to confusion and curtailed opportunities for collaboration. Furthermore, there were no interaction designers working in the museums or exhibition venue with which Salgado collaborated, and the background of most of the staff differed from hers, mainly art historians or education experts. Understanding each other's ways of thinking and operating was sometimes a challenge.

In this publication Salgado wanted to draw attention to issues related to collaboration. The need to embrace the whole museum community is presented in relation to the concept of **ecology of participation**.

The concept ***could be seen as a tool to map possibilities of collaboration that have never been imagined before or else as a tool to analyse the limitations of a certain project***. The concept of ecology of participation suggests a response to the question of how to shape the content material gathered by interactive pieces. The answer relies on the inclusion of different groups in the ecology of participation. ***Community-created content is a result of design strategies that allow the inclusion of these groups into a single ecology of participation***. These design strategies include populating the interactive pieces with content, facilitating and promoting people to contribute to content. Community-created content is useful for many actors only when many of these actors are included in the design process.

We should ***permit experimentation and even failure while developing new media in the museum context***. Though Salgado has always felt the museum staff to be grateful, the harsh criticisms of the interface design proposed demonstrates

a lack of understanding that the framework of collaboration was a research project. Therefore, the prototypes and software solutions were under development and provided some innovative component that needed testing as part of the research agenda. The museum should not aim to receive ready-made solutions from the university but see the collaboration as an opportunity to influence the development of technology by being the "research field" for experiments and by providing content. This collaboration must be furthered to foster suitable development of technology for museums and their communities.

The development of new technology along with the shift to a collaborative peer-to-peer culture must be taken into account when thinking about future designs for the museum. Incorporating practices such as tagging, commenting, voting systems, or even bookmarking will likely be a part of the museum visit experience in the future. These practices serve to open the visit experience and provide opportunities for dialogue around the exhibition. However, if one truly wants to forge an open museum

in constant dialogue and collaboration with the community, then it is necessary ***to involve all the actors in setting the agenda.***

On the basis of Salgado's experience during these case studies, pre-prepared material yields better responses from visitors and having a facilitator from the museum staff or external team member is key to encouraging people to take part in the participatory process. Therefore, Salgado concludes that while it is not possible to shape content material, it is possible to facilitate situations in which active participation might emerge to influence its variety and richness. ***Once design proposals have come to involve participation, the new challenge is to make them grow through collaboration with the community in which they will be implemented.***

Participatory design approaches could be applied when it comes to making important decisions and involving those who are not currently part of the group of decision-makers. ***Museums need to understand the potential of participatory projects in order to reinforce the dialogue with their community.*** There is a growing interest in social technologies on the part

of audiences and staff in order to nurture dialogues with the community. Once the practice of listening to the community has been established, new types of conversations will take place both online and in the museum space itself, enhancing the quality of discussions that happen during the visit experience. For museums that are trying to open new means of conversation with their communities, this work could help encourage sustainable collaboration. Above all, however, Salgado hopes to positively influence the museum visit experience by reflecting on the collaboration geared towards museum community engagement in the exhibitions

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The know-how books act as a bridge between research findings and everyday practice for people working in the cultural heritage sector and creative industry. The aim is to support people working in museums, heritage sites, monuments, CH managers, exhibition producers/curators, pedagogues and professionals engaged in restoration, site management and preservation, as well as those responsible for communication to different audiences and the public at large.

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