Objects of Exile / Objects in Exile

Exhibition Project

Objectives

To stage an itinerant exhibition about the objects of exile, objects doubly significant because, on one hand, they make up the elements of a material/maternal culture which mark a distance from or the abandon of actual, symbolic and emotional territories (objects of exile), and, on the other hand, they evoke the transformation that exile brings upon the value and status of these objects (objects in exile).

Through spaces tied to a theme, associating an object and a related narrative via multiple forms of supports (texts, music, images), the exhibition will uncover the traces of exile, excavate the memories of exile and in exile, and unearth their stratigraphy.

The museographic journey should also include a place for visitors to freely compile their writings and narratives. Such an installation would allow the public to partake in the very current, political questions on exile as an investigation of immigration, integration, assimilation, citizenship, identity and inclusion.

The exhibition's host institutions and countries would have a choice between:

• Putting the exhibition together under its original form, as in Montreal, but enriching it with a new space, that of the welcoming institution;
• Borrowing the exhibition's structure and recreating the content on the basis of the initial themes (see *infra*).

The exhibition thus invites us to reconsider the modes of presentation adopted by displaced identities, in their fluctuating and ever-modifying forms. What this says is that randomness serves as a guiding principle, and the exhibition becomes a metaphor for exile in its unpredictable and transformational aspects. If the exhibition's point of departure is a given (Montreal), its later journey can only be told by the places and teams ready to welcome it. There aren't any temporal limits and therefore, no indication of its duration.

Faced with worldwide migratory movements, the exhibition, varying in content, attempts to create a globalized museography.

The catalogue will take on the form of a website, progressively enriched by the travels and metamorphoses of the exhibition.

In order to recreate the global dimension of the project and the process behind the creation of its vistas, a film will simultaneously recount the exhibition's journey and each site's series of preparatory steps and achievements.

Complementary publications (edited by the various host sites), conferences or other events could eventually accompany the exhibition.

Museographical Principles

The exhibition is based on the notions of movement, of constant swinging between the personal and the collective, the singularity (of exile, history and place) and multiplicity of contexts (social, political, memorial), fragmentation and reconstruction, effective severances and sought-after permanence.

Concretely, this approach translates into a three-tiered plan:

1) An everyday object, often banal (an icon, a piece of clothing, a gramophone, a key, a spoon, a picture, a book, a hand-written letter, etc.), is showcased and promoted to a new position as a symbol of exile.

2) A narrative on a digital display or any other support accompanies the object, unveiling its story and unfurling its emotional charge and its potential to inspire speculation. The discourse can be written, oral, musical, homogeneous or fragmented, using a large variety of materials, and is tied to the principal theme of each section, with the freedom to use as many subcategories as needed (see *infra*).

3) Background sounds, a mixture inspired from the specific atmosphere of each of the ten sections, float along the course of the exhibition.

The exhibition is divided into ten sections corresponding to the ten themes presented below. Each theme is freely developed under the responsibility of a designer. The status of those in charge is extremely variable and depends on the host site. Each theme will be signed by its designer, no matter his or her initial social or professional background.

The exhibition's specifications amount to the ten listed themes that each welcoming team (organisers and designers of the ten thematic sections) can illustrate as desired, and, above all else, with the means available at their site.

As such, the host site could be a simple school classroom or a community centre, a library or a museum, an established institution or any alternative place.

Ten Thematic Sections

PRINCIPAL THEME (TIER 2)	SUBCATEGORIES (TIER 2)	OBJECT (TIER 1)
Exile – Body	Gestures / Attitudes / Postures Clothing Food Dance	
Exile – Narrative	I / We Meaning Lies / Omissions Silences Artistic forms	
Exile – Transmission	Memories / Forgetting Commemorations / Remembrances Parents / Children, Generations	
Exile – Language	Proper nouns Lingua franca Dialects Pidgin / Gibberish Accents	
Exile – Dignity	Self-presentation Dissimulation Humiliation Loss of status Fear Violence / Trauma	
Exile – Beliefs	Faith Hopes Expectations / Deceptions Ideologies Dreams	
Exile – Emotions	Nostalgia Sorrow Laughter Humour, Irony / Self-irony Tenderness Meetings Wonders	
Exile – Distance	Displacement Transportation (means of) Detachment Correspondence Connection	
Exile – End	Solitude Seclusion Inner exile Return Death	
Exile – Law	Family Law Clandestinity Residency permit Welcome	

Exhinition Sites

Contacts have been made or are being made in Montreal, Paris, Moscow, Geneva, Brussels, Poland, the Netherlands and Taiwan. These contacts will soon be specified and formalised.

The first exhibition site will be in Montreal. The event will be organised by the group "POEXIL" (www.poexil.umontreal.ca) who is at the heart of the project's elaboration.

Curators

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June 2007
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