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Route 360, New Roads for Communication

Imaginative and Didactic Faculties in Visual Technology

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Figure 1: An installation combining visual, photographic and three-dimensional objects with text.



Press photographer Yannis Behrakis' photo is an example of the many kinds of photographs that were included in the exhibition in an effort to contextualize the exhibited objects.

Photo by Arnold Mikkelsen.

Introduction

- 1 An exhibition “is a complex assembly of technologies, interfaces, platforms, networks, media and ‘things’” (Weibel and Latour 2008: 104). The exhibition *På Flugt / Flight for Life* curated by the National Museum of Denmark deals with the experience of immigrants making their way to Europe and Scandinavia from across the Mediterranean Sea in the wake of the Syrian civil war. The exhibition is multimodal and contains all of the elements quoted above – including various types of photographed and filmed material. An exhibition invites the museum visitor to enter a three-dimensional space, constructed and created to engage the visitor. This article reflects upon the means to achieve multidimensionality and sensorial associations aimed at creating reflectivity and an understanding the experiences of the individuals forced to flee their homes. One aspect of this is the practice of collecting films and objects not only as means of documenting contemporary history but also in order to enter into dialogues, construct narratives and convey meanings related to lives, and thus form a narrative representation of refugees and their way through Europe.
- 2 Film and 360 VR are useful contemporary media to support and widen the theme of the exhibition for museum visitors. The goal of integrating moving images, 360 VR and connected narratives is to facilitate identification, imagination and understanding of the experiences of refugees. In this pursuit we collected, created and integrated audiovisual material in various ways, with and without participatory methods. In the following we shall focus on two ethnographic films and the ‘newcomer’, 360 video, and discuss the intentional or unintentional implications, ethically and methodologically, that informed our filmic objects.
- 3 The implications of translating realities into dramatized audiovisuals are not always anticipated or known in the process - obviously more so for all participants in front or behind the camera. New technical possibilities offer up an element of surprise in contrast to technology to which the visitor is accustomed and already used to decode in different settings. The framing of the camera and the rich affordances of montage carry powerful sensorial elements, and we know from today’s culture of digital mass-communication that audiences are strongly motivated and experienced in watching films with a level of historically unsurpassed visual literacy. By engaging with narrative techniques the authors argue that audiovisual technological developments have implications for our senses and perceptions of realities that we cannot always anticipate, but it should not restrain us from communicating using new technology. We cannot control the museum visitors’ experiences, in spite of our guiding theories and methods, but we certainly have responsibility for setting issues in motion.
- 4 The Danish National Museum had three major considerations when initiating the collecting of films, photographs, objects and testimonies and including them all in an exhibit. Firstly, for a National Museum collecting is part of an institutionally embedded and ongoing practice concerned with memorizing important incidents and changes in Danish society and the world. Secondly, the project wanted to draw attention to migrants and their histories. Thirdly, the exhibition aimed to offer a new perspective on what the media termed as the European migrant crisis or refugee crisis, a phenomenon that attracted massive attention in the daily news feeds and public debate from 2015 onwards.

- 5 Ethnographic documentation and visual constructions are not just replicas of reality. They perform an activity that is more than a pure representation, as Theodore R. Schatzki suggests (2001: 10). The collecting of objects is a process of selecting objects that are perceived as having representative value. This however does not imply that the selection of items can be regarded as an objective representation. We'll argue that items collected and displayed in an exhibition acts, in collaboration with various visual effects, as a total installation that in the eye of the visitor hopefully opens up to central aspects of the life as a refugee.
- 6 In September 2015, a project group was formed at the National Museum of Denmark with the task of collecting objects to document the life and conditions of refugees making their way from Syria to Denmark. Curator and anthropologist Gitte Engholm oversaw the collection project in collaboration with historian and web specialist Rune Clausen, who filmed the 360 recordings, and senior researcher Lars K. Christensen. In the autumn of 2016, ethnologist and filmmaker Elisabeth Colding came in to record and edit two films about two Syrian families now living in Denmark. None of us are visual anthropologists but we work professionally in overlapping areas in exhibition production and contribute with different experiences and knowledge in the materialization of the exhibition.
- 7 We chose to visit several refugee camps and localities in Greece as a starting point, followed by visits to refugee camps in Denmark in the autumn of 2016. During the first field trip to Greece in April 2016, the idea of making an exhibition was still just one of many possible outcomes of the project. In other words, it was uncertain where the project was moving to. We were literally working against time; almost every object used and worn during the crossing from Turkey to Greek territory, the temporary shelters, the blankets, the tents were discarded in the process once people moved on. Apart from a few precious personal objects, many individuals making the crossing had very few possessions when they arrived on European shores.
- 8 360 video or immersive video was initially brought into the project both as an experiment with the aim of adding 'thickness' to the level of documentation produced and with the aim of creating a more immersive experience in an exhibition setting.
- 9 Our trips to Greece took place during April and September 2016, when the massive flow of people across the Aegean Islands had slowed to a trickle due to the EU-Turkey deal signed on 18 March 2016. Consequently, a great deal of the collected photographic material and video footage displays a remarkable emptiness and eerie absence of the main protagonists – the children, women and men fleeing war torn Syria. This was particularly the case with the Island of Lesbos.

Audiovisuals in the Exhibition

- 10 As touched upon above, the idea of producing a contemporary exhibition about the human aspects of the refugee crisis was decided between our two field-trips. This had an impact on the audiovisual material that we chose to produce and ultimately show in the exhibition. Initially we focused our efforts on supporting the collection in a more museological sense, documenting the contexts of the objects collected: locations, details of construction, temporary dwellings, hygienic facilities in photos, video and interviews etc.

Figure 2: Collected object.



An example of documenting the context of the collected objects: power bank for mobile phones.
Photo by Rune Clausen.

- 11 Consequently photos, film and eventually 360-degree video were generally recorded in a documenting style – attempting to capture the contexts of the transient realities through which people and objects move on their journey. As the objective of the fieldwork changed to also include an exhibition, emphasis was added on photographing and recording material with an exhibition audience in mind. This meant for instance that some interviews were conducted in a more journalistic style focusing on the individual story and narrative, while photographs, film and 360 video were recorded with an added focus on composition and suitability for an exhibition setting.

Figure 3: Communicating.



An example of documenting in a more journalistic style, telling a narrative of the life of refugees. Mobile phones are vital for keeping contact with families and navigate through Europe.

Photo by Rune Clausen.

Figure 4: Signature photo for exhibition poster.



Behraki's photo was used as the signature promotional photograph for the exhibition.

Photo by Yannis Behraki.

- 12 Photographs were an integral part of the project from the very beginning and during the collecting phase photos were continually taken by authors of this article and their

colleagues from the museum. In the exhibition photos were used from a variety of sources – from the photos and film produced during the fieldwork to press photos and private photos from the individuals and organizations involved. The exhibition’s condensed narrative movement and the highlights it featured – allowing the museum visitor to follow the perilous journey from a home in war torn Syria to the relative safety of Denmark – was simultaneously defined by the material collected, the academically guided narrative and the design and aesthetics of the exhibition.

- 13 We also produced two ethnographic films for the exhibition unfolding in the final theme of the narrative “A New Home”.
- 14 An ethnographic film is created in the meeting between all actors: camera, film crew and participants, all perform something constructive. There are no claims of truth so the knowledge of partiality and interpretation in doing ethnographic work also acknowledges that film can push us into unknown, invisible territories by using filmic tools to promote original views. We wished to unfold the life of two Syrian families in their new homes in Denmark. Everyone involved had a voice and could influence the process and product, and we hoped to work together as co-creators, as we will elaborate below.
- 15 Following general ethical guidelines and museum policy we strove to obtain written permission from every identifiable film subject on all occasions. In the case of minors, permission from a parent or legal guardian was also necessary. In some cases, we did the filming first and obtained permission afterwards. The latter was the case in a camp in northern Greece where we showed the subjects a preview of the footage after filming and obtained permission. Needless to say it is not always possible to be 100% sure that we have obtained permission from every subject involved – for instance in the case where a group of children suddenly run past the lens just to disperse between the camp tents... How can we be entirely sure that every legal guardian was identified? Sometimes language barriers and a simple slip of attention is all it takes. As a rule of thumb however footage without permission is not used in the final production.
- 16 We hoped that the use of immersive 360 VR-media in the exhibition would allow visitors to experience the exhibition in a less filtered and more direct manner because of its added sensory impact. Precisely because 360 video captures a 360-degree view of the camera’s surroundings in 4K quality, detail and context is recorded in a formerly unknown complexity. It is simply not possible to do the same with a traditional still - or film - camera without involving several cameras and locations. Also, the ground-breaking and topically similar 360 video, *Clouds over Sidra* by Gabo Arora and Chris Milk supported by the United Nations and Samsung in 2015, inspired us to try our hand at 360 video.

- 17 This media file cannot be displayed. Please refer to the online document <http://journals.openedition.org/anthrovision/3435>

Video link: <https://www.with.in/watch/clouds-over-sidra>

Contemporary Ethnographic Film – And its Affordances in the Making

- 18 Our intention with the two films was to let museum visitors meet individuals, who were no longer in flight or in the category of refugees. This was our chance to create two

personal audiovisual objects without anonymizing or generalizing the individuals involved. We hoped to co-create and share authority in the making of the two films. The participant families are fellow citizens, opening their homes and telling parts of their story – both to us working at the museum and to the visitors of the exhibition.

- 19 We worked with all the participant co-creators to produce a composition of ethnographic material, whether the participants were human or non-human (the latter in the case of the camera and computer). Example of the construction and use of audiovisual objects in exhibitions might be a photograph from a Greek island combined with a UN-blanket from who knows where, a text written at a desk in Denmark that links together the objects and words to create a meaning; thus the audiovisuals are no less, no more, constructions, than any other exhibition-objects. The films are the partial and interpreted versions of the families' life which everybody involved could accept being shown publicly.
- 20 Before meeting the families, we talked about 'presenting' the two homes in similar framings; for example, a long shot of 'this is the kitchen', 'this is the living room' etc. But this kind of systematic presentation does not necessarily correspond to how the actual recordings unfold. We were a new constellation of individuals, trying to get to know each other and at the same time produce a film for the exhibition. We – the grownups – perceived it as a valuable contribution for the exhibition. But our systematic plan had to give way to the unpredictability of real life and new meetings where the agency of all present agents generated the recordings (including the children) – we acknowledge our intervention, disturbance, and transformation when filming.
- 21 Something other than reality emerges during film production. We translate reality into something else on film. It's an abstraction. On film, the three-dimensional world is abstracted into a two-dimensional world. The anthropologists Christian Suhr and Rane Willerslev write about manipulating image and sound into a filmic architecture, and in the process maybe evoking a multidimensional world for the viewer (2012: 288). Thus the filmic tools are engaged in involving the audience on many sensorial levels. We certainly aimed for empathy in our approach, hoping to guide the audience' imagination and feelings in this direction.

Figure 5: Scenographic presentation.



Participants and audience watching the ethnographic films on the 'television' in the homely scenography. Omar is recording the screening of the films of his own and another Syrian family homes and life in Denmark.

Photos by Elisabeth Colding.

- 22 The films present a possible outcome beyond the existence as a refugee, when a country opens its doors and let the refugees in. The films were put on show in the exhibition in a setting imitating a home: a framed flower-poster above a sofa, a coffee table in front of the sofa, both facing a huge TV-screen. On this TV-screen the two films, lasting about 10 minutes in all, were shown in a loop to catch the attention of the visitor passing by. Headphones were placed on the sofa, inviting the visitor to sit down and listen while watching the films. A panel with text beside the sofa provided information about the films.

- 23 This media file cannot be displayed. Please refer to the online document <http://journals.openedition.org/anthrovision/3435>

Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8c5v8xtepAg&feature=youtu.be>

Past Practice vs Present Practice

- 24 Hidden or invisible perspectives, paradoxes, relations, or opposites can be made clear, evoked, or be anticipated through the montage of a film. As Suhr and Willerslev write, “we find that montage, along with other forms of cinematic manipulation, is a precondition for evoking the invisible in its own right” (2012:284). We understand this to be a productive and insightful perception of visual literacy. There is no unbroken relationship with an intact ‘reality’ once you start working in and with the field. It’s a combination of ruptures and compositions while editing (or writing), and you might compile vertical and diagonal compositions thus creating new layers of meaning.
- 25 We certainly had an authority as exhibition-makers and hopefully we didn’t compromise the Syrian’s authority as participants while producing the films, but the films could certainly have been planned and produced in a more involving manner. The decision to produce these films for the exhibition were made in the last minute, therefore the initiative and ideas for the recordings were handled by us in order to meet the deadline. The Syrians’ participation was considered vital for the audiovisual exhibition object but the initiative to film was fully on our side and the tight time schedule didn’t allow for experiments with production scenarios and methods, such as co-creation.
- 26 Our presence as museum workers in the films, are visible and audible. We held the camera but our invisibility is very visible in a way because the individuals on film react towards us behind the camera. The participants often looked into the camera lens, which installs reflexivity and self-consciousness, for both the participant and the viewer (Møhl 2011: 233). We could have handed over the camera, let the ideas, storyboard and content be developed by the Syrians. But alas! We did not.
- 27 As Møhl writes: “Without people’s active collaboration and participation in the process of representation, in the film recordings, there is no representation, at least not of human life” (2011: 231). We were very much prepared to change the outcome, according to the various voices involved.
- 28 We tried to incorporate the feedback from all participants during recording and post production. Every edited version of the films was revised and approved by the participants. The final product is a performative audiovisual construction of how we all actively performed working in front and behind with camera, microphone and the

computer programs. The reality of the post production consisted of a lot of editing done by us at the museum, which was then reworked after valuable feedback from the participants. The audiovisual material, based on our footage, went back and forth, until all participants were satisfied with the narrative constructions.

- 29 By framing something visible you can point to something invisible – that paradox is also a filmic tool. To link recordings together across time, place, topics, and participants, can render the invisible visible. Film opens to places, voices, analyses and insights, and may reach out to the visitors in a manner other objects do not. This filmic tool also supported our overall aim to show the Syrians as individual human beings that due to the civil war in Syria had been forced to leave their home, their full lives and flee, thus ending up in Denmark as refugees. The two families were asked to make a drawing of their former home in Syria. This scene, drawing something, which does not exist anymore, makes the spectators acutely aware of the invisible former home. The filmic narratives of family life in a Danish context certainly points to the invisible complexities of maintaining the family existence in war-torn Syria as well as in Denmark.
- 30 The issue of becoming visible on film also touches upon an important consideration. Do you potentially put the participants at risk? We all discussed the security-risk of presenting the various family members on film: the father of one of the families could not appear on screen for security-reasons. He agreed in being audible on screen, but not visible. This precaution was respected in the recordings and editing, using basic cinematic tools: splitting image from sound.
- 31 The point is that all the filmic tools are there to help manufacture the narrative, the story or vision you aim for. Visual literacy is a skill like literacy *per se*. As ethnologists we should explore and use it. Visual media cannot be ignored today.

Immersive Video in the Exhibition

- 32 “People who try it say it’s different from anything they’ve ever experienced in their lives.” The words belong to Facebook’s Mark Zuckerberg (Internet Source 1) celebrating Facebook’s acquisition of a company in virtual reality technology in 2014. 360 video certainly is immersive. And more so than many other visual technologies that have become part of everyday life in a world marked by unprecedented and continuing technological advances.
- 33 We recorded 360 video using a Bluetooth controlled spherical camera about the size of a tennis ball with two 180-degree fisheye eye lenses. The camera was placed in position on a tripod and the photographer would then retreat hidden from the screen. The camera was monitored and controlled via a smartphone. This technical detail turned out to have some unforeseen implications in the exhibition. Editing post-production and programming for the exhibition was done in collaboration with Copenhagen-based virtual reality (VR) start-up KHORA.

- 34 This media file cannot be displayed. Please refer to the online document <http://journals.openedition.org/anthrovision/3435>

Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmrUv5uAoZs&feature=youtu.be>

- 35 The term virtual reality suggests that the viewer can access a certain type of unmediated truth or reality via the medium of 360 video. However tempting this interpretation may be, it is of course not the case. Like any other representation of a perceived reality it has its limitations. It is no more a representation of an objective reality than a photograph or an ordinary film. 360 video is both an object in itself, and a transmitter of messages, to extend Roland Barthes' (1977) point about the nature of press photographs.
- 36 We would suggest that the medium of 360 video currently has more in common with Victorian stereoscopic viewing stations like the Kaiser-panorama (Internet Source 2) and hand-held stereoscopes, and has the same effect on the exhibition guest as the stereoscopic images had on the Victorian public – representing another lifeworld through technology. In fact, replacing the word 'stereoscope' with 'VR head set' in the following quote from a 1906 journal praising the qualities of using a stereoscope in geography classes underlines this parallel:
- 37 ... cut off from their surroundings by the hood of the stereoscope; this tends to a concentration of attention and a more enduring impression. Also, the comparative infrequency of using a stereoscope increases the interest in the views and adds to the attention given to them. (Unstead 1906: 215)

Figure 6: Museum visitor.



In another lifeworld?

Photo by Rune Clausen.

- 38 Precisely because 360 video head set cuts the users off from their surroundings and is a result of recent technological development – just like the stereoscope was in its day – many have not yet grown accustomed to the sensory impact of the experience. And thus –

at least theoretically – allows for a more unmediated experience immersing the viewer in the locations adding a ‘thickness’ to the experience of another lifeworld.

Immersive Video vs Virtual Reality

- 39 Generally speaking, 360 video is closer related to traditional videography than virtual reality. Following Milgram’s simplified model referred to as the Reality-Virtuality (RV) Continuum (1994: 283) with a representation of an environment consisting solely of real objects in one end, and a representation of an environment consisting entirely of virtual objects in the other; everything in between being some form of mixed reality with a representational overweight of either virtual or real objects immersive video is far from the virtuality end of the continuum and much closer to reality. Obviously the 360-degree video representation still synthesizes reality through the camera’s two 180 degree fisheye lenses but is closer related to video than an entirely computer generated virtual environment.
- 40 Recently experts such as Brenda Laurel argue that a refined and narrower vocabulary should be used to distinguish between variants of virtual reality, augmented reality etc, with key elements defining virtual reality (not found in immersive video) among others being the ‘Principle of action’. A user must “be able to take action in the world and perceive the effects” (Laurel, Internet Source 3). Another one is “Affordances for narrative constructions”(Laurel, Internet Source 3): the user must be able to create his or her own stories. Oscar Raby and Sarah Jones offer parallel points concerning a sense of agency, the creation of an embodied experience and the ability to interact in their guide on BBC’s website, posing the question in the title: “Will virtual reality change the way I see history?” (Raby and Jones, Internet Source 4). These are examples of elements of a virtual reality experience that immersive video does not directly support.

Production and Use of Immersive Video

- 41 Two black VR headsets on a large box constructed from pallet collars in one corner of the exhibition allows the museum visitor access to a 6 minute 360 video viewing experience. The video covers three locations corresponding to some of the key points of the refugee journey from Syria across the Mediterranean via Greece to a destination somewhere in Europe – in this case Denmark. The locations are:
- 42 1. A municipal dump of thousands upon thousands of life jackets and debris from rubber dinghies and wooden boats on northern Lesvos in the Aegean Sea. Three different angles.
- 43 2. A military controlled refugee tent camp in northern mainland Greece not far from the Macedonian border. Three different angles: curious children playing, between a group of tents and inside a tent.
- 44 3. A temporary Danish refugee tent camp in Thisted municipality in Northern Jutland, Denmark. Four different angles: three outside and one from inside a tent.
- 45 A short accompanying text mounted just above the box provides directions for using the head set.
- 46 The VR head sets are located approximately in the middle of the exhibition flow. The exhibition plan is structured to correspond with the refugees’ journey from Syria to

Europe and is divided into seven corresponding parts. The VR experience thus breaks with the overall structure of the exhibition – primarily due to practical considerations avoiding disturbing audience flow and creating a comfortable viewing space, but also due to the decision to present the three locations representing the entire journey in a single 6 minute video. The video is played in a continuous loop.

- 47 Immediate reactions to the immersive video were predictable to some extent; many museum visitors elaborated on the “immersiveness” of the experience. “It was just like being there” one visitor said. “It activates all your senses.” Another visitor had some observations with regards to the eeriness of the footage and reflected on the strange unresponsive photographer due to the fact that the camera was remotely controlled. As mentioned above, the recording technique involved the tripod-mounted camera to be left on its own while the photographer retreated to a hidden position. The absence of the photographer added a feeling of unease connected with the direct stare of the people relating only to the camera – not the person behind. Exactly the same observation is made by Randi Marselis, Associate Professor in Cultural Encounters, Roskilde University in her blog-review of the exhibition (Internet Source 5).
- 48 In our case, it was in part a conscious decision by the videographer to step out of the scene in an attempt to capture scenes of daily life without the interference and presence of a photographer/interviewer. On the other hand, the built-in remote functionality of the camera played a part too. The camera itself ended up playing the part of a surveilling eye that was simply ignored by passers-by or – in the case of children in a camp in North Greece – approached with a wary curiosity. However, the described feeling (experienced by some viewers) of voyeuristic uneasiness in the final production was to some extent an unintended side-effect. Placing a camera on a tripod with no photographer present does not necessarily lead to a more ‘objective’ representation of reality as Margaret Mead theorized (1995: 10). But even though the camera might be able to record a precise and indexical account of the world, it is just as open to manipulation as the written word and its output just as subject to interpretation.
- 49 Several learning points and opportunities for further research can be extracted from the production and use of immersive video in an exhibition setting like *Flight for Life*.
- 50 The absence of a consciously planned detailed narrative and the inherent properties of 360 video recording technology had side effects, the above-mentioned eerie feeling bordering on a voyeuristic sense being one suggestive example. This could be incorporated more directly in the production and layout of the exhibition – perhaps by including an explanation on the recording technique in the exhibition.
- 51 The possible locations and the choice to include them in the final video guided the narrative along the lines of the exhibition in general. An obvious point perhaps, but still important to keep in mind is whether the filmmaker consciously storyboards and plans the production in detail – it’s still a narrative. It performs ‘something’. During the collection trips, we were never entirely sure of what to expect from locations and settings – and therefore only rudimentary production planning was possible. The narrative was by and large the result of editing after the fact. Virtual Space or to put it more precisely immersive space is another element of museum space that needs further addressing on a practical and theoretical level. What does this extension of the museum space do to the museum and the experience of it? Perhaps something along the lines that Ross Parry and John Hopwood’s concept of ‘Soft’ museum space – a dynamic, discursive and immersive

concept of space as opposed to physical, linear and authored 'Hard' museum space (2004: 71-73).

Figure 7: The Idomeni Camp.



13,000 fugitives gathered and took up living along a railroad on the Macedonian border.
Photo by Rune Clausen.

Exhibitions as Dramatized Testimony

- 52 As mentioned above, it was decided to go forward with an exhibition mid process during the collecting of contemporary objects. We aimed to give the visitor a chance to imagine, just for a second, what it's like to be in the shoes of a person forced to flee home. Striving to do so, we chose to address the audience directly in the exhibition texts.
- 53 We organized the exhibition in seven sections with individual themes. The first section bore the title 'Risking your life' and attempted to invite the visitor to take a leap of faith and reflect on a situation where he or she was to experience being on flight. The second theme focused on the temporality of being on flight and was titled 'From place to place'. The third theme, 'Order in chaos', illustrated how reestablishing everyday life in the temporary camps was a way to reestablish a kind of order and control in a chaotic and unpredictable situation. The fourth theme was 'The journey', illustrating the different routes taken by individuals on a large map of Europe. The fifth theme was called 'Welcome?' with a question mark to address both the mixed feelings about the 'refugee crisis' in Denmark and the personal experiences of the individuals having attained relative safety, but maybe not feeling entirely welcome or at home. The sixth theme of the exhibition was called 'Waiting time', addressing the limbo of the long wait for an answer to one's application for asylum. And the seventh and last theme was called 'A new home', pointing to the phase where asylum is finally granted and a new life in exile has to be consolidated.

Figure 8: Waiting time in a Danish asylum center.



Private life in the Danish tent camp in Thisted is defined by very austere interiors; a bed, a chair, a metal locker. Ali Jabar passes time by cultivating vegetables and keeping chickens.

Photo by Gitte Engholm and Lars K. Christensen.

- 54 The exhibition was staged and presented in the permanent exhibition of The Royal Arsenal Museum, a part of The National Museum of Denmark. Situated amid canons and historical weapons, the exhibition appeared both as a reminder of the consequences of warfare and the fragility of human existence. The exhibition area was walled off with transparent wire fencing enabling the visitors outside the exhibition area to look into parts of the exhibition. The exhibit thus tried to unfold various aspects of being a refugee with dramatic, poetic, and pragmatic means.

Conclusions

- 55 The use of film in exhibitions and particularly employing participatory approaches in this connection – e. g. having participants generate ideas, content, define the narratives and do the photographing and editing themselves, providing room for other and conflicting perspectives – can be expanded further. Almost everything is possible in a world where easy access to advanced recording and editing tools are readily available for every cell-phone owner – with very little training and experience required.
- 56 We struggle behind rapidly advancing technology to develop and reflect upon the processes and practices we are engaged in and at the same time face the constant problems of lack of funding and time.
- 57 Implying and relying on a common understanding and perception of a shared lifeworld between us (as representatives of the museum) and two different Syrian families was a necessary prerequisite. The tight time schedule for the making of the films was counterproductive to a more participatory process and leaves us wondering whether we missed out on central learning points by not handing over the camera.
- 58 In materializing an exhibition, it is evidently useful to explore the affordances and possibilities of contrasting, mirroring, highlighting, repeating, collapsing, isolating and connecting various objects or phenomena, whether they are written, are three-dimensional material objects or two and multi-dimensional audiovisual material. Every object has an agency in relation to the narrative frame of the exhibition, and the totality is expanded by the museum visitors experiences.

Figure 9: The site of the exhibition just before opening.



Mehar, to the left, and his mother Heba participated in one of the films about Syrians and their new life in Denmark.

Photo by Elisabeth Colding.

- 59 What does the sensory impact of immersive video do on a longer term? Does it carry some implications for the way we remember and ultimately understand history? As tech-reporter Maria Korolov put it on a BBC website, “Instead of it (history) being something we’ve learned about, as it is today, it will become something we have personally experienced” (Internet Source 6). How does this have an impact on our ideal of representing the past as ‘historically correct’ and our responsibilities as museum professionals? The implications of this need to be explored further, perhaps as colleague Randi Marselis has suggested (Internet Source 5) by using Alison Landsberg’s concept of ‘Prosthetic Memory’: “memories which do not come from a person’s lived experience in any strict sense”, because media and technology “alters our notion of what counts as experience” (1995:175).
- 60 In the juxtaposition of, or comparative glance at, various perspectives, new links and possibilities are created, aimed at unfolding the narrative. Thus the title of the exhibition is interpreted by the various objects and vice versa. Whether your medium of preference is moving images, immersive video, still photography or text, technology imposes limits and restrictions on what is possible to do. At times, as in the case of the remote controlled immersive video camera, it adds new unforeseen layers of complexity to the final product. But it also offers new perspectives and possibilities.
- 61 The collecting and producing of objects is constituted by politics, technology, time, money, and ethics. As always, a critical approach is essential; we must continue exploring creatively with new technologies and simultaneously discuss and problematize their implications.

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- På Flugt / Flight for Life*, The National Museum of Denmark, curator Gitte Engholm, opened in January 2017 at The Royal Arsenal Museum (part of NMD); than on show at Stiftsmuseet i Maribo

and Bornholm Museum; from September to December 2018 on view at Moesgaard Museum, titled *Efter flugten: Syriske hverdage på Samsø / After the Flight: Syrian Daily Life at Samsø*.

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ABSTRACTS

The authors argue that engaging with narrative techniques in technological developments in film has implications for our senses and perceptions of realities that we can't necessarily anticipate. But it should not restrain us from communicating by using new technology. We can't control the museum visitors' experiences, in spite of our guiding theories and methods, but we certainly have responsibility for setting issues in motion.

Some of the multiple connections, conjunctions and layers we create by bringing our methods and technology to the narratives of an exhibition only become evident for us after the production of audiovisual material. These lead us to reflect in hindsight, hoping to raise our awareness about the implications in future projects.

We discuss how newer technologies like 360 VR video can 'rattle' us out of our sensorial comfort zone because of the unexpected character of the viewing experience. And how does this affect our sense of reality in re-creating it audiovisually? We also explore the multiple significance of framing and montage in relation to the production of two films, based on participatory methods.

Les auteurs soutiennent que l'utilisation des techniques narratives développées grâce à l'évolution technologique du cinéma a des répercussions sur nos sens et nos perceptions des réalités que nous ne pouvons pas nécessairement prévoir. Mais cette évolution ne doit pas nous empêcher de communiquer en utilisant ces nouveaux moyens technologiques. Malgré nos théories et méthodes, nous ne pouvons pas contrôler l'expérience des visiteurs du musée, mais nous avons certainement la responsabilité de permettre aux interactions d'exister.

Certaines des multiples connexions, conjonctions et strates de lecture que nous créons grâce aux méthodes et aux technologies dédiées aux récits ne deviennent évidentes pour nous qu'après la production du matériel audiovisuel. Cela nous amène à réfléchir rétrospectivement, dans l'espoir de prendre conscience des implications en vue de projets futurs.

Nous abordons d'une part la manière dont les nouvelles technologies comme la vidéo 360 VR peut nous faire sortir de notre zone de confort sensoriel en raison du caractère inattendu de l'expérience visuelle et d'autre part la manière dont cela affecte notre sens de la réalité en la recréant audiovisuellement? Nous explorons également les multiples significations du cadrage et du montage dans le cadre de la production de deux films qui s'appuient sur des méthodes participatives.

Los autores argumentan que interactuar con las técnicas narrativas de los avances tecnológicos del cine tiene repercusiones para nuestros sentidos y nuestras percepciones de realidades que no siempre podemos prever. Sin embargo, eso no nos debería impedir comunicarnos mediante las nuevas tecnologías. No podemos controlar las experiencias de quienes visitan los museos, a pesar de las teorías y los métodos que nos orientan, pero sí tenemos la responsabilidad de poner los temas en movimiento.

Algunas de las numerosas conexiones, combinaciones y capas que creamos al llevar nuestros métodos y nuestra tecnología a las narrativas de una exposición solo se nos hacen evidentes después de la producción del material audiovisual. Estas nos llevan a reflexionar en retrospectiva, con la esperanza de concienciarnos sobre las repercusiones en proyectos futuros. Analizamos cómo las tecnologías más modernas, como el vídeo 360 VR, pueden sacarnos de nuestra zona de confort sensorial dado el carácter inesperado de la experiencia de visionado. ¿Y cómo afecta eso a nuestro sentido de la realidad al recrearla audiovisualmente? También exploramos la diferente trascendencia del encuadre y el montaje en relación con la producción de dos documentales basada en métodos participativos.

INDEX

Palabras claves: métodos, medios 360 VR, documentales etnográficos, encuadre, montaje, realidades, repercusiones imprevistas, responsabilidades, comunicación, agencia

Mots-clés: méthodes, 360 VR-média, film ethnographique, cadrage, montage, réalités, implications imprévues, responsabilités, communication, institution

Keywords: methods, 360 VR-media, ethnographic films, framing, montage, realities, unforeseen implications, responsibilities, communication, agency

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