



5T 2012

TITLE

A New Affair: Design History and Digital Design Museums

DATE

Conference: 17-18 May 2012

KEY DATES

Deadline for paper proposals: 1st February 2012

Notification of acceptance: 15th February 2012

Deadline for author registration: 14th April 2012

VENUE

YASAR University, Main Conference Hall

THEME

One of the institutions going through rapid and radical changes in the 21st Century is the museum. On the one hand the number of museums keeps increasing all around the world, on the other hand the way we conceive, consider and consume museums are being reconstructed. Digital museums are entirely new to us. While we are reviewing the concept of the museum, we are also reviewing the history that we think, we know.

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) develops and updates the definition of a museum from time to time. According to the recent definition, "A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment."

Keeping this definition in mind, we need to respond to the question of what we would like to 'equip' a digital Turkish Design Museum with. The Istanbul branch of ETMK (Industrial Designers' Society of Turkey) made a successful bid with Beyoglu Municipality, and received financial support for the project. The initial workshops were launched by ETMK in 14-15 October, in Istanbul. The content and context of the project

have raised key issues concerning the nature of digital museum as well as design history in Turkey. The theme of the 7th Turkish Design History Society Conference is the relationship of design history and design museums with special emphasis on Turkey. The following subjects may be inspirational:

History and Museum

Design history has always been under scrutiny in terms of its content, subject matter, methods etc. since its early days. Design museums are the inventions of the late 20th century and, in general, museums, inter alia, are arenas where the past is preserved and a version of history or versions of histories are presented to the public. In one sense, museums are active, visible and accessible façades of the past, which may or may not be in line with mainstream historiography. Therefore the position of museums regarding the concept of the past and the history may be examined from the viewpoint of design, designed and exhibited objects. One may argue that, museums' contributions to social memory through their collections, archives, exhibitions and so on, overt or covert, empower them, to some extent, over historiography. The duality of history and the museum needs exploration in the light of their reciprocal relationship.

Design History in Turkey and Digital Design Museum

The issue is vast but there are a few questions in priority: How could design concept in Turkey be conceptualized in order to be presented in a digital museum for the purpose of raising public design awareness? What are the key elements, objects and things forming and reconstructing the social memory and with what merits do they deserve to be an item in a museum collection? Who are the key actors of Turkish design? What are the 'designed objects': those industrial and mass produced objects? Those designed by industrial designers only? Or those craft designs that have some impact on daily life, society, history and industry? What does the craft do in a design museum and what place does it occupy, should or shouldn't occupy? These subjects should be argued on the basis of concrete designed objects that they have a value in design history of Turkey.

Private collections, collectors and their potential role for the establishment of a digital design museum

The refurbishment of the digital design museum will require access to key objects, specific information, series of products and so on. In this sense, in addition to those researchers dealing with history, collectors' knowledge and experience in particular areas are assets. The possibility of exhibiting collections is also a highly motivating and tempting factor for some collectors. However, each collector's items, or items in private collections are not necessarily pieces for museums. Since the pieces in museums are relatively more valuable, the value adding power of museums is known well and requires a delicate approach to the subject. In addition, it is essential to catalogue who the collectors are in Turkey, to know what they collect, to identify which objects and images are worth exhibiting. Mapping of the collections in Turkey would be of great help for future studies.

Periodization of design development in Turkey

How the design history will be displayed in a digital museum as such, is a matter of debate. Thematic approach, historical periodization, classifications of objects and subject base presentations and so on, may all be ways to reconstruct certain aspects of the past. However none of these has yet been clearly stated and agreed by those

working on history in Turkey. Therefore, whatever is proposed will face a challenge and will probably receive a good deal of criticism. Nevertheless, without those potential suggestions nothing can be built. One should start from somewhere.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Those interested in contributing to the conference with a paper are invited to send a title and an abstract of 250-300 words (in English and Turkish) by February 1st, 2012 to [bahar.emgin@yasar.edu.tr]. The paper proposal must include the essential contact details (name, surname, position, institution, email address and a cell phone number.) Selected proposals will be announced by Feb 15, 2011.

CONFERENCE LANGUAGE

The language of the conference is Turkish and English. Papers can be submitted and presented in either of the official languages of the event, Turkish or English. Please note: There won't be simultaneous interpretation.

CONFERENCE FEES

The conference fee of 150 TL covers lunch, tea and coffee services throughout the event, the closing reception and the gala dinner. Depending on the cost, it is intended to give a free copy of the proceedings to those registered.

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