

# Designing exhibitions

Introduction

# ? Designing exhibitions

- What exhibition have you seen recently?
- What kind of museum have you visited this year?
- What kind of cultural event have you attended?



# V&A

- <http://www.vam.ac.uk/>

# The V&A Exhibition Road

- design by Amanda Levete Architects in London, England
- to break down the boundary that exists between the V&A Museum and the street by taking the museum onto Exhibition Road and bringing Exhibition Road into the museum.



# The V&A Exhibition Road

- potential to bring new audiences into the museum by exposing it to passersby



# The V&A Exhibition Road



# The V&A Exhibition Road

- Entrance into the museum will unveil the juxtaposition of the old architecture to the **Amanda Levete Architects** intervention
- This entrance is not just for the new gallery; it is for the entire V&A collection.



# The V&A Exhibition Road

- The expression of the gallery ceiling is a direct response to its function and the structural challenge of 38 metres, and follows in the museological tradition of ornate neoclassic and neogothic ceilings.



# The V&A Exhibition Road

- In this way, the new architecture and engineering capabilities are reflecting on the older architecture of the building.

# The V&A Exhibition Road

- <http://www.archdaily.com/253489/video-new-va-project-amanda-levete/>

# Amanda Levete

- architect, principal of Amanda Levete Architects (known as AL\_A).
- Formerly married to Jan Kaplický with whom she had a son, for 20 years they were co-partners at Future Systems.



# Amanda Levete

- Selfridges Building, Birmingham



# Selfridges Building

- The building is part of the Bullring Shopping Centre and houses Selfridges Department Store.
- The building was completed in 2003 at a cost of £60 million and designed by architecture firm Future Systems.



# Selfridges Building

- It has a steel framework with sprayed concrete facade.
- Since its construction the building has become an iconic architectural landmark and seen as a major contribution to the regeneration of Birmingham.



# Selfridges Building





# Selfridges Building



# Lord's Media Centre

- officially known as the J.P. Morgan Media Centre for sponsorship reasons, is a building at Lord's Cricket Ground, London.



# Lord's Media Centre

- It was the first all aluminium, building in the world.
- It was built by using boat-building technology.



# Lord's Media Centre



# Amanda Levete Architects

- <http://www.amandalevetearchitects.com/>



# Designing exhibition

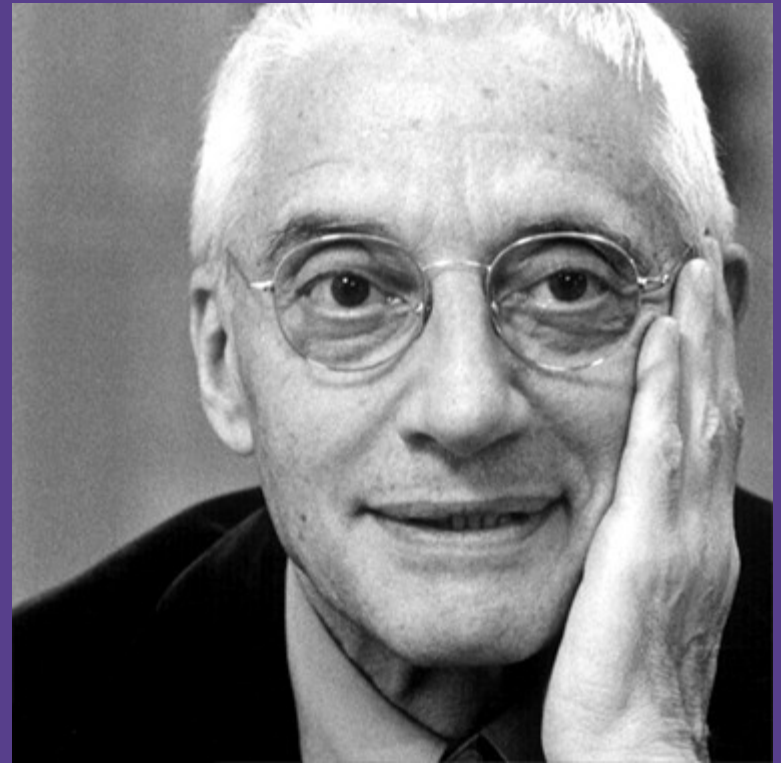
- What is the MUST when designing exhibition?

# Designing exhibition

- The basis of every project is
  - a detailed investigation
  - clear design position
  - a convincing structuring of the task

# Allesandro Mendini

- *„My work is not based on inspiration: snapping (luskat) my fingers in the night is not enough to give me an idea. I work very methodically, like a worker going off to work every morning...I am always working!“*





# Groninger museum

- <http://www.groningermuseum.nl/>



# Groninger museum



# ? **Designing exhibition**

- What do we have to investigate???

# Designing exhibition

- Themes and content
- Key statements and intentions
- Requirements, interests and positioning
- State of research
- Sources
- Object situation
- Target group determination

# Designing exhibition

- Visitor analyses
- Museum pedagogy/educational theory
- Spacial *(prostorový)* factors
- Framework conditions, preservation
- Conservational conditions
- Mobility concept, visitor pathways
- budget

# Designing exhibition

- Presentation styles
- Do you know any? Can you describe any presentation styles you've experienced?

# Designing exhibition

- Presentation theory
- Object → Presentation → Information

# Designing exhibition

- Object
  - Artefact
  - Original
  - Replica, faksimile
  - Fixtures (*vestavěné vybavení – mobiliář*)
  - Accessoires
  - Building, historical monument



# Designing exhibition

- Presentation
  - Authentic presentation
  - Museal presentation
  - Didactic presentation
  - Scenographic presentation

# Designing exhibition

- Presentation:
  - Authentic – historic building with fixtures, accessories, artworks
  - Museal – protected display of museum collections
  - Didactic – originals and reproductions, information
  - Scenographic – historical experience involving multimedia

# Designing exhibition

- Information
  - Guided presentation – lecture, guided tour,
  - Audio-guide - individual tour
  - Concise (*stručný*) guide – print, ...
  - Labeling spaces and exhibits
  - Information areas
  - Media resources

# Designing exhibition

- Initial evaluation (*počáteční evaluace*)
  - Considers task from different angles
  - Interests of visitor and sponsor of the museum are not always identical
  - Comprehensive analysis of the existing situation and all relevant areas is required

# Designing exhibition

- It should precede (*předcházet*) the introduction of concrete planning measures
- This areas should be already established during the concept phase:
  - 3D presentation
  - Scenographic presentation
  - Visualization and communication
  - Role of objects

# Designing exhibition

- Text and image
- Layout, graphics and typography
- Colors
- Lighting and illumination
- Acoustics

# Designing exhibition

- Initial evaluation
  - Analyze preconditions required to achieve objective (*záměr*)
- Schematic design
  - Essential aspects of planning task
- Design development
  - Elaboration of solutions

# Designing exhibition

- Building documentation
  - Elaboration of building documents according to applicable codes, registrations and standards
- Executive design
  - Design drawings, plans



# Designing exhibition

- Basic evaluation should also include those points:
  - Participants
  - Heading
  - Subheading
  - Key concepts
  - Brief description
  - Presentation goals

# Designing exhibition

- Models
- Exhibits – originals, replicas
- Pictorial materials
- media

# Monika Griefah

(Committee for Culture and Media)

- *„In the information society we are in danger of losing sight of contexts. Museums and exhibitions can offer a place where contexts of meaning can be experienced and opened up to discussion, where the roots of the present are revealed in the past and knowledge is conveyed (sdělit) in a way that restores our capacity for astonishment (údiv) and inquiry (otázky)“*

# Designing exhibition

- Museum is understood as a site of:
  - Topicality
  - Authenticity
  - Communication
  - Interaction
  - Contemplation
  - Entertainment

# Designing exhibition

- Exhibition design always includes a reference to contemporary history
- Ideas about contemporary presenting are constantly changing
- Good exhibition does not have to make use of the latest techniques

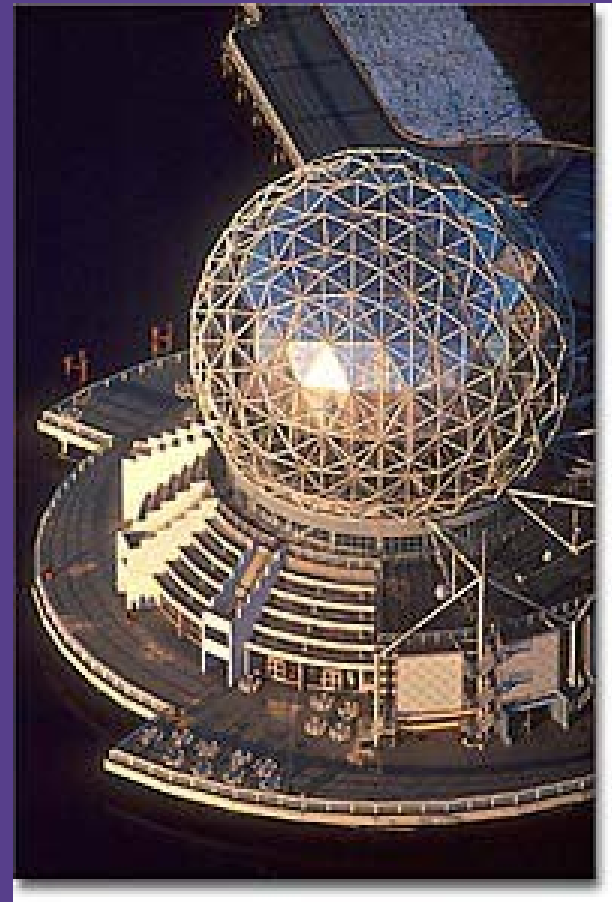
# Designing exhibition

- Too much interactive exhibitions?
- Do you have experience with any?



# Designing exhibition

- Vancouver Science World
  - <http://www.scienceworld.ca/>



# Designing exhibition

- In large museum there are different exhibition styles
- Example – Museum of Natural History Berlin
  - <http://www.naturkundemuseum-berlin.de/en/>





# Designing exhibition



# Designing exhibition

- view inside



# Designing exhibition

- The need and desire for something new must not be allowed to dismiss (zavrhnout) proven (ověřené) approaches in the service of an overall (celkový) standartized and modernized concept

# Designing exhibition

- Certain aspects and typical forms of historical facilities have their own particular appeal
- Also having preservation and exhibition value
  - A typical collection of original furniture from the 19th century has its own individual quality
  - Dioramas also remain popular today

# Designing exhibition

- Dioramas – yes or no?



# Designing exhibition



# History of Diorama

- The Diorama was a popular entertainment that originated in Paris in 1822
- An alternative to the panorama, the Diorama was a theatrical experience viewed by an audience in a highly specialized theatre.
- As many as 350 patrons would file in to view a landscape painting that would change its appearance both dramatically.
- Most would stand, though limited seating was provided. The show lasted 10 to 15 minutes, after which time the entire audience (on a massive turntable) would rotate to view a second painting.

# Large-scale Diorama

- Such large scale dioramas were not 360° panorama paintings but reduced versions with an angle of 90 to 150°.
- a tilted (*nakloněný*) plane (*rovina*) to represent what would otherwise be a level surface
  - a painted background of distant objects
  - false perspective, carefully modifying the scale of objects placed on the plane to reinforce the illusion through depth perception in which objects of identical real-world size placed farther from the observer appear smaller than those closer
  - the distant painted background or sky will be painted upon a continuous curved surface so that the viewer is not distracted by corners, seams (*spoj*), or edges.



# Designing exhibition

- Advantage x disadvantage of diorama?



# Designing exhibition

- Looks it has been taken directly from nature
- Purely static creatures

# Designing exhibition

- History of presentation:
  - Mystical – sensational cabinets of curiosity
    - 16th – 18th century
  - Systematic collections from 19th century
  - Contextual, e.g. Dioramas, beginning 20th century
  - Didactic – mostly 80's
  - Scenographic 90's
  - Multimedia based, experiential worlds 21st cent

# Designing exhibition

- *„These days, many museums seem less like temples of culture and science and more like multimedia amusement parks, with Imax screens, exhibits designed to mimic carnivals and toy stores scattered (rozházený) throughout.“*

- *Debra Galant, NY Times*

# Designing exhibition

- Clear exhibition concept defines overriding *(prvořadý)* themes:
  - Respect for listed buildings
  - Respect for the objects
  - Respect for the visitor

# Designing exhibition

- Respect for listed buildings
  - Exhibition design embraces historical space
  - Avoids dominating this space with additional structures
  - The architectural originality of museum spaces should remain visible
  - The historical spaces have a fundamental influence on the overall impression and contribute to the atmosphere of the museum

# Designing exhibition



# Designing exhibition

- Respect for the objects
  - „let the objects speak“ – 80's
  - History should be told through objects
  - Indeed objects do speak, although not in a language comprehensible for every visitor
  - Scholars act as translators
  - Designer is to make knowledge tangible  
*(uchopitelný)* and accessible



# Designing exhibition

- Respect for the visitor
  - The museum fascinates its visitors through the variety and quality of its objects
- Science centers?
  - Not entertaining the visitor with artificial experiential worlds, should be taken seriously

# Designing exhibition

- Respect for the visitor
  - Wherever possible, the goal should be to facilitate (ulehčit) a playful access to the subject matter
  - Although this may not be a goal itself
  - Information must be structured in such a way that it is easily comprehended

# Designing exhibition

- Structure
  - Information to the visitor should be organized according to a specific principle
  - Do you know any?

# Designing exhibition

- Principles:
  - Chronological
  - Thematic
  - Synchronoptic (a graphic display of a number of entities as they proceed through time)
  - Synergic (společně působící)
  - Exemplary
  - Pointed

# Designing exhibition

- What are the main plus or minus of those principles?

# Designing exhibition

- Chronological runs risk of being boring
- Thematic does not allow an integral picture to emerge (vyvinout)
- Nowadays mixture of synergic and pointed