

EXHIBITING THE FUTURE: RELEVANCY AND INCLUSIVITY IN CITY MUSEUMS' CITY LABS



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DATE OF SUBMISSION: SEPTEMBER 1, 2019

ABSTRACT

The question of the inclusive museum has been heavily debated in cultural and political communities for decades. However, while museologists and scholars focus on the importance of museums through the symbolic representativeness of their exhibitions of and for the community, they do so through observing museums that engage with the past. This focus on the historical means that there is currently inadequate literature on city museums that are increasingly aiming to interact with their audiences with questions and debates regarding the future of the city.

I seek to address this gap in literature through exploratory research at two city museums' city labs: the Museum of the City of New York's *Future City Lab* and the Historisches Museum Frankfurt's *Stadtlabor*. Utilizing historical analysis of museums' curatorial trends, expert interviews with exhibition curators, content analysis of the exhibited materials, observations, and architectural analysis; this study provides an understanding of if and how city museums utilize their city labs to engage their audiences in interactions concerning the future of the city. This study will additionally analyze these exhibitions for their efforts to be both relevant and inclusive to their local populations.

Through a close examination of the Museum of the City of New York's *Future City Lab* and the Historisches Museum Frankfurt's *Stadtlabor*, this research will provide an understanding of how city museums seek to be both relevant and inclusive in their future-oriented programming, with the objective of illustrating existing and possible practices for city museums around the world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank Kubi Ackerman and Angela Jannelli of the Museum of the City of New York's Future City Lab and the Historisches Museum Frankfurt's Stadtlabor, respectively. As the curators and project managers of these city labs your work inspired my research and your expertise fills these pages. Thank you.

To my supervisor, Martin Zerlang: your initial interest in my research helped to get this work off the ground. Thank you for your many interesting and relevant book recommendations. I hope to one day be half the walking library that you are.

Joshua Grigsby, while I was grappling with a plethora of interesting topics you led me to the city museum. For that small moment of clarity, I am eternally grateful. It also doesn't hurt that this epiphany was over a cold glass of beer.

To all of the friends and family who provided a couch, sleeping bag, air mattress, floor, pile of blankets, etc. for me to sleep on in the last two years; I sincerely appreciate you keeping me warm and dry.

My sister, Alex Campbell, I owe you thanks for letting me know it wouldn't be the end of the world if I overused commas. Thank you for always picking up the phone whenever I needed a second opinion, or just someone to babble at.

This work would be impossible without the love and support of the people who literally brought me into this world, my parents, Blaine and Camille Campbell. You handled my over-caffeinated moments with grace and patience, and without you I would have never had this amazing opportunity and all that has come with it. I love you guys.

I owe an incredible debt to Daniel Johan McCaw Hilhorst. My partner in 4cities, best friend, travel buddy, roommate, and personal chef. You tirelessly guide me through moments of insecurity and celebrate my triumphs. You also make me coffee every morning. That alone is worth endless gratitude.

Lastly, a huge thank you to Cohort 10, for an absolutely unforgettable two years.

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1. INTRODUCTION, AIMS, AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 *Statement of Interest*

Embarking on an urban studies master program with a background more firmly rooted in the arts than the social sciences, I struggled to find a foothold in an academic world that had rarely made me feel welcome. I spent my weekends and spare afternoons flitting from art galleries to museums, and back again; all while attempting to understand why I had shown an interest in urban studies in the first place – other than just for my love of living in a city. Taking a step back it became clear that my passion for cities is rooted in their rich cultural offerings, and I would not have been able to find such refuge and retreat from the stresses of academic expectation had I lived anywhere other than an urban center. Cultural institutions need cities to survive in the same measure that cities need such institutions. As John Reader states,

“Cities are the defining artifacts of civilization. All the achievements and failings of humanity are here. Civic buildings, monuments, archives and institutions are the touchstones by which our cultural heritage is passed from one generation to the next. We shape the city, then it shapes us.”¹

Thus, the perfect representation of this symbiotic relationship between culture and the urban is the city museum.

Therefore, I can conclude that my interest in how the city museum interacts with the resident of the city is due to the frequency of my personal use. Through further reading and observation, I later found the question of how the city museum seeks to engage the resident in interactions with the future of the city a fascinating addition, as the true relevancy of a museum lies within its ability to speak to its users and the public. Because, as Jan Gerchow, director of the Historisches Museum Frankfurt explains, “the city is the only thing that all the people who live there have in common - no longer the religion, the origin, any national identity - it is the place they share.”²

1.2 *Problem Statement and Research Question(s)*

The question of the inclusive museum has been heavily debated and discussed in cultural and political communities for decades.³ Twenty-first century museum scholars have historically focused on the importance of museums through the symbolic representativeness of their exhibitions of and for the community, asserting that “museum displays influence how the nation and its place in the world get imagined, even among people who never step inside their doors.”⁴ However, such research has largely focused on historical, ethnographical, or art museums. These museums principally engage with the history of a particular movement, place, artifact, or piece of art. Thus, this focus on the historical means that there is currently inadequate literature on the rapidly changing face of a unique and under-researched type of museum: the city museum.

In a new wave of museum re-openings and remodels, city museums are increasingly aiming to interact with their audiences about questions and debates regarding the future of their city. I argue that since museums mirror the community’s “highest values and truths”, it is imperative

¹ Bourbeau, Marie Louise, Caroline Butler-Bowden, Szu-yun Chang, Chi-jung Chu, Anja Dauschek, Geoffrey Edwards, Max Hebditch, et al. *City Museums and City Development*. Edited by Ian Jones, Robert R. Macdonald, and Darryl McIntyre. (Lanham, Md: AltaMira Press, 2010), 1.

² Erenz, Benedikt. “Historisches Museum Frankfurt: Einst, aber jetzt.” *Die Zeit*. October 26, 2017, sec. Culture. <https://www.zeit.de/2017/41/historisches-museum-frankfurt-neueroeffnung>.

³ See Theoretical Framework

⁴ Levitt, Peggy. “Introduction.” *Artifacts and Allegiances: How Museums Put the Nation and the World on Display*. (Univ of California Press, 2015), 5.

that we seek to understand these city museums' most recent efforts⁵. Therefore, this project aims to shed new light on the new city museum and its involvement with the future of the city. In conclusion, I will answer the question:

How do city museums' city labs seek to engage local communities in interactions with the future in relevant and inclusive ways?

In order to answer this question, I will focus on first answering the following sub-questions:

1. How do the curators of the Museum of the City of New York's *Future City Lab* and the Historisches Museum Frankfurt's *Stadtlabor* address the future of the city in the content of their respective exhibition spaces?
2. How does the architecture of the Museum of the City of New York and the Historisches Museum Frankfurt enhance or hinder accessibility and inclusion?
3. How do the Museum of the City of New York and the Historisches Museum Frankfurt leverage education and events programming in order to increase relevancy for certain communities?

⁵ Duncan, Carol. "Conclusion." *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*, (Routledge, 2005), 8.

2. Theoretical Framework

In order to understand city museums' efforts to engage local populations in discussions about the future of their cities in relevant and inclusive ways I first aim to elucidate several aspects of museology today through a review of existing literature.

2.1 Defining the Terminology

Firstly, I will define the museum at large, and illustrate what defines a city museum for the purposes of this research. Additionally, I will provide an understanding of the unique phenomenon of the "city lab" present in a small number of city museums. Secondly, I will provide short overview of the history of museums and curatorial practices in order to position this research within a clear historical framework. The following section will further illustrate more recent developments of museums in the 1970s and beyond, and era in museology known as the new museological turn. I will conclude with a response to critics of museums.

2.1.1 The Museum

The New World Encyclopedia asserts, "museums collect and care for objects of scientific, artistic, or historical importance and make them available for public viewing through exhibits that may be permanent or temporary."⁶ Though this definition is, by all means, correct; it neglects to emphasize the communicative function of museums. Museums are public entities of cultural communication and consumption, and as such, "museum displays influence how the nation and its place in the world get imagined, even among people who never step inside their doors."⁷ Museum scholar Carol Duncan goes further to assert that museums communicate the power and priorities of their respective communities, stating,

"To control a museum means precisely to control the representation of a community and its highest values and truths. It is also the power to define the relative standing of individuals within that community".⁸

Due to the public nature of most museums, it is impossible to ignore the statements that they make through the content they choose to display and whom they choose to reflect within their exhibition halls.

The International Council of Museums' 22nd General Assembly produced a definition that properly acknowledges the multi-faceted function of the modern-day museum. Their definition of a museum reads:

"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."⁹

As the world's leading committee of museum professionals dedicated to up-to-date scholarship on museums, the aforementioned definition and additional work published by the organization strongly influences a great deal of existing literature on the topic.

Additionally, for the purposes of this study, it is important to view museums as inextricable from the buildings themselves; the container in which they operate. Indeed, in understanding a museum, one must take into account its physical attributes and how it presents itself externally to the larger public, even and especially to those who may never venture through the museums' doors. As Susanna Sirefman explains in *Formed and Forming: Contemporary Museum Architecture*,

⁶ "Museum" *New World Encyclopedia*. <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Museum>.

⁷ Levitt. "Introduction." 5.

⁸ Duncan, Carol. "Conclusion." *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*, (Routledge, 2005), 8.

⁹ "Museum Definition." *ICOM*. <https://icom.museum/en/activities/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/>.

“Museum architecture is both formed by culture and culturally formative. Occasionally applauded, often overlooked, frequently bemoaned – yet absolutely essential and always there – architecture is integral to the museum experience.”¹⁰

Sirefman also aims to highlight the stresses that museum buildings are under, in that they are a rare typology that necessitates many functions. She explains,

“No other building typology represents such intricate complexities, or a multiplicity of functions as does that of the museum. Cultural repository, dynamic civic space, popular entertainment center, tool for urban revitalization – much is asked of contemporary museum architecture. A striking paradox of past achievements and future possibilities, museum architecture – unlike art, or a great collection – never stands alone.”¹¹

This link to the formation and forming of culture is particularly prudent when we observe trends in postmodern museum architecture. Globally, recently-built museums most famous for their architecture such as Frank Gehry’s Guggenheim Bilbao, and Jean Nouvel’s Louvre Abu Dhabi, among others; are often built by star architects hailing from foreign countries and contexts. This fad necessitates observation of museums architecture and within its context as,

“Connection to a local neighborhood and relevance to a specific community begins with a building attentive to its surroundings. Responsible for reflecting a diversity of outlooks, the contemporary posturban museum must present an architecture that is substantive and welcoming.”¹²

Though hundreds of alternative definitions exist to explain the role of museums, they often are incomplete or outdated, reflecting antiquated functions of museums that will be further discussed in a subsequent brief historical overview. As such, the definition and works of the International Council of Museums, as well as Sirefman’s emphasis on the importance of locally-embedded and welcoming museum architecture influence and guide the focus of this research especially in regard to my architectural analysis of my case studies.

2.1.2 The City Museum

Historically, city museums, “illuminate the city’s finest hours and the high points of its history. Essentially, they are eclectic museums of city history and the collecting habits of individuals.”¹³ However, city museums are now more complex, hoping to showcase more than just the personal collections of wealthy residents and the most gleaming moments of the city’s history. Ian Jones, honorary secretary of the Collections and Activities of Museums of Cities (an international committee within of the International Council of Museums) explains these recent changes,

“...this relatively new museum of the city that looks beyond the safety of the city’s past to the uncertainties of the present and even to the uncharted waters of the future has become increasingly common...Its subject is the city: This is its only artifact. This artifact is, however, alive, all around the museum, and relentlessly changing.”¹⁴

The new function of a city museum can be difficult to capture; in a 2011 seminar funded by the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, architectural scholar Giulia Mezzalama lamented the difficulties in attempting to define the city museum. She explained,

“Today, the term ‘city museum’ is highly nuanced, with a wealth of possible interpretations. The museum is an extraordinary vehicle for creating a city’s sense of identity as well as contributing to its collective memory and interpreting its history. It is a place which embodies the culture of a city and where that culture can be rediscovered, including through new means of communication.”¹⁵

¹⁰ Sirefman, Susanna. “Formed and Forming: Contemporary Museum Architecture,” n.d., 318.

¹¹ Ibid, 297.

¹² Ibid, 317.

¹³ Bourbeau, *City Museums and City Development*. 4.

¹⁴ Ibid, 6.

¹⁵ Mezzalama, Giulia. “Built City, Planned City, Virtual City: The City Museum.” *Planning Perspectives* 27, no. 3 (July 2012), 454. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02665433.2012.686577>.

The importance of the creation of city identity and interpretation of history is noted time and time again in literature on city museums. Additionally, Mezzalama's statement on discovery of culture through communication is a concept that can be found in every museum – providing an understanding of the positionality of city museums within the larger framework of all museum institutions. Despite her holistic definition, Mezzalama neglects to recognize the importance of people within her definition, as Jones explains "...there is perhaps a greater recognition than before that city museums are dealing not just with city treasures, but with the lives of people and their interaction with each other and with their urban environment".¹⁶ Additionally, we must also take into account the fact that the museum is a place, a physical location within the city.

Duncan Grewcock, in a 2006 issue of *Museum International*, addresses the necessity of city museums to be place-based, explaining them as,

"...an open-ended, trusted democratic space, that can be physically experienced as a quarter of the city, but also used as a site for debate, discussion, and experimentation on urban issues with the context of a city's past, present, and future...the museum as a networked, distributed conversation rather than an inward-looking institution."¹⁷

Mezzalama and Grewcock both emphasize the importance of city museums as creators and reinforcers of the narrative of the city – but only Jones and Grewcock also stress the presence of the future in the city museum. This question of the future of the city, in the context of the city museum, is a theme rapidly generating interest in the city museum community. In fact, the 2019 theme for the annual International Council of Museums' subconference held by the Collections and Activities of Museums of Cities is "Museums as Cultural Hubs – Past, Present, and Future". This conference topic shows that the museum community at large is valuing the importance of the city museum's role in discussions of the future. Thus, in 1995, Nichola Johnson was anticipating future trends when she wrote in *Museum Journal*:

"The best city museums act as a starting-point for the discovery of the city, which can lead people to look with fresh, more informed and more tolerant eyes at the richness of the present urban environment and to imagine beyond it to past and possible future histories."¹⁸

The city museum as a forum in which to learn the history of the city in order to understand the present and in turn shape the future is particularly pertinent for this research on city museums' interactions with the future. Additionally, the city museum as a building embedded within the built environment and prevailing cultures of its surroundings will be observed and analyzed moving forward.

2.1.3 The City Lab

The emergence of new city museum typologies has led to the creation of the city lab. The city lab is designated as a lab, instead of an exhibition, due to its transitory and experimental nature. The Museum of the City of New York explained why they designated it as such:

"On one hand, [we] wanted to set visitors' expectations about what they might experience in a place like this, as opposed to just a gallery because it requires a different type of engagement...and to emphasize that it is a place of change and experimentation."¹⁹

Additionally, Angela Jannelli of the Historisches Museum Frankfurt elucidates,

"I think it is a really good metaphor because in a lab you have...it is a research space...the knowledge is not already concrete – it is still kind of fluid, you still have to

¹⁶ Bourbeau, et al. *City Museums and City Development*, 7.

¹⁷ Ibid, 9.

¹⁸ Ibid, 10.

¹⁹ Appendix 7.4.1

reflect upon it, you make some experiments. You put things together and look how the reaction is, so I think it is a good metaphor the lab.”²⁰

Thus, the “city lab” is a place for experimentation, where museum visitors can interact with content in new ways within the museum setting.

2.2 Historical Overview

In this section I aim to provide a short overview of the history of the museum in two parts. First, I will illustrate the origins of the museum from ancient Greece until the infamous World’s Fairs in London and New York. I will then explain the disciplinary function that museums displayed until the “new museology” of the 1970s. In the second section I will elucidate the pillars of “new museology” and the consequences of its implementation. The subsequent sections on relevancy, accessibility, and inclusion are a direct result of the new museological turn.



Figure 1: timeline of museological developments²¹

2.2.1 Then – Ancient Greece to the Late 20th Century

The word museum comes from the Latin word, “musea”, which finds its origin in the Greek “mouseion”, denoting a place or temple dedicated to the muses – the patron divinities of the arts. Therefore, ancient Greek museums were dedicated to the muses but were utilized “more usually as a place where the arts and learning were cultivated. Thus ‘museum’ came to mean a place of education.”²² Despite the early presence of museums in ancient societies, their prevalence in written history largely disappears between 280 BCE with the legendary museum of Alexandria in Egypt and reappears with the first cabinets of curiosities in Europe during the renaissance.

These cabinets of curiosities (also known as wonder-cabinets or *Kunstkabinett*, in German) were personal collections created by citizens who had the financial means to travel and purchase such items, often aristocrats and rulers. The “cabinet” was conceived of in earnest in the 1600-1700s, as a sort of encyclopedia of artifacts that today we would put into separate geology, ethnography, art, and natural history museums. As explained by Peter Thomas on Charles I of England’s collection, “The *Kunstkabinett* itself was a form of propaganda” to externalize the wealth and power of the cabinet owner.²³

Throughout time, these collections grew into princely, state, and national collections of items purchased (or more often taken) during conquests and colonization. These collections became too large for one room, and the museum building was borne. The British Museum in London was founded in 1753 and consisted of Sir Isaac Sloan’s own oversized personal collection of curios. The Age of Enlightenment brought public museums into society when the Vatican’s Museo Sacro became the first museum open to the middle and upper classes in 1756. Three years later (in

²⁰ Appendix 7.4.2

²¹ Produced by author

²² *Museum* - New World Encyclopedia. <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Museum>.

²³ Powell, Brent. *Collection Care: An Illustrated Handbook for the Care and Handling of Cultural Objects*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 6.

1759) the British Museum opened its doors to the public though application for entry was mandatory and waits for admission were long and not guaranteed.²⁴

The French Revolution brought about the first truly public museum in 1793, when the Louvre opened its doors and “for the first time in history free access to the former French royal collections [was available] for people of all stations and status.”²⁵ The opening of the Louvre was the catalyst for museums to open publicly worldwide. Museum scholar Tony Bennett explains, “the seizure of the Louvre in the name of the people remains, insofar as there are such things, *the* founding moment of the modern public museum, and the extent of its influence is beyond dispute...”²⁶

This accessibility led public museums to take on the role of educating the masses, arguably their “aspiration was to transform both the political crowd and the idlers who had earlier got up to all sorts of mischief in the dark and secluded corners of the British Museum or Westminster Abbey into well-regulated publics...”²⁷ In his reflection on the World’s Fair Crystal Palace exhibition in New York in 1853, Martin Zerlang argues that, “in the processes of civilization and mental urbanization the importance of such establishments as the Tivoli Gardens and the World’s Fairs cannot be underestimated.”²⁸ Museums existed in this iteration, until the evolution of the “new museology” of the 1970s when pressures to change the function of the “civilizing” museum emerged.

2.2.2 And Now – New Museology of the 1970s

The shift to the “new museology” of the 1970s was borne from the overwhelming societal criticism emerging that claimed,

“museums were isolated from the modern world, elitist, obsolete and a waste of public money...[and] the major social role of museums was to ‘civilise’ and ‘discipline’ the mass of the population to fit their position within society...”²⁹

As a response to this criticism, “new museology” focused on redistribution of power and “a redefinition of the relationship that museums have with their communities.”³⁰ Throughout the end of the twentieth century museums increasingly aimed to become more representative of diverse communities, provide roles for the public within the creation and curation of exhibitions, and have even taken “an active role in tackling discrimination and inequality within society...”³¹

Additionally, a newfound focus on inclusion and relevancy have emerged, with “education now argued to have a central position in museums”.³²

This new museological “shift from inward focus on collections and preservation to outward focus on education and visitors [has been described] as a ‘revolution’ in museums.”³³ Now it is nearly impossible to find a museum that does not offer tours and educational programming for school children, while some institutions with more funding even offer teacher training, young adult courses, summer day-camps, and supplemental high school or college classes. In the 2006

²⁴ Lewis, Geoffrey. “Museum | Definition, History, Types, & Operation.” Encyclopædia Britannica, n.d. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/museum-cultural-institution>.

²⁵ *Museum - New World Encyclopedia*.

²⁶ Bennett, Tony. “Introduction.” *Museums, Power, Knowledge: Selected Essays*, (Routledge, 2017), 4. www-taylorfrancis-com.ep.fjernadgang.kb.dk, doi:10.4324/9781315560380.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 6.

²⁸ Zerlang, Martin. “Urban Life as Entertainment.” *The Urban Lifeworld*. (Center for Urbanitet Og Æstetik, Institut for Litteraturvidenskab, Københavns Universitet. 1998), 316.

²⁹ McCall, Vikki, and Clive Gray. “Museums and the ‘New Museology’: Theory, Practice and Organisational Change.” *Museum Management and Curatorship*, vol. 29, no. 1, (Jan. 2014), 20.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 20-21.

³¹ *Ibid*, 21.

³² *Ibid*.

³³ Munley, Mary Ellen, and Randy Roberts. “Are Museum Educators Still Necessary?” *Journal of Museum Education*, vol. 31, no. 1, (Mar. 2006), 29.

article *Are Museum Educators Still Necessary?* in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Museum Education*, Mary Ellen Munley and Randy Roberts proclaim,

“If collections are the heart of museums, what we have come to call education – the commitment to presenting objects and ideas in an informative and stimulating way – is the spirit.”³⁴

In fact, the importance of education in museums is so prevalent that it even takes a place within the International Council of Museums’ definition of a museum, as “for the purposes of education...”³⁵ This new museological turn has created new exhibition formats like exploratory labs, interactive exhibits, and the use of virtual reality. Therefore, the museum visitor is increasingly experiencing exhibitions that embed them not only within the building and its urban environment, but within the exhibitions themselves. This exhibitionary shift is in direct relation to the foundation of “new museology” where “there is an awareness of social accountability and social (as well as moral) responsibility in the museum.”³⁶

2.2.3 Critics of Museums – Responding to Foucault

It is here that I will respond to the main criticism facing museums today, that which is linked to the institutions’ authority and dominance, which I argue is largely an out of date critique. In Michel Foucault’s influential work *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* he illustrated the concept of the Panopticon: an enclosed, segmented space where all can be observed but the observed is incapable of seeing the observer. He explained,

“Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So, to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action...”³⁷

Though Foucault most popularly referenced the prison, asylum, hospital, or the school as the prime examples of the Panopticon – he also expands such a definition to include other “social institutions” – a term vague enough to capture the attention of the museum community. Scholar Ka Tat Nixon Chen reflects a profound pattern within the community of museum scholars and critics, stating, “Foucault saw the possibility of these institutes to form a vast network to regulate the behavior of people in a society. Museums are a part of these institutes.”³⁸

Steven Conn, author of *Do Museums Need Objects?*, responds to Foucault and other museum critics’ assertion of the museum as instrument of panoptic power in a startlingly simple, yet passionate cry;

“Treating museums as part of the same institutional constellation as prisons, asylums, and hospitals simply begs the question of why people would ever go, because, of course, only schoolchildren are forced to...As any resident of the former Soviet Union will happily tell you, a day at the Hermitage is not the same thing as a day in the Gulag. To conflate the two insults the intelligence of those who come to museums and the dignity of those who have suffered real imprisonment.”³⁹

Conn’s argument here is obvious, that if the museum were truly a place of dominant punishing power, people simply would not attend. Though Conn makes a fair point here, it is a stark one – assuming that the punishment provided by the institution would be overt enough to elicit such a strong response from the museum-going community.

³⁴ Munley, et al. “Are Museum Educators Still Necessary?” 31.

³⁵ “Museum Definition ICOM.” <https://icom.museum/en/activities/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/>.

³⁶ McCall, et al. “Museums and the ‘New Museology’: Theory, Practice and Organisational Change.”, 21.

³⁷ Foucault, Michel. “Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,” (1975), 201.

³⁸ Chen, Ka Tat Nixon. “The Disciplinary Power of Museums.” *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, (2013), 407. <https://doi.org/10.7763/IJSSH.2013.V3.271>.

³⁹ Conn, Steven. “Introduction.” *Do Museums Still Need Objects?* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 3-4. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt3fh6rd>.

Scholar Tony Bennett asserts that museums are both alike and unlike prisons and asylums. He maintains that they are regulatory institutions but, like Conn, acknowledges that the visitors can come and go as they please. Kevin Hetherington, professor of sociology and geography, responds to Bennett in his article *Foucault and the Museum*, “For Bennett, the museum is not a carceral institution per se but, along with other forms of exhibition, a more disciplined form of spectacle in which the once excluded unruly mob is regulated into the more orderly public or audience of modern civil society.”⁴⁰ Bennett’s most recent work, *Museums, Power, Knowledge*, focuses almost solely on the museum as vehicle for control – perhaps overemphasizing the role of museums in late 18th century Britain, when the British Museum aimed to provide the lower classes access to entertainment outside of gambling and drinking in order to teach and regulate their behaviors. Hetherington perhaps explains the relationship between Foucault and museums best when he expounds upon Bennett’s thoughts on the disciplinary function of museums,

“It is not, I would argue, that Bennett is wrong in his reading of the museum but that, in drawing as he does on this aspect of Foucault’s work from his later work, he transforms one element of the operation of the museum – its disciplinary function – into a definition of the museum project as a whole. Museums may have had such a function but, I would argue, they operate in other, less clearly defined, ways too.”⁴¹

Hetherington provides a more balanced idea of the power at work in museums, admitting that yes, depending on the museum’s context a disciplinary function may exist, but that it is definitively not the sole function of the institution.

However, I argue that the new museological turn of the late 20th century shed light on these panoptic practices and has thus in turn provided alternatives to such experiences. For example, as referenced in my discussion on new museology⁴² the new emphasis on education, relevance, and inclusivity has changed the face of many museums; rendering such criticism outdated and moot. Hetherington supports this view, explaining, “this new museology has been more interested in the position of *the museum* as well as in museums within society, and that includes addressing some distinctly Foucauldian themes.”⁴³

2.3 Pillars of New Museology

The “new museological” shift at the end of the 20th century led to an increased importance of the museum as a site for relevance, accessibility, and inclusivity in society. The subsections of this chapter will define these three pillars and how I will utilize the terms in my research.

2.3.1 Relevancy

Relevancy is an important goal for city museums, and museums at large, in order to retain a lively audience, engage their community, and maintain viable funding to preserve their collections and look forward to the future of the institution. Gail Anderson, author of *Museums and Relevancy*, explains,

“Relevancy has reentered the national discourse among museum colleagues, triggering discussions about whether or not museums can demonstrate their public value, and whether or not museums are viable players in building healthier communities.”⁴⁴

Consequently, it is imperative for museums to continuously strive to create relevant practices for as large a local public as possible in order to demonstrate their public value for their communities.

⁴⁰ Hetherington, Kevin. “Foucault and the Museum.” *The International Handbooks of Museum Studies* (American Cancer Society, 2015), 28. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118829059.wbihms102>.

⁴¹ Ibid, 28.

⁴² See section 2.2.2

⁴³ Hetherington. “Foucault and the Museum.”, 21.

⁴⁴ Anderson, Gail. “Museums and Relevancy.” *Journal of Museum Education*. (2006), 3. <https://www.doi.org/10.1080/10598650.2006.11510524>

Defining a concept as individualized as relevancy allows for many possible interpretations of the word. Jane Nielsen explores this conundrum in her article *The Relevant Museum: Defining Relevance in Museological Practices*, acknowledging,

“It is not an easy concept to define, as the understanding of new perspectives and realizations will always be subjective; what is relevant to one visitor or one museum may not be so to another”⁴⁵

This question of relevancy will undeniably shift depending on the visitor’s background and their goals when consuming museum content and programming. This personal subjectivism is why Nielsen states that, “creating relevance in museums is closely connected to both personal and social interaction”⁴⁶ Anderson agrees with this sentiment clearly stating,

“...what is relevant is open to broad interpretation and diverse opinions, but it is clear that determining what is relevant cannot be defined and shaped through internal discussions and decision-making.”⁴⁷

She further elucidates:

“Determining how to make museums relevant is about deeper connections with our publics, communities, and constituents, *and* having our populace experience museums in ways integral and supportive of their lives and the future health of their communities.”⁴⁸

Both Nielsen and Anderson stress the personal within the creation of relevant practices – necessitating observation on how these institutions interact with their audiences. For the purposes of this research, relevance can be defined through observed interactions between the visitors and the museum content – their level of engagement not only in the exhibitions themselves, but also in their creation.

In 2008 the American Alliance of Museums’ Center for the Future of Museums commissioned a report, *Museums & Society 2034*, and a follow up *Demographic Transformation and the Future of Museums*. These two studies,

“described the changing face of the U.S. and its impact on museums...these reports urge that museums must be civically engaged and reflect the diversity of their communities to remain relevant.”⁴⁹

The importance of engagement with diverse communities is also integral to my research – which will be served by an analysis of exhibition content in order to ascertain which populations are being reflected and involved in the creation of the museum’s discourse.

2.3.2 Accessibility

In order to provide a suitable definition and understanding of inclusion in museum practices, I must first discuss and define accessibility. Put simply, for the purposes of my research, accessibility is the provision of the minimum allowances necessary for inclusion to exist. Youth.gov, an American organization that provides online local and federal resources to children explains that,

“...one part of inclusion involves creating true accessibility, rather than simply providing accommodations. A way to accomplish this is through universal design, which includes designing products and environments to be useable to the greatest extent possible by everyone, regardless of age, ability, or status in life.”⁵⁰

To delve further into defining accessibility, the American Alliance of Museums explains,

⁴⁵ Nielsen, Jane K. “The Relevant Museum: Defining Relevance in Museological Practices.” *Museum Management and Curatorship* 30, no. 5 (October 20, 2015), 376.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09647775.2015.1043330>.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Anderson. “Museums and Relevancy”, 3.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 4.

⁴⁹ Farrell, Betty, Maria Medvedeva, and Cultural Policy Center. “Demographic Transformation and the Future of Museums.” *Center for the Future of Museums*. (2010), 54.

⁵⁰ “Inclusion and Accessibility” *Youth.Gov* <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/inclusion-and-accessibility>.

“accessibility is giving equitable access to everyone along the continuum of human ability and experience. Accessibility encompasses the broader meanings of compliance and refers to how organizations make space for the characteristics that each person brings.”⁵¹

Accessibility is most often associated with physical disability, where “accessibility issues for families range from the physical needs of a multi-generational group that may include both a stroller and wheelchair, to the need for information both at home on the internet or in the gallery that will answer orientation, comfort, and wayfinding questions.”⁵² Therefore, accessible practices can range from the provision of wheelchair ramps to different opening hours for people with sensitivity to crowds and noise.⁵³ Those without need for accessible practices often take them for granted, assuming that such provisions are legally mandated and enforced. However, accessibility laws and protections vary widely depending on what country, and even what building, you are in.⁵⁴



Figure 2: disability activists lead a march (left) and participants in “Capitol Crawl” (right)⁵⁵

Initial efforts to provide public accessibility to those with disabilities began in the United States after World War II, in response to the return of disabled veterans and the visibility of the polio epidemic. These efforts were met with congressional response in 1968 with the Architectural Barriers Act; and after extensive demonstrations and protests due to the Act’s delay, the subsequent Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (also known as the ADA) was passed.⁵⁶ The Americans with Disabilities Act made the United States of America,

“the first country to establish architectural access as a national law, and its statutes form the basis of global declarations such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which includes a commitment to ensure access ‘to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information

⁵¹ “Definitions of Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion.” *American Alliance of Museums*, April 30, 2018. <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/diversity-equity-accessibility-and-inclusion/facing-change-definitions/>.

⁵² McRaney, D. Lynn. “Shaping a City Museum’s Future: Developing an Audience-Centered Approach.” *Journal of Museum Education* 38, no. 1 (March 2013), 56. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10598650.2013.11510755>.

⁵³ “How Museums Are Becoming More Sensory-Friendly For Those With Autism.” *Smithsonian*. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/how-museums-are-becoming-more-sensory-friendly-for-those-with-autism-180967740/>.

⁵⁴ “ADA.Gov.” <https://www.ada.gov/>.

⁵⁵ Olin, Tom. “Disability History Museum--ADA Demonstration.” <https://www.disabilitymuseum.org/dhm/lib/catcard.html?id=492>.

⁵⁶ Williamson, Beth. *Accessible America: A History of Disability and Design*. (NYU Press: Jan, 2019).

and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public.”⁵⁷

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has over 160 signatories and 177 ratifications but is in no way legally binding. This means that despite the European Union’s participation it is up to each member state to enact and enforce their own laws on accessibility and disability rights. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights’ 2011 study to ascertain if there were mandatory accessibility standards in EU Member States for national and local authority buildings concluded that while 15 EU Member states have mandatory standards; “Cyprus, Germany, Greece, and Sweden’s legislation allows for exceptions or only requires the partial application of accessibility standards when altering existing buildings.”⁵⁸

This study is reflective of Williamson’s assertion in *Accessible America: A History of Disability and Design*, that “Often these features were added reluctantly, as technical after-thoughts, or were difficult to use, requiring people who needed them to ask or search for supposedly accessible services.”⁵⁹ Therefore, I argue that due to a lack of streamlined, supra-national regulation of accessibility standards in public buildings, accessible practices in museum buildings cannot be taken for granted as being present. Now that I have established that accessibility is a prerequisite for inclusion, my study will first take note of the presence or absence of accessible practices, and only then will I be able to observe inclusive practices.

2.3.3 Inclusivity

In *Inclusion and Museums: Developing Inclusive Practices* author Hannah Shepherd argues that “museums are used as learning organisations and, as such, need to consider how to create an inclusive environment.”⁶⁰ Not to be confused with accessibility, inclusivity within museums and educational institutions focuses on the ability for all people (not only those with disabilities) to feel included within the institution’s practices. Shepherd defines inclusivity as separate from accessibility in that it can be thought of as “the principles and processes that are involved with increasing...capacity [to] respond to pupils’ diversity and promote greater participation for all pupils.”⁶¹ Whereas, the American Alliance of Museums defines inclusivity as,

“the intentional, ongoing effort to ensure that diverse individuals fully participate in all aspects of organizational work, including decision-making processes. It also refers to the ways that diverse participants are valued as respected members of an organization and/or community.”⁶²

They further explain that, “in order to leverage diversity, an environment must be created where people feel supported, listened to and able to their personal best.”⁶³ Therefore, it is a necessity for inclusive museums to be mindful of intersectionality; and must create practices that are equitably available to peoples of all races, genders, migration status, and financial backgrounds.

Though not the main focus of my study, it would be remiss to not acknowledge the difficult situation that museum directors are put in while attempting to attract wider audiences. “Museum directors...have addressed charges of elitism leveled by an earlier generation and increased their audience by adding cafés, shops, performance events, and so forth, only to find themselves

⁵⁷ Williamson, *Accessible America: A History of Disability and Design*, 2.

⁵⁸ “Fundamental Rights Report 2011.” European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. (2011) <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2019/fundamental-rights-2019>.

⁵⁹ Williamson, *Accessible America: A History of Disability and Design*, 2-3.

⁶⁰ Shepherd, Hannah. “Inclusion and Museums: Developing Inclusive Practice.” *British Journal of Special Education* 36, no. 3 (September 2009), 1. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8578.2009.00437.x>.

⁶¹ Ibid, 1-2.

⁶² “Definitions of Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion.” *American Alliance of Museums*, April 30, 2018. <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/diversity-equity-accessibility-and-inclusion/facing-change-definitions/>.

⁶³ Ibid.

accused of turning museums into Disneyland.”⁶⁴ Though a rich topic for a different study, I do not hope to analyze these assertions of museums as centers of ‘info-tainment’ – instead, I aim to focus on inclusivity through the notation of museums’ educational outreach initiatives, admissions fees, and events programming in order to ascertain the presence of inclusive practices.

Relevancy is inexorably linked to inclusivity, in that, while relevancy can be thought of as the reflection of the audience within the museum’s content; inclusivity is the goal and process of getting those diverse audiences to visit the museum in the first place. Thus, through my research I will be able to ascertain if and how museums are utilizing relevant, accessible, and inclusive practices to include diverse audiences in their future-oriented programming.

2.4 Defining the Local

In order to have a greater understanding of whom museums are aiming to cater their offerings toward, it is important to define the local, or locality, first. As David Harvey explains, “place has to be one of the most multi-layered and multi-purpose words in our language.”⁶⁵, and in an increasingly globalized world, it becomes more difficult to pinpoint the physical and social barriers that define us. As the complex questions of space and place are not the main focus of my study, I aim to very briefly outline the thinking that has led me to the definition of the “local” that I will be utilizing for my research. Utilizing the works of a geographer who has devoted his life’s work to defining and understanding place and locality, I consulted David Harvey. He explains,

“There are all sorts of words such as milieu, locality, location, locale, neighbourhood, region, territory and the like, which refer to the generic qualities of place. There are other terms such as city, village, town, megalopolis and state, which designate particular kinds of places. There are still others, such as home, hearth, ‘turf’, community, nation and landscape, which have such strong connotations of place that it would be hard to talk about one without the other.”⁶⁶

Therefore, Harvey’s explanation that all layers and complexities of place rely on one another to define themselves – allows us to see that “...place, then, is much more than a container or a mental construct. It is both text and context...”⁶⁷

This complexity of place is in direct contrast to the simplistic mechanisms by which museums measure where their visitors hail from. Both the Historisches Museum Frankfurt and the Museum of the City of New York measure where the visitor originates in a different way. The Museum of the City of New York records a total count of their visitors; including door entry, school groups, tour groups, and visitors who attend their events at the museum. Upon entry the clerk records the postal code of the visitor which is then distilled into a proportion of New York City vs. non-New York City locals.⁶⁸ Conversely, the Historisches Museum Frankfurt does not measure where their visitors come from upon entry to the museum. Instead, they collect total number of visitors at entry (also including school groups, tours, and events) and visitors are able to voluntarily participate in a questionnaire prior to their departure. This voluntary questionnaire (in German) asks for visitor’s postal codes and country of origin – allowing the museum to note the proportion of German and non-German visitors.⁶⁹ Consequently, the Museum of the City of New York

⁶⁴ Conn, Steven. “Introduction.” In *Do Museums Still Need Objects?* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 4. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt3fh6rd>.

⁶⁵ Harvey, David. “From Space to Place and Back Again: Reflections on the Condition of Postmodernity.” *Mapping the Futures*, (September 10, 2012), 4. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203977781-9>.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Knox, Paul L., and Steven Pinch. *Urban Social Geography: An Introduction*. Sixth edition. (London New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 194.

⁶⁸ See Section 7.2.1

⁶⁹ See Section 7.2.2

focuses their definition of “local” at the city level, while the Historisches Museum Frankfurt prioritizes the national scale. The difference shown in scale highlights Massey’s assertion that, “we need to conceptualise space as constructed out of sets of interrelations, as the simultaneous coexistence of social interrelations and interactions at all spatial scales, from the most local to the most global.”⁷⁰

Therefore, for my study I aim to illustrate and analyze how both the *Stadtlabor* and the *Future City Lab* aim to engage their visitors on the neighborhood, city, national, and global scales; through interviews with curators, observations, content analysis of the exhibitions, and architectural analysis of the exhibition spaces and museum as a whole. I have chosen this multi-scalar approach because as Robert Archibald’s *The New Town Square* asserts, “lack of attachment to place disembodies memory, sunders relationships, promotes prodigal resource consumption; it threatens democracy itself...”⁷¹ and thus, I aim to illustrate if and how these museums are seeking to make such attachments.

⁷⁰ Knox. *Urban Social Geography: An Introduction*, 80.

⁷¹ Brown, Jeffrey P. *The New Town Square: Museums and Communities in Transition*, History: Reviews of New Books, 33:2, 5253, (2005), 1. DOI: 10.1080/03612759.2005.10526453

3. Cases and Methodology

3.1 Introduction to the Cases

Though this research does not endeavor to be comparative but rather describe and analyze two cases independently, I still aim to consider cases that contain notable similarities. With that in mind, my two case studies are the *Future City Lab* within the Museum of the City of New York (hereafter: MCNY) and the *Stadtlabor* at the Historisches Museum Frankfurt (hereafter: HMF). Despite the difference in population and geographic size of Germany and the United States; both nations are key economic players on the global stage. On the urban level, while there is a discrepancy in city population size between Frankfurt and New York City, both cities maintain the primary financial functions of their nations and carry strategic and symbolic power as global hubs. As Ian Jones explains in *City Museums and City Development*, “London, New York, Frankfurt, and Tokyo are financial centers that leap national boundaries...and through migration, have a remarkably diverse, multicultural population.”⁷² Hence, as primary financial centers for their countries, New York City and Frankfurt share disproportionately high shares of foreign-born populations in comparison to their national contexts and serve as important transit nodes for their nations’ goods and people.

I claim that the cases I have chosen further bridge the gap in difference between these two urban centers as both museums share two important characteristics. Firstly, both museums have recently undergone extensive building changes; the MCNY underwent a remodel in 2006 and 2016 and HMF received an entirely new building in 2017. I chose two museums with exhibitions that have recently undergone major changes because they serve as ideal examples of up-to-date exhibition spaces reflecting the contemporary wishes and priorities of the museums. Secondly, both museums’ websites claim to focus not only on the history of their respective cities, but also the future. With both museums claiming to address the future of their respective city I am able to observe if and how they achieve this, without unfairly assessing a case that does not make a such an assertion. Lastly, both museums contain city labs, a concept previously defined by each cases’ respective curators as experimental forums for visitors to interact with the city and have their voices heard.

3.1.1 Museum of the City of New York

The Museum of the City of New York was founded in 1923 by Henry Collins Brown, a Scottish-born writer with a vision of a populist approach for the city, in order to preserve and present the history of New York City and its people. The museum’s original location was in the Gracie Mansion, but moved into its current location of 1220-1227 Fifth Avenue between East 103rd and 104th Streets in 1932.⁷³ The museum is located directly across 5th Avenue from Central Park, at the northern-most end of Museum Mile. Its current home is a red brick building with marble trim, designed and built in 1929-1930 by Joseph H. Freedlander in a neo-Georgian style.⁷⁴ In 1967, the museum building was designated as a landmark. The museum’s website states,

“The Museum of the City of New York fosters understanding of the distinctive nature of urban life in the world’s most influential metropolis. It engages visitors by celebrating, documenting, and interpreting the city’s past, present, and future”⁷⁵

The museum collection contains approximately 750,000 objects “including prints, photographs, decorative arts, costumes, paintings, sculpture, toys and theatrical memorabilia” and is a private, non-profit institution that is classified as a history and art museum.⁷⁶ The museum receives a

⁷² Bourbeau. *City Museums and City Development*, 2.

⁷³ “History of 1220 Fifth Avenue.” Museum of the City of New York. <https://www.mcny.org/story/history-1220-fifth-avenue>.

⁷⁴ More details in Section 4.4

⁷⁵ “About the Museum.” Museum of the City of New York. <https://www.mcny.org/about>.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

small amount of financial government support as a member of New York City's Cultural Institutions Group while the rest of their income is comprised of endowments, admission fees, and contributions.

In 2006, the museum began a large-scale renovation, the first phase of which was completed in 2008. Director Susan Henshaw Jones explained, "The transformation of the museum has been both physical and mission-driven. The structural renovation supports our goals."⁷⁷ Furthermore, a large exhibition space was remodeled and reopened in November 2016 dedicated to the permanent exhibition of *New York at its Core*, a "first-of-its-kind exhibition" that tells the history of New York City through the stories of famed and ordinary New Yorkers alike. The exhibition concludes with the *Future City Lab* a room dedicated to exploring the future of the city, "where visitors can explore what the museum describes as the five central challenges facing New Yorkers in coming generations: housing; transportation; job opportunities; diversity; and climate change."⁷⁸

3.1.2 Historisches Museum Frankfurt

The Historisches Museum Frankfurt was founded in 1877 with the initial task of keeping alive the "Free City of Frankfurt" with the goal,

"to acquire suitable objects from the entire area of cultural and artistic antiquities with special consideration of the city of Frankfurt am Main and its surroundings, and to exploit them through scientific research"⁷⁹

The museum is the oldest in Frankfurt am Main to be financed by the municipality. After World War I, the museum limited itself to only Frankfurt's local history and was renamed the *Stadtgeschichtliches Museum*⁸⁰ and in 1937 the Department of Archaeology became its own autonomous museum (now the Archaeological Museum). Great portions of the museums' collections were lost in the World War II bombings on Frankfurt, with the destruction of numerous exhibition buildings that held the collections.

In 1971, construction began on a new building with plans that it would be a centralized location for the historical museum at Saalgasse, one of the oldest streets in the center of the historic city. The building opened in 1972 to much criticism while new slogans, "place of learning versus temple of the muses!" and "culture for everyone", were introduced.⁸¹ The 1972 building was demolished in 2011, to make way for a new building in its place. The new building launched a mission redesign to reinvigorate interest in the museum; with the website proclaiming that,

"the Historisches Museum Frankfurt has transformed itself from a museum of history to the city museum of Frankfurt... As a forum for the important topics of urban society, it contributes to the understanding of the present and future of the city. The collections, exhibitions and events at the museum react to the present day just as much as they ask questions about the future."⁸²

The *Stadtlabor*⁸³ has been in operation since 2010, when the museum was closed, but since 2017 has been part of the new permanent exhibition *Frankfurt Now!* located on the top floor of the museum. The *Stadtlabor's* website explains,

"We want to know how the city is subjectively perceived and experienced. And the best people to answer this are Frankfurters themselves, of course. Using different methods in

⁷⁷ Pogrebin, Robin. "Museum of the City of New York Unveils Its Own Future." *The New York Times*, August 11, 2008, sec. Art & Design. <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/12/arts/design/12muse.html>.

⁷⁸ Charlé, Suzanne. "New York at Its Core: An Arresting Exhibit" *New York City Woman*, <http://www.nycitywoman.com/a-new-and-arresting-view-of-nycs-history/>.

⁷⁹ "Historical Museum Frankfurt." <http://museu.ms/museum/details/816>.

⁸⁰ Translated: City History Museum

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² "Historisches Museum Frankfurt." <https://historisches-museum-frankfurt.de/de>.

⁸³ Translated: city lab

participative city research, the *Stadtlabor* is always on the move and invites you to join new exhibition and event formats regularly.”⁸⁴

3.2 Overview of Methods

3.2.1 Architectural Analysis

For my architectural analysis of MCNY and HMF I aimed to consider the multiple scales at which the city labs would be experienced. First, I considered the positionality of the building within the context of the geography of the city. Then, by utilizing a multiplicity of methods, the analysis of scholarly and news sources in addition to on-site observations of both the entrance to the building and the lab spaces, I conducted an architectural analysis of the building itself as well as any other recorded buildings that may have housed the museum collections in the past. Lastly, I explain the layout of the lab spaces themselves – that of the *Future City Lab* and temporary *Stadtlabor* exhibitions respectively, through on-site observations and the results of interviews with curators. Using primary and secondary sources I am able to illustrate a holistic view of how the visitor interacts with the exhibition spaces and building itself.

3.2.2 Content Analysis

In order to conduct a content analysis of both exhibitions at the *Stadtlabor* and the permanent *Future City Lab* exhibition I created a personal digital catalogue of the content exhibited by documenting all text and videos displayed. This cataloguing method allowed me to return to the exhibited material throughout the duration of my study even while not physically present at the sites. This purpose of the content analysis is to ascertain how much of the display interacts with future-oriented issues, as well as to observe whom the material features and is created by.

3.2.3 Expert Interviews

At both museums I conducted two in-depth interviews with each of the exhibition curators: Kubi Ackerman, (now former) project manager at MCNY’s *Future City Lab* and Angela Jannelli, the curator of HMF’s *Frankfurt Now!*.⁸⁵ The dates of the interviews (as seen below) were informed by my ability to be in each location personally, and to capitalize on events held in each location. Thus, I was able to observe two different temporary exhibitions at the *Stadtlabor*, as well as attend an exhibition opening on May 15th, 2019. Additionally, I was able to observe the annual Teaching Social Activism Conference held at MCNY on May 19th, 2019.

Museum of the City of New York Kubi Ackerman (former) Project Manager <i>Future City Lab</i>		Historisches Museum Frankfurt Angela Jannelli Curator <i>Stadtlabor</i>	
Date of Interview	Exhibition on View	Date of Interview	Exhibition on View
30/10/2018	Permanent Exhibition	7/1/2019	<i>Young in Frankfurt</i>
21/5/2019	Permanent Exhibition	16/5/2019	<i>How do People Live?</i>

Table 1: Expert Interview Schedule

All four of these interviews were semi-structured with the aid of interview guides prepared ahead of time. With the exception of the second interview with Kubi Ackerman, all interviews were conducted in person, in the *Future City Lab* and *Stadtlabor* respectively. I have provided all four interview guides and full transcripts in the appendices, for reference.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ “Stadtlabor.” *Historisches Museum Frankfurt*. <https://historisches-museum-frankfurt.de/de/stadtlabor>.

⁸⁵ It is important to note that the results of these interviews are the views of the curators, and do not reflect the official view of the museums or labs themselves

⁸⁶ See appendices 7.3 and 7.4

3.2.4 Observations

Lastly, I conducted observations at each site in order to understand how the spaces are utilized and to what extent the visitors interact with the exhibitions. I have provided a table below outlining the date, time, and duration of each observation. It is important to note that due to the geographic constraints of two distant case studies, and the financial constraints of travel and accommodation, I was only able to conduct observations during the month of May, 2019 at MCNY's *Future City Lab*, while I conducted observations in two different months (January and May 2019) in HMF's *Stadtlabor*.

Museum of the City of New York <i>Future City Lab</i>			Historisches Museum Frankfurt <i>Stadtlabor</i>		
Date	Time	Duration	Date	Time	Duration
19/5/2019	14:30-15:30	1 hour	5/1/2019	12:50-14:50	2 hours
21/5/2019	16:30-17:30	1 hour	16/5/2019	10:00-11:00	1 hour
23/5/2019	12:45-13:45	1 hour	16/5/2019	13:00-14:00	1 hour
28/5/2019	14:00-16:00	2 hours	16/5/2019	17:00-18:00	1 hour

Table 2: City Lab Observation Schedule

I chose these observation dates and times due to the temporary nature of exhibitions at the HMF. The January 5th observation took place in the middle of the exhibition period of *Orte Der Jugend*⁸⁷. The inauguration of a new exhibition on May 15th entitled *Wie Wohnen die Leute*⁸⁸ lead to a day of three different observations on May 16th. Conversely, since MCNY's *Future City Lab* is a permanent exhibition, with no additional temporary components; I conducted all four observations in May of 2019. Though this methodology is variant it provided a view of the *Stadtlabor*'s multiple exhibitions; while the *Future City Lab*'s singular permanent exhibition allowed for observation four times within the same month. Additionally, in order to complete my architectural analysis, I conducted observations outside of the museums on the plazas that contained the museums' main entrances. Due to weather, I chose to only observe these plazas in May 2019, as both cities get very cold in temperature and I anticipated that the outdoor spaces would largely be abandoned in the winter months.

Museum of the City of New York Entrance Plaza			Historisches Museum Frankfurt Entrance Square		
Date	Time	Duration	Date	Time	Duration
19/5/2019	13:30-14:30	1 hour	15/5/2019	12:30-13:30	1 hour
23/5/2019	12:45-13:45	1 hour	16/5/2019	12:30-13:30	1 hour
28/5/2019	13:00-14:00	1 hour	16/5/2019	18:00-19:00	1 hour

Table 3: Outdoor Observation Schedule

3.3 Structure

This paper is organized in an effort to provide a narrative of how each city lab is embedded within its larger context. Thus, each case will first be explored in its totality, first the *Future City Lab*, and then the *Stadtlabor*. I will first provide a brief overview of the national, urban, and neighborhood contexts in which each case is embedded. Secondly, I will introduce the museum as a whole, through an analysis of its history, architecture, content, admissions policies, and event and educational programming. Then, I will delve into the city lab itself; its design, content, and programming; all supported by interviews with the curators, on-site observations, and relevant media. Lastly, I will provide a conclusion of the main findings for each lab, separately. The paper culminates in final discussions analyzing both museums and their city labs, together, and providing recommendations when appropriate.

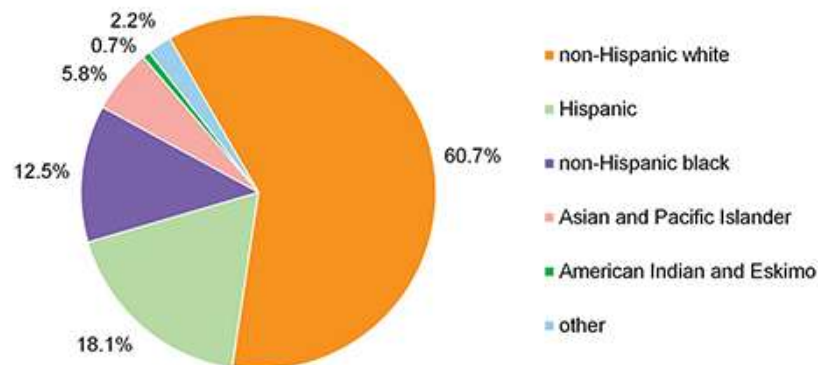
⁸⁷ Translated: Young in Frankfurt

⁸⁸ Translated: How do the People Live?

4. Future City Lab & the Museum of the City of New York

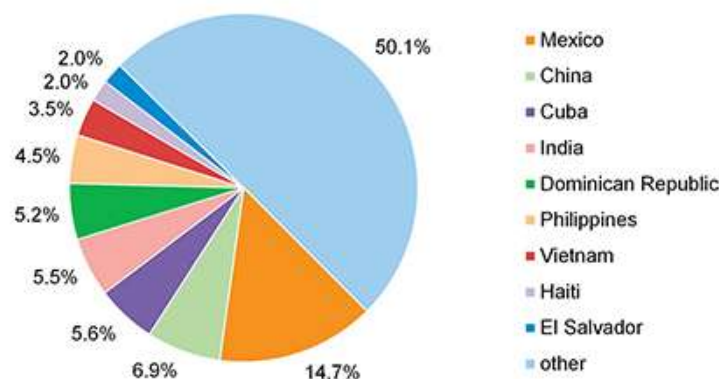
4.1 The Country: The United States of America

The United States of America is the fourth largest country in the world, by area, and the second largest country in North America. The country is comprised of 50 states and one district, and 82.3% of the total population in 2018 were urban dwellers.⁸⁹ As of July 2018, the national population was 329,256,465 with an ethnic composition of: 60.7% non-Hispanic white, 18.1% Hispanic, 12.5% non-Hispanic black, and 5.8% Asian and Pacific Islander.⁹⁰



Graph 1: USA Population by race and Hispanic origin, 2017⁹¹

In 2018 there were an estimated 3.8 migrants/1,000 people in the population.⁹² Permanent immigrants admitted to the United States in 2016 came from a variety of different countries, the largest single share of which was Mexico, comprising 14.7% of all immigrants.⁹³



Graph 2: USA permanent immigrants' origin 2016⁹⁴

The United States has the second largest gross domestic product in the world when in 2014, after more than a century with the largest GDP, it slipped behind rapidly growing China to number two. Thus, the country is ethnically and racially diverse with a strong global economy.

⁸⁹ "North America: United States" *The World Factbook - Central Intelligence Agency*.
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html>.

⁹⁰ "United States: History, Map, Flag, & Population" *Encyclopædia Britannica.com*.
<https://www.britannica.com/place/United-States>.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² "North America: United States" *The World Factbook - Central Intelligence Agency*.

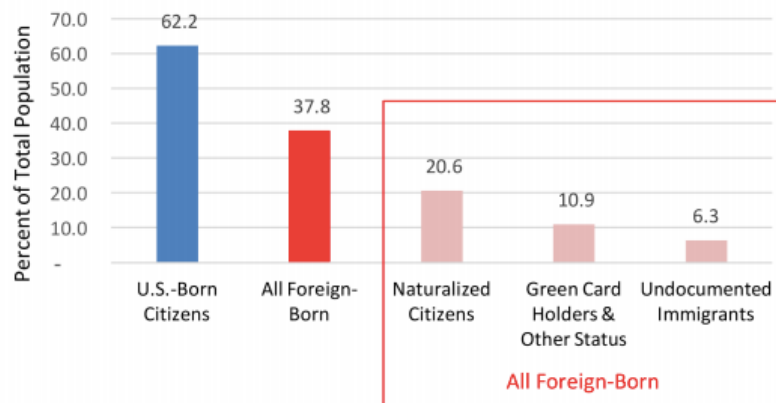
⁹³ "United States: History, Map, Flag, & Population" *Britannica.com*.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

4.2 The City: New York City

New York City is the largest city in the United States of America and the state of New York with a population of 8.623 million in 2017.⁹⁵ For the past two centuries the city has been the largest and wealthiest in the country. The city has functioned as a historically significant port, with more than half of the people and goods entering the country through New York City. The city became an important center for financial activity when the Bank of New York opened in 1784, and a branch of the First Bank of the United States opened in 1792. The origins of the financial exchange trade can be traced back to the Buttonwood Agreement of 1792 and the establishment of the Exchange Board in 1817.⁹⁶

New York City is extremely diverse, with as many as 800 languages spoken throughout the city.⁹⁷ Ethnically, the city is comprised of 42.78% white, 24.32% black or African American, 15.12% other, and 14% Asian residents. Additionally, according to New York City's *Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs Annual Report 2018*, 62.2% of New York City's population is born with United States citizenship, while 37.8% are foreign-born.⁹⁸



Graph 3: NYC Population by Immigration Status in Percentage⁹⁹

Though widely considered the financial and cultural backbone of the country, New York City has a history of financial hardship that lead to what many believed to be a culture of deviance. In fall 1976 the city very narrowly avoided bankruptcy, leading to President Ford's impassioned speech condemning the collapse and vetoing the opportunity for federal bailout. Indeed, the harshness of Ford's speech lead to the newspaper the *Daily News*' most famous headline "Ford to City: Drop Dead".¹⁰⁰ Though bankruptcy was ultimately avoided, the collapse led to a rollback in public services, and the city's infrastructure famously fell into disrepair as the image of the New York City's graffiti covered subways of the 1970-80s became synonymous with urban crime and poverty. Due to this decline many residents with the means to, left the city in favor of surrounding suburbs and the city became infamous for its high crime and murder rates.

⁹⁵ "QuickFacts: New York City, New York." *US Census Bureau*.

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/newyorkcitynewyork>.

⁹⁶ "New York City | Layout, People, Economy, Culture, & History." *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

<https://www.britannica.com/place/New-York-City>.

⁹⁷ Roberts, Sam. "The Lost Languages, Found in New York." *The New York Times*.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/29/nyregion/29lost.html>.

⁹⁸ "Annual Report." *Mayors Office of Immigrant Affairs*. 2018. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/immigrants/about/annual-report.page>.

⁹⁹ De Blasio, Bill. *State of Our Immigrant City*. Mayor's Office for Immigrant Affairs, pp. 1–40.

¹⁰⁰ Nussbaum, Jeff. "The Night New York Saved Itself from Bankruptcy," October 16, 2015.

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-night-new-york-saved-itself-from-bankruptcy>.

It wasn't until the 1990s financial boom and large-scale reinvestment in the built environment that New York's crime rate would decrease and middle- and upper-class citizens would return to the city center. New York City is now home to some of the most valuable real estate in the world, pricing out middle-income residents throughout Manhattan and parts of Brooklyn. The city is increasingly being seen as an amusement park for the hyper-rich as over one million millionaires¹⁰¹ and 82 billionaires now own property in the metropolitan area, the most of any city in the world.¹⁰²

4.3 The Neighborhood: East Harlem

East Harlem, also known as El Barrio or Spanish Harlem, was founded in 1658 by Dutch settler Peter Stuyvesant as Nieuw Haarlem¹⁰³. Though there are no formalized administrative boundaries for New York City's neighborhoods, East Harlem is largely thought to be bounded by 96th Street in the south, 142nd Street in the north, 5th Avenue in the west, and the East River in the east, as is evidenced in the map below.¹⁰⁴



Figure 3: East Harlem, outlined in red, can be seen bound by 96th Street, 142nd Street, 5th Avenue, and the East River¹⁰⁵

Harlem was a rural farming village until the 1800s when German Jews and Eastern Europeans were drawn to the area's affordable housing while in search of better opportunities and safety from persecution. The late 1800 to early 1900s saw an increase of Italian immigrants to the

¹⁰¹ Elkins, Kathleen. "New York City Is Home to Nearly 1 Million Millionaires, More than Any Other City in the World." CNBC, January 18, 2019. <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/01/18/new-york-city-has-more-millionaires-than-any-other-city-in-the-world.html>.

¹⁰² "82 NYC Billionaires Make Forbes' 2017 List." New York City, NY Patch, March 22, 2017. <https://patch.com/new-york/new-york-city/82-nyc-billionaires-make-forbes-2017-list>

¹⁰³ Translated: New Harlem

¹⁰⁴ "East Harlem: The Official Guide to New York City." NYCgo.com. <https://www.nycgo.com/boroughs-neighborhoods/manhattan/east-harlem>.

¹⁰⁵ "East Harlem." East Harlem. <https://www.google.com/maps/place/East+Harlem,+New+York,+NY,+USA/data=!4m2!3m1!1s0x89c2f60f3189564d:0x1f81ef1c8b10115e?sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwihw76vuqDkAhVxRhUIHSONBkcQ8gEwAHoECAoQAQ>.

extent that the area became known as “Italian Harlem”. Simultaneously, Puerto Rican refugees began moving to the area, seeking political asylum from the Spanish-American War of 1898. After the war ended, middle class Puerto Ricans continued this migration and by the 1930s over half of Puerto Ricans living in the continental United States had settled in East Harlem.¹⁰⁶

The 1950s saw the emergence of a Puerto Rican cultural enclave as invasive urban renewal policies drove out Italian Americans and leveled large portions of the neighborhood. East Harlem was one of the neighborhoods hit hardest by urban flight; and the prevalence of racial and ethnic gangs (as portrayed by popular film *West Side Story*) led the neighborhood to become associated with violence, substance abuse, and poverty. Residents fought back against the lack of public services by founding community empowerment schemes and neighborhood care networks. By the 1990s, urban renewal projects began again, and though violent crime has drastically reduced throughout the last three decades, the neighborhood still suffers the highest crime rate in Manhattan, with seven murders in 2018.¹⁰⁷

As of 2016 the neighborhood was home to roughly 134,000 residents, about half of whom identify as Hispanic, and one-third of whom are African American.¹⁰⁸ East Harlem’s residents remain low to middle income, but there are strong signs of gentrification emerging from the south of the neighborhood northwards. In 2016 the New York Times included East Harlem on its list of “Hot New Neighborhoods”¹⁰⁹ and the New York State Comptroller’s office explains that, “...household income was the seventh-lowest in the City [in 2016]. East Harlem, like many neighborhoods in New York City, is changing. Gentrification has brought economic growth, but many residents still face challenges, including poverty and a lack of affordable housing.”¹¹⁰

4.4 The Museum: Museum of the City of New York

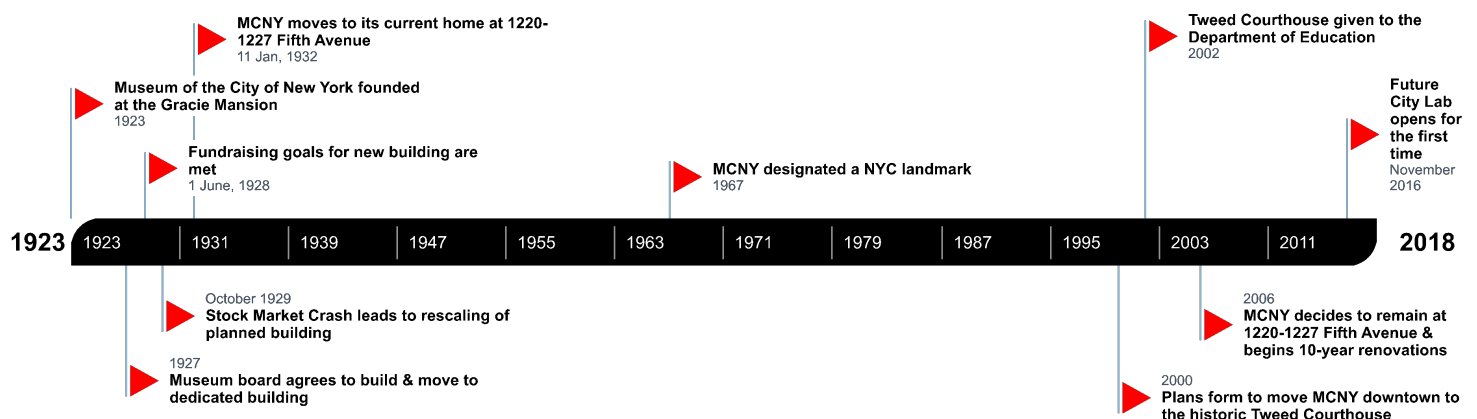


Figure 4: timeline of MCNY’s development¹¹¹

The Museum of the City of New York was originally located in the Gracie Mansion. The Gracie Mansion was built in 1799 by the prosperous merchant Archibald Gracie to be his country home – located five miles north of what was the city at the time, and what is now Carl Schurz Park at

¹⁰⁶ “Exploring the Latino Metropolis: East Harlem.” *Exploring the Latino Metropolis: A Brief Urban Cultural History of US Latinos*. University of Southern California. <http://scalar.usc.edu/works/latino-metropolis-a-brief-urban-cultural-history-of-us-latinos---1/east-harlem-1>.

¹⁰⁷ De Blasio, Bill, and James P O’Neill. “Police Department City of New York,” (2018), 1.

¹⁰⁸ DiNapoli, Thomas. “An Economic Snapshot of the East Harlem Neighborhood,.” *Office of the New York State Comptroller*. 2017, 8.

¹⁰⁹ Higgins, Michelle. “New York’s Next Hot Neighborhoods.” *The New York Times*, February 26, 2016, sec. Real Estate. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/28/realestate/new-yorks-next-hot-neighborhoods.html>.

¹¹⁰ DiNapoli. “An Economic Snapshot of the East Harlem Neighborhood.”

¹¹¹ Produced by author

East End Avenue and 88th Street in Manhattan. After Gracie experienced financial troubles the mansion's ownership was passed first to Joseph Foulke, another rich merchant, and then to Noah Wheaton. In 1891, upon the creation of the East River Park, many surrounding homes were condemned, but Wheaton stayed until his death in 1896, when the home was expropriated by the state and integrated in the park.¹¹²



Figure 5: Gracie Mansion (unknown date)¹¹³

The home was utilized as a comfort station and ice cream stand until 1923, when a group campaigned to create a museum there, the beginnings of the Museum of the City of New York. The museum's first major successful exhibit, *Old New York*, presented in 1926 prompted the search for a new, larger, and permanent location. Eventually a design competition between five invited architects was held, and museum construction began in 1929.¹¹⁴ The Gracie Mansion later, at the urging of Robert Moses, became the official residence of the mayor of New York. As such, it was home to Mayor Abraham Beame's tense conversations with fellow politicians on October 16th, 1976; the night before it was believed the city would fall into bankruptcy. At this moment when public hospitals were being closed and the importance of schoolteachers was called into question, the museums of the city were undoubtedly considered non-essential and were only saved due to the avoidance of full bankruptcy.¹¹⁵ The Mansion is no longer used for government work but retains the reputation as the Mayoral home to this day.

The current home of the museum is located at the northeastern portion of Central Park at 1220 Fifth Avenue between 103rd and 104th Streets. Unfortunately, this location puts the museum just north of the major attractions on section of Fifth Avenue that is known as Museum Mile – host to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and the world-famous Metropolitan Museum of Art. The project manager of *Future City Lab*, Kubi Ackerman explains,

“And we have known from various studies that our principal challenge as far as getting an audience is our location. Especially visitors to New York...even Manhattanites are like ‘oh you’re all the way up there’...”¹¹⁶

Though only a 15-minute bus ride, or a 22-minute walk straight north from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the perceived distance is far greater than the physical distance. Ackerman muses, “this is crazy to me as it is just like 20 blocks from the MET. But again, I understand as

¹¹² “History of 1220 Fifth Avenue” *Museum of the City of New York*. www.mcny.org/story/history-1220-fifth-avenue.

¹¹³ “Gracie Mansion: How a Bucolic Summer Home Survived a Couple Wars, a Society Feud and a Few Live-in Mayors - The Bowery Boys: New York City History.” <http://www.boweryboyshistory.com/2010/09/gracie-mansion-surviving-couple-wars.html>.

¹¹⁴ “History of 1220 Fifth Avenue” *Museum of the City of New York*

¹¹⁵ Nussbaum, Jeff. “The Night New York Saved Itself from Bankruptcy,”

¹¹⁶ Appendix 7.4.1

visitors too, they think of New York as just a small slice of Manhattan.”¹¹⁷ As Ackerman observes, visitors to the Museum Mile from outside of New York City may not venture north, as MCNY is located within East Harlem, a neighborhood that still carries its past association with crime and poverty.



Figure 6: MCNY shown north of the cluster of museums at Museum Mile¹¹⁸

The present home of the MCNY is on land that was offered by the city on the condition that the trustees could raise two million dollars by June 1, 1928. Ads were placed in the newspaper and on the subway that stated,

“The Museum of the City of New York, devoted exclusively to the city’s own history, will be built by public subscription. No other such institution exists today in America. The purpose of the Museum is not merely to pay fitting, lasting homage to New York’s great names and great deeds of the past, but to inspire future greatness through them.”¹¹⁹

The fundraising goal was met, right before the stock market crash of 1929; which caused architect Joseph H. Freedlander’s original plans to be scaled back, though construction began and continued otherwise undisrupted.



Figure 7: museum entrance showing stairway, courtyard, and front door¹²⁰

By 2000 the Board of Directions for MCNY aimed to relocate to the Tweed Courthouse in downtown Manhattan. When the deal fell through and the Courthouse was taken over by the Department of Education instead, the museum recommitted to its home in East Harlem by

¹¹⁷ Appendix 7.4.2

¹¹⁸ “Museum of the City of New York.” www.nycgo.com/museums-galleries/museum-of-the-city-of-new-york.

¹¹⁹ “History of 1220 Fifth Avenue” *Museum of the City of New York*.

¹²⁰ *New York City Museums*. https://home.manhattan.edu/~mark.pottinger/nyc_museums/cityofnewyork.php.

beginning a 10-year building renovation in three parts. The lead architect, James S Polshek of the firm Polshek Partnership (now known as Ennead) explained, “We’ve always been the poor sister to the city museums in London, Rome, Paris, and Tokyo...”¹²¹ The first phase consisted of the creation of a 3,000 square foot glass gallery in a former lot behind the museum, and a new two-story semicircular wall that supports the architecture of the existing winding grand stairway. Polshek said,

“We used architecture to create a public announcement of the state of the institution. We wanted to give a signal that this was an alive and modern museum, capable of catering to the next generation of visitors in New York City.”¹²²

The second phase of construction renovated the landmarked building to become accessible to those with disabilities, as well as LEED certified; and to provide new administrative offices and proper archive space. The last phase renovated the museum’s north wing and restored of the terrace. The first phase alone cost \$28 million, with \$20 million coming from New York City, the owner of the building. The renewal of the built structure provided an opportunity to rethink and rework practices and programming as well – as Susan Henshaw Jones explained, “We really want to be an urban forum for New York.”¹²³

In seeking to become an urban forum, MCNY offers a suggested admissions fee, in that, though they advertise the cost of admission at 18USD (€15.83) the visitor is welcome to pay whatever they wish for their entry. This means that if the visitor is aware of this policy (which is a commonplace practice in other NYC-based museums), they are entitled to pay as little as one cent for their visit. In addition to this policy, the museum offers discounted admission rates and annual memberships for students and seniors, package deals for tourists hoping to visit numerous attractions, and free admission for many groups including visitors that either work or live in the surrounding postal codes of the museum.¹²⁴ This policy, and their provision of discounted memberships to local businesses in East and Central Harlem with recognition on the museum’s website, is a concerted effort to make the museum accessible and inclusive to their direct community of East Harlem. Additionally, the annual “Uptown Bounce” is a day-long block party in collaboration with the neighboring El Museo del Barrio and celebrates the culture and people of East Harlem with music, food, dancing, and free admission to both museums.

Additionally, the museum is in collaboration with the non-profit Cool Culture, which offers free, unlimited admission to 90 of the city’s participating cultural institutions to financially disadvantaged families with young children. Lastly, MCNY is now granting free yearlong memberships to IDNYC holders, “a government-issued identification card that is available to all City residents age 10 and older...immigration status does not matter.”¹²⁵ Since IDNYC is the only government issued identification that is attainable no matter the resident’s documented status, this initiative provides vulnerable populations the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of a membership that would otherwise be unattainable.

The external renovation of the museum building maintained the original Georgian Colonial-Revival facade. Georgian style is a subtype of Colonial Revival and is one of the United States’ most consistently popular styles – thought to be inspired by pattern books brought over from England as early “how-to” manuals to support colonial settlers. In the 20th century these classical details were frequently over-exaggerated or updated to fit into a more contemporary style, as seen at MCNY with Freedlander’s meticulous use of symmetry to create dramatic affect. Grand in size and dominated by New English red brick and stately marble as the main building materials, the visitor is reminded of architecture present at historic exclusive American colleges like Harvard or Yale University. In fact, the conservative architecture of the building has been

¹²¹ Pogrebin, Robin. “Museum of the City of New York Unveils Its Own Future.”

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ More information in Appendix 7.2.1

¹²⁵ “About: IDNYC.” NYC.gov. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/idnyc/about/about.page>.

utilized in the popular American television show airing from 2007-2012, *Gossip Girl*.¹²⁶ In the show, the building served as an expensive high-class private high school for New York City's elite teenagers. The MCNY building's cameo as an exclusive space for the city's wealthiest begs the question of how those who might not feel welcome in such spaces could overcome the mental and physical hurdles in order to find themselves within the museum.



Figure 8: museum building as seen in an establishment shot on *Gossip Girl*¹²⁷

In order to reach the impressive entrance topped with four large white marble columns, the visitor must first ascend a half-staircase, complete with an iron gate. There is no ramp adjacent to the staircase, so visitors with any mobility aids such as wheelchairs or crutches, or those with children in strollers, need to use a separate entrance around the northern side of the building. However, while couples with strollers were able to often lift their strollers up these stairs, visitors in wheelchairs would find this task impossible. These stairs also lift the building off of the sidewalk, creating an immediate physical barrier between the public realm of the street and the literally elevated world of the cultural consumer.

Once up the stairs, the visitor is level with a marble fence surrounding the front courtyard, but as it turns to an iron gate at the entrance and would easily be penetrable – the fence serves as an aesthetic detail and a mental barrier more than a method of security. Past this gate the museum attendee finds themselves within a courtyard created by the U-shaped building, already engulfed in the institution itself, preparing the visitor for the experience they are about to have once inside the building. On days when weather permits, the courtyard is supplied with 10 tables, 46 chairs, and 8 umbrellas and appears to be utilized for a variety of activities.

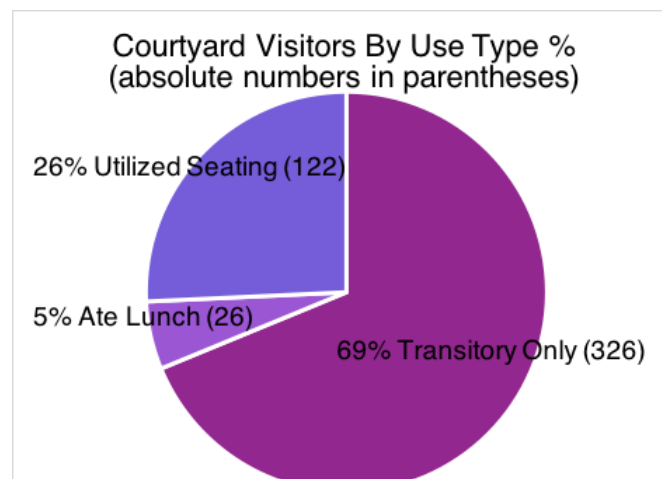
¹²⁶ Cross, Heather. "Where Did 'Gossip Girl' Film in New York City?" *TripSavvy*. June 7, 2019. <https://www.tripsavvy.com/gossip-girl-sites-tour-1612874>.

¹²⁷ "Gossip Girl." *CW Network*. 2007-2012.



Figure 9: entrance sign pointing to separate accessible entrance (left) and visitor struggling with stroller on entrance steps (right)¹²⁸

During four rounds of observations in the courtyard it became clear which behaviors are typical for the space. On days when there is rain or it is unseasonably cold, fewer visitors spend time outside in the courtyard – such a day saw 73 visitors pass through the courtyard, but only one person chose to sit down. This person was able to utilize the umbrellas to his advantage, and comfortably sat beneath one and read for about 45 minutes while it continued to drizzle. Days when the weather is warm (around 75°F or around 24°C in the case of two observations) the courtyard is heavily utilized. One particular day saw 65 (of the total 188 visitors who walked through the courtyard) sit and enjoy the museum’s outside area. Some of those who choose to sit also use the courtyard to enjoy their lunch – many families came out of the museum with sandwiches from the museum café, as well as museum employees on their breaks. Surprisingly, a handful of hospital employees, obvious clad in their hospital scrubs, came from the neighboring Mount Sinai Hospital on 5th Avenue and 102nd Street. The presence of employees from outside of the museum enjoying their lunches in the courtyard is striking because Central Park is just across the street from both MCNY and Mount Sinai Hospital, and is a larger and far more well-known public location.¹²⁹



Graph 4: distribution of activities occurring in MCNY's front courtyard¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Produced by author

¹²⁹ See Appendix 7.5

¹³⁰ Produced by author

The courtyard was host to an outdoor interactive lesson during the museum’s annual free and public “Teaching Social Activism Conference” for NYC educators. The 2019 topic of “Building Tomorrow” asked over 350 predominantly public-school educators,¹³¹ “what strategies can we use to teach about the past, increase awareness of current community and individual needs, and support our students as they use this information to envision the world they want to create?”¹³² (MCNY.org) The courtyard session of “Grid City” encouraged conference attendees to create and present their own proposed public provisions for a city. Through open discussion moderated by a museum educator the attendees debated the placement of each provision in relation to the others. As this thoughtful discussion was outside in the open air of the patio, over the course of the hour-long workshop, 14 passersby stopped to observe or participate while on their way in or out of the museum. The interest that passersby showed in this event could be leveraged by more regular use of the courtyard for exhibitions and events; to further include wider publics in the museum discourse.

Thus, the imposing nature of the museum’s architecture can be mitigated by the provision of comfortable public concessions. However, in order to utilize this outdoor space, you must first be aware that it is yours to utilize freely, without the obligation of attending the museum. Some workers in the area seem to be aware of this distinction, but others may be too intimidated by the traditional architecture to venture up the staircase. This distinction is similar to the suggested admissions policy, in that those already privileged enough to know the policy¹³³ may disproportionately benefit while others may continue to be unaware of these not-quite-blattantly inclusive practices.¹³⁴

Once through the patio and inside the building, the visitor is able to fully appreciate the architecture of the museum, inside and out. Ackerman reflects on the architectural style, musing, “The architecture of the building itself, on the one hand it is elevating as a building and a space...and when people come into it, it puts them in the mood of contemplation and intellectual engagement. But at the same time, it is a very conservative architecture.”¹³⁵ Once inside the museum, the 2006 renovations show the creation of a light and modern atmosphere within this traditional building that remains true to the Georgian architectural touches of the time.



Figure 10: remodeled entrance hall with entrance to the new glass gallery space¹³⁶

¹³¹ According to Joanna Steinberg, Senior Education Manager

¹³² “2019 Teaching Social Activism Conference: Building Tomorrow.” *Museum of the City of New York*. <https://www.mcny.org/social-activism-conference>.

¹³³ Such as consistent museum-goers or people who are already members of the museum.

¹³⁴ Appendix 7.2.1

¹³⁵ Appendix 7.4.3

¹³⁶ “Museum of City of New York.” *archphoto*. <https://www.archphoto.com/museum-of-city-of-new-york>.

The building contains four floors of exhibition space, in a layout difficult for exhibitions, as described by Kubi Ackerman.

“Even just the layout, as a T shape...compared to a lot of museums, [has] quite constrained spaces. And a large central circulation of a hallway that so much of the building space is occupied by...it is beautiful but there is not much you can do with it.”¹³⁷

The large central hallway is often host to temporary exhibitions, and the museum is home to between eight and twelve exhibitions at any given moment, of which five are permanent. These permanent exhibitions consist of a short film, light installation, an exploration of activism in the city, and *New York at its Core* which concludes in the *Future City Lab*. Special rotating exhibitions are often topically related to what is occurring in New York City at the time. For example, *PRIDE: Photographs of Stonewall and Beyond* was unveiled in June 2019 in time for the 50-year anniversary of the Stonewall uprising. Additionally, *Beyond Suffrage: A Century of New York Women in Politics*, opened after the 2016 presidential upset, in which native New Yorker Hillary Clinton lost to Donald Trump. *Muslim in New York: Highlights from the Photography Collection*, opened early 2017, when anti-Muslim sentiment was on the rise in the United States and; on a lighter note, *Santa and the City* opened just in time for the 2016 holiday season.¹³⁸

The museum seeks to link educational and events programming to their exhibitions and through the Frederick AO Schwarz Education Center serves “nearly 50,000 students each year, the great majority of whom attend under-resourced public schools”.¹³⁹ The center offers numerous in-exhibition student tours and classes; and even after school and summer programming like field trips and photography courses. Though most student opportunities come at a cost, 175USD (€157.30) for a 60-minute tour, the museum does provide students from grades 8-12 admission to their free “Saturday Academy”, a six-session program for SAT¹⁴⁰ preparation. Past topics have included: *20th Century Student Activism in NYC and London*, *Parks in 19th Century NYC*, and *Tracing 400 Years of Black Athletic Activism*. In addition to the annual “Teaching Social Activism Conference” the education center aims to assist teachers year-round through the provision of over 45 free lesson plans available on their website. These lessons can be downloaded and taught within their own classroom, featuring wide-ranging topics with titles like: *Port City: Building the Erie Canal*, *Future City Lab: NYC Transportation System*, and *Beyond Suffrage: ‘A Unifying Principle’ Understanding Intersectionality in Women’s Activism*. In addition to these online resources, educational administrators can provide in-school professional development, and free pre- and post-visit lesson plans online for teachers who bring their students for a tour of the museum.¹⁴¹

In addition to educational initiatives that support exhibition content, the museum has organized a fairly extensive set of events. Firstly, they feature “Unexpected Pairings”, where the visitor can “hear from the city’s most adventurous brewers, distillers, purveyors, and connoisseurs about their craft, and try unusual samples of food and drink pairings for yourself”¹⁴². In addition, during summer months the museum’s front terrace is utilized for “Moonlight & Movies”, a film series that often focuses on local or immigrant filmmakers. The most extensive event series on offer is “Core Conversations” which is described as an “ongoing series of lectures, talks, and tours features the city’s most original and expert thinkers as they engage with the Core exhibition’s four guiding themes: money, density, diversity, and creativity”¹⁴³ are often around 15USD (€13.50) but can occasionally be free. Kubi Ackerman of the *Future City Lab* explains that,

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ “Exhibitions.” *Museum of the City of New York*. <https://www.mcny.org/exhibitions>.

¹³⁹ “About the Schwarz Education Center.” *Museum of the City of New York*.
<https://www.mcny.org/education/about-schwarz-education-center>.

¹⁴⁰ A popular mandatory college entrance examination

¹⁴¹ “Education.” *Museum of the City of New York*. <https://www.mcny.org/education>.

¹⁴² “Unexpected Pairings.” *Museum of the City of New York*. <https://www.mcny.org/pairings>.

¹⁴³ “Core Conversations.” *Museum of the City of New York*. <https://www.mcny.org/coreconvo>.

“As a cultural institution we want to create really engaging, interesting, programs for our general audience – not just our expert audience...we try to mix it up a little bit and get some of the folks who might appear at those types of events in conversation with unusual suspects. Basically, folks from the humanities: artists, novelists in some cases, other people who have, through their own work, addressed these issues and addressed the importance of cultural change as opposed to strictly focused on science or policy change.”¹⁴⁴

Thus, through their events series, MCNY seeks to bring in a diverse set of speakers, in the hopes that they may attract a more diverse audience. Unfortunately, due to the way data is collected at the museum, we are unable to ascertain how many visitors to the museum are solely brought in by events – making us unable to gauge the effectiveness of events and educational programming in attracting new and diverse visitors.

4.5 The Exhibition: Future City Lab

The *New York at its Core* and *Future City Lab* permanent exhibitions opened in November 2016 and inhabit the recently remodeled portions of the museum. *New York at its Core* explores the past history of the city from 1609 to 2012 in three galleries exploring the themes of money, density, diversity, and creativity through the lives of famous and everyday New Yorkers. *New York at its Core* culminates in the *Future City Lab* a “suite of interactive virtual-reality installations that open up questions around the challenges of an ever-growing city.”¹⁴⁵ designed by Local Projects design studio.

The **Future City Lab** focuses on issues that will impact how people will live and work in New York over the next generation. The city's defining characteristics—*money, diversity, density, and creativity*—are interwoven in these challenges, providing both opportunities and constraints as they have throughout the city's history. An iconic global city, New York is exceptional in many respects, but it is also informative about 21st-century urban conditions. Speculating about the future of New York raises issues that have implications for cities worldwide.

These are our challenges:

- **Making a Living:** What can we do to provide economic opportunities for the next generation?
- **Housing a Growing City:** How can we meet the housing needs of New Yorkers?
- **Living Together:** How can we foster a more inclusive city?
- **Living with Nature:** How can New York City enhance its environment and cope with climate change?
- **Getting Around:** How can we make it easier for people to get into and around the city?

The **Future City Lab** is not a traditional exhibition: it is designed for experimentation and creation as well as exploration. The future may be unknowable, but it is not beyond our influence. Our choices, investments, and ideas will determine the directions we take and what New York City becomes. Where does New York City go from here? The **Future City Lab** invites you to consider this question

Figure 11: *Future City Lab* introductory text outside of the lab space¹⁴⁶

The space is contained within a large rectangular room, with floor to ceiling translucently-curtained windows on each side, occupying the new glass gallery from the remodel. According to former *Future City Lab* project manager, Kubi Ackerman, the room was not designed for the exhibition itself. He explains,

“The space wasn’t built for the *Future City Lab*; it was actually built as an event space because the museum gets a good amount of its revenue from events like weddings. And that is why it has huge windows and huge windows are a challenge in an exhibition space...”¹⁴⁷

Located on the ground floor of the museum, directly under the newly renovated grand staircase, the lab is at a privileged location as one of the first exhibition rooms many visitors see. The

¹⁴⁴ Appendix 7.4.1

¹⁴⁵ Wachs, Audrey. “Two New Exhibitions at the MCNY Dive into the Soul of New York.” *Archpaper.Com*, 18 Nov. 2016, <https://archpaper.com/2016/11/two-exhibitions-mcny-soul-new-york/>.

¹⁴⁶ Produced by author

¹⁴⁷ Appendix 7.4.3

space features an open-floorplan segmented into four distinct sections that provide differently designed structures for various interactive opportunities.



Figure 12: Future City Lab's unique windows, with *What If* table in the foreground, map to the right, video to the left, and interactive games in the background¹⁴⁸

The first space contains a large “digital map [that] overlays almost 100 maps to document the present and peer into the future (up until 2050)”¹⁴⁹. This map allows visitors to explore past data and see future projections on the topics of “housing a growing city”, “living with nature”, “getting around”, “making a living”, and “living together”. These topics were consciously named in order to not “seem too jargon-y...we wanted to frame them around people’s experience of the city so like ‘transportation infrastructure’ sounds very abstract but ‘getting around’ is hopefully...a bit more identifiable.”¹⁵⁰



Figure 13: Future City Lab's map with future projections¹⁵¹

Directly across the room from the digital map is the film *Then & Now & Then* by Neil Goldberg. The 25-minute film plays on a continuous loop with no beginning or end, while 50 different New Yorkers from all five boroughs explain their hopes and fears for the future. Next to this is the “What If?” table, where visitors are encouraged to ask questions at a table that provides notecards, pencils, and other visitors questions. Each month questions are chosen to be

¹⁴⁸ “‘New York at Its Core’ Story.” *Pentagram*. <https://www.pentagram.com/work/new-york-at-its-core/story>.

¹⁴⁹ Wachs. “Two New Exhibitions at the MCNY Dive into the Soul of New York.”

¹⁵⁰ Appendix 7.4.1

¹⁵¹ “Local Projects | Exploring NYC’s Past, Present, and Future.” Local Projects. <https://localprojects.com/work/mcny-new-york-at-its-core>.

answered by experts, and after their answers are posted in longform on the MCNY blog, they are also displayed side-by-side with the other constantly accumulating questions on the table (over 40,000 as of October 2017). Observations conducted across four days concluded that on average 17% of all visitors to the lab interact with the “What If” feature, showing the presence of thoughtful engagement despite curators initial concerns that this open-endedness could be abused and used as a place for inflammatory statements.¹⁵² Ultimately, the “What If” table is the most inclusive space within the lab, as questions asked in French, Spanish, and Mandarin are all considered and answered by experts.¹⁵³



Figure 14: some “What If’s” displayed next to their answers while others have just been filled in¹⁵⁴

In the other half of the room lay five tables, all of which contain examples of real groups of New Yorkers exploring the five themes outlined in the lab. For example, in this portion of the lab visitors interested in “making a living” can read about the New Yorkers who are leading the charge in the “Fight for \$15” – a protest movement advocating for raising the minimum wage. Or, if interested in “living with nature” one can learn about the concept of establishing green habitat corridors to bring local fauna back to the city. Here the visitor can explore different issues and proposed solutions alongside contextualizing quantitative data, throughout various neighborhoods of the city in all five boroughs. Additionally, three of these tables contain interactive games, in which,

“visitors are invited to explore the intersectional problems of housing, transportation, outdoor space, living together, and getting by in New York through SimCity-like games that amuse and edify...In the housing section, visitors can construct an apartment building from one of the five boroughs to create a structure based on context, budget impact, and sustainability—the very real factors architects and developers consider when building in the city.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² Appendix 7.5

¹⁵³ “What If...” *Museum of the City of New York*. <https://www.mcny.org/whatif>.

¹⁵⁴ “‘New York at Its Core’ Story.” *Pentagram*.

¹⁵⁵ Wachs. “Two New Exhibitions at the MCNY Dive into the Soul of New York.”

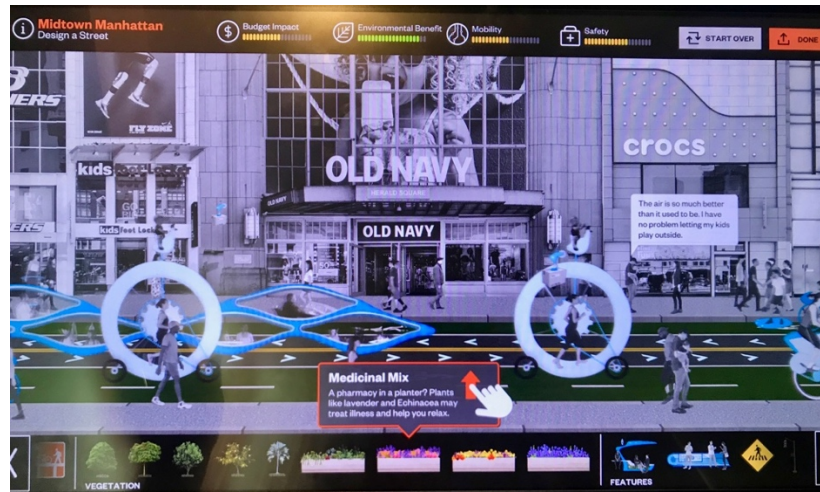


Figure 15: example of a streetscape visitors can design, showing options for vegetation options, transport, and street activities – also featuring feedback in real time on top bar¹⁵⁶

This provides opportunities for interactive play to show how difficult it is to plan an apartment building, a street, or a park affordably, sustainably, and safely. The game displays in real time the tradeoffs your decisions create – for example, as you add more transportation infrastructure your street may have greater mobility but be less financially viable. “It lets you step into the shoes of a Robert Moses or a developer,” Sarah Henry, the museum’s chief curator, said. Ms. Donhauser added, ‘And it shows that the perfect solution is not possible.’”¹⁵⁷ These exercises in city planning are instantly transformed into videos that play on a wall-sized screen, in which you and your fellow museum-goers can be projected into. Visitors who ventured this far into the lab seemed to particularly enjoy viewing themselves within their own, and others’, visualizations of parks, housing, and streets. Many choose to stand on the rugs that allow them to be projected onto the screen, whether or not they took part in actively creating a visualization themselves. However, many did participate in creating a new version of the city – on average 35% of visitors to the lab interacted with the screens that would create these visualizations though this does not necessarily mean that they completed a visualization.¹⁵⁸



Figure 16: visitors enjoying seeing themselves within the visualization of the urban plans they have created¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Produced by author

¹⁵⁷ Roberts, Sam. “This Museum Show Explains Why New York Is So New Yorky.” *The New York Times*, December 22, 2017, sec. Arts. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/18/arts/design/this-museum-show-explains-why-new-york-is-so-new-yorky.html>.

¹⁵⁸ Appendix 7.5

¹⁵⁹ Produced by author

Despite the extensive use of technology in the lab, Ackerman described the curators' and designers' desire to avoid creating something too futuristic and showy, favoring a clean and streamlined appearance. He explains that in order to avoid this spectacle that they may have compromised the "work in progress" feeling they desired from the lab;

"the design is quite beautiful, we get a lot of compliments on it actually, but it is also very deliberately meant to...create a space that didn't seem frenetic in many ways. I think we achieved that to a large degree but potentially at the cost of it being too staid. Unlike what we might expect from a lab space which might feel a little messier, like...this does not feel messy...it feels very controlled. And I think that works against the aspiration."¹⁶⁰

He goes further to explain that though he and his team are happy with the aesthetics of the space that they are, "always looking for ways for people to get their hands a little dirtier with it. I think the idea is to engage people right away."¹⁶¹

The museum consulted with an evaluator after the 2016 reopening in order to understand how people were utilizing the space. The evaluator ultimately confirmed that visitors who were confused by the lab would not go further than the door to explore. Ackerman elucidates,

"we got other interesting feedback along the lines that they were...wishing to see more of some of the stuff that we had deliberately avoided, like more of the expert visions...It is interesting to me that in this age of supposed mistrust of experts and institutions one of the findings was that people want more of that."¹⁶²

He further clarifies that people who may already feel comfortable in this lab setting have a positive response to the interactivity and open-endedness of the user experience. However, those museum-goers who may know less about urbanism or are simply less comfortable within the space are likely to opt-out and choose to not engage with the materials. Changes to the layout and appearance of the lab have been proposed in order to counter this issue but are ultimately contingent on unlikely financial funding.

The results of the evaluator's study may have been found prior to the opening of the lab, if diverse groups were in the room while plans were being made. Though Ackerman explains that there are advisory committees that consist of actors who vary "from show to show...activists and a mixture of private institutions, and public officials" who have the opportunity to view and discuss exhibitions prior to their openings; such committees have not always been so diverse. He illustrates that,

"the demographic makeup of those advisory committees and the role of those committees is changing quite a bit...It is at a much earlier stage in the process...so it has become a much more involved process of who is being represented and who is participating in creating what is going into the content of these exhibitions."¹⁶³

So, though these advisory committees are gaining a greater role in not just approving plans, but also shaping them; they did not at the time that the *Future City Lab* was created. This means that the top-down process of creation formed a beautifully designed and interactive space, that has the potential to alienate. This desire to have more voices be heard in decision-making processes also emerged when discussing the questions and wishes of visitors to the lab.

Ackerman revealed that many visitors ask him if the information collected at the "What If" table was in any way being given back to the city. He explained, "I think it does speak to this larger desire...people feeling disconnected from decisions from policy making, feeling like they want their concerns to be heard..."¹⁶⁴ As of right now, there are no channels to externalize this information anywhere other than the museum website and social media. Despite this, Ackerman believes that the lab can,

¹⁶⁰ Appendix 7.4.1

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

“provide very specific, and in a sense, curated opportunities for them [visitors] to express their voice. But it is also inherently limited...we want to make sure it is as inclusive as possible, but we cannot claim that a large swath of New York comes here to express their opinions...”¹⁶⁵

The breadth of content presented in the lab sacrificed the curators’ ability to create greater opportunities for deeper conversations. He hopes that people are able to see the lab as a jumping off point for more focused and in-depth conversations, and that, “if it inspires people to have those conversations, then that is fantastic.”¹⁶⁶

When asked about whether or not the lab seeks to make political statements with the content and topics that they choose to exhibit the Chief Curator, Sarah Henry, of MCNY views the museum as first and foremost, impartial. Henry explained in a 2016 paper that,

“Especially on the most controversial issues, the Future City Lab strives to refrain from steering visitors to a particular point of view. Hotbutton contemporary issues, such as the issue of immigration – documented and undocumented – are discussed as matters of controversy, with accounts of arguments put forward on both sides, and are updated as political events require.”¹⁶⁷

However, *Future City Lab*’s former project manager Kubi Ackerman had an entirely different viewpoint, confirming that both the museum and the lab are politically-minded. He stated,

“the museum does not shy away from political themes...we are neutral in a sense that we are providing two sides to the situation but at the same time the museum has a position...our stance is very clear in the choices about what types of data we present. For example, things like immigrant entrepreneurship were specifically selected and designed to counteract some of the falsehoods around the issue; which in and of itself is taking a position.”¹⁶⁸

In a city with such great diversity at this divisive time in American history, whether or not all decision-makers agree, it is impossible to believe that the lab does not inherently make political statements merely with the content it chooses to display, and the people they aim to represent and reach as an audience.

4.6 Conclusions

In terms of addressing the future of the city, the *Future City Lab* does so explicitly in every aspect. All of the lab’s programming; from its interactive city planning screens, to the “What If” table encourages visitors to ponder questions of the future of the city and their place within it. In fact, when asked what he deemed to be the greatest success of the lab, Ackerman answered,

“There are a lot of ways in which it could be improved, or ways that it didn’t reach our expectations, but all of that said I think that one of the greatest benefits is in the fact that it was done. I mean, developing the concept of the space on the future of a particular place. And in a way I think and hope that it opens the conversation for other institutions...”¹⁶⁹

Indeed, in 2016 Whitney Donhauser, the museum’s director, asserted, “There is no other city museum in the world that deals with the future”¹⁷⁰ and, whether this statement can be proved true or not, the *Future City Lab* is certainly unique in its approach to a full room in the museum dedicated solely to discussions on the future. Whether or not this future programming is relevant or inclusive to different communities, at the scales of the neighborhood, city, nation, and world; will be explored here.

¹⁶⁵ Appendix 7.4.1

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Henry, Sarah. “Confronting New York’s Present and Future.” *Museums of Cities and Contested Urban Histories*. CAMOC Annual Conference, 2017. 140-147.

¹⁶⁸ Appendix 7.4.3

¹⁶⁹ Appendix 7.4.3

¹⁷⁰ Roberts. “This Museum Show Explains Why New York Is So New Yorky.”

Neighborhood

Unfortunately, the traditional Georgian Colonial-Revival architecture of the 1930's museum does not allow MCNY to feel stylistically embedded in East Harlem. In a neighborhood that is dominated by small brownstone apartments and street art, the museum's large, fenced building with steps to its entrance, literally elevates itself off of the street and creates physical and mental barriers that must be overcome in order to enter the building or its public courtyard.

However, despite its traditional architecture, the admissions policies of MCNY show great effort to be inclusive to the East Harlem community. From free admission for residents and workers in the surrounding area, to discounted corporate memberships for local businesses; the museum seeks to embed itself within the complex cultural fabric of East Harlem. Alongside the history of the building, the MCNY website provides information about East Harlem, proclaiming, "we are proud to be part of this vibrant community", and highlights small local businesses and attractions in the area.¹⁷¹

Within the content of the *Future City Lab* and other exhibitions within the museum, there may not necessarily be a strong focus on East Harlem itself; but events and educational programming geared towards the community fills this gap. The annual free Harlem Bounce party is a concerted effort from MCNY and neighboring Museo del Barrio to engage the local community in activities in and outside of the museums. Educational field trips within the neighborhood, and the availability of tours for public schoolchildren additionally serve as outreach to the community – aiming to embed the museum within its immediate geographical context.¹⁷²

City

Though it has been argued that the architecture of MCNY is exclusive and imposing, the inscription in marble on the building "Museum of the City of New York" is inherently elevating – proclaiming its presence to passerby and celebrating the city itself. Within the walls of the museum, the city is the main focus. All exhibitions, including the *Future City Lab*, are based in New York City's history, culture, and character – and the city is uplifted as both the subject and the artifact of the museum's exhibitions and programming. The museum's unwillingness to shy away from political statements makes the content particularly relevant to New Yorkers, especially when, "in this day in age the presentation of raw facts is not neutral."¹⁷³ In terms of content, the museum works to reflect the diverse character of such a multicultural city – producing exhibitions elevating and celebrating people of different religions, races, genders, and sexualities. Since the educational and event programming offered is in support of current exhibitions, New York City locals would also likely find these provisions both relevant and inclusive.

The Frederick AO Schwarz Educational Center is specifically geared toward filling gaps in the New York City student's education. The free Saturday Academy for students working towards their SAT college entrance exams is one example of an inclusive practice that benefits local students. The teacher training programs, free online lesson plans and educational resources, and the annual Teaching Social Activism Conference all benefit New York City teachers – in turn benefitting their students. The museum's partnership with Cool Culture also benefits New York City eligible children and their families, removing the notion that only the rich can enjoy the city's cultural offerings, and providing free admission to some of the city's financially neediest residents.

¹⁷¹ "Our East Harlem Home." *Museum of the City of New York*. <https://www.mcny.org/story/our-east-harlem-home>.

¹⁷² "Uptown Bounce." *Museum of the City of New York*. <https://www.mcny.org/event/uptown-bounce-august-14>.

¹⁷³ Appendix 7.4.3

Event programming focused on current events in the city that bring in local experts, activists, artists, and scholars assist in boosting relevancy to New Yorkers who might otherwise not visit the museum. Additionally, some events take place outside of the museum and in the city itself – tours, field trips, and scavenger hunts make use of the museum’s urban environment in which is usually celebrated out of doors.

Lastly, the fairly widely known practice of suggested admission is a policy that favors the New Yorker as city dwellers who frequent other museums would be familiar with this policy and able to use it to their advantage. In addition, IDNYC cardholders are able to secure free yearlong memberships, removing the stigma of immigration status and allowing all New Yorkers, irrelevant of their legal status, to enjoy the cultural institutions of the city.¹⁷⁴

Nation

Though MCNY and the *Future City Lab* are obviously ultimately embedded in their national context of the United States of America; the museum and lab do not stress the importance of national identity in or outside of its walls. This lack of focus on the national scale could be in response to the United States’ rising nationalism, and an effort to remain inclusive of all people in a city with such a high immigration rate. Though some exhibition content could be extrapolated to other American urban centers (like *Germ City: Microbes and the Metropolis* or *Designing Tomorrow: America’s World Fairs of the 1930s*) the vast majority of the exhibitions are inherently and uniquely New York-based.¹⁷⁵ This is not to say that Americans would feel that the content and programming is exclusive or irrelevant – but rather that, as a city museum, it is more firmly rooted in its urban context than its national one.

World

Despite a lack of interest in the national scale MCNY and in particular, the *Future City Lab*, could be seen as immensely relevant on a global scale. The museum’s blog asserts,

“Almost all the topics we are addressing are directly relevant to cities around the world, and we show examples of strategies from elsewhere which can serve as precedents for how we can address the challenges at home. For example, we’re looking to cities in Europe and Asia that are constructing floodable infrastructure, or places that have integrated driverless vehicles into their transit systems.”¹⁷⁶

Kubi Ackerman agrees, and explains that not only can New York City learn from other cities, but that other cities may be interested in relating to New York City:

“we specifically make the case that, yes, they talk about New York, but any global city is facing roughly the same challenges...we hope that people from other cities that come here can relate this information to their own city”¹⁷⁷

In the interest of accessibility and inclusivity, it is important to note that the digital content in *Future City Lab* is, as of this time, only offered in English. Due to the changing nature of the content in the lab translations and audio-guides were deemed financially impossible at the present. Despite this, the museum is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and is fully wheelchair accessible (through a separate entrance, albeit), provides captioning for all videos, offers sign language interpretation for tours upon request, and supplies noise cancelling headphones free of charge for those who may have sensitivities to the sensory experiences in the museum. Ackerman explains the museum’s goal for inclusivity,

¹⁷⁴ Appendix 7.2.1

¹⁷⁵ “Exhibitions.” *Museum of the City of New York*. <https://www.mcny.org/exhibitions>.

¹⁷⁶ Shalant, Jenny. “The Future City Lab: A Conversation with Director Kubi Ackerman” *Stories Behind the Scenes*. Museum of the City of New York. October 11, 2016. <https://www.mcny.org/story/future-city-lab>

¹⁷⁷ Appendix 7.4.1

“the way everything is written, the presentation of the information, the aim is to make it as accessible as possible. I mean the design of the apps: everything from the wording to the colors to the number of colors and the amount of time on the map table...”¹⁷⁸

So, though the museum focuses its content and programming on the intersectional identities of New Yorkers and aims to create possibilities of visitation for people of all genders, sexualities, races, and economic backgrounds – they are amongst the many institutions that fall slightly short of providing exceptional accommodation for people who may be differently-abled. Though legally compliant, from the front steps of the museum, to the lack of audio-guides for all exhibitions, visitors with different physical abilities may have hurdles to overcome in order to feel included within the museum’s practices.

A multi-scalar analysis of the Museum of the City of New York’s practices, architecture, design, content, and programming allows us to see how diverse groups of people may find different aspects of the museum relevant and inclusive. Though the MCNY and the *Future City Lab* content is created predominantly with the New York City resident in mind, the lab has the ability to be relevant to everyone because, as Ackerman simply states, “the future is up to all of us.”¹⁷⁹

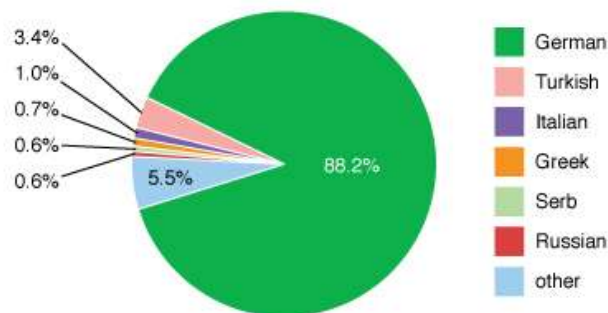
¹⁷⁸ Appendix 7.4.1

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

5. Stadtlabor & the Historisches Museum Frankfurt

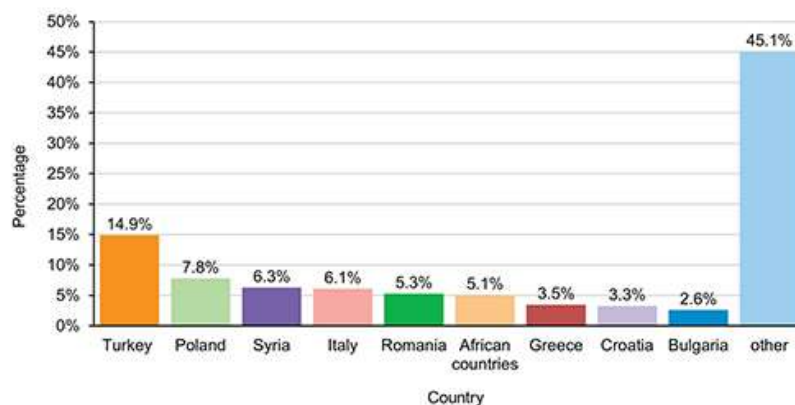
5.1 The Country: Germany

Germany is the 64th largest country in the world by area but the most populous nation in Europe, with a population of 80,457,737 in July of 2018. The country is comprised of eight states, and is predominantly urban, 77.3% of the population are defined as urban dwellers.¹⁸⁰ The country is ethnically homogeneous with measurements of ethnic composition comprised of nationality instead of race or ethnicity. In 2000 88.2% of residents were German, 5.5% were from various nations, and 3.4% were Turkish.¹⁸¹



Graph 5: Germany's ethnic composition by nationality, 2000¹⁸²

In 2018 there were an estimated 1.5 migrants/1,000 people in the population.¹⁸³ The foreign population by country of birth is diverse, but with the majority of residents from a singular country were from Turkey in 2016, comprising 14.9% of the total share of foreign residents.¹⁸⁴



Graph 6: Germany's resident foreign population by region/country of birth, 2016¹⁸⁵

Germany plays an immensely important role in Europe's economy, as it is Europe's largest economy and the fifth largest economy in the world. Thus, Germany is not very ethnically diverse, but it does play an outsized role in the economics of the European agglomeration.

¹⁸⁰ "Europe: Germany" *The World Factbook* - Central Intelligence Agency. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html>.

¹⁸¹ "Germany: Ethnic Groups." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Germany>

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ "Europe: Germany" *The World Factbook* - Central Intelligence Agency.

¹⁸⁴ "Germany: Ethnic Groups." *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

5.2 The City: Frankfurt am Main

Frankfurt am Main is the largest city in the German state of Hesse, and the fifth largest city in the nation with a population of 736,414 as of 2016 and an urban agglomeration population of roughly 3,681,000.¹⁸⁶ The city lies along the Main River and is a key stopping point for river, rail, and road traffic. Frankfurt am Main has also been an important inland port since the canalization of the Main River in the late 19th century. Additionally, Frankfurt Airport is the largest airport in Germany and one of the busiest in Europe. The city is a leading financial center for Europe as it is home to a prominent stock exchange that was established in 1585 and the European Union's central bank.¹⁸⁷

Despite Frankfurt am Main's small population, the residents are exceptionally diverse, with over half of the population (51.2% in 2015) coming from a non-German background. The city is home to as many as 180 nationalities and has large immigrant populations from Turkey, Italy, Croatia, and Poland.¹⁸⁸

Frankfurt am Main contains evidence of settlements that date back to the 1st century BCE, but the city as we know it originated around the 12th century. With a rich history of shifting power for numerous centuries, the city was strong as it was designated as the medieval site for the elections of German kings.

In more contemporary history, we best remember the city for its embeddedness within Germany's legacy in World War II. Prior to the war, it was the largest medieval city still intact in Germany, but the Allied bombings of 1944, reduced the city to rubble. By the end of the war many Germans felt deeply defeated, having originally aligned themselves with Nazi ideology and were tasked by their Allied-occupiers to reconsider their perceptions of history and their place within it. Johannes Tuchel of the German Resistance Memorial Center explains that the children of this era largely saw potential rather than defeat – and in 1968 these students confronted their parents with the atrocities committed during the Third Reich in what became known as the “1968 Movement”.¹⁸⁹ Since then the prevailing attitude towards World War II is that of the Allied Powers as “liberators” of Germany – and with Angela Merkel proclaiming in June, 2019 that D-Day created, “reconciliation and unification of Europe, but also the entire postwar order that has brought us more than 70 years of peace”.¹⁹⁰ Due to the destruction of many museum materials and large parts of the city, the museum did not address its place within World War II for many years – though it now has an entire section dedicated to National Socialism and Frankfurt's place within it. The city is now a global financial center and is home to many global workers – refugees and white-collar financial workers alike.

5.3 The Neighborhood: Altstadt

Frankfurt's Altstadt¹⁹¹ neighborhood can be found in the center of Frankfurt am Main, bordered to the south by the River Main, west by the Bahnhofsviertel, and east by the Ostend neighborhood the Innenstadt Quarter can be found north of the Altstadt, surrounded by a green park that shows where the city's last fortifications once stood.

¹⁸⁶ “Federal Statistical Office (Destatis).” *Statistisches Bundesamt*. <https://www.destatis.de/EN/Homepage.html>.

¹⁸⁷ “Frankfurt Am Main: History, Population, Points of Interest, & Facts.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Frankfurt-am-Main>.

¹⁸⁸ “Frankfurt Am Main: History.” *City of Frankfurt am Main*. <https://www.frankfurt.de/sixcms/detail.php?id=502639>.

¹⁸⁹ “From Loss to Liberation: Germany's Evolving Postwar Attitude.” *The Japan Times Online*, June 7, 2019. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/06/07/world/loss-liberation-germanys-evolving-postwar-attitude/>.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Translated: old town

The Altstadt has a rich history as the oldest quarter of Frankfurt am Main. Containing evidence of Celtic and Germanic settlements (dating from 1st century BCE) as well as Roman remains (from 1st and 2nd centuries CE) the start of the city we know today can be traced to this area. Frankfurt became a fortified city for the first time in the 12th century when Frederick I was elected king. Frankfurt am Main was a free imperial city from 1372 until 1806, after which power changed hands numerous times. It was not until after the Franco-Prussian War that Germany unified and Frankfurt developed further outside of the Altstadt, into a large industrial city center. After World War II, the city was decimated, to be rebuilt gradually in various modern architectural styles culminating in the creation of the new DomRömer Quarter (further explored later).¹⁹²



Figure 17: Altstadt, outlined in red, can be seen bound by the River Main and Innenstadt Quarter (surrounded by the evidence of past fortifications)¹⁹³

The Altstadt is marketed to tourists as the center of Frankfurt am Main, with Google Map's description of the area explaining,

"The city's main tourist hub of Altstadt, or old town, is centered on gothic Frankfurt Cathedral with its Renaissance frescoes. Cobble streets are lined with half-timbered and gabled buildings, like the Römer city hall on Römerberg square. Shops sell traditional souvenirs – ceramics, dolls and dirndl dresses – as well as local food specialties such as sausages and apple wine."¹⁹⁴

Since the Altstadt is centered around tourist activity, home to attractions like the Alte Nikolaikirche, Paulskirche, Museum für Moderne Kunst, and the Kaiserdom St. Bartholomäus; the resident population is very small. In 2016 the population of the quarter was estimated at just under four thousand (3,997). Despite a small population, the neighborhood is quite diverse, with 36.8% of the residents possessing non-German citizenship.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² "Frankfurt Am Main: History, Population, Points of Interest, & Facts." *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

¹⁹³ "Altstadt, Frankfurt am Main." *Google Maps*.

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Altstadt,+60547+Frankfurt,+Germany/@50.109326,8.6810424,445m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x47bd0ea61130a8cd:0x522435029b398e0!8m2!3d50.1100897!4d8.6822492>.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*.

¹⁹⁵ "Frankfurt Am Main: Population." *City of Frankfurt am Main*.

[https://www.frankfurt.de/sixcms/detail.php?id=437171&_ffmpar\[_id_inhalt\]=258871](https://www.frankfurt.de/sixcms/detail.php?id=437171&_ffmpar[_id_inhalt]=258871).

5.4 The Museum: Historisches Museum Frankfurt

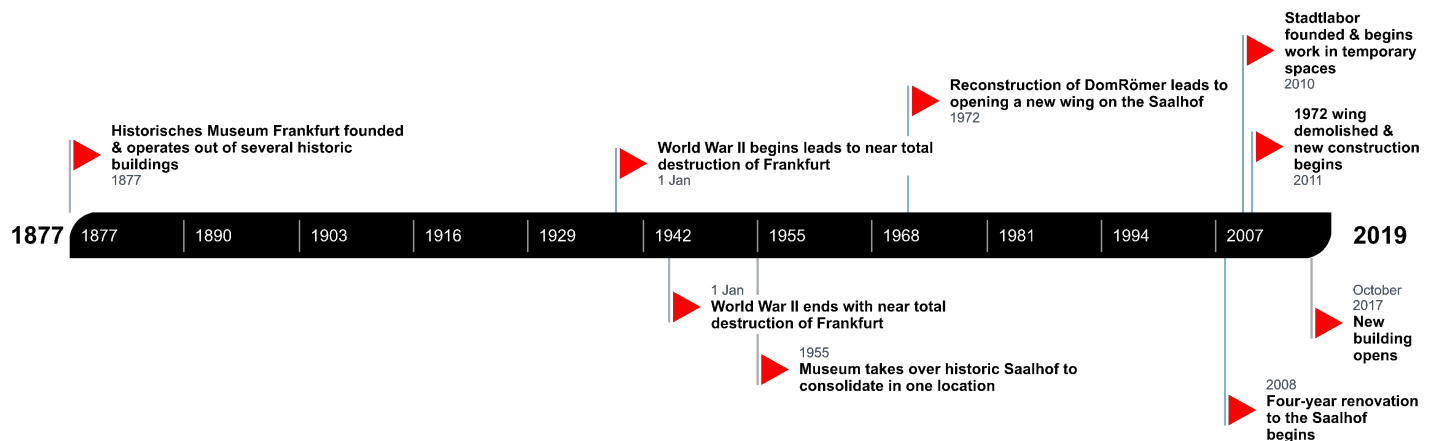


Figure 18: timeline of HMF's development¹⁹⁶

Though the Historisches Museum Frankfurt was founded in 1877, it did not have a home in Frankfurt am Main's Altstadt until the 1950s. Prior to World War Two, the museums' archives and exhibitions were held in several historic buildings scattered around Frankfurt am Main. Unfortunately, due to the destruction of Frankfurt's Altstadt in the 1944 Allied bombings, many of the museum materials were lost. In 1955, the museum took over the historic Saalhof in the DomRömer Quarter, the oldest surviving building in the Altstadt of Frankfurt am Main, parts of which date back to the 12th century.¹⁹⁷



Figure 19: Saalhof as seen from the Ironbridge showing the Rententurm and Bernusbau¹⁹⁸

The Saalhof extends between the site of the historic main city gate (the Fahrter) in the west, the River Main to the south, the former site of the Geistpförtchen to the east, and the Saalgasse to the north. This strategic location meant that the southern side of the Saalhof faced the most important port in Frankfurt from the Middle Ages until the end of the 19th century, and the northern side led to the center of the Altstadt. The embankment of the River Main meant that the Saalhof lost approximately three meters of its visible height in the 19th century but gained the

¹⁹⁶ Produced by author

¹⁹⁷ "Frankfurt's History in the Historic Saalhof." *The European Museums Network*. <http://museums.eu/exhibition/details/3629>.

¹⁹⁸ "Historical Museum, Frankfurt." *Wikipedia*, July 23, 2018. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Historical_Museum,_Frankfurt&oldid=851624800.

additional appeal of tourism and leisure activities along the waterfront. This part of the waterfront is now a main street and is heavily used by cars, bikers, and pedestrians, as well as tourists boarding river tour boats. The Saalhof is located within the DomRömer Quarter, within the Altstadt in the heart of the historical city center. This newly pedestrianized area is the center of tourism in Frankfurt am Main and has been under near-constant reconstruction and renovation since its destruction in World War II.¹⁹⁹



Figure 20: aerial view of DomRömer Quarter in Frankfurt am Main showing HMF²⁰⁰

Though the Saalhof began as a Romanesque palace, it has undergone many changes throughout the centuries; creating a complex of several attached buildings all comprised of five separate epochs of construction. The many additions to the Saalhof during disparate architectural eras create an eclectic architecture, of what appears to be numerous buildings stuck beside and between one another. The original building, the Staufer Royal Castle, was built in 12th century, was a residential structure, designed to complement the neighboring Royal Palace Frankfurt and was likely home to a royal's subordinate. The original residential tower and addition of a chapel (also in 12th century) are the oldest buildings in Frankfurt am Main that survive today. The first addition to this castle-esque property was the Rententurm (toll tower) which was added between 1454 and 1456, as a gate to the city for military protection and the collection of duties and port fees. From 1715-1717 a large residential development was created to house the Bernus family of wealthy Dutch merchants. The neo-Romanesque Burnitzbau was added in 1842.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ "Frankfurt Am Main: History." *City of Frankfurt am Main*.

²⁰⁰ "Altstadt, Frankfurt am Main." *Google Maps*.

²⁰¹ Ibid.



Figure 21: 1970s HMF extension shown on the left, in contrast to traditional architecture of DomRömer²⁰²

One wave of reconstruction of the DomRömer Quarter was in the 1970s, when, in 1972, a new wing was added to the Saalhof in order to create more space for the Historisches Museum Frankfurt's collection. The DomRömer was undergoing large-scale redevelopment and the architectural focus at the time was on brutalism; as evidenced by the Technical City Hall – a behemoth of brutalism that opened to heavy criticism just two years later. Angela Jannelli of the *Stadtlabor* at HMF explained,

“We had a building from the ‘70s. A brutalistic concrete building, the idea was great at the time because the museum didn’t want to be a temple of the muses, but more a comprehensive school – you know, a place for learning...and it was the perfect building for that idea, but it was a really ugly building. You know it was a grey concrete building – the ceiling was not high; the entrance was dark. So, people did not like it, they hated it actually, most people.”²⁰³

By the 1980s, the Ostzeile, a street in the heart of DomRömer, was reconstructed mimicking the historical style of the city and spurred public demand for the demolition of the brutalist architecture in the area. Angela Jannelli of the *Stadtlabor* explains,

“...we have this new, old city – and so it was also one of the thoughts. We have this big project here so kind of this is the beginning of this new city quarter. We should...take this chance and also have a new building for the city museum. So, this...was actually a political decision also about the architecture.”²⁰⁴

What finally led to the demolition of the former HMF building was the implementation of new regulations for fire prevention. According to Felix Semmelroth, a Cultural Affairs Officer in Frankfurt, a new building was estimated to cost €29 million, while the conversion of the building from the 1970s was to cost roughly €22.1 million. Thus, “it was a political decision. To say, ‘we do not invest any money in this ugly building, we will tear it down and have a new building.’”²⁰⁵ By 2011 the 1972 HMF extension was demolished and an architectural competition was held to find the firm to create the new museum.

Creating a new museum to fit holistically into the new historical portion of Frankfurt am Main was not just architectural, but policy driven. Therefore, the museum seeks to be inclusive to groups through the implementation of discounted admissions and memberships for particular groups like

²⁰² “‘Forever New: Frankfurt’s Old Town: Building between Dom and Römer since 1900’ at DAM.” *BMIAA*, October 28, 2018. <https://www.bmiaa.com/forever-new-frankfurts-old-town-building-between-dom-and-romer-since-1900-at-dam/>.

²⁰³ Appendix 7.4.2

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

students and people with while others may qualify for free admission. Additionally, Frankfurt Pass holders (a special pass for low income families that provides discounts on public transport) are amongst those eligible for discounted admissions into the museum, allowing families who may not otherwise be able to afford visitation the opportunity to do so. Lastly, refugees are able to visit the museum for only €1, which creates an affordable and attainable safe space for vulnerable populations.²⁰⁶

The winners of the architectural was the German firm of Lederer Ragnarsdóttir Oei who were credited to have won due to the design's continuity with the urban fabric. On their website, they stated, "After completion, the new exhibition building, and the existing historic buildings will constitute a single entity."²⁰⁷ The first step from 2008-2012 was renovation of the Saalhof in order to accommodate the operations of the museum while the new building was being completed, and to respect and maintain the historical architecture. The architectural firm began construction on the new building in 2011.



Figure 22: aerial view of the new Museumplatz between the Saalhof (left) and new exhibition-hall (right)²⁰⁸

The museum opened in full on October 7th of 2017, and the Director of the Deutsches Architekturmuseum proclaimed that "the city gains big-time with this building."²⁰⁹ The complex ended up costing roughly €45.95 million and sought to bring continuity to the new Altstadt in the form of clean, modern construction that respected elements of architectural history. Built from red sandstone from the Main River, the building consists of two side-by-side long narrow buildings, creating an inner plaza between the two. According to the Frankfurt Ministry of Culture,

"The plans incorporate the major squares of Frankfurt old town...in the concept, as well as the partly now overbuilt and partly still visible narrow alleyways of the historical city centre. This architectural design gives rise to a new spatial feeling: interim spaces that were previously hidden now loosen up and reinterpret this area."²¹⁰

The 8,000 square meter museum provides an "interplay between old and new" and a new public area within the heart of the city center. However, the creation of this new public space comes at a cost for some. Curator of HMF's *Stadtlabor*, Angela Jannelli explains,

²⁰⁶ Appendix 7.2.2

²⁰⁷ "The Historical Museum in Frankfurt | Lederer Ragnarsdóttir Oei." <http://www.archlro.de/en/projects/projects-culture-and-church/historisches-museum-frankfurt?order=years>.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Cahola-Schmal, Peter. "Frankfurt's New Historic Museum by Lederer Ragnarsdottir Oei." Stylepark. <https://www.stylepark.com/en/news/historic-museum-frankfurt-lederer-ragnarsdottir-oei-peter-cachola-schmal>.

²¹⁰ "KulturPortal Frankfurt: New Museum Constructions." <https://www.kultur-frankfurt.de/portal/en/Museums/NewMuseumConstructions/1689/0/52082/mod885-details1/1441.aspx>.

“For the appearance of the city it is really good. It is really part of the architectural ensemble of the city. But if I talk as a creator for community engagement, I think it is a catastrophe. Because it is very hierarchical. It is very exclusive, in both senses. It is a fantastic design, but I think in how to use this building it is really austere. You have to go upstairs. And we are an inclusive museum but the first thing that you see are stairs.”²¹¹

Indeed, though the museum boasts its inclusivity and accessibility (winning the Hessian Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration award for “Inclusive Design”), the entrance of the museum is up a short set of stairs, meaning that “if you are in a wheelchair you have to enter from the back or with the elevator; you can’t use the stairs like everyone else would.”²¹² Once in the plaza, the visitor is able to see that the exterior of the extension is decorated with statuesque ornamentation from the archives of the museum collections. This provides the visitor or the passerby with the opportunity to enjoy free statuary, and to understand further what the building may contain inside.



Figure 23: view of the Museumsplatz showing the shaded bench (right), periscope to the basement (center) and statue nooks in the sun (left)²¹³

Icelandic and German architect Jórunn Ragnarsdóttir, explained the rationale for the creation of this public plaza that has wishfully been described as a “Mediterranean-style square”, in which she envisions,

“...the creation of an urban plaza between the existing buildings and the additional exhibition spaces... Under this plaza is the circulation level, a lower lobby, which gives access to the exhibition levels on four floors. A special feature of the building is its roofscape, which is composed of two contiguous gable roofs joined lengthwise.”²¹⁴

The creation of the plaza, informally deemed Museumsplatz, created a new Museum Quarter for the city as the Junges Museum,²¹⁵ Sammlermuseum,²¹⁶ and Rententurm²¹⁷ are also located within the Saalhof complex. The HMF website boasts, “Pedestrians can cross the square day and night, allowing them to be in the middle of the museum without having to pay admission.”²¹⁸ Unfortunately, the only formal seating provided in the square is a long bench along the entrance hall to the ticket office of the museum, often shaded in what is already a colder-than-Mediterranean climate. However, upon observation, it became clear that most visitors neglected

²¹¹ Appendix 7.4.4

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Produced by author

²¹⁴ “The Historical Museum in Frankfurt | Lederer Ragnarsdóttir Oei.”

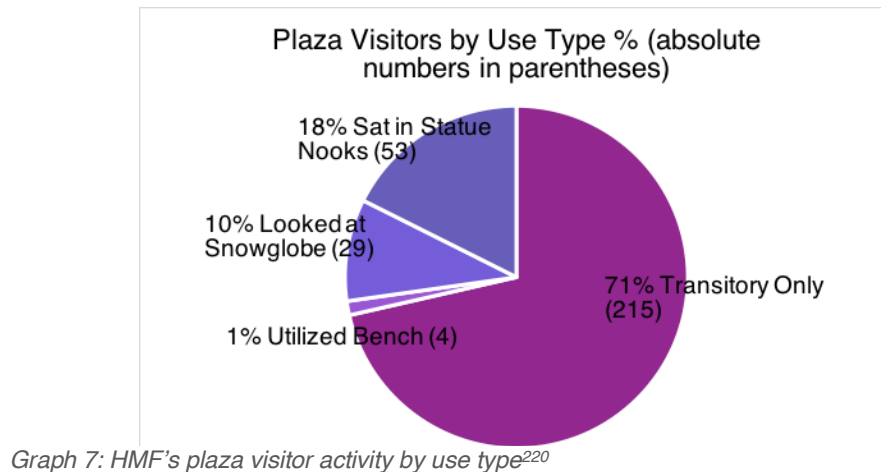
²¹⁵ Translated: Youth Museum

²¹⁶ Translated: Collectors Museum

²¹⁷ Translated: Toll Tower

²¹⁸ “Historisches Museum Frankfurt.” <https://historisches-museum-frankfurt.de/de/ausstellung>.

to utilize the formalized seating area and instead sat on the opposite side, in the nooks created by the statues. In the center of the plaza is a large gold structure that, through the use of mirrors, allows visitors to see the large animatronic snow globe in the basement of the museum. This structure generated a lot of interest, but unfortunately seemed to be confusing as the snow globe's appearance is periodic and is controlled by unseen visitors in the basement below. However, this shows that passersby were interested in going out of their way to see what the museum had on offer here – and this interest could be harnessed to the museum's benefit by utilizing simpler, less confusing mechanisms.²¹⁹



Additionally, we are able to see that visitors prioritize sun exposure over formalized seating and prefer to forgo the bench provided as it constantly in the shade of the museum. For how centralized and public the plaza is, it is underutilized in comparison to similar surrounding squares, and could benefit from investment in additional flexible seating arrangements like benches and tables to create more use and a livelier atmosphere.

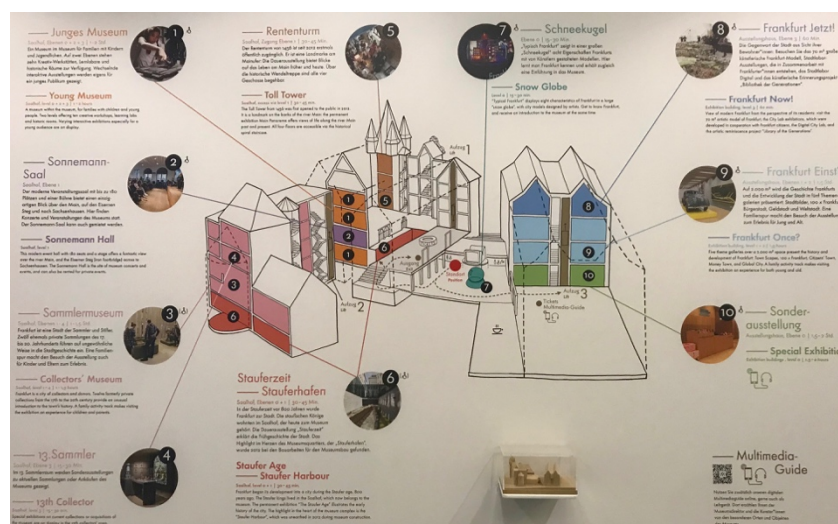


Figure 24: map of the HMF showing the exhibition spaces with the Saalhof (left) and new extension (right)²²¹

The admissions desk and museum shop are located to the right of the plaza, but confusingly, the rest of this building is administrative. This means that in order to reach the exhibitions, visitors

²¹⁹ Appendix 7.5

²²⁰ Produced by author

²²¹ Ibid.

must cross the plaza, by way of the basement. When asked about the museum architecture as a whole Jannelli explained that,

“I think it is really contradictory in a lot of ways; even if I like the architecture, I am not sure it is representing the idea of our museum in a good way. And the square is a fantastic idea the architects had, with this the museum is much more a part of the city, but still our main exhibition building is a building without doors.”²²²

The new building holds aesthetic cache, and as Jannelli points out, “it may be excluding but on the other hand it is valuing” – creating a huge home for the collections of the HMF. The museum hosts several temporary exhibitions per year on the ground floor of the museum which have included current themes and famous Frankfurters. Past temporary exhibitions have included: *Frankfurt Spitzenarbeit: Mode von Toni Schiesser*,²²³ *21: Erinnerungen ans Erwachsenwerden*,²²⁴ and *Damen Wahl: 100 Jahre Frauenwahlrecht*.²²⁵ Permanent exhibitions include the *Frankfurt, Einst?*²²⁶ which populates two floors of the new extension, and culminates in *Frankfurt, Jetzt!*²²⁷ located on the top floor of the museum.²²⁸

The museum seeks to integrate educational programming into these exhibitions and provides tours for students in grade 8 and up with topics like “Frankfurt Collector and Founder”, “Appropriation Refurbishment Frankfurt and National Socialism”, and “Frankfurt on the Move: A City with a Migration Background” – all for €3 (3.33USD) or less per student. Younger students, through a partnership with the neighboring Junges Museum, can enjoy 2-hour tours within the HMF on urban development or tours outside the museum, exploring history within the city itself. The three day “Project Week” is the best of both worlds and allows students to learn the history of Frankfurt through city walks paired with tours of corresponding exhibitions within the HMF. Lastly, the HMF’s Library of the Generations has collaborated with the Junges Museum to create the Youth Project, in which,

“Frankfurt teenagers write texts about their life experiences: how they see themselves, what they think, feel and how they imagine their lives. With various methods and media (text, photography, interview) and professional support, a biography archive will be integrated into the “Library of Generations” in the Historisches Museum Frankfurt.”²²⁹

In addition to student tours, the museum offers guided tours for all, but includes special programs for families such as the “Manduca” tour for families with very small babies in order to provide an opportunity for new parents and their children to enjoy the museum with group of people who understand the complications of bringing a baby along. The museum tours are often around €8 per person (roughly 9USD) but the SaTOURday tours are free of charge to families who pay admission to the museum. In addition to tours, the museum offers occasional lectures and monthly jazz concerts (€21 or 23USD) to those who might not otherwise visit for the exhibitions themselves.²³⁰

5.5 The Exhibition: Stadtlabor

The museum encourages the attendee to conclude their visit on the top floor, in the *Frankfurt, Jetzt!* exhibition, in which the *Stadtlabor* is part. The top floor is home to an open floor plan and contains: a model of Frankfurt (a crowd favorite), a slideshow of data on the city with special

²²² Appendix 7.4.4

²²³ Translated: Frankfurt Lace Work: Fashion by Toni Schiesser

²²⁴ Translated: 21: Memories of Growing Up

²²⁵ Translated: Women's Choice: 100 Years of Women's Rights

²²⁶ Translated: Frankfurt, Once?

²²⁷ Translated: Frankfurt, Now!

²²⁸ “Historisches Museum Frankfurt.” <https://historisches-museum-frankfurt.de/de/ausstellung>.

²²⁹ “Frankfurt Live! Biographical Youth Project.” *Young Museum Frankfurt*. <https://junges-museum-frankfurt.de/node/11>

²³⁰ “Veranstaltungen” *Historisches Museum Frankfurt*. <https://historisches-museum-frankfurt.de/de/veranstaltungen>.

focus on transportation and housing, the Library of the Generations, and the rotating exhibition space of the *Stadtlabor*.

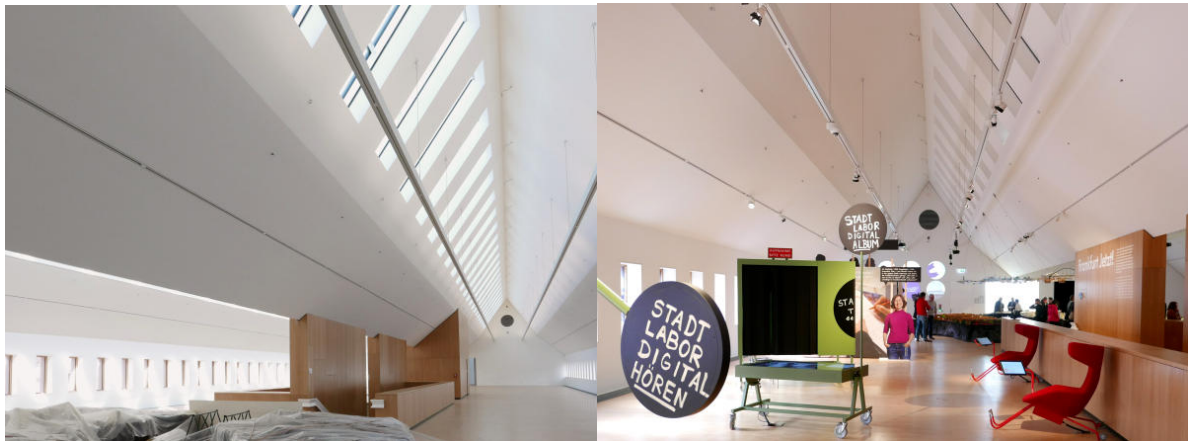


Figure 25: Stadtlabor on top floor of HMF, note the hallway-like nature of the space²³¹

When asked about the exhibition space, lead curator of *Frankfurt Now!*, Angela Jannelli, said “I think we have the most beautiful space in this new building”²³² about the open and brightly lit top floor. However, she did explain that the architecture can create problems when attempting to put on an exhibition,

“the space is really difficult. You have those two naves then you have three different possibilities to enter the exhibition. If you think about the exhibition as a narrative thing, how can you narrate the story with three different beginnings?”²³³

Though the *Stadtlabor* is located at the top floor which “is the most prestigious space, and people notice and appreciate this.”²³⁴ It also makes it the least physically accessible exhibition space in the building. These physical and mental barriers are frustrating for Jannelli as her main mission is to incorporate Frankfurter’s knowledge of the city into the museum through the use of a participatory framework. Jannelli explains,

“the goal of the city lab is to take all the expert knowledge seriously that people living in Frankfurt have acquired through the everyday practice of living in the city...it is not only urbanists or sociologists, historians, architects; who can explain the city – but it is the people who live here.”²³⁵

Jannelli and her colleagues create 2 exhibitions per year, and in the past each exhibition has focused on a particular neighborhood within the city. The *Stadtlabor* not have a home in the museum until 2017 so they would utilize their cargo bike which Jannelli describes as “a mobile lab of sorts; it’s a bar, a meeting point, a research tool.”²³⁶ to attract attention and gather interested participants in the field. They then work together with the participants for months to create an exhibition displayed in the city. Now, with a new home in the museum Jannelli explains that, “creating exhibitions in this room isn’t as easy as we thought but it is more difficult. Because we need more resources.”²³⁷ The *Stadtlabor* has now also shifted gears and is focusing increasingly on thematic exhibitions but the lab remains participative with an emphasis on diversity and inclusion. The process begins by looking for volunteers and enlisting the help of

²³¹ “Feuilletonfrankfurt.de »Blog Archive» New Historical Museum Frankfurt Opened.”
<http://www.feuilletonfrankfurt.de/2017/10/06/neues-historisches-museum-frankfurt-eroeffnet/>.

²³² Appendix 7.4.2

²³³ Appendix 7.4.4

²³⁴ Appendix 7.4.2

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

related organizations but they ultimately, "...try to look for whose voices are missing, and then we try to invite other people"²³⁸

The recent *Young in Frankfurt* exhibition was predominated by digital technology such as audio-clips and films, only in German. The digital exhibition was supplemented by 10 large double-sided placards in German and English asking visitors to place stickers, color-coded by what decade they were teenagers in, on a map of Frankfurt in order to answer questions like "what place were/are you afraid of?", "where did you first kiss someone?", and "where did/do you volunteer?". The other side of the placard featured data regarding the same topic. During a two-hour observation only 3 out of 146 visitors (2%) actively participated by placing a sticker, though the heavily-stickered answer boards are evidence that visitors have actively participated in the past.²³⁹ However, the visitors who come to the exhibitions are just the tip of the iceberg, Jannelli explains. Since the creation of the exhibitions are a participatory process she explained to me that, "we also put lots of emphasis on the product, but I personally think the participatory process is more important."²⁴⁰

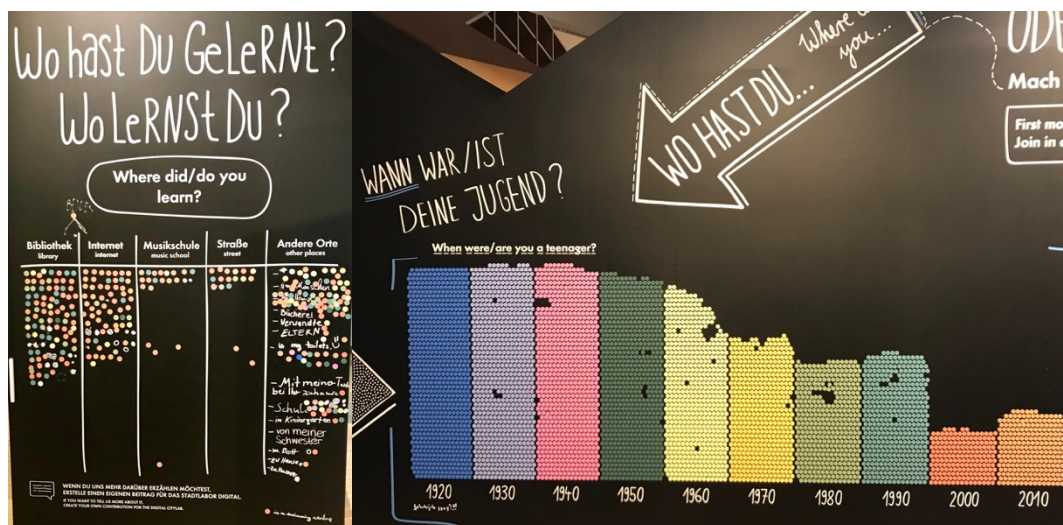


Figure 26: Visitors answer "Where did you learn?" (left) Stickers for the visitor to take to denote when they were teenagers (right)²⁴¹

The questions posed here invite the visitor to think about their present or past, but not the future. Jannelli explained despite their efforts to engage participants in questions about the future, she believes that "many people think 'oh it is the museum wanting to collaborate with us, so we have to do something about history'".²⁴²

However, the summer 2019 exhibition, *How Do the People Live?* encouraged reflection and forward-thinking. The exhibition was comprised of four different Ernst May apartment typologies, created using white fabric and wood frames, this exhibitionary mode allowed the visitors to physically embody the subject matter of the exhibition while additional information and artifacts were posted on the walls around them. Created in collaboration with designers, architects, Bauhaus-historians, and residents of Frankfurt's Ernst May settlements the exhibition asked visitors to consider questions like: "how will the people of tomorrow live?", "how do we envision living together, what do we wish for?"²⁴³.

²³⁸ Appendix 7.4.2

²³⁹ Appendix 7.5

²⁴⁰ Appendix 7.4.2

²⁴¹ Produced by author

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ "Stadtlabor's Ernst May Settlements: How do the People Live?" *Historisches Museum Frankfurt*. Stadtlabor Exhibition Guide. May 2019.



Figure 27: orange stickers show what features visitors would like added to a new housing development (left) visitors enclosed in the exhibition (right)²⁴⁴

The exhibition's opening party saw anywhere between 200-300 visitors²⁴⁵, many of whom participated in the interactive portions of the exhibit. For example, on a question regarding the visitor's preferred apartment sizes, there were 49 responses by the end of the exhibition's opening party and no additional contributions the following day. Additionally, at the conclusion of the party, there were 37 answers to a large poster asking what should be added to a new housing development, and by the end of the following day there were 5 more.²⁴⁶ This level of engagement at the opening party, in contrast to the engagement observed on a normal day in the *Stadtlabor* at both temporary exhibits leads me to believe that the lab enjoys heavy participation by attendees of these events by a small proportion of outspoken participants, and less participation on day to day visits.

Jannelli and project leader Susanne Gesser have come to the conclusion that they need to be far more politically engaged. Jannelli elucidates,

"I think we are getting more political because we see all those right-wing movements and how democracy is a bit threatened. I think this is one reason why we say 'no, we are a democratic institution and we want to have a diverse society and we want to contribute to this diverse society'. I think we are mentioning this more and more explicitly and I like it."²⁴⁷

Due to this desire, the *Stadtlabor* is planning an exhibition on migrant families for fall 2019. The lab is already inherently political in that it is largely funded by the city government and it shares the data that is collected in the participatory process with the Department of City Planning. Jannelli explains, "if one city department communicates with another it is easier than for normal people to inform someone...so, this kind of information chain exists but is not systematic."²⁴⁸

The *Stadtlabor* has worked to create innovative tours within the museum lab space itself, hosted by collaborators of the current exhibitions. There are also offsite tours that vary depending on the current topic of *Stadtlabor's* exhibition, but often integrate city touring and biking. For example, there are presently offsite tours of the "Frankfurt Kitchen", and biking within the Ernst May settlement Engelsruhe. Jannelli explains,

"for our events we have a really diverse public – many young people, also people with a migrant background – so I think we are the diversity manager of the museum. And it is

²⁴⁴ Produced by author

²⁴⁵ According to Angela Jannelli

²⁴⁶ Appendix 7.5

²⁴⁷ Appendix 7.4.4

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

fantastic to involve people – many people say, ‘I never thought my history would be interesting for the museum and now it is part of it, and it is fantastic’ and they are really attached to the museum.”²⁴⁹

Thus, the lab’s participatory framework and events planned for diversity aim to create a space for people who may not initially see themselves within the museum.

5.6 Conclusions

In terms of addressing the future of the city, the *Stadtlabor* only does so periodically and circuitously. However, since the focus and content of the lab changes depending on the exhibition the content may shift toward a more future-oriented focus at any time. Additionally, the curators’ newfound interest in making overt political statements could create an increase in relevancy to greater populations as exhibitions shift. The participatory nature of the *Stadtlabor* means that the content is inherently relevant and inclusive to the participants involved in the creation process, but whether or not their programming is relevant or inclusive to different residents, at the scales of the neighborhood, city, nation, and world; will be explored here.

Neighborhood

The *Stadtlabor* does not have a particular focus on the neighborhood in which it is embedded, the Altstadt. This could be due to the fact that tourism dominates the neighborhood and very few Frankfurt residents actually reside within the area. However, the *Stadtlabor*’s formative exhibitions focused solely at the neighborhood level as curation and exhibition occurred within the neighborhood itself. Now, with more thematic exhibitions, the *Stadtlabor* still participates in their “Summer Tour”, utilizing their cargo bike for important outreach. As was explained in the *Stadtlabor* exhibition guide as such:

“in preparation for the exhibition ‘how do the people live?’, the CityLab team visited 19 New Frankfurt housing estates and residential building groups between May and September 2018...The Summer Tour 2018 was an important building block for the exhibition. It gave the residents of the housing estates an opportunity to share their knowledge and experiences right on site.”²⁵⁰

In fact, the emphasis on participatory frameworks leads me to argue that more so than being relevant to residents at the neighborhood level, the lab aims to be relevant on an individual level. Jannelli explains that in terms of engaging participants, “I really believe in networking and personal relationships.”²⁵¹ The focus on the process, as opposed to the product, also highlights the lab’s goal of relevancy and inclusivity on an individual level. To conclude, the *Stadtlabor* seems to prioritize the quality of one’s relationship with the lab through a focused participatory process with a small number of community members over the quantity of exhibition visitors through.

City

The addition of the new museum building to the Altstadt is a benefit to Frankfurters in that it provides a dedicated, elevated space for the history and current issues of the city to be displayed and explored. This new building and plaza space create a central place for Frankfurters to hear and tell their own stories. As such, both the *Stadtlabor* and HMF are principally concerned with remaining relevant and inclusive to their residents at an urban level.

When asked about the ideal visitor, Jannelli stated, “I think we are mostly focused on Frankfurters. When we conceived of this exhibitionary space we also said this is the space for

²⁴⁹ Appendix 7.4.4

²⁵⁰ “Stadtlabor’s Ernst May Settlements: How do the People Live?” *Historisches Museum Frankfurt*.

²⁵¹ Appendix 7.4.2

people living in Frankfurt.”²⁵² As the Frankfurter is the producer and consumer of *Stadtlabor* exhibitions, the content proposed is then best addressed by Frankfurters, as it is inextricably place-based. Thus, the content and programming of the lab shows that being firmly rooted in the city is a prerequisite for active participation.

Additionally, the museum’s content at large is first and foremost concerned with addressing the history, current issues, and influential peoples of Frankfurt – thus fostering relevancy for the people living within the city. HMF makes an effort to be inclusive to Frankfurt residents, providing schoolchildren with tours and lessons that integrate museum exhibition content with history lessons they would learn in their classrooms at very affordable prices. Furthermore, the Manduca tour series that invites families with young babies to enjoy exhibitions together in an effort to be more inclusive to Frankfurters with varying needs.

Nation

There is no particular stress on the importance of the national scale within the *Stadtlabor* or the museum at large except for the scale at which data is collected by the museum. However, some content exhibited, and themes explored would definitely be relevant to Germans from outside Frankfurt. For example, the *Stadtlabor*’s exhibition of the Ernst May housing estates is in celebration of Bauhaus, a school and cultural movement that affected large parts of Germany. Additionally, the museum’s engagement with Frankfurt’s place in National Socialism would be relevant to all Germans, if not all global citizens.

World

The museum’s location in the heart of the Altstadt, in tourist center of DomRömer provides a forum for out-of-town guests to engage with the past and present of the city in a meaningful way. With museum content in German and English – residents of other countries can participate and learn from the materials exhibited (provided they can read German or English). The website features visitor information in German, English, Turkish, French, Italian, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Tigrinya, Arabic, and Russian but it is important to note that as of right now the lab and the museum only offer written descriptions in English and German (with some lab information only offered in German). The museum’s efforts for accessibility and inclusivity are great. Their mission statement proclaims,

“Our museum welcomes different social and cultural groups and persons with various mental and physical disabilities to learn about the history, present and future of Frankfurt – spontaneously, independently and not just within the scope of special programmes.”²⁵³

There have been extensive efforts to make the museum as inclusive as possible, from hosting conferences on the topic, to creating a new multimedia guide, the museum is putting forth huge efforts. However, these efforts are contradictory in that, no matter how great the provisions are for differently abled peoples, the first and most visible thing that all visitors encounter upon approaching the museum’s public plaza is a set of stairs.

With such a diverse population, the *Stadtlabor* is planning an upcoming exhibition on migration, Jannelli explains,

“our goal is to say, ‘migrant memories are part of German memory.’...and to say, ‘we are a diverse society, Germany is an immigrant society.’ Unfortunately, right now everywhere in Europe there are right-leaning tendencies that try to exclude migrant memories, so I think it is important to make this exhibition to not even ask ‘does this belong to German memory or not’, but to say, ‘yes, we are there, we are changing society and our

²⁵² Appendix 7.4.2

²⁵³ “Barrierefrei.” Historisches Museum Frankfurt. <https://historisches-museum-frankfurt.de/de/barrierefrei>.

memories are part of this'...I think we do not mention the future but I hope that it is important for the future."²⁵⁴

This focus and stress on German memory could be argued to be most relevant at the national level, but the *Stadtlabor*'s interest in becoming more political will focus on issues that may have a national focus but are relevant to the global community. Jannelli explains,

"I think it can be interesting because there are a lot of connections for tourists where they can connect this back to their homes. So, I think we should reflect on this point a bit more because now we know that 50% of our visitors are tourists and...we should reflect on whether we should integrate their perspective more to the exhibition, but we started with the conceptual idea that it is for Frankfurters."²⁵⁵

Thus, the *Stadtlabor* is first and foremost concerned with creating relevant content for Frankfurters through the use of participatory frameworks. This participation means that strong bonds are created with very limited populations, potentially at the expense of larger groups experiencing relevant content. However, the museum at large aims to be accessible and inclusive to all visitors through the implementation of their engagement with accessible practices and inclusion of vulnerable populations in museum programming.

²⁵⁴ Appendix 7.4.2

²⁵⁵ Appendix 7.4.4

6. Conclusion and Limitations

6.1 Findings and Discussion

	Future City Lab	Stadtlabor
Museum	Admissions policy favors neighborhood and NYC residents	Admissions policy does not particularly favor one local scale
	Grand historic building recently remodeled (2016) by local architect	Grand new building recently reopened (2017) by local architect
	Embedded in historically disadvantaged, immigrant community	Embedded in historical city center but dominated by tourists
Lab	Explicitly future-oriented and addresses the future through the present	Alludes to future by addressing the future through the interactions with present issues
	Top-down approach to curation	Bottom-up approach to curation
	Fixed permanent exhibition with focus on sleek design and interactive elements	Temporary exhibitions with some interactive elements but focus on process over final product

Table 4: MCNY's Future City Lab and HMF's Stadtlabor comparisons

Though both museum buildings are vastly different, from their architecture to their date of construction, they share similar features. Most importantly, they both feature an elevated plaza or courtyard through which the visitors enter. The use of stairs is extremely popular in museum architecture; but as it elevates, it is inherently exclusionary. On a symbolic level, the stairs are the first barrier to overcome, as explained by Jannelli but true for both museums,

“there are quite a lot of symbolic barriers that you have to overcome. There is the staircase, then it is the big heavy doors, and then the entrance hall with the cashier desk...so you really have to want to go into the museum.”²⁵⁶

On a physical level the stairs are an obstacle for large swaths of the population. The book *Accessible America: A History of Disability and Design* provides a brief overview of Clarence Day's essay “Legs vs. Architects” in which he condemns, “the debonair habit architects have of never designing an entrance that is easy to enter.’ Any ‘dignity and beauty’ in a grand stair, he found, was a ‘hard-hearted’ king...”²⁵⁷ Though both museums comply with legal standards and seek to be accessible, they create separate provisions, immediately othering the visitor that must enter through the separate entrance. As Sirefman asserts,

“Connection to a local neighborhood and relevance to a specific community begins with a building attentive to its surroundings. Responsible for reflecting a diversity of outlooks, the contemporary posturban museum must present an architecture that is substantive and welcoming.”²⁵⁸

To conclude, in order to be truly inclusive to diverse populations, some of whom may feel uncomfortable entering museum settings and some who may be physically unable to, museum architects must consider getting rid of the grand entrance staircase once and for all.

In fact, interviews with both lab curators illuminated frustration with their museum's architecture and outlined the large physical barriers that visitors had to overcome in order to gain access to the content they have created. In the case of MCNY, the historic building prioritizes grand hallways at the expense of exhibition spaces conducive to more experimental formats. Meanwhile, HMF's new building features a grand staircase that bisects exhibitions and makes wayfinding for visitors, and storytelling for curators, a complicated task. Thus, I believe that though the new museological turn of the 1970s may have led to curatorial changes that

²⁵⁶ Appendix 7.4.4

²⁵⁷ Williamson, Beth. *Accessible America: A History of Disability and Design*. (NYU Press: Jan, 2019). 7.

²⁵⁸ Sirefman, Susanna. “Formed and Forming: Contemporary Museum Architecture,” n.d., 317.

prioritized inclusivity and accessibility – this trend never trickled into the consciousness of the architectural community tasked with creating such museums. This lack of care around implementing the pillars of the new museological turn into physical museum architecture means that architects still seem bent on creating buildings that intend to elevate and impress rather than include.

In the case of HMF, the museum's architects sought to create a meeting place for the city through the implementation of a staircase and public plaza, perhaps endeavoring to act as a place from which to view the city – like New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art or Berlin's Altes Museum. However, the structure and size of the stairs is too low to create a meaningful viewpoint and as such, are underutilized as a public forum. Additionally, observations proved that visitors prioritize sun exposure over formalized seating options. Thus, the museum could increase use if they provided seating for visitors and passersby that is flexible and could be moved as the sun moves across the sky. In the case of MCNY, the museum would benefit from altering the design of the signage on the railings of the courtyard that obscure the space from sight. This signage advertises current and upcoming exhibitions at the expense of passersby's ability to see the seating available there. This limited visibility means that neighborhood locals may walk past the museum daily but still be prohibited from seeing and utilizing the public courtyard in order to feel included within the fabric of the museum.

This challenge of reconciling grand architecture with new inclusive curation means that museums and labs should consider utilizing their external spaces for events or content exhibition in order to bring new visitors into the museum. In the case of MCNY's Teaching Social Activism conference, hosting the workshop outside brought additional participants and interest from the surrounding area. Additionally, HMF's plaza periscope to the snow globe below generated considerable interest from visitors and passersby – arguably showing potential for greater engagement within the space. Activities such as pop-up exhibitions, educational programming, curator talks, or concerts could be introduced in these spaces to instrumentalize the plaza and courtyard as a tool for inclusion – helping to reconcile the challenging architecture of the building while endeavoring to embed it within the neighborhood and local community as a public space.²⁵⁹

Within the walls of the museum, city labs are utilizing their platforms to make political statements. In the case of the *Stadtlabor* the participatory nature of the lab comes with the concern of stoking populism. Jannelli explains,

“one concern is that... the raising of the participatory paradigm or trend is also correlated to the rise of populism. Populism relies on subjective meanings – you know ‘there are too many foreigners living here’ it is purely subjective. There is no statistical evidence...sometimes I ask myself if this invitation to enunciate your subjective meanings is not also encouraging populists to do the same.”²⁶⁰

These concerns are addressed in both labs by the mitigation of curators through content they choose to engage with. For example, both labs seek to incorporate and normalize immigrant stories as local stories worthy of exploration. This engagement with political issues has in the past been considered morally sticky but is increasing in prevalence and will inevitably lead to greater relevancy in this highly politicized era.

Indeed, the contemporary curator of post-new museology of the 1970s prioritizes the voice of the visitor through participation and interactivity, over discipline and surveillance. The complete absence of docents and guards in MCNY's *Future City Lab* and the literal creation of new walls and barriers that removed clear visibility in HMF's *Stadtlabor* summer exhibition proves that Foucault's Panopticon has no place within the contemporary city museum's curatorial practices.

²⁵⁹ Appendix 7.5

²⁶⁰ Appendix 7.4.4

Though they share many similarities, the most notable difference between the *Future City Lab* and the *Stadtlabor* is in the process by which their content is created. The *Future City Lab*, created by curators and then presented as a finished product to the museum public can arguably be aiming for relevancy on wider scales of locality, from the urban up to the global. However, this wider range comes at the expense of smaller scales of locality in that the design of the lab evokes the impression of finality and the individual does not have a say in the creation of content or distribution outside of the museum. Here, the visitors voice is valued, but only through the larger mechanisms put in place by the lab's curators and decision-makers. Conversely, the content exhibited within the *Stadtlabor* is created by individuals, and though it does not aim to be relevant to tourists from outside the country, city, or even a particular neighborhood; for the participants involved in its creation it is innately relevant. In order to learn from these different cases: museums, labs, and curators must first decide if they would like to prioritize a top-down approach to creation that may engage wider and larger audiences more superficially; or a bottom-up approach that can create strong ties to the museum but at the expense of wider scales of relevancy. When considering which approach may engage greater relevance, we return back to Anderson, who argues that,

“...it is clear that determining what is relevant cannot be defined and shaped through internal discussions and decision-making...[relevancy] is about deeper connections with our publics, communities, and constituents, *and* having our populace experience museums in ways integral and supportive of their lives and the future health of their communities.”²⁶¹

Though Anderson would undoubtedly argue that a top-down approach does not create a relevant museum, through this study we can see that there is merit to a wider lens of relevancy, depending on the goals and scope of the institution. However, despite the efforts of museum decision-makers, as Levitt explains, “Where a museum ultimately lands is determined by the intersection between national and urban cultural politics and the globalization of culture...”²⁶². Thus, mitigation of content creators can only go so far, as certain content will always be relevant on a global scale due to the political forces of our globalized society.

In terms of engagement with the future, it is clear that the *Future City Lab* does so explicitly, while the *Stadtlabor* does so more implicitly. However, any museum's presentation of content that engages with the present should not be dismissed as not future-oriented. Indeed, the opposite could be true as visitors can meaningfully engage with the future through learning from the present. Ian Jones asserts,

“We cannot easily separate the past from the present and the future: one flows into the other. After all, the past was once the present, and we are creating our future every day...And the city's past, like its present, is all around us; we see it every day in the city's fabric. It has shaped our present as our present will shape our future.”²⁶³

As the city lab is a place for experimentation, engagement with the future of the city in some capacity is inevitable. Whether or not curators choose to explicitly guide the visitor into discussions with the future, or if they aim to focus on the present – these conversations are integral to understanding our current place within the city and in turn, how our decisions will lead to the creation of our shared future.

City museums around the world are increasingly closing their doors to remodel and revamp their exhibition content and spaces in an effort to attract wider audiences.²⁶⁴ In this time of change, these museums would be wise to consult contemporary museum studies, such as this one, to aid efforts to create future-oriented programming that is relevant and inclusive. These city museums should utilize the findings presented here as a foundation and introduction to the diverse

²⁶¹ Anderson, Gail. “Museums and Relevancy.” *Journal of Museum Education*. (2006), 3-4.

²⁶² Levitt, Peggy. “*Artifacts and Allegiances: How Museums Put the Nation and the World on Display*. 5.

²⁶³ Bourbeau. *City Museums and City Development*, 8-9.

²⁶⁴ Paris' Musée Carnavalet, Copenhagen City Museum, and Vienna's Wien Museum are just a few city museums currently closed for large-scale remodel

practices currently employed by their peers. By understanding the current curatorial practices employed in the industry, and the architectural conditions other curators have inherited and grappled with, these museums are empowered to consider the advantages and repercussions of each decision they encounter. This can provide greater opportunity to leverage more inclusive and relevant museum practices that have the capacity to benefit the global community.

6.3 Limitations and Future Research

Due to the time and financial constraints of this research, I was unable to conduct numerous observations in each location. Though I attempted to schedule observations in comparable times across both cases and maximize my ability to observe special events (MCNY's Teaching Social Activism Conference and HMF's *Stadtlabor* Opening Exhibition Party) there is arguably always room for greater frequency of observation in varying conditions. Additionally, the scope of this project only allowed for the perspectives of curators and museum decision-makers and did not endeavor to interview or gain the perspective of museum visitors. In future research, the viewpoints of city labs' curators could be supplemented with the impressions of visitors to create a full view of the current situation at play. Additionally, a similar study utilizing different city museums would have merit. Lastly, a different study may find interest in understanding the motivations of architects who have been chosen to create new museum architecture in order to illustrate the prevailing discourse of the architectural community and how it may fit in with 21st century curatorial practices.

7. Appendix

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7.2 Admissions Information

7.2.1 Admissions Tables MCNY

Reduced Admission -- €10.55 (12USD)*	Bundled Packages	Free Admission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seniors (+65) Students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New York Pass Adult €117.72 (134USD) Child €86.98 (99USD) NYC Explorer Pass Adult €82.58 (94USD) Child €61.50 (70USD) New York Sightseeing €201.19 (229USD) Topview Tours Adult €39.53 (45USD) Child €34.26 (39USD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children under 19 Museum members City University of New York students, faculty, and staff New York University students, faculty and staff American Alliance of Museum members International Council of Museum members Active duty military Cool Culture participants Residents or workers from zip codes: 10029, 10035, or 10037 (surrounding neighborhood) Citigold card holders Bank of America card holders All employees of Corporate Member companies (Appendix XX)

*currency conversions as of 26/5/2019

Table 5: Discounted Admissions Policies MCNY

Standard Memberships	Discounted Memberships	Company or Corporate Memberships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual €70.35 (80USD) Dual €131.90 (150USD) Family €131.90 (150USD) Additional Options €219.84 and up (250USD and up) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students and Seniors €52.76 (60USD) Senior Dual €105.53 (120USD) New Yorker at Heart €39.57 (45USD) IDNYC Card Holders €0 first year (0 USD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate €879.38 (1,000USD) Library Friend €219.84 (250USD) Local Business €219.84 (250USD)

*currency conversions as of 26/5/2019

Table 6: Membership Pricing MCNY

Fiscal Year	Total Museum Visitors (Rounded to be Approximate)	Percentage of Visitors Reported NYC Permanent Address
2018	320,000	--
2017	278,000	34.5%
2016	244,000	39%
2015	233,000	43%

Table 7: Visitor Numbers MCNY

7.2.2 Admissions Tables HMF

Reduced Admission -- €6*	Bundled Packages	Free Admission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students/Apprentices People with disabilities (from 50 on the GdB) Groups of 20 or more full-paying guests Frankfurt Card holders Frankfurt Pass holders Booked guided tours for students Voluntary service members Refugees with ID €1 Kulturpass holders €1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MuseumsuferTicket (2-day pass) Family €28 Individuals €18 Reduced €10 MuseumsuferCard (1-year pass) Family €150 Individuals €85 Reduced €42 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone last Saturday of the month Students of Goethe University Frankfurt Students of Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences Students of College of Music and the Performing Arts Honorary Hesse card holders JULEICA card holders

*These numbers slightly vary depending on which language of the website is viewed, the English version is advertised as €4 but this does not include admission to all exhibition spaces

Table 8: Discounted Admissions Policies HMF

Standard Membership	Discounted Membership	Corporate Membership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual €60 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student €20 Dual €80 	Corporate Sponsorship €1,000

Table 9: Membership Pricing HMF

Year	Total Museum Visitors (In Absolute Numbers)	Percentage of Visitors Reported German Residency
2018	166,133	83%
2017	88,102	--
2016	55,751	--
2015	56,986	--

Table 10: Visitor Numbers HMF

7.2.3 Transcript for Visitor Numbers MCNY

(sent via email by Gabi Barton)

Total visitor numbers* for every year from 2010-2018:

- We can only supply from 2012-2018 at this time because attendance was tracked differently prior to FY12 making it difficult to share outside the Museum. Please note these figures are rounded to be approximate:
 - FY18 (7/1/17-6/30/18): 320,000
 - FY17 (7/1/16-6/30/17): 278,000
 - FY16 (7/1/15-6/30/16): 244,000
 - FY15 (7/1/14-6/30/15): 233,000
 - FY14 (7/1/13-6/30/14): 217,000
 - FY13 (7/1/12-6/30/13): 210,000
 - FY12 (7/1/11-6/30/12): 228,000

*You should note that MCNY considers all of the following types of visitation to be part of its total visitor numbers:

- Walk-in (regular daily admission from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm)
- Reservations from NYC tour bus companies and other tourism partners

- Participants in education programs such as students attending field trips, adults attending teacher workshops or professional development programs, etc.
- Participants in group tours
- Participants in after-hours Museum public programs such as lectures, panel discussions, film screenings, etc.
- Attendees of all after-hours special events such as fundraisers, member events, and private rentals from third parties
- Attendees of offsite events organized by the Museum such as walking tours, bus tours, and events held in private homes or other locations

Visitor numbers* reflecting where the visitor is from (NYC address vs. non-NYC address) from 2010-2018:

- We can only supply this information from 2014-2017 at this time. It has not yet been calculated for 2018, and it was tracked differently prior to FY14, making it difficult to share outside the Museum. We also only currently have them in percentage format:
 - FY17 (7/1/16-6/30/17): 34.5%
 - FY16 (7/1/15-6/30/16): 39%
 - FY15 (7/1/14-6/30/15): 43%
 - FY14 (7/1/13-6/30/14): 58%

*Please note as well that, unlike the above, these figures only include data for walk-in admissions, and not any of the other kinds of visitation described above:

7.2.4 Transcript for Visitor Numbers HMF

(email conversation between Victoria Campbell and Sandra Baetzel)

January 16, 2019 5:57pm Victoria Campbell to Sandra Baetzel

Greetings,

My name is Victoria Campbell, and I am a master's student in Urban Studies writing my thesis on the Frankfurt Historisches Museum. I am in contact with Angela Jannelli (of the Stadtlabor) who referred me to you as potentially the best person to reach out to regarding visitor numbers.

For the purposes of my study it would be very advantageous for me to have access to the total visitors you have received for the last year and as far back in history as possible. Additionally, if you do have any access to information on where these visitors are from (Frankfurt locals vs tourists, or German vs non-German) that information would also be greatly appreciated.

Please let me know if there is someone else who may be better suited to answer these questions. Thank you so much for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,
Victoria Campbell

Additionally, I have provided my CV and research outline below in case you may have any questions.

February 4, 2019 3:52pm Sandra Baetzel to Victoria Campbell

Dear Victoria,

regarding your inquiry I can send you an overview of our visitor numbers from the Historical Museum Frankfurt through the past four years:

2018: 166.133 guests
2017: 88.102 guests
2016: 55.751 guests
2015: 56.986 guests

Unfortunately, there is no information where the guests came from; in 2018 we estimate that 83 per cent of our guests are from Germany and the other 17 per cent are from foreign countries.
I hope this information is kind of helpful for you.

February 7, 2019 6:16pm Victoria Campbell to Sandra Baetzel

Sandra,

Thank you so much for sending this information! I had a couple questions about how these numbers come to be:

1. Are the numbers just of the visitors to the museum, or do they also include visitors to events hosted by the museum?
2. Does this include school groups and tours?
3. Are these numbers recorded at the admission desk?
4. How was the estimation on German vs. non-German visitors made?

Again, thank you so much, I sincerely appreciate the information and it will be very valuable for my study.

Best,
Victoria Campbell

February 20, 2019 6:18pm Sandra Baetzel to Victoria Campbell

Dear Tori,

the numbers include the visitors to the museum and all the visitors to events, who also had visited our exhibitions meanwhile.

Yes, the number includes also participants of school groups and tours.

The numbers respectively the percentage are evaluated with two visitor survey displays in a random questionnaire.

In this questionnaire you can fill in your postal code and your country / homeland.

Bests,
Sandra

February 21, 2019 3:42pm Victoria Campbell to Sandra Baetzel

Sandra,

Great, thank you so much for this information!

Best,
Victoria Campbell

7.3 Interview Guides

7.3.1 First Interview Guide for Kubi Ackerman

Project Director of *Future City Lab* at the Museum of the City of New York
30/10/2018

Creation:

1. When the Lab was being realized – what were its main objectives?
2. What was your role within its creation?
3. When you were creating the Lab – what did the “ideal” or “average” attendee look like to you?
4. Did you work with any partners to create and/or maintain the lab?
5. Do you know how the Future City Lab came to be? For example, was it suggested by a donor, curator, director, museum attendee?
6. Why did you choose to call the space the “Future City Lab” rather than exhibition – or rather – what is the difference between an exhibition and a Lab?
7. Was there any exhibit or lab prior to the renovation of the museum that addressed questions of the future of the city?
8. Do you have a relationship with any other similar labs around the world or in the United States?
9. Could you tell me a bit more about the events and programming you are working on?

Content:

1. How were the 4 “city’s defining characteristics” of *money*, *diversity*, *density*, and *creativity* decided?
2. One could argue that there are no objects or artifacts in this portion of the museum –
 - a. Firstly, do you agree with this claim?
 - b. And secondly, how was this decision made?
3. Do you think there is anything missing from the Lab?
4. How often does data get updated in the Lab?

Inclusion/Audience Capture:

1. How detailed is your data capture? For example, do you know the ages, gender, student status, residences of your visitors?
 - a. If so, what do you do with this data?
2. Do you know anything about how people find out about MCNY? Or more specifically, the Future City Lab?
3. Do you feel like everyday people are able to have their voice heard in the Future City Lab? How so?
4. How do you see the Future City Lab as relevant to New Yorkers?
5. Do you see the Future City Lab as not only accessible but also inclusive? How so?
6. Are there ever events held around the Future City Lab?
7. What are your biggest concerns with the lab?
8. Do you, or have you ever, had any concerns regarding the relevancy or inclusivity of the lab?
9. A study by the NY Times in 2017 showed that 35% of MCNY’s full time staff and only 10% of the board of trustees are minorities – amongst the least diverse in the study. Do you know if there have been any changes since this study?
 - a. Do the results of this study bring up any concerns about creating a Lab focused on the Future of the City when the decision-makers do not represent the present make-up of the city?
10. Are you at all concerned about the demographic makeup of the visitors?

Miscellaneous:

1. How would you define MCNY? Is it a history museum, art museum, or something entirely different?

2. When looking at the visitor numbers from 2014 to 2017, there was a total increase, but there was a significant decrease in the share of locals. Do you have any idea what this might be due to? Is this a concerted effort to appeal more to tourists?
3. Do you have any knowledge of how your tourism company partnerships might work?
4. Is there anything that I have not asked here that you think would be valuable for me to know?

7.3.2 First Interview Guide for Angela Jannelli

Director of *Frankfurt Now!* at the Historisches Museum Frankfurt
7/1/2019

Introduction/Clarifying Questions:

1. Could you confirm for me which parts of the Frankfurt Now! floor are part of the City Lab?
 - a. The Young in Frankfurt portion is temporary correct?
 - b. How often will that area change exhibitions?
 - c. The archive is the only permanent portion of the City Lab?

Creation:

10. Could you tell me a bit about how the Lab came to be? For example, has it always been affiliated with the museum even before it had a permanent home here? (was it suggested by a donor, museum director, visitors, etc)
11. What was the goal of the City Lab?
12. Could you explain to me a bit about your role within the Lab?
13. It seems that prior to the reopening of the museum, the Lab was mobile – how has having a permanent space for the Lab affected its activities or exhibitions?
14. The website states that the City Lab interacts with the past, present, and future of the city – for the purposes of my study I am most interested in how the future is being discussed at the City Lab – could you tell me a bit more about that?
15. When you were creating the Lab – what did the “ideal” or “average” participant look like to you?
16. Does that person differ at all from the “ideal” or “average” exhibition attendee?
 - a. If so, how so?
17. Do you view there being more emphasis on the process of creation or the final product of the Lab? Put more energy on the process, result is the tip of the iceberg – the rest is even more important than the result – prep is more important, all of the people contributing wouldn't identify with the museum otherwise
 - a. How so?
18. Did you work with any partners to create and/or maintain the lab?
19. Why did you choose to call the space the “City Lab” rather than exhibition – or rather – what is the difference between an exhibition and a Lab?
20. Do you have a relationship with any other similar labs around the world?
21. Are there tours, lectures, events, or educational programming offered on the material within the Lab?

Content:

5. It seems that there are specific locations and topics that are focused on within the lab – how are these decided?
6. One could argue that there are no objects or artifacts in this portion of the museum – how was this decision made?
7. Do you think there is anything missing from the Lab?
8. Does the City Lab address the future as much as you would like it to?
 - a. Why or why not?

Inclusion/Audience Capture:

11. Do you record any demographic data on your visitors or the participants in the Lab?
 - a. If so, could I get access to this information?
12. How do residents find out and get involved in the activities of the City Lab?
13. Do you feel like everyday people are able to have their voice heard in the City Lab?

- a. How so?
 - 14. Do you see the City Lab as relevant to tourists?
 - 15. Do you see the City Lab as not only accessible but also inclusive of all people?
 - a. How so?
 - 16. What are your biggest concerns with the Lab?
 - 17. Do you, or have you ever, had any concerns regarding the relevancy or inclusivity of the lab?
 - 18. Are you at all concerned about getting a representative demographic makeup of visitors?
- Miscellaneous/Clarifications:
- 5. How would you define the museum? Is it a history museum, art museum, or something entirely different?
 - 6. Could you tell me about what motivated the renovation and relocation of the museum? Have you seen any significant changes since the remodel?
 - 7. For the Young in Frankfurt exhibition in particular – I am curious about how often the placards get cleaned of the stickers – or are they up the whole time?
 - 8. Is there anything that I have not asked here that you think would be valuable for me to know?
 - 9. Would you be willing to meet with me again and/or answer questions via phone or email?

7.3.3 Second Interview Guide for Kubi Ackerman

Former Project Director for the *Future City Lab* at the Museum of the City of New York
21/5/2019

Catching Up:

- 1. While I get ready could you take a look over the clearance form that I have provided and sign where appropriate?
- 2. What are you up to now that you are not at the Future City Lab full time?

Future City Lab:

- 1. What do you think is the greatest success of the Future City Lab?
- 2. If you could do it again from the start, what might you change?
- 3. How do you see the Future City Lab changing in the future?
- 4. Are there audio-guides available for the Future City Lab?
- 5. Could you tell me a bit more about the accessibility offerings for the exhibition? (What languages are audioguides offered in for example?)
- 6. The Future City Lab deals with a lot of very heavy topics, such as immigration and housing rights.
 - a. Are you seeking to make a political statement with these themes?

Museum:

- 1. Do you have any response to the architecture of the museum as a whole?
 - b. What do you think people's initial response to the museum is from seeing it from the outside?
- 2. Have you thought of any ways to help reconcile the difference between the of the museum and its more traditional facade?
- 3. Are there any plans for events or programming out on the entrance courtyard?
- 4. What do you think are the main hurdles in getting new visitors in the door?
- 5. Anything else you might want me to know?

7.3.4 Second Interview Guide for Angela Jannelli

Director of *Stadtlabor* at the Historisches Museum Frankfurt
16/5/2019

Ernst May Exhibition:

- 1. So firstly, thank you so much for having me at the opening party last night. I was wondering if all openings are like that one?
 - a. If not, how do they differ?

2. Do you know who is attending the opening parties?
3. What do you think is the greatest success of this new exhibition?
 - a. What would you like to do differently now that you have seen it realized?
4. I noticed that this new exhibition asks visitors to think more about their present and future than the Young in Frankfurt exhibition did. How was this decision made?
 - a. Why?
5. How do you see this exhibition as relevant to Frankfurters who might not live in the Ernest May settlements?
 - a. Do you think it is relevant to tourists?
6. Are there any audio guides available for this exhibition?
 - a. If so, what languages are they in?
 - b. If not, do you have any concerns about the portions of the museum that are only in German?
 - c. If not, do you have any concerns about the accessibility of the exhibition for people who may have sight difficulties?

Stadtlabor:

1. Last time we spoke, you said you were interested in the Stadtlabor focusing more on the future of Frankfurt. Have your feelings changed at all?
 - a. Do you have any new plans in place for this?
2. Are you seeking to make a political statement with the Stadtlabor?
3. How do you see the Stadtlabor's process changing in the future?
 - a. Or do you believe you will continue to work on particular neighborhoods in the city, and with the citizens of those neighborhoods?
4. What is next for Stadtlabor?
5. Do you think that people would experience the Stadtlabor differently in a different space?
6. Now that you have completed a few different exhibitions in this new space what are your feelings towards it?
7. What is being done with the data that is collected on Stadtlabor Digital and in the exhibitions?

Museum:

1. What do you think that people's initial responses to the museum are from seeing it from the outside?
 - a. Do you have any concerns about the external appearance of the building?
 - b. Anything you would change?
2. Do you think the layout of the building is confusing?
3. You mentioned yesterday that there were originally different plans for the plaza outside the front of the museum. Could you tell me a bit more about that?
4. Is there anything else you would like me to know?

7.4 Interview Transcripts

7.4.1 First Interview with Kubi Ackerman

Kubi Ackerman in the *Future City Lab* at the Museum of the City of New York
30/10/2018

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, to start, do you mind if I tape this?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Not a problem

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, to start, I will specify between the lab and the museum at large. So, when the lab itself was being realized what were its main objectives?

KUBI ACKERMAN: The main objective of the lab basically was just to get people just engaged with questions of the future. But more specifically I'd say there were a few different objectives. The first being, to get people to, to empower people through information. So it has an educational purpose, as the entire museum does but in this case the particular challenge – unlike with a history gallery – we don't have information on what is going to happen in the future, and so for that reason we chose specifically not to focus too much on the more speculative side of futurology that you often see in places with like really cool renderings with crazy technology. So, we have a little of that in here and I can talk about that but for the most part it is not foregrounded. A) because the track record of futurology is very poor, and it is likely to reflect whatever our current obsession is which is inherently unhelpful but also because we want to have work against what would either be, you know, resignation, hopelessness, or complacency in regard to, you know, big challenges and complex questions facing humanity at large but cities specifically. Because it tends to kind of be like 'oh people are working on it, experts are working on it, I don't have to concern myself with that' whereas that is rarely the case. And so, part of the objective was to just get people familiar with the – not only what the big challenges we are facing are, but also the terminology. So, we try to cut through the jargon, and are very careful and specific in the terminology that we use so as to not make it sound too intimidating, you know for urban planning professionals these are terms you tend to hear but I think for the general public not all of it is what you would hear on a daily basis and so, one of the key objectives there was to empower people so that when they read the paper and hear about an issue with architects, and this or that, then it's something that they have an understanding of what the basic terms of the discussion are, and feel that they can participate in that discussion. And understand what the stakes are for them as individuals and for their communities at large. So that's like one of the main objectives. The second big objective I think is just to provide a place for people to have a voice for themselves. Again, because the future is up to all of us in a sense and we are very careful to make sure that we are not over-privileging it...Have you seen the two history galleries?

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Yes.

KUBI ACKERMAN: So, you see there that the interactives are all focused on specific people whose actions or lives made some sort of difference or were emblematic of the time...and the kind of contingency of history to fit things into a narrative, whereas in fact we could have gone multiple directions with the actions of the people at that time. And so, the premise behind the gallery, the unstated premise, is to make the connection that it is us collectively that basically deserves a gallery. It is citizens at large whose actions and decisions in the present really help shape the future of the city – so it is as much a gallery about the present as it is about the future. Deliberately so. So, in any case we wanted to make a place where people could in a basic way find their voices. So that was important to us. And then the third objective, which is really the purpose of the interactives is really to provide an experience. We very strongly believe in the importance of experiential learning but not just in terms of learning information but almost a more emotional sense of being able to engage with it creatively as opposed to just like being inundated with a flow of information. I am a very firm believer in play – especially with complex, serious,

otherwise daunting or arresting issues. We do seek to reduce like, more dire warnings...because people just feel so disempowered and again I don't think this solves that, but it is hopefully just one step towards 'oh, I can like...play with this'. Yes, there's obviously learning objectives behind this and there is a certain amount of creativity involved and it is limited because of course, it is a designed experience, but we try to make it open ended. So, the idea is for people to have the experience of making decisions and seeing those come to life.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, a sort of empowerment through play?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Yeah, and empowerment might be too strong a word...I know I used it but...yeah.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Okay, great. Could you explain what your role within the creation of the lab was?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Sure. I was the project director of the lab and it was basically me and the lead curator for the lab who was a long-time curator at the museum: Hilary Ballon who was a distinguished professor of urban studies at NYU and was just an amazing scholar and inspiration for the museum as well. So, we worked very closely together to piece together which a much larger team of people from the history galleries as well as some partners.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: I actually did have a question about that: did you work with any outside partners?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Certainly, at the beginning. So, we had architects, a graphic design team, media design team – we did a lot of work on museum-specific media. And then we also had an academic advisory board who we met with prior to opening to discuss some of the issues we were dealing with.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: I may ask you later for a bit more specifics on that, but I think for now that makes sense. And when you were creating the lab what did the ideal or average visitor look like to you? Did you have something in mind?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Hm, that's a good question. You know we definitely discussed the demographics of our visitors to the limited extent that we know – we don't pull a lot of information. We do ask where people are from when they come in, so we know a pretty good mix of about 30% New Yorkers about 30%...actually don't quote me on these numbers...

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: No, it's okay I actually do have the numbers.

KUBI ACKERMAN: Oh fabulous! Okay so you know. So, from outside of New York and then internationals. So, we are reasonably aware that people are coming to this with a very wide range of prior knowledge about New York City and we kept in mind that fact – many people come and experience a very very small slice of Manhattan. So, we didn't have like an ideal visitor, but we certainly directed it all towards a general public – kind of in the abstract – which is obviously a very ambiguous and vague term. You know, kind of purposefully so. We wanted to make sure it was accessible to non-experts for sure.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Great. I know you were obviously on the creation-side of the lab, but do you know what happened prior to this being here? Kind of, how did this space come to be?

KUBI ACKERMAN: I mean so, yes. I was not here for the very early stages for just conceiving of the work, but my understanding is that it was the previous director whose idea was to create a space – she certainly championed the concept of having a gallery of the future.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Do you know why the space is called the 'Future City Lab' rather than an exhibition? Or do you have a distinction between the two?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Oh certainly. There was a lot of discussion about that. I mean we wanted it to – the name is obviously aspirational. On one hand, wanted to set visitors' expectations about what they might experience in a place like this, as opposed to just a gallery because it requires a different type of engagement than our other standard history galleries. And to emphasize that it is a place of change and experimentation. I will say that you know, this is something that I personally think we still aspire to that but that we don't achieve it. So, we are working on, and continually working on ways of adjusting and shifting and changing the lab to make it more loose and have more of that kind of 'in progress' feel. So, we have plans for changing a bit of the structure, to really reflect that.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: How do you personally feel that it is aspirational and not really achieving the goal of being a lab?

KUBI ACKERMAN: So, I think that it is partially a design issue. I think actually it is principally a design issue in the sense that the design is quite beautiful, we get a lot of compliments on it actually, but it is also very deliberately meant to – in a lot of museums particularly ones that deal with issues of the future it tends to be – hm, I don't know how to describe it. Like there are a lot of spaces that have like...more like spectacle. Lots of big signs, flashing big screens...

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Ah, like, 'look here's some VR [virtual reality]'

KUBI ACKERMAN: Exactly. And we certainly want to have some kind of controlled spectacle. But also, to create a space that didn't seem frenetic in many ways. I think we achieved that to a large degree but potentially at the cost of it being too staid. Unlike what we might expect from a lab space which might feel a little messier, like...this does not feel messy...it feels very controlled. And I think that works against the aspiration. So, I think that is one of the things to change – is to make it – like for example a lot of this material is updated but the design is in a certain format. It is meant to look very official, very clean, sleek...

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: But it doesn't feel very 'work in progress'

KUBI ACKERMAN: Exactly. So, I think that is a piece of it. I think there are obviously ways that people can interact with each other, but we are always looking for ways for people to get their hands a little dirtier with it.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And you mentioned, obviously if funding came through, there would be some changes made. Do you have any idea a timeline or when you would be hoping to implement this?

KUBI ACKERMAN: I mean, ideally it would be next year [2019]. We have re-engaged our design team so there are some thoughts being put into this.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Can you tell me a little bit more about the decisions you would make then?

KUBI ACKERMAN: So, I think the idea is to engage people right away. Because a lot of people just poke their heads in and they see it and they have no idea about what this is and since this is a museum we have a lot of people coming in and since it doesn't really announce itself and they walk right out. And so we had an evaluation right after its opening, where we had an evaluator for the entire floor but they also focused much more on the Future City Lab – and from the beginning our ambition was to have it as a much more flexible space – and so they confirmed the finding that for some people (I mean people who had some familiarity with the subject or with a lab they

had more stamina and ambition with it, it was fine) but for a lot of other people they got a lot of 'oh well I looked at it but I didn't know what to do'. And we got other interesting feedback along the lines that they were hoping to see more of, or wishing to see more of, actually some of the stuff that we had deliberately avoided, like more of the expert visions. Like 'I was interested in that, but I didn't see the future. What's the future going to be like? I didn't find out what the future is going to be.' And so, as I said, we don't have those types of rooms, but we do have a lot of information in our strategy sessions which are tucked away on the iPads in those tiny corners where there are a lot of ideas on paths to take with these different questions. So, people are saying they want to hear that, but they aren't finding it. 2% or so of visitors were finding it. It is interesting to me that in this age of supposed mistrust of experts and institutions one of the findings was that people want more of that.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: People want more, to be told.

KUBI ACKERMAN: Yeah, exactly. People want guidance. And this was designed as like 'Oh, this is a place for your voice' that kind of thing. Which I think for certain people, with a certain level of comfort with that – it was great. But for other people it's just like...they need a little bit more guidance, a bit more scaffolding – which we want to respect that. So those two things are motivating some changes. So essentially, we want to take out these tables – and put a space that is specifically oriented to design activities that are oriented a little more towards experiences so there is a more clear relationship because that is also something that people don't really understand that screen. They come in and say 'I don't know what this is' and then leave. We actually want to change the language so that between each one we say something like 'Design one for yourself'. People don't read text in a museum, it is just kind of a general rule which I understand but so taking each wall there and then creating something you can see from the door. So, like big large-scale images from the strategies so that people can see that there is something there to explore. The designers are looking at some low-cost kind of armature almost like, easel looking, that would be attached to the walls that would make it clear that these things are flexible, and original, and can be switched out as panels – so make it feel more like a pin-up work in progress type place.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Kind of quick aside, was there an exhibit or lab prior to the renovation of the museum that did focus on the future at all or no?

KUBI ACKERMAN: No. And as far as we know, and you probably know more than I do at this point, I think it is fairly unique. At least in the sense that, I mean I think there is a supposed museum of the future under construction I think in Dubai or Abu Dhabi, which is totally crazy but very much like technology-centered. And I know that certain cities, I know the one in London but maybe a few others, have like certain sections on 'Where are we going?' like, that kind of thing, but I mean we certainly looked for precedence for this exhibition on the future and I couldn't find any. So yeah, we really looked for precedence to learn from and we didn't really find many.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Yeah, that was going to be my next question – if you have a relationship with any similar museums or exhibits?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Our director obviously has relationships with museums I think there is one in Amsterdam because of our colonial dimension, as well as some folks I think in Copenhagen, but I am not sure. But I personally have no connection and no formal relationships as a museum.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: In the research so far, I mean you guys kind of inspired this because I came here and I did read all the text and did love it – and so I thought 'wow I love that as a case study' and then find another kind of permanent exhibition that is focused on the future of the city and then I kind of couldn't find one. So, it is interesting to see that – and I went to the Museum of London and they do have like that one little section like 'monkeys will be living in the center...' you know. So, it has been an interesting task kind of finding those things.

KUBI ACKERMAN: Although that, the museum in London had a year's worth of programming on the future. We actually helped in developing some of the programs with the Future City Lab, but I don't think they have anything in the actual museum. I actually think there is a museum in Germany that my colleague was telling me about that's...Nuremberg? It is not Berlin. Where they closed for renovations for a year and during that time – it's not about the future specifically – but they did a really interesting kind of community outreach thing about where their city is now. They sent staff out to all of the neighborhoods to like, collect stories and artifacts and they did discussions and workshops and things like that to really bring the community in to see the city and where it is going. All sorts of programming to get ready for whatever it is they are planning.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: What an interesting way of handling being closed but still being present. And you just mentioned that you were kind of focusing more of your efforts now on events and programming?

KUBI ACKERMAN: I would say half of my time approximately is spent on updates, so, that could easily be a double-full time job, so it is a very time-consuming process. You know there is a back-end system that was specifically designed to allow for updating. And the rest of my time is spent, yes, we have a program series that we run. So, each one features a different theme. So last year we focused on climate change, this year is housing. Basically, one of each of the challenges. And as a cultural institution we want to create something really engaging, interesting, programs for our general audience – not just our expert audience. But also, to bring kind of usual suspects, because there are tons of institutions that give lectures and events, so we try to mix it up a little bit and get some of the folks who might appear at those types of events in conversation with unusual suspects. Basically, folks from the humanities: artists, novelists in some cases, other people who have, through their own work, addressed these issues and addressed the importance of cultural change as opposed to strictly focused on science or policy change. Frequently, but we always try to make it, with voices that are not often represented at these forums so that has been great, and I am really happy with the response. Otherwise I do a little bit of working and advising on temporary exhibitions and some advisory on other stuff. I try to get involved in engagement issues and the website needs a total overhaul – like I want to do some changes to make it more future-oriented. Because right now there's a huge amount of data and it is super data-intensive but so maintaining at least some of that but also to some more potential things we would suggest around these issues which is obviously difficult to balance in some cases.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And you said you are working a bit on community engagement, could you tell me a little more about that?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Yeah, it's a long-standing ambition to engage the community a little bit more and so, there's a lot of different ways, so part of it is...the East Harlem Resilience Task Force and there is also...I mean I am trying to shape everything, so I don't really know the answer. But for example we have municipal agencies here very often who we work with A) to get information and data but they can also come here, and for the most part even though...I mean someone asked me just last week we had some tour here and they were like, 'I mean so much of what you discuss here could be seen as critical to city agencies...how have they reacted?' and I mean, by and large they are just happy we are focusing on their work. I mean someone is paying attention to what they do and trying to educate the public about what it is they do, and so I think we are continuing to explore ways in which we can kind of serve as that bridge in a way between some of those public agencies and the public.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, focusing a bit more on content, do you know how the four city's defining characteristics...money, diversity...how were those decided?

KUBI ACKERMAN: I mean it was, I can't say it was any organized process...I imagine just lots of discussions in the room. It was maybe 5 or 6 conversations internally with curators and the externally with advisors also. We wanted to keep it very short and direct, and of course they do I believe encapsulate the essence of New York City. Of course, you can also argue any city has those four characteristics for sure. But, we wanted to make something very direct, very easy to understand given that people don't read the text we figured that we would plaster those four words people would...

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Have kind of a take-away?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Yeah, exactly.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And then I would assume, those five challenges that you were talking about earlier – was this a similar process?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Similar process, yeah. And you know, it was about having a limited number that were fairly broad and that covered – certainly not comprehensive – but I believe are most of the big issues. I mean there are certain issues that I feel we don't address enough. But again, our aim is not to be super comprehensive. But we also spend a lot of time figuring out how to frame them, what to name them, to put them in real terms so they wouldn't seem to jargon-y. We wanted to frame them around people's experience of the city so like 'transportation infrastructure' sounds very abstract but 'getting around' is hopefully like 'oh yeah I need to get around' it's a bit more identifiable.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Do any suggestions that didn't make it in kind of stick out to you?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Any suggestions for...?

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: For either the five challenges or the four characteristics...

KUBI ACKERMAN: Yeah, I can't really speak to the four characteristics...it was so long ago, and I wasn't actually in on all those discussions...but the five challenges certainly. There wasn't necessarily that we were...there is kind of a combination of the title and how we framed it and how the actual challenge was. So, things we definitely discussed are in here. Like there is kind of a larger infrastructure piece that we certainly address through all of these but at one point we were going to have a certain topic of infrastructure, you know like: water, gas, energy...all those things. And they are in here but not directly as one topic. Public health is something that we address indirectly in some places but not directly. We were never considering having one be crime and policing, but it is also something which wouldn't fit so well specifically but I still wanted to address it.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Okay, great thank you. Walking around it could be argued that there are no artifacts here. You agree with that?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Yeah, I agree with that. Actually, this was a very long discussion – at certain points we were planning on having some artifacts but objects. People love objects. Especially future-oriented objects there was a lot that we could do so we could do a representation of 100 different objects or something. But there is kind of typical infrastructural challenges of the space, creating cases, in terms of how often these things have to be rotated...and also you know, there is also the conceptual challenge of how the pace of technological change how quickly these things seem not so future-y.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Right, you put an iPhone in right now and in a year...

KUBI ACKERMAN: Exactly, so, in order to build custom cases around these things and then who

knows what's coming next. It seems, also, in addition to our reluctance about objects and tech – not necessarily interested in skewing more towards kind of cool tech. And we are not necessarily against that, I mean technology is a huge and will have a huge impact on our future and we hopefully address that, but you know, gadgetry is something very alluring, but it is not necessarily the focus here.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Do you think that there is anything, in particular, missing from the lab?

KUBI ACKERMAN: You know, some of the topics I just mentioned, some of the changes. One of the things I will say is that...there are a couple of things that people ask often and people say. So, one of the things is making the information in the data more interactive...so certainly with the maps...people always ask, 'Are these maps online?' and that is one of the things we are working on and initially, other than the labor involved it is not just the question of putting them online. They have to be reformatted, redesigned for online interactivity...but it is also, initially I was kind of resistant to this idea because a lot of the data is online – you just have to know where to look. At the beginning the intention was never for the map to become a kind of clearinghouse for information but of selecting, curating, and presenting information in a particular way. But given the interest we will be putting stuff online – but there's a lot of maps that exist – it's kind of recreating the wheel. But if people come here, love it, want to see it...that's cool too.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: I mean it could be considered a compliment that your map is better...

KUBI ACKERMAN: Yes, I am always glad to hear it...that's just until recently we hadn't considered it. Another thing I will say is that people very often ask about either with the 'What If' table or with the designs like 'oh, is this information going anywhere...like are you giving this back to the city?'. So many people want to talk about this. And again, my initial reaction was like 'this is not useful data'...this is a very selective group of people, it doesn't represent the population at large by any stretch of the imagination. But I think it does speak to this larger desire...people feeling disconnected from decisions from policy making, feeling like they want their concerns to be heard...certainly like with midterm elections coming up that is important. It is just such a tiny step, and totally inadequate, this means of engaging with these issues – getting people pumped about this stuff or interested at least in it. And we don't really have any place that says, 'okay this is what you should do now' and again, our range is...so for our own sakes for decision-making we needed to know how to frame the issues like 'okay what is a generation ahead' so that way, to not have it overtly focused on certain ills or possibilities on the table right now...like this administration...you know because things change so fast...and we just don't have the capacity to keep up with that so we are not saying like 'hey pressure your house-person to push this bill' as that's not really what we are doing...I mean if this leads to someone pressure them to push the bill then that's great but at the same time we are not like 100 years in the future...you know computers merging with our bodies...but it is more of that mid-range. So that is our focus...but people really want to know A) what they can do and how what they do here can actually make it back to some sort of channel of power which we just don't have the mechanism for doing that. And that is something I am always thinking about...we create inspiration with different things like the 'What If' table and we have been successful way beyond my own imagination like 'are people really going to want to do this?' and you know we have received 40,000 since we have opened.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And I saw that you guys kind of interact with those questions on Instagram and the blog?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Exactly, so we have made some changes on that on how we put those out there and in what format and we started off by having expert responses and then online we would have kind of mini-think pieces around them and then in this stage of social media we just started Instagramming them out and the ones that do the best on Instagram are the ones that

are fairly like...earnest...funny and engaging...not necessarily something that serious. Nothing super expert.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, Instagramming the 'What Ifs' wasn't the original plan was it?

KUBI ACKERMAN: No, originally what we were doing was we were selecting certain ones and then we were getting three expert responses and then writing a little piece.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Okay I think I saw some of those online.

KUBI ACKERMAN: Yeah, I mean it is a lot of work. Whereas it is really easy to like slap one on Instagram.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: You mentioned before, data updates. You said it is a couple of years?

KUBI ACKERMAN: So, it depends. All the demographic data we rely on census...so the American Community Survey comes out every year and we do five-year estimates which are usually based on data collected two years ago. And that is generally the most accurate data available. And so, it comes out every year, so some data sets are less frequent. The most challenging the nature because it's not covered by the census so that is 5 different sources, some of which are explicitly proprietary – some of which I have to go and badger some organization and work on the formatting.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, are you the only person working on the updates?

KUBI ACKERMAN: I am. If I had anyone else helping me, and I have interns every so often and that has always been helpful.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Your data capture, I know they take zip codes or countries at the door but beyond that do you do any other data capture on your visitors?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Not that I am aware.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, there is that, and then this kind of pseudo-data capture here.

KUBI ACKERMAN: Yeah, I mean we don't actually have any info on who is participating. We do some very basic categorization sometimes but like...we don't keep a log on who in particular is participating.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Do you have any concerns about potential homogeneity of the demographic makeup of the visitors?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Yeah, certainly. I mean I think this is more of a museum-wide question, and I think it is a huge question all the time and it has both to do with the types of exhibits and programming we have. So there has been a concerted effort definitely within the last five to ten years to have our programming and exhibitions reflect more all of New York, you know, whatever that means. We had a basketball show, a graffiti show...basically we are trying to make sure...I mean we had salsa and jazz and dance show...so to do things like Uptown Bounce which is a series of parties over the summer with folks from the community...so there is a lot of discussion around it. Not that we have solved this...I mean all cultural institutions are grappling with this issue right now. As a matter of fact, there's a mandate from the city to do some both internally with staff and board which we have certain mandates for diversity but also with visitors.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And it looks like you're kind of trying to focus on diversity in the audience at all levels, so curation, events, marketing...

KUBI ACKERMAN: Education is a huge part of that so actually we are offering free tours to school groups from Upper Manhattan and the South Bronx, so we have tens of thousands of school kids here. There are also teacher training programs...that is also something I should have mentioned I work on is curriculum for teacher training.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: I read the study that showed 35% of the full-time staff and 10% of the board here at the City Museum of New York were minorities, and it looked like it was the least diverse in the study. Do you know if there have been any changes since the study? I know it came out in 2017 so it was fairly recent.

KUBI ACKERMAN: I do believe that there have been some changes. I know that it is one of upper managements goals at this point...but I can't say for sure.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And for you, personally, do you have concerns about creating exhibitions when the decision makers are less diverse than the city at large?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Definitely. It is something we are always keeping into account. That is something our consultants are also about. We are having all of our exhibitions now have, and this has been true in the past as well, but they all have advisory committees. But the demographic makeup of those advisory committees and the role of those committees is changing quite a bit. So, it is not just like 'here is what we are doing, give us your feedback'. It is at a much earlier stage in the process. Certainly with these exhibitions for sure, but more so going forward...I worked closely with the curator for the 'Activist New York' exhibition and she is also spearheading this whole process where in each case having multiple stakeholder sessions where we develop the concepts and making sure as many voices as possible are at the table and constantly asking 'who needs to be here?' and 'can we reach out to those people?' so it has become a much more involved process of who is being represented and who is participating in creating what is going into the content of these exhibitions.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And so, who would be on these advisory committees? Would it be museum experts?

KUBI ACKERMAN: It is usually not museum experts, it usually a combination of...I mean it depends... In this particular case it was...so we have always had academic advisory committees and so that is what is changing is that it is not just academics, but it varies from show to show. So, in 'Activist New York' we had activists and a mixture of private institutions and public officials.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Do you know anything about how people find out about the Museum of the City of New York?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Yes, I mean I don't have stats on that, it is more of a question for marketing, but I do know...we have a marketing team whose main job is to get press. I mean press is what we want. People learn about our exhibitions from press and I know social media is a huge part of that. We work with NYC & Company which is the city's tourism board as well as private tour operators in order to get tourists here. And we have known from various studies that our principal challenge as far as getting an audience is our location. Especially visitors to New York...I mean even Manhattanites are like 'oh you're all the way up there'. I commute from Brooklyn every day but yeah that is a challenge.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Do you know if there is any separate marketing or a separate push for the lab itself or is the focus on newer exhibitions?

KUBI ACKERMAN: There is a separate, but I mean I work with the marketing team – if I am going to do something – I mean the updates take a lot of time but there is nothing marketable

about that, I just have to do them. But certainly, for putting maps online, or something they can give me some traction to put some interest out there. But as far as press is concerned it is mainly for new exhibitions. I mean there was a big push, the museum's largest marketing push ever was for New York at its Core – but I mean that is not news any more. We have various marketing around programs and events and we are trying various partnerships through like Atlantic City Lab and things like that.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: We discussed what you do with the 'What ifs' and how people say 'okay you have taken my information now what do you do with it' – obviously that is a concern, but do you feel in general that people's voices are being heard in the lab?

KUBI ACKERMAN: You know, I think yes. I think we provide very specific and, in a sense, curated, opportunities for them to express their voice. It is effective in a sense that it is presented in a particular way that they think and with feedback and actual results show that people do like that. But it is also inherently limited. Given the breadth of what we cover here it is not a place for super in-depth conversations necessarily. If it inspires people to have those conversations, then that is fantastic, but I will also relate on some of those other questions that you asked me on who's voices are not here I mean we want to make sure it is as inclusive as possible, but we cannot claim that a large swath of New York comes here to express their opinions. So yes and no. But it is a place where people come with questions and to play games, and if they are with someone else that they can talk to and express their thoughts then that's great.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Do you see the Future City Lab as relevant to New Yorkers specifically?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Definitely.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: But still engaging to tourists and out of towners?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Yeah, I certainly hope so. I feel like in the way we framed the issues but also in the strategy sessions we specifically make the case that, yes, they talk about New York, but any global city is facing roughly the same challenges and so there is a lot to be learned for other places. We definitely try to combat the populism like 'oh this is the greatest city on earth', I mean I like it but there is so much that we have to learn from other places certainly and I think that is an important message and like, you know, we hope that people from other cities that come here can A) relate this information to their own city, I mean we don't explicitly instruct people to do so but I certainly hope that is the case and also, again, with the strategies maybe that people can see that within their own cities.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Do you see the lab as not, only accessible in terms of not only wheelchair accessibility and all of that, but also inclusive to any type of person?

KUBI ACKERMAN: That is certainly the hope. I mean the way everything is written, the presentation of the information, the aim is to make it as accessible as possible. I mean the design of the apps: everything from the wording to the colors to the number of colors and the amount of time on the map table...which is always a source of contention. Some people think it is way too fast and for other people it is way too slow...so there is no perfect answer. But yeah, definitely we hope so. And also, we wanted to have multiple points of entry, so if data and numbers are not your thing then there is a lot of qualitative information on the videos for example and it should engage to a lot of different learning styles from kind of quantitative numbers to, like, here is someone's story.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: You had mentioned programming and events, are you usually collaborating with other exhibits in the museum or is it just Future City Lab events?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Oh, it is just Future City Lab events. I mean we have lots of events but the ones that I run are a Future City Lab series.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: I am going to ask you a couple of questions that might not be under your purview but if you had to define the Museum of the City of New York would you define it as a history museum or an art museum or something entirely different?

KUBI ACKERMAN: That is a very good question. I would say definitely not an art museum. It has traditionally been defined as a history museum, but I think the leadership right now is trying to expand that definition to be much more inclusive partially because of the Future City Lab. A lot of our other programming and exhibitions also are much less of what you would think of as a traditional history museum, so it is much more a museum about New York City culture...broadly. So, a cultural institution, a cultural museum that focuses on politics, history, and urban issues. The museum last year rewrote its mission statement to make that more explicit...I mean the word history is still in there, but it is among a list of other descriptors. I mean it is pretty vague but if you can't find the mission statement on the website I can get it to you.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Okay, thank you. And then, I just received the visitor numbers from 2014-2017 and it looks like you guys used to quantify it in a way that changed in 2014 but the numbers from 2014 to 2017 show an increase in total visitors but the share of locals actually decreased from 58% to actually 34%.

KUBI ACKERMAN: Locals being like, from New York?

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Yeah. The definition there was 'New Yorkers'. Do you have any idea what that might be due to?

KUBI ACKERMAN: From 2014 to 2017, I don't know. Was it a spike in 2014 and then a big drop the next year or was it gradual?

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: It was gradual.

KUBI ACKERMAN: Yeah, I have no idea.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Do you think it could possibly be a concerted effort to get to tourists? Because I was looking at a share, and not absolute numbers – so do you know if there were any additional resources put into marketing towards tourists?

KUBI ACKERMAN: I don't. I know they are always pushing for more visitors, but I don't know.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: No problem I can reach out to marketing on that. Lastly, is there anything that I haven't asked here that you think that I should know?

KUBI ACKERMAN: No, I don't think so.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: I know that I personally was surprised to hear about how many pots you have your hand in, so I might, if possible, reach out to ask you more question about education and events that you deal with.

KUBI ACKERMAN: Definitely.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Perfect, thank you so much!

KUBI ACKERMAN: Yes, if you have any follow up questions reach out to me. I look forward to hearing from you soon and reading your research when you are do

7.4.2 First Interview with Angela Jannelli

First Interview with Angela Jannelli in the *Stadtlabor* at Historisches Museum Frankfurt
7/1/2019

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: I figured it would probably be most helpful if I reminded you of exactly what I am focusing on before we start talking? So, I am focusing in particular on city museums and how they engage local residents in interactions with the future of their city. So, that may be something to keep in mind as we talk of course I am looking forward to of course hearing all of your thoughts. So, obviously I was here the last two days – but I was hoping you could confirm for me what parts of this space are particularly the city lab.

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yeah...so the city lab is kind of a fluid thing. And right now, the city lab exhibition is on this aisle, to be really precise it is the digital content you see there in the crazy machines, the green media machines. And it is the first time we have an exhibition of digital content in the museum space and our designers from Amsterdam, they designed these media machines in order for us to display the digital content. The Stadtlabor Digital is kind of the digital branch of the Stadtlabor. It used to be analogue since we tried it for the first time in 2010 and now we are collecting more digital content and it is the first time we have this exhibition. Because we thought it is rather boring having these four machines and just displaying the digital content we also decided to have another space, which is also participative but on another level – but it is co-creative so it is not really telling the city together, which is done on the crazy machines, but it is more 'how do you...?' Where the visitors are asked to reflect upon their youth and also it is on the voting level. It is a very low level of participation.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, my understanding is that the archive seems to be very permanent.

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yes.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And then the rest changes?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yes, and it changes twice a year. When we conceived the Stadtlabor we were very naïve and thought that we could change three or four times a year...but then well, you know there was this prejudice that when you work participatively it is the other people who do the work...so we knew it wasn't like that but I think we really underestimated how much time it takes and how many resources it really takes to in a participatory manner. And really to work together to collaborate with people, and not just giving them a space where they can do something.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And so, do you have an idea, or can you tell me about what will be in this space next?

ANGELA JANNELLI: In May we will inaugurate the next Stadtlabor exhibition. It is about the Neues Frankfurt, New Frankfurt, which is an architectural school or era that was mainly realized in the 1920s and it is in the context of the Bauhaus. Bauhaus has its 100th anniversary this year, and so we decided to also do something about the Bauhaus architecture we have in Frankfurt. Frankfurt was one of the most important places for the realization of the Bauhaus ideas. And there was a city planning officer, Ernst May, who decided in the 1920s to create about 10,000 new apartments or houses. And Frankfurt is very famous for this kind of architecture and so we decided to have a Stadtlabor but not to focus on the architectural side but on the people living there. And the main question is 'how do people live today in the utopia of yesterday' because it was not only programmed for building or constructing but there was also a whole philosophy of the 'new man' who would live there. So not an old-fashioned person but someone healthy, light, airy. So, it was a whole idea of living so we will do something – and this is a really co-created project, like we did also before. It is a colleague of mine, Katharina Böttger, curating it and it is more than 100 people I think really contributing to this exhibition.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And that begins in May?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yes. And then in Autumn we will have the next one. It will be about transnational families. It is not really focused right now, we have to do this in the next six weeks. But I am really interested to know how migration affects family structures. So, we will look how historical or present-day oriented it will be. Frankfurt with all the banks and also the university, there are a lot of transnational families. Not only guest workers or care workers so it will be really nice to have a broad view on transnational families.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, to go back a little bit, could you tell me a bit about how the lab came to be? Who conceived of it? And was it always affiliated with the museum, even before it had kind of a space here...or was it something that the museum kind of absorbed?

ANGELA JANNELLI: So, the idea was from Susanne Gesser, she is the head of the project Frankfurt Jetzt! She was involved in the whole new planning for the museum and she always tells this nice story how once before Christmas she was baking Christmas cakes and then she had the idea of the city lab. So, she wanted to do something where also the people from Frankfurt are involved and they can tell their expertise knowledge about the city. So, she really worked closely together with the director to conceive the whole museum and so the idea of the city lab was implemented. I came in 2010 when the planning process was already there, and I further developed the idea together with Susanne. And our first pilot project was in 2010. Actually, it was the first Stadtlabor that we really initiated...for the other Stadtlabor projects we were always invited – so people really liked the idea and really wanted us to come to their city quarter. And so, for the first five years we went from one city quarter to the next and it worked extremely well. Well actually, we didn't have a museum space. So, the museum was torn down in 2011, and it was inaugurated in 2017 so this was for several years where we had no exhibition space and we decided to do the exhibitions in the city. And this is something we should do again because people really liked it and really appreciated that the historical museum came to them...but we also don't have the resources right now to do it. So, this is 6-800 square meters and it takes so much time to prepare these exhibitions that there is no time left for doing something outdoors. Well, doing the exhibition projects outdoors. What we developed in 2015 is the Sommer Tour, we have a cargo bike and we tour the city and ask people. The first tour was done to gather information for the huge city model that you see there, so we asked people 'What should be in the model?'. Then in 2016 we did something about housing. Housing is a really big issue in Frankfurt – I think when you are from New York it is ridiculous – but for Frankfurt people prices are really high, so it is a big issue, housing. And in 2018 Katharina also did a Sommer Tour preparing the Bauhaus exhibition. She was in the dwellings, the groups of houses of the Neues Frankfurt and she asked people how they live there, what they expect, what they like, what should be better in the future. So, she also did the Sommer Tour. This is something I really appreciate because we can still have a close contact to the people, and be also there where the people are, and not just be in the museum.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, you kind of already answered this but maybe you can say it in a single sentence – what the goal of the city lab is.

ANGELA JANNELLI: Well the goal of the city lab is to take all the expert knowledge seriously that people living in Frankfurt have acquired through the everyday practice of living in the city – or the everyday experience of the city. We think it is an important knowledge, so it is not only urbanists or sociologists, historians, architects; who can explain the city – but it is the people who live here. So, the Stadtlabor is kind of a means, how we can collect this informal knowledge, but also how to display it, and therefore make it shareable with other people. So, if you think of homeless people, I think most of the people living in Frankfurt they rarely meet homeless people – so maybe they see them on the streets, but they don't know how they experience the city. And we did an exhibition about homelessness, it is a good example. So, a place where you can meet other people mediated through the museum and I think it also creates a bit of understanding

about other forms of living. Also, people working in a bank live in a completely different Frankfurt than maybe drug addicts, or children, or cyclists do.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, as you said before the reopening of the museum the lab was mobile. So, having a permanent space for the lab for the first time ever – how has that shifted the ambitions or the activities of the lab?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Well that is a question I am thinking about right now. So, I do not have a clear answer yet. As I mentioned before I am a bit sad that we cannot be as much outside the museum as we did in the last years and I also told you already that creating exhibitions in this room isn't as easy as we thought but it is more difficult. Because we need more resources. We need furniture or architecture. We need scenographers, we need technicians. So, it is really more professional – and we have equipment that we can use but it is really contrary. We thought it would be easier to make exhibitions, but it needs more planning. Technically it is easier but the process...

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: There is kind of more administration?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yes. And so, we thought it would be possible to do one exhibition in the city and one here, but actually it is not possible. So, this is something on a real pragmatic scale, it is the biggest change, that it takes so many resources to do exhibitions here. So, I really, I am not so sure. People really appreciate that their object or their content is shown in this prestigious museum. It is new, it is fantastic architecture...so this is really also a benefit, but I am not so sure how it will be in the long term. And I am really interested to do more projects outside. And I hope we can realize that. I am not so sure.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, the website states that the city lab interacts with the past, present, and future. For the purpose of my study I am interested in the future and I am wondering if you could tell me a little more about that – how you interact with that kind of forward-looking idea.

ANGELA JANNELLI: Well actually that is something I think we could do more. That is really also something that I was really a bit astonished about. So, we always invite people to think about the future – what they imagine for their city, what they wish for it. But I think many people think 'oh it is the museum wanting to collaborate with us, so we have to do something about history'. So many people that collaborate with us contribute something about the history. That is really interesting. We always try to have installations where we ask people 'what is missing? What do you wish for the future?' in Ginnheim for example, we had a big map on the floor where people could pin their wishes for the future. So, there are small things like 'we need a café' but there was also one woman who told us that through the Stadtlabor she really understood that she as a citizen...that the public space belongs to her and so she now is an activist for sustainable living. And she does this professionally. So, it is a bit big to say it was the benefit of the Stadtlabor, but she said it gave her the initiative to kind of also change her life. So, I think this is something really future oriented, even if it is not part of the Stadtlabor. But I think that in an abstract way, people who reflect about their living, their environment, they engage in another way with their surroundings; I think this makes them also fit for the future. This is also one reason why the city department of social work funds the Stadtlabor yearly. As a partner of the Stadtlabor they say, 'if you do artistic projects and you as a museum contact the people it is 100 times more efficient than if we do it'. Because nobody collaborates with the social welfare, but they collaborate with the museum, but we have the same aim. That people engage with their environment and reflect upon it.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So just to clarify, the Stadtlabor is funded by the city?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Partially. We are part of the city administration. So, our basic costs are covered by the city. All of the projects we do we have to get funding. One part of the funding is

through this department 'Active Neighborhood' – so they are a partner of the Stadtlabor. It is a really small part of the funding. The rest is through foundations. Most of the money we get through foundations.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: When the lab was being realized was there an idea of what the ideal or average participant would look like? Or would that depend on the location that you were in?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Hmm...that is a good question. So, when we started we had no idea if anyone would be interested to do something with the museum. So, we always have open calls, and you can say that people participating as individuals are more elderly people, or retired people who are really enthusiasts about city history. Another big group are kind of activists or artists. So, they use the museum really as a platform to show their content to a bigger public, which they wouldn't reach without the media of the exhibition. And then a third group are the so-called 'keyworkers' so it is teachers, or educators, or also social workers who work with homeless people or drug addicts. So, through them we can also reach quite a lot of people who we wouldn't reach through the museum. People who aren't interested in museums at all. So, this is really interesting. And we always try to have a look...so we have an open call and then we see who is there and then we try to look for whose voices are missing, and then we try to invite other people. And this is different from location to location and also from project to project. The project running now – it is spaces of youth – so it is clear that our focus group are youth clubs or also people who were young. But it is already existing groups and it is not as open as other Stadtlabor projects were.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: The open call – people come to you with ideas. So, you kind of, help realize an idea?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Maybe I can tell this with one example. The Bauhaus project which is running right now – Katharina had the Sommer Tour where she informed people and where she already did some site-specific research, some field work, but also invited artists to do some artistic research. And she informed people about the Stadtlabor. Then...must have been Spring 2018...we had the first workshop where she invited lots of people. So, we invite through media, through postcards, through face to face communication. We invite the keyworkers, and they spread the word. So, it is really an open call and we don't exactly know who is coming for this first meeting. So, people present themselves to each other, and explain their idea for a project in one or two sentences so it is really that everybody knows who other people are and what they would like to do. And then we have curatorial advisory where we really help people to make an exhibit out of their idea. Some people already have really precise ideas. Others are really vague. And then there is a second workshop where these ideas are presented, and people discuss together or give feedback or say 'oh I know someone who you could ask' – it is kind of workshopping. And then for the third workshop the scenographers are invited, and their duty is to really develop the scenographic ideas with the people. So, they develop – is it a really bright exhibition, or is it more documentary, is it colorful – so it is really about developing the character of the exhibition together. The fourth workshop is the presentation of the scenographic idea and people have the possibility to reject it, so they really have to say yes, actively. Then we have a workshop about exhibition labels and exhibition texts. And then it is the realization phase, it is the inauguration. And the whole time the curators are the sparring partners for the people to really collaborate together. At the beginning we were not sure if we should do this – we didn't want to have any influence, but then after Nina Simon's book and our first experience it was clear that people want our curatorial expertise to go into the project, so we realize it together. And it is really appreciated as a help and not perceived as influencing people. That is really one of the main experiences we had in the first projects.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, I kind of talked about what the ideal or average participant looks like – is there an ideal or average attendee of the exhibition?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Well we really, I really think it is a stupid answer, but we really try to collaborate with everyone and also to be open for everyone. I know that museums are always, or experts always say that it's a naïve approach, but I think it is the only possible approach. We are a communal institution and we have to address basically everyone. If it is really interesting for everyone I don't really know. But all marketing experts would say I am fundamentally wrong, and I am not really sure if our communication department has a focus group...I don't really think so. But I also believe in networking and we have a really huge network now of people that participated in projects. And it really works fantastically, so they come and bring friends. And thanks to our Stadtlabor projects and other participatory projects we do I think people really have a relationship with the museum and it is more than just an exhibition space. I think most of the people who collaborated with us think of it really as their museum. That they really contributed to this museum and collaborated with it. So that is really nice to observe that. So, well, the ideal attendee...anyone.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And I think you were just about to touch on this; but do you view there being more emphasis or time put into the process of creation of the exhibit or final product itself?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Well definitely we put more energy on the process. And that is one of the problems of participatory projects. That the result is kind of the tip of the iceberg – you don't see the rest. And the rest is maybe even more important than the result. But well, we are a museum, and we also have to care for a good experience for visitors. So, we put also lots of emphasis on the product, but I personally think in the process, well in the participatory process, the preparatory process, is more important. So that is really where you establish the relationships with people. For sure we all want to have a good product because I think it would be a bad process if we didn't care about the product because all the people contributing wouldn't identify with the museum. So, I think it is extremely important to have a good product – but most of our work, you just see it in working hours. Most of our working hours go into the process.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And, do you work with any partners to create and maintain the lab? I think I saw that some of the exhibit was created by a firm in Amsterdam...is that true?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yes, well not the entire city lab. You know they were the designers for the exhibition space and they provided the Library of the Generations, and the machines, and the model – also this flexible furniture that we need for the workshops, and the archive of the project. But for each and single Stadtlabor project we have different scenographers. So, these are partners – and also everyone who collaborates with us is a partner, and also the collaborators which are more institutionalized like our youth club that does cultural projects with youngsters. And for them it is a great opportunity to show the outcomes of their projects in our exhibitions. So, a large public gets to know what the young people make.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Why did you and others choose to call the space a city lab as opposed to an exhibition? Or how do you view them as different?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Well it was Susanne's idea and we never changed the name. And well I don't like this technical implication of labor, but I think it is a really good metaphor because in a lab you have...it is a research space...the knowledge is not already concrete – it is still kind of fluid, you still have to reflect upon it, you make some experiments. You put things together and look how the reaction is, so I think it is a good metaphor the lab. Today I think it is also a method, so Stadtlabor is also a method, and maybe we should also say that this is the Stadtlabor exhibition and not the Stadtlabor. But it is copied so many times now, so so many other museums have Stadtlabors now.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And that actually leads me into, do you have a relationship with any other labs around the world?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Unfortunately, not systematically. We know lots of colleagues who do similar things and we meet on conferences so there is an exchange, but I am really sad that it is not institutionalized. There was our partner, the Department of Social Museology in Lisbon, they wanted to have a conference in February to bring together all of those city labs, but unfortunately it had to be cancelled because there weren't enough inscriptions and that is really sad. And I do not really know, I think people did not really know about it.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Are there tours, events, lectures in the space offered on the material of the lab in particular?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yes, so we have guided tours also done by the people themselves. We have curatorial tours. Then we always have the inauguration which is public and where everybody who participated is there and there are lectures. For example, this space, I can open up the doors and it becomes a little lecture hall for about 50 people (she points to the Library of the Generations area). So, I primarily use it for my reminiscence project but if it's a matter of space also the Stadtlabor more and more uses the space. So, it is really nice. Also, we do the workshops here if possible. So, we really try to work here in the space and if it is possible to also let visitors know that we are working here.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, visitors can come and observe the process of creating the next Stadtlabor?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yes, for example the last workshop we did in November...it was really funny...the scenographers workshop where they presented their scenographic idea. There were four people coming, I thought they were collaborators, but it turned out in the end they were just visitors. They thought it was so interesting! So, they sat down – we always offer some sort of wine or drinks and something to snack on – so that is really important for creating a cozy atmosphere. So, it was really interesting. But it's not possible always. The last Stadtlabor I curated was on looted objects in the Nazi era...and there have to be thousands of objects still in German households that belong to Jewish people...and we wanted people to bring them and research them to find traces for whom they would belong. And so, these are difficult issues. So, we had the first workshop and it was public but then we went to a separate room because it can be quite difficult talking about your family. So, it is not always suitable to do it in a public space. But if it is possible we do it.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, you kind of touched on this a little bit already, but just to confirm. There are obviously specific locations and specific topics that are focused on. So, for example with the 2018, now going to be presented in 2019, Sommer Tour – how was that topic decided?

ANGELA JANNELLI: So that was something we decided. Because for this 100-year anniversary there are lots of available funds. So, we were invited to present the project, we conceived one, and we got the money, so we said we would do it. Sometimes it is just like that, very pragmatic. The first Stadtlabor exhibitions we did always focused on city quarters and I think that is something we should do again, but we were a bit bored always doing same thing. And we have 42 quarters in Frankfurt and it was a bit, well the idea was a bit boring, doing the next forty years those same exhibitions. And then I thought it would be really interesting to do thematic exhibitions and when we conceived the first exhibitions for this part we had hosting projects here. For example, one exhibition was about looted objects and then I thought 'okay let's do a Stadtlabor about looted objects' When we first decided to have this artistic project '21' (points to nearby audio-visual exhibition by guest artist) and then I said, 'oh let's have a Stadtlabor about being young in Frankfurt'. So, these were agendas we set, or themes we set, but we are open. For example, we had one Stadtlabor working with the collection, it was about migration. And the people participating there formed some ideas. And one idea gave me the impulse to do this transnational family Stadtlabor, and I will invite also people who participated in that migration Stadtlabor to develop the idea together with me. So, it is a bit...I think it was really a big cut to

have the museum. And now we know the space, we know how it works. I get the impression that now is really the time to develop themes again together.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Was this the first exhibit in this space?

ANGELA JANNELLI: No, the third actually. The first exhibition was about Frankfurt Jezst!, also about how it worked and we presented the Stadtlabor and the space. Then we had this exhibition about looted objects. And now it is about being young in Frankfurt.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, people could argue that there are no artifacts in this portion of the museum – how was that decision made?

ANGELA JANNELLI: I think we have artifacts – they are digital artifacts. So maybe the idea of the artifact has to change. Well the last exhibition and the next exhibition will have lots of artifacts again – but this one is really something special which is dedicated to the Stadtlabor digital. I think people also like that it is not so stuffed like the other floors of the museum. And actually, so, I also had made the experience that people do not really think in terms of exhibits or artifacts. Sometimes they just want to tell the story and then we reflect together on how you want to tell the story. So, if you want pictures, you try to find artifacts, you do interviews...

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Do you think there is anything missing from the lab or its process?

ANGELA JANNELLI: In general, I think I am missing two or three colleagues. I think it is a really powerful method, this participatory work, but it is really time consuming. We establish so many really nice relationships with people, but it is just Susanna and me on long-term and the rest, we have two colleagues now who are always on short-term – well it is two or three years – but it is time-bound. So, Susanna and I, we are the only ones with a permanent contract. So, I think it would be really good to have more permanent contracts, who can really care for the relationships. And I would also like to have a small exhibition room where people or organizations can present themselves. We have developed the idea, it is called Frankfurt: Ein Fenster (Frankfurt: A Window), like window into the city. And I would like to have the resources to realize that, so we can have more short-term exhibitions. And I would like to do interventions, to actually react to real debates in the city. But that is not possible due to lack of resources.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: You said that you feel that you don't address the future nearly as much as you would like to – could you just tell me a bit more about that or how you might be looking forward to changing that?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Well I would like to have a dream workshop or something like that, where really people can start thinking about how we would like to live together, what do we miss, what would we like to have in the city. Envision our future. I think that would be really nice to have kind of, dreaming sessions. So, I think it would be really really good to look forward, to imagine something. It would be nice for the next summer actually, to have a dream space.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Do you record any demographic data on either your visitors or your participants?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Well we do that unsystematically. On the participants it is just our team who evaluates who took part, and we urgently have to do this for the whole museum. But it is also something we have no resources for which is really a shame and a pity. We know that it is a big desire and requirement, but it isn't possible to do it right now. But I think it is mostly classical museum public, but for the Stadtlabor for our events we have a really diverse public – many young people, also people with a migrant background – so I think we are the diversity manager of the museum. And it is fantastic to involve people – many people say, 'I never thought my

history would be interesting for the museum and now it is part of it and it is fantastic' and they are really attached to the museum.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Do you have any concerns about getting a representative demographic makeup of either visitors or participants?

ANGELA JANNELLI: We need that, also the director knows and wants it, but I think we still don't have any precise projects to do that. So, it is just personal subjective experience. Oh, one thing I would maybe like to say, I think we need new evaluation measurements for our participatory projects. So how do we measure the outcome of such a project. It is not measurable in terms of visits, it is something emotional, how do you measure that? How do you evaluate that? It would be really great to have some tools – not just questionnaires after the project is done.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: As of right now you do have questionnaires after the project is done?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yes, we do a documentation of every project and we ask people for reflection, statements; and parts of it are published, parts we collect, and also, we did this for several projects. We invited some people for a reflection discussion: 'how did you like the project? What would you change? What didn't you like?' so we ask for personal feedback.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Maybe you could tell me a little bit more about how people find out about, and get involved in the activities? You mentioned media outreach?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yes, so media outreach is quite important for us, but it is not the best way to get in touch with people. The best way is really personal networking. The fieldwork phase is really important when the curators are on the locations that are touched by the exhibition and the keyworkers. So that we get in touch with initiatives or associations; so, people that really can provide the contact to the other people. For example, for migrant communities we had a city department for multiculturalism which can provide us contacts to different ethnic groups. They are ethnically organized which is not always the best way, but it is a first step. And I really believe in networking and personal relationships – so I would say after nine years of Stadtlabor – I could say that for every topic I know who I can call to get contacts to other people. And that is really good to have this network. And so, the museum is not any longer an isolated island, it is really part of the city. It is really nice to see that – it is a really good reward for all that work.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Do you see the Stadtlabor as relevant to tourists or are you mostly focused on Frankfurters?

ANGELA JANNELLI: I think we are mostly focused on frankfurters. When we conceived of this exhibitionary space we also said this is the space for people living in Frankfurt – and now it turned out that the model is one of the big highlights of the museum, people love it. But this is actually conceived as the exhibition space for people in Frankfurt. So, I am not sure – what do you think? Was it interesting for you?

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: It was very interesting. I saw a few families getting really involved and the awkwardness around the kissing placard...it was very interesting. I actually had a technical question about that – are the placards erased at all or are the stickers from the very beginning still there?

ANGELA JANNELLI: It is the stickers from the very beginning. The only thing we do, there is chalk drawing and we check for obscenities and we remove that and sometimes parts are removed so that other people can draw – the awful things are systematic the other things are not systematic, just to provide some space.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And do you see the city lab as not only accessible to people, but also inclusive of all people.

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yes, definitely. And this is also one of our main focuses.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: How would you say you realize that focus?

ANGELA JANNELLI: One thing is awareness. So, for example I have a migratory background. Also, my personal background, my family is not so much in culture. I am the first one who studied, and I think this also gave me a bit of awareness how people might feel in spaces which they think are not made for them. So, it is really important to create a friendly atmosphere, a welcoming atmosphere. This is one thing. The other thing is a professional view as a cultural anthropologist I think I have an idea of who we should ask or include. And also, with my colleagues and their specific training, they also have their focuses but there will still be many blind spots and I hope that many people then help us. So, when we do a project someone will say 'oh this person or this association should be included' so we also ask them if they want to participate.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And what are your biggest concerns with the lab?

ANGELA JANNELLI: My biggest concern...one concern is that it is, that the subjectivity is conceived of as...nice but not really relevant. So, it is like browsing through a glossy magazine. That is one concern. And through the curatorial advisory we try to prevent this. Always also looking at bigger picture. And the other concern is more philosophical, political, which really gives me food for thought is the raising of the participatory paradigm or trend is also correlated to the rise of populism. Populism relies on subjective meanings – you know 'there are too many foreigners living here' it is purely subjective. There is no statistical evidence. And 'all those refugees, all the bad came' this is populism. And there is no statistical evidence. And sometimes I think if we encourage people to tell their opinions, I think it is important in a democratic society that you should get to have the space to tell your opinion and reflect upon your life...but sometimes I ask myself if this invitation to enunciate your subjective meanings is not also encouraging populists to do the same.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: That is very interesting thank you. How would you define the museum at large? Is it a history museum, is it an art museum, is it something completely different?

ANGELA JANNELLI: It is a city history museum basically. And it has this space dedicated to participatory museum work. And sometimes I ask myself, 'would we do it in the same way if we did it again?', so the plans now are more than ten years old and it really was the beginning of participatory museum work, at least in Germany. And sometimes it feels a bit strange that we are quite a traditional museum and then we have this participatory floor. And I think if we were to do it again, we would have it a bit everywhere, so it wouldn't be so separated. But I mean that is my opinion, I never talk with the director about it. Could you repeat the question?

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Yes, it is just how you define the museum.

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yes, so I think it is really a city history museum, but also with a quite new approach so that we do not tell the story in a chronological way but there are these thematic or different exhibitions. I think for people who are very conditioned that museums are chronological the orientation is a bit difficult for them. But I think it is a good approach, to deny this learned narrative of how to use a museum.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And again, this is more about the museum at large and less about the city lab – could you tell me a bit about what motivated the renovation?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Actually, it was new regulations for fire prevention. We had a building from the '70s. A brutalist concrete building, the idea was great at the time because the museum didn't want to be a temple of the muses, but more a comprehensive school – you know, a place for learning. Learning how history is made. And it was the perfect building for that idea, but it was a really ugly building. You know it was a grey concrete building – the ceiling was not high; the entrance was dark. So, people did not like it, they hated it actually, most people. And then there were new fire prevention regulations. So, I think it would have cost about 16 million euros to renovate it, so it was a political decision. To say, 'we do not invest any money in this ugly building, we will tear it down and have a new building'. And I don't know if you noticed that we have this new, old city – and so it was also one of the thoughts. We have this big project here so this is kind of the beginning of this new city quarter. We should also use this chance to have a new building for the city museum. So it was actually a political decision also about the architecture. I think if we as a museum team would have decided, we would have a different building. I like it, I think it is really nice, for example I think we have the most beautiful space in this new building. But I would have preferred ground floor space with doors. It is quite difficult to come here. And you know, everyone who takes place in our projects gets a little club card, they are a member of the Stadtlabor club so they have free access with one companion for two years so we really want the people who contributed to this museum to not have to pay any entrance...but still if you are in the city center and you think 'well I have to go the wardrobe, I have to do to the cashier desk, then I have to go down and go up again' I think it would be really different if we had a ground floor exhibition space with doors where people could more easily pop in.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And when you say a ground floor space you mean for the Stadtlabor in particular?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yes, with doors to the outdoors, to the world outside.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Yes, it takes a bit of effort to get up here.

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yes, I really like the space, but it is also a difficult space with the two long aisles...and it is difficult to access as well. But on the other hand, it is the most prestigious space and people also notice and appreciate this.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: With that in mind, it being so high up here – have you noticed any issues in getting people from the floors below all the way up into this space?

ANGELA JANNELLI: I can't really answer that because I am not so much present in this space. What I notice is that when people come up here they feel kind of relieved because it is light, it is not stuffed, so but this is the only observation I have.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: I have noticed people very interested in the windows and just enjoying the light. I think have I asked most of the questions I have wanted to ask. I am wondering if there is anything that I haven't asked that you would like me to know?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yes. I am really interested in your impression of what you have seen. And I would like to know how you found us.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: I honestly, so the City Museum of New York also has a City Lab and so I was looking for comparable spaces. And I think I went on ICOM and searched CAMOC committee and I was able to find the history museum here and was happy to see it was a recently renovated space...because also a lot of city museums right now are being closed to be renovated. So, it was a relief to see somewhere that was already done and would have a fresh outlook. Because I think interviewing a city museum – the MCNY was renovated in 2016, so having a comparable case as opposed to somewhere that might want to change many things

with a renovation coming up. But I was fascinated to observe yesterday this space – people are fascinated by the city model.

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yeah, they really like it.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: I was very interested in that, and especially in a space that, as of right now, doesn't have non-digital artifacts – I was surprised by how much people were drawn to a physical, tangible item. When I myself am usually more drawn to interactive touch-screens, and things like that. And maybe that is just a generational divide. It was also interesting to see, and I had assumed, the stickers there were probably an equal amount for every generation?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yes.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: You see the 2000 and the 2010 are almost gone.

ANGELA JANNELLI: Oh really? Okay yeah, I have to check that.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So most of them have been taken while the elder generations are still there. And to see people kind of read the instructions and find interest in it but to see who actually takes part.

ANGELA JANNELLI: I think that is one of the things that I really like about the Stadtlabor is that people start to talk to each other and change their memories or opinions. And also, with the model. Frankfurt people have a different approach and tourists maybe look more at the material which is used. But it is encouraging to hear that people are talking to each other.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, my study goes until September 2019, so I am hoping to be back at some point this summer, so I was wondering if you would be willing to meet with me again?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Oh yes. Of course. That would be great. And I would also be very interested in reading your thesis.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Thank you so much! Lastly, I was wondering if there is someone I should reach out to in addition to you to talk about educational initiatives that take part in this space?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Well, maybe it would be idea to talk to the other curators, Katarina who is doing the Bauhaus project or Laura who did the Stadtlabor Digital. We have an educational department but that is one person, so they actually don't do anything for the Stadtlabor, and that is actually nice because I am not working as a classical curator – so I am curating and educating. It is not really a separable position anymore. It is really interesting, so we do lots of educational work ourselves. You asked also for the visitor numbers. So, since we don't do it systematically, I am not really sure who I should hand you over to.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, I should I speak to you about education – or Susanna?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Well Susanna is head of the educational initiatives, but she is on sabbatical until April. And it is all her over-hours for four and a half months. For sure you can talk to the people at the Young Museum, the educator and curators and also Anna but if you have general questions I think everything concerning the city lab you can ask me or my colleagues.

7.4.3 Second Interview with Kubi Ackerman

Second Interview with Kubi Ackerman at the Dead Rabbit NYC
21/5/2019

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, can I ask what you're up to now?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Sure, I am freelancing. I am working with a design firm called Thinc Design. They do a lot of work with museums so conceptual development and consulting with them. Also, around sustainability and conservation issues. And actually, still working with the Museum of the City of New York. So, I am creating, hopefully, if we get the funding, an exhibition on the census. The census but it is something I have been working on for a while is the census and all of the issues surrounding it, but I wanted to work on what kind of angle for a museum to take. So, working with artists and designers who use demographic data in one way or another in their work who help provide some insights into who we are as a society.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, since it is our second time meeting some of my questions may be all over the place but let's dive in. I am wondering what you think the greatest success of the Future City Lab is?

KUBI ACKERMAN: I think it is twofold. I think one, on a very practical level, the most impactful thing about it is seeing schoolchildren in there and also knowing how many schoolkids have gone through the space and interacted with it. And providing that type of platform, for kids especially, to deal with these kinds of issues in an accessible kind of way, I think is a powerful part of this exhibition. And otherwise, I mean there are a lot of ways in which it could be improved or ways that it didn't reach our expectations for that space but all of that said I think that one of the greatest benefits is in the fact that it was done. I mean developing the concept of the space on the future of a particular place. And in a way I think and hope that it opens the conversation for other institutions in terms of presenting these materials is very useful. I mean I would like to see it replicated, but better.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: That brings me to the next question of: if you could do it again, what would you change?

KUBI ACKERMAN: I can't remember at all what I said last time. But I feel we had a lot of different ambitions for the space. I feel like individually a lot of those ambitions were fulfilled but I think taken collectively it leads to a really disjointed experience. I think that not enough attention was paid to the visitors' overall experience of the space and how they might navigate it. And to the fact that precisely because it is an unconventional gallery space in a museum setting, how through design, we might be able to prime people for what they might experience and what they might encounter. I think that was not done very successfully – because I think it is a space where there is an incredible amount on offer, but it is unclear how it relates to each other. And it also requires a certain presupposition of a certain amount of motivation and effort in the part of the visitor to go find it, as opposed to being expressed and presented in a way that is accessible to the layperson.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Do you see the Future City Lab changing in the future?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Yeah when I left there were concrete plans to change it, but it was basically depending on a budget that wasn't there. In general the gist of it was to provide a bit more visual storytelling that allowed people to see and prompt them to experience a little bit more instead of requiring people to kind of dig for that on iPads which I think is a bit too much akin to surfing the web which is something they could do in the comfort of their own home. So, making it much more visually engaging.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: That will not be coming to fruition due to funding? Or it is kind of on the back burner?

KUBI ACKERMAN: At this point I cannot speak to their priorities, but I know it is an ambition of the museum, but it is probably not a top priority. It is the reconstitution of an existing exhibition, so it is not something that is easy to raise funding for.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Are there audio guides available for the Future City Lab?

KUBI ACKERMAN: There are not. We considered it and we really wanted it but because of the multimedia it was unclear how we could go through with that.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: The lab itself deals with pretty heavily political topics. Was there a conversation about whether or not you were seeking to make a political statement through the lab?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Yes, there were lots of conversations as to how to handle those types of topics and in general and it is not reflected only in our lab but also in places like 'Activist New York' gallery and the museum does not shy away from political themes. There is the whole very tricky question of neutrality and certainly in developing the material for the lab, and I think this is consistent for the whole museum, we are neutral in the sense that we are providing two sides to the situation but at the same time the museum has a position. And we are less saying 'we believe this, or we believe that' I just think it is fairly clear from the tone even though it is presented neutrally. For example, on immigration we say 'there are those that believe x, y, and z about immigration' however our stance is fairly clear in the way it is examined and the way it is covered and the choices about what types of data we present. For example, things like immigrant entrepreneurship were specifically selected and designed to counteract some of the falsehoods around the issue; which in and of itself is taking a position. Unfortunately, in this day in age even the presentation of raw facts is not neutral.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And was there any controversy over that?

KUBI ACKERMAN: No. Well, not within the institution itself. We always want to offer opportunities to comment on and provide commentary through the use of the 'What If' questions – I mean you can write whatever you want. And certainly, some of the cards take issue with our material but frankly a lot less than I expected. I mean it is a self-selecting audience.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Were there any concerns about how people might share their feelings at the 'What If' table?

KUBI ACKERMAN: There were concerns and I would say, for the most part, they were unwarranted. I mean not entirely, every now and then there would be obscenities and they were removed, but by and large it was fine. It was really interesting for me seeing the differences between the 'What If' table which is akin to a comment board, but with a completely different tone. And I think that told us something about handwriting something and the design of the space – I firmly believe that with those elements combined it put people in a different psychological mode that was more conducive to leaving thoughtful comments as opposed to trolling.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Being there in person makes a huge difference.

KUBI ACKERMAN: Yeah, but I actually want to go back to one thing that I said about whether or not it was controversial to present politically charged information – I will say that there were a lot of very difficult decisions about how to present certain content. There were some tense internal discussions having to do with the whole question of neutrality, and how hard we would come down on one side vs another. And as you know, certainly within academia but also within the

whole cultural discourse, the whole idea of presenting something as impactful as the debate around immigration impacts so many people's lives so directly that it is ripping families apart. There was the question of whether it is even ethical to present that neutrally.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: I mean obviously the museum building has been there for decades, but do you have any response to the architecture of the museum as a whole.

KUBI ACKERMAN: The architecture of the museum as a whole? Well that is an interesting question. I mean it is a beautiful building, it is a landmark building. The architecture of the building itself, on the one hand it is elevating as a building and a space and when people come into it, it puts them in the mood of contemplation and intellectual engagement but at the same time it is a very conservative architecture. And, very limiting from the perspective of if you are trying to do something new with technology. I mean, the Future City Lab is in a new wing so the possibilities there are a bit greater but the way that the space is divided is in response to very traditional, old-fashioned, and conservative ideas about what museums are. And that is a challenge in the museum throughout. I mean the layout of 'New York at Its Core' has to be broken into three sections literally just due to the building.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And some of that was the function of it being a landmark building and not being able to pull down walls and things like that?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Yeah, certainly it being a landmark building is a challenge but even just the layout, as a T shape with, compared to a lot of museums, quite constrained spaces. And a large central circulation of a hallway that so much of the building space is occupied by this hallway. I mean it is beautiful but there is not much you can do with it.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: If you go into the Future City Lab, that exhibition space is vastly different from what you experience from the outside of the museum. Was there any conversation about how to reconcile the outside versus the inside?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Not much. Because the space was kind of a given. The space wasn't built for the Future City Lab, it was actually built as an event space because the museum gets a good amount of its revenue from events like weddings. And that is why it has huge windows and huge windows are a challenge in an exhibition space. I was there and fairly soon after it was reopened, they realized that having so much of the square footage of the building dedicated solely to event space doesn't make sense, so they covered up the windows and then it was exhibition space. So, for the Future City Lab they then uncovered the windows, and allowed light in, which makes for a much nicer experience and a bit of an unusual gallery experience also limiting though types of things we could do there. For example, projection is something I initially wanted to do a bit more with, but we weren't able to do. As far as the relationship between the rest of the museum space and the lab space – there weren't a lot of discussions about this just because the space wasn't designed for that exhibition.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, when I was here last it was November, so it was cold and not a pleasant time to be outside, but I am wondering if, when the weather is nicer, are there any plans or events outside the museum?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Oh yes. So, every summer the museum has a program called Uptown Bounce for the neighborhood of East Harlem which is in collaboration with our neighbor, the Museo de Barrio. And it is a series of weekend events with DJs and arts, so it is basically a huge party on our terrace. There is also Museum Mile.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And is there ever any initiatives to bring the museum from the inside out?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Yeah, so this is something we have talked about a lot. So, there is just using the museum terrace and the outside space but what you're talking about is going out into the city.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Well even just having a small exhibition space outside on the terrace?

KUBI ACKERMAN: It is quite limited what we are legally allowed to do with the sidewalk and things like that. And the museum, I wouldn't say it is conservative, it is very rigorous in how they mount exhibitions with like registry standards. So, for example with this show that I am curating right now, a lot of these artists have exhibited before in gallery settings, but the museum standards are so much higher on what can be in the museum space, the temperature, all that stuff. So, it is not the kind of institution to be like 'let's put stuff outside', you know what I mean? There are like months of planning.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, a lot more admin around it?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Yes, but not like bureaucratic admin but more like high standards for things like artifact conservation and things like that. Which would make it more difficult for us to mount an exhibition outside. That being said, the whole idea of taking the mission of the museum outside the walls has been being discussed for years and years. And I certainly have big ambitions to get the Future City Lab out into the city. Things like public programs and organizing walking tours and developing VR apps that would allow you to, in the city see some aspect of what is in the Future City Lab in situ. But I mean all of that obviously needs funding and stuff. But the museum has sponsored things like this before, just a couple of weeks ago they did a scavenger hunt around the city. And they partnered with LinkNYC where all around the city they broadcast information from the museum, so that is definitely on the radar. But I think people see it as education also. Our education department is fantastic, and they don't go into schools that much but there has been a push to get teachers information they can use in their classrooms irrespective of coming to the museum.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: I happened to be lucky enough to come across the annual social activism conference, so I ended up a part of it.

KUBI ACKERMAN: Yeah, it is a really fantastic program. And entirely free. The education department is independently financially backed through the FAO Schwartz Foundation.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Great, thank you. What do you think are the main hurdles of getting new visitors through the door?

KUBI ACKERMAN: The number one hurdle is the location. As has been demonstrated through multiple studies. But again this is crazy to me as it is just like 20 blocks from the MET. But again, I understand as visitors too, they think of New York as just a small slice of Manhattan. But also, I think there was always a branding and marketing shortfall, frankly from my perspective. The museum has struggled to find itself and you know for a lot of people there is an association of the museum as it was ten years ago or something – which was kind of as a musty exhibition room where the major highlights were the dollhouse. And I think for whatever reason we struggled with communicating the rebranding of the museum as this day you need continual messaging out there. I thought we could be doing more on that, which is something I was really pushing for when I was there.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: I think the vast majority of the visitors for the next three months are going to be my friends, since I keep telling them about what I am doing my research on. And then, honestly that are all the more focused questions that I wanted to ask, so I am wondering if there is anything that came to you since the last time we spoke that you thought was interesting or if there is anything that you think I should know?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Well nothing in particular but I will say the museum is struggling with fundraising. Which is why I am meeting with you here [outside of the museum]. I was part of some larger layoffs and I think it speaks to the...well the museum commissioned a strategic plan a couple years ago from an external consulting company at considerable cost. The recommendations were, among other things, to be more populist and create more accessible popular exhibitions – as well as to push this whole looking into the future thing. And, again, not at all saying anything about my own work but the fact that they let me go speaks to the challenge frankly, of these institutions as they seek to define themselves and their priorities. I mean I have my own personal opinions on their priorities, but I think it is a really challenging thing to do and a challenging thing to market. And as I said earlier. Obviously, I don't know all the details of their decision making but they decided that they couldn't afford to keep this going.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And do you remember when the consultant was brought on?

KUBI ACKERMAN: 2018. The beginning of last year.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, the Future City Lab already existed, and they said to push it more but also create more populist exhibitions?

KUBI ACKERMAN: Yeah.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, it will be interesting to see what happens over the next year or two.

KUBI ACKERMAN: Yes definitely. It is interesting to contrast it with the Historical Society. Have you been there?

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Yes.

KUBI ACKERMAN: So, the Museum of the City of New York and the New York Historical Society have been collaborators slash rivals. The Historical Society is much larger, wealthier, and more conservative than the Museum of the City of New York. They have had a lot of successes over the last few years and have had some very popular exhibitions. For example, they had a Harry Potter exhibition, which is like...

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: What does that have to do with the history of New York?

KUBI ACKERMAN: I don't know but they made some connections and it was huge. Like you had to buy tickets weeks in advance. So those are the kinds of pressures that museums are facing. Like, 'do we have a Harry Potter exhibit'? I mean, not literally.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Right, I know what you mean. But I wish I had seen it so I could understand how they linked Harry Potter to New York City. And you said the New York Historical Society is wealthier – is that from a private or public funding standpoint? Or both?

KUBI ACKERMAN: I don't know. It is a much larger institution.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Great thank you. I will be very curious to see what happens in the next couple of years. Also, I did some observations when I was in the Future City Lab on Sunday and people were very interested in the visualizations on the parks, apartments, and streets. You had mentioned in the past that people didn't quite know what to do when they walked in.

KUBI ACKERMAN: Well that is something I should probably clarify. The issue with that is people not even getting as far as those machines. They would poke their heads in and be like 'you know

I don't really see anything', if they get there, they are really into it. But, hey that is great to hear. What is your timeline on this?

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: It is due September 1st, but I am aiming to have it in earlier.

KUBI ACKERMAN: I would love to see it!

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Great, I will send it your way. Thanks again!

7.4.4 Second Interview with Angela Jannelli

Second Interview with Angela Jannelli in the *Stadtlabor* at the Historisches Museum Frankfurt
16/5/2019

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: First of all, thank you for having me back and inviting me to the opening night party. But to jump in, I was wondering if last night was representative of what the Stadtlabor parties are usually like or if that was an exceptional example?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Well Stadtlabor openings are always exceptional in a different manner. The difference from the traditional openings of the big temporary exhibitions downstairs is that there are lots of young people and also the visitors are much more diverse. And then each Stadtlabor is different because different people collaborate. So, the people who attend the opening are usually representative of the people who collaborated. For example, for this Stadtlabor there were many artists, young people, students who contributed and that is why there were a lot of young people. There are always much more young people than the traditional openings, but I also thought it was a lot of arty people last night. It was remarkable yesterday.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And is it usually that large?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yes, it is always 200-300 people coming to the openings.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And do you know how people find out about the openings?

ANGELA JANNELLI: I think many people know about the opening because they collaborate and then it spreads the word and then the opening is announced publicly by the press department of the museum. It means it is in the emails, on the website, also published via the newsletter and the Stadtlabor Facebook accounts. And also, maybe on the Instagram account. I don't know because I don't do the social media. And we send invitations to the collaborators and to the whole museum address book.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Do you think that most of the people find out through the collaborators?

ANGELA JANNELLI: I think 2/3 of the people come through the collaborators. And then we really have, kind of a Stadtlabor fan club also. So, people who didn't collaborate but know the Stadtlabor from past experiences or they like these kinds of exhibitions, so they think 'Ah, Stadtlabor I am going to the opening'. And so, some people are kind of the regulars of the museum also attend the Stadtlabor opening.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: What do you think is the greatest success of this exhibition?

ANGELA JANNELLI: I didn't curate it but as someone who followed the process, I did all of the editing of the texts for example. I think the biggest success is to bring all of those people together. It is really different people who collaborated within the Stadtlabor and something which has more space in this exhibition is the context part, which Katarina the curator researched and wrote. So, I think that is really good that we do not only have the subjective impressions, but we

also have a context layer. And also, I really like the scenography. I think it is really crazy and amazing to have four apartments in our space, and its 1:1 the apartments.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: How was that decision made, so that you could physically embody the apartments?

ANGELA JANNELLI: I think the scenographers presented it, and we liked it, so we approved it.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: The scenographers are people from the museum?

ANGELA JANNELLI: We always work with external scenographers and we try to change the scenographers quite often. It is really interesting, we often collaborate with scenographers who are just starting out. Because we do not have a big budget, but it is also kind of an opening door for them. The Stadtlabor is quite renowned to it is quite good for their portfolio and hopefully it is a win-win situation. We have two workshops where we work with the scenographers. The first workshop the scenographers kind of ask people 'how does your exhibition feel? How do you imagine it? Is it more serious or playful? Is it documentary or narrative?' So, we try to elaborate the guidelines with the participants and then the scenographers have to present their idea to the participants and the participants can change it then. So, we also try to do the scenography in a participatory manner.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And the participants for this particular exhibition were residents of Ernst May housing? Or was it also architects and artists familiar with Bauhaus?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Both. I would say 2/3 of the people were living in the Ernst May settlements and 1/3 were artists, architects, architectural historians, or also city planners.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: How did people get involved with the process?

ANGELA JANNELLI: So last summer Katharina did a Sommer Tour. And maybe you know we have this cargo bike, which is really more like a mobile lab of sorts; it's a bar, it's a meeting point, it's a research tool. It is a really fun thing to have this bike. So, she visited nearly all the settlements last summer and talked to people and did a "promenadalogie", it is kind of not only walking through it, but it is an artistic research tool. So, they did artistic happenings and artistic research and they asked people to bring objects and some of the people who they met in 2018 participated in the curatorial process that started in autumn 2018. There is also one stage where we try to look at who is there and who is missing, and we try to invite those people that are missing. And also, the Stadtlabor participants then can bring in other people.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And in this case then, do you know who was missing and was invited?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Housing is a very big issue in Frankfurt right now and so we actively reached out to activists who want to raise the level of communal settlements in Frankfurt.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: In comparison to the Young in Frankfurt exhibition I noticed that this exhibition asked visitors to think a bit more about their present and future. How was this decision made?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Well it evolved. To be honest for the Young in Frankfurt we had very little time. And time is very important, so we had to be more superficial for Young in Frankfurt whereas for the Bauhaus we had more time. The idea for the Stadtlabor is Frankfurt Now so we want to have a look at the city from a present point of view and I think Katharina had the time and conceptual possibilities to really strengthen that perspective.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And last time we spoke you mentioned that some of the funding had come from the Bauhaus foundation.

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yes, there was the representative of the Federal German Cultural Foundation gave most of the money.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: How do you see this exhibition in particular as relevant to Frankfurters who might not be familiar with the Ernst May settlements?

ANGELA JANNELLI: I think it is information about the fact that we actually have quite a lot of architectural heritage in Frankfurt that is valued in very different manners. There are settlements in really bad conditions and others that have already been rediscovered for their architectural heritage with architects buying the houses and refurbishing them in a way that reflects the heritage. And it is also fun to take a peek at other people's lives. And I think it also makes you think about what housing means to you. I mean, how much space do you need to live in? Would I as a single person like an 80 square meters apartment, or would I say no 40 square meters is enough for me? So, I really like those elements of the exhibition where you think about what is important for you to live with, is it the ice cream shop or is it the metro station? So, I really value those interactive formats.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And, do you also think it is relevant to tourists? People who might not be familiar with Germany's housing?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Well I don't really know. I think it can be interesting because there are a lot of connections for tourists where they can connect this back to their homes. So, I think we should reflect on this point a bit more because now we know that 50% of our visitors are tourists and they all come up for the model. We should reflect on whether we should integrate their perspective more to the exhibition, but we started with the conceptual idea that it is for Frankfurters. What do you think actually?

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: It is interesting because just compared to the NY case study that I am looking at, I asked essentially the same question because everything is quite New York based. And the curator there said, "yes of course it is focused on New York, but it is asking questions that are global" and I thought of that in the housing affordability and particular area that focused on students trying to find housing because I am a student trying to find housing, I think it could resonate with a large group of people. With exhibitions it is pretty impossible to find something that everyone is going to be interested in, but I think this exhibition did ask the broad questions. And just a technical question, are there any audio guides available for the exhibition?

ANGELA JANNELLI: No. They are not available.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: On the question of tourists again, do you have any concerns about the portions of the museum that are only in German?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Well I think there is enough information in English, but it is always frustrating when you can't read anything. But that is what I was saying before, that maybe we should reflect upon that. Because it is 50% of the visitors that are not Germans, they are tourists, or they do not speak German. I think it is also a financial question if we should really translate everything. What we didn't translate was the content side of the people who participated, we only translated the labels. Every contribution has a label and there is a translation but the contribution itself contains text that is not translated. I think we couldn't afford to translate all of it. So, I am sorry for people who might not understand it but if one day we say 'oh, it is not the people from Frankfurt as the target group' then we will change that.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And do you have any concerns about accessibility? So, if people are hard of hearing or have vision problems...

ANGELA JANNELLI: So, we try to be an inclusive museum, for example all the architecture is planned in a way that you can visit in a wheelchair. But there are the stairs [at the entrance to the museum] which is the only point you can't access but we also try to place the labels so that someone in a wheelchair can read them. I think for visually impaired people or maybe people with hearing problems we do not have really special accommodations in this part of the exhibition.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Last time we spoke you said you were interested in the Stadtlabor focusing a bit more on the future. Do you have any new plans in place for this or have your feelings changed at all since we last spoke?

ANGELA JANNELLI: I think Katharina did quite a good job including the future, so I was really happy to see that. The next Stadtlabor I am curating is about work, migration, and identity and it is a look back in the past, but our goal is to say, 'migrant memories are part of German memory'. It is very focused on the today and to say, 'we are a diverse society, Germany is an immigrant society'. Unfortunately, right now everywhere in Europe there are right-leaning tendencies that try to exclude migrant memories, so I think it is important to make this exhibition to not even ask 'does this belong to German memory or not', but to say 'yes, we are there, we are changing society and our memories are part of this'. So, I don't think we really say this outright, but it is important to present all these memories in this kind of institution. I think we do not mention the future, but I hope that it is important for the future. And then we will have a big temporary exhibition downstairs about clothing and movement and that will have a fun area where you can try on dresses and have kind of a parkour course to see how clothing also prevents you from moving or influences your moving. This is something we do instead of the huge participative process but participation here is also interacting with fun. But then we will have an exhibition about racism and we will have a kind of 'Decolonize Frankfurt' exhibition. We will put our resources towards this exhibition which is why we will have the clothing and movement one be just a more fun alternative participatory space.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So 'Decolonize Frankfurt', will that be a Stadtlabor?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yes. And then we will have something about gardens and gardening and then we will probably have something about the Nazi period. There will be a big temporary exhibition, so we are not sure if we will also have something in the Stadtlabor because the Young Museum will also participate, and we did something last year about how looted objects still exist today. So, I am not sure if we should also participate or if we should do something else. We do not know yet.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And I know in the past with the Stadtlabor projects, it was largely focusing on particular neighborhoods and issues within that neighborhood with the participants being those residents. But now are you shifting more towards thematic goal instead of place based?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yes, I think we got bored doing 42 years of the same thing in different quarters of the city. And I think it is more connecting to have thematic exhibitions, so different people can meet and share the same interests. I think, and this is just a resource question, if we would have more curators it would be so great to do the kind of participative work in the neighborhoods and to do the outreach work. But we cannot do that because I am the only fulltime curator and all the other colleagues are on a temporary basis. And we are getting less and less people so things we do have to be spread, so you meet us in a moment where we are exhausted and a bit frustrated because it is really sad. We do really good work but sometimes I feel like an air hostess, happy on the outside but on the inside, I feel 'just don't bother me'. I don't

like this kind of incongruence. It is hard that it is only based on how much we have to work. I am really exhausted, and it is really frustrating.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, is that largely a funding problem?

ANGELA JANNELLI: No, it is political. In order to create a new job position it is a political decision. So, we can't decide this ourselves and the city also has to save money and one thing to save money is to not create more jobs. We will soon get new jobs because everyone sees that we are very exhausted and with the new museum but the same old staff it is too much. It is three times as big as the old museum. I think politicians realize that and we will get new posts, but it is not sufficient, so it is really frustrating. Yes, it is a problem of funding and we try to solve it by getting additional funding. For example, Katharina is paid through the money from the foundation, the German Federal Cultural Foundation. We have lots of temporary people that are paid with that additional financing, but it needs continuity. It would be great to have at least two more colleagues to do the same work because I am not just doing the Stadtlabor but also the Library of the Generations which takes a lot of resources.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So how would a new job be created?

ANGELA JANNELLI: The museum has to ask the cultural department, the cultural department asks the magistraat, the city council. And then the city council decides whether or not.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: It is a little complicated. And this is because most of your funding is government funding?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yes, city government funding. Well actually they care for our salaries, the building, and the collection buildings but all the programming, exhibitions, educational programs is all funded by additional foundations.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, going back to the programming we were talking about before, is Stadtlabor seeking to make a political statement?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Ah yes since we met last time I have thought a lot about this point. For me personally and also for Susanna who is the project leader, I think we really realized we have to be far more political. And the next exhibition I am preparing is also like a little activist exhibition, an undercover activist exhibition. You know in the 1970s there was this cultural debate and we know since then that essentially objectivity doesn't exist. But still in the museum the dictum of neutrality, objectivity is still there, and it is still so vital. And we who work in the museum know that we position ourselves in everything we do but I have the impression that not only do we position ourselves, but we also try to connect this positioning with the real statement. So, I think we are getting more political and not only because we see all those right-wing movements and how democracy is a bit threatened. I think this is one reason why we say 'no, we are a democratic institution and we want to have a diverse society and we want to contribute to this diverse society'. I think we are mentioning this more and more explicitly and I like it.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: We talked about this briefly last time, but I am curious since creating another exhibition how you feel about the space here in the Stadtlabor. And if you think that people would experience the Stadtlabor differently in a different space, and how so?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Well I think this is a real big museum and also maybe a bit threatening, but it is a very classical architecture. It may be excluding but on the other hand it is valuing. So, you have both sides of the coin. It is fantastic to see your contribution in such ambience and it is a real museum with very expensive furniture, so it makes people feel valued and it is the historical museum. But on the other hand, I think other different people would attend the exhibition if it would be for example, in a local institution. Already that is one observation we have made, that it

is more difficult for people who do not connect to the museum to come to this place than it would be to meet us in a more informal space. I have two opinions then, or rather there are two different kinds of experiences.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: What is being done with the data you are collecting? So, in the exhibition itself I know there are places where you can put stickers down with your opinion, things like that. And there is a space to record video, so what happens to that information after the exhibition is over?

ANGELA JANNELLI: For the video recording, if you don't send yourself the material it is deleted. It is only conserved for a very short period of time and it is not collected because it would also be too difficult for all those data protection guidelines. And, the participative elements in the exhibition, we document them regularly photographically and then it is documented in the final printed booklet that we publish after each exhibition. We try also to reflect or evaluate it in this printed documentation.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And is there any push from either visitors or museum staff to get this data towards government officials, city planners, or architects? Or, is it largely internal data collection?

ANGELA JANNELLI: It is mostly internal data collection but let's say not really internal because it is published so it is public and can be shared with everyone. Actually, it is more the city planning department that asks us for collaboration because people who wouldn't collaborate with city planning would collaborate with the museum. So, there was this city development plan that we were asked to be partners so we collaborated, and they tried to instrumentalize us. We said, 'no, we do our work and we document our work, but we will not ask questions for you'. It was interesting to see that other departments are interested in what we do here and our methods and that they believe our methods are more efficient. What we do then, we always give our evaluation to the city planning department. For example, when we worked locally in Ginnheim, many people said, 'we want a meeting place, we want a café, or we want a bridge to cross this street or a light to illuminate the street at night'. Sometimes it is really easy things to communicate because if one city department communicates with another it is easier than for normal people to inform someone. So, this kind of information chain exists but it is not systematic.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: It is a more informal conversation then.

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yes

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Okay, and did any changes happen in Ginnheim?

ANGELA JANNELLI: No, unfortunately. It is really sad. There was one woman who since she participated in Ginnheim she has participated in every Stadtlabor. She is a sustainable development activist and it is incredible how she participates in every exhibition. But she wanted to run a café and a meeting point, and also a place where solidarity farmers could distribute their crops, but she did not succeed. In the Ginnheim exhibition though she realized that the museum's platform was something she could use so that is a really nice collaboration.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: At what point, or I guess, how, did the city planning department reach out to you to start that relationship?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Well when we started ten years ago we launched the idea of the Stadtlabor they said 'wait, you want to do our work now, so what is happening?' we said, 'no we are just a subjective perspective and we are not planners at all'. So, it is really interesting to see how it has changed that just a couple of years later they approached us and said, 'we have this city

development strategy for 2030, we are doing it right now in a participative manner' and they offered us some money to take part in the process or to finance our plans and to share our experiences with them. And that was the moment when not only did they want us to share our experiences, but they wanted us to really act in favor of them, and we refused.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, the museum essentially said, 'we will continue doing what we are doing, and we are happy to share the information, but we are not willing to take on...'?"

ANGELA JANNELLI: 'We are not your research team' is kind of what we said. We are willing to share information.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: We have touched on this quite a bit but the external appearance of the building. You had mentioned that there were originally plans for that plaza. I was wondering if you could share a bit more what those were.

ANGELA JANNELLI: It is very very superficial. We just know that we have this wonderful plaza and that people really like to use it. People eat ice cream on the stairs or they eat ice cream in the niches, but we could do lots more. Our director asked us for ideas and we have a collection of those ideas, but we don't have the resources to develop those further. I think it could be much more inviting and livelier. We know people like it and use it, but I think we could really make it much more attractive for more people.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Do you have any concerns about the appearance of the building as a whole, as opposed to just your floor?

ANGELA JANNELLI: That is also...I am a bit schizophrenic about this. On the one hand side I really like it. For the appearance of the city it is really good. It is really part of the architectural ensemble of the city. But if I talk as a creator for community engagement I think it is a catastrophe. Because it is very hierarchical. It is very representative. It is very exclusive, in both senses. It is a fantastic design, but I think in how to use this building it is really austere. You have to go upstairs. And we are an inclusive museum but the first thing that you see are stairs. So, if you are in a wheelchair you have to enter from the back or with the elevator; you can't use the stairs like everyone else would. In a lot of ways, it is very contradictory to our museum idea, that we want to be an open museum and you have to enter, you have to go to the cashier desk, you have to go down the stairs, you have to cross the square, and then you can go up to the exhibition. So, I think it is really contradictory in a lot of ways; even if I like the architecture I am not sure it is representing the idea of our museum in a good way. And the square is a fantastic idea the architects had, with this the museum is much more a part of the city but still our main exhibition building is a building without doors.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: I had a question about the layout of the museum, because with the staircase you can enter the exhibitions from two different points, and I was wondering if you found that confusing or if you had received any feedback from visitors on this point? And if the Stadtlabor plans with this in mind, the possibility for two different entry points?

ANGELA JANNELLI: No. This is something really absurd. When I left university and I was confronted with all these pragmatic decisions you really understand why absurd things happen. It is a political decision. We didn't want that staircase. For us, it is really difficult, and the space is really difficult. You have those two naves then you have three different possibilities to enter the exhibition [two staircases and an elevator]. If you think about the exhibition as a narrative thing, how can you narrate the story with three different beginnings? So, for us it is really difficult and if we had been the only ones deciding about the design of the whole building it would have been completely different.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: And so, who made that decision?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Politics. The city planning department, the heads of the different departments: it was culture, city planning and someone else. So, the museum only had one voice in this decision-making process. The architect wasn't even interested in our concept. I thought he always had a classical art museum in mind, but I know when he visited the museum he said, 'look at what a fantastic building it is but look at what kind of rubbish they put in it'.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: So, no museum professionals were consulted?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Our director was in meetings and he really tried to make a stance for the museum's needs but at that point the concept wasn't very developed. So, the decision to tear up the old building and build a new one, when we knew we were going to have a new building we didn't know what the new building would look like. So, it wasn't really a collaboration, but it was more parallel planning and evaluation and at some point, we had to bring it together.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: I was under the impression that there was an architectural competition. Was the decision on the architect made by that same group of political actors?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Yes. And the idea was reworked so the building now is not really 1:1 to the building they presented in the first draft, but the main ideas are there. And as I said the museum really only had one voice. If we were to have planned it I don't think we would have this middle staircase which is not usable at all for us, but we have to live with it and deal with it.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Last time we spoke you had mentioned that one of the plans that you would have provided would have had the Stadtlabor on the bottom floor. Is there anything else that you might've done differently?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Well if I can dream I think it would have been really great to maybe have the museum in a building which is more low-scale. Something like a shop that you enter, I think that there quite a lot of symbolic barriers that you have to overcome. There is the staircase, then it is the big heavy doors, and then the entrance hall with the cashier desk and as I said, you have to go down...so you really have to want to go into the museum. It is not so much a museum that you can just pop in. I think my wish museum would be a museum where you could just pop in, maybe even just to have a coffee. I really like British museums because they are often used as meeting spaces or social spaces and the café has a different meaning, so I really like that.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Lastly, where did you get the information about 50% non-German tourists as visitors?

ANGELA JANNELLI: It is an estimate. An unsystematic, subjective observation. And we urgently need a visitor case study. Did you see those little monitors where you can give feedback and type in where you come from before you leave but it is very unsystematic, so we do not know how many people just play with it or how serious the opinions are, so we do not have any hard numbers on this.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: I think that is all for me for now, is there anything that I did not ask that you think might be relevant for me to know? Or that you might want to tell me?

ANGELA JANNELLI: Well I think it is important in your research that it is my subjective view as a curator.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Of course.

ANGELA JANNELLI: I wouldn't like that this is representative of the museum, if you ask someone else you would maybe get quite different answers. So that is important to me. And I

think that also when you do research it would be interesting to care a bit more about the people who are doing the work. You are finding me at a very exhausted moment, and I am kind of in need of recognition. I think we do this really great work and it is not valued in a good manner. Often it is delegated to the educational department and I think it is a curatorial, collective research practice but it has affects on you as a person, and as a curator, because you are personally involved. I came across one study of a geographer who compared it to care work. So, it was interesting to see that it is not a problem that I have personally but that it is really a structural issue. People often study how the institution changes, and what it means to people; but how does it affect the people doing the work might be something worth a second look.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Just to put your mind at ease, I want you to know that in my methodology section of my paper I will have a note saying, 'this is the view of the curators, it is not the view of the museum'. And the consent form that I sent over to you as well means that I can provide you with the transcriptions to read before they are published because I want you to be comfortable with the information that I will put forth from this.

ANGELA JANNELLI: Thank you it is really great to have you and a great opportunity to reflect on what we do.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Yes, and thank you so much for the opportunity to learn from you. More and more I am realizing that there is no one, perfect answer for museum-making.

ANGELA JANNELLI: I have really learned curating and exhibition-making it is such a constant pragmatism where there are so many decisions that you have to make that are not based on, let's say, theoretically the best option but it is the external things that decide. You have to base it in your reality.

VICTORIA CAMPBELL: Great, well thank you again!

7.5 Observation Tables

Date	Time	What Ifs	Plays with VR Screens	Watches VR
19/5/2019	14:30-15:30	5	10	28
21/5/2019	16:30-17:30	5	11	9
23/5/2019	12:45-13:45	6	9	12
28/5/2019	14:00-16:00	3	10	12

Table 11: count of interactions observed at MCNY's Future City Lab

Date	Time	Transitory Only	Sits Down	Eats Lunch
19/5/2019	13:30-14:30	63	45	2
23/5/2019	12:45-13:45	188	76	24
28/5/2019	13:00-14:00	73	1	0

Table 12: Total Count of MCNY's Observed Courtyard Activity

Time	Section 1	Section 2	Section 3
10:00	37	49	79
13:00	37	49	83
14:00	37	49	83
17:00	41	49	89
18:00	42	49	89

Table 13: count of total interactions within the Stadtlabor on May 16, 2019 (as measured through the number stickers placed in interactive exhibition spaces)

Date	Time	Transitory Only	Sat in Statue Nooks	Utilized Bench	Looked at Snowglobe
15/5/2019	12:30-13:30	50	10	0	13
16/5/2019	12:30-13:30	95	37	2	9
16/5/2019	18:00-19:00	70	6	2	7

Table 14: Total Count of HMF's Observed Plaza Activity