

Confronting Stereotypes, Racism and Xenophobia in Oslo Museum – Intercultural Museum (IKM)

Robert Wallace VAAGAN

Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway

Annelise Rosemary BOTHNER

Oslo Museum — Intercultural Museum, Norway

Abstract: Museums play an important role in society as repositories of culture history and knowledge, and also as meeting places for visitors. Oslo Museum – Intercultural Museum (IKM) is a municipal museum located in the Norwegian capital Oslo, in a diverse neighbourhood including a high concentration of immigrants. With its many exhibitions and local activities, IKM is a contact zone for the local community, the capital’s inhabitants and numerous schools. The exhibition “It’s just like them ...” with the installation Anatomy of Prejudice encourages visitors to reflect on prejudices, to express and co-create them using their smart phones, and to exhibit them. In 2017, IKM and Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet) started exploring how IKM can strengthen its digital presence and reach out to a wider audience.

The article first outlines and theorizes the mission and activity of IKM. Then the exhibition “It’s just like them...” and the installation Anatomy of Prejudice are analyzed. Finally, IKM’s external communication strategy and media management are addressed.

Keywords: Museum, stereotypes, xenophobia, contact zone, plural societies, communication strategy, digital public space

1. Introduction

Museums — especially museums that address intercultural issues — represent ‘contact zones’ between diverse groups in plural societies (Pratt, 1992; Barrett, 2011; Naguib, 2013a; Naguib, 2013b). Oslo Museum is located in the Norwegian capital Oslo and includes four specialized museums: The Museum of Oslo, The Intercultural Museum, The Labour Museum and The Theater Museum (Oslo Museum, 2019). Today, 33 percent of the capital’s population of 667,000 are immigrants, compared with the national average of 17.3 percent. In a few districts and in the neighbourhood where Oslo Museum – Intercultural Museum (IKM) is located, immigrants comprise 50 percent or more of the population (Oslo Museum/IKM, 2019; Hoydahl, 2015). IKM has for many years been a contact zone, both physically as a venue for visitors, and to some extent digitally through its website and use of social media (Bettum et al., 2018; Bothner-By, 2015, 2017; Naguib, 2013c; Statistics Norway, 2019). The exhibition “It’s just like them...” with the installation Anatomy of Prejudice is one of IKM’s new exhibitions; it opened in June 2017 for a planned exhibit period of 5 years. It is designed for secondary and tertiary level educational institutions, but is also open to the general public. The exhibition is about prejudices and xenophobia, including an artistic installation Anatomy of Prejudice. Visitors are encouraged to express and reflect on their prejudices which are anonymized, catalogued and exhibited. In Norway, where a right-wing terrorist murdered 77 victims in July 2011 in protest against the government’s perceived

liberal immigration policy, there is a special need to confront racism, xenophobia and stereotypes (Vaagan, 2015). When the exhibition closes in late 2022, this material will provide a valuable database for research regarding the state and development of young people's levels of tolerance and mind-sets over a five-year period.

This article is organized into the following five sections:

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In section 2 we trace the history, mission and current activity of IKM. Here we also explain IKM's evolving communication strategy with the public where a novel cross-disciplinary cooperation project started in 2017 with The Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Oslo Metropolitan University. Key concepts which are theorized include 'immigration', 'contact zone', 'intercultural communication', 'Habermasian public space', and 'media management'. In section 3 we turn our attention to the exhibition "It's just like them..." with the installation Anatomy of Prejudice. Although this is only one of many exhibitions at IKM, it is unique with its lifespan of five years, it occupies some 45 percent of the available exhibition space, it relies on visitors using their smart phones, and not least, it is an interactive work of art by the conceptual artist Thierry Geoffroy, whose artist name is 'Colonel'. In section 4 we consider the communication strategy and media management of IKM where five undergraduate students (4th semester) in Media and Communication Studies from OsloMet present their findings and recommendations for improvement (Arstad, 2018; Bocchi, 2018; Clasen, 2018; Gluggvasshaug, 2018; Lentini, 2018). A common general conclusion and recommendation, presented in the final section 5, is that IKM is an important intercultural contact zone for Oslo's increasingly diverse population, and that the concept of Habermasian public space is a useful way of adapting and expanding IKM's contact zone in the digital, public sphere. This will allow IKM and this exhibition to strengthen social cohesion and 'cultural citizenship' in the local community and also in the capital, especially among school children and the young immigrant population (Clarke, 2008; Kong, 2010; Nurse, 2010; Bodo, 2012).



Figure 1. Street Performance at IKM Main Entrance (Photo: Sebastian Dahl)

2. Immigration and Plural Societies

In their book on immigration to Norway from the Viking Age to modern times, Kjeldstadli and Brochmann (2014) question the myth that Norway had always been a largely homogeneous society before the 1970s when this was changed by the arrival of immigrants from Asia, Africa and Latin America. Historically, the indigenous population the Sami were the first settlers, and subsequently Vikings, monks, German Hansa traders, Swedish railroad workers, national minorities, guest workers, immigrants seeking work and more lately, asylum seekers, have all added to Norway's current heterogeneous demographic makeup. Today 17.3 percent of the Norwegian population are immigrants or children of immigrants. Statistics Norway defines an immigrant as someone who is born outside Norway by foreign-born parents and who has 4 foreign-born grandparents. The largest groups hail from Poland, Lithuania, Somalia, Sweden, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Germany, Eritrea and the Philippines. In Oslo, the immigrant proportion is 33 per cent, and in some of the capital's north eastern and south eastern suburbs the proportion exceeds 50 percent. The neighbourhood Groenland where IKM is located, is one of 9 neighbourhoods in the burrough of Old Oslo (Gamle Oslo). Here, immigrants and their children comprise 60 per cent of the inhabitants (Oslo municipality, 2019; Statistics Norway, 2019).

2.1. Stereotypes, Xenophobia, Empowerment and Media

In plural societies, majority population attitudes to minorities are often in focus. Hellevik and Hellevik (2017) have done time series research 1993-2015 on Norwegians' attitudes to immigrants and immigration. They argue that most Norwegians today are favourable regarding the cultural and economic impact of immigrants; a majority are willing to assist refugees and are relaxed about imposing restrictions on immigration. But a significant proportion remain negative especially to Muslim immigration and immigrants. Stereotypes and xenophobia are therefore quite usual in public debate, especially in social media.

An interesting feature in recent years is that immigrants and their children have become more active in local politics in Oslo than previously. While voting in national elections requires Norwegian citizenship, voting in local elections is open also to non-Norwegian passport holders with legal resident status. Most voters with an immigrant background vote for leftist parties (Kleven, 2017). Since 2013, Norway has been governed by a conservative coalition government, and until 2015 the conservatives were also in power in Oslo. But in 2015 this came to an end when a Red-Green coalition of three parties was elected to govern the capital (Ap - the Labour Party, SV - The Socialist Left Party and MDG - the Environmentalist Green Party). Of the 59 seats in Oslo city council 2015-2019, no less than 13 seats (22 per cent) are held by politicians with an immigrant background. In the local elections in September 2019, the Red-Green Alliance reinforced its political control of the capital for another 4-year period, but with a weakened Labour Party and strengthened Environmentalist Green Party. As we shall return to in, sections 2.3-2.4, IKM enjoys an independent role based on ICOM principles. IKM is funded by Oslo municipality and The Ministry of Culture, but IKM does not experience pressure from the state or municipal authorities regarding museum activity.

Immigrants are not only playing a more active role in local and national political life, they are also more visible in the media and in public discourse (Sevincer, Biseth & Vaagan, 2018). A study done in early 2013 by NRK and The University of Oslo of the 11 largest immigrant groups concluded that 80 per cent of immigrants use Norwegian media on a daily basis, and media preferences are largely similar to the majority population, with some exceptions: Immigrants spend less time listening to the radio and reading newspapers. Their favourite media are TV and the internet. 90 per cent of the immigrants use the internet daily, both via PCs and mobile. 5 per cent of the immigrants use YouTube daily, compared with 31 per cent of the majority population. Drama series from Turkey and Pakistan on YouTube are particularly popular in these segments. Surprisingly, weather forecasts and winter sports are equally popular with the majority and immigrant population. These types of programs seem to assist in developing a common identity (Moerlie & Vaagan, 2019).

At the end of 2018, a slight majority of the world's population (3.9 billion people or 51.2 percent) were using the Internet, and 40 percent use social media. Norway is among the countries with very high Internet penetration, and social media accessed through mobile devices are increasingly popular. As we shall see later, this is one reason why the installation *Anatomy of Prejudice* relies on smartphones. With the spread of social media over the last decade, public discourse has, in many cases, migrated from legacy media to social media. The most popular social media with the highest user percentages (in brackets) are Facebook (81), Snapchat (59), Instagram (52). This is important when one considers expanding IKM's contact zone to the digital public sphere (International Telecommunication Union, 2019; Kantar Media, 2019; Ipsos, 2019; Vaage, 2018; NDLA, 2017).

2.2. IKM as a Contact Zone

Today, the neighborhood Groenland, where IKM is located, is the most diverse urban neighbourhood in Norway, in terms of population, religion, culture, civil society organizations and commercial enterprises. Groenland is both an urban centre and a

housing environment for close to 10,000 inhabitants of whom 60 percent, as noted earlier, are immigrants or children of immigrants. There are marked contrasts: obvious poverty versus a growing middle class and strong financial institutions (Brattbakk et al., 2017). The neighbourhood is now rapidly being transformed: local politicians are implementing the development plan “Neighbourhood Improvement Groenland” with large construction projects causing civic engagement from local inhabitants.



Figure 2. IKM backyard music festival (Photo: Lars Opstad)

In her analysis of today’s IKM, Naguib (2013a) recounts that it is located in a building constructed in 1900-1902 as a police station with cells. Groenland had from the 1700s affordable housing that attracted many new arrivals to the capital from the districts. Social and health problems like unemployment, drunkenness and disease were often rife. From the 1970s, when modern immigration to Norway gained pace, Groenland acquired a high concentration of immigrants, as mentioned earlier. In the late 1990s, Oslo municipality decided to establish a Centre of International Culture and Museum. The new institution concentrated its efforts on school children and youths in and around Groenland. In 1998, Oslo municipality refurbished the 5-storey building and converted it into a cultural centre with a concert hall, an art gallery, conference rooms and some rooms for various activities, including children. From the beginning, IKM was conceived as a physical meeting place and ‘contact zone’ between the different population groups in the capital. As we shall see shortly, the concept of ‘contact zone’ has both consensual and conflictive dimensions. In 2006, the centre and museum were renamed IKM and received the prize “Museum of the Year” which is awarded annually by The Association of Norwegian Museums. The jury emphasized that IKM had succeeded in creating bonds of confidence and durable contacts between different minority groups and had the courage to address difficult issues and even taboos. In the wake of a museum reform that same year, IKM merged with Oslo City Museum and Oslo Theatre Museum to become Oslo Museum (OM). OM is today financed by the municipality of Oslo and the Ministry of Culture. Today, IKM occupies the ground floor and first floor of the building while Oslo municipality Culture Centre occupies the top three floors. IKM has at its disposal a total of 620 square meters of which the ground floor has 370 square meters. Of this, the exhibition “It’s just like them...” with Anatomy of Prejudice claims 45 percent. The offices and conference rooms on the first

floor comprise 240 square meters. In addition, IKM shares a backyard with adjacent buildings (Oslo Museum- Intercultural Museum, 2019).

Groenland can also be described as a “community of dissension” (Iversen, 2014). During the years 2007-2012 IKM chose as a main theme “Exhilaration and Fear in The Multicultural City” with several projects and exhibitions that explored the often conflictual feelings people have about their city lives. As part of IKM’s ambition to become “the pulsating heart of Groenland”, museum staff are continuing their work on diversity issues and contrasting perceptions locally, at all levels and across dividing lines. Looking ahead, IKM staff want to explore to what extent IKM can serve as a contact zone and intercultural space and at the same time raise challenging issues and set an agenda. How can IKM manage its relations as a hub, a host and stakeholder in a “community of dissension”?

The anthology edited by Oslo Museum’s research coordinator Dr. Anders Bettum (Bettum et al., 2018) is the result of the project “Minorities and inclusion” which was part of a 3-year program 2015-2017 financed by The Arts Council of Norway titled (author’s translation) “The societal role of museums; democracy, human rights and reflection”. In the introductory article of this anthology Bettum, Maliniemi and Walle (2018) describe government policy developments since the mid-1990s to promote ways in which museums can better reflect diversity. In 2006, a national network was established among museums in Norway dedicated to diversity issues and minority inclusion.

2.3. Domestic Politics and Urban Planning

In Norway, museums are the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture, which sees museums as active stakeholders in public discourse:

one of the main elements in maintaining a collective memory [...] these institutions play an important role when it comes to developing and communicating information about how humans understand and interact with their surroundings. (Ministry of Culture, 2018)

Museums have traditionally been financed by the Ministry of Culture, but this is currently under debate following a proposed regionalization which, if implemented, will transfer management and financing to the counties (*fylker*). Yet the importance of values such as democracy, diversity and freedom of expression will continue, in line with several policy documents on museums during the last two decades. Public museums should continue to reflect society’s cultural diversity with regard to exhibitions, management and recruitment.

Today, the museum and its staff play an important role also in the ongoing discussion about urban planning and the development of the neighbourhood of Groenland. Private developers such as the Olav Thon Group (Norway’s largest private real estate company) prioritize office space and fast food facilities, while housing and environmentally friendly elements like parks are downgraded. The current Red-Green alliance that governs Oslo is at odds with the conservative minority government on several issues, including urban planning and especially car traffic and parking in Oslo. Denmark, which has the strictest immigration policy among the Nordic countries, announced in March 2018 its resolve to eliminate all the country’s 22 ghettos. The

Danish government has for some years published an annual ghetto list based on an index of unemployment, low education, low income, criminal record and a high percentage of non-Western immigrants. Now it is proposing that the only criteria will be neighbourhoods with more than 60 percent non-Western immigrants. The conservative Norwegian minority government includes the Progress Party (FrP) which is often cast as anti-immigrant and supports Danish policies on immigration. FrP has wanted to try similar policies in Norway and Oslo, which the Red-Green government of Oslo is extremely opposed to (Lundgaard, Moe & Kofod, 2018). The re-election in September 2019 of a Red-Green alliance means that this debate has been swept under the blanket for the next 4-year period.

IKM is also influenced by The International Council of Museums (ICOM) which defines a museum as:

....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. (ICOM, 2018).

In its annual report for 2017, ICOM emphasized the social role of museums, which was also in evidence on 18 May, the International Museum Day, which was celebrated with the theme ‘Museums and Contested Histories: Saying the Unspeakable in Museums’. This theme focused on the role of museums as hubs for promoting peaceful relationships between people, and highlighted how the acceptance of a contested history can lead to reconciliation. No less than 157 countries and territories organized special activities round the globe (ICOM, 2018).

Goodnow and Akman (2008) review how Scandinavian museums have addressed cultural diversity. This study pays close attention to the change from when Scandinavian museums were created in the late 1800s/early 1900s to strengthen notions of national identity through authorized narratives (at the expense of minorities and the indigenous Sami), to a situation arising since the 1960s when globalization and migration have further challenged these same notions and narratives. Skartveit and Good (2010) explore how museums have changed their practices with new media (especially film and videos, oral history and databases, games and interactives), and paid more attention to refugees and participation.

2.4. From Contact Zone to Digital Public Space

Historically, there has been considerable theorizing and discussion on the role of museums in society (see e.g. Simon, 2010). The ICOM definition of a museum cited earlier gives a clear mandate to museums to play an important role in public debate. As already mentioned, a large corpus of scholarly research has noted that museums - especially museums that address intercultural issues - represent ‘contact zones’ between diverse groups in plural societies (Pratt, 1992; Barrett, 2011; Bettum et al., 2018) or ‘intercultural spaces’. As noted, contact zones involve both consensual and conflictive dimensions (Bodo, 2012).

Pratt (1992, p. 6) coined the term ‘contact zone’ to refer to “the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come

into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality and intractable conflict.” Clifford (1997) adapted the term to museums, based on experiencing meetings in The Portland Museum of Art, Oregon, with Tlingit elders to discuss North West Coast art. They strongly objected to the fragmentation of their cultural heritage when only certain objects were exhibited. Clifford therefore concluded that “When museums are seen as contact zones, their organizing structure as a collection becomes an ongoing historical, political, moral relationship – a power-charged set of exchanges, of push and pull.” (pp. 192-193). Nonetheless, Boast (2011) later criticized both Pratt and Clifford for what he saw as their perpetuation of only the inclusive dimension of the contact zone which neglected the zone’s inherent asymmetrical power relations and conflictual aspects.

Barrett (2012) expanded this discussion by adapting Habermas’ theory of the public sphere to museums. She sees museums as a critical sphere of public debate, exploring the many notions of the public in museum debates, such as public space, public culture and public intellectual. She argues that it is critical to reconsider the idea of the museum “in a world in which museums compete for the representation and interpretation of cultural heritage with other related public forums and sites, including community cultural centres, public halls and the Internet.” (p.1). Mairesse (2016) has picked up the Internet challenge to museums. In an issue of the French book series *Musées-Monde*, he discusses new tendencies in museology, especially digitization and the development of virtual museums. The 12 articles address how museums over the last decade in Europe, the Americas, Asia and Africa have all felt the triple impact of rapid technology-driven change, a major financial crisis and globalization. The articles all agree on the need for museums to adopt a common, global strategy of digitization to fulfil their mission.

Applying this to a Norwegian context, the media scholar Gripsrud (2017) traces the historical development of public discourse in Norway, especially in the media. Influenced by Habermas, he sees the public as our common space, where we argue and exclude, mobilize and quarrel, acclaim and ridicule, enlighten and offend. It is the meeting ground of society and a prerequisite for democracy. Increasingly, Norwegian policy and media developments have made this public space digital. In April 2012, the minority Red-Green coalition government of former Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg announced its intention to fully digitize the central, public sector administration (Vaagan, 2015, p. 28). From then the normal way of communication between the authorities and citizens was to be digital. One result of this policy change was that post offices and postal services were gradually scaled down and replaced by digital post boxes for each citizen. The purpose is to rationalize the public sector, save money, improve efficiency at all levels and benefit the public. Although this transformation has taken time, has been adjusted with the addition of a universal ICT design policy, and is still not complete, digitization has been the mantra of successive governments. In January 2019, Prime Minister Erna Solberg’s conservative majority government expanded the Ministry of Local Government and Modernization by appointing Norway’s first Minister of Digitization, meaning that this Ministry now has two Ministers.

For IKM, the perspectives of these scholars in combination with Norwegian state policy of digitization, mean that the contact zone of all Norwegian museums is also a question of strengthening their digital presence and outreach to online target groups, local, national and transnational. This will require improved media management and resources. The question then arises, how can this be done?

3. Methods

Before we turn to the exhibition in our title, we must emphasize that IKM arranges a broad variety of exhibitions and activities that we for reasons of space cannot cover in this article. We explained above that the exhibition “It’s just like them ...” with the installation *Anatomy of Prejudice*, is unique with its lifespan of five years, that it occupies 45 percent of the available exhibition space, that it relies on visitors using their smart phones, and not least: that it is an interactive work of art by the conceptual artist Thierry Geoffroy / Colonel. Let us now briefly consider the planning process.

3.1. Conceptualizing and Preparing the Exhibition

The main exhibition in the museum 2017-2022 is titled *Typisk dem... (It’s just like them...)*, which opened in June 2017 and will be on show for 5 years. By October 2019 the exhibition had attracted 250 secondary school classes from many of the capital’s 91 secondary level schools. In addition, almost 30 tertiary level student groups and thousands of other visitors have seen the exhibition, mostly from Oslo. These figures suggest that the exhibition is developing successfully. The exhibition addresses prejudice and xenophobia, and is the result of a two-year long process of documentation and developing the material of the exhibition. The documentation process included interviews with youth all around Oslo. Academic professionals and NGOs working with prejudice and xenophobia were involved in this process.

Prejudice against and discrimination of minority groups interacting with xenophobia is a problem in general in Norwegian society. Recent studies show that one out of three will admit to prejudice against Muslims (Midtboen & Lidén, 2015, p. 98; Hoffman & Moe, 2017, p. 7). The starting point of the exhibition is therefore an inquiry of the phenomenon of prejudice with a reflection around the basic human ability we call categorization, and the tendency to create dichotomies between us and the other. IKM defines prejudice as unjustified and negative attitudes towards people based on their allegiance to a certain social group or category of human beings.

The IKM project group, together with the involved academic professionals, created an exhibition relating this understanding of prejudice and presenting prejudice as a societal challenge. Through interviews and involvement with youths the project group found that concern with prejudice involves sociocultural issues, and issues concerned with age, social status and the city’s site-specific identities (and also gender ...) as well as the larger issues of racism and xenophobia. Rather than investigating and reporting different or historical and present examples and consequence of prejudice, the phenomenon of prejudice is seen more generally and across different areas. IKM wants the audience to reflect on the relevance of general awareness of their own and surrounding prejudices. The intention of the exhibition is to raise awareness and challenge our visitors to ask themselves: What is prejudice, exactly? Where does it come from? Is it part of our nature, or a cultural construct? How dangerous are our prejudices, and is it possible to change them?

3.2. The Artist Thierry Geoffroy (Colonel)

The project group decided to invite the contemporary conceptual artist Thierry Geoffroy / Colonel (born 1961), to develop artistic work for the exhibition. This was an important

decision as it meant breaking the tradition of the museum as author of the exhibitions by the museum's documentation projects team. Rather than inviting the artist to do an intervention, the project group collaborated closely with Colonel, while still giving him the autonomy that is basic and embodied in the artistic work process. In this way, a separate process with Colonel was arranged from the one with the academic and organization reference group. In this way, Colonel created *The Anatomy of Prejudice*, a series of installations integrated in the exhibition, which address the phenomenon of prejudice in an artistic way.

Colonel is known for his art formats designed to 'train the awareness muscle'. He addresses contemporary issues and engages the audience in ways unrestricted by the established norms of contemporary art. Ever since 1992, he has referred to his work as 'ultra-contemporary'. His plea is that art must refer to current issues in the present, rather than representing issues in the aftermath. Among his works is the *Emergency Room*, an exhibition format where new artworks are added daily. He is also responsible for a number of performative debates in major cities around the world, where the audience is invited to discuss current issues in an unfamiliar setting (e.g., *Critical Run* and *Slow Dance Debate*), thereby evoking spontaneity and honesty.

His art has been described as *Aesthetics of Emergency*, an aesthetics that reflects the urgency he requires. His material palette consists of post-its, cartoons, marker pens and Xerox prints. The installation of *The Anatomy of Prejudice* is created in this ready-made office stationery style. It is a new art format developed especially for the exhibition "It's just like them..." at IKM. Here, Colonel is working with a very different time frame than he normally does. *The Anatomy of Prejudice* is an artistic survey of the prejudices that surround us in our daily lives. The central element of the installation is *The Extractor* (figure 3) and the extracted material presented in the *Jungle of Prejudice* (figure 4). Through this he engages all visitors to the exhibition to co-create the artwork. The audience is encouraged to capture a sample of prejudice on their own smart phones, print these and share them as exhibited leaves in the *Jungle of Prejudice*.



Figure 3. *The Extractor* (Photo: Robert W. Vaagan)



Figure 4. Entrance to the Jungle of Prejudice (Photo: Robert W.Vaagan)

The leaves in the Jungle (figure 5) will amass slowly over a 5-year period, and constitute a protracted performance resulting in an ever-growing monument of personal testimonies about everyday prejudice. Thus, this artwork preserves at any time the current relevance of the exhibition. It is possible to see the individual leaf in the context of the other visitors' contributions, and by following the dated leaves of prejudice, it is possible to detect how the individual's perception of areas of prejudice reflects the public agenda.

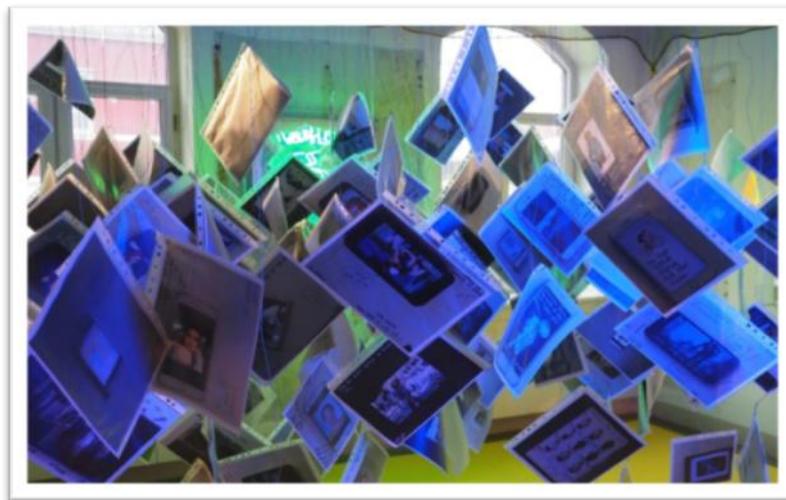


Figure 5. Leaves in the Jungle of Prejudice (Photo: Robert W.Vaagan)

The artistic approach allows for discussions about challenges of prejudice both on individual and structural levels, and across different areas and degrees of prejudice. The exhibition project is especially aimed at young people in the upper secondary school. As noted, many school classes from all over Oslo have visited the exhibition, but there is also an increasing number of young people visiting the exhibition in their time of leisure. The visitor groups include an increasing number of adult groups, many participating in Norwegian educational programs for immigrants. In planning and preparing the exhibition, we realized from the documentation that there are many

presumptions and prejudices made about Groenland. Therefore, addressing the challenges of categorisation and polarisations within and around Groenland is an important motivation for the ongoing local community work of IKM.

In figures 6-10 below we have selected a few of the exhibited leaves from the Jungle of Prejudice. These are anonymized and are expressive of some of the categories analysed by one of the students in Media and Communication Studies from OsloMet that we will discuss in part 3. Briefly, the main categories found were politics, xenophobia, religion, body shame and pressure, and the East End/West End conflict in Oslo (Bocchi, 2018). In figures 6-9 we find sweeping generalizations beginning with “All..” etc., the author(s) not only perceive someone else’s claimed prejudice but express opinions that appear equally prejudiced, and in several cases xenophobic. Figure 10 also makes a generalization, though less sweeping (not “all” mothers, while fathers are not mentioned).

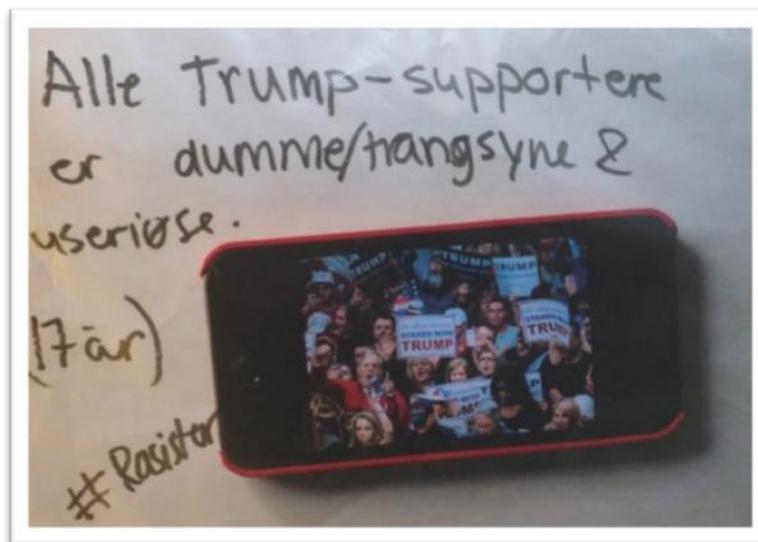


Figure 6. “All Trump Supporters are Stupid/ Narrow-Minded & Insincere (17 years #Racists)” (Photo: Robert W.Vaagan)



Figure 7. “All East Europeans are Alcoholics, Painters and Carpenters. 17-18 years, 09.01.2018” (Photo: Robert W.Vaagan)



Figure 8. “All Muslims are Terrorists 4. December 2018” (Photo: Robert W.Vaagan)



Figure 9. “All White West End Mothers Drink at Least One Glass of Wine with Dinner. 15 and 16 years. 19 April 2018” (Photo: Robert W.Vaagan)



Figure 10. “Parents who Fatten Their Children with Junk Food and Soft Drinks from an Early Age. Helen, 18 years, 27 September 2017” (Photo: IKM)

4. Data

4.1. Media Management

As part of Oslo Museum policy and strategy 2016-2020, IKM maintains a website and uses Facebook and Instagram as social media. This is strictly speaking more than IKM is legally required to do. Since it came into force in 1993, the law governing the activities of municipalities and county councils in Norway has stated (§4) that they must actively provide *information* about their activities, and best possible transparency into their administration (Lovdata, 2019). But as all media and communication scholars and students can confirm, information and communication are far from identical processes. Information in most cases means a one-way process where a sender or provider transmits messages, e.g., through static websites that occasionally are updated, with little or no possibility for receivers to answer. Communication is a much more demanding two-way process where information flows both ways, like in messaging back and forth or commenting in social media. This demands more resources to handle and also staff that are trained in media management and social media, e.g., webmasters, social media managers, content providers. Particularly today with the spread of hate speech and fake news, especially through social media, the role of the editor is increasingly important for successful online media management (Vaagan, 2015). Since Norway very recently has appointed for the first time a Minister of Digitization, we must expect that the law cited above will soon replace the term ‘information’ with ‘communication’, and that necessary resources will be invested to follow this up. This means that more resources for better media management will be required if museums like IKM are to expand their contact zones digitally.

4.2. Preliminary Student Research Findings and Recommendations

We return now to the work of the five undergraduate students mentioned in section 1. The cooperation between IKM and OsloMet started in 2017 as a cross-disciplinary cooperation project between the two authors. Professor Robert W. Vaagan, as principal investigator from Norway, invited IKM and Senior Curator Annelise Rosemary Bothner-By to be an associate partner in an application to the EU Horizon2020 HERA programme “Public Spaces: Culture and Integration in Europe”. The application included universities, polytechnics and research institutions from seven European countries. The first author involved several students in Media and Communication Studies who were enrolled in an English-language undergraduate course (4th semester) entitled Information, Communication and Social Media. The idea was to encourage the students to write term papers about IKM’s communication strategy and use of social media. These papers would be used in the joint article, and the best papers would win a travel grant to join the two authors and present a draft article at the 24th annual convention of the International Association for Intercultural Communication Studies (IAICS). This conference took place at DePaul University in Chicago 5-8 July 2018. Both of the co-authors of this article as well as the 5 students took part in the conference, with travel grants from Oslo Metropolitan University.

The five students (three Norwegians: Solveig Gluggvasshaug, Sophie Clasen and Celine Arstad as well as two Italian exchange students: Catarina Bocchi and Gabriella Lentini), all females in their early 20s, completed term papers based theoretically on

some of the most widely used theories in Media and Communication Studies, notably agenda setting theory, framing theory, uses and gratifications theory and to some extent also cultivation theory. Put simply, agenda setting theory attempts to explain how legacy and social media set an agenda for public debate by selecting and timing coverage of certain events and issues. Framing theory deals with how media coverage of issues and events is influenced by ‘frames’ such as values, ideas or stereotypes. Uses and gratifications theory tries to understand the media preferences of users in terms of user needs (gratifications). Cultivation theory deals with long term effects of exposure to certain types of media content (Bruun Jensen, 2012). The inspirational basis of these theories include the foundational ideas of Habermas on the digital public sphere (Barrett, 2012; Habermas, 1989). The intention from Oslo Metropolitan University was twofold: to offer students real-life working experience by writing papers as part of the research for this article, and also to offer them international conference experience.

In the 3-year undergraduate program in Media and Communication Studies at OsloMet, students acquire a broad basis in theory combined with practical skills in all types of media platforms (Vaagan, 2018ab). All the students taking this course are trained both in critical perspectives on social media, particularly ownership concentration and privacy concerns (Fuchs, 2017) as well as more positive, market-oriented approaches (Meerman Scott, 2015). The three Norwegian students chose to concentrate on social media while the two Italian students preferred working on the “It’s just like them...” exhibits; one worked especially on the concept of humiliation and the other tried to develop a typology of the leaves (exhibits) in the Jungle of Prejudice.

If we first look at social media as part of IKM’s communication strategy and media management, which were the concern of the three Norwegian students, they mostly drew on agenda setting and uses and gratifications theory. Arstad (2018) agreed with IKM’s use of Facebook, because 83 per cent of Norwegians between the ages 18-60+ had a Facebook profile in the second quarter of 2018 when the students completed their research. This makes Facebook an indispensable tool to reach audience and visitors. It is especially its wide use and the possibility to ‘like’, ‘share’ and ‘tag’ that generate dissemination and allow IKM to set the agenda far beyond its normal contact zone. But she also noted that IKM was still in the early stages of using Facebook and that social media marketing theory stressed the need to use Facebook insight and monitor traffic in order to find improvements, e.g., calls to action and key performance indicators (KPIs) (Arstad, 2018). Gluggvasshaug (2018) concentrated on Instagram, which is the other social media, apart from Facebook, that IKM uses. Instagram is very popular in Norway and 54 percent of the Norwegian population aged 18-60+ had an Instagram profile in the second quarter of 2018. This means that Instagram is also a very important tool for agenda setting and outreach to the digital public sphere. She also noted the importance of the exhibition “It’s just like them...”, because many people are not aware of their own prejudices, and need to be sensitized about them. Although the exhibition will be open for five years, it should be permanent, in her view. Additionally, all three Norwegian students pointed out that since Facebook owns Instagram, only relying on these two poses a potential dependency problem, so it is advisable to also use a social media outside the Facebook/Instagram sphere.

Clasen (2018) took an interest both in Instagram and Snapchat. IKM does not use Snapchat although after Facebook, it is the second most used social media in Norway: 63 per cent of the Norwegian population aged 18-60+ had a Snapchat profile in the second quarter of 2018, and not only young people. A snapchat account would mean

that IKM for instance could invite one or two student visitors (or influencers) to be Snapchat reporters and upload content during the visit. This would save IKM staff doing this. In her paper titled “How to address a digital group in a digital world”, she recommended the following:

In conclusion, creating a Snapchat account and improving IKM’s Instagram account may lead the museum closer toward their social media goals, KPIs, and finally their over-all strategy objectives. The Instagram account should be used to educate, inspire and tell authentic real-life stories which help to convey the message of IKM, and build a relationship between the visitors and the museum. Finally, inviting influencers to IKM, consequently using hashtags on Instagram and Snapchat may create engagement for certain issues which are easy to monitor and analyse (Clasen, 2018).

The two Italian exchange students chose to address other issues than social media. Lentini (2018) was primarily interested in a conceptual analysis and took an interest in the four thematic rooms which formed part of the Anatomy of Prejudice. These rooms were dedicated to the themes of humiliation, pride, hatred and fear. Choosing humiliation as her focal point, she explored how cognitive categorization can generate stereotypes, which in turn can grow into prejudices, which again can result in action causing humiliation. She provided comparative and pertinent examples from Italy and Norway, drawing on interviews among her Italian and Norwegian acquaintances.

Bocchi (2018) took as a starting point the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 2 (non-discrimination) (UDHR, 1948). She then did a content analysis of the 256 leaves in the Jungle at the time and developed a taxonomy of prejudices, grouping them in categories such as politics, xenophobia, religion, body shame and pressure, the East-West conflict in Oslo, school controversies and bad behaviour, as we have seen in the examples in figures 6-10. She further divided these categories into sub-categories and cross-tabulated these with (where possible) the age and gender of the author, while maintaining EU DGPR compliancy. Her approach is interesting and will provide a basis for later time-series studies we intend to do when the exhibition closes in mid-2022. By October 2019, the number of leaves had doubled to around 750 leaves.

5. Conclusion

This article has presented and discussed the mission and activity of Oslo Museum-Intercultural Museum (IKM), especially one of its main exhibitions in recent years: “It’s just like them...” with the installation Anatomy of Prejudice. In a capital and neighbourhood marked by increasing ethnic, religious and cultural diversity, IKM has since the 1990s played an important role as a contact zone and builder of social cohesion and cultural citizenship across demographic distinctions. In a country still haunted by the right-wing murders of 77 victims in 2011 in protest against multiculturalism, it is vital to confront stereotypes, racism and xenophobia in public discourse, including museums. IKM (and Oslo Museum) has started to explore the contact zone digitally through its website and use of especially Facebook and Instagram, thereby doing more than is legally required of municipalities. A new cross-disciplinary cooperation with staff and students in Media and Communication Studies from OsloMet, has yielded valuable insights regarding how IKM can further digitize its

contact zone. Both authors endorse many of the student findings and argue that IKM should consider making the website more dynamic and use a wider array of social media, especially Snapchat. This will require harmonization with Oslo Museum as well as added resources and professionalization of media management. These steps are, however, consistent with media developments in Norway and with the appointment of a new Norwegian Minister of Digitization.

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Author Note

Robert Wallace Vaagan, PhD, is Professor of Media Studies, Journalism and Intercultural Communication at OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University, Department of Journalism and Media Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences. He served as President 2017-2019 of the International Association for Intercultural Communication Studies.

Annelise Rosemary Bothner-By is Senior Curator at Oslo Museum – Intercultural Museum (IKM) and responsible for the museum's art exhibitions. She takes an active part in all the museum's exhibition and documentation activities.

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