

Media, mediatisation and museums

A new ensemble

*Kirsten Drotner, Vince Dziekan, Ross Parry and
Kim Christian Schrøder*

Museums have always communicated with the world around them through various means, such as signage, leaflets, photos and materials for learning. Over the years, museum communication has been marked by the uptake of media technologies that were new at the time, such as film and audio guides. In recent years, the options of mediated communication have been catalysed by a range of media technologies that are born digital (computers, mobiles) or can be turned into digital formats (e.g. print, film, photos). The Internet has widened these options through rapid and nearly global reach, thus turning museums' mediated communication into both a physical and a virtual affair. Museums are in many ways unique spaces because they can bring the whole media ensemble into a particular place and space that exists within a set of complex mediated communication environments.

A prime motivation for this Handbook is to explore what it means to take the concept of mediated communication as a key concept for museum studies and as a sensitising lens for media-related museum practice on the ground. The title of the Handbook is indicative of its scale and scope. Its ambition is to break new ground by reframing mediated museum communication as a resource for an inclusive understanding of current museum developments. The volume takes as its starting point that museums around the world are in a process of deep transformation because they are permeated by technologically mediated forms of communication. So, rather than asking disconnected questions about museums' digital infrastructure or technology uses, or about visitor engagements through the application of apps or online marketing strategies, we instead address the complex mediated communication environments within which museums are embedded, contextualising specific research questions within a broad account of museums' changing interactions with their surroundings. To take a simple example: rather than asking about the impact of gaming on museum visitor engagements, we ask when and why gaming makes connections between museums and gamers, and amongst gamers themselves, and how these communication processes are shaped by institutional and everyday contexts of use.

What is a medium?

This focus on museums' technologically mediated communication environments is at once more modest and grander than what is often found in museum studies. It is more modest because we define *media* as particular communication technologies whose properties enable the production, storage, reproduction and sharing of signs – text, images and sound – across space and time. Signs are meaning-making tools, as is evident if we think about language; and so, mediated communication technologies allow the expression and exchange of meaning beyond the here-and-now, and beyond the co-presence of actors. Perhaps the most obvious example is print media such as the book, which allows meaning in the form of text and images to be produced and reproduced in large numbers, to be stored for posterity and exchanged across large distances. This definition of media follows media scholar James Carey's assertion that media at one and the same time hold both material and symbolic properties (Carey, 1989/1992). Media, in other words, are material artefacts, often of a commercial nature, circulating in society, but they are also symbolic tools generating meaning, representation and rituals.

Our definition of media differs from more encompassing understandings of media often found in museum studies. These are understandings that have tended to conflate media and communication in museums. For instance, in her pioneering overview of museums and communication, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill critically describes how a transmission communication model permeates museums' interactions: "It is possible to describe the exhibition team as the source, the exhibition as the transmitter, with objects, texts and events as the channel of communication, the visitors' heads as the receivers, with the visitors' understanding as the final destination" (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999, p. 31). No distinction is made here between media ("texts") and other modes of communication that are transient and interpersonal ("events") or localised ("objects"). Our definition of media also differs from conceptions that collapse the concept of media and the concept of museum. For example, Angelina Russo asserts that "the contemporary museum is a media space" (Russo, 2012, p. 145). Such a definition makes it difficult to analyse, understand and design for communicative distinctions between, for example, display techniques, guided tours and social network sites. Finally, our definition of media differs from, especially more recent, approaches to museum communication that focus on aspects of technology rather than on aspects of communication (L. MacDonald, 2006; Tallon & Walker, 2008; Ch'ng, Gaffney, & Chapman, 2013). Such approaches often critically examine information systems and infrastructures and their importance for framing discourses on "newness" with implications for museums' internal processes of communication, including data management and modes of curation. Less attention is paid to external modes of communication, including mediated modes of communication, or these modes are only inferred from the technological properties.

The modest definition of media, on which this Handbook is based, allows us to separate out developments and discourses of museums that are, indeed, related to wider developments in communication and to developments in communication technologies, but may not have these developments as their cause. Discourses on participation, for example, in many parts of the world predate the pervasive uptake of digital media. These discourses may be accelerated by digital media but have wider resonance in contestations over welfarist vs. neo-liberal social models. Likewise, the current datafication of many museum practices – from archival interoperability to online audience traces – prompts important reflections on shifting relations between proprietary platforms, museums' institutional and legal authority and the limits of engagement. Such reflections imply nuanced analyses of the nested nature of communication, mediation and technological digitisation that, in their turn, must start from precise definitions of these terms.

We hope that our more modest definition of media may allow an accurate mapping of the relations between museums and media developments, thus avoiding a partial focus that stresses only aspects of these relations – for example, technology aspects such as digital information infrastructures, institutional aspects such as marketing or user aspects such as learning. Also, our approach to media invites a more historicised understanding of these relations and so escapes an unhappy focus only on “new media” or digital media.

At the same time, our focus on museums’ technologically mediated communication environments also invites grander claims than are often found in museum studies. This is because the Handbook has an inclusive understanding of media and offers examples of museums’ appropriations and interlacings of all known media technologies – print, radio, film, mobiles and computers – in addition to their key communication infrastructure, the Internet. This inclusive understanding helps us avoid binaries between digital and analogue media, between mass communication and personalised communication, since museums’ mediated communication often operates across such binaries. Also, our inclusive understanding of media involves specifying gaps between strands in other museum studies, but also illuminating overlaps and productive interconnections, such as dialogue and “voice.” We hope that the approach adopted in this volume will inspire museum specialists to contribute to this growing field, locating mediated practices of communication in relation to research such as archeological preservation or accounts of zoological taxonomies, thus contributing to the advancement of interdisciplinarity and depth of understanding.

This inclusive approach to media raises a further feature of the volume. For while museum research has seen an increasing professional and policy interest in museum engagements with their surroundings, most museum research and much museum practice take for granted, or even seem to neglect, the profound and constitutive importance of mediated communication for the very notion of museums. Museums are not media, but without media there would be little left of museums as we have come to know them. Unpacking the very concept of media is important for museum studies in order to overcome a deployment of the concept as a simple descriptor of trends or challenges towards, for example, social inclusion, outreach and participatory practices. Approaching media as an ensemble of communication technologies and modes of meaning-making enmeshed with the dynamics of museum practices allows us to understand wider transformations of museum organisation, visions and priorities of substance – from acquisition and conservation on to exhibition and community engagements.

The Handbook’s grand claims in terms of mediated communication are echoed by media historian John B. Thompson. He argues that media is deeply implicated in the development of modern society, in the ways in which people can act in the world and how institutions constitute and conduct themselves: “Mediated communication is an integral part of – and cannot be understood apart from – the broader contexts of social life” (Thompson, 1995, p. 11). Still, in an age of globalised, technologically mediated, and networked communication, Thompson’s “environmental” view of media needs to be taken one step further, a step that is also indicative of the Handbook’s claims of the constitutive role played by mediated communication for museum environments.

Mediatisation

The emergence of mediatisation theory in media studies coincides closely with the period during which museums have faced the challenges of digital transformation. While providing a conceptual lens for gaining understanding of the media/culture nexus in general, we believe that the mediatisation perspective holds great promise for the understanding and analysis of

the evolving status of museum media and communication; and that by approaching this still-formative subject from an interdisciplinary approach, insights that demonstrate the benefits of cross-fertilising media studies and museum studies can be produced.

In media studies, mediatisation theory seeks to reconceptualise the notion of media influence in a way that moves beyond measuring and interpreting their effects. The effects of media have traditionally been conceptualised on the one hand by “effects research” (by seeking insights about the influence of *media content* on individuals in areas like politics or advertising) and on the other by “medium theory” (which considers the ways that various cultures, as well as human perception itself, are shaped by *media technologies* such as print media and television). In contrast, mediatisation theory considers the entire cross-media ensemble as a moulding force on culture and society. By serving as a holistic theory about how media play formative roles in social and cultural transformations at different levels, mediatisation can be shown to function as a meta-process, on a par with processes such as individualisation, globalisation, and commercialisation. Mediatisation research, thus, explores how media change the ways in which we communicate and thereby partake in the social construction of reality (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). This approach lends itself to application as a set of methodologies for analysing different communicative domains; the contemporary museum being one such sphere.

While sharing many points in common (Lundby, 2014; Hepp, Hjarvard, & Lundby 2015), the mediatisation perspective comes in two distinct varieties: the constructivist approach (Hepp, 2013; Couldry & Hepp, 2017; Hasebrink & Hepp, 2017) and the institutional approach (Hjarvard, 2013; Strömbäck, 2008). One point on which these two strands agree is that “mediatisation” must be distinguished from “mediation.” While mediation “refers to the process of communication in general – that is, the way that technology-based communication involves the ongoing *mediation* of meaning production” (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, p. 35), mediatisation studies instead shift attention “from the particular instances of mediated communication to the structural transformations of the media in contemporary culture and society” (Hjarvard, 2013, p. 2). As a leading proponent of mediatisation theory, Danish media scholar Stig Hjarvard asserts that “the influences of the media are not only to be found within the communicative sequence of senders, messages, and receivers, but also in the changing relationship between the media and other cultural and social spheres” (Hjarvard, 2013, p. 2).

The constructionist approach diagnoses mediatisation in terms of five interwoven trends that characterise contemporary media culture; namely: differentiation, connectivity, omnipresence, the accelerated pace of information and datafication. Each of these identified traits, in turn, offers a useful scaffolding by which discernible developments occurring in, for example, museum media and communication, can be correlated with their associated mediatised factors. The influence of differentiation, for instance, can be recognised in the significant expansion of media options available to museums today. The museum’s evolution into a distinctively multi-platform entity has been exacerbated in large part because of the extended functionality afforded by a wide spectrum of new media technologies. Media are interconnected, both organisationally and in the ways we use them. The development of the connected museum as a distributed network of content and creators is reflective of developments in networked society more generally (Drotner & Schrøder, 2013). Under these socio-cultural conditions, many of the dichotomous relationships that museological operations are predicated upon (i.e. reinforcing institutional authority by establishing a clear separation of inside from outside) can no longer be perpetuated since media have become omnipresent and pervasive. Consequently, cultural experiences normally associated with museums – as a sanctioned and demarcated space for rarified, aesthetic encounters that take place at a remove from the real world – collide with

everyday social practices. In the process, museal effects can happen “anytime” and “anywhere”; in fact, “everywhere.” In the face of accelerated development, technology is experienced as transformative and disruptive. And while the pressure to innovate exerts itself in different ways upon established museological practices – arguably in many cases simply for change’s sake – the “postdigital museum” would seem to present a number of significant new opportunities. One such opportunity responds to datafication. All media exposure is controlled, at least to some extent, by algorithms, while processes of digitisation create digital traces. At the same time, when many aspects of our social life are becoming the subject of digital capture and codification, one of the challenges facing “data-rich” cultural institutions is how the information and knowledge residing in their collections can be turned into new forms of cultural value for all. Rather than assuming a reactive stance towards media, could the renewed mission of a more fully “mediatised museum” be turned proactively towards sparking new paradigms into action; and in so doing, reconceive the role of the cultural institution by fostering a new appreciation of the value of content (digital and otherwise); how it is exchanged and transacted with.

Each of the above-mentioned trends carries potential promise as well as cautionary risk. Depending on circumstance, they may lead to either greater empowerment or domination, to increased participation and co-creation or surveillance and control. And when it comes to finding ways to research them, they should be treated as part of a domain, a *media environment* formed by the entire body of media that make up its media ecology. Importantly, this *media ensemble* encompasses not only the particular domain’s subset of media forms, but also its *media repertoires*, whose routines of production and consumption draw upon both physical and virtual, onsite as well as online, authored and user-generated modes. These modes of practice relate to the individual’s selection and use of media taken from the ensemble and application of it in everyday, social domains as practice-based *communicative figurations*.

Inspired by the German sociologist Norbert Elias, these arrangements can be characterised in accordance with constructivist mediatisation theory as being non-media-centric (Morley, 2009; Krajina, Moores, & Morley, 2014). Communicative figurations are characterised by their scalability, that is, in sizes that can range from small groups (a family, a group of friends, a community of practice) to organisations (an NGO, a museum) or a whole social field (a national public sphere, the global financial system, the machinations of an internationalised, elite cultural sector). Communicative figurations can be translated to the museum domain, as their following three features attest: a *constellation of actors* (i.e. a network of individuals who act and communicate, such as directors, curators, conservators, exhibition designers, educators, media producers, publicists and crucially, audiences); their *frames of relevance* (i.e. the “topic” or “project” which unites the figuration and reflects their typology, as art, natural history or science museums, for example) and, lastly, their *communicative practices* (i.e. what actors “do” and “say” with media as they produce or transform the domain through their curatorial programmes, exhibition-making practices, marketing and promotional strategies, learning activities, etc.). Most practicably, this theoretical framework lends itself to analytical operationalisation: “Communicative figurations offer us a cross-media and processual meso-level approach to the construction of social domains,” because we may come to understand social domains “by researching their actor constellations, frames of relevance, and communicative practices” (Hasebrink & Hepp, 2017). Methodologically, the framework calls for a mixed-method approach that is representative of the different but nonetheless contributory kinds of knowledge that scholars as well as practitioners distinctively create in order to grasp the inherent complexity, dynamics and consequences of communicative figurations. As a reflection of the more constructivist tendencies of mediatisation, this framework offers the widest array of museum researchers with a systematic recipe for mapping communicative processes that influence internal, organisational change as well as generating external impact

between the museum and an array of different stakeholders, or between the museum domain and other domains (i.e. education, politics).

Mediatisation, though, can also be conceptualised in systematic neo-institutional terms. A central precept to the institutional approach is that the media operate in terms of “logics” that function as ways of understanding how events and ideas are interpreted and acted upon in the media production process as well as *processed* by their audience (Altheide & Snow, 1979, p. 28). Media are constituted by their technologies (hardware, software, infrastructure) and aesthetics (genres, modes of narration, presentation or display), as well as the institutional properties reflected in their regulatory procedures and organisational frameworks. These media logics take effect through the ways that media institutions increasingly impose themselves on the logics of other social institutions, such as politics (Strömbäck, 2008), education or religion. “Mediatisation implies that other institutions to an increasing degree become dependent on resources that the media control, so that they will have to submit to some of the rules the media operate by in order to gain access to those resources” (Hjarvard, 2013, p. 23). To that end, it is by paying particular attention to the perspective of mediatisation theory – wherein mediatisation is regarded as the adaption of the logic of media rather than their technical application – that “the tension or interaction between the expanding media and other institutions with their [own] different logics that drive social and cultural change” is most clearly revealed (Lundby, 2014, p. 27). Our approach to museum media and communications responds to this distinctive “synthetic situation” (Knorr-Cetina, 2014) by attempting to better establish what an interdisciplinary approach can bring to identifying, versing, responding to and meeting the challenges – and implications – of museum transformation.

The mediatised museum

“The Media” has acquired the elevated status of an independent, or semi-independent, societal institution. Having effectively saturated the entire cultural environment, media themselves are no longer as dependent as before on other regulatory institutions. Just as virtually all aspects of contemporary life have become dependent on media to define personal as well as social reality, media exert an influence on how we understand the museum as a cultural institution – its claim to authority, the values it extolls and its relationship to other spheres of public life (including the social, political, economic and techno spheres). As was the case with the constructionist approach to mediatisation, the institutional approach equally lends itself to empirical analysis, especially in the form of exploring the extent to which the traditional, indigenous logics of an institution (such as a museum) or an entire societal sector (such as the Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museum sector) adapt in order to respond to the mediatised conditions of institutional success or survival. Implicit here is the challenge for the museum of the 21st century to reappraise the currency of certain of its beholden institutional values today. What might this self-reflection reveal? Will the museum even still recognise itself?

The director of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), Glenn D. Lowry, has described the interface that exists between the goals and mission of the museum and the public it serves as a constantly shifting boundary that requires continual renegotiation. While specifically referring to how the mission that originally inspired the founding of MoMA itself endures to this day and is continually regenerated in the face of ongoing social, cultural and technological transformation, he asserts that the idea of the museum as a “disruptive institution” is embedded in the museum’s original conception (Lowry, 2009, p. 9). While reputedly the American author and art collector Gertrude Stein pronounced that it cannot be possible to be both a museum and modern at the same time, disruptive institutions or enterprises “alter established paradigm[s] by

pioneering new processes or reaching new audiences that are otherwise ignored” (Christensen, Baumann, Ruggles, & Sadtler, 2006). To illustrate his point, Lowry draws particular attention to how successive building projects undertaken by MoMA since 1939 have each in their own distinctive ways responded to “the changing position of the institution, expanding and altering its galleries and public spaces to meet the needs of an increasingly complex understanding of the period, as well as a dramatically enlarged collection and constantly growing public” (Lowry, 2009, p. 21). Noting the ambitious redesigns of the MoMA campus that continue the museum’s project of ongoing adaptation at the turn of the millennium, he singles out the influence that both performance art and social media have had on transforming the nature of the experiential encounter with works of art and how these considerations challenge “the Museum to evolve beyond the physical and into the realm of the psychological and metaphysical” (Lowry, 2009, p. 29–30).

The insights gleaned from MoMA’s experience can be extrapolated to facilitate a broader discussion of museum transformation at large. After all, the museum at heart is primarily a site of discursive practice. In MoMA’s case, the museum’s project has been reflected in an evolving architectural “programme” whose adherence to time-honoured historical references was disrupted progressively by the introduction of exhibition practices that “treat[ed] the galleries not as a venue for display of the past but as a laboratory where new ideas could be explored and where the public was invited to participate” (Lowry, 2009, p. 16). In architectural terms, a building’s brief or “programme” is synonymous with the interpretation of its functional and structural, as well as aesthetic, requirements. By contrast, the transformative promise of the 21st-century museum may well be achieved through what might be construed as its “programme architecture”; that being the programming of its various museological functions across multiple media and communications platforms.

The movement of the cultural industry towards the informational economy – as reflected in the experience, attention and sharing economies – raises not insignificant challenges to the well-established paradigms that have come to be applied in very direct and immediate ways to how hegemonic institutions such as museums control meaning-making processes in Western society (Louv, 2001, p. 134). For their part, media-based art forms challenge the underlying basis of the traditional art world and its established, institutionalised practices, as these are represented by customary methods normally applied to collecting, conserving and exhibiting (Paul, 2008, p. 1). As influential new media historian and curator Christiane Paul points out, digital media exert broader cultural implications for the production, dissemination and reception of art by altering its basis from a predominantly spatial to a digitally-informed orientation. In recent years, these possibilities have developed beyond what might be thought of as the initial stage of “digitalisation” (with its emphasis on the technical and administrative processes involved with the digitising of museum assets and remediating this content through digital formats and ICT channels) towards what is posited today as a “postdigital” phase characterised by a more thorough and mature integration of digital content in museum practices (Parry, 2013). These practices are revealed through exhibition designs that realise the convergence of digital mediation and spatial practice, and various forms of museum communications and publication that facilitate new kinds of exchanges between the museum and its audiences. The deepening interdependency between formally regulated and informal economies is reconfiguring the basis of how cultural authority can still be exercised by museums. Even as the Internet has made activities such as file sharing, unauthorised distribution and copying more visible, it is important to recognise that technical, cultural and commercial disruptions associated with such informal, non-sanctioned practices are not only or merely related to the digital realm (Lobato & Thomas, 2015, p. 4). The museum’s “Collect-and-Share Economy” – with its generalisable reorientation towards

contemporaneity and away from the privileging of substance, solidity and the enduring qualities associated with “permanent” collections towards activity, performance and the event-based characteristics exhibited by temporary exhibitions – illustrates the evolutionary pressures that are being exerted upon it in the mediatised age.

The shifting *disposition* of the cultural role and social function of museums from “custodial” responsibility to facilitating more “convivial” interactions is being revealed in the adaptation of museological modes of operation, their organisational structures and strategies, as well as curatorial and pedagogical practices. Disposition describes “something of what the organisation is doing” as an unfolding relationship between states of actuality and potentiality; as “a tendency, activity, faculty or property in either beings or objects – a propensity within a context” (Easterling, 2014, p. 72). Recognised through agency, activities and actors, not static arrangements or collection of objects, disposition is “immanent, not in the moving parts, but in the relationship between components” (Easterling, 2014, p. 72). Different forms of cultural communication are precipitating the need for rethinking the ways and means, as well as the whys and wherefores, of collecting, conserving, exhibiting and disseminating cultural heritage (tangible and intangible). How might these mediatised interactions catalyse the museum’s potential to serve as a “contemporary utopian laboratory” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004) of and for the future? How can a radical museum that is “more experimental, less architecturally determined, and offering a more politicised engagement with our historical moment” (Bishop, 2013, p. 6) be realised?

A mediatised turn in museum studies

Mediatisation research charts the “changes in practices, cultures and institutions in media-saturated societies, thus denoting transformations of these societies themselves occurring at all scales, including what might otherwise be described as ‘everyday’ interactions” (Lundby, 2014). Stated simply, the core of mediatisation is found in its social and cultural transformations, not in technology itself. Mediatisation is a long-term, longitudinal process that implies transformations of practice and institutions taking place as an interplay between changes in communication and media and the personal, societal, political and cultural contexts in which they operate. Museum mediatisation configures the ongoing encounter between processes and structures, forms and content operating across domains and at different scales. It challenges us to think how this meaning-making process might be seen as the chief challenge that a “mediatised turn” presents for museums today. Arguably, turning focus towards a thoroughly mediatised museum lends itself to a wider socio-cultural analysis of how its attendant museological and communication processes actively exercise and perform agency in conjunction with the cultural and material structures wherein they take place (Hepp & Krotz, 2014, p. 9). Most challengingly of all, it leaves us to contemplate the “future of” (or conversely and more provocatively, to consider the real possibility of the “end of”) the museum as we have come to know and understand it.

This more precise definition of “media,” and this more pervasive concept of “mediatisation,” both have deep consequences not only for museum practice, but also for museum studies scholarship. As much as we might acknowledge and trace the mediatisation of the museum, so we might also experience, concurrently, a mediatisation of the subject of museum studies itself. Just as the museum becomes ever more immersed within a media-rich and media-driven society (with its proliferating platforms, increased connectivity, omnipresent media technology and datafication of culture), so both the focus and the reasoning of museum studies is changed. Not only does the subject see connections and contexts in new ways (recognising the wider and more holistic ecologies of industries and sectors, and of communicative practices, into which

museum media needs to be understood), but museum studies as a subject area has the opportunity (we might dare to say, the obligation) to understand the museum within the logic of media. In short, this is about museum studies predicating itself upon an extended set of (media-based) principles, equipping itself with a more precise (media-informed) nomenclature and allowing itself to realign and discover a new set of (media-driven) lines of investigation.

As a relatively young academic subject used to defending its place in the academy, ecumenical in its disciplinary outlook and highly responsive and sensitive to sectoral change, museum studies is, by design, adept to adapting; it is “a discipline which inherently invites, if not requires, practices and ideas gleaned from a wide variety of fields” (Walklate & Richards, 2012, p. 461). Whether in its movement from “minority subject into the mainstream” (S. Macdonald, 2006, p. 1), or its constant movement between informed practice, praxis and practice-led scholarship, or in its (constructively) willful denial on any single discipline as its centre, or in its “repeated attempts to reinvent and redefine” (Kneall, MacLeod, & Watson, 2007, p. xix), and its openness to reconfiguration and re-assembly (be it by the documentational turn of the 1970s, the educational turn of the 1980s and 1990s, the social turn at the start of the new century), museum studies has been – and will continue to be – intellectually and methodologically agile.

And yet, the concepts of “media” and “media technology” have been somewhat compartmentalised, with particular scholarly communities taking ownership over certain themes. The field of museum education, for instance, made an early claim for the subject of “media,” and owing to the early reasoning of the first proponents of the area, an enduring bond was quickly set up between the study of media and communication (Hooper-Greenhill, 1998). And it is an alignment that has been sustained for over a generation of museological writing. A similar ownership has tended to surround media technologies. In this regard, it has been the areas of what was once called “museum computing” and today is more familiarly termed “digital heritage” that have monopolised discourse in this area. Energised by rapid progresses in technology, empowered by the significance these new platforms and channels would appear to have on the museum and society at large and with an acute sense of obligation to establish new standards, protocols and policy to facilitate and justify their use, digital heritage scholars have been the responsible guardians of understanding museum communication technology (Parry, 2010). However, the opportunity for museum studies now – following its mediated turn – is to liberate these topics from their intellectual habitus, to recognise a wider relevance to a more extended community of interest, and to allow them to become more openly referenced, understood and activated in the subject at large. Just as media is not about solely the properties of communication technologies, and just as digital research does need to dominate research on communication technology, so, mediated communication (digital and non-digital, technology-orientated as well as process and practice-orientated) can now catalyse discussion and research across the varied topography of museum studies. The opportunity is for new writing on mediated communication in the museum to ignite new conversations in areas such as visitor studies and socially engaged practice (Wong, 2012), as well as inform and sustain the recent rise and intellectualisation of museum design literature (Macdonald & Basu, 2007; Parry, Page, & Moseley, 2018).

The structure of the volume

The internal structure of this volume has been organised to rehearse some of these new locations for writing on museum media, and in some cases to initiate and give voice to some of these new subject alignments. To highlight these features of criticality, and to remind the reader of the agenda and claim sustained through the volume, each of the five parts is prefaced with a prolegomenon, differentiating between: deeper historical foundations in Part I; wider systemic

contexts in Part II; varied modes of practice in Part III; visual rhetoric of key themes in Part IV; and future trajectories and directions of scholarship in Part V.

The authors in Part I (Foundations) share an assumption that mediated communication has always been fundamental to the museum. Common across their work is also an objective that this constitutive role of media in the museum can best be demonstrated through a historical approach. Back through the modern digital revolution, past the advent of broadcast media, back into the 19th century and the origins of display technology, theirs is an exercise in the “long view” on museums and media. And, crucially, rather than a clean timeline of media development, this is rather a time-based approach that exposes the entanglement of interpersonal and mediated modes of communication that have characterised the formative role played by media in museums through history. The volume’s narrative then pivots in Part II (Environments) to demonstrate that media cannot only be studied as material technologies across time, but also as symbolic meaning-making processes across space. Slicing its subject in this alternate direction, the chapters in this part work together to show the significance of understanding media within the wider contexts of companies and political regulators (the administrative terrain), but also within the context of criticality, creativity, democracy and learning (the socio-cultural terrain). Part III (Practices) re-orientates the discussion yet again, but this time to hone in on the part played by media in the practices of museums, particularly in terms of their relations to audiences, to their modes of organisation and to their strategies of development. Grounded in the everyday work of the museum, the chapters aim to show new and emerging modes of working (particularly with respect to co-design and co-curation), as well as some ways of adopting more systematic studies of mediated modes of communication. Part IV (Incident(al) readings) offers an evocative, visual expression of the relationships formed between the museum as cultural construct, media that give it shape, and communication which inflects meaning and value. With these new critical lenses verified, these new critical practices initiated and (throughout) these new assumptions on the mediatised museum enacted, the final part of the volume (Part V: Directions) then provides a clearing for a group of authors to share their own personal, intellectual and professional trajectories with media and museums. This final set of chapters revisits, in turn, the different facets of the mediatised society (connected and data-full, technology-rich and informational), and, as they do, they perform for us versions of future mediatised museum studies scholarship.

Taken as a whole, these five sets of original chapters work self-consciously as an ensemble to share a more nuanced and precise understanding of media, media concepts and media terminology. They recognise the museum as an organisation and a space in which media has a constitutive role. They acknowledge museums within a mediatised society. And they accept mediatisation not just as a context for the museum, but as a framework for how everyday life is conducted. Consequently, the subject and contents of this volume go beyond simply delineating another sub-subject or micro-discipline. The intention here is not to ring-fence yet another topic for review, or to petition for another agenda item for museological debate. There is a grander claim here – about how to do museums studies, and how to be a museum.

References

- Altheide, D. L., & Snow, R. P. (1979). Media logic, social control, and fear. *Communication Theory*, 23(3), 223–238.
- Bishop, C. (2013). *Radical museology, or, What’s “contemporary” in museums of contemporary art?* London: Koenig Books.

- Carey, J. (1989/1992). A cultural approach to communication. In *Communication as culture: Essays on media and society* (pp. 13–36). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ch'ng, E., Gaffney, V., & Chapman, H. (Eds.). (2013). *Visual heritage in the digital age*. [Springer Series on Cultural Computing]. London: Springer-Verlag.
- Christensen, C. M., Baumann, H., Ruggles, R., & Sadtler, T. M. (2006). Disruptive innovation for social change. *Harvard Business Review*, 84(12), 94–101.
- Couldry, N., & Hepp, A. (2017). *The mediated construction of reality*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Drotner, K., & Schröder, K. S. (Eds.). (2013). *Museum communication and social media: The connected museum*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Easterling, K. (2014). *Extrastatecraft: The power of infrastructure space*. London, New York, NY: Verso.
- Hasebrink, U., & Hepp, A. (2017, April 7). How to research cross-media practices? Investigating media repertoires and media ensembles. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 13(4), 362–377.
- Hepp, A. (2013). *Cultures of mediatization*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Hepp, A., Hjarvard, S., & Lundby, K. (2015). Mediatization: Theorizing the interplay between media, culture and society. *Media, Culture & Society*, 37(2), 314–324.
- Hepp, A., & Krotz, F. (2014). Mediatized worlds: Understanding everyday mediatization. In A. Hepp & F. Krotz (Eds.), *Mediatized worlds: Culture and society in a media age* (pp. 1–14). Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Hjarvard, S. (2013). *The mediatization of culture and society*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hooper-Greenhill, E. (Ed.). (1998). *Museum, media, message*. London, New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hooper-Greenhill, E. (1999). Communication in theory and practice. In E. Hooper-Greenhill (Ed.), *The educational role of the museum*. London: Routledge.
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B. (2004). The museum: A refuge for utopian thought. In J. Rüsen, M. Fehr, & A. Ramsbrock (Eds.), *Die Unruhe der Kultur: Potentiale des Utopischen*. Weilerswist-Metternich: Verlag Velbrück Wissenschaft [English transl. accessed from <http://www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/web/museutopia.pdf>].
- Knell, S. J., MacLeod, S., & Watson, S. (Eds.). (2007). *Museum revolutions: How museums change and are changed*. London, New York, NY: Routledge.
- Knorr-Cetina, K. (2014). Scopic media and global coordination: The mediatization of face-to-face encounters. In K. Lundby (Ed.), *Mediatization of communication* (pp. 39–62). Berlin, Boston, MA: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Krajina, Z., Moores, S., & Morley, D. (2014). Non-media-centric media studies: A cross-generational conversation. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 17(6), 682–700.
- Lobato, R., & Thomas, J. (2015). *The informal media economy*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Louw, P. (2001). *The media and cultural production*. London: Sage.
- Lowry, G. D. (2009). *The museum of modern art in this century*. New York, NY: The Museum of Modern Art.
- Lundby, K. (2014). Mediatization of communication. In K. Lundby (Ed.), *Mediatization of communication* (pp. 3–35). Berlin, Germany; Boston, MA: De Gruyter/Mouton.
- MacDonald, L. (Ed.) (2006). *Digital heritage: Applying digital imaging to cultural heritage*. Oxford, Burlington, MA: Routledge.
- Macdonald, S. (2006). Expanding museum studies: An introduction. In S. Macdonald (Ed.), *Companion to museum studies*. Malden, MA; Oxford, Carlton: Blackwell.
- Macdonald, S., & Basu, P. (Eds.). (2007). *Exhibition experiments*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Morley, D. (2009). For a materialist, non-media-centric media studies. *Television & New Media*, 10(1), 114–116.
- Parry, R. (Ed.). (2010). *Museums in a digital age*. London, New York, NY: Routledge.
- Parry, R. (2013). The end of the beginning: Normativity in the postdigital museum. *Museum Worlds*, 1, 24–39.
- Parry, R., Page, R. & Moseley, A. (Eds.). (2018). *Museum thresholds: The design and media of arrival*. London, New York, NY: Routledge.
- Paul, C. (2008). Introduction. In C. Paul (Ed.), *New media in the white cube and beyond: Curatorial models for digital art* (pp. 1–9). Oakland, CA: University of California Press.
- Russo, A. (2012). The rise of the “media museum.” In E. Giaccardi (Ed.), *Heritage and social media: Understanding heritage as a participatory culture*. London, New York, NY: Routledge.
- Strömbäck, J. (2008). Four phases of mediatization: An analysis of the mediatization of politics. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 13(3), 228–246.

- Tallon, L., & Walker, K. (Eds.). (2008). *Digital technologies and the museum experience: Handheld guides and other media*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Thompson, J. B. (1995). *The media and modernity*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Walklate, J., & Richards, A. (2012). The symbiotic academy: On specialism and interdisciplinarity. *Science Progress*, 95(4), 447–465.
- Wong, A. (2012). Social media towards social change: Potential challenges for museums. In R. Sandell & E. Nightingale (Eds.), *Museums, equality and social justice* (pp. 282–283). London, New York, NY: Routledge.