

THE SMALL MUSEUM  
SUGGESTIONS ON ITS DEVELOPMENT

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## ABSTRACT

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### THE SMALL MUSEUM - SUGGESTIONS ON ITS DEVELOPMENT

This thesis deals with issues confronting the small museum. Chapter one introduces two museums: The Vaudreuil-Soulanges Historical Society Museum, at Vaudreuil, Quebec, and the Museum of the Historical Society of Argenteuil County, Quebec, these being used for points of reference in the body of the text.

Discussion is presented on the role of a small museum's educational services, functions of its art educator, and the museum's development and community involvement.

Chapter two presents suggestions for the educational uses of the collection, the relationship of the art educator to the museum, the community and the schools. Also introduced are suggestions directed toward the fuller development of the potential of the museum's educational services in the community.

## PREFACE

All references to small museums in the text should be taken to mean a private institution or building for preserving and exhibiting historical and cultural objects, size of the collection may be scaled in appropriate proportion to a similar large scale operation.

The purpose of this thesis is not to stipulate a plan for operation of small museums, but rather to present suggestions for successful ongoing developments in education, and to present possible means of establishing a relationship between the museum and the community.

Some of the thoughts then, on the development of small museums, are being confined to discussion on educational services offered by the museum, development of the potential of the museum's collection and integration with the community by means of a liaison with the museum's art educator.

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## CHAPTER I

### A DESCRIPTION OF TWO SMALL MUSEUMS IN THE VICINITY OF MONTREAL

My project deals with small museums and their significance as social institutions. Developing means to make full use of the museums is not a new idea. As a matter of fact, we can witness today innumerable efforts and programmes developed toward meeting this objective: "The basic objective of the Museum is to collect, preserve, study and exhibit significant objects of the community, and provide related educational services in order to increase public knowledge and stimulate creative activity."<sup>1</sup>

My purposes in developing this project are part of this encompassing objective, while working toward that goal with means that are at the level of suggestions and not of solutions. My purposes are: a) to present suggestions for ongoing successful developments in educational services and b) to present possible means of establishing a relationship between the museum and the community.

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<sup>1</sup>Raymond O. Harrison, The Technical Requirements of Small Museums. Technical Paper No. 1. (Canadian Museums Association, n.d.,) p. 8.

In order to carry through my purposes, I have chosen to describe two small museums in the vicinity of Montreal. These two museums have been selected because of their geographical location and their easy accessibility. The quality of their collections is a second factor. These are not specialized museums but they exhibit a specified collection reflecting the life of the community. And finally, as a third factor, from coming to know these two museums not only from published information, but through direct contacts I have developed a personal interest in them.

The Vaudreuil Museum, located on the main road in the town of Vaudreuil, has been in its present site since 1958. The building, recognized as an Historical Site by the Commission of Historic Monuments of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of the Province of Quebec, was built around 1850 and was the first public boys' school in Vaudreuil. It was slated for demolition in 1954, but was bought by the Founder of the Vaudreuil-Soulanges Historical Society, the late Colonel Roger Maillet. At that time the collection was transferred from the Parish Hall of Ste. Jeanne de Chantal on Ile Perrot, to the present Vaudreuil site.

The building contains three rooms on the ground floor, three on the second and one large room on the third floor. A wooden annex has been added to the original stone school building which contains the smaller rooms for the

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collection, but the large central rooms on the ground, second and third floors, represent the original dimensions of the school. The first floor contains musical instruments, paintings, furniture, early settlers' effects and clothing, and documents relating to Canada's history. Concerts (Concert Intime "a la chandelle") are held in this room, which also contains a grand piano. Adjacent to this room is a display of furniture, china, silver, maps, some clocks and Greek coins amongst other objects. The stairway leads to a second floor display of religious articles, furniture, clothing, a bed and some handicrafts. The large room has some typewriters, a collection of wrought and cast iron instruments and tools, plus some large pieces of farming equipment. The large top floor houses more agricultural articles, spinning wheels, looms, paintings, handicrafts and religious articles.

The Vaudreuil-Soulange Historical Society was founded in 1953 and incorporated under the Company Act Part III in 1955, and was created to search, preserve and publicize the local history of the Vaudreuil-Soulange area. The museum has been open to the public since 1965. It houses a collection forming a cultural centre, where the history of Canada and the making of its art are unfolded side by side. It is an excellent example of a building accessible because of its central location, to the community and the schools.

Plans for the development of the Vaudreuil Museum have been initiated by Mr. Jacques Dumouchel in the form of an ongoing three-year programme. Mr. Dumouchel, with the help of fifteen workers-in-training, photographed, and made an annotated inventory of the entire collection, some 4,151 pieces. At the same time plans were presented for expansion of the museum in the form of educational services and a library for the future.

The Museum of the Historical Society of Argenteuil County is situated approximately 50 miles from Montreal at Carillon, Quebec. The collection is housed in Barracks built at the foot of the Long Sault Rapids in 1836, for the Royal Staff Corps of Engineers. The building was donated to the Historical Society for use as a museum in 1937. It was restored and fitted up for this purpose with the assistance of the Federal Government. With the building of the Carillon Dam in 1962, the rapids disappeared and some buildings remaining in the area of the museum have been designated historic landmarks. Although this museum is not as centrally located as the Vaudreuil Museum and is less easily accessible, from May to November in 1974, over 1000 children visited the museum by bus.

The Barracks is a four story stone building and has eleven rooms containing its collection. On the first floor in rooms one, two and three can be found articles connected



to Seigniorial days and to the Indians of that time. Railway exhibits, a printing press, furniture and dishes, kitchen utensils, paintings, some Currier and Ives prints, and early settlers' pianos are also found there.

The second floor has collections in the various rooms representing a bedroom, a memorial room to Sir John J.C. Abbott furnished in mid-victorian style, a library, ancient weapons and uniforms and ladies' clothing and toilet accessories. One room on this floor is devoted to the natural history of the area, while the final room deals with transportation facilities in the Ottawa Valley. In the old guardroom of the Barracks, in the basement can be found household articles and old implements concerned with farming, dairying, lumbering and hunting. It also contains a fire pump used by the volunteer Fire Brigade of St. Andrews.

The Museum's collection is currently being catalogued (from accession records) by a retired minister and member of the Historical Society, the Reverend Dr. Harold W. Reid. A willingness to accept ideas for introducing innovations similar to those which have been brought into use at Vaudreuil was expressed by both Dr. Reid and Miss Bertha Wales (past Treasurer of the Argenteuil Society), but both indicated wariness of the financial burden such ideas might impose.

These museums are not meant, by any means, to be a generalization of all small museums in the country. I do believe, however, that they are significant examples of what

a small museum is. They have been in operation for some years and, as such, they can be looked at as potential models for new small museums to come in the future. It is interesting to point out here that there is a significant growth in the number of Canadian museums. Statistics (Appendix 1) for the years 1964 to 1973, reflecting the growth of Canadian museums show that during Centennial Year, 1967, 336 museums came into being. The five years following 1967 show an additional growth of 89.<sup>2</sup> These figures are significant in that they show an increase, rather than a decrease, of public interest in the museum. Attendance figures (Appendix 1) show an increase of 409,000,000 visitors over an eight year period.

Small museums may present collections varying in size and content, so much that there is no common denominator to be found beyond the old utilitarian object. These old objects, commonly called antiques, have had a utilitarian function in the past and they are regarded today for their suggestive symbolism. Awakening memories of the past in the spectator can release meaningful values and have a cultural impact upon people if made significant through educational means.

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<sup>2</sup> Archie F. Key, Beyond Four Walls: The Origins and Development of Canadian Museums (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1973), passim, chapt. xix.

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The original effective meaning of an object suffers when exhibited in a museum. The museum, and it is true of the small museum as well, restores, preserves and displays objects for which people have once had respect, involvement and attachment. When, however, these objects are no longer shown in their original context, they will more often attract detached examination than genuine interest. Collections of small museums may often confront the visitor with an unrelated assortment of objects. What is that Greek coin doing among Québec agricultural tools in the Vaudreuil Museum? The Greek coin has been given to the museum and it is a real one; it may puzzle the casual spectator or make the scholarly one smile, but no one would dare throw it away. It is material relevant to human concern but what can the museum do with it? "The problems of exhibition in a museum are many, and the effectiveness of a work is often gravely impaired by the presence of other pieces all around it."<sup>3</sup> True, but other pieces can be used to reveal the effectiveness of a specific object. Small museums are usually not confronted with a multitude of objects but with objects unrelated in space and time.

The problems of exhibition in small museums cannot be solved by display alone. Small museums have objects

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<sup>3</sup>Susanne K. Langer, Feeling and Form (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 403.

which are works of art but habitually are not regarded as such. I see a challenge to the educational value of a museum in its attempts to convey a direct message to the untrained vision and mind of its visitors, by deepening existing knowledge. "(It is that) whole ranges of fact, previously unnoticed or dismissed as irrelevant, can suddenly be seen to pertain to the work of art. These transformations can occur in a variety of ways: as a result of changes in criticism .... or as a result of changes in the general intellectual environment." <sup>4</sup>

With and through their limited collections, small museums have to bring order and knowledge out of an apparent confusion, making the objects reveal art while remaining sensible and realistic in their approach. "When a community museum with a limited collection attempts to present a world view of art, however, the grandeur begins to fade and the disadvantages become apparent." <sup>5</sup> Small museums have an important educational role and, because they are challenged by the limitations of their collections, they have to develop a creative approach to education based on economy and reality.

If we view the museum not as a school but as a social

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<sup>4</sup>Richard Wollheim, Art and its objects: An Introduction to Aesthetics (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 76.

<sup>5</sup>T.B. Adam, The Museum and Popular Culture (New York: George Grady Press, 1939), p. 76.

institution endowed with an educational role, what does it teach and how does it do it? When this educational role is assumed by the large public or private museum, there is abundant and interesting literature available on the subject. But this is not the case for small museums. Here explanations or excuses for lack of educational services and difficulties in relating the cultural objects of the museum to the community are consistently presented in terms of financial limitations. Financial obligations are inherent to most human activity, but they can be seen as consequences of organismic problems, rather than sources of the problems. To obtain the financial support that small museums are looking for, they will have to become necessary, and this is possible through education. "The social recognition of the value of museum work that should follow a rise in the prestige of museum education will probably react not only on the use that the general public makes of its museum collections but also in the support that it accords through public and private funds."<sup>6</sup>

Small museums such as the two I have used as examples, are under the benevolent administration of people who have faith in what they are doing. There is no question of our indebtedness to these people, through their application

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<sup>6</sup>T.R. Adam, The Museum and Popular Culture (New York: George Grady Press, 1939), p. 166.

and conviction, for the very existence of these museums. I am concerned with helping them maintain a viable existence of these institutions. I see in the resources of ongoing educational services, in art education, and in the art educator, practical suggestions for successful development of this objective. References to these suggestions will be presented in the following chapter.

As the museum is not a formal educational institution, I consequently see the teaching-learning situation taking place in the museum as being of a different nature to that which is taking place in the school. A school can face the teaching-learning situation through variable methods and actions, the museum depends primarily and essentially upon the object. What may be seen as a limitation is, in fact, a powerful advantage which has not, as yet, been fully realized. People come to a museum to enjoy the objects and to learn through them and to try to grasp their significance.

"Nothing has replaced and nothing will replace the impact of the real object, the experience of seeing, or better still of handling the actual piece made by a great artist or used by someone many years ago."<sup>7</sup>

The object is, whether in art or in the sciences,

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<sup>7</sup>D.V. Proctor, Museums-teachers, students, children in Museums, Imagination and Education, Museums and Monuments XV (Paris: UNESCO, 1973), p. 29.

the material vehicle for ideas. Inventory and identification of objects are first steps toward recognition of an idea. Both large and small museums have long acknowledged the importance of these first steps through searching for and studying the identity of the object. "The core of the museum is its collections. An effective museum can be maintained only on the basis of an active programme of proper documentation, restoration, study and arrangement of the collections."<sup>8</sup> When Mr. Dumouchel was making an annotated inventory of the collection of the Vaudreuil Museum, he was concerned with the expansion of the museum in the form of educational services and a library for the future. A small museum in a position to act as an educational source must have well-developed, up-to-date and accurate information on its collections. There are in existence various agencies which can be instrumental in bringing more professionalism to management of such institutions. "The advice of your Provincial Museum, the CMA, and the Museum Association of your province if one has been formed, should be obtained; information on any technical aid or grants available should be sought; ..."<sup>9</sup> The Vaudreuil Museum has been in operation

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<sup>8</sup>Raymond Q. Harrison, The Technical Requirements of Small Museums, Technical Paper No. 1 (Canadian Museums Association, n.d.), p. 6.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

at its present site since 1965 and it is only since 1973 that Mr. Dumouchel has completed the inventory. Many small museums, and there must be many among the 336 born between 1964 and 1974, have not as yet made this first step.

The educational role of the museum is rooted in its utilitarian function of identifying, preserving and exhibiting cultural objects. When people are brought into contact with the object and can associate with it, reach knowledge with it, and (figuratively) enter into the object, the museum assumes its educational role. The object educates provided that the museum makes it do so. In a museum the object, for the spectator, may transcend conventional barriers and link man to man in a relationship defying time and space. The factors implicit in this relationship concern mankind's social communion, and is a reason to regard the educational role of the museum as being one of communication with people. "The museum is a medium of communication .... It is primarily ... concerned with the visual communication of objects of cultural and scientific interest .... Unless the museum is able to fulfill this task it is failing in its purpose."<sup>10</sup> Public attendance at the museum satisfies two needs: the need the museum feels to activate its educational services

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<sup>10</sup>Michael Brawne, The New Museum: Architecture and Display (New York: Praeger, 1965), in The Museum and the Canadian Public, Brian Dixon, A.E. Courtney, R.H. Bailey (Culturcan Publications, 1974), p. 1.



through its collection, and the unconscious need the public has to use the facilities the museum has to offer. The measure of satisfaction to each is enhanced by the active participation of both. "The effort to educate the untrained public may be the means by which the scholar may himself receive enlightenment."<sup>11</sup> "Art is a community matter transcending the limitations of specialization. It is the most intimate language of the senses, indispensable for the individual in society. Its function is to be a seismograph of the relationships of the individual to the world, intuitive re-creation of the balance between the emotional, intellectual, and social existences of the individual."<sup>12</sup> In the following chapter, I will also be concerned with means of establishing a relationship between the museum and the community through education.

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<sup>11</sup>T.R. Adam, The Museum and Popular Culture (New York: George Grady Press, 1939), p. 68.

<sup>12</sup>Moholy-Nagy: Documentary Monographs in Modern Art, ed. R. Kostelantz (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), introduction, p. 21.

CHAPTER II  
EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND SERVICES  
IN SMALL MUSEUMS

Implicit in the creation of a museum is its educational role, "The creation of the public museum was an expression of the eighteenth-century spirit of enlightenment which generated enthusiasm for the equality of opportunity in learning,"<sup>13</sup> and this educational role is inherent to the functions of a museum. How efficient can the museum be in educating people? Museums of international and national importance have a specialized staff, a budget and working facilities to develop their educational services.

The wave of increased interest from children and students has given further stimulation. Now it is not at all unusual to find that, in place of one officer, several education staff have been appointed, that in place of a dingy remote corner of the museum which no one else wanted, they have been given well-fitted teaching rooms, club rooms and studios in which to work. Although some curators still fear the spread of museum educational services, many have recognized their value in making soundly

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<sup>13</sup>Mark Luca, The Museum as Educator, in Museums, Imagination and Education, Museums and Monuments XV (Paris: UNESCO, 1973), p. 145.

organized provision for visitors, thus easing the load of work on the purely curatorial staff, giving them more chance to carry out their research and writing. Good standards in educational work are achieved only through hard work and the appointment of well-qualified staff, so that the education department of a museum can stand on a par with the curatorial departments in efficiency and in general academic ability.<sup>14</sup>

Training programmes designed to increase the efficiency of the museum educationalist when meeting the specific needs and purposes of the museum, are also under investigation.

In view of many new developments in museum education, it is natural that increasing attention is being given to the training required for the educationalist in the museum, and to the teacher who integrates the museum visit with the school curriculum. General courses in museology now offered by universities in many parts of the world are primarily concerned with matters of conservation, presentation and research. A Working Party on Training set up by the ICOM Committee for Education and Cultural Action has drawn up recommendations concerning the general qualifications and status of the museum educationalist, and proposes that these recommendations be put into effect in the current courses on museology and that the training of the educationalist be given full consideration in their programmes of study.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>D.V. Proctor, Museums-teachers, students, children, in Museums, Imagination and Education, Museums and Monuments XV (Paris: UNESCO, 1973), p. 24.

<sup>15</sup>Renée Marcoué, Changing Museums in a Changing World, in Museums, Imagination and Education, Museums and Monuments XV, (Paris: UNESCO, 1973), p. 21.

The requirements and standards these remarks suggest may be met by museums of international or national importance. Small museums, however, have limitations and although acknowledging this, I would be inclined to think that size of collection is not an indicator for the educational services to be offered by the museum, as much as is understanding of the nature of the collection and the type of community to which the museum will relate.

The small museum, as I have stated, owes its existence to the people of the community, members of societies and organizations who have devoted time and care toward the survival and perpetuation of their museums. This fundamental support, however tenuous it may appear, cannot be destroyed or ignored. A logical and practical step toward the development and continued existence of small museums would be, it seems to me, through activating their latent educational role. To initiate educational services in these museums, the assistance of a highly specialized art educationalist is not as pressing as the matter of finding a competent art educator. Through hiring an art educator, the small community museum could make a significant and intelligent step toward establishing its educational role. The art educator is capable of introducing a new and comprehensive knowledge and use of the museum to its administrators.

When one recognizes the educational role of the museum to be inherent to its functions, the art educator

involved with the small museum can be regarded as a vital force in the maintenance of the life of the museum. His concerns are, first, for the museum itself through its collections, second, for the visitors and third, for the community. I will try to describe these relationships which the art educator will have to establish for a viable functioning of the museum, and also, attempt to present some basic suggestions.

The first task in dealing with the collection of a small community museum is to show the collection so that it can be seen as cultural objects, a fact which is not always evident at first glance. As I have mentioned before, the nature of the collection of a small museum is completely different from that of any large or specialized museum. One is confronted with a plethora of objects, and when inspected individually, one wonders sometimes why this or that object is in a museum. The fact that these objects are old and dated implies a "historical" significance; seen from the angle of education the collection is a cultural one with educational potential. The art educator can develop this potential through different techniques particular to and effective in the field of art education, one of which is the technique of seeing.

An object that has no name does not exist. The importance of naming in the learning process of the young child is a known fact, and this is true for anyone

encountering a new and unknown object. When the object is named, the museum visitor may be able to see the object in the context of its original function and associations with the object will accordingly become more concrete. "Information-in-context is particularly important when knowledge is to be diffused among increasing numbers of people lacking background information and requiring aids to form mental associations."<sup>16</sup>

The art educator may not be the specialist who will name or search for the historical identity of the objects. This work requires the services of a competent specialist such as an art historian. In the Vaudreuil Museum such a task was undertaken by Mr. Jacques Dumouchel, and as a result of this work the museum now has the basic material for its catalogue. This material, however beneficial it may be to the trained specialist, is far from adequate for the untrained visitor to the museum. The role of the art educator here is to present material prepared by the specialist in a form which is more appropriate as a learning tool for the visitor. It is not as essential that the art educator be the specialist as that he be aware of what the specialist is doing, and while working with the specialist be able to develop and carry on the work.

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<sup>16</sup>Alma S. Wittlin, Museums: In Search of a Usable Future (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1970), p. 206.

Association by naming may appear to be insufficient basis for an in depth appreciation of the object, but there can be more than one way of making this kind of presentation. An association with many objects to one name might be used as an example. A table is a piece of furniture, but there are also arithmetic tables, tables of contents, table arrangements, tableware, table of the law, etc. The art educator can make in one display, disparate objects coherent, in terms of learning and understanding the symbolic value of a word. Cultural objects having a utilitarian function are conceived of necessity, the first characteristic of man's creative urge. A story is inherent within the utilitarian object which can form an association of many dissimilar objects into one reality. Through investigating the function of the object, the art educator can explore further into form, shape and colors in a presentation of the values and visual language of the utilitarian and cultural object. Shapes and textures, round, square, thin, fat, open and closed objects, all are invested with qualities for investigation and exploration. With a simple display of bottles, the art educator can introduce to the untrained observer an awareness of the significance of style as an expression of necessity.

Seen by an art educator, the collection of a small community museum crude or simple though it may be, presents a rich source of learning material. The art educator must assume his educational role at the very basic level of

learning in his attempts to enrich the visitor's perception. It is by no means an act of condescension to come down to the people, but rather an incisive and conscious effort to expand the perceptual level of the viewer, and to motivate the desire to question and analyze, in short, to see more.

Finally, any cultural object may conjure up an image of self and of a world. In a rural community, agricultural objects relate to the agricultural self and to the land. In small towns, the image is of the community and the encompassing or alien world. The objects in the museum reflecting the activity or past of the community become viable when presented in a context of the evolution of an image of itself held by the community, and when juxtaposed with the reality of the actual object. A responsive reaction is generated when the viewer is presented with the familiar. Displays including photographs of an actual reality demonstrating the evolution of an object, can help the visitor grasp the symbolic significance of an object, an image or a cultural concept. "It is our sole desire to feed information into people, or do we understand education to be a process of wider scope: a tuning of people to their best ability to think judiciously and to feel humanely? To realize new relationships between phenomena on earth, and between their own behaviors and what happens around them? ..."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 206.



If the small community museums assume their educational role at the level of their capacity, full use of their educational material can be instrumental in developing a more active and important role for the museum. The objects in the museum are available and their educational potential is wasted as long as they are not used. A partial decentralization of the collection is possible when objects are taken to different locales for exhibition purposes. For instance, a shop dealing in handicrafts and books in Hudson, Quebec, has objects on display in its windows which are on loan for a limited time from the Museum in Vaudreuil. Similar opportunities for the degree of expansion in exposure of the collection becomes apparent on contemplating having the museum's objects in the local school, under the same arrangement.

Displays can be extremely expensive, but I believe that financial resources or limitations should not condition the existence of education. Such factors may have a bearing upon the sophistication of the display, but that is of secondary importance. To implement the educational role of the museum, the investment is found in the objects themselves and in displaying them in such a way as to release their latent possibilities and full educational value. The nature of the collection is the essence of the display, which presentation, in turn, should suitably reflect the characteristics of the objects displayed. A display, carefully

conceived, can communicate whatever message the museum wishes to convey. An issue introduced at the level of immediacy through the museum's objects can stimulate a thinking process of some impact.

.... Who expressed dissent in the past? And dissent from what? And why? And by what means? Relics and graphic interpretations of faded passions exist, and so do records of historical events that began with small actions of individual dissent from a majority. Is there any palpable thread of dissent running through human history, irrespective of any particular nation or country? How is religion or economics; political history, education, or any other aspect of civilization related to an individual's confrontation with the ruling mores of his day? Exhibits of this kind would help us to perceive better the continuities of human existence beyond the brief span of individual lives as well as changes in rationality and in humaneness, be they progressive or retrogressive.<sup>18</sup>

There is a natural relationship between the museum and the school in that both are educational institutions. When answering the question of who the visitor is to the small museum, the answer might be, the school children of the community. They are, however, brought to the museum; they do not come spontaneously. It has been mentioned that from May to November of 1974, over 1000 school children visited the Argenteuil Museum, and it is of importance to consider that a programme of adequate preparation be made to provide a stimulating and provocative experience for

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 208.

145 children or more, who come each month to view the collection. Traditionally it is the role of the art educator or officer to provide this programme for the child visitor. While the familiar docentry tour of the exhibits can serve some audiences, to the child who has had the exposure via television to an extremely condensed and universal knowledge, this may prove to be tame and dull. An important factor in presenting the collection would be an emphasis upon the usefulness of the museum as a reference tool and upon encouraging the child to want to return to see and use the collection. It is through presentations such as this, that the museum may find its services being used and appreciated more than they had formerly, and it is through introducing an element of vitality to such presentations that the museum will continue to communicate socially.

The quality of the learning process taking place in the museum and in the school compliment one another but a practical way to establish satisfactory, effective and efficient relations between the two institutions has been the subject of some study and research. Louise Condit writing in the article "Children and Art" in the UNESCO publication, Museums, Imagination and Art, has given a comprehensive picture of the work being carried on at at least one hundred childrens' museums in the United States. The relationship with the school in these examples, range from the hiring by the Metropolitan Museum of Art of their first instructor

in 1908, to offer guidance in the galleries to 'teachers and scholars from the public schools,' to the gradual integration into the museum, of rooms designed for the purpose of allowing the children to do practical work while at the Museum. "The emphasis was on doing: art appreciation as such was out of favor." This attempt at a new philosophy allowed the child to nurture his originality and express his own ideas in a variety of materials. With the increasing importance placed upon education in the museums, these programmes branched out into an incredible range of services offered by the museum for the edification of the child visitor. Sections of the museum dedicated solely to a childrens' exhibition area were developed into youth museums featuring auditorium programmes, concerts, illustrated lectures, demonstration by artists, puppet theatres where the production is executed by the children themselves, gallery games and summer, non-credit courses for children. These are several of many innovations incorporated into the effort to bring the child to the museum. Another development was the creation of extension services which decentralized the museum's activities for children, through mobile units visiting districts, schools and playgrounds, or, on occasion, through the rental of a large vacant space in a building in which to set up shop. This decentralization is designed to bring the facilities of the museum to areas of the community, where there is now very little cultural

activity.

The small museum, such as I have been speaking of, may very well represent the cultural centre of the community. If not the centre, at least an area where cultural activity may be found. The Vaudreuil Museum, for example, features the occasional music recital. Nevertheless, the programmes and ideas mentioned here are part of the repertoire available to the art educator who, in his educational role, may generate from them a new and lively interest in the museum, or incorporate them into a learning situation with the student from the school.

The large museums have recognized the teacher's responsibility for preparation of the students for museum use, by presenting enlightenment in some of the following forms:

... junior museums ... almost all offer some programmes for teachers as well. In-service courses have the longest history. .... they survey the collections in whole or in part through gallery talks and slide lectures, and seek to relate museum objects to the school curriculum ...

In addition to courses, conferences and individual consultations with teachers, almost every museum produces materials for school use ... . Many museums produce teachers' guides or student preparation materials on their special exhibitions and on their permanent collections .... Some museums rent slides, films and circulating exhibitions, and most sell publications and reproductions. A relatively new development is the packaging of educational materials in multi-media kits. Some

combination of books, pamphlets, slides, film-strips and objects (reproductions or originals) on a single subject are packaged together . . . . (A) school exhibition service, a programme which will 'publish' six panel exhibitions annually for subscribing schools. . . . Accompanying each exhibition are slides, a recorded lecture, curriculum integration manuals, posters, colour reproductions, and teaching guides.<sup>19</sup>

The underlying message in all of these preparations will eventually take the form of a communication based on the objects in the museum. If the small museum wishes its art educator to develop any programmes such as those suggested above, they will nearly all require funds to become operative. For the small museum the hiring of an art educator may represent a heavy financial burden; in the school however, the art educator has already been hired. It may be feasible to suggest that the school's art educator be lent to the museum in exchange for services the museum may be able to offer. In this way a meaningful relationship between these two institutions can be established by the art educator.

A dominant factor relating to the role of the small museum and to the art educator is the contact with the community, through groups or with the individual. Is there a need for the museum to concern itself with activities extending beyond its primary educational commitments? I

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<sup>19</sup>Louise Condit, Children and Art in Museums, Imagination and Education, Museums and Monuments XV (Paris: UNESCO, 1973), pp. 76-77.

believe there is such a need. Functions extending beyond the display and presentation of its collection, enable the museum to operate successfully socially and to be an effective instrument for communication.

It is conceivable that the museum could establish a contact with the community by motivating the serious development of the work of amateur groups in the community. Of particular interest to the small historical museum, might be the collection of records for the museum, of historical and sociological information from the community. Such an effort, would serve the purposes of both an educational and a participatory role. "... education by direct participation in cultural work, ... should afford a test of the thesis that the ordinary adult learns more readily by means of firsthand activities than through the passive acceptance of 'secondhand information.'"<sup>20</sup> An extension of these remarks relating to man's desire for exploration, are appropriate here, I think. To desire to discover, on one's own initiative, is presumably an educational concept. Whether or not the incentive and motivation behind the 'initiative' described above is recognized by the individual, there still remains a palpable fact. That fact is the feeling of achievement

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<sup>20</sup>R. R. Adam, The Civic Value of Museums (New York: George Grady Press, 1937), p. 85.

rendered viable by the act of discovery.

An example of the type of contact the museum might establish with the community is outlined by the following extracts from T.R. Adam, in The Civic Value of Museums:

Several ingenious experiments have been carried out ... linking popular hobbies with the serious study of civic origins and development... The program suggested by the museum is the creation of a photographic record ... with the aid of camera enthusiasts. ... Slum areas, exteriors and interiors of contemporary stores and churches, river life, and numerous other features of sociological and historical value (also) could be subjects for study. In twenty-five to fifty years' time such a record would be an invaluable historical document.

The author says further that if the museum has already started an iconographic collection on its own initiative, it "would welcome the task of directing groups of amateur photographers in building this collection on a wider basis." The exhibition facilities of the museum can be used to "display the achievements of amateur research and may act as a powerful incentive to ... the public ... to turn their hobby into cultural directions."<sup>21</sup>

Evaluation of a programme such as the foregoing, can be measured in terms of tangible results. There is, small scope, however, for the practice or evaluation of

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 84-85.



critical judgment unless the museum, through its educational programme, undertakes this task. - Selectivity and discrimination are as important factors for the public to be aware of as are the more easily understood qualities of admiration, and possibly, respect. In projects the museum might choose to undertake with the community, the exercise of judgment, based on activating the public's critical assessment will serve to reinforce the educational image the museum will project to its public. "Education as opposed to mere persuasion is an impossibility in art as in any other subject until the people have access to independent and unbiased scholarship."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 52-53.

## CONCLUSION

The art of selection is an educational service rendered by the museum to its public. This, and other abstract qualities of a museum's education programme are not as patently obvious to the visitor of the museum as are concrete objects or named and annotated displays. Inherent to educational programmes, addressed to specific groups, are anonymous and less obvious principles governing communication and transmission of knowledge. The presence of a correspondence between human beings is basic to these objectives.

An attempt to emphasize this last fact has been made through the suggestions presented in this paper, showing where the museum, the museum's art educator and the community may become unified in goals directed toward mutual benefits.

The visitor's responses when viewing the collection will be stimulated by displays designed and selected by the museum to carry their particular messages of cultural, sociological and aesthetic qualities. This experience in

viewing, when linked with the visitor's general cultural environment, can add to his knowledge and stimulate further thought, through the object. By this approach, visual communication is reinforced in an additional communication based upon the mental processes of analysis and evaluation. An introduction can be made to the visitor of the exploration and discovery of form, shapes, colours, the significance of style, and an image of self and of a world, all of which are related to the symbolism and significance of the functional and cultural objects of the museum.

The influence of the small museum as an educational institution in the community, need not be governed by financial limitations which the museum may be experiencing. A creative approach to educational services relative to the understanding of the nature of the museum's collection and the type of community it serves, will assist in surmounting some of these barriers. In this respect, the art educator is well suited, by the nature of his educational background, to develop and maintain the educational life of the museum.

The museum has a natural relationship to the school, as an educational institution, but the nature of the teaching-learning situation differs. A foundation for the successful implementation of educational services, answering the demands of schools, school children, the community adult population and the itinerant visitor, is possible

under the direction of a well-trained and competent art educator.

The accessibility of the small museum is not only through its doors, but through its ability to project its social, cultural and educational standard and image. By cultivating an awareness of its benefit and necessity among the members of the community and a more general public, the small museum will assure its own continuing cultural growth and development.

## APPENDIX I

## STATISTICS

FOR NEW MUSEUM GROWTH IN CANADA OVER A 9 YEAR PERIOD<sup>23</sup>

1964	-	385	
1968	-	721	increase of 346 museums and art galleries
1973	-	1146	

DESCRIPTION AND QUANTITY OF MUSEUMS IN CANADA IN 1967<sup>24</sup>

National Museums	37
Public Museums	1135
Private Museums	213

ATTENDANCE FIGURES AT CANADIAN MUSEUMS FROM 1937 to 1970

1937	1,000,000 visitors	<sup>25</sup>
1962	14,000,000 visitors	<sup>26</sup>
1970	54,900,000 visitors	<sup>27</sup>

Showing an increase in attendance over an eight year period of 40,900,000 visitors

ESTIMATE OF CANADIAN POPULATION FOR THE YEAR 1973<sup>28</sup>

22,095,000 people

<sup>23</sup> Archie F. Key, Beyond Four Walls: The Origins and Development of Canadian Museums, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1973), passim, chap. xix.

<sup>24</sup> United Nations Statistical Yearbook 1967 (New York, N.Y.: United Nations Publishing Service, 1968), p. 251.

<sup>25</sup> The Canada Year Book 1951 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1951), p. 32.

<sup>26</sup> Canada Year Book 1973 (Ottawa: Canada Year Book Section, Queen's Printer, 1973), p. 358.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 70.

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