In the Shadow of Money

Making Heritage and Creating Diversities in Museum Contexts

Gradén, Lizette; O'dell, Thomas

Published in:
Western Folklore

2020

Document Version:
Early version, also known as pre-print

First draft of the contribution to *Western Folklore*.

In the Shadow of Money:

Making Heritage and Creating Diversities in Museum Contexts

Lizette Gradén, Associate Professor of Ethnology
Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences
Lund University, Sweden
and Head of Research, Kulturen, Lund

Tom O'Dell, Professor of Ethnology,
Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences
Lund University, Sweden

ABSTRACT: This article focuses upon the ways in which contemporary political processes, neoliberal market forces, and identity politics of the 21st century have affected understandings of Swedish heritage and how that heritage is staged, performed and allowed to come to expression in two museums of cultural heritage. It does this by examining the work being done at the Hallwyl Museum in Stockholm, Sweden, and the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis, MN.

KEYWORDS: Heritage, Public folklore, Cultural Economy, Diversity, Museums

Heritage has always been an important vehicle through which the past has been mobilized in the present in the name of specific cultural identities and communities. Or more specifically, as Barbro Klein taught us, "heritage is phenomena in a group's past that are given high symbolic value and therefore, must be protected for the future" (Klein 2000:25). In the first decades of the 21st century, however, cultural heritage is increasingly understood as having much more than symbolic value, it is also recognized in a growing array of contexts of having a strong economic value. Under the pressures of neoliberal economic processes and the forces of new public management, heritage museums, for example, are expected to report to their stakeholders their growth and development in terms of measurable units such as numbers of visitors, visiting school classes, and gift shop sales, among other things. A

question which this raises, and which this article focuses upon is, in what ways have contemporary political processes, neoliberal market forces, and identity politics of the 21st century affected understandings of Swedish heritage and how that heritage is staged, performed and allowed to come to expression? Equally significant is the question of what museums choose (actively or unintentionally) not to focus upon.

The two museums we will discuss in this article are part of a larger ongoing study, that deals with how museums that include historic houses feature aspects of what many visitors would recognize as Swedish heritage or Swedish culture, striving to understand how cultural heritage is staged, performed, displayed, packaged and ultimately sold to the public.

The main question that we have focused on is, "When budgets are tight, whose heritage counts most?" In what ways have contemporary political processes, neoliberal market forces, and identity politics of the 21st century affected understandings of Swedish heritage and the manner in which communities and institutions invoke heritage? In order to approach this issue, we will draw upon two empirical cases from our research: The Hallwyl Museum in Stockholm and The American Swedish Institute (ASI) in Minneapolis, which both are located in cities, include historic houses built around around the turn of the century 1900, a time concurrent with the emergence of Folklife Studies and Folklore as a discipline in Sweden.

Underpinning our research is the idea that heritage is an embodied performative practice that individuals, communities and societies engage in to negotiate the past in the present with an aim at influencing the future (cf. Smith 2015, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998). We have focussed on museum leadership at ASI & Hallwyl as they play important roles in stewarding such processes, by elevating cultural practice to cultural heritage, through processes of selection. Our overall suggestion in this paper, is that in addition to being part of educational efforts and memory complexes (Macdonald 2013), museums must be increasingly viewed as economically embedded tools for *heritage justification* and *standardization of heritage* that affects the manner in which they function in relation to *public education* and as *agencies of diversity and change*.

For this article, which is dedicated to Barbro Klein, we will take our point of departure in one of the more recent texts she published before passing away. It is, "Cultural Heritage, Human

Rights and Reform Ideologies: The Case of Swedish Folklife Research" from 2014. In this text Barbro made a series of highly interesting, poignant, and at times provocative (as Barbro never shied away from provocation) points about the manner in which ethnology and folklore in Sweden had been complicit in the formation of images of Swedish heritage as they were staged in Swedish museums over the course of the late 19th century and 20th century. However, her interest in this article is more than just Heritage, it is the relation between heritage and cultural diversity that concerns her.

Barbro's article focuses on three periods of folkloristic and ethnological engagement in this time frame. The first focuses on the late 19thcentury and Arthur Hazelius' work to build up Nordiska Museet and Skansen in Stockholm. And she writes:

> Hazelius and other intellectuals did not aim to erase cultural differences when they made peasant culture a part of the urban public sphere… Hazelius thought that if he could open the eyes of all Swedes (particularly the urban middle classes) to the beautiful diversity in the country, their feelings for the fatherland would be awakened…//… Maintaining difference was simultaneously an act of unification (2014:115).

She then moves on to the period spanning 1930-1950 and contemplates the role folklore and ethnology played in facilitating and supporting the development of *Folkhemme*t, the Peoples' Home, enacted and propelled by Sweden's Socialdemocratic leadership. She notes how these scholars strove to participate in ongoing reforms of the time, and argues:

> …it is not far-fetched to view the discipline during this period as a reform project aiming to create citizens of a modernizing welfare state in which differences in income and social class were to be erased. The "folk" discipline went hand in hand with political efforts to shape a homogenous "folk" home, and differences in terms of language, religion, or culture among such minorities as Sámi, Roma, Jews, and Finns who were hardly recognized (2014:118).

Since Klein was strongly interested in questions concerning cultural diversity, the point which she mentions but under-communicates is the fact that many of these policies were driven by an undercurrent aimed at economic homogenization in Sweden. The Social Democrats' efforts were primarily focused on economic inequalities in the country. Policies aimed at affecting change in the social and cultural realms were seen as a way of leveling the economic playing field (Frykman 1981, Frykman & Löfgren 2018). Economic factors, in other words, strongly affected the manner in which the Social Democrats, and ethnologists in turn, framed understandings of cultural diversity. We will return to this issue later in this article.

The third period she focuses on spans from 1970 to 2000, but a strong emphasis is on the late 1990s. This, she points out is when the term "kulturarv" (heritage) first comes into play within academia in Sweden. It is an interesting coincidence, or actually no coincidence at all that the concept of "cultural heritage" on the one hand and "cultural diversity" on the other both begin to appear in the official language and publications of the Swedish government, articulated in various policy documents. The uses of heritage in public discourse and political strategies increases after 1994 when issues of education and cultural issues become separated and tended by two ministries: the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Culture (Jakobsson 2014). However, even here, her focus is perhaps more to critically reflect upon than to celebrate. Barbro explains:

> Often "diversity is celebrated" while real "difference is shunned" and a sort of "feel-good" diversity is established (Kurkiala 2002). Many museums (including the Nordic Museum) have been reluctant to single out or highlight distinct cultural or religious differences that are an outcome of the intense immigration during the last few decades. The reasons for this can be laudable: curators may wish to avoid stereotyping, essentializing, or exoticizing other people. Yet, the upshot can also be that other cultures, religions, and languages stand out as something disagreeable that must be avoided (2014:122f.)

What we have presented above has been a very concise summary of Klein's text, but even in its entirety, one would be hard pressed to describe the tone of this text as upbeat and

optimistic. It is critical, and contemplative. And her closing reflections are where we would like to begin ours. Klein writes:

> Is the preservation and protection of cultural heritage always morally good and valuable? Could it also be a liability or a smoke screen preventing the highlighting of other even more pressing issues (2014:124)?

Bearing these critical questions in mind, we now turn to some observations we have made at the Hallwyl Museum and at the American Swedish Institute (ASI) over the past few years.

Hallwyl Museum: Diminished Diversity in the Shadows of the Politically Correct

Photo 1, exterior of the Hallwyl Museum

The Hallwyl museum's is part of the National Historical Museums, a government agency, which mission is to "promote knowledge of and interest in Sweden's history combined with preserving and developing the cultural heritage that the agency administers" (www.shm.se). When Wilhelmina Kempe (1844-1938) and her husband, count Walter von Hallwyl (1839-1921) from Switzerland created the Hallwyl Palace in Stockholm, they brought in craftsmen from across Europe and they shaped a home with the intention of converting it into a museum, which after her passing would be bequeathed to the Swedish government and then opened as a museum to the public. Today, the Hallwyl museum holds a collection of 30 000 accession numbers, items ranging from Asian bronzes and ceramics from China, to European silver, and fine art. Kept side by side with collections, are everyday household objects such as brooms and buckets, toys and teeth (baby teeth as well as dentures). Wilhelmina explained:

> I want everything to be included, such as brooms, dust brushes and such, because one day, when everything is being done by electricity, these will be the most remarkable things of all" (Wilhelmina von Hallwyl's annual notes 1844-1930. The Hallwyl museum archives, cf. EH Cassel-Pihl 2006:xx, cf Cassel-Pihl 1990).

On display are also not-so-every day pieces such as the cast in which her arm was fixed after a car accident on a trip to Gripsholm's castle in 1911, and clippings from Walter's moustache.

The Museum opened in 1938. However, it did not thrive as a museum during its early years. As the current director explained,

> Staff opened the door at certain hours, sold tickets and gave a limited guided tour of the salons and social areas. In the first decades, the curatorial effort was focused on completing the catalogue.

The first holder of the Hallwyl professor of Ethnology, Nils Lithberg, oversaw the completion of the catalogue, which engaged curators from museums such as Nationalmuseum as well as students from Stockholms högskola, now Stockholm University. Lithberg and his assistants finalized the cataloguing in the 1950s, 75 volumes in total and printed in 110 copies, some of which were distributed to fellow museums in Sweden and abroad (Rehnberg 1989).

Photo 2 & caption. Portait of Wilhelmia von Hallwyl by Julius Kronberg. Photo credit: Jens Mohr.
Caption: when portayed in oil by Julius Kronberg, Wilhelmina asked to be portrayed "as is", without make-up and with a slight mustache.

And the spirit of the times of the 1960s and 1970s with their countercultural and leftist winds did little to improve the museum's public appeal. As the museum director went on to elaborate:

> In the 1970's, the entire aristocratic lifestyle was brought into question in Sweden. Why did the palace become a museum, why build a monument of affluence? Wilhelmina was interpreted as a bit crazy. Stories how she moved about Stockholm in patched clothes flourished. She was portrayed as eccentric and the museum had an air of the bizarre, almost scary. You

> know, the saved sponges, toilet paper, and baby teeth. Still in the early 1990's, we just opened the doors, sold tickets and gave a short tour. In the late 1990s, we introduced thematic tours and the museum staff worked to dramatize both family members and servants.

In tours, docents emphasize the attempt to collect and catalogue "everything" by highlighting the wastebasket in the smoking room, which, covered by a plexi display case, holds Walter's discarded letters, and the wine cellar stocked full with the empty bottles of wine that the Hallwyls and their guests drank through the years.

Photo 3 & caption:
The Hallwyl wine cellar stocked with empty bottles covered by layers of dust, a deliberate act and part of Wilhelmina von Hallwyl's effort to share with future visitors what life of nobel family in Stockholm was like in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Photo: by Lizette Gradén

Wilhelmina von Hallwyl curated her home for future visitors, and her action was one of meticulous preparation. In addition to building her collections of European and Asian china, Armory, Scandinavian and European fine art and more, she also ordered and stored display cases for future use, among those, the case covering Walter's wastebasket. To ensure her desire that the home would be converted into a site of heritage, she left her annual notes, which described the collection process, and she composed instructions for Lithberg and future successors explaining how to complete the catalogue and care for the collections after her death. But for decades the museum was haunted by the figure of the extraordinarily wealthy but eccentric, hoarder in tattered clothes.

Ultimately, the Hallwyl Museum came to display the life of the wealthy and aristocratic whereas other museums such as Nordiska Museum and Kulturen in Lund created collections that included all four of the estates, but tended to emphasize the peasantry and linkages to an agricultural mode of living in the countryside. In line with Klein's argument the Hallwyl Museum was a cog in a machinery of heritage that displayed very different sides of the Swedish population. Wilhelmina herself, financially supported Hazelius' work with Swedish folk culture at Nordiska Museum as well as Georg Karlin's efforts to procure Kulturen's

Östarp and preserve the traces of a peasant past in situ, on a site located 30 kilometers outside of Lund. In this way Wilhemina von Hallwyl's work did have parallels to the way Klein argued ethnologists and folklorists of the late 19th century strove to preserve and display the diversity of Swedish cultural heritage. However, rather than being a monument over folk culture, the Hallwyl Museum, under Wilhelmina's tutelage, became a rather distinct and separate monument over the estate of the upper-classes that had no connection to the peasantry, and made no attempt to include them. The social and cultural distance between the people living in Sweden's four estates was in this way symbolically maintained by the lack of recognition of their existence in the Hallwyl mansion.

The lore around Wilhelmina and the Hallwyl Museum has been successively changing since then. Assembling the collection and cataloguing it was a collective effort involving Wilhelmina, the Hallwyl professor of European ethnology, Nils Lithberg as well as young museum workers and numerous students. Although the making of the Hallwyl museum was a huge collaborative undertaking that was completed in the 1950s, more than a decade after Wilhelmina's passing, docents often highlight Wilhelmina's sole effort, but say little about the role of Lithberg, the curators, or the students. Instead it is Wilhelmina's work which is highlighted. As one curator explained:

> Wilhelmina is at the center of every tour still. The visitors want to hear about her and her family. They are fascinated by her as a person and ask questions about her personality.

And although the museum leadership today underscores that the Hallwyl Museum is not a biographical museum, in the same way that museum scholars have tended to describe the Strindberg museum or Thiel gallery, curatorial staff continuously refers to Wilhelmina von Hallwyl by her first name - Wilhelmina. The first name basis demonstrates an interpretative shift, where the protagonists of the story of the Hallwyl Palace are at the narrators', that is the curatorial staffs', disposal. In the curatorial management context, this intimization may be understood as an act mitigating the social gap between nobility and class. Wilhelmina becomes an approachable and personable figure that visitors are brought into cultural proximity with as they are drawn into the lore of the woman. A tale emerges of a driven woman who dared to flaunt the norms of her time: taking a leadership role in a curatorial

endeavor of the early 29th century, working as a patron to her male peers, and even allowing herself to be portrayed in an oil painting carried out by Julius Kronberg, with the slight mustache she had. It is the details of her personality that emerge through the museums lore, and it is the contours of modern and independent corporate woman that appear.

This is different in the dramatized guided tours in which staff members take on the roles of servants, curators, and scholarly figures working under the ironhand of "Countess Wilhelmina von Hallwyl" to organize the collections and establish the museum. No one ever takes the role of Wilhelmina von Hallwyl, instead she becomes an invisible geist hanging, without relent, over all who work and move through the palace. She is in many ways the ghost of Swedish class privileges and positions past, although rather than speaking so much of "class", her story is more strongly bent through the prism of diligent work and professional ambition. All the while her husband, count Walter von Hallwyl from Switzerland, is reduced to a waste basket full of letters, emptied bottles of wine, a few mustache clippings in a display case, and an annoyance making a racket in the attic bowling frivolously with his butler, Eskil, and disturbing Wilhelmina's concentration.

The movement of Wilhelmina von Hallwyl from the realm of the eccentric to that of the modern heritage visionary came into even sharper focus in May of 2018 when the curatorial team prepared an exhibition celebrating the Hallwyl Museum's 80th anniversary, they decided to bring Wilhelmina von Hallwyl's role as a career woman and museum maker to the fore, and went on to emphasize her role as benefactor for major museums such as Skansen and Nordiska museet, Gotlands Fornsal, Kulturen in Lund, Nationalmuseum, and Schloss Hallwil in Switzerland. As the museum website says:

> The exhibition emphasizes the cataloguing of the collection that Wilhelmina initiated and then supervised for decades, and which made her preservationist attempt unique .../.../... A new film shares the story about how she in her role as cultural benefactor left a legacy far beyond the museum (https://hallwylskamuseet.se/sv downloaded 2018-05-08).

In this exhibition Wilhelmina was cast as the protagonist in the professional development of not only her own museum but also in the story of museum history and museology in Sweden more generally. Beyond this, the Hallwyl Palace took center stage in a story of feminist

heritage making. The contemporary story about Wilhelmina von Hallwyl is presented as a progressive herstory, pointing out that her contributions to the museum field were crucial for Artur Hazelius' and Georg Karlin's work as museum founders. At the time when the role of cultural heritage (and museums) was to provide a collective identity for emerging nations, by providing them with origin stories and a folklife sphere, the exhibition at Hallwyl museum in 2018 positions Wilhelmina von Hallwyl as the "Other" (a woman in a man's world) in a Swedish context. Archival materials are mobilized and put on display to tell the story about the work through which the collections emerged, providing the museum itself with a narrative meta-level. Here are letters to employees giving them clear instructions on how to go about their work, and firm orders for those employees to follow her wishes and ignore the directions and agendas of male colleagues such as Professor Lithberg. If Wilhelmina von Hallwyl was once perceived to be bizarre and scary in the heritagelore of the museum, that image is here erased and replaced by that of a determined woman leading a squad of employees scattered around Europe with the determination of a general.

As heritage scholar Laurajane Smith points out, the professional discourse, or the "authorized heritage discourse" assume that heritage experts ought to pass on their knowledge of the meaning and value of heritage to the public in the name of education. A critical point of departure made by Smith concerns the manner in which the materiality of heritage supports wider senses of shared identity, often national or ethnic identity (Smith 2006: 29-24). In the context of The Hallwyl Museum it is revealing to see how the materiality of the museum has been entwined with different and shifting narratives about Wilhelmina in order to adapt to the spirit of the times. In the 1970's, a time in Sweden in which class awareness and critiques of class privilege were a pressing topic, the story of Wilhelmina von Hallwyl readily took the genre of the mad woman in the attic (Gilbert & Gubar 1979): a privileged member of the upper classes whose riches led her down a path of oddity and eccentricism that was out of touch with society. In the first decades of the twenty-first century the same house and the same materiality had morphed into a new tale better adapted to an educated upper-middle class public entrenched in neo-liberal values. This was a tale of an industrious visionary woman daring to challenge the norms of her times to realize her professional objectives.

Photo 4. The Hallwyl museum continues to grow its visitors number and reach new audiences through collaborations. Meanwhile the long standing social base remains loyal and the same. Photo: the Hallwyl Museum.

To be sure, heritage has always been about invoking the past for the purposes of the present (Anttonen et. al 2000; Appadurai and Breckenridge 1992:35-55; Aronsson & Graden 2013; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998:7; Lowenthal 2015:41-60, 2015), but from a perspective of critical cultural theory it is important to be aware of how the materialities and immaterialities of heritage are used to not only create shared identities and allegiances, but to even silence other stories and possible voices from the past (Graden 2003; Hyltén-Cavallius & Svanberg 2016). At Hallwyl, there are parallels to what Klein points out ethnologists and folklorists did in the 1930s to 1950s, silencing sings of class diversity in ways that reinforced an imagind national unity. Working in a similar spirit, class and class tensions at Hallwyl have been pacified over the years and folded into a neoliberal discourse that is highly palatable to the segment of people who regularly visit the Hallwyl Museum. Issues of ethnic diversity and transnational movement remain largely dormant even though Walther von Hallwyl came from Switzerland and Wilhelmina von Hallwyl's family were of Pommern (Polish/German) descent. Heritage is here locked into a geographically bound area (cf. Gupta & Ferguson 1997), implicitly understood to be Swedish and Stockholmian. In building their mansion they enlisted some of the best craftsmen in Europe whose work is embedded in the concrete and wooden surfaces of the house and its interior, but they had very clear ideas as to which ethnic groups were welcome into their home and which were not. These however, are not stories museum leadership and curatorial staff choose to address in a time in Sweden in which multiculturalism is a heated topic dominated by the agenda of the far-right. Rather than confronting such challenging topics to problematize the past and perhaps enlighten the present, "Wilhelmina" has repeatedly been folded into a series of stories of edutainment value (Hannigan 1998) that work to attract an established middle-class and upper-middle class museum public.

The American Swedish Institute: Reaching a new social base and shaping groups

Photo 5 & Caption.

Exterior of American Swedish Institute. Photo: Tom O'Dell

Caption: ASI is located on Park Avenue in the Phillips Neighborghood in Minneapolis. Since the original building, the Turnblad Mansion, was erected in the late 19th century Park Avenue has been transformed from being the main throughfare of a affluent neighborhood, to

a run down area with boarded up homes in the 1990s to becoming part of the Midtown area in the 2000s.

ASI's states its current mission is to serve "as a gathering place for all people to share experiences around themes of culture, migration, the environment and the arts, informed by enduring links to Sweden" (https://www.asimn.org/about-us/mission).

When putting this mission into practice ASI offers to the public a collection of 7,000 artifacts, as well as core and temporary exhibitions of material from Sweden and the Nordic region, programming for youth and family. And in recent years ASI has expanded its programmatic offerings to include concerts, outdoor festivals, cocktail hours, performing arts, fashion shows and food events.

The story of the organization starts in 1929 when Swan Turnblad donated his large three story castle-like home the Turnblad Mansion to the Swedish community of Minneapolis.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, the American Swedish Institute was experiencing a gradual decline in membership, and interest. As the institute's current director explained:

> Attendance was never terribly robust, no matter what we tried to do. It was pretty much flat. Attendance was primarily, historically comprised of 75 % members and 25 % non-members. And that just never changed. And with the declining membership, that's ¾ of your attendees, you know.

In order to avoid a further downward spiral a decision was made to update the institute with a new multi-million dollar wing, now called "The Nelson Cultural Center". Temporary art and design exhibitions were brought in to fill the gallery spaces, and programming was expanded from Swedish to Nordic, and re-oriented towards younger groups of professionals and families. With joy in his voice, ASI's director explained the consequences these changes had, "Our revenue from admissions has gone up from 20,000 dollar a year to over 300,000 a year!"

The development of the gallery brought with it a renewed interest in the museum, which the leadership acknowledged was spurred in part by the modern architectural form of the building, but which was even reinforced by investments made in developing and fortifying a

number of professional categories including, human resources, pedagogy, marketing, and retail management. Indeed, while curatorial staff complained about shrinking resources, leadership enthusiastically pointed to the growing role the programing department had in attracting visitors by working in a trend sensitive manner.

In order to meet external demands to be more relevant to the community, ASI set out to build a core audience that was financially robust, culturally interested, socially active, and well connected, as the leadership explained. In order to do this, ASI leadership focused its efforts on targeting five audience categories whom they defined as:

Heritage Brokers:
•Interested in Swedish, Nordic, Scandinavian-American cultures
•Swedish nationals living in or visiting U.S.

Visitors with Children:
• Seek out fun, inviting activities to do as a family or as a group visiting with children

Socially Active Adults:
• Frequent museum galleries, exhibitions and openings
• Go out often
• Socially active, network-minded, A-listers
• Mix of nightlife, museum, theatre and performance art

Makers:
• Craft enthusiasts – actively pursue art & craft activities as a hobby or profession
• Heritage craft and contemporary craft
• Foodies and co-ops

Neighborhood:
• Mix of residents and employed in Phillips and Whittier
• Early childhood education and whole student learning
• Bike By, But Never Been
• Mix of New Immigrant / Elder Care / Social Service / Community Arts

• Active community members

Emphasizing the significance the changing role of programing has had, a senior board member reflected on the museum's expanded work:

> Our children's programing is held in the mansion, and usually includes exploration of the mansion. The kids have a scavenger hunt, they have to go find something. So that families and children are becoming familiar with the mansion, not as an austere museum where you can't touch anything, but as a place that is alive and is possible to explore. And I think that has been very cool.

Members of the curatorial department, however, had a different understanding of the situation. They recounted with horror coming to the museum to find throngs of children running around, in, over, and through exhibitions and artifacts, moving items around looking for "treasures" on their treasure hunt. And while one curator appreciated the museums' attempt to engage the public, he shook his head and described the time he found a group of children having a birthday party under programing supervision playing dodgeball on the third floor of the mansion. Sculptures on exhibition had been so badly battered and damaged by the balls being thrown around that they had to be removed from the exhibition, and he concludes, "I mean, what were they thinking?!".

Another staff member in the curatorial department reflected upon some of the effects of changes made to accommodate the expansion. With locks on the cupboards in the kaffestuga and price tags on every meeting room, clubs, groups and older members didn't feel welcome.

> Because it was this idea that all we have is younger people here. But younger people may come for the big events but not for day-to-day volunteer work and programs. And becoming members...they might not even live here in six months. So why would they ever engage in a membership. But there are all these older people. *This was their second house*!

Whereas leadership and curatorial staff present divergent perspectives on how to use the mansion, staff in programing find themselves caught in the middle, when trying to measure up to the anticipated needs of the new audience groups. As one manager in education explained:

> I think for us it really comes down to our mission. To serve as a gathering place for all people. It doesn't say to preserve, interpret and share the history of *the Turnblad Mansion*./.../ Kids that come here, do they really need to know about the Turnblad mansion. No, they don't. /.../So what we do in that case is we start with the child and we say what does the child need and then we build up from there.

Photos 6 & caption: Events such as cocktails in the castle is a popular event at ASI that serves to draw new audiences, to discover ASI. Photo: Lizette Gradén
Photo 7 & caption: Exhibits in the play area in the Turnblad mansion are often brought in from overseas, such as the 2017 event from Wanås. Photo: Lizette Gradén

Continuing our discussion, the education manager emphasized an awareness of revenue measures and that the goals of curatorial and programing departments did not always align:

> Curatorial and I recently had a conversation about birthday parties because birthday parties are something that happen here at ASI. How is it that you are gonna get families involved and engaged in your institution? What can we do to get them in the door that makes them happy? So I would say it is a very complex web that we are looking at when looking at programs and how we best meet the needs of the audiences that we have identified. Can we serve everyone at the same time? Absolutely not! Nor do I think we need to. But what we need to do is to be very practical and realistic about things.

The ambition was not necessarily to bring people together, but to raise the visitors numbers. As the educational manager emphasized "Can we serve everyone at the same time? Absolutely not! Nor do I think we need to..." Keeping folks segregated was in a sense a more certain way of keeping them happy, feeling comfortable and coming back to the institute.

Dodge ball in the morning, cocktails in the evening, with a temporary exhibition of a Swedish fashion designer and local Somali artist somewhere in between - this might sound like a smug way of summarizing the situation, but not entirely off the mark either. It also falls in line with critical heritage scholar's Laurajane Smith's recent research that points out that most people do not go to museums to have their world view challenged, but to have them confirmed (Smith 2015, pp. 459-484) and that most people who visit heritage museums in the United States are tourists (Smith 2018). By serving as a gathering place for all people, but at very different times, the ASI managed to raise visitors numbers, maximize the use of the space in relation to cost. Most of all, ASI has been successful in reassuring their identified select target groups that individual choice matters and that at ASI they may experience culture with links to Sweden, entirely on their own terms. This new business model may sustain the museum institution while simultaneously sustaining the influence by the tiers of community members that are willing to pay.

Conclusion:

Both of the museums we have presented here are striving to broaden their appeal and attract larger and more diverse groups of visitors. Both museums successfully attract larger audiences; however, they are still challenged in terms of financial and ethnic diversity. While recognising that heritage making involve power asymmetries, these museums still get more of the same. This article provides examples of how institutional management is a balancing act between pulling in money and bringing new and diverse groups of people together. This tends to be a context in which attempts to pull together different groups of visitors is subordinated to the reality these institutions face in relation to their stakeholders in which money talks and management work incessantly to create revenue and institutional sustainability.

Weaving together a story that appeals to a gender conscious Swedish middle class the Hallwyl Museum consciously under-communicates Wilhelmina von Hallwyl's unusual, at times almost obsessive, focus on preserving the details of her life and of putting a museum together. Where there once stood a woman who attracted the derogatory comments and behind the back whisperings of her contemporary peers, there now stands a determined female leader. She is a woman who not only built a museum over herself and her class, but

she is also now positioned as central to the development of many of Sweden's largest heritage institutions. In many ways, she is presented as the epitome of the good neo-liberal manager, able to read the needs of the future while soberly and clear-headedly leading her team and "business" towards that future. The museum's goal is to draw in more and more visitors, and to broaden the diversity of these visitors, and here the focus on "new groups" has been particularly oriented towards engaging men, younger visitors and school classes. This is a goal that fits in well with directives from the ministry of culture, but the tendency has been the production of exhibits and programs that non-abrasively fit in well with the ideology and values of the educated middle-class: that is to say, a group of people who are the museum's current primary audience.

And while the work of Wilhelmina von Hallwyl is emphasized, the cadre of university based scholars, and trained curators who worked extensively to help make the museum a reality, are all but forgotten. Ultimately, this becomes a narrative that on the one hand fits very well with the gender politics of the day. However, on the other hand, all of this fits less comfortably with the Swedish government's call for national museums to more strongly embrace a norm critical view. Where there once stood a woman who seemed to chafe with many of the norms of the Swedish middle (and upper) class, there now stands a driving force in the establishment of a cultural heritage that the Swedish middle class can easily accept and digest.

And as ASI works to attract a diverse audience, its activities and budget priorities are slowly shifting from curatorial educational initiatives to programing initiatives with a stronger emphasis on entertainment in the form of treasure hunts, cocktail parties, fashion shows and art exhibitions that speak to the educated and endowed middle class. In their attempt to build a broader audience base, ASI is dividing people up into new forms of groups. By applying dialogic engagement through focus groups the museum has worked to shift the visitor profile from being "Swedish" to a wider segment of visitors interested in "Swedish" culture. While ASI's intention has been to share representational authority and collaborative program development with a wider community, the shift has caused groups to emerge, and this has led to the development of new (if unintentional) asymmetries and imbalances.

Beyond this, it is interesting to note that these are both museums that were not only founded by immigrants but also homes that were originally built by craftsmen and artisans many of whom were migrants themselves. Nonetheless both museums currently offer a cultural heritage of emplaced identities: Hallwyl currently emphasizing a place created by Wilhelmina, and ASI emphasizing Swedish and Nordic linkages. However, had these museums been seen through the lens of migration and mobility, very different stories would emerge out of them.

This being said, as scholars of public folklore and ethnology who are working transatlantically and contributing to the field of critical heritage studies, we wish to raise awareness among critical heritage scholars of public folklorists' long standing engagement with communities and their museums in fostering autonomy and arms-length distance to governing authorities. Simultaneously we wish to raise awareness among public folklorists and ethnologists of the effects of financial realities on cultural diversity when museums reconceptualize their social base and foster financial development through heritage. Following scholars with extensive experience of joint academic and applied work, and a continuous reflective approach towards their own practice (Baron 2016:2-16, Dewhurst, Hall and Seeman 2016, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, Whisnant 1988) we advocate studies of museums that benefit from such scholarly engagement. This to form further collaboration and comparative studies to increase awareness among scholars and heritage brokers of the inevitable interplay between heritage making, political governance, and business models. Folklorists working both academically and publically have been pioneers in museum and heritage studies for over half a century, moving the field toward collaborative work, engagement with communities, and inclusive practices, but also in theorizing practice in connection with issues of power and diversity. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, trained as a folklorist sparked a paradigm shift in heritage studies in the early 1990s through her theorization of heritage as "a mode of cultural production that has recourse to the past" (1998:150), a metacultural practice that included a performance approach and a display orientation that has impacted critical studies of heritage making, including what UNESCO has compartmentalized as tangible and intangible heritage (cf. Hafstein 2018). Her seminal work has shaped current perspectives of heritage scholars something new and transformed cultural products with recourse to the past. Inspired by her work, Barbro Klein came to develop methods within European Ethnology, tools for taking a critical stance towards

curatorial practice at institutions such as Nordiska Museet and its archives in Stockholm, of which the field of folklore and ethnology was deeply embedded from the start. Klein's long standing transatlantic work on heritage, migration and cultural diversity, which is epitomized in the article of hers that we refer to in the opening of this text (Klein 2014), has impacted and inspired several generations of scholars in Sweden, including ourselves. So when we ask, whose heritage matters to museum sustenance when the budget is tight, we aim at expanding her scholarship by adding a financial component to the analysis of how museums work with diversity. In the case of ASI, the museum becomes a place where all events and activities come with customized content as well as price tags - where "Kulturtanter" (culturally interested middle-aged women) meets "kulturtanter", hipsters meet hipsters, families meet families, young active adults meet young active adults, *und so weiter*. By working strategically with target groups for audience development, the museums, in their efforts to be inclusive to increase visitors numbers, simultaneously characterize, organize, divide, and separate communities in new ways. This becomes an act that demonstrates whose heritage matters most when numbers count and stakeholder expectations implicitly inform leadership choices and strategies.

What we have observed at all of the museums we have studied is how strategic heritage making strategically re-fashions museums, museum staff and museum audiences, and how such forging of select audiences is financially driven. Thus the impact of official Swedish and American cultural politics, that advocate an inclusive audience development, proves to have its limitations. We opened with Barbro Klein's question of whether the protection of cultural heritage might be understood as "a liability or a smoke screen preventing the highlighting of other even more pressing issues". We can't speak for museums in general, but in the museums we have studied, market forces, the attempt to attract larger (but nonetheless well defined) audiences and appease stakeholders, seems to work in a mainstreaming manner that resists pressing issues more than it embraces them, and that strives in the direction of attracting more visitors from established market segment groups than yearning for greater inclusion.

First draft of the contribution to *Western Folklore*.

Acknowledgments:

We would like to thank colleagues in Sweden and the US for constructive comments on the paper version of the article. Most of all, we would like to thank staff and leadership teams for generously sharing their expertise, visions and daily practices with us, on site and in interviews. The research results presented in this paper were made possible by the generous funding of Birgit & Gad Rausings stiftelse för humanistisk forskning, Erik Philip Sörensens stiftelse, Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, and the Swedish Heritage Board. We thank them for their support of our research.

Sources:

Ethnographic Fieldwork at both museums was carried out in several periods between 2015 and 2018, recorded interviews in the possession of the authors.

References:

American Swedish Institute mission statement. https://www.asimn.org/about-us/mission

Anttonen, Pertti J, Barbro Klein and Anna-Leena Siikala, eds. 2000. *Folklore, heritage politics and ethnic diversity: a festschrift for Barbro Klein*. Botkyrka: Multicultural Centre (Mångkulturellt centrum)

Appadurai, Arjun and Carol Beckenridge. 1992. Museums are Good to Think: Heritage on View in India. In *Museum and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture*. Washington D. C.: Smithsonian.

Aronsson, Peter and Lizette Gradén. 2013. *Performing Nordic Heritage: Everyday Life and Institutional Culture*. London: Ashgate.

Baron, Robert 2016. Public Folklore and Dialogism and Critical Heritage Studies. International Journal of Critical Heritage Studies. Routledge. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/3527258.2016.1150320

Cassel-Pihl, Eva Helena. 1990. *De sista privatpalatsen. Fyra Stockholmsbyggnader från sekelskiftet*. Stockholm: Hallwyliana 3.

Cassel-Pihl, E.H. 2006. *För en långt avlägsen framtid: en bok om Wilhelmina von Hallwyl*. Stockholm: Hallwylska museet.
Dewhurst, Kurt, Patricia Hall & Seemann, Charlie (red.) (2016). *Folklife and museums. Twenty-first Century Perspectives: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers*.

Frykman, Jonas. 1981. Pure and Rational. The Hygenic Vision: A Study of Cultural Transformation in the 1930s. "The New Man". *Ethnologia Scandinavia*. 11:36-62.

Frykman, Jonas, and Orvar Löfgren. 1987. *Culture Builders*. New Brunswick: Rutgers.

Frykman, Jonas, and Orvar Löfgren. 2018. *Den kultiverade människan*. Malmö: Liber.

Gilbert, Sandra and Susan Gubar. 1979. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the 19th Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Gradén, Lizette. 2003. *On Parade: Making Heritage in Lindsborg, Kansas*. Studia Multiethnica 15. Stockholm: ACTA Upsaliensia. Diss.

Gupta, Akhil and James Ferguson. 1997. *Culture, Power, Place: Exploration in Critical Anthropology*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Hannigan, John. 1998. *Fantasy City: Pleasure and Profit in the Postmodern Metropolis*. Oxon: Routledge.

Hafstein, Valdimar Tr. (2018). *Making intangible heritage: el condor pasa and other stories from unesco*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Hyltén-Cavallius, Charlotte and Fredrik Svanberg. 2016. *Älskade Museum: Svenska kulturhistorisk museer som kulturskapare och samhällsbyggare*. Lund: Nordic Academic Press.

Jacobsson, Bengt. 2014. *Kulturpolitik: Styrning på avstånd*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. 1998. *Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Klein, Barbro. 2014. *Cultural Heritage, Human Rights and Reform Ideologies: The Case of Swedish Folklife Research*. In: Kapchan, Deborah A. (red.). *Cultural heritage in transit:*

intangible rights as human rights. First edition. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press

Lowenthal, David. 2015. *Possessed by the Past*. New York: The Free Press.

Macdonald, Sharon. 2013. *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today*. London: Routledge.

Rehnberg, Mats. 1989. Wilhelmina von Hallwyl och Nils Lithberg. Kring tillkomsten av professuren i Nordisk och jämförande folklivsforskning i Stockholm 1919. *RIG* (72) 1: 1-23.

Smith, Laurajane. 2015. Theorizing Museums and Heritage Visiting. In *The InternationalHandbook of Museum Studies,* edited by Sharon Macdonal & Helen Rees,. pp. 459-484. Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell.

Whisnant, David E. (1983). *All that is native & fine: the politics of culture in an American region*. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press