Title: Hot Topics in Exhibition Design Roundtables: Process, Challenges, and Possibilities

Session Summary: Diverse presenters from around the world will lead provocative roundtable discussions about a wide range of burning issues in exhibition design. Together, groups will explore each “hot topic,” discuss concrete design challenges our field is facing, and collectively imagine solutions for the 21st century visitor experience.

Fearlessly moderated by Kathy Gustafson-Hilton
Client Liaison and Creative Thinking Facilitator
Hands On! Inc.
689 Central Avenue, #200
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701
(727) 824-8988 x 15
www.hofl.org

Summary of Provocateurs:

Greg Belew: Designing for sustainability (overbuild, right-sized, designed for capacity of museum – staffing/OPS, what an institution is good at (programming, staffing, etc.)

How can we design for a sustainable organization? The design and scale of the building and exhibitions can have a significant positive impact on the long-term sustainability if the unique strengths and challenges of the museum are taken into consideration. What strategies can we implement to strengthen sustainability?

Principal-In-Charge
Hands On! Studio
Office: 727 824-8988
greg@hostudio.net
www.hostudio.net

Molly Lenore: How can we use technology, especially social media, in non-traditional ways to help the public access content?

President
Moey Inc.
232 3rd Street, #e301 3rd floor
Brooklyn, NY 11215
646 246-6845
www.moeyinc.com
molly@moeyinc.com
**Sarah Macey:** How can institutional buy-in kick off a project for success, keep it aligned with organizational culture, and build cross-departmental collaboration?

Director, Exhibition Design  
Discovery Place  
[www.discoveryplace.org](http://www.discoveryplace.org)  
Charlotte, NC 28202  
sarahm@discoveryplace.org

**Mikko Myllykoski:** How do we design the impossible, like an exhibition that envisions Finland’s future in 2067?

Heureka is developing an exhibition about future to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Finland. The exhibition is looking 50 years in the future, to the year 2067. This timespan, two generations ahead, is exceptionally long. How to exhibit the impossible: the future that is not here yet? Should the future be displayed as science fiction, or would it be more accurate and to-the-point to present the inevitable changes in the nature due to climate change?

Heureka has chosen a game approach. The exhibition will be called *7 siblings from the future.* The exhibition presents seven characters who are establishing a new nature town in a suburban area. They are arguing about how to plan the infrastructure: energy, housing, traffic, food production and many other issues have to be dealt with. Each sibling has a different point-of-view. The visitors have their voice and will be helping the decision-making. Each visitor will have a profile closer or further away from the exhibition's seven siblings.

"The seven siblings” refers on one hand to the futurologists’ idea that seven is a good number to build diverse future scenarios. On the other hand it refers to a classic Finnish novel “The Seven brothers” (1870) by Aleksis Kivi. The novel describes the development of these brothers from youth to adulthood. The idea of seven different characters is known in other cultures as well: Seven Samurai (1954) by Akira Kurosawa, which inspired The Magnificent Seven (1960), a western by John Sturges.

Experience Director  
Heureka the Finnish Science Centre  
P.O. Box 166, FIN-01301 Vantaa  
[http://www.heureka.fi](http://www.heureka.fi)  
Tel. + 358 40 9015 244  
Mikko.Myllykoski@heureka.fi
Paul Orselli: Can small and simple be as impactful as big and high-tech when it comes to visitor experiences?

Why do people keep building giant museums? Sheer ego and "edifice complex" as far as I can tell. It's a lot sexier to say you're building the "world's biggest and best museum" than to actually set up the infrastructure to ensure a continually growing and evolving institution that makes best use of both staff and community resources.

If we as a field want to make museums **better**, not just **bigger**, then museum workers and museum organizations should advocate for smaller and nimbler museums that truly become an integral part of their local communities, and spread throughout those communities like public libraries.

Chief Instigator
POW! (Paul Orselli Workshop, Inc.)
p:(516) 238-2797 | e: paul@orselli.net | w: www.orselli.net

Lynn Scarff: Forget exhibition designers. Where are all the set designers? Why we should build our exhibitions like an immersive theatre experience?

Director, Science Gallery Dublin, Ireland
lynn.scarff@dublin.sciencegallery.com
https://dublin.sciencegallery.com/

Jo Ann Secor: Who is controlling the content in museum exhibitions—museums, consultants or funders?

More frequently, museums are casting a wider net to engage an array of consultants and ‘experts’ to help them envision, develop and design their exhibitions. Beyond the usual ‘guest curator’, museums are engaging with professional storytellers, audience advocates, community representatives, and a plethora of exhibit industry representatives. Especially, with the evolution and growth of technology, exhibits can now be ‘augmented and enhanced’ with any number of experiences using a wide selection of devices...but are the proposed enhancements/directions staying true to the mission of the museum? The intended goals of the exhibition? Is the audience engagement just a ‘wow’ without the ‘why’? The discussion leader and participants will discuss ways in which to maintain the project vision, goals and objectives while navigating the consultant waters.

Director of Interpretive Services/Marketing
Lee H. Skolnick Architecture + Design Partnership
75 Broad Street
New York, NY 10004
p 212.989.2624
f 212.727.1702
http://www.skolnick.com