

The Role of University Museums

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ABSTRACT

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University museums carry out significant roles and duties to define, process, distribute, reshape and develop knowledge in scientific domain. By the end of 1990, the literature on university museums has expanded, the role of subjectivity and personalization of interest strengthened. Educational transformation for redefining and archiving of collections has become prominent. Since 2000, studies on museums and visitors have increased. This leads an increase in the awareness and significance of the establishment of university museums. The increase in the role of university museums in research areas supports the establishment of university museums in various areas. Enclosed, isolated university collections were not able to endure stable in front of today's rapid social transformations. Transforming university collections into living institutions of museums is a significant attempt of transformation of past tradition into future. Following the transformation, these traditional and institutional practices about university collections should be redefined. University museums will transform universities into more valuable, branding institutions in the next century.

Key Words: university museum, museum projects, university museums association.

Introduction

University museums carry out significant roles and duties to define, progress, distribute, reshape and develop knowledge in scientific domain. As the fundamental institutions of specializations in the modern era, museum studies shed light on the understanding of social service. By the end of 1990, the literature on university museums has expanded the role of subjectivity and personalization of interest strengthened. Educational transformation for redefining and archiving of collections has become prominent. This new museology understanding leads an increase in experiences in digital and interactive media domains. Nationwide web-based networks provide access to collections and support researches and studies.

University museums conduct joint studies on technology; focus on networks which increase the number and volume of collaborations. University museums are very significant to provide visible, livable, touchable and sensible environment for education of Generation z, in other words “the internet generation”. There is an increase in their art and exhibition experiences based on interactive placements.

Studies on university museums and visitors have increased since 2000. Those lead to an increase in the awareness and significance of the establishment of university museums. Plenty of museums conduct new joint projects with university museums to meet people’s demands. Recent scientific studies have brought the significance of the projects conducted with university museums into the agenda through the hypothesis as “Museums are vital for mental health to find out one’s emotions and ideas”. Researches show that most people visit museums for relaxation and refreshment purposes.

The project in London Guildhall Art Gallery investigated the impact of museum and gallery visits in the afternoon on stress level of people. It was observed that there was a significant decrease in stress hormone levels of people while they were analyzing the pieces of art. New York Museum of Modern Art (MoMa) in the USA conducts studies on Alzheimer patients. This kind of projects indicates that many projects will be conducted to support social consciousness and awareness of university museums. Today, in the era of 4th Industrial Revolution, the importance of university museums is ever-increasing. University museums have started to take a more direct role in scientific projects. The significance of these museums increases day by day as they provide resources for innovation studies and scientific research. Development of university museums parallel with the cultural structure requires new ways to pursue. The attempt of bringing past and future together is influenced by this transformation. The increase in the role of university museums in research areas supports the establishment of university museums in various areas.

In Turkey, my studies on the increase in strengths of university museums in social structure indicate that university museums are not in an underrated situation. Academic studies and academicians play significant roles in dramatic increase in the number of these museums. Devoted

studies of pioneering academicians are very important to increase the recognition and accessibility of university museums in Turkey. Enclosed, isolated university collections were not able to endure stable in front of today’s rapid social transformations. The course of opening new university museums has accelerated in recent years in Turkey. In 2009, I resigned from my position at Bogazici University and was appointed by Istanbul University to establish 12 museums within the scope of the university. Transforming university collections into living institutions of museums is a significant attempt of transformation of past tradition into future. Following the transformation, these traditional and institutional practices about university collections should be redefined.

University museums carry out significant roles and duties to define, progress, distribute, reshape and develop knowledge in scientific domain. As the fundamental institutes of specializations in the modern era, museum studies shed light on the understanding of social service. The mission of university museums expanded to transfer information and ideas with the intention of changing existing thoughts, increasing information and guiding behaviors through communication. By the end of 1990s, the literature on university museums has expanded the role of subjectivity and personalization of interest has strengthened. Today, technological change and economic transformation, and the concerns to protect lost values, assign significant missions to universities. Educational transformation for redefining and archiving of collections has become prominent. Natural sciences, archaeology, ethnology, earth sciences and science collections increasingly included in university museums. Recent studies in various fields such as open-air museums and cultural heritage are increasing day by day parallel with the increase in excavation works at universities. University museums have recently increased the activities to raise social consciousness. They organize permanent exhibitions, educational activities, atelier works and conferences which make them different from traditional understanding of exhibition. Today, technological change and economic transformation, and concerns to protect missing values, assign significant missions to universities. University museums use their social influence to raise social consciousness on cultural and scientific heritage. University museums should be driving forces for universities to increase the existing knowledge and communicate with students and society. University museums conduct joint studies through technology oriented networks which increase cooperation possibilities in the future. University museums are very significant to provide visible, livable, touchable and sensible environment for Generation z, in other words “the internet generation”. There is an increase in their art and exhibition experiences based on interactive placements.

The increase in the studies in digital and interactive media areas within the new museum understanding leads new research areas for university museums. International web based networks support the access and studies on each level of collections. The number of studies in digital and interactive media areas has also increased. New projects on digital archiving have emerged after re-evaluation of university museum collections since 2000. University museums conduct joint studies, which also increased the

collaboration among universities, over technology based networks.

Nationwide web-based networks provide access to the collections and support researches and studies. The use of digital technologies has changed the communication language of universities. University museums have also initiated digital network studies. The University of Oxford has digitally connected university museums through wi-fi connection. University museums have started to support project researches and innovation studies. New museology studies lead to transformation in exhibition and presentation techniques of university museums. The stories of the exhibited objects have also gained importance. The importance of online studies has come to the agenda to share the information easier. Universities should consider this transformation as an opportunity and should prepare themselves for the future. The adaptation of the university museums to this development and transformation should be planned in detail.

Nick Poole defines in his study “What impact will university museums have in 2020?” the five driving forces of universities. These driving forces are democratization of knowledge, market competition, digital technology, global mobility, integration with industry and all of these forces are significant for the future of university museums. Project based studies have created new marketing areas for university museums. Joint projects on the fields of neuro-marketing, brain and health are initiated with university museums. Plenty of museums have conducted new projects with the universities to meet people’s demands. The hypothesis of “Museums are necessary for mental health to perceive what people feel and think” is a result of the recent scientific studies and also revives the importance of joint projects conducted by university museums. The research suggests that many people visit museums for relaxation and regeneration. Furthermore, it can be said that St. Ambulance Wens of Rijks Museum is an inspiration for other museums. Thus, museums have extended their studies on humans, nature and society.

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University museums have started to take a more direct role in scientific projects and innovation based projects. Traditional and institutional structures of universities regarding their own collections have created a competitive environment. With this regard, Britain ranked top six universities: University of Cambridge Fitzwilliam Museum is ranked as the first, Oxford University Ashmolean Museum, Pitt Rivers Museum, London University Courtauld Gallery and Petrie Museum and Glasgow University

Hunterian Museum, respectively. Closed, isolated university collections could not remain stable from Turkey’s rapid social transformation.

In recent years, there is a competition to open new university museums in Turkey. I have also contributed to establish new museums since 1990. In 1992, I was assigned to establish Kandilli Observatory Museum in Bogazici University. I gave consultant for the establishment of İTÜ Mineral Museum (1995), İstanbul University Cerrahpaşa Medical Faculty, Medical History Museum (2003-2013). There were many difficulties during this establishment process, but collaborations and efforts brought the success. I was assigned to establish 12 museums in İstanbul University in 2009. I was assigned to establish Geology Museum (2012), Beyazıt Fire Tower Memorial Museum (2012), Archaeology and Cultural History Museum in İstanbul University. These projects are very significant to reach success in museology area. The cultural heritage was transferred into digital environment, new restoration ateliers were opened and MUZEYUM was established to compete in this environment. Today, İstanbul University has five approved museums. In the future, special areas and specialities will increase in the museology area. Academic studies and academicians play significant roles in dramatic increase in the number of these museums. Devoted studies of pioneering academicians are very important to increase the recognition and accessibility of university museums in Turkey. It is difficult to maintain the sustainability of university museums which established with special efforts.

To establish university museums through the university collections is a significant attempt for transformation of tradition into the future. The numbers of specially designed architectural projects for university museums are rapidly increasing in Turkey. The studies to establish a Contemporary Arts Museum in the Antrepo 5 region instead of Arts and Sculpture Museum of Mimar Sinan University continue. This museum will have the widest university art collection in Turkey in a new area designed by a special architectural project.

Academicians play significant roles to increase the social importance of university museums in Turkey. They have valuable contributions to the development of university museums. I organized the 1st International University Museums Conference at Bogazici University in 1994 with the cooperation of Helsinki University and Bogazici University Museums.

In 2006, Ankara University organized Bekir Onur University Museums and Museology Conference. In 2012, Kocaeli University conducted museum project with the conference of New Perspectives for University Museums in Europe and Turkey and brought university museums together.

1st International University Museums Conference was held at Bogazici University in 1994 and Helsinki University and Bogazici University museums were examined together. International University Museum Association Platform realised with 22 university museums in 2014 with the cooperation of Boğaziçi and İstanbul Universities. Beşiktaş Naval museum host the conference in 2015

with 40 university museums both national and from abroad: Participants from 6 countries (Serbia, Russia, Bulgaria, USA, Korea, Finland) introduced the university museums. Boğaziçi University host the conference.

In 2016, with over 50 university museums, It took place in Trakya University. Participation in 8 countries (Egypt, Serbia, Kosovo, Russia, Cyprus, Bulgaria, USA, Greece) was provided. In 2017, both national and international 56 notices accepted to the conference which will be in Anadolu University. Museum theorists from 8 countries (Russia, Cyprus, Bulgaria, USA, Jordan, Iranian, Spain, Azerbaijan) introduced their university museums

This year, in 2018, the conference was held at Trakya University with 60 participants who indicated us that there is an increase in the interest for university museums. The participating museums from 10 countries (Russia, Bulgaria, Srpska, USA, Iranian, Azerbaijan, Tatarstan, Kazakhstan, France, Indonesia) discussed the problems of university museums in the conference.

In this five year period, increase of the participate number shows the importance that museum workers and scholars give. I am glad to contribute to the structural transforming of university museums through the conferences of University Museum Associations Platform which has been organized since 2014. The valuable contributions, positive feedbacks and energies of our colleagues who attend these conferences will empower the development of university museums.

Conclusion

University museums will transform universities into more valuable, branding institutions in the next century. I hope, in the future, with their valuable contributions to universities, working like educational and research institutes, the number of university museums will increase in the future. University museums have significant importance in terms of social sciences. Universities should rediscover the museums to create new academic funds. Cultural based development of university museums required new developments and improvements in this area. The success of university museums is parallel with the success of their universities. Universities' adaptation to the recent scientific and technological developments as well as rapid structural transformation will also affect university museums. University museums present source for the future youth. University museums will maintain its existence by utilizing environmental factors and adaptation to the transformation.

In the future, universities will transform with the transformations in university museums. Universities transform into alternative structural organizations to maintain contemporary education services. Universities will contribute to too many researches and projects with their university museums. University museums will transform into valuable, branded organizations in the future. Brand value definitions, existing in a competitive environment will bring university museums into new research areas. To institutionalize the cultural heritage of university museums is significant for the development of university

museums. University museums in Turkey are richness of our country. They will contribute today and future with their Professional management studies. I hope the number of university museums will increase in the future to contribute the success of universities and work as education and research institutes

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