



## 'It wasn't all bad': representations of working class cultures within social history museums and their impacts on audiences

*Elizabeth Carnegie*

### Abstract

This article examines the complexities inherent in creating social history displays which honestly represent communities whilst at the same time remaining sensitive to participant's needs and fears of exposure. It considers ways in which oral history collecting to inform displays is subject to self-censorship, community collusion in 'stigma management' and the curatorial decision making process of local government officers. Drawing on material collected for the People's Palace Glasgow and elsewhere it analyzes the ways in which individual responses are used to create notions of community identity, within the framework of the social history museum as voice of local government. Lastly it considers the impacts of such histories on local, tourist and diasporic visitors when the context for such memories (and indeed objects) has been changed by their relationship to the museum.

### Full Text:

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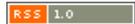
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Art Gallery Identity Modernity Museum Change

Persian Gulf **actor-network theory** children, museums, research, photography

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## FONT SIZE



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Museums – and other institutions that represent our culture, heritage and art – are not excluded from this trend. They may in fact be at the very heart of it. I believe museums (and also archives, galleries, libraries, theatres, art centres, ...) have a place in the 21st century. The ABBA museum in Stockholm is my favourite recent example of engagement done well in gallery. I'm not an ABBA fan, or wasn't when I went to visit the museum 'for professional reasons'. Co-creation is a process in which an institution and its audience work together to create value. The institution does what it does best, the audience does what it does best, and together they achieve something that is

better than the best of either of them. One plus one equals three. History consumed in museums is closer to what might be termed 'public history' than the history that circulates within the academy. Despite the rapid expansion of museum collections throughout the last century

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