

Brainstorming

## Natural History Museums and Anthropocene: The Coming up of a Polyphonic Narrative

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### ABSTRACT

With the example of the National Museum of Natural History in Paris, we will see how the concept of Anthropocene became the structural element for temporary and permanent exhibitions in natural history museums.

We will analyse the context of scientific and social awareness of the ecological crisis and how socially engaged issues became a decisive factor for the narratives and stage design of the renovation project of the Grande Galerie de l' Evolution (GGE), in the late 80' s.

In a new museology context, collaborative works between museologists, architects and scientists resulted in an innovative project.

Of course, there were controversial debates about the detailed content for the last part of the gallery that is dedicated to the human impact on natural evolution: ethical positions opposing objective science or political stands and visitor' s studies;

A new kind of museographical approach was created with the help of René Allio, a well-known artist: through his influence, the stage was not designed to reproduce nature but to make it visible. The use of the inner space whole volume became an essential element in creating the magic aura and in structuring the narrative. The initial success has gone from strength to strength. Since its opening, the GGE became a museological and museographical icon and inspired many natural history museums renovations. Nowadays blending science with art is no more an option but a cornerstone in natural history museum pedagogy.

It helps to understand the visitor' s experience: it is integral and relies on numerous parameters. All senses are involved and lead to experience an unpredictable novelty involving emotional, semantic, sensory, symbolic and aesthetic dimensions. But over all, this study helps us to better understand the constraints, influences or restrictions that weight heavily and inevitably on all Anthropocene concerns exhibitions.