

Conference:

Challenge the Past/Diversify the Future. A Critical Approach to Visual and Multi-Sensory Representations for History and Culture.

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Abstract Title: Museum homepages as a tool for challenging the past and diversifying the future

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to critically examine how museums can use their homepages as tools in order to handle problematic cultural heritage in their care. Focus will be laid on locally established museums, which faces problems when the first generation of enthusiasts are succeeded by a younger, and maybe more professionalised staff. Such a change of generations may coincide with an urgent need to deal with historiography as well as with a fading public and academic interest. How may a museum, in a situation of that kind, use its homepage as an arena for handling a narration which might be perceived as *the story* or as deeply problematic and misleading? What possibilities and problems may a homepage and digital technology offer, in order to engage existing supporters as well as new groups of information providers and seekers? What sorts of traditional and untraditional sources of information are possible to make available and in what form, considering limited economical means and copyright? What freedom of agency is the museum willing to allow its homepage visitors, in order to make more voices heard, and previously neglected perspectives visible? Consequently, what types of control does the museum want to uphold? Is the liberty of action and effect, necessarily more limited for a small museum, than for a large one? To some museums these are urgent matters which needs to be handled in order to maintain their collections as important cultural heritage, worth financing.

As an example the Mjellby Art Museum/the Halmstad Group museum will be discussed, supplemented with some Swedish and foreign examples.