



HOUSE OF
EUROPEAN HISTORY

Collect, Curate & Communicate

Sharing a transnational history of Europe

Tuesday 7 June, NEMO webinar

The Webinar

At the House of European History in Brussels a European story is being told through both multinational and multilingual content.

- But how does the museum accommodate such diversity?
- And how does the museum team collect objects, curate exhibitions, and develop and engage audiences, in a truly transnational way?
- How exactly does the museum contribute to an inclusive understanding of the past, and as a result, inclusive societies today?

Museum, diversity, inclusion

ICOM definition? "A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage.

Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability.

They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing. "



HOUSE OF
EUROPEAN HISTORY

A few facts

Opened for the visitors in
May **2017**

Already received around
600000 visitors

A museum under the
auspices of the **European
Parliament**

A **free** museum

A **permanent** exhibition on
recent European history

Temporary exhibitions, a
touring exhibition project,
an **online** collection and a
virtual tour.





Mission

Become a leading museum on **transnational phenomena** which have shaped the continent.

Provide a **forum for learning, reflection, and debate**, open to audiences from all generations and backgrounds.

Document and preserve **European memories of shared historical events** and raise awareness about their variety and diversity.

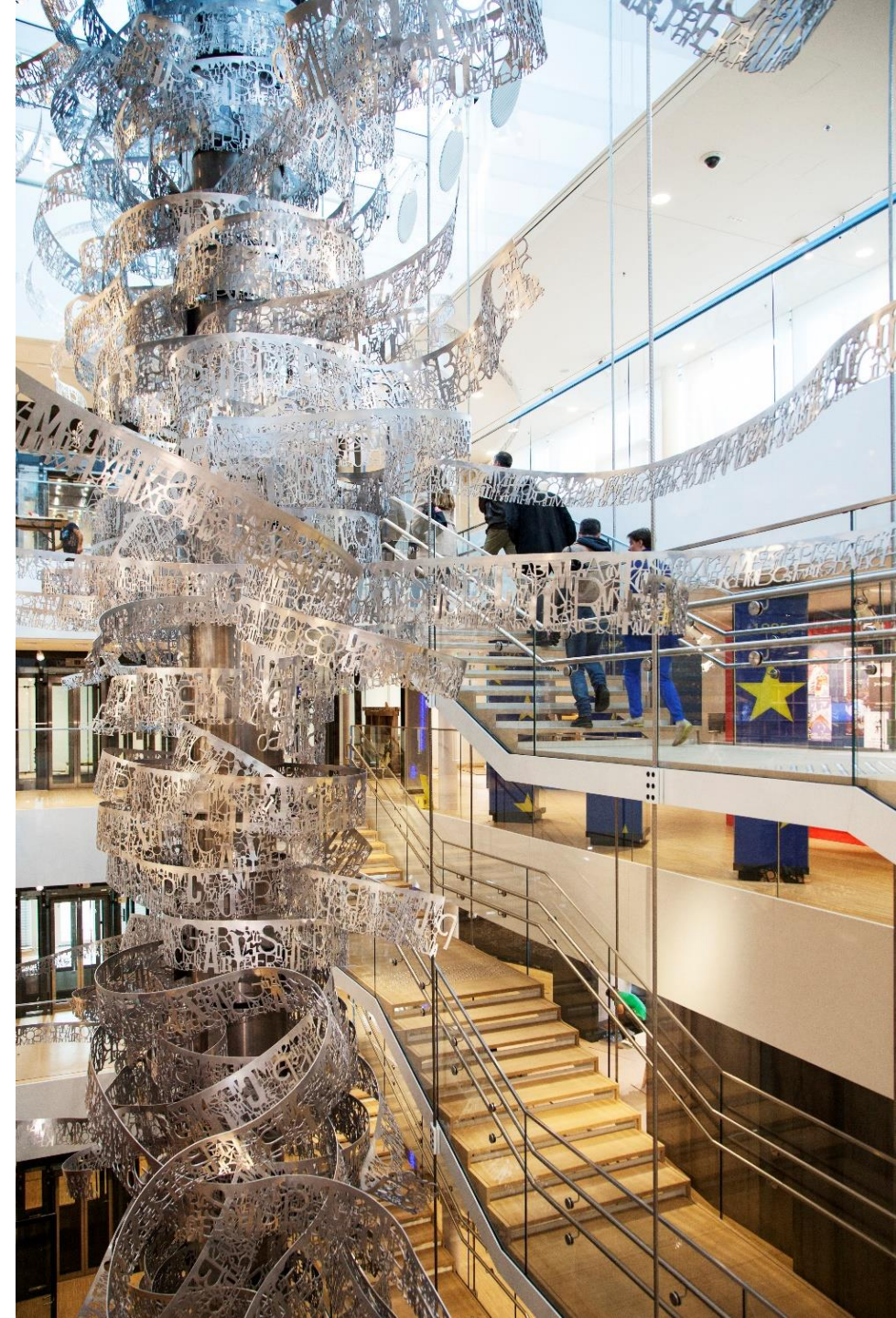


The challenges:

1. A transnational history of Europe, **not a sum** of national histories
2. Tell the story in the **24 official languages** of the EU
3. **Lack of** a museum collection
4. Reaching out to **the whole of Europe**

The solutions:

1. Clear **criteria** for the stories and objects exhibited and academic independence.
2. All museum texts are in a **multilingual tablet**
3. **Objects lent** from 200 institutions in Europe.
4. **Onsite** and **online** programmes





Collecting

“**Sourcing**” and
“**Evidencing**”: 250 visits in
nearly 30 countries - big and
small museums, storage
facilities, etc.

Addressing the **variety** of
professional standards,
backgrounds and mentalities

Finding objects of museum
quality, complementary to
one another, and with a
European dimension, either
intrinsically or when placed
alongside similar objects of
other European countries







Curating

The **main criteria** for exhibition content are:

The process, event or development should have **originated in Europe**.

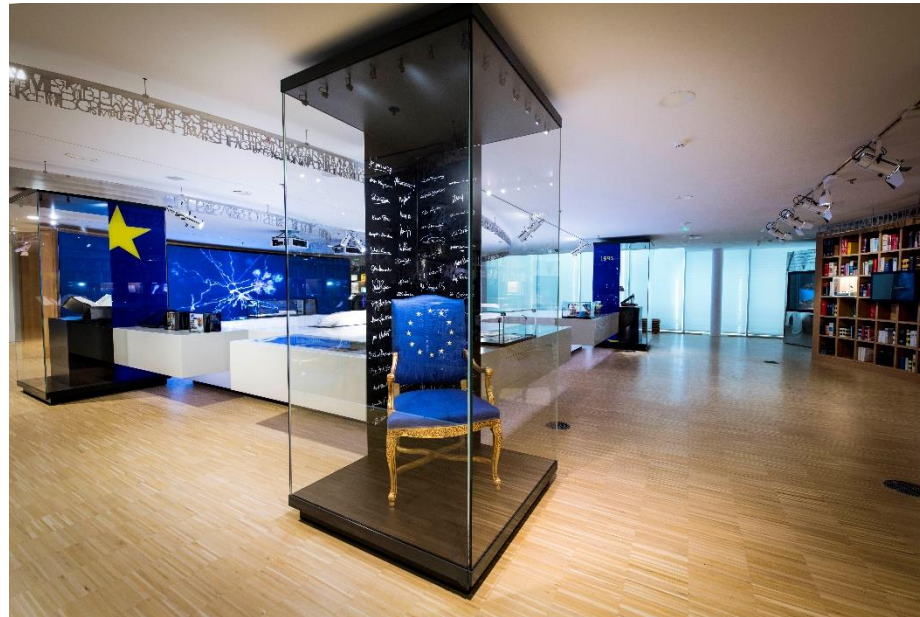
It has to have spread **across Europe** over a period of time.

It is still **of relevance today**.





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Communication

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History in **24 languages**

Stimulate engagement with **multiple perspectives**: a safe space to address complex and sometimes sensitive history

Questioning the past to understand the present through **active learning**

Spirit of **collaboration** to act as a forum, a house for encounters and exchange





Resources

- Audio files exhibition contents
- "Stories of our objects" magazine
- Website and YouTube channel
- Guidebook, catalogues and "Creating the House" publication

On-going projects

- History of waste in Europe
- European Democracy Sites
- Evaluation, participatory history
- Touring exhibition





HOUSE OF
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Fake for Real. A History of Forgery and Falsification

Touring Exhibition





Facts

- **It is an adaptation of the exhibition with the same title, which took place in the House of European History from October 2020 to January 2022.**
- **Content: Introduction and 16 case studies that cover 6 topics of significant fakes and forgeries throughout European History.**
- **The case studies are put in chronological order, but also grouped according to types of forgeries which reflect the aspirations and anxieties of specific epochs. It starts with medieval times and finishes with current issues.**



Aims of the exhibition

- **Relevance:**

It addresses one of the currently most discussed subjects – fake news/disinformation - and puts it in a broad historical context.

- **Education:**

The exhibition should foster critical thinking and accentuate the need of fact checking. It should raise awareness of the relevance of expertise, and encourage visitors to seek out reliable sources of information.





The narrative of the exhibition

- **We are surrounded by disinformation and fake news, but we are not condemned to be deceived.**
- **Each era fakes what it values the most. Although certain types of fakes existed all throughout human history (counterfeit money, art forgery, fake documents), each era experienced particular types of fakes.**



The leading questions of the exhibition

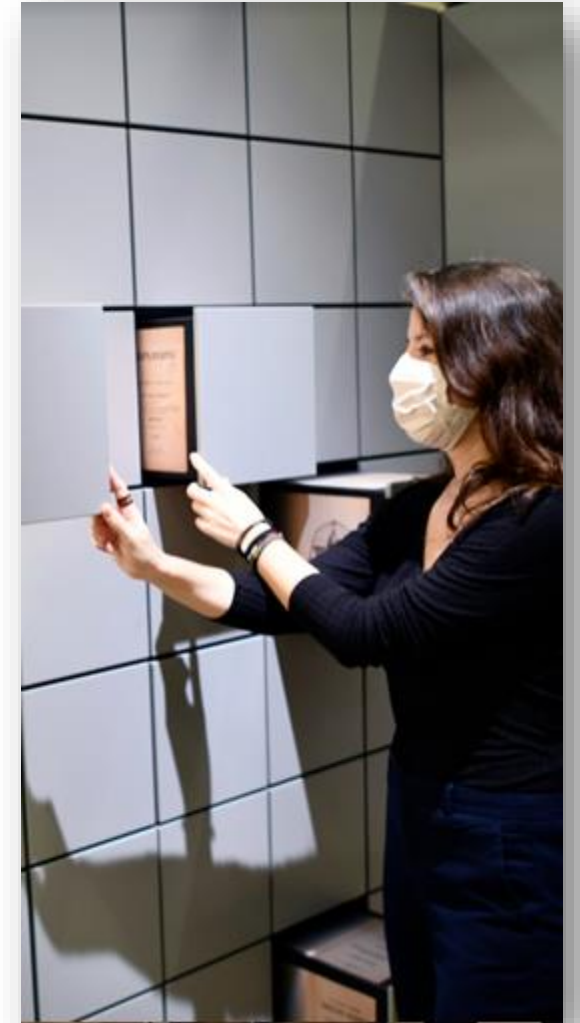
- What have been the mechanisms behind significant forgeries and hoaxes in history?
- How could some 'fake news' claim validity for a very long time? And how were they exposed in the end?
- Can we defend ourselves from the mass of false information?
- How to defend the role of experts in the world in which catchy, loudly expressed statements become viral in the media?





Objectives of the narrative

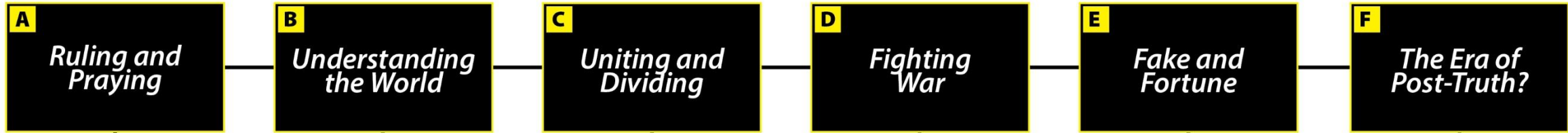
- To show that 'fake news' has a long standing tradition in history
- To allow the visitors to reflect on the human tendency to believe in certain untrue statements
- To raise awareness of the need for critical thinking and fact-checking
- To underline the role of experts, whom are so often undermined in today's world.



Touring Exhibition

Fake (f)or Real. A History of Forgery and Falsification


6 topics and 16 case studies




1. Condemned to be forgotten




2. Forged legitimisation. Donation of Constantine



3. Cult of (fake) Relics




4. Far away and fantastical



5. Freedom to print




6. Forging science: Piltdown man




7. Forging history: Patriotic fakes



8. Conspiracy theories: The "Elders of Zion"




9. False testimonies in misuse of law. Dreyfus affair



10. Lifesaving forgeries



11. Deceiving the Enemy



12. Denying crime. Katyn massacre




13. Forging a Masterpiece



14. Faking brands



15. Mocking capitalism. "Czech Dream" provocation




16. Counterfeit Currency




a. Interactive/serious game: Fake invaders



b. Manual) interactive: Fact, opinion, manipulation?



c. Interactive virtual sensor projection: In our bubbles



d. Professional trolling Bad news game





Planning

- **Destination: 9 EU countries**
- **Timeframe of the touring exhibition: autumn 2023 – Dec 2026**
- **Target group: urban citizens from secondary school students to educated adults aged between 30-45 years old.**



Success of “Fake for Real” in Brussels (2020-2022)

- **Great visibility and enthusiastic feedback from the media**
- **Satisfaction of our visitors, most of whom were visiting HEH for the first time**
- **Public events and educational programs addressed to schools and teachers**
- **... all of this despite the challenges of mandatory booking, smaller groups visiting the museum, absence of tourists and no guided tours!**





Features of the touring exhibition

- **Turn-key exhibition:** The House of European History will provide the hosting venues all the physical assets required
- **A condensed exhibition with approximately 60 objects** from House of European History's collection, multimedia, games and mechanical interactives.





Contact details

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Thank you for your attention

