

Colloquium
“Museums of the 21st Century”
Thursday 1st and Friday 2nd of June 2017

The Museums of Art and History of Geneva are organising a two-day colloquium on the future of museums that will address simultaneously cultural, social, architectural and political concerns.

It has become commonplace to observe the major upheavals affecting the museum world over the past thirty or so years. The demographic changes, urbanisation, digitisation, and globalisation, etc., which have been instrumental in bringing about a rapid redefinition of our relationship to the world, have also been factors contributing to a fundamental shift within the museum world. This could be summarized as the deconstruction, at least in part, of a classical and unchanging museum model. Although this old model tends to die out today, no new archetype has yet arisen to take its place, at least on a consistent basis, and the 21st century museum still appears in need to be defined.

Thursday 1st of June – Museum of Art and History of Geneva

The last decade has brought about new social, political and economic challenges, partly because of the financial crisis and partly because of an increased digitalisation. The demand for change and the need for adaptation are especially visible in museums, traditional harbourers of our culture and knowledge.

In the 21st century, collection growth is spurred exponentially by new knowledge and new technology making archaeological and scientific discoveries more accessible, by the need to safeguard collections and by an increase in the production, scale and complexity of works of art to be preserved and displayed. As part of a massive global trend, the new developments in design, technology and the ways of enjoying and learning about culture are changing museums.

Friday 2nd of June – Pavillon Sicli

The architectural and urban importance of the museum in the city is at the heart of interconnected issues which imply social choices, economic hopes and urban planning problems.

The museum, as a building, is a multifarious symbol. In several respects, the choice of an architect and the nature of his or her creation are inevitably the subject of heated debate or often fierce controversy.

In the end, which of the architectural programme's concerns are of paramount importance for the creation of the museum building? Its integration into the city and its conformity with the urban identity? Its ability to anticipate the future needs of the institution and its users? Can the development of a museum or a museum district actually contribute to the emergence of new polarities and new economic dynamics? How can the optimal interrelation between the architectural and cultural projects be achieved?