

## *Introduction*

# THE MARITIME MUSEUM IN TIME AND SPACE

MEMORIES AND ARTEFACTS ASSOCIATED WITH SHIPPING AND SEAFARING are collected, sorted, categorized and (re)presented in maritime museums all over the world. The narratives that these museums stage can depict relations between the local and the global, land and ocean, and humans and nature, as well as relations between life and death. The stories include military leaders and mariners, shipowners and sailors, seafarers and land dwellers, fishermen and tourists, emigrants and refugees. Global trade and national economies depend on shipping, both today and historically, and maritime narratives play an important part in the creation of national identities – a process to which the maritime museums contribute. And yet, for some reason, there is almost no research on the category of the maritime museum, and the few articles that can be found confirm that critical museum studies, which, for decades, has scrutinized archaeological, ethnographic and natural history museums, for example, has not addressed maritime museums (Tibbles 2012: 160, Leffler 2004: 24, Hicks 2001: 159). Since these make up a large group of museums worldwide, we need to critically analyse how they depict the world, nations, shipping and people through maritime cultural history. In this book, I therefore analyse, compare and discuss the stories told at national maritime museums in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland and Iceland.

## **Museum and Place**

Geographically, maritime museums are often located in a borderland where land and sea meet: in old harbours, shipyards or areas close to shipping lanes. Next to the museum, there may be a pier with ships and smaller boats that belong to the museum, and remnants of historical activities

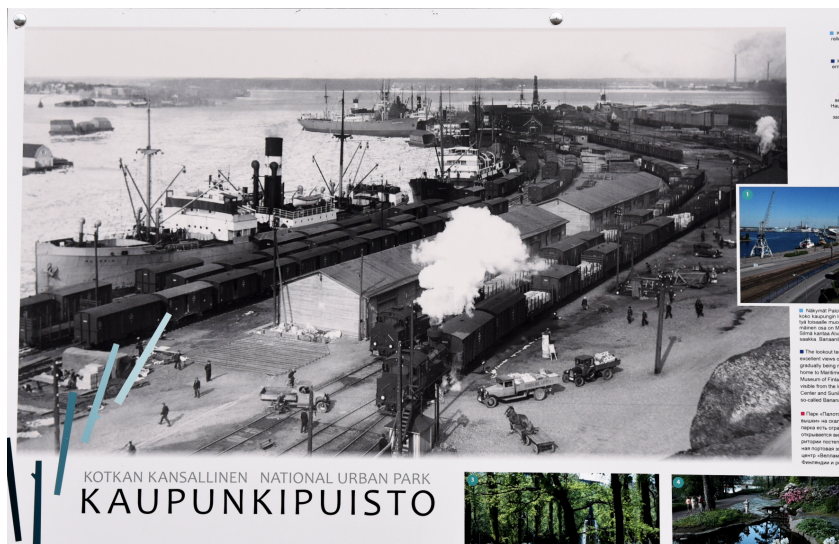
can often be identified in the surroundings. A characteristic trait of the maritime museum is thus that it is often located in a contemporary and/or historical environment from which its collections and narratives originate. Through architecture, design and (re)presentations, the museum can be directly linked to the site and its history. For this reason, I choose to examine the maritime museums in this study in terms of relationships between landscape, architecture, museum and collections – relationships created both in the external landscapes and in the interior landscapes of the museum building. A good deal of research has been done on museum architecture and the meanings generated in the interactions between architecture and collections (see, for example, Naredi-Rainer 2004, Searing 2004, Newhouse 2007, McClellan 2008, Self 2014, Hoffman 2016), but it has almost exclusively focused on art museums and galleries. Knowledge is lacking about other museum genres and their specific characteristics, problems and assets (Fleming 2005: 58).

Through this book, I wish to initiate discussion about the different layers of meaning that the architecture of museums and their placement in historical environments bring to the narratives. The Maritime Museum of Finland is a good illustrative example. It is located in Maritime Centre Vellamo in the old harbour of Kotka. The building that houses the maritime centre follows the softly rounded quayside and rises toward the navigable fairway and the new harbour. From a certain angle, the lines of the quay and the museum building blend together, merging into the shape of a huge, swelling wave. A couple of harbour cranes and some railroad tracks are visible remnants of the activities that once flourished at this site. The lines of the harbour cranes, both near and far, are silhouetted against the sky and two cranes stand directly adjacent to the museum building. Walking toward the museum, visitors are presented with two ship bells that are lined up with a missile and a rescue boat. There is also a poster with pictures, maps and texts. The texts inform visitors that the harbour area is part of Kotka National Urban Park. They explain that the park tells the story of a fortress and border town that was first established to make use of resources from the Baltic Sea and the Kymijoki River, with the town gradually evolving into a multifaceted port and industrial city. The text is illustrated by a large black-and-white photo of Kotka's old harbour when it was still in use, sometime in the early 1900s. The photo depicts an environment bursting with activity and filled with freight cars, stacked goods, buildings and ships moored at the quay. People are walking in the area and a couple of trucks roll up and are met by a horse wagon. White steam pours from a locomotive. The photograph depicts a lively place where life on land meets life at sea. It is a borderland where the local everyday life

of the harbour city interacts with global shipping. And this location has been chosen for Maritime Centre Vellamo, which houses the Maritime Museum of Finland, the Museum of Kymenlaakso and the Coast Guard Museum.



**Figure 0.1.** Maritime Centre Vellamo in Kotka, Finland, 2017. © Annika Bünz



**Figure 0.2.** On a sign located in the harbour area, visitors can see a photograph showing how the area looked when Kotka's old harbour was in use. 2017. © Annika Bünz

The architect Simon Unwin argues that *identification of place* is the essence of what we call architecture (2009: 28). Architecture is an intellectual activity that typically also involves physically changing a part of the world through the construction of a building, Unwin states, but it does not always have to entail physically building something. As identification of place, architecture may simply consist in recognizing that a specific location can be distinguished as a *place*. *Places* can be identified based on elements of the landscape, such as a cave or the shade of a tree. When a site is identified, a choice can be made to use it for something. The shade of the tree can become a *resting place* and the cave a *hiding place*. The identification, recognition and use of a *place* is often a communal activity, with the *place* being associated with collective memories, for practical, social, historical, mythological or religious reasons (Unwin 2009: 69).

In the city of Kotka, a *place* was first identified and used as a port, and there were probably several different practical reasons for choosing this particular location. When the shipping activities were relocated to other areas, the old harbour was instead identified as a *place* for a maritime centre that, among other things, houses a national and a regional museum. Both museums have a historical connection to the identified and used *museum place*, which now coexists with the *old-harbour place*. The museums are located in the kind of environment where the collections belong, and are in dialogue with what remains of the historical activities. The newly designed architecture of the maritime centre is intertwined with the older buildings and constructions, as well as with both historical and contemporary operations. Furthermore, the objects in the collections are not only displayed in exhibition halls, but have also been arranged in the surrounding landscape. Thus, the maritime centre and the museums not only communicate with visitors through the exhibitions that are staged within the museum walls. They communicate in the environments where the museums are located, and this particular *place*, which has been identified and chosen for the building, is itself an important part of the stories being told about maritime history and seafarers' lives and realities. A visit to the Maritime Museum of Finland begins long before the visitor has entered the premises of the maritime centre; it includes the *place* and the scenarios that one can experience when discovering and approaching the museum building.

## Semiotic Resources; Modes of Communication

In the inner landscape of a museum building, visitors encounter reception areas, shops, restaurants and exhibition halls. The architecture frames the



institution and provides spaces and conditions for the museum's activities and the design of exhibitions. Museum exhibitions are narratives that are organized *in* the room. They consist of spatiality, materials, colours, sound, light, images, artefacts and props. They are a four-dimensional storyscape and meanings are created when visitors perceive and experience the room and all the materials in it, both through their senses and by *being* and *moving* in the room (Bünz 2015: 183). The exhibited artefacts can be considered in their own right, but the design of the exhibition has the potential to create additional meanings for the objects depending on how they are placed and combined in the room (Hooper-Greenhill 2000: 103, 115; Moser 2006; Psarra 2009: 4, Bünz 2018c) and how lighting, sound and material have been arranged (Falk and Dierking 2000: 124, Roppola 2012, Bünz 2015).

Based on a social-semiotic theory of multimodal communication, the many kinds of media and materials that are used in the design of a museum exhibition can be examined as modes of communication (Kress 2010). Modes, according to Gunther Kress, are socially shaped and culturally given semiotic resources for creating meaning, such as images, writing, layout, music, gestures, speech, moving pictures, audio tracks and 3D objects. Kress emphasizes that the materiality of the resources is an important component of the semiotic work. Cultures choose 'material' that appears to be useful or necessary for meaning making; by material, Kress means, for example, sound, clay, movement (of parts) of the body, surfaces, wood and stone (Kress 2010: 82). When it comes to staged storyscapes at museums, the conditions that the architecture generates can also be considered a semiotic resource, as can the visitor's presence and movements in the room (Roppola 2012: 211, Bünz 2015: 298).

One museum where the properties of the architecture are actively incorporated and used in the design of exhibitions is the M/S Maritime Museum of Denmark in Helsingør. The museum building is located underground in an old disused shipyard and surrounds a nineteenth-century dry dock. Inside the museum's premises, the exhibitions are staged in a sequence that follows a trail around the long and narrow cavity. The first thing that visitors encounter on the way into the row of exhibitions is a poetic staging commented upon by a quotation from Hans Christian Andersen's 'The Little Mermaid' (1837):

Far out in the ocean, the water is as blue as petals on the prettiest cornflower, and as clear as the clearest crystal, but so very, very deep; deeper than any cable can fathom. Many church steeples would have to be piled one upon the other to reach from the bottom and above the surface. There dwell the sea people.

In the middle of the open, bright, blue room, there is a red buoy; it is slightly tilted and rotates slowly around a fixed point on the floor. The gently rocking marker can disturb the visitor's sense of balance, as if it is the room, and not the buoy, that is moving. On two of the surrounding walls, clips of moving images are screened. The film sequences are cropped with a round frame, as if they were being viewed through a telescope. The images appear in different places and gradually glide across the walls in various directions. The sounds and the images convey mystery and tension, a sense of drama, and the compositions suggest a sequence of events. The spectators, however, have to use their imagination to put together a narrative. Regardless of what storyline the visitor imagines, the design creates an atmosphere in the room that suggests that those who continue further into the exhibitions will encounter a world that is separate from and unlike everyday life outside the museum.

In order to continue beyond the introduction, along the trail of permanent exhibitions, visitors must pass through a narrow passage that is created by the architecture. The passage leads to the first exhibition, titled 'Our Sailors'. It starts with the quotation: 'There are three types of people: The living, the dead and mariners. (Anacharsis, Greek philosopher, ca. 600 BC)'. Furthermore, it is stated that the way of life at sea is so foreign that it has bred many myths that are part of our common culture today. In other words, the poetic staging with the rocking buoy has prepared visitors



**Figure 0.3.** M/S Maritime Museum of Denmark. The red buoy slowly rocks back and forth. 2017. © Annika Bünz



**Figure. 0.4.** The architecture presents an open space and a narrow passage. 2017.  
© Annika Bünz

to step into what is presented as the world of a mythical seafarer, and the spatial properties of the architecture have been actively employed to create the experience of a passage from one world to another.

## Linking Together the Outer and Inner Landscapes of the Museum

These analytical descriptions of two maritime museums illustrate what I will discuss and examine in the first part of this book. The analyses begin in the environment where the museum is located and then continue through the door into the interior landscape generated by the architecture, where I explore the staged scenes and storyscapes created by the museum staff. Passing through the door and crossing the threshold between outside and inside is an example of what Juhani Pallasmaa calls the primary feelings that architecture creates. Another primary feeling is the link that is created with the surrounding landscape when a person looks out through a window (Pallasmaa 1996: 452). I will thereby also examine whether any links are created between the museums' surroundings and the staged and designed narratives within their walls, that is, whether and if so how the outer and inner landscapes of the museums are connected in the narratives.

The analyses of the designed exhibitions that I present in this first part of the book address general relationships between spatiality, design and artefacts that appear clearly when one walks through the inner landscape of the building. In the second part of the book, I will go more deeply into the designed narratives, asking questions about *what* the museums are communicating, *how* it is presented, and whether it is in line with the meanings suggested by the museum and the architecture as a whole, or indeed if other meanings appear in the exhibitions' texts and showcases. As stated above, maritime museums are often located next to water; the maritime narratives describe life at sea, but also life in coastal communities and port cities, both at home and in foreign countries. The questions to which I seek answers in this book are: what meanings are conveyed in the maritime museums about relations between humans and the ocean, between life on land and life at sea? How are encounters between the foreign and the familiar, between 'Us' and 'the Others', described? What meanings are conveyed about encounters, influences, conflicts and friendships between continents, nations and cultures? What norms and identities are created?

## Five Nordic Countries from the Perspective of the Maritime Museum

The museums that I will study are the national maritime museums of the five Nordic countries, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland and Iceland. Of Sweden's three national maritime museums, I have chosen to include the Maritime Museum in Stockholm (MM-Sw) and the Naval Museum in Karlskrona (Nav-Sw). I made this decision because both are interesting to investigate in relation to the framework of this study. The other museums are M/S Maritime Museum of Denmark in Helsingør (M/S-Dk), Reykjavík Maritime Museum, Iceland (MM-Ic), the Norwegian Maritime Museum in Oslo (MM-No), and the Maritime Museum of Finland in Kotka (MM-Fi), which is part of Maritime Centre Vellamo (MCV-Fi). All of these museums have a national mandate to preserve and depict the pasts, presents and futures of maritime technology, societies and cultures.

My reason for choosing these five nations is that, throughout history, they have been closely linked with each other in unions and coalitions and through the back-and-forth movement of national borders. Iceland was founded by settlers who migrated from Scandinavia in the ninth century. From 1262 until the Second World War, the Icelanders were ruled first by the King of Norway and later by the King of Denmark. In 1944, Iceland unilaterally declared itself a republic. A union between the kingdoms of Denmark, Norway and Sweden was declared in 1380. The Swedish king-

dom left and re-entered the union several times before finally leaving for good in 1521. The Denmark–Norway union, ruled from Copenhagen, lasted until 1814, when, after a war with Sweden, Denmark was forced to cede Norway to Sweden. The Sweden–Norway union lasted until 1905. Finland was a part of Sweden from around 1157 to 1809. Throughout history, Finland has been characterized by its location between Sweden to the west and Russia to the east, but the influences from the West have dominated, and, from early on, Finland was part of the cultural sphere of the West.

Today the five Nordic countries are all independent nations. Denmark, Sweden and Finland are members of the European Union (EU) and Finland is also a member of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). Norway and Iceland are not members of the EU, but as a result of agreements made in the 1950s, the populations of the five Nordic countries are free to cross the borders between the countries without passport. Finland has two official languages, Finnish and Swedish, but a large majority of the population speak Finnish. The official languages of the other four countries, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and Icelandic, all have a common origin in a language spoken in prehistoric Scandinavia. People in Sweden, Norway and Denmark can communicate with each other fairly easily because their languages are very similar. Icelandic is a bit different, but one can still discern the common origin. Finnish belongs to another language family and is related to Karelian and Estonian, for example.

Throughout history, museums have played an important role in the production and representation of nations and in the making of ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson [1983] 2016) within them. Peggy Levitt concludes that museums have helped to create uniform ‘teams’ of millions of people who never really meet, by staging in collections and exhibitions the knowledge, customs and traditions that they declare to be held in common. Even today, museums on every continent exhibit collections of paintings, furniture and other decorative objects and inform visitors that these selected artefacts represent a nation. Each type of museum participates in some way – intentionally or unintentionally – in the creation of citizenship, staging the nation from slightly different angles. ‘National’ collections of paintings, beautiful objects and material culture tell us something about how nations represent themselves both inwardly and for outsiders, Levitt states, and the ethnographic objects that have been collected by colonizers and explorers tell us what the collectors want people to know about the world beyond the nation. As representations of ‘constituencies’, the experiences of specific groups are arranged in the museums’ showcases, but the arrangements also reveal something about how each group stands

in relation to the nation as a whole (Levitt 2015: 2–3). Inspired by Levitt's work, I will argue that maritime museums stage the maritime world and reality as a national narrative from the specific perspective of maritime cultural history, while also showing how the maritime societies and cultures relate to the nation (and world) in general.

Asking what kinds of citizens museums create in today's global world, Levitt demonstrates how the globalization of the museum world influences local institutions and how the local speaks back, exploring how museum staff worldwide think and act in relation to nationalism and globalism. She notes that, in her material, she has not found any museum that depicts only a national or a global narrative. Instead, the nation is always displayed through images of the cosmopolitan and the international narrative always includes something about the nation. The institutions can all, according to Levitt, be placed on a continuum of cosmopolitanism and nationalism (2015: 2–3). In this book, I will investigate how the Nordic national maritime museums combine the national and the global.

Phyllis Leffler emphasizes that the narratives conveyed at the maritime museums are relevant both nationally and internationally, and that the museums have an important capability to shape national awareness. Leffler has carried out a comparative study of maritime museums in the United Kingdom and the United States, and one conclusion she draws is that although these museums have traditionally focused on objects that belong to the sea, well-known naval leaders and maritime art, many maritime museums in these two nations have begun to engage with issues of 'race', gender and class in narratives of inequality, domination, hegemony and elitism. By looking inside the nation (at issues such as ethnicity, class and immigration) and at issues that cross national borders (globalization, the slave trade and the expansion of empires), UK and US museum staff have made room in the maritime museums for talking about social history. At the same time, however, the two nations on either side of the Atlantic create unique national identities, values and even myths about their national characteristics (Leffler 2004: 24). The Nordic national maritime museums are, of course, also devoted to objects that belong to the sea, and maritime art is displayed at these museums, though to varying extents. Naval leaders are depicted at the Naval Museum in Karlskrona, while the other museums focus on merchant vessels, shipping companies, the fishing industry, seafaring and seafarers. In the second part of the book, I will examine whether and how the six museums engage with social history and relations within the nation and across national borders, as well as engaging with questions of how the maritime museums participate in creating national identities and myths.

## Museums and Architecture: Making Order of Space and Time

Michaela Giebelhausen emphasizes the relationship between the museum and architecture, and argues that the museum *is* the architecture; the architectural design is what gives the museum meaning (Giebelhausen 2006: 42, see also Roppola 2012: 189–90, Moser 2010: 24). In other words, it is not possible to separate the museum from the building that houses it; nor can the architecture be separated from the institution it frames. The museum buildings are, of course, influenced by trends and fashions within architecture and by notions of what architecture should be and do; the museums are inevitably a part of the history of architecture. At the same time, the idea of what a museum should be has also changed throughout history and therefore one can talk about specific trends within museum architecture. In this book, I will not discuss architectural-historical categorizations and styles in general, but I must, to some extent, relate changing forms of museum architecture over time and how they are linked with notions of how objects should be displayed and what kinds of narratives should be presented. With that said, the analyses in this book will first and foremost examine architecture as a meaningful semiotic resource that is an important part of the narratives conveyed by the museums.

When analysing the relationships between the museum, the building and the landscape in which it is situated, I draw on phenomenological architectural theory. From this starting point, I argue that museums and architecture both basically involve arranging human existence in time and space. Mari Hvattum notes that the art of building throughout history has been centred practically and theoretically around the human body, on the one hand, and the cosmos, on the other hand (2015: 48). Phenomenological architectural theory defines architecture as the means for humans to relate to the world and reality, and as a tool for organizing their existence. According to Pallasmaa, architecture is fundamentally involved in the mutual dependence of dimensions of reality, such as the dialectic between external and internal spatiality, the physical and the spiritual, the material and the mental, and the unconscious and conscious priorities of the senses (2012: 19).

As mentioned above, Unwin defines architecture as the identification of place, and the core of this identification consists of ‘geometries of being’, which describe the different social and practical properties of the world in which people exist, move and interact with each other and the environment (2009: 69). The architect and the user create and use architecture together in the world in which they exist and move (Unwin 2009: 131,



138–39). ‘Architecture is the practical, poetic and philosophical art by which we organise and give form to space; it is the medium by which we make sense of our world spatially and physically’ (Unwin 2014: 5).

Architecture is largely about creating frames. Buildings frame three-dimensional spaces that also include aspects of time. Architecture creates boundaries between inside and outside, and the product of the architect’s work is a set of multidimensional frames that can comprise many different layers (Unwin 2009: 103–4). Sophia Psarra argues that by creating relationships between three-dimensional spaces and abstract frameworks of rules, architecture arranges both conceptual and perceptual layers of order. It thus expresses meaning and participates in the construction of meanings by arranging spatial and social relations (Psarra 2005: 2; Unwin 2014: 5). In other words, architecture articulates meanings (Pallasmaa 2015: 54) and it can make allusions, induce metaphors (Unwin 2009: 6; Pallasmaa 2015: 54), provoke emotional responses (Unwin 2014: 5), create narratives (Psarra 2009; Coats 2012; Unwin 2014: 3) and even affect who we think we are (Unwin 2014: 5).

With regard to the relationship between architecture and the museum, the design of the building determines the conditions of the museum visit, both conceptually and physically (Giebelhausen 2006: 42). In the interior of a building, the spatial organization also generates relations (1) between *galleries (exhibitions)*, determining how visitors can explore them, (2) between *artefacts*, determining how visitors can perceive and read them, and (3) between *visitors*, creating the conditions for co-presence and meetings (Tzortzi 2015: 2); and further, the placement of the collections creates relations in the room (4) between *visitors* and *artefacts* (Bünz 2018c: 120). Therefore, the architecture of the museum is not an empty vessel; it is an important part of the museum’s narratives. The museum staff can choose to *work with* the architecture and allow it highlight messages, or instead adopt strategies to counteract and perhaps even hide what the architecture communicates, with the help of designed elements, props, lighting and so on.

But the relationship between the museum and architecture does not end with how the building frames the museum in material and meaning-bearing structures that provide the conditions for the exhibition design. The museum practices of collecting, sorting and categorizing are, like architecture, ways of gathering and arranging space and time in order to understand humanity’s relationship with the world. The museums create (re)presentations of fields of knowledge, geographical locations, historical eras and events, contemporary and future visions, the universe and humanity. In the phase of collecting, choices are necessarily made that de-

termine what things are considered important or unimportant to collect. Decisions are then made about *which* artefacts to display, *how* to exhibit them and *what* to tell about them. The description that Pallasmaa gives of the basic function of architecture (2012: 19) is just as good a description of the museum. It deals with metaphysical questions about the self and the world, inside and outside, time and duration, life and death. The architectural design and the museum together domesticate endless time and boundless space, enabling them to be tolerated, inhabited and understood by human beings.

## Creation and Re-creation of Space and Place

Suzanne MacLeod has investigated the various actors and processes involved in a museum project and argues that the groups working at the museums are excluded from the history of museum making. Instead, specific stories about museum buildings and architects are prioritized (MacLeod 2013: 7). This leads to museum architecture being discussed and valued only as the product of the architect's work, while the actual creators and users of the building are forgotten, which MacLeod sees as a problem (2013: 176). In line with MacLeod's reasoning, I wish to generate knowledge about the contexts in which the museum was built and the architecture has been used and transformed by the museum staff and visitors, and in which the building is a part of the staging and use of the *place* where it is situated. MacLeod emphasizes that the interior of the museum is created through a collection of practices and a system of knowledge. The museum's inner landscape is an environment with its own history; it consists of spaces that are active in the creation of meaning and open to change (MacLeod 2005: 1). The people who use the architecture are not merely an audience for the 'stories' that the building tells; they are characters involved in the telling (Unwin 2014: 3).

At cultural-history museums, objects and texts are almost always arranged with various types of designed elements, such as temporary walls, showcases and props, as well as sounds, pictures, films and so on. Visitors are guided through the exhibitions by elements in the room, by generated perspectives, and by created volumes or frames consisting of actual constructions or suggested spatialities (Falk and Dierking 2000: 124). The staff not only stage exhibitions; they also utilize the spaces that the architecture offers and create lecture halls, museum shops, play corners and places to eat a packed lunch. The museum visitors in turn transform the spaces by how they use them and move in them (Toon 2005: 35). Unwin

argues that thinking about architecture as identification of *place* gives rise to the notion that architecture is an activity performed by more than one individual (2014: 29) and that ‘architecture is penetrated by the people whose activities it accommodates’ (2014: 31), which means that the museum building is penetrated by the staff, the events and activities organized by the institution, and also by the ways in which the museum visitors use the arranged spaces and exhibits. There will be *places* proposed by the architect, *places* created by the staff and *places* identified by the visitors. In other words, there are always negotiations about meanings in a reality in which people and their surroundings mutually shape each other. Tricia Austin puts it like this:

This position implies that the physical and cultural context of the museum and the gallery, the architecture, the collection, the curators, the layout, the lighting, the typography, the materials, colours, forms chosen for the design, the media, the sound and the visitors’ expectations and behaviours all have a part to play in producing and sustaining the meaning of the place. (2012: 109)

## Staged Narratives

Narrative is a fundamental ingredient in all work related to museums (e.g. MacLeod, Hourston Hanks and Hale 2012). Bruno Ingemann argues that the museum visitor primarily experiences exhibitions as a whole, in stories, rather than as separate exhibits (2012: 16). Narrative is also fundamental for museum visitors’ ability to channel their experiences. The creators of the exhibition use storytelling as a tool, and visitors construct their own stories to find meaning in the exhibition. An absence of narrative can be perceived as confusing (Roppola 2012: 204–5). The museum can be viewed as a theatre, a dramatic ritual and a narrative of the world in miniature (MacLeod, Hourston Hanks and Hale 2012: xx). Tiina Roppola calls the work of designing and building exhibitions ‘stagecraft’; the finished exhibitions are designed scenes where the viewer moves in performative spaces that have been created for pedagogical and political purposes (2012: 11–12). And regardless of whether it is intentional, ‘exhibitions express a discursive stance . . . they express “reality” from a particular perspective and have particular interests at their core’ (Roppola 2012: 5–6). In this book, I use the idea of visitors moving in performative spaces when analysing the museum building in the landscape where it is situated. I regard ‘the museum in the landscape’ as a staged narrative, and the visitor’s walk toward the entrance of a maritime museum as a walk through a perfor-

mative staging of maritime history. This means that the discursive stance staged by the museum spreads out into the surrounding environments, communicating narratives and meanings that also reach people who never pass through the museum's doors.

## From a Museum Visitor's Perspective

The analyses will be conducted from the perspective of the museum visitor and will investigate what a person can see, hear and feel when approaching a museum and exploring its outer and inner landscapes. The six museums that I examine in this book were built at different times and the architecture was chosen and designed based on different political and ideological notions. But whatever the contexts and reasons behind the choices and prioritizations that are made when a museum is built, the institution will thereafter be run by a group of staff that move into, and thus take over, the building. Some of the museums in this study mention the architects' ideas about the building's design on their websites and I take that information into account in my analyses because it is information that museum visitors can find. If the museum does not provide easily accessible information on the history of the building and the objectives and intentions of the initiators and architect, I do not seek out such information. The same applies to the museum staffs' objectives for and ideas about how they use the premises and how they think about the design of exhibition narratives. Information that is available to the general museum-goer on websites or in brochures is included in the analyses, but I have not asked questions about the museums' aspirations and intentions. What I am searching for are the meanings that museum visitors can experience when they visit the maritime museums. But it also needs to be kept in mind that visitors can come from different cultural contexts and therefore understand and interpret their surroundings in different ways (Kress 2010: 54, Kjær 2016: 238). It is not, however, within the scope of this study to investigate those kinds of variations and differences.

When analysing the meanings and stories conveyed by museums, it is important to remember the position of the researcher. To be able to engage meaningfully with analyses and interpretations of the narratives that the museums stage, the researcher must have a basic understanding of the cultural context being investigated. In addition, the researcher has an academic background and it is imperative to consider which disciplines – with their accompanying accepted beliefs, forms of knowledge and canons

of literature – the researcher is trained in. A person with a background in maritime history does not have the same starting point as, for example, an architectural historian. Sara Ahmed (2006) argues that the various academic disciplines function as a form of inheritance that follows a specific line of descent. In philosophy, for example, a line can be traced from one philosopher to another, like an inheritance from parent to child. Disciplines also draw lines in the sense that they create a specific ‘take’ on the world, a way of arranging time and space through the decisions that are considered important in the field of knowledge. Such lines, Ahmed claims, mark the boundaries of disciplinary affiliation, thereby also marking that which is ‘out of line’. Ahmed points out that she herself was ‘raised’ between disciplines and never felt truly at home in any of them. From this starting point, Ahmed formulates what she calls a queer phenomenology, whereby she is ‘out of line’ when she reads philosophical texts. This is a risk, she says, of going astray when reading philosophy as a non-philosopher, because one is not trained in all the intellectual narratives from which the texts have emerged. But this can also be creative and can lead to something new (Ahmed 2006: 22). Inspired by Ahmed, I conclude that, as a researcher, I am situated in a position in which I am ‘out of line’ with regard to maritime history and architectural history. I am therefore taking a creative risk by investigating the combination of maritime narratives and architecture, but I expect that it will yield interesting results.

## **Part I: The Museum in the Landscape and the Landscape in the Museum**

In Part I of the book, I introduce, describe and analyse the museums in pairs. The pairings have been selected on the basis of aspects that unite the two museums but that can also create contrasts between them. The analyses are then performed in two steps: ‘the museum in the landscape’ and ‘the landscape in the museum’. This method will be presented in detail in chapter 1. There are two underlying reasons behind the choice to introduce, describe and analyse the museums in pairs. The first is that it is more practical, both for me, when performing and presenting the analyses, and for the reader, when following the reasoning. The groupings have not been made entirely randomly, but are based on aspects that a first review of the material has revealed to be interesting and worth exploring in more detail. Hence, the second reason is that the pairing of the museums is a fundamental part of the results of the analyses.

## Part II: Thematic Analyses

In the second part of the book, I penetrate more deeply into the museums' designed exhibitions and investigate whether the narratives and meanings conveyed by 'the museum in the landscape' and 'the landscape in the museum' can also be discerned when looking more closely at the narratives. The stories told in texts, showcases and exhibition designs are analysed in greater detail and the analyses are organized according to a number of themes that I have identified as important in the six investigated museums' narratives. In exhibition halls, the communication between visitor and museum can be expected to intensify, both because it is here that visitors probably expect to find the museum's narratives and because the communication, explicitly follows planned scripts and narrative strategies. Museum exhibitions, as Roppola puts it, are assemblages of objects, texts, media and spaces that have been put together to communicate, to provoke thoughts and/or feelings, to persuade, to inform or otherwise to create a meaningful impression (2012: 5). Therefore, when analysing the stories and meanings conveyed, I assume that 'every part of the exhibition, every square inch of it, is a carrier of meaning, regardless of what the curator and the designer have in mind' (den Oudsten 2012: 18).

Since the narratives conveyed by maritime museums have not been investigated before, it is interesting to unravel which aspects of maritime history and maritime societies they choose to exhibit and how the lives and realities of seafaring people are depicted. The second part of the book therefore consists, to some extent, of reflective descriptions of the contents of the exhibitions with the aim of finding and defining characteristic features, which can also lead to conclusions about what the museums do *not* tell visitors about or deal with. Another aim is to enter more deeply into what kinds of worlds and realities the museums stage and which identities and relationships they depict.

## Notes

1. Elisabeth Grosz also makes a point of being outside a field and its concepts and traditions, arguing that being in a position 'outside' can result in new perspectives. Outside of disciplines and their most prominent and accepted forms, and beyond their accepted notions, Grosz believes that 'we will find the most perilous, experimental and risky of texts and practices' (2001: xvi).