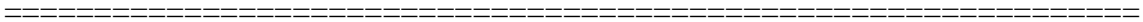


ABSTRACT

- In this keynote presentation, the renowned museum planner Gail Dexter Lord will draw on her firm's experience of more than 1,800 cultural projects in 45 countries over 30 years to elaborate a scientific approach to the development of museums in this period of unprecedented cultural change. Starting with a definition of culture, Gail will explain how the four kinds of culture—material culture, physical culture, social-political culture and aesthetic culture— are present in all human communities as cultural resources. These cultural resources need to be secured, preserved, studied and sustained so that they remain available for public contemplation, enjoyment and use. All museums and heritage sites play a decisive role in maintaining cultural resources by conserving and re-presenting them. But museums and cultural institutions also have the opportunity to transform cultural resources into cultural capital—in order to create prosperity in a knowledge economy context. Cultural capital, like other forms of capital, implies the capacity to reproduce knowledge and produce surplus. Gail will present an empirical model of cultural capital that can be applied to museums, cultural activities, heritage sites, cultural tourism and city branding in the knowledge economy of the 21st Century.



FROM CULTURAL RESOURCES TO CULTURAL CAPITAL

Presentation by

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for the

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Museum Economy and Development Forum

It is a great honour to be invited to attend this forum on museum economy and development. Museums as institutions and museum professionals are experiencing unprecedented cultural change so I applaud the organizers of this forum in bringing together such a thoughtful and diverse group to brainstorm on the economics of museums in a globalized world. I hope my experiences over 30 years as co-president with Barry Lord of Lord Cultural Resources, which has completed more than 1,800 cultural assignments in 45 countries, will contribute to your deliberations. I know I will learn a great deal from them.

The subject 'From Cultural Resources to Cultural Capital' has a special meaning for me because as a Canadian I live in a country famed for its many natural resources – water, timber, minerals, oil and natural gas. When I was growing up, Canadians still had a reputation as “hewers of wood and

drawers of water” by which was meant a people who merely extracted resources and exported them but did not transform them into capital. We exported lumber, for example, not finished wood. This situation arose from our hundreds of years of colonial history, first French, then British and then American neo-colonialism. The essence of colonialism is that the colony does not control capital. Today, we are a very different society: more than 80% of Canadians live in cities; we are an advanced post-industrial economy creating capital in the industrial and finance sectors, technology of all types, communications and in the agricultural and energy sectors too.

For many in this room China has in your lifetime undergone an amazing transformation to become one of the leading industrial nations in the world

Capital produces wealth in a more sustainable way than the mere exploitation of resources.

Is there a parallel in culture? And, if so, what lessons can we draw for museums?

Firstly it needs to be said that a cultural resource is not at all like a natural resource because culture is not a product of nature – culture is an active

ongoing human process whereby people transform nature and society, producing meanings.

In our new book on cultural change, Barry and I identify four (and only four) kinds of culture. **Each type of culture produces cultural resources**

1. **Material culture** – This is the transformation of the environment for the purpose of human survival. This includes food, drink, shelter and clothing. Objects of material culture from all eras of human development fill museums and archeological sites around the world. These are material culture resources.
2. **Physical culture** – Includes all the activities needed for human health and reproduction such as medicine, psychology, sports and marriage. Objects of physical culture (such as Olympic medals, sports and medical equipment) fill our sports and health museums – they are physical culture resources
3. **Social-political culture** addresses how societies organize the products of material and physical culture. Who will get the surplus food? How will health care be organized -- medicine for the few or medicine for the many? Social political culture includes most sciences, universities,

urban planning, philosophy and history-writing. Museums as institutions can be understood as part of social political culture. But it is mainly history museums that contain the objects and documents related to social political culture – constitutions, the army uniforms, and objects of the revolution.

4. **Aesthetic culture** consists of the meanings created in objects (works of art, poetry, novels, plays and operas) that are understood and appreciated by our senses or by our imagination – which is an extension of our senses. Aesthetic culture fills our art museums – but is also displayed in many other museum types because human beings from earliest times produced aesthetic culture – on cave walls and as adornment and as part of burial practices – most magnificently here in China.

The diagram in this slide shows how the first two types of culture (material and physical) are mainly oriented to survival and the production of surplus; while social-political and aesthetic culture require some surplus to exist and are mainly engaged to create meanings either through cognition (social political culture) or through the senses (aesthetic culture).

As individuals, we are engaged with all kinds of culture. The famous Canadian Dr. Norman Bethune is a great example – he was transformative influence in physical culture through his innovations in blood transfusion and the treatment of tuberculosis. He engaged in social political culture through his support of the Chinese revolution and at home in Canada through his support for public health. He was also an artist who expressed his ideas and passions in the sensual forms of poetry and painting.

As museum managers, directors and curators, you are continuously classifying artifacts and works of art -- cultural resources -- according to type of culture or discipline within that culture. The work of the museum is to research, conserve, preserve and display cultural resources! Museums, archeological and heritage sites work in a very comprehensive way with cultural resources. Libraries and Universities are also repositories for cultural resources -- but limited mainly to documents and books in many media.

Museums, archeological and heritage sites are at the forefront of preserving and presenting cultural resources and interpreting them – which means drawing the meaning out of these resources for the enlightenment and enjoyment of the public.

But museums, archeological and heritage sites also have the opportunity to transform cultural resources into cultural capital, which can contribute so much more to the prosperity of communities and to sustainability.

Cultural capital --

- Builds intellectual skills
- Creates new knowledge
- Stimulates creativity
- Transforms consumption (of culture) into production
- Partners with financial capital

So how can museums build on their rich cultural resources to create cultural capital?

One method is to take something that museums do every day – interpret their collections – to a higher level which I’ll call **advanced interpretation** that encourages questioning by all visitors from children in school visits to adults and families.

1. Demonstrate the value of questioning

A good example is the Museum of the African Diaspora in San Francisco which is dedicated to interpreting the fact that all humanity originated in

Africa – a biological and anthropological fact that combats racism and promotes human understanding. The first experience for the visit is to see themselves in a mirror where the question is posed – “When did you first learn you are African?”

2. Stimulate connections across boundaries of discipline and geography

One of the main boundaries in our time is between art and science. Art is seen as a “luxury” and science is seen as a necessity. Art is made in studios. Science is made in labs. Art is shown in art galleries and science is displayed in Science Centres.

One prominent scientist, Professor David Edwards Harvard University who is a chemical engineer by training of sees it quite differently. He believes that artists and scientists have a lot in common --

- They passionately espouse ideas that they hope to realize
- They study deeply
- They struggle against resistance to conduct research
- They repeatedly test their ideas and often see them evolve in unexpected ways
- They strive for originality

David believes so strongly that artists and scientists can accomplish great things by working together that he has established an ARTSCIENCE LAB in Paris (near the Louvre) called "Le Laboratoire". It is a lab where artists and scientists collaborate and work with youth in summer camps and an exhibition space where their art science inventions can be experienced by the public.

In two short years Laboratoire has earned patents and earned money through art science inventions like this. (*Show Bel-Air and the Pumpkin*) Dr.

Edwards is currently working on an art science project to invent a recyclable water bottle! And he established Le Lab for students at Harvard.

In Dublin, Trinity University has initiated the Art Science Gallery that brings art and science together to stimulate the creation of new knowledge about such diverse subjects as control of epidemics and "green machines" for environmental sustainability. (*Show picture*)

In Toronto a highly unusual festival called "Subtle Technologies" brings artists and scientists together to solve problems and create cultural capital (*Show pictures*)

By bringing art and science together – crossing boundaries – Laboratoire, the ArtScience Gallery and the Subtle Technologies Festival in Toronto are creating cultural capital – creating inventions (**new knowledge**), stimulating creativity, and engaging youth.

3. Engage youth

Museums are truly in the business of engaging youth. Somewhere between 25% and 50% of museum visitors come in school groups. But when museums insist that school classes march through the galleries, are told to be quiet and not to touch – are we really engaging them? These types of school visits at best set a pattern of passive **cultural consumption**. And while we can agree that “cultural consumption” is preferable to many other forms of consumption – it is not creating cultural capital.

Here are some great examples of engaging children in museums – creating cultural capital at an early stage. This is a form of “child labour” that is fun.

4. Nurture a Creative Economy

The Island republic of Singapore transformed itself in just 20 years from an **industrial** economy (producing microchips for the world) to a **creative** economy based in financial services and biotechnology and exporting ideas.

Transforming its cultural resources into cultural capital has been a major tool in that change.

It was only in the 1980s that Singapore could afford to preserve its heritage assets. It had mainly been tearing down the decrepit and dangerous “go downs” to replace them with modern safe buildings. They studied the transformation of other postindustrial cities like Glasgow which is where Barry and I met our future clients in 1989. They had come to visit Glasgow in its year as “cultural capital of Europe”.

Soon we were working with the Singapore government on master plans for the first post-colonial museums, including an exciting new art museum, Singapore’s brilliant Asian Civilizations Museum (crossing borders of Asia’s many countries and cultures), and establishing a National Heritage Board to administer them.

In the 1990s, Singapore placed severe social and ideological restrictions on art, theater, and film subjects (sex and gender issues were not to be discussed) and style (radical or countercultural forms like installation and conceptual art were strongly discouraged). A lone art school struggled to survive, as parents insisted that their children study science or business courses only. A countercultural artist-run center in a former power station

was often under surveillance, performance art shows were summarily closed, and artists in a few cases were arrested for “offensive” presentations.

Tourists visited Singapore for shopping or as a rest stop between the more interesting destinations in Asia all around it.

As education levels rose and a very high percentage of Singaporean youth were university-educated—many of them abroad—Singapore became an exporter not just of microchips but also of talent and knowledge. Singapore has a relatively small population of a few million people, so a permanent brain drain was a definite possibility, and would have posed a serious problem. But at about this time the Singaporean economy was becoming more diversified: knowledge-intensive biotechnology industries were now in the forefront. As the world’s biggest port city trading in this increasingly diversified economy, Singapore had to become more open.

Today, the cultural scene in Singapore is also more open—instead of being suppressed the artist-run centers are subsidized, the art school is flourishing, architectural heritage is being preserved, and Singapore hosts art fairs and biennials. Changes in Singapore’s material culture have developed new interests among potential patrons of the arts, in both the public and the private sector. To be sure, the context is very Singaporean, with a

Singaporean level of control and centralization—but the edge of cultural change is always subtle. Singapore now strives to stimulate and support creativity, so that those Singaporeans who are educated abroad have good reason to come back and stay. Visitors who come to shop or between other destinations stay to explore what the island has to offer. **Singapore now brands itself as a “Renaissance city”.**

I have more recently been helping Singaporeans to plan a new museum on an art-science theme—crossing borders again—that will be part of a bright new waterfront cultural and tourism complex at Marina Bay that includes a major gambling casino. Here artsience is the cultural resource that forms the cultural focus for a **S\$ 8 billion (total estimated cost)** waterfront development project.

5. Develop Cultural Tourism

It is estimated that 15-29% of tourists travel for the sole purpose of cultural participation. This is true for domestic travel as well as international travel. The figure rises dramatically to 60-80% when cultural participation is *part* of the reason for the trip. Data shows that people who are motivated by culture spend more money, stay longer and are more respectful of the environment that *mass tourists* – those who travel for recreation and

gambling, for example. In the west, only 5% of the revenue from mass tourism stays in the country that hosts it.

National and international tourists are extremely interested in Chinese culture both ancient and modern. Recent mega-events like the Olympics and Expo have built huge interest in your country. Building a sustainable cultural tourism industry requires intellectual as well as physical infrastructure – the museums and heritage sites need to be well-interpreted. Cultural tourists in the 21st Century want opportunities not just to consume cultural experiences but to participate in learning and creating. For example, provide opportunities for tourists not only to consume local specialties but to learn how to cook them! Festivals are one of the most effective ways of extending the cultural experience so that visitors stay longer, get to meet the local population and spend more money – thus helping the museum or archeological site to create cultural capital.

6. Build on Cultural resources to create cultural capital and attract financial capital and development

The City of Salford which is located just outside Manchester in England was made famous by Frederick Engels in his 1844 book “The Conditions of the Working Class in England” as one of the most horrific examples of the immiseration of the working people as a result of the industrial revolution.

150 years later Salford was improved but the world had moved on and according to European Union statistics, it was at the centre of one of the most deprived areas of Europe.

The City council embarked on an ambitious plan to clean and revitalize the polluted and disused Manchester ship canal into a 21st century leisure waterway at the heart of a new Salford. The City of Salford had a great but underutilized cultural resource – the largest collection of paintings of LS Lowry in the public. Lowry (1887 – 1976) was and remains the “most loved” artist of the English people. He painted the lives of the working classes – going to and from work in the mills of Salford and Manchester, fighting, going to fairs.

The paintings depict people in a distinctive way – stick figures without any individuality. Every school child in England learns a little song about these figures called “matchstick men”. **So the cultural resource of the Lowry Collection was being preserved and researched in the basement of the local museum.** With the help of consultants (myself), the city of Salford **decided to transform this cultural resource into cultural capital by building a magnificent cultural center to house the Lowry collection (as well as theatres, restaurants and bars) which opened in 2000.**

This investment in cultural capital has attracted more than \$3 billion of inward investment adding 6,500 jobs to the local economy and creating – condominium towers, a shopping mall named after Mr. Lowry, attracting the Imperial War Museum of the North and recently winning a competition (over Manchester – the much bigger city) to attract the northern production facilities of the BBC.

And this project has built **cultural capital among the people of Salford**. .

The Director of the Redevelopment agency told me a great story . . .

Redevelopment and City branding

Osnabrück, a small German city near the border with the Netherlands provides an extraordinary example of transforming both social-political culture and aesthetic culture into cultural capital for major urban development and wealth creation. It is also an example of successful city branding.

In the 17th Century the Peace of Westphalia was signed here.

However during the Nazi period the city deported all Jews, gypsies, gays, handicapped people and communists and others who protested. In the 1980s

and 90s -- the town was determined to once again make Osnabrück the city of Peace. The Gates to the city welcome all visitors with not only a message of peace but also an apology to what occurred in the Nazi era.

The city established the German Peace Foundation – transforming social political culture into an active force for cultural change.

Felix Nussbaum – one of the greatest painters of the 20th century had been born in Osnabrück in 1904. In 1944, he was deported to Auschwitz from Brussels where he was hiding (and painting in secret) and murdered in the Gas Chambers. He created this great painting prefiguring his own death in 1944.

The town of Osnabrück purchased his paintings which has been hidden from public view for decades, restored them and built a magnificent museum for them -- Felix Nussbaum Haus. Transforming a cultural resource into cultural capital.

Erik Maria Remarque author of “All Quiet on the Western Front” – one of the greatest anti-war novels of all time -- was also born in Osnabrück. His books were burned by the Nazis and he was hunted by them. Unlike Nussbaum, he was able to escape to the United States but he never returned

to his home town – where the Nazis murdered his sister. The city has transformed the cultural resource of Remarque’s legacy into a literary archive and a Peace prize that is awarded every two years.

The examples of Salford and Osnabrück demonstrate that the development of cultural resources to cultural capital is an active and engaged process of knowledge creation that also leads to development, tourism, and education for local people. Salford has rebranded itself from being the most deprived city in Europe to a city of culture around the artist LS Lowry.

Osnabrück has rebranded itself as a City of Peace – not in words but in deeds.

End

The knowledge economy is one in which a very high percentage (35%-45%) of the workforce is engaged in productive labour that does not directly engage with the transformation of the natural or material world – but with ideas. A simplistic example would be the production and export of television shows not the television sets!

Whether knowledge-based societies can be more productive than industrial ones is certainly debatable. Nonetheless it seems clear that “human brainpower” is the world’s most renewable resource. As such “knowledge economy” contributes immeasurably to all other sectors.