



Exhibition "The Story of the Dutch East Indies", museum Bronbeek. Close up of the set up of room 2 of the "The dependency 1817-19". Photo D.Kuijten.

In line with this discussion I will present an analysis of the exhibition called *The Story of the Dutch East Indies*, which I did with two other students from the Reinwardt Academy. This exhibition was developed in 2009-2010 as a collaboration between The Military Museum Bronbeek and the Indies Remembrance in Arnhem, and is shown in the former Military Museum on the Estate Bronbeek. These are two very different stakeholder-groups: The Museum celebrates the colonial past of the

Netherlands in the Dutch-Indies with, centrally the story of the Royal Dutch-Indies Army (KNIL), and the colonized opponents. The Indies Remembrance Centre focusses on the Japanese occupation and the Bersiap period in the Dutch Indies commemorating "the suffering that our compatriots in the period between 1941-1949 in the distant part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands had to bear".

The original exhibition at the Museum Bronbeek was very much object based in a traditional exhibition set up. The new exhibition challenged them to revisit their collection and narratives to come to a new multi-sided presentation. As the civilian story heavily rests on memory other ways of presenting the intangible were researched. It was a challenging attempt to have these very different stakeholder-groups placed under one roof trying to tell their stories in one cohesive representation. This paper discusses the set up of the new exhibition and will critically look at the approach to bringing these stories together.

---

Danielle Kuiten is Master of Museology candidate, Reinwardt Academy (Netherlands). [danielle.kuiten@student.lahk.nl](mailto:danielle.kuiten@student.lahk.nl)

## Imposed utopia. Establishing collections; building the Israeli nation state

*Judy Jaffe-Schagen*

Today I present some of the findings of my PhD research called *Objects in context, peoples in place. Home, museum and belonging in the cultural landscape of Israel*. In this research I like to argue that more than trends in museology, it is the character of a subculture – religious, ethnic or political – and the connection with the land and the state that is decisive in defining the specific kind of museum. In any case every museum established in Israel has to deal with the question of whether to tell the Zionist narrative with all its nuances and in all its variations, or to exhibit another one.

I would like to single out two recent developments in the establishment of

collections in relation to the building of the Israeli nation state. The first is a temporary exhibition on Hasidim, a movement within Orthodox Judaism by the Israel Museum in Jerusalem that opened summer 2012. It is not self-evident that a secular institution like the Israel Museum would show an exhibition with a religious subject. However, the curator believes that one of the obligations of the museum is to overcome existing stigmas by presenting the material culture of specific subcultures, and by building a bridge between one subculture and another. The exhibition shows the material culture from a group most of whose members probably will never visit the museum, as they consider it a Zionist symbol. The exhibition thus is most of all a

tool to pursue the utopia of the museum itself to build bridges between secular and religious groups. But the result is a one way bridge. The subjects' own utopia, the arrival of the messiah, is not addressed in the museum nor is the museum seen by the subculture as a tool for achieving this goal.



*A world apart next door. Glimpses into the life of Hasidic Jews. Israel Museum, 2012. Photo J. Jaffe-Schagen.*

The second recent development concerns the opening in 2011 of the exhibition *Israeli texture*. The 47 selected works exhibited in the parliament building consist of something Israeli. They depict the landscape, or the home or the memory. Ariyeh Eldad from the National Party demanded the removal of the painting 'The Orange-grower's family' made by Eliyahu Bokobza. He said that by showing an Arab family from the thirties it is a 'Nakba' painting, presenting the Palestinian narrative. Nakba, an Arab word, means catastrophe and refers to the independence of the State of Israel

in 1948. Reuven Rivlin, the speaker of the parliament, responded by saying that he is proud to present contemporary art that displays the variety in Israeli society. However it is the government's own story that is exhibited. In order to show all the layers of the population, work made by Israeli Arab artists among others should be added to the collection.



*Eliyahu Eric Bokobza. The orange-grower's family, Jaffa 1939. 2007 oil on canvas. Collection Parliament building, Jerusalem, 2012.*

The question arises whether a museum is the right tool to enable a subculture to establish itself within the nation-state, to act as a mediator between generations and to function as a bridge to the other subcultures.

Judy Jaffe-Schagen is PhD Researcher (Israel) /VU University Amsterdam (Netherlands).  
[j.b.schagen@vu.nl](mailto:j.b.schagen@vu.nl)

## From One Utopia to Another: Polish Museums since the Communist Era

*Anna Zakiewicz*

For over 20 years, since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, we have been experiencing the transformation from oppressive communism to free capitalism. The process concerns museums as well. As state institutions they should provide people with the widest possible access to art and national heritage but they also need public money in order to achieve this.

In these early years of transformation to free capitalism, museums in Poland gained the freedom to seek private sponsorship but at the same time progressively began to lose financial security from the state. So we have to see all the challenges and difficulties associated with this transition and ask the basic question that museums in Poland now ponder: what is more important – freedom or financial security?