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Research and
Evaluations in the Field of

**MUSEUM STUDIES:
INTERDISCIPLINARY
APPROACHES FROM
THEORY TO PRACTICE**

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Of Museum Studies:
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June 2025

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Editor's Introduction

Prof. Dr. Mustafa Cevat ATALAY

Museum Studies: Interdisciplinary Approaches from Theory to Practice brings together five distinct chapters that explore the evolving scope of museum studies through interdisciplinary, inclusive, and practice-based perspectives. This volume was developed with the belief that museums, as dynamic cultural institutions, are no longer confined to traditional exhibition roles; they now operate as platforms for dialogue, learning, social inclusion, and heritage activation. Each chapter reflects this shift, offering a unique case study or model that contributes to the contemporary discourse in museology.

The first chapter, "Storytelling in Space: The Case of Junibacken as a Children's Literature-Based Museum" by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Burcu ÇILDIR, explores how Junibacken in Sweden transforms children's literature into an immersive and participatory museum experience. Through spatial storytelling, multimodal literacy, and sociocultural learning theories, the chapter demonstrates how children become active agents in story worlds they can inhabit, play with, and reconstruct. The chapter argues that Junibacken reimagines the museum as a narrative environment that fosters creativity, agency, and intergenerational learning, going far beyond static displays.

In the second chapter, "Designing Education Programs in a Micromuseum with a Focus on Interaction and Accessibility: Ankara Toy Museum," Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ceren GÜNERÖZ and her colleagues Elif BÜLBÜL, Meltem DEMİR, and Ulviye ATAĞ offer a pedagogically grounded model for museum education. The Ankara Toy Museum exemplifies how a micromuseum can become a vibrant space of learning through playful design, accessibility innovations, and participatory tools such as a 12-Month Museum Calendar and a Discovery Map. The authors emphasize play as a powerful mode of learning and advocate for broader integration of such models across museum types to support emotional, cognitive, and social development.

The third chapter, "The Journey of Cultural Heritage from Turkey to Hungary: Cultural Interaction Through the Traveling Trunk Museum Practice," by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Cihan Şule KÜIÜK, presents a cross-border museum initiative aimed at promoting Turkish cultural heritage abroad. The Traveling Trunk Museum, equipped with replicas, digital content, and tactile activities, engages participants in hands-on learning and cultural dialogue. The study highlights both the strengths and limitations of the practice and offers concrete recommendations for enhancing its impact through localization, inclusive technologies, and artistic integration. It provides a

valuable roadmap for future cultural diplomacy and mobile museum strategies.

The fourth chapter, “Exploring the Role of Children’s Museums in Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs,” by Scientific Expert Hilal SARI, focuses on the importance of inclusive museum environments. Children’s museums are shown to play a significant role in social integration, emotional development, and cognitive growth for children with special needs. By offering sensory-friendly spaces, tactile exhibitions, and structured interaction, these museums provide opportunities for self-expression, peer interaction, and family participation. The chapter recommends further research and policy efforts to enhance accessibility and equity within the museum sector.

The fifth and final chapter, “Suitcase Museums for Intangible Heritage: A Mobile Museology Model for Artvin,” by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zekiye ÇILDIR, introduces a transformative model for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in geographically marginalised areas. The suitcase museum redefines museology through mobility, locality, and participatory practices. Drawing on examples from Artvin’s ecological and cultural richness, the model activates heritage not as static memory but as living practice. The chapter calls for policy integration, local co-creation, and digital synergy to scale this innovative model across other regions.

Together, these five chapters exemplify a shared vision: to reconceptualize the museum as an interactive, accessible, and socially engaged institution. Whether focusing on children’s museums, micromuseums, or mobile heritage models, each contribution demonstrates that museums can serve as catalysts for creativity, inclusion, and learning. This volume aims to inspire museum professionals, educators, cultural policymakers, and researchers by offering actionable models grounded in theory and practice. It is my hope that these interdisciplinary approaches will contribute meaningfully to the ongoing evolution of museology in both local and global contexts.



CHAPTER 1

STORYTELLING IN SPACE: THE CASE OF JUNI- BACKEN AS A CHILDREN'S LITERATURE-BASED MUSEUM

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Introduction

Museums are increasingly recognized as valuable educational spaces that promote reading and foster literacy through immersive, participatory experiences (Falk&Dierking, 2016; Black, 2005). As public cultural institutions, they are well positioned to support inclusive, community-oriented programs that extend learning beyond formal school settings. Their pedagogical approaches often emphasize informal, experiential learning that contrasts with the didactic models of traditional classrooms. In recent years, children's museums in particular have embraced storytelling and narrative-based design to create environments where literature becomes accessible in multisensory and playful ways (Menéndez, 2023). This shift includes changes in museum practice toward visitor-centered experiences, while Kress (2010) describes literacy as a multimodal, embodied process shaped by space, media, and sensory engagement.

Within this evolving landscape, storytelling has emerged as a powerful strategy for transforming museum exhibitions into participatory learning experiences that invite imagination, emotional involvement, and social interaction. Children's literature museums exemplify this shift. These hybrid spaces, located at the intersection of literary practice and spatial design, enable children to move beyond passive reading by engaging with stories through touch, movement, sound, and visual stimuli. Rather than simply displaying books or author biographies, these museums create interactive, story-rich environments where children can co-construct meaning and deepen their connection to literature through embodied, social, and creative forms of engagement (Marchetti, 2012; Hamer, 2019).

A growing number of such institutions have emerged globally, offering varied approaches to curating children's literature through spatial storytelling and interactive design. Examples include the Story Museum in Oxford, the Kinderboekenmuseum in the Netherlands, the Estonian Children's Literature Centre, the Roald Dahl Museum in the UK, the Eric Carle Museum in the USA, and Junibacken in Sweden. Despite their cultural and educational significance, children's literature museums remain under-researched in academic literature. While there is growing interest in museum-based literacy programs (Giles, 2021; Young et al., 2022; Menéndez, 2023), less attention has been given to how these spaces use spatial storytelling, multimodal literacy, and participatory design to promote children's literary engagement.

This chapter addresses this gap by examining Junibacken in Stockholm as a case study in experiential, social, and multimodal learning. Founded in 1996 with the support of Astrid Lindgren and directed by Staffan Götestam, Junibacken was conceived not as a traditional museum or archive,

but as a living story-world where children could experience literature in tangible, playful, and emotionally resonant ways.

The chapter uses a cross-disciplinary theoretical framework to analyze Junibacken's approach. It draws on Dewey's concept of experience and education, which emphasizes the balance between meaningful engagement and lasting learning outcomes; Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which highlights the role of social interaction and guided participation; the concept of spatial storytelling, which considers how physical space and design create narrative experiences; theories of multimodal literacy, which expand literacy beyond text to include images, movement, sound, and spatial cues; and participatory museology, which centers visitors as active co-creators of meaning. By applying these lenses, the chapter explores how Junibacken reimagines the act of reading as an embodied, social, and interactive practice situated in a museum environment.

In doing so, the chapter contributes to broader discussions about the role of museums in fostering creativity, literacy, and cultural engagement in childhood. It argues that children's literature museums like Junibacken do more than preserve books or author legacies; they transform stories into lived, shared experiences that cultivate emotional connection, narrative understanding, and a lifelong love of reading. The analysis begins with an exploration of Junibacken's founding vision and conceptual foundations, then examines its spatial storytelling strategies and pedagogical features through detailed discussion of its exhibits and design. In conclusion, the chapter reflects on the museum's broader educational and cultural significance, suggesting how this model can inform future museum practice and literacy education.

1. Museums as Sites of Experiential, Social, and Multimodal Learning

Museums have long been recognized as vital cultural institutions that support complex, lifelong learning processes. Unlike formal schooling, which often emphasizes structured curricula and assessment, museums offer informal educational environments that encourage exploration, curiosity, and personal interpretation. Learning in these contexts is inherently experiential and participatory, inviting visitors to construct knowledge through social interaction, sensory engagement, and emotional involvement (Falk & Dierking, 2018). Rather than treating knowledge as something to be transmitted from expert to learner, museums create spaces where visitors actively make meaning, bringing their prior knowledge, interests, and cultural backgrounds to the experience.

This holistic view of learning emphasizes that museum visits are not isolated, one-time events but accumulative processes that continue to resonate and be reinterpreted throughout life (Rennie & Johnston, 2004). Visitors' personal contexts-such as motivations, interests, and past experiences-shape how they perceive and understand exhibitions. The sociocultural context includes interactions with family members, peers, and museum staff that support collaborative meaning-making. Meanwhile, the physical context-the design of exhibits, layout of rooms, and sensory atmosphere-guides attention, evokes emotion, and structures the learning experience (Falk & Dierking, 2016).

This shift from object-centered to visitor-centered practice has transformed museum education, aligning with broader developments in experiential learning theory (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007). John Dewey's philosophy of experience and education argues that high-quality educational environments must balance the immediacy of engaging experience with the development of enduring understanding. Exhibits that focus exclusively on delivering content risk becoming didactic and disengaging, while those that privilege experience alone may offer limited educational value or even become miseducative (Ansbacher, 1998). Effective museum learning integrates these dimensions, ensuring that visitors not only encounter content but do so in ways that are personally meaningful and transformative.

Dewey's framework underscores the need to design learning experiences that are active, reflective, and situated within meaningful contexts. In the museum setting, this means creating opportunities for hands-on exploration, open-ended inquiry, and affective engagement that together foster deeper understanding. This perspective resonates with sociocultural theories of learning, particularly those of Vygotsky, who emphasized that development occurs through social interaction, language, and guided participation. According to Vygotsky, learning takes place within the learner's zone of proximal development (ZPD), where collaboration and support enable individuals to achieve more than they could independently. Museums, as social learning environments, facilitate such interactions by encouraging dialogue between visitors of different ages and backgrounds and by offering interpretive resources that guide discovery.

Research demonstrates that these social dynamics extend the impact of museum learning beyond the visit itself. Children and adolescents often transfer knowledge gained in museums to other contexts such as home and school, integrating new ideas into conversations, drawings, and play (Dias & César, 2014). In this way, museum experiences support both individual cognitive development and the collective sharing of knowledge within families and communities. Museums can thus be understood as intergene-

rational learning spaces that foster collaboration, negotiation of meaning, and shared cultural understanding.

Further enriching this educational role is the concept of multimodal literacy, which recognizes that meaning-making involves more than written text alone. As Kress (2010) argues, communication and understanding rely on multiple modes-including images, sound, movement, gesture, and spatial design. Museums are especially well-suited to supporting multimodal literacy because they create environments where visitors can see, hear, touch, and move through content. Such sensory-rich settings engage diverse cognitive pathways, accommodate varied learning styles, and foster emotional connections to subject matter.

For children in particular, these multimodal, embodied experiences are critical to developing literacy in its broadest sense. Through interactive exhibits, dramatic play, and immersive environments, museums provide opportunities to interpret stories and concepts across different media and modes. This approach aligns with contemporary views of literacy as a dynamic, social practice that involves not just decoding text but making meaning in diverse and contextually situated ways.

Taken together, these theoretical perspectives position museums as uniquely powerful learning environments. They are places where experiential, social, and multimodal learning intersect-where visitors actively construct understanding through interaction with objects, spaces, people, and ideas. Designing museums with these principles in mind requires careful attention to spatial layout, interpretive resources, and opportunities for social engagement. It also demands an inclusive approach that respects the varied backgrounds, interests, and needs of visitors, particularly children and families. By embracing these frameworks, museums can move beyond traditional models of education to create transformative learning experiences that are meaningful, memorable, and accessible to all.

2. Children's Literature Based Museums

Within this broader understanding of museums as experiential, social, and multimodal learning environments, a distinctive genre has emerged that focuses specifically on children's literature. Children's literature-based museums occupy a unique space at the intersection of literary heritage, education, and imaginative play. These institutions are dedicated to preserving, interpreting, and celebrating children's books and storytelling traditions-not simply as static cultural artifacts but as living, dynamic experiences that children can actively inhabit and reshape.

As Menéndez (2023) explains, children's literature museums acquire, preserve, and communicate children's literature in order to promote knowledge about it and its role in society. Yet they do far more than display books or author biographies behind glass. Instead, these museums transform stories into immersive, physical environments that invite young visitors to explore with their bodies, engage their senses, and co-construct meaning through play and interaction. In doing so, they embody a shift from traditional, didactic approaches to literacy toward models that are participatory, multimodal, and child-centered.

Such museums are designed to bring the worlds of children's books to life, allowing children to walk into story settings, encounter characters, and experience narratives through sound, light, movement, and scenography. This approach recognizes that children learn not only by reading but also by doing, feeling, and imagining (Kolb, 1984). By fostering emotional engagement, curiosity, and creative exploration, these environments support deeper understanding of stories while nurturing the intrinsic motivation that underlies a lifelong love of reading. In this sense, they move beyond the idea of literacy as simply decoding text to embrace a broader vision of literacy as the capacity to make meaning across diverse modes and media.

Moreover, these museums provide opportunities for social learning and intergenerational dialogue. They are designed to encourage shared exploration between children and their caregivers, peers, and educators, creating spaces where storytelling becomes a collaborative, negotiated process. This aligns with sociocultural theories of learning that emphasize the role of guided participation and dialogue in cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1934/1962). Interactive exhibits, role-play areas, and open-ended design invite children and adults alike to adopt narrative roles, invent new storylines, and reflect together on familiar tales. Such shared experiences not only enrich children's narrative understanding but also strengthen family bonds and cultural continuity.

Children's literature museums also explicitly advocate for literacy education by promoting reading as both an art form and a cultural practice. Recognizing that literacy development begins well before formal schooling and continues across contexts, these museums offer informal, accessible, and engaging environments where early encounters with stories can lay the groundwork for later reading proficiency. By presenting books as sources of wonder, exploration, and shared meaning, they help combat perceptions of reading as a chore and instead frame it as a joyful, socially meaningful activity.

Globally, this genre of museum has taken on varied forms, reflecting different cultural traditions and curatorial strategies. Author-centered mu-

seums, such as the Roald Dahl Museum in the UK or the H.C. Andersen House in Denmark, focus on celebrating and interpreting the legacy of individual writers. Character-themed museums, like the Muumimuseum in Finland or Nijntje Museum in the Netherlands, create immersive worlds around iconic literary figures. Generalist children's literature centers, such as the Story Museum in Oxford or Kinderboekenmuseum in the Netherlands, adopt broader approaches that highlight national or thematic traditions in children's storytelling. Despite these differences in scope and design, all share a commitment to making literature accessible, engaging, and meaningful for young visitors.

These institutions also highlight the cultural value of children's literature as an important component of shared heritage. By treating stories as worthy of preservation, interpretation, and display, they elevate children's literature to a status on par with art, history, and science in the museum world. At the same time, by transforming stories into participatory, sensory-rich experiences, they ensure that this heritage remains a living, evolving practice that continues to inspire new generations of readers. In doing so, children's literature museums exemplify how the principles of experiential, social, and multimodal learning can be harnessed to foster not only literacy development but also cultural appreciation, creative expression, and intergenerational connection.

To better understand the scope and variety of children's literary museums around the world, it is helpful to look at concrete examples of how different institutions interpret and present children's literature in museum settings. These museums vary in size, focus, and design, but they all share a commitment to making literature accessible and engaging for young visitors. The following table, designed by Menéndez (2023), presents a selection of children's literary museums, highlighting their locations, key features, and the authors or literary works they are dedicated to. Estonian Children's Literature Centre has been manually included to reflect relevant developments in the Baltic region.

Table 1. List of children’s literary museums

Name of Museum	Location	Description
Author museums	These museums honour the heritage of a particular children’s author (writer or illustrator) with the purpose of communicating their work to future generations. They are often located in the author’s birthplace or former residence.	
Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre	United Kingdom	An interactive museum based in the village where the author lived and wrote most of his works.
Moat Brae	United Kingdom	Scotland’s National Storytelling Centre. It is based in the village where James Barrie spent part of his childhood and potentially inspired his book, Peter Pan.
The world of Beatrix Potter	United Kingdom	Exhibition about the life and works of the children’s books author and illustrator Beatrix Potter.
H. C. Andersen’s House museum	Denmark	An interactive museum located next to Hans Christian Andersen’s childhood home.
Grimmwelt Kassel	Germany	A multimedia museum devoted to the stories of the Grimm brothers.
Tomi Ungerer Museum	France	The museum celebrates the legacy of the author, including his children’s books and illustrations.
The Amazing World of Dr. Seuss Museum	USA	The museum focuses on the stories, characters and illustrations of the iconic children’s author.
The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art	USA	The museum focuses on the work of Eric Carle, but it also contains a gallery of picturebooks.
Lucy Maud Montgomery Birthplace	Canada	A house museum located in L. M. Montgomery’s original birthplace.
Anno Mitsumasa Art Museum	Japan	A museum devoted to the art of the picturebooks illustrator Anno Mitsumasa.
Chihiro Art Museum	Japan	The museum displays the artwork of the children’s illustrator Chihiro Iwasaki.
Character museums	These museums are devoted to a particular literary character, bringing to life its fictional universe to immerse visitors in the story.	
Museum House of Ratón Pérez	Spain	A fictional house museum about the character Ratón Pérez created by Padre Luis Coloma.
National Leprechaun Museum of Ireland	Ireland	An immersive museum about the history of Irish folklore through the figure of the Leprechaun.

Muumimuseum	Finland	The museum focuses on the Moomin characters from the books created by Tove Jansson.
Nijntje Museum	Netherlands	A museum on Nijntje (Miffy in English) and other characters created by Dick Bruna.
Heididorf	Switzerland	The museum recreates the universe of Heidi, the character and book created by Johanna Spyri.
Struwwelpeter Museum	Germany	A museum about the children's character Struwwelpeter created by Heinrich Hoffman.
The Anne of Green Gables Museum	Canada	The museum focuses on Anne Shirley, the main character in the series by Lucy Maud Montgomery.
Generalist literary museums	These museums are devoted to a specific kind of literature and aim to showcase its personal identity. They can take different approaches, such as focusing on a particular national literature, historical period or genre (e.g., comics, picturebooks).	
Seven Stories	United Kingdom	England's National Centre for Children's Books. An interactive space that brings stories to life.
Discover Children's Story Center	United Kingdom	Immersive and interactive storytelling space for children.
The Story Museum	United Kingdom	Interactive exhibitions that celebrate stories for children.
Junibacken	Sweden	A pioneering museum focused on children's literature, especially on the author Astrid Lindgren.
Kinderboekenmuseum [Children's Book Museum]	Netherlands	A haven that celebrates storytelling and literature for children and young adults.
Villa Verbeelding	Belgium	A wonderland that aims to foster a love for art and literature in children.
Comic Strip Center	Belgium	The museum honours the artistry and storytelling of comics and graphic novels.
Bilderbuchmuseum	Germany	The museum is devoted to the art and history of illustrated books.
Illustration of the Youth Museum	France	A museum that displays art and illustration for young readers.
Fairy House	Lithuania	The museum is devoted to fairytales and folklore from all around the world.
Fairy Tale Museum	Cyprus	A museum that celebrates universal folklore and mythology.
Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art and Storytelling	USA	A specific centre for promoting literature and other related arts among children.

National Center for Children’s Illustrated Literature	USA	A collection of American illustrations and illustrated books for the youth.
The Rabbit Hole	USA	An ongoing project to launch an immersive museum on children’s literature.
Iwaki Museum of Picture Books for Children	Japan	The collection showcases the art of children’s picturebooks.
Estonian Children’s Literature Centre	Estonia	A national centre for children’s books that displays art, illustration and promoting literature for young readers.

List of children’s literary museums. Portillo Menéndez, 2023.

The wide range of children’s literature museums presented in Table 1 demonstrates the global commitment to making stories accessible through immersive, interactive, and culturally meaningful experiences. From author-centered museums that honor individual literary legacies to character-themed and generalist centers that celebrate broader traditions, these institutions share a common goal: to transform reading from a solitary act into a shared, multisensory journey that nurtures imagination and literacy. Among these diverse models, Junibacken in Sweden stands out as a pioneering example of how storytelling, spatial design, and participatory practices can be integrated to create a holistic, child-centered literary environment. The following section examines Junibacken in depth as a case study, exploring how it embodies the principles of experiential, social, and multimodal learning while reimagining what a children’s literature museum can be.

3. Junibacken as a Narrative Space

3.1 The Founding Vision of Junibacken

Junibacken was founded in 1996 with the vision of creating a cultural space where children could encounter literature. Located in Stockholm, the museum was conceived not merely as an exhibition hall or book archive, but as a story-world-one that invites children to step inside the imaginative landscapes of children’s literature. The original idea for Junibacken was proposed by Staffan Götestam, an actor and director well known for his role in the film adaptation of *The Brothers Lionheart*. His vision was clear: “*I wanted to create a cultural centre for both children and adults. Not an old-fashioned, stuffy institution, but something innovative, full of life and content, and exciting!*” (Junibacken, 2025). A key part of the project’s identity is its connection to Astrid Lindgren, whose stories are present th-

roughout the museum. However, Lindgren firmly insisted that Junibacken should not be dedicated solely to her own work. According to the museum, Lindgren initially welcomed the idea but expressed clear reservations about creating a space solely devoted to her own work. Instead, she supported the vision of a cultural center that would also highlight the contributions of other children's authors and illustrators—a vision that ultimately shaped the museum's development (Junibacken, 2025). This founding concept closely aligns with the educational principles explored in the previous sections, offering a practical illustration of how museums can integrate experiential, social, and multimodal learning into their design and programming. Drawing on Dewey's philosophy of experience and education, Junibacken was conceived as a place where stories are not only read but also enacted and felt—turning literary content into meaningful, memorable experiences that balance emotional engagement with lasting educational outcomes.

Equally central to Junibacken's mission is its grounding in sociocultural theories of learning. Recognizing that children learn through social interaction, guided participation, and shared cultural practices, the museum deliberately fosters spaces where families, peers, and educators can engage in collaborative storytelling and role-play. The museum's pedagogical approach is grounded in Astrid Lindgren's view of childhood, emphasizing both the joy of play and the importance of learning (Sommar, 2005). Its content is thoughtfully designed to respond to children's natural curiosity, imagination, and need for exploration. Indeed, Lindgren's condition helped shape Junibacken's inclusive literary vision. While her own stories—including *Pippi Longstocking* (1945), *Emil in Lönneberga* (1963) and *The Brothers Lionheart* (1973)—anchor many of the museum's experiences, the institution also prominently features other iconic characters from Swedish children's literature, such as *Alfons Åberg* (by Gunilla Bergström), *Krakel Spektakel* (by Lennart Hellsing) and *Pettson & Findus* (by Sven Nordqvist). This narrative diversity reflects a broader commitment to celebrating children's imagination, culture, and language through various authors and narrative styles. This approach creates opportunities for visitors to operate within their zone of proximal development, supporting learning that is both socially mediated and developmentally appropriate. By encouraging intergenerational dialogue and co-construction of meaning, Junibacken exemplifies Vygotsky's vision of learning as an inherently social process.

Junibacken also embodies the concept of spatial storytelling, transforming physical space into narrative environments that visitors navigate, interpret, and inhabit. As Menéndez (2023) notes, museum design plays a critical role in achieving educational aims; the positioning of objects, the sequencing of experiences, and the atmosphere of a space can all enhance both engagement and learning. The museum's design carefully cho-

reographs movement through themed zones and immersive installations, guiding children to construct story meaning through bodily engagement, interaction, and play. Play embodied within a narrative framework that supports and extends children's existing storytelling practices (Marchetti, 2012). This vision is most clearly realized in Junibacken's exhibitions. The centerpiece of Junibacken is the *Story Train* (*Sagotåget*), a three-dimensional literary journey through scenes from Astrid Lindgren's books, brought to life by the artistic vision of Marit Törnqvist, Lindgren's long-time illustrator and collaborator (Van Den Bossche, 2013). Visitors travel by train past memorable scenes such as Emil's party in Lönneberga, Karlsson's rooftop flights over Stockholm, and the dramatic fire from *The Brothers Lionheart*. Marit Törnqvist served as Junibacken's artistic adviser and lead designer until 2010, and later returned in 2014 to oversee a comprehensive renovation of the Story Train's visual scenes. Unlike traditional linear storytelling formats, Junibacken's spaces invite non-linear exploration, offering multiple entry points and pathways that empower children to make their own narrative choices. This spatial design aligns with contemporary theories of multimodal literacy by integrating images, sound, movement, and physical environment into the storytelling process, recognizing that children interpret and produce meaning through diverse communicative modes beyond text alone.

Moreover, Junibacken's founding vision explicitly reflects the principles of participatory museology. Rather than positioning children as passive observers, the museum engages them as active participants and creative co-authors of the stories on display. Through interactive exhibits, role-play opportunities, and scenographic environments, Junibacken encourages children to imagine, improvise, and perform, blurring the boundaries between learning, play, and cultural participation. This participatory ethos is not only evident in the design of individual exhibitions (Hamer, 2019) but is also woven throughout the museum's broader programming, from theater performances to evolving temporary displays. In this context, children's literary museums like Junibacken play a significant role in fostering early literacy by offering story-based experiences that go beyond traditional instruction.

By nurturing emotional engagement, sparking curiosity, and encouraging imaginative exploration, these museums create environments where literature becomes tangible and immersive. Rather than treating reading as a solitary or purely cognitive task, they invite children to experience stories through movement, play, and interaction. This approach not only supports foundational literacy development but also cultivates a lifelong appreciation for literature as a dynamic cultural practice. The following sections explore how Junibacken realizes this vision through its key components-

beginning with the Story Train, continuing through its interactive exhibits and thematic zones, and culminating in the spatial storytelling techniques that shape visitors' literary journeys. Formun ÜstüFormun Altı

3.2. Story Train: Immersing Visitors in Literary World

One of Junibacken's most iconic features is the Story Train (*Sago-tåget*), a theatrical ride that carries visitors through a series of immersive tableaux based on Astrid Lindgren's most beloved books. Far more than a theme-park attraction, the Story Train embodies principles of spatial storytelling and multimodal literacy by transforming literary narratives into sensory, navigable environments. Designed to be experienced bodily and emotionally, it turns reading from a solitary act into a collective journey where meaning is co-constructed through movement, sound, light, and scenography.

The original concept for the Story Train emerged in the museum's earliest planning stages, driven by the vision of creating a train that would transport children through vividly realized scenes from Lindgren's fiction. This vision was given form by illustrator Marit Törnqvist, who worked in close collaboration with Lindgren herself to ensure fidelity not only to the books' visual details but also to their emotional tone. Törnqvist's creative challenge was to evoke the atmosphere of the stories without reducing them to static displays (Junibacken, 2025). The solution, she found, was to return consistently to the original texts, staying faithful to their mood, details, and emotional landscapes. Working closely with Lindgren herself, Törnqvist developed sets that were not mere visual replicas, but atmospheric evocations of story worlds. Her approach reflects experiential learning principles by prioritizing how children would *feel*, *move*, and *respond* within the space, ensuring the experience would be both affectively meaningful and cognitively engaging.

Bringing the Story Train to life required extensive collaboration among doll-makers, scenic artists, prop-makers, musicians, and theatre carpenters—a process that exemplifies participatory museology at the level of design. As Lindgren later wrote to Törnqvist, "I cannot think of any other children's museum that even approaches what you have achieved at Junibacken." (Junibacken, 2025). Rather than imposing a single, didactic interpretation of Lindgren's work, the creative team aimed to offer an open-ended, layered experience that would invite visitors' personal interpretations and emotional responses. This approach aligns with Dewey's view that meaningful learning arises from the interaction between experience and reflection, ensuring that visitors do not merely see representati-

ons of Lindgren's stories but live them in ways that resonate long after the ride ends.

Unveiled in 1996, the final ride offers a carefully curated journey through scenes from six of Lindgren's books, including *Karlsson-on-the-Roof*, *The Brothers Lionheart*, and *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*. The narration, written by Lindgren herself, was her last literary text before her death in 2002, adding a powerful layer of authorial authenticity. Designed as a "medley" of evocative fragments rather than a linear retelling, the Story Train models non-linear narrative strategies that allow for interpretive flexibility and encourage visitors to connect emotionally with different moments in the story worlds. This design supports multimodal literacy by engaging visual, auditory, and spatial modes simultaneously, fostering layered understanding that goes beyond text alone (Kress, 2010).

Importantly, the Story Train also creates opportunities for sociocultural learning. Families ride together, sharing reactions, memories, and interpretations as they pass through the atmospheric scenes. Children often ask questions, share associations, or narrate their own imaginative extensions of the story, enabling intergenerational dialogue that enriches comprehension and emotional connection. This dynamic reflects Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), where learning is supported through guided participation and social interaction.

In this way, the Story Train stands as a centerpiece of Junibacken's educational mission: to make literature an embodied, social, and participatory experience. By weaving together artistic design, narrative fidelity, and pedagogical intention, it exemplifies how museums can transform stories into immersive environments that foster curiosity, empathy, and a lasting love of reading.

3.3 Interactive Exhibits and Thematic Zones

Beyond the Story Train, Junibacken offers a diverse range of interactive exhibits and thematic zones that further embody its vision of transforming reading into an immersive, participatory experience. These spaces reflect the museum's commitment to experiential learning, inviting children to move, play, and discover narratives through direct physical and sensory engagement. By designing environments that prioritize touch, movement, role-play, and open-ended exploration, Junibacken ensures that literary meaning is not only seen or heard but *lived*, integrated experience that combines action, emotion, and reflection.

Many of Junibacken's exhibitions are inspired by works of Nordic region children's book authors and illustrators, with some installations re-

maintaining constant since the museum's opening in 1996 while others rotate or are periodically reimagined. This evolving design strategy ensuring that the museum remains dynamic, responsive, and engaging for repeat visitors. By updating or reinventing exhibits, Junibacken encourages children to return, discover new stories, and deepen their ongoing relationship with literature.

A recent example is the exhibition *Wander the Way!*, based on the beloved works of Pija Lindenbaum. This installation demonstrates spatial storytelling in practice, transforming physical space into a carefully curated narrative environment. Visitors are invited to cross a threshold—both literal and imaginative—entering a world designed to evoke Lindenbaum's distinctive tone, characters, and settings. Instead of reading about these stories passively, children navigate them physically, discovering details through movement, observation, and interaction. Such design supports multimodal literacy by weaving visual cues, spatial arrangements, textures, and playful prompts into the storytelling experience, encouraging children to construct meaning across different sensory modes (Kress, 2010).

Similarly, the *Story Book Square* offers a playful, make-believe plaza where well-known children's book characters "live" in creatively imagined dwellings, such as a spotted mushroom, a tall treehouse, or even an airplane. Designed as an interactive neighborhood, this space embodies sociocultural learning principles by encouraging social play and collaborative storytelling. Children and their caregivers can move through the square together, inventing stories, adopting roles, and sharing interpretations in real time. The space evolves over time, with certain characters remaining constant while others are updated, fostering a sense of novelty and shared discovery on repeat visits.

The *Moomin Playground* is another standout example, where children can slide from the iconic tall Moomin house, play inside a giant shell, and explore scenes from Tove Jansson's classic books like *Moominpapa's Memoirs* and *Comet in Moominland*. These design elements invite embodied, imaginative engagement with the Moomin stories, supporting children in emotionally inhabiting these fictional worlds. Such physical enactment of narrative supports experiential learning by making abstract story elements tangible and memorable, while also promoting intergenerational dialogue as parents and children explore the spaces together.

Eemil – Snickerboa hopp fallera, inspired by Astrid Lindgren's Emil books, offers another richly interactive space. Here, children can visit Emil's woodshed (Snickerboa), navigate a firewood maze, play hide and seek, or explore a food stall filled with playful props. This exhibit exemplifies participatory museology by inviting children to co-author their own

Emil adventures through role-play and problem-solving. By encouraging creative improvisation within a narrative framework, Junibacken supports children's sociocultural development, helping them practice language, negotiation, and perspective-taking in collaboration with peers and adults (Vygotsky, 1934/1962).

Across these varied zones, Junibacken consistently integrates multi-modal literacy approaches that value images, spatial design, sound, and embodied movement as important modes of meaning-making alongside text. These spaces do not simply teach stories but create conditions for children to perform them-through dialogue, gesture, exploration, and imagination. The museum's thematic zones are intentionally open-ended, allowing for non-linear narrative exploration where children choose their own paths and construct personal interpretations. This flexibility supports differentiated learning, enabling each child to engage with stories in ways that match their interests, abilities, and cultural contexts.

Junibacken's broader programming reinforces this participatory ethos. As the museum notes, everything it does is rooted in its mission "to awaken the desire to read," with exhibitions, theatre performances, and activities designed to nurture a love of literature through direct, joyful engagement. Notably, the museum stages over 1,500 children's theatre performances annually and houses a large, carefully curated children's bookshop-demonstrating its commitment to sustaining a rich ecosystem of literary culture. This self-sustaining model, achieved without state funding, highlights Junibacken's innovative approach to cultural entrepreneurship, showing how immersive, story-centered design can successfully blend education, entertainment, and cultural preservation.

By integrating these design and programming strategies, Junibacken offers a compelling model of how children's literature museums can transform reading into an embodied, social, and participatory cultural practice. Its interactive exhibits and thematic zones exemplify how museums can support literacy development, cultural appreciation, and imaginative play in ways that extend far beyond the traditional page.

3.4 Spatial Design as Storytelling Device

Junibacken's spatial design plays a crucial role in transforming literature into an immersive, lived experience by embodying narrative logic through its architectural and choreographic choices. The layout, sequencing, and spatial choreography guide how children physically "move through" stories, enabling them to engage actively with literary worlds. This approach exemplifies spatial storytelling, where meaning is constructed not only through words but through movement, sensory experience, and

the physical relationships between spaces and objects (MacLeod, et al., 2012; Meyer, 2016). By designing environments that children can navigate, inhabit, and manipulate, Junibacken ensures that stories are not simply told but performed, supporting Dewey's notion of learning as meaningful, integrated experience rooted in action and reflection.

Central to this design philosophy is the full-scale replica of Villa Vilekulla, the iconic home of Pippi Longstocking, which perfectly reflects Astrid Lindgren's vivid descriptions. Both the exterior and interior of Pippi's house are meticulously recreated, allowing children to explore and interact with the space as described in Lindgren's books (West, 2020). This spatial embodiment of story supports experiential learning by encouraging imaginative play and deepening children's emotional connection to narrative worlds. By stepping into Pippi's house, children don't just observe the story—they live it, enacting roles, experimenting with ideas, and building personal interpretations.

The open-ended design of Junibacken's play environments also fosters dramatic play and narrative exploration, key components of sociocultural learning. Children are often observed adopting roles from the stories or inventing their own tales within the familiar settings. For example, some children pretend to be Pippi or other characters, while others create entirely new storylines inspired by the space. Parents and caregivers frequently join in, enhancing the intergenerational storytelling dynamic and creating shared learning opportunities. Through these interactions, children develop language, negotiation skills, empathy, and cultural knowledge in socially meaningful contexts.

This emphasis on play echoes Lindgren's own philosophy, where work and play merge seamlessly. As Lundqvist (1989) notes, Pippi "plays all day; for her, work is play and play work. Junibacken embraces this ethos by offering spaces that support participatory museology, empowering children to become active co-creators rather than passive observers. Without formal guides dictating movement or interpretation, families are free to navigate autonomously, encouraging spontaneous engagement, exploration, and co-construction of meaning. This design choice aligns with inclusive, child-centered pedagogies that value learner agency and recognize diverse pathways to understanding.

Beyond visual design, Junibacken engages children's senses through rich auditory and sensory elements, bringing stories vividly to life. Soundscapes, lighting, textures, and scenography are integrated intentionally to evoke the moods and atmospheres of specific story worlds. This multimodal approach acknowledges that literacy is not confined to text alone but is constructed through a range of communicative modes— including images,

movement, sound, and spatial arrangement (Kress, 2010). By creating layered sensory environments, Junibacken ensures that children can access stories in diverse ways, accommodating different learning styles and supporting inclusive educational experiences.

Importantly, the museum's interactive, non-linear spatial layout encourages personal navigation through stories, supporting a more aesthetic and individualized literary experience (Hameed & Perkis, 2018). Unlike traditional museums with fixed pathways, Junibacken allows visitors to choose their own routes, pause, return, and reimagine the spaces as they see fit. This flexibility reflects contemporary understandings of narrative as multi-threaded and open-ended, giving children the freedom to create personal connections and interpretations.

By embracing spatial design as a storytelling device, Junibacken exemplifies how children's literature museums can transform reading into a participatory, embodied, and socially meaningful practice. Through architectural design, scenography, and sensory cues, the museum creates environments where children are encouraged to imagine, play, and co-author the stories they encounter. In doing so, Junibacken not only preserves literary heritage but reinvents it as a living, shared cultural experience that fosters curiosity, creativity, and a lifelong love of reading.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This chapter has examined Junibacken as a compelling case study of how children's literature can be transformed from static text into an immersive, participatory, and socially meaningful museum experience. Drawing on theories of experiential learning, sociocultural interaction, spatial storytelling, multimodal literacy, and participatory museology, the analysis has demonstrated how Junibacken's design and programming embody a holistic approach to fostering children's engagement with literature.

Rather than functioning as a traditional museum with object-centered displays and didactic interpretation, Junibacken reimagines the museum as a living story-world- a space where children do not simply read about stories but physically inhabit them, act them out, and share them with others. Its carefully choreographed spatial design enables narrative experiences that unfold through movement and interaction, supporting Dewey's call for education that unites meaningful experience with enduring learning outcomes. By inviting children to play, experiment, and imagine within richly designed environments, Junibacken also supports Vygotsky's vision of learning as a social, collaborative process mediated through cultural tools and guided participation.

Crucially, the museum's use of spatial storytelling and multimodal literacy practices ensures that narratives are conveyed through visual, auditory, tactile, and spatial cues, making them accessible and engaging to children with diverse learning styles. Its participatory ethos positions children as co-creators of meaning, not passive recipients of information, reinforcing the importance of agency and voice in cultural learning spaces. By embracing play, intergenerational dialogue, and open-ended exploration, Junibacken models an inclusive approach to literacy education that honors the complex, social, and embodied ways children make sense of stories.

Beyond its significance as a single institution, Junibacken offers important insights for museum practice and education more broadly. It exemplifies how children's literature museums can move beyond preservation to foster living cultural practices that sustain storytelling traditions and promote literacy as an imaginative, collaborative, and joyful experience. Its self-sustaining model- supported by a blend of exhibition design, theater programming, and retail- demonstrates that cultural institutions can innovate to remain financially viable while maintaining a strong educational mission.

Based on this analysis, museums and educators can enhance their literacy-focused practice by designing immersive, sensory-rich environments that also support interpretation and reflection; encouraging intergenerational dialogue and collaborative storytelling to promote social learning; integrating multimodal strategies such as images, sound, movement, and ensuring inclusive, adaptable spaces that welcome all children. By adopting these principles, museums can more effectively foster literacy, creativity, and meaningful cultural engagement.

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CHAPTER 2

DESIGNIN EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN A MICRO- MUSEUM WITH A FOCUS ON INTERACTION AND ACCESSIBILITY: ANKARA TOY MUSEUM

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Abstract

In this study, museum education is examined within the context of interaction and accessibility. In order to enhance the accessibility of the museum from the visitor's perspective, concepts such as interaction design, the use of the museum as a play space, and the notion of the "playful museum" are addressed in a comprehensive manner. Within this framework, the study explores how museums have historically approached the concept of play and the extent to which they have incorporated play-based practices. Museums are open to the public, accessible, and inclusive; they promote diversity and sustainability. Operating ethically and professionally with the participation of communities, museums offer diverse experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection, and knowledge sharing. Within the scope of this definition, which emphasizes participation and interaction, the playful museum approach—emerging under the framework of new museology that seeks to transform the visitor into an experiential subject—constitutes the central focus of this study. The concept of the playful museum, which includes key terms such as interaction, play-based learning, communication, participation, creativity, imagination, experience, and discovery, is particularly prominent in children's museums, science centers, and creative museum projects. In addition, art museums and other museum types are also adopting the playful museum approach to make learning more inclusive, accessible, and enjoyable. In this study, a theoretical framework has been established through the review of national and international academic literature and examples of practical implementations in different museums, with the aim of examining educational design in relation to interaction and accessibility in the museum context. The Ankara Toy Museum, which offers play-based services for children, is analyzed within the framework of the playful museum approach, and an interaction material developed to enhance the museum's accessibility for visitors is presented in detail. In the evaluation process, a mapping method aligned with the playful museum approach was adopted, and original game designs were developed accordingly. First, for children aged 5–8—the age group that visits the museum most frequently—a 12-month activity calendar was developed, based on the museum collection and designed to be used throughout the year. This calendar includes the selection of a toy for each month, surrounded by activities, riddles, historical information, and interactive tasks. Then, with the aim of transforming the museum experience of children aged 7–12 into an interactive, participatory, and discovery-oriented process—whether experienced individually or with their families—the "Playful Museum Discovery Map" and its integrated game contents were developed to guide their visit. Finally, to complete the design of the interactive material and expand museum accessibility for visitors with visual impairments, audio

description applications were implemented for selected key objects in the collection. The findings of this study suggest that educational designs based on the playful museum approach can strengthen the pedagogical function of museums and contribute to the creation of inclusive, accessible, and participatory learning experiences for diverse age groups and individuals with varying needs.

Keywords: museum, play, playful museum, participation, accessibility.

Introduction

In Prague, on 24 August 2022, the International Council of Museums has approved the proposal for the new museum definition as “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.” (ICOM, 2022).

Museums are not merely spaces for leisure and recreation; they are increasingly recognized as social environments that foster out-of-home and out-of-school learning, where individuals interact with exhibitions, narratives, and one another (Karadeniz & Artar, 2017). It is important for museum visitors to have an enjoyable and meaningful experience during their visit, as this plays a critical role in fostering a motivation for repeat visits and in facilitating lasting learning about the museum and its collections (Buyurgan & Şener, 2023).

In order to ensure that museums are preferred by visitors, key strategies include implementing contemporary exhibition design approaches, developing educational programs tailored to different age groups, interests, and needs, and voluntarily assuming the role of a cultural catalyst by placing emphasis on technological design. One of these strategies is to fundamentally transform the museum’s approach to welcoming visitors. For example, as part of a fictional and visitor reception design, the Manchester Museum adopted a “play-based exhibition approach” and implemented a project titled *The Happy Museum* in 2015. The Happy Museum Project, launched in 2011 and funded by Arts Council England, encourages museums

to prioritize well-being, sustainability, and happiness—before all else. It challenges the traditional focus on collections and narrative, urging institutions to center visitor joy and community connection in every decision. In their project aimed at promoting experimentation, play, and experiential engagement in museums, key principles were identified and later compiled into a handbook titled “Rules for a Playful Museum.” The handbook outlines fundamental principles for becoming a playful museum (Lester, Strachan & Derry, 2014): preparing the museum environment to support play, incorporating play-related concepts into the museum’s mission and vision, designing activities based on play, offering diverse and varied types of play, and ensuring that the games can be adapted and shaped by the participants themselves (Güneröz, 2022).

A Playful Museum?

One of the indicators of a fundamental shift in the visitor reception approach is the emergence of museum types based on fun, learning, and interaction—such as children’s museums, discovery centers, and science and technology museums, as well as various thematic museums. Children’s museums, in particular, have emerged as pedagogical spaces that support the cognitive, social, and psychomotor development of children in a multidimensional manner. This transformation coincided with the 20th-century shift from traditional museology to a contemporary, education-oriented museum approach. This development has been significantly influenced by child-centered educational philosophies advocated by thinkers such as John Dewey, Maria Montessori, and Jean Piaget.

Building on these ideas, the Brooklyn Children’s Museum—established in 1899 in New York City, USA—made history as the first institution to prioritize children’s active participation. It offered not only exhibitions but also hands-on learning spaces, club rooms, botanical gardens, experimental laboratories, and children’s libraries. This model spread throughout the 20th century, particularly in the US, and also to countries such as Japan, Canada, the United Kingdom, and various European nations. In each context, it was reshaped with different content, aligning with local understandings of childhood culture, scientific curiosity, or social values. Over time, with technological advancements, features such as interactive exhibition

spaces, digital games, simulations, and multisensory learning environments became increasingly prominent in these museums (Demir & Demirarslan, 2020; Güneröz, 2022; Sobel et al., 2022; Haden et al., 2014; Willard et al., 2019; Karadeniz, 2013).

The Playful Learning Landscapes initiative is an innovative learning model developed in partnership between the Chicago Children's Museum and Metropolitan Family Services. It aims to support the early mathematical skills of children aged 0–5 through play-based and interaction-focused approaches embedded in everyday public spaces. Within the scope of the project, locations such as a laundromat in Little Village, Douglas Boulevard in North Lawndale, and the Marie Wilkinson Community Garden in Aurora were redesigned to encourage children to explore mathematical concepts alongside their caregivers. Core competencies such as number sense, spatial and shape relationships, pattern recognition, sequencing, and geometry were supported through visual-auditory materials, physical arrangements, and instructional cards. The tools and guidance used in these learning spaces aim to facilitate cognitive development by enabling caregivers to interact with children in natural, real-world contexts. Representing an extension of museum pedagogy into community spaces, this initiative serves as a powerful example of how learning processes can be effectively designed through play, independent of the traditional museum setting (Chicago Children's Museum, 2025). The Young Victoria and Albert Museum, located in London, is a museum focused on children, young people, and families. Originally opened in 1872 as the Bethnal Green Museum, it was renamed the Museum of Childhood in 2006, and in 2023 it reopened following an extensive renovation process. More than 20,000 children and families participated in the redesign, which reimaged the museum around three interactive galleries titled “Play,” “Imagine,” and “Design,” placing play-based learning at the heart of the visitor experience (Young Victoria and Albert, 2025).

In Türkiye, the idea of establishing a children's museum that centers on interaction and learning was first proposed by archaeologist Dr. Musa Baran. In 1983, he founded a pioneering museum in Bademler Village, located in the Urla district of İzmir, by transforming a room of his house into an exhibition space featuring a collection of toys made by children themselves. This museum was a groundbreaking initiative in the field of children's museology in Türkiye (Baran Türker, 2024). Officially recognized

as Türkiye's first toy museum, the Ankara Toy Museum was established by Bekir Onur on April 20, 1990. Inspired by toy museums he had visited during his travels abroad, Onur envisioned creating a similar institution in Türkiye. Known for his academic work on childhood, play, and toys, he travelled across the country conducting research on traditional toys and collected numerous samples. He also reached out to prominent companies that had shaped the history of the Turkish toy industry, enriching the museum's collection with both traditional and industrially produced toys. The Museum was designed not merely as an exhibition space but as an educational and cultural center. With the establishment of a research center four years after its opening, the museum evolved into a multifaceted institution that fulfills functions of exhibition, preservation, education, and research (Onur, 2010; 2016).

Following the establishment of the museum, toy museums were founded in many other cities, including Istanbul, Gaziantep, and Antalya. Children's museums and toy museums in Türkiye particularly support multisensory and experience-based learning through interactive activities—especially during group visits—such as creative drama, puppet making, wooden toy painting, robotic coding, stone painting, and science workshops. These museums adopt a pedagogical approach that centers on learning through play, and they effectively fulfill their educational functions through thematic learning areas, hands-on workshops, and interactive exhibitions (Günca, 2023).

The ideas of ancient Greek philosophers advocating the positive impact of play on physical, emotional, and social development have laid the foundation for later perspectives that emphasize the developmental value of play. In the 20th century, influential thinkers such as Piaget and Vygotsky proposed that play, when used for educational purposes, can be highly effective. These ideas have significantly shaped educational and developmental methodologies. Today, play continues to be recognized as an activity that enhances children's problem-solving skills, fosters creativity, and positively influences their overall development. Theories developed around play, supported by research, have led some museums—like many other child-focused institutions—to adopt play-based approaches (Olesen & Holdgaard, 2024).

The concepts of museum and play have been increasingly associated with one another as the educational and pedagogical value of play has become more widely understood. However, a review of the literature reveals that the terms “playful museum” or “fun mu-

seum” were notably introduced and emphasized by Oppenheimer. He asserted that play in museums is not only an engaging way to involve children but also an effective means of including adults in the processes of exploration and learning. Unlike traditional exhibition methods, play-based exhibition approaches allow children to make original discoveries and facilitate more lasting learning. This is because play is not merely a form of entertainment—it also forms the basis of discovery through trial and error (Oppenheimer, 1972). Museums designed with a playful museum approach are supported by vivid and colorful architectural arrangements that aim to engage all the senses of their visitors and establish meaningful connections. The design of such spaces centers on the instinctive human desire to play and embraces a playful perspective throughout the spatial planning process (Purwatiani et al., 2018). Creating museum environments that are visually and experientially appealing for children increases both learning and interest in learning. It is crucial that these spaces attract children’s attention and encourage interaction with the museum by being simple, comprehensible, age-appropriate, developmentally suitable, and entertaining, while also capturing their curiosity (Oppenheimer, 1972).

Unlike traditional approaches based on one-way transmission of information, a new understanding has emerged that emphasizes visitor participation and highlights the role of the senses and emotions. This approach has gained momentum through the integration of the playful museum perspective into museum practices. The playful museum concept supports the development of connections between visitors and museums by emphasizing sensory and emotional engagement, encouraging visitors to contribute to their museum experiences through the use of imagination. The playful museum approach enables visitors to engage with museum objects on both individual and social levels, transforming the museum from a site of passive knowledge dissemination into a living cultural space where learning occurs through active participation and play (Styles, 2015). A study focusing on the redesign of the West Java Food Museum, which originally featured outdated and uninviting architecture, using a playful theme, highlights three major architectural challenges faced by museums. One of these is the difficulty in attracting the attention of younger audiences when displaying historical artifacts, which often compels museums to integrate technology. To do so effectively, however, museums must also have sufficient financial resources to keep pace with current developments. The study notes that following the playful redesign of the museum, cylindrical forms were incorporated into the architecture, and the museum’s exterior was inspired by

a traditional rice basket, an object of geographical and cultural significance (Purwatiani, Aryanti & Minggra, 2018).

In the field of museum education, the development of play-based social interactions in interactive museum exhibitions and the influence of exhibition design on these processes have not yet been thoroughly explored. In particular, how flexible social play structures emerge among visitors, which exhibition methods support these structures, and how such interactions shape the overall museum experience require more detailed examination. Addressing this gap, Kumar et al. (2024) developed an analytical framework called Social Configuration Affordances for Museum Play (SCAMP) to systematically analyze play-based social interactions within museum settings. The SCAMP system categorizes play behaviors into three main types: parallel play, cooperative play, and competitive play. It also identifies how social structures—such as teaching, helping, and playing together—emerge, and how exhibition components influence these processes. Through his analysis of an interactive exhibition titled *Rainbow Agents*, Kumar demonstrated that exhibition design elements—such as spatial layout, display methods, and digital interfaces—significantly affect social interaction. Notably, tasks based on shared goals (e.g., collaboratively nurturing virtual plants within the exhibit) were found to enhance cooperation among visitors. The SCAMP approach offers valuable insights into how museums can become more inclusive and interactive environments that foster participatory experiences and learning through play (Kumar, 2024).

In a study conducted by Olesen and Holdgaard, 38 peer-reviewed articles were selected from a total of 766 publications related to the concepts of play and museums published up to 2022, and were subjected to qualitative analysis. The selected studies were prioritized for their focus on museums as central settings, their systematic examination of play within museum contexts, and their emphasis on visitor experience. The vast majority of these studies were published in Europe and the US and focused primarily on children's museums, natural history museums, and science museums. Through the use of qualitative analysis methods, the researchers categorized playful approaches in museums under three main themes.

- **Engagement:** Play enables visitors to establish more meaningful and effective connections with museum objects and the themes created within exhibition spaces. It encourages children to spend quality time with their families during their museum visits.
- **Learning:** Playful approaches in museums provide foundational knowledge in fields such as science, engineering, and art, increasing children's motivation and interest in these disciplines. By

focusing on intergenerational interaction—especially between parents and children—such approaches support cross-generational learning. Since playful learning emphasizes experiential and emotional engagement, it contributes to more lasting learning outcomes.

- **Enjoyment:** Play ensures that museum visitors have enjoyable experiences and encounter exhibitions and displays in more engaging ways. Nevertheless, some critiques point out that museums may miss the opportunity to become experience-centered spaces.

Traditional presentation methods in museums often fail to create an engaging experience for younger visitors. Exhibition approaches that focus primarily on objects make it difficult for adolescent visitors to establish emotional and cognitive connections, thereby limiting both learning processes and active participation. In response to this issue, a study was conducted on the design and implementation of a mobile and tactile prototype called Emotions Speaking, which aimed to foster emotional connections with historical figures, promote perspective-taking, and encourage historical empathy through gamified interaction. The study was implemented on two display cases at the Ancient Agora Museum in Athens. Participants were given a handheld device, headphones, and a polygonal cardboard necklace. This necklace featured surfaces corresponding to seven core emotions—anger, fear, jealousy, sadness, joy, admiration, and indifference—based on Plutchik’s theory of emotion-color associations (Kumar & Vardhan, 2022).

Each surface triggered an audio narration by a different character, each representing a distinct perspective on the life of Socrates. Through these audio narratives, visitors had the opportunity to explore a single historical event from multiple emotional viewpoints, thereby enhancing their critical thinking and empathy skills. Tested with a group of 32 participants, the experience was described as significantly more “engaging,” “fun,” and “educational” compared to traditional museum visits. The emotional narratives, in particular, sparked a deeper curiosity and sense of meaning about the life of Socrates. Many participants emphasized the power of individual experience and highlighted the excitement of discovering the identity behind each narrator. The study strongly demonstrates the potential of gamified emotional storytelling techniques in fostering historical empathy among young visitors (Roussou et al., 2024).

Although interactive and play-based exhibitions are becoming increasingly common in museum experiences, there is a notable lack of systematic analyses regarding how and at what stages visitors engage with these exhibits. Yet, the detailed visualization of such interactions is crucial for

informing and improving exhibition design decisions. A study was conducted with the aim of visualizing visitor behavior and assessing the validity of a participation analysis model known as the Participant Journey Map. The study analyzed six different interactive museum exhibitions through the individual observation of 672 visitors. The Participant Journey Map model defines the visitor's engagement process with an exhibition in six key stages: Awareness, Interest, Intention, Exploration, Continuation, and Completion. For each exhibition, the frequency and nature of engagement at these stages were visualized using graphics similar to heat maps. The analyses revealed notable behavioral differences between child and adult visitors (Mast, 2023).

Exploring Interaction and Accessibility Through the “Playful Museum” Approach: The Case of the Ankara Toy Museum

The Ankara Toy Museum was established by Bekir Onur on April 20, 1990, within the Faculty of Educational Sciences at Ankara University. The founding philosophy of the museum is based on three key principles: preventing the disappearance of toys and play culture, which are vital elements of cultural heritage; conducting research on all domains influenced by toys (such as culture, industry, education, and play); and implementing educational activities through the use of toys and play. From its inception, the Museum has functioned as more than just a museum. It has also operated as a research and educational institution. In 1994, the museum established the Center for Research on Child Culture under its administration, consolidating its academic and educational work under this unit. Located within the Faculty of Educational Sciences, the museum's exhibition space has been expanded twice in response to the growth of its registered inventory. Necessary arrangements have been made regarding the display areas, and the museum collection has been enriched with new donations (Onur, 2016).

The museum hosts nearly 10,000 visitors annually and is frequently preferred by both individual visitors and school groups. In addition to guided museum tours, it regularly offers educational programs inspired by the museum's collection, with activities conducted on a weekly basis. Within the exhibition space, a variety of activities are designed to enhance active visitor participation and promote child-family interaction. Examples include “Find the Odd One Out” labels placed in the showcases, “Matching Cards” related to selected toys from the collection, and “Audio Descriptions of Toys” —all of which are interactive, play-based tools aimed at enriching both individual and group visits while making the experience more engaging and enjoyable (Artar, Karadeniz, Ateş & Doğan, 2020).

With the advancement of technology, innovations such as Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), and the Metaverse have attracted the attention of museums as well. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, museums aiming to become more accessible and reachable have revised their exhibition methods using technological tools. In this context, the “AR Toy Box” application was developed in alignment with the 4th grade Social Studies Unit “Culture and Heritage,” and its impact on student motivation at different stages of museum education was examined (Güneröz & Yanar, 2024). The application enabled visitors to interact with traditional toys exhibited in the museum.

In addition to educational and play-based materials that enhance interaction and experiential opportunities, the museum has incorporated audio description services into the project to improve accessibility—initially focusing on visitors with disabilities and subsequently addressing the needs of children and families. At the core of an accessible museum lies the principle of inclusive museology, in which all physical and cognitive barriers are removed to ensure universal access. Persons with disabilities are individuals who are considered to have congenital or acquired impairments—whether physical, sensory, intellectual, or psychological—that prevent them from fully participating in physical, social, cultural, or educational activities, and who therefore face challenges in integrating into society (Öztürk, 2011: 18). Projects aimed at addressing the accessibility needs of people with disabilities highlight the importance of transforming museums into usable and inclusive spaces. This transformation paves the way for curatorial practices aligned with the concept of the “barrier-free museum,” which aims to foster broader social engagement for individuals with disabilities (Şimşek, 2022: 93).

In response to visual accessibility issues, Candlin (2004: 103) suggests that museums should prioritize implementing solutions within their main exhibition programs that meet the full range of needs of visually impaired visitors. Within this framework, the initial goal at the museum was to provide audio descriptions for selected, prominent toys in the collection. Audio description, which was first used in the 1980s in theatre to support visually impaired audiences, has since been widely adopted in media. Over time, it has developed into an interdisciplinary practice utilized across various industries (Randaccio, 2018: 285). In the implementation of this project, the museum adopted the guiding principles proposed by Randaccio (2018), which define the stages of audio description in museums and galleries.

1. Gathering information about the objects exhibited in the museum and conducting a detailed analysis.

2. Creating the source script to be narrated, based on the collected information and the object itself.
3. Narration of the source script: In this stage, voice recordings are made in a studio by sound technicians and voice actors. Any errors in the narration are corrected, and the final editing of the audio file is completed.
4. The audio output is finalized in an appropriate format (e.g., CD, DVD, MP3) and made ready for distribution and use.
5. For each object, the audio file can be integrated into a display using QR code technology, allowing for the combination of the object, audio narration, 3D outputs, and an information note written in Braille. As part of this project, the audio recordings were uploaded to SoundCloud, a global audio and music streaming platform. The platform features the museum's history as well as audio recordings for twenty of its most significant objects. For each audio file, QR codes were generated using the Canva application and integrated into the corresponding display cases and exhibition areas within the museum. This allows visitors to instantly access the audio recordings of the objects by scanning the QR codes with their mobile devices. At the entrance to the museum, a primary QR code provides a brief introduction and a detailed overview of the museum. Additional QR codes placed next to the displays of the twenty featured objects allow visually impaired visitors to scan the codes with their own phones and access the related audio content while physically exploring the museum. An example of a QR code linking to the SoundCloud-hosted recordings of the museum introduction and its twenty featured objects is shared below as part of this project.



Figure 1. *Ankara Toy Museum – Spinning top QR code.*

As part of the museum's accessibility efforts, the first initiative implemented to transform the museum into a "playful" institution was the development of a 12-month museum calendar. Based on the museum's collection, the calendar targets preschool-aged children between 5 and 8 years old. The calendar is intended to serve as an educational tool that fosters a sustained connection between children and the museum throughout the year, shifting away from the traditional concept of a calendar to become an engaging and pedagogically rich resource. The development process of the calendar began by identifying twelve standout toys from the collection—objects that had attracted particular interest from visitors. These toys, each with historical and cultural significance, were integrated into individual months. The calendar was designed to combine educational, cultural, and entertaining elements, with a different toy featured each month. The calendar contains 21 distinct sections. These sections and their contents are outlined as follows: *Toy of the Month*, *Quote of the Month*, *Riddles*, *Did You Know?*, *Design and Play*, *Secret of the Candle-Powered Boat*, *Toy Conversations*, *Design and Tell!*, *Space Vehicles*, *Fun Facts*, *Toys in Art*, *Spinning Fun*, *From Past to Present*, *Think and Draw!*, *How to Play?*, *Firsts in Aviation*, *Explore and Learn!*, *Keep in Mind*, *Infant Memories*, *Cradle in Art*, *Your Dream Toy* and *Discover the Rhythm*.

Image 1. *Space Craft*



Space craft (<https://cagdasmuzebilim.ankara.edu.tr/3d-oyuncak-muzesi/>) Photo: Doğanay Çevik

Specifications: Produced in 1961 by Nekur Toy Company, one of Turkey's leading manufacturers of tin toys. Nekur was known for its focus on transportation-themed toys, including police cars, fire engines, ambulances, and pickup trucks.

Image 2. Educational Calendar – January Front Page



**ANKARA
OYUNCAK
MÜZESİ**

OCAK 2025

AYIN SÖZÜ

Oyun, çocuğun işidir.
Maria Montessori

AYIN OYUNCAĞI



Çakar Motor
Artin Çakar'ın çakar motor adını verdiği bu oyuncak 1950 yılında Artin Çakar tarafından yapılmıştır.

PAZARTESİ	SALI	ÇARŞAMBA	PERŞEMBE	CUMA	CUMARTESİ	PAZAR
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Image 3. Educational Calendar – January Back Page



**ANKARA
OYUNCAK
MÜZESİ**



TASARLA VE OYNA!

OCAK 2025

BİLMECE



Tenekeden yapıldım,
Mum yanınca hareketlendim,
Buhar gücüyle ilerledim,
Bil bakalım ben neyim?
(Çakar Motor)

Bir A4 kâğıdı kullanarak adım adım katlama işlemiyle bir gemi tasarlayın. Tasarladığınız gemiyi boyayarak, süsleyerek ve bir isim vererek kişiselleştirin. Ardından gemiyi su dolu bir leğene bırakarak yüzdürün ve nasıl yüzdüğünü gözlemleyin. Daha sonra suyun kaldırma gücünü ve gemilerin suyun üzerinde nasıl yüzdüğünü araştırıp öğrenerek bilimsel düşünme becerilerini geliştirmeye yönelik bir keşif yapın.



BUNU BİLİYOR MUSUNUZ?

Artin Çakar, tenekeden oyuncak konusunda Türkiye'nin en önemli ustalarından biridir. Artin Çakar'ın çakar motor adını verdiği oyuncak "mumlu gemi oyuncak" adıyla da bilinmektedir.

MUMLU GEMİNİN SIRRI

Mumlu Gemi (Çakar Motor) Nasıl Hareket Ediyor?
Mumun ısısı, geminin alt kısmındaki metal boruların içinde bulunan suyu ısıtarak buhar oluşturur. Oluşan bu buhar, borulardan dışarı atılarak gemiyi ileriye doğru hareket ettirir.

OYUNCAK SOHBETLERİ

- Çakar Motora sen bir isim verseydin hangi ismi seçerdin?
- Bu oyuncak geçmişte nasıl kullanılmış olabilir?
- Gemiye yeni bir özellik eklemek isteseydin bu özellik ne olurdu?

Following this initiative, the main exhibition hall of the Ankara Toy Museum was re-evaluated based on the “Playful Museum” approach, and new play models were developed. In designing these models, children aged

7 to 12 were identified as the target audience. The showcases selected for use in the playful museum materials included: School Culture, Street Games, Vehicles, Dollhouse, Music and Entertainment, Animals, Dolls, Neighborhood, Space, and Logic Games. From each of these showcases, one toy was selected to serve as a thematic keyword, and a set of questions was developed around each toy. The “School Culture” showcase features toys from the museum collection that can be associated with school and school-related culture. Examples include a mandolin, a doll wearing a school uniform, and science kits. For this showcase, the toy selected to help identify the first letter of the keyword is the mandolin. After locating the hidden card within the “School Culture” showcase, participants are instructed to examine the exhibit label and identify the mandolin among the displayed toys whose production year includes the number ‘7’. They are then asked to note the fifth letter of the toy’s name as the first letter of the keyword.

Image 4. *Mandolin, Ankara Toy Museum Collection*



Specifications: A seven-string mandolin with a light brown wooden body and a circular sound hole on the front. The area surrounding the sound hole is decorated with brown patterns.

The “Street Games” showcase displays handmade traditional toys such as spinning tops, yo-yos, marbles, slingshots, and knucklebones. To identify the second letter of the keyword, the yo-yo has been selected as the reference object in this showcase. Participants are instructed to examine the “Street Games” display and locate the yo-yo marked with the number two. They must then take note of the first letter of the toy’s name as the second letter of the keyword.

Image 5. *Yoyo, Ankara Toy Museum Collection 1990*



Specifications: A yo-yo composed of two separate wooden discs joined at the center with a small gap between them. The surface features fine circular lines, and the center has a hole.

The “Animals” showcase features a variety of animal figures made from materials such as plastic, metal, wood, clay, and tin. Some of the toys in this display include a camel, a monkey, a frog, and chickens being fed. To identify the sixth letter of the keyword, the selected reference toy is the monkey. Participants are asked to read the question provided on the card and locate the toy in the showcase by matching it with a partial visual clue. Once they have identified the monkey, they are instructed to write down the fifth letter of its name as the sixth letter of the keyword.

Image 6. *Monkey, Ankara Toy Museum Collection*



Specifications: A monkey figure made of wood, with movable arms. The eyes are painted brown and the mouth is painted red. The hands and feet are designed in the shape of hooks.

The letters obtained from the answers to the questions were combined to form the target keyword that children are expected to discover by the end of the activity. In this context, the keyword—Playful Museum—was selected, reflecting the museum’s overarching approach. To encourage active visitor participation throughout the activity, a map representing the exhibition hall was created, with the selected showcases clearly marked. An informational brochure explaining the entire Playful Museum activity was designed, and the map was included within this brochure.



Image 7. Playful Museum Discovery Map of the Ankara Toy Museum (Designed by Elif Bülbül via Canva).



Image 8. Playful Museum Bochure Front Page (Designed by Elif Bülbül via Canva).



Image 9. Playful Museum Bochure Back Page (Designed by Elif Bülbül via Canva).

The question cards placed in each showcase were intentionally hidden in low-visibility areas to stimulate children's discovery skills. During their museum visits, children are expected to examine the brochure, follow the provided instructions, locate the hidden cards in the showcases, and observe the exhibit contents in order to find the correct answers and combine the corresponding letters. This activity enables children to explore the museum space through play while engaging in an interactive learning process aligned with the “playful museum” approach.

Conclusion

This book chapter has examined museum education design within the context of interaction and accessibility, addressing the pedagogical, technological, and participatory dimensions of contemporary museology. Through the case of the Ankara Toy Museum, the applicability of the “playful museum” approach has been evaluated. The educational materials and exhibition content—developed with consideration of children's developmental characteristics, learning styles, and responsiveness to learning through play—have transformed museum visits into more participatory, meaningful, and enjoyable learning experiences. In particular, the *12-Month Museum Calendar* and the *Playful Museum Discovery Map*, designed for children aged 5–12, aim to turn visitors into active participants who explore, engage, and learn—rather than remaining passive observers.

The playful museum approach, unlike the traditional concept of museums, prioritizes emotional, cognitive, and social engagement of visitors, supporting learning through play on both individual and societal levels. This approach stands out as an effective tool not only for museums dedicated to children but also for creating inclusive, enjoyable, and participatory educational environments across all types of museums. As emphasized in this study, play is not merely a recreational activity; it is also a powerful learning method that fosters higher-order cognitive skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, empathy, and creativity. In this context, incorporating play into the museum experience enhances learning retention and helps establish an emotional connection between the visitor and the museum.

The models implemented at the Ankara Toy Museum also serve as significant examples in terms of accessibility. The development of audio description applications for visually impaired individuals and the use of QR code technology have enhanced the museum's capacity to reach diverse visitor groups. In this regard, the museum has successfully embodied the core principles of contemporary museology: inclusivity, accessibility, and community-based participation. Furthermore, by making its collection available on digital platforms and enriching it with augmented reality applications, the museum has enabled visitors to connect with its content regardless of physical location.

In conclusion, the playful museum experience offered by the Ankara Toy Museum represents a unique example within the field of micromuseology in Turkey. The interactive learning environments developed through the playful museum approach not only provide an educational model for children but also enhance family engagement, support intergenerational learning, and transform the museum into a dynamic space for education. In this context, the study serves not only as a case analysis but also as a roadmap for improving museum education policies, enhancing the functionality of micro museums, and promoting play-based learning in museum settings. The approach exemplified by the Ankara Toy Museum offers inspiration for all museum professionals in Turkey seeking to enrich museum experiences for children and families.

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CHAPTER 3

THE JOURNEY OF CULTURAL HERITAGE FROM TURKEY TO HUNGARY: CULTURAL INTERACTION THROUGH THE TRAVELING TRUNK MUSEUM PRACTICE

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Introduction

According to the definition provided in the UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, cultural heritage includes monuments, groups of buildings, and sites. Monuments comprise architectural works, monumental sculptures and paintings, archaeological elements, inscriptions, and cave dwellings that possess outstanding universal value from the standpoint of history, art, or science. Groups of buildings are ensembles of structures that hold significance due to their architectural coherence, their unity, or their placement within a landscape. Sites refer to areas, including archaeological locations, that hold outstanding universal value from historical, aesthetic, ethnological, or anthropological perspectives and that may be the product of human activity or the combined work of nature and humans (UNESCO, 1972).

According to the definition provided by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, cultural heritage encompasses works, monuments, groups of buildings, and museums that possess symbolic, historical, artistic, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological, scientific, and social value. This heritage includes tangible heritage—both movable, immovable, and underwater—as well as intangible cultural heritage that is intertwined with tangible and natural heritage objects, sites, or monuments. While the definition covers elements such as industrial heritage and cave art related to other cultural domains, it excludes intangible cultural heritage such as festivals and celebrations (UNESCO, 2009).

The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, published by UNESCO in 1972, encourages State Parties to enhance awareness of cultural and natural heritage through educational and informational programs. Within this framework, it is considered important that local communities attribute functional value to heritage in their daily lives and that scientific and technical research be conducted to support its preservation. Moreover, State Parties are expected to regularly submit reports to the World Heritage Committee regarding the state of conservation of heritage sites and to take the necessary measures to ensure their protection (UNESCO Türkiye Millî Komisyonu, n.d.).

At the Extraordinary General Assembly held in Prague on August 24, 2022, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) adopted a revised definition of museums, underscoring their evolving societal role. According to ICOM (2022), a museum is defined as: “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.” In contrast to previous definitions, this updated version introduces 13 new components, such as sustainability, ethics, accessibility, and diversity, which reflect the increasing importance of inclusivity and social engagement in museums. The key question raised during the process was whether the primary function of museums is to educate and build collections, and whether these collections should be used for the betterment of society. This shift emphasizes museums as community-oriented institutions that contribute not only to preserving cultural heritage but also to fostering social change and development.

Museums are dynamic institutions that preserve and present objects of cultural, artistic, and scientific significance while also serving as centers for education and public engagement. Beyond displaying collections, they act as catalysts for intellectual curiosity and lifelong learning through interactive exhibitions and diverse educational programs. These programs foster perceptual development and active participation, accommodating various audiences including those with special needs. Contemporary museums incorporate multifaceted facilities—such as classrooms, laboratories, and participatory galleries—to support inclusive, experiential learning. As exemplified by institutions like the Exploratorium, museums increasingly emphasize hands-on, multisensory learning experiences that promote exploration and self-directed discovery (Pitman-Gelles, 1979).

According to the International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM, 2010), museum education can be understood as a collection of values, concepts, knowledge, and practices that support the development of the visitor; it is an acculturative process that relies on pedagogical methods, personal growth, fulfilment, and the acquisition of new knowledge. In a similar vein, Hooper-Greenhill (1992) defines museum education as a lifelong, interactive, dynamic, participatory, and innovative process that creates connections between museum collections and the interests of visitors. Todino and Campitiello (2025) further emphasize that museum education entails the intentional and strategic use of museum spaces, collections, and resources to promote learning among diverse groups. This educational approach comprises a variety of non-formal learning experiences, such as guided tours, participatory workshops, and interactive exhibitions that support inquiry-based and experiential engagement. With a strong focus on accessibility and inclusivity, museum education seeks to enhance visitor understanding, foster appreciation for cultural, historical, and scientific content, and cultivate active citizenship and lifelong learning. Moreover, through the integration of digital tools and immersive technologies, museum education extends its pedagogical impact beyond physical spaces,

offering both in-person and distance-based experiences. This learner-centered approach encourages critical thinking, active participation, and the co-construction of meaning. As inclusive environments, museums function as dynamic learning settings where tangible objects and digital media contribute to cognitive, emotional, and social development, deepening individuals' connections with cultural heritage and historical narratives.

The cultural action of museums in English Canada is shaped around the principles of accessibility, equality, inclusion, equity, and sustainability. This concept entails museums establishing continuous and multidimensional dialogue with communities, developing unique educational strategies that respond to diverse societal needs while aiming to promote diversity and equity. Moreover, within the scope of cultural action, it is essential for museums to carry out their educational mission with a sense of social responsibility and sustainability. The categorization of educational strategies can contribute to museum professionals conducting their activities in a more planned, effective, and innovative manner (Émond & Mendonça, 2022). In this context, Traveling Trunk Museum Practices can be regarded as innovative approaches that overcome the spatial limitations of museum education and enable outreach to diverse communities, thereby enhancing cultural access and inclusion.

Museums play a central role in preserving a society's history, cultural heritage, and aesthetic values, ensuring that these values are passed on to future generations. They not only showcase traces of the past but also enable individuals to develop historical and cultural awareness, enhance their aesthetic sensitivity, and understand the contributions of different civilizations. In this sense, museums establish a cultural bond between individuals and societies, fulfilling both an educational and social function. However, the traditional museum concept, which depends on physical spaces and specific visitor groups, presents a limiting factor in terms of accessibility. Museum education overcomes these limitations, enabling museums to reach a broader impact both spatially and functionally. Museum education is an approach that includes knowledge-transmitting and creative learning processes, encouraging individuals to interact directly with cultural and historical values. Rather than simply displaying museum collections, presenting these collections in an interactive and learning-supportive way makes visitors' experiences more meaningful. In this context, the traveling museum services provided by museums emerge as an innovative method, expanding the boundaries of museum education and making cultural heritage accessible to all segments of society.

A review of the relevant literature shows that mobile museum practices are referred to in various countries and institutional contexts by different terms such as “museums' loan boxes,” “outreach boxes,” “outreach

trunks,” “discovery boxes,” “traveling trunks,” “history trunks,” “artifact trunks,” “teacher trunks,” “education trunks,” and “outreach resource trunks.” In this study, the term “traveling trunk” is preferred in order to ensure conceptual consistency. The word “mobile” is commonly used to describe services provided through transportation, such as mobile libraries, mobile hospitals, mobile schools, mobile theaters, and mobile exhibitions. However, the term “traveling trunk” as used in this study refers to a specific model distinct from those delivered inside large vehicles like minibuses, buses, or trucks. Instead, it defines a practice in which museum objects and educational materials are transported via portable containers such as bags, boxes, trunks, or suitcases and presented within the recipient locations. In this context, a traveling trunk is understood as a portable educational tool designed to bring museum artifacts and learning resources to individuals, institutions, or organizations that are unable to visit museums due to reasons such as distance, transportation issues, financial constraints, legal limitations, or time restrictions. To avoid conceptual confusion and to clarify the nature of the practice, the term “traveling trunk” is used throughout this research.

As Weil (2002) also stated, museums organize various programs aimed at visitors of all ages by offering interactive exhibits, conferences, and workshops to achieve their educational objectives. By utilizing their unique and authentic collections, they prepare hands-on and inquiry-based educational programs for both children and adults. In this way, museum visits become more enjoyable for everyone.

Talboys (2000) argues that museums develop various social service programs to diversify their services to communities and increase access by moving their collections outside museum spaces. In this context, they collaborate with local schools, facilitate the loaning of objects through traveling trunk museums, organize traveling exhibitions, and create mobile museums or museum-related portable units to bring cultural heritage to different communities.

Gibbs, Sani, and Thompson (2007) describe the community service programs offered by museums within their educational mission as initiatives aimed at engaging groups who do not regularly visit museums due to reasons such as economic disadvantage, social exclusion, lack of self-confidence, and educational or institutional barriers. These programs aim to reach communities who cannot benefit from the opportunities offered by museums and galleries, providing services to a broader and more diverse audience. Conducted in collaboration with community-based organizations, these programs seek to raise awareness about available museum services and learning opportunities, involve disadvantaged groups in museum activities, and increase participation. Furthermore, museums develop new

exhibitions and programs by organizing special exhibitions and learning activities for communities and even support communities in creating their own exhibitions. In this context, traveling museum services also play a significant role. These services involve offering museum activities in organizational settings such as hostels, nursing homes, hospitals, and prisons, as well as in non-institutional environments like streets and shopping malls. Additionally, museums aim to reach all segments of society through home service programs, providing access to disabled individuals or people living in remote areas.

On the other hand, community service programs of museums, including applications such as traveling trunk museums, are significant initiatives that add value both to the museum and to the community. Before implementing such programs, it is essential to carefully evaluate how both the museum and the target audience will benefit. The program's goals and objectives, target audience, available and attainable resources, potential partnerships, venue, funding, and cost-benefit balance should all be considered. If the necessary resources can be secured, the program should be planned carefully and creatively, with the members of the community involved in the process to assess needs and impacts. Collaborating with the community provides greater benefits beyond individual contributions, and successful programs are both inspiring and rewarding. When implemented effectively, these programs touch different segments of society, creating lasting value (Johnson et al., 2017, p.157).

Traveling trunk museums are portable educational tools that bring museum collections into learning environments. These boxes provide instructional materials in various fields such as history, art, and culture, allowing students to experience historical and cultural topics within the classroom setting. They typically contain original or replica objects, photographs, documents, and guide materials for teachers. The guide materials include historical context, suggestions for classroom use, and additional resources, while the boxes help students develop observation, critical thinking, problem-solving, and empathy skills. Furthermore, by integrating with disciplines such as creative writing, art, and design, they support interdisciplinary learning experiences. By offering the opportunity to interact with real objects, traveling trunk museums make learning more tangible and engaging. These museums are typically designed for classroom use and cover a variety of themes suitable for different educational levels (Oxfordshire County Council, n.d.).

Johnson et al. (2017) explain the primary purpose of the traveling trunk museum as providing students with a more interactive learning experience that complements museum visits, while also encouraging teachers to use the museum as an educational resource in the process of teaching lo-

cal history. They note that the activities included in the trunk are specially designed for use in educational settings, and these activities can be applied both as independent lessons on local history and as curriculum-supporting activities before or after a museum visit.

According to Thomas and Mintz (1998), museums today are no longer confined to permanent buildings; they have diversified their ways of reaching the public, extending far beyond their physical boundaries. Museums deliver their collections through traveling trunk museums and mobile museums to various locations such as public schools and hospitals, transport their exhibitions to remote communities using railways, and, in this way, expand their community-oriented programs across a wide area. For example, the Artrain USA project, implemented in the United States, has emerged as a significant cultural event for many communities with populations ranging from 300 to 3 million. Furthermore, with the impact of technological advancements, the concept of the “virtual museum” has emerged; thanks to the internet and new media tools, exhibitions and services have become globally accessible, significantly transforming the ways museums interact with the public and how their societal roles are perceived.

As Kuhlthau, Maniotes, and Caspari (2012) emphasize, museums serve as inspiring tools that spark inquiry-based learning experiences through the programs they offer across the United States and around the world. Historical societies and museums provide traveling trunk museums filled with costumes and replicas that reflect a specific period. Natural history museums, science centers, and zoos offer educational collections—including seashells, minerals, fossils, and other natural objects—that can be loaned to schools. Additionally, many museums present visual materials, primary sources, explanatory texts, and interactive programs based on their collections and exhibitions through online platforms. Such resources can complement materials already available in the school library. The school librarian can integrate these external resources with those in the library to create a richer and more in-depth learning experience.

Crane (2023) describes the function of traveling trunk museums as a significant service model, particularly for individuals who are unable to travel. According to her, these programs allow individuals with special needs—such as students with disabilities—to experience the museum without leaving their schools. By directly interacting with museum objects, students are able to concrete abstract concepts and engage in hands-on history lessons within the classroom environment. Moreover, such practices enrich learning experiences by enabling participation in museum-based activities without interrupting students’ educational processes or requiring travel.

The Greensboro History Museum defines its Traveling Trunk Museum program as a set of portable educational tools that allow students to explore historical topics within the classroom environment. The trunks prepared as part of the program include original and replica objects, documents, photographs, and guide materials for teachers. These resources aim to support students in developing their critical thinking, observation, and analytical skills. Covering a wide range of themes such as Local Peoples, the American Revolution, Colonial Children, the Civil War, Growing Greensboro, North Carolina's Textile Industry, and the Civil Rights Movement, these trunks offer students an opportunity to engage with historical events through tangible objects and experience an interdisciplinary approach to learning (Greensboro History Museum, n.d.).

The Traveling Trunk Museum activity, which is part of the educational programs at the SeaCity Museum, has been developed especially for students interested in archaeology-focused historical explorations. These traveling trunks provide students with access to real and replica artifacts, allowing them to directly interact with historical objects. The content primarily focuses on themes such as the Prehistoric Period, the History of Southampton, and the Titanic, while also including materials related to the Blitz, the Victorian Era, and the Tudor Period. Linked with various disciplines such as art, creative writing, drama, music, and storytelling, this initiative aims to offer students a rich, interactive, and interdisciplinary learning experience. Additionally, it contributes to the development of observation, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills through the use of archaeological and historical objects (SeaCity Museum, n.d.).

Considering the findings from the literature review, traveling trunk museums are adopted as an effective and functional model for promoting cultural heritage, especially in local communities, schools, and areas with limited museum access. Through portable exhibition formats, these museums are able to reach wide audiences without being confined to a specific location, offering inclusive and interaction-based learning environments for diverse age and demographic groups. The portable collections, made up of miniature versions or replicas of museum objects, enable participants to engage directly with cultural heritage, facilitating tactile experiences, cultural storytelling, and understanding historical contexts. Moreover, the interactive and inquiry-based programs developed within museum education are extended beyond the physical museum spaces, reaching a much broader learning environment through traveling trunk museums. In this respect, traveling trunk museums are seen as an innovative practice where participants can interact with museum collections, and learning processes are experienced in a more accessible, inclusive, and participatory manner.

This study examines a practice aimed at the international promotion of cultural heritage within the framework of portable museology. The primary data source of the research is the “Museum in a Box” workshop, held on April 18, 2023, at the University of Nyíregyháza in Hungary as part of an Erasmus+ Staff Mobility for Teaching program. This traveling trunk museum, introducing Anatolian civilizations, is presented as an innovative approach that can contribute to cultural heritage education at an international level, differing from portable museum models typically implemented in local contexts.

The study was structured according to the descriptive analysis approach, one of the qualitative research methods. Materials used during the event, presentation of contents, participant interactions, and implementation steps were analyzed in a holistic manner. The workshop, which lasted a total of 90 minutes across two sessions, involved 22 participants, including academics specializing in fine arts education and undergraduate and graduate students. During the sessions, participants engaged directly with cultural objects and actively took part in processes of information sharing, interpretation, and creative thinking. No personal data were collected during the research process; instead, the evaluation was based solely on the processes, interaction patterns, and content presentations emerging within the context of the implementation. In this regard, the study involves a qualitative analysis based on structural and contextual observations rather than experiential data. The fact that the practice was carried out in another country provides a new ground for discussions in fields such as cultural transmission processes, museum pedagogy, and cultural diplomacy. Furthermore, it offers an alternative museological approach for the international promotion of local cultural heritage. This traveling trunk museum, focused on Anatolian civilizations, can be considered an innovative model that contributes to cultural heritage education beyond the local context.

1. Preparation Process of the Traveling Trunk

A detailed preparation process was carried out for the Traveling Trunk workshop activity. During this process, various arrangements were made both to create the portable museum format and to ensure its suitability for international transportation:

Determination of the Concept and Theme: The theme of the Traveling Trunk was designated as Anatolian Civilizations, and relevant cultural objects were selected accordingly. The main objective was to introduce the history and art of Anatolian civilizations through the Traveling Trunk.

Preparation of Promotional Materials: A large promotional banner measuring 1m x 2m was designed and printed to highlight the theme of the workshop (see figures 1, 2).



Figures 1 and 2. Preparation of Promotional Materials. (Külük Archive, 2023).

QR Code Applications: English-language video materials were prepared to introduce archaeological museums in Turkey that feature artifacts from Anatolian civilizations. QR codes providing access to these video contents were generated. Participants were able to view the content using their mobile devices (see figures 3, 4).



Figures 3 and 4. QR Code Applications. (Külük Archive, 2023).

Object Information Cards: Informational cards containing brief descriptions were prepared for each item included in the traveling trunk. These cards served as a guide for participants (see figure 5).



Figure 5. Object Information Cards. (Külük Archive, 2023).

Transport and Storage Equipment: To ensure the safe transport of the items in the traveling trunk, an accordion-style aluminum trunk was provided. This trunk not only facilitated the portability of the objects but also offered a practical solution in line with international transportation standards (see figures 6, 7, 8).



Figures 6, 7, 8. Transport and Storage Equipment. (Külük Archive, 2023).

Completion of Customs and Legal Procedures: The necessary legal permissions for the international transportation of the Traveling Trunk Museum were obtained, and the following procedures were carried out:

Documentation of Replica Objects: At the Bolu Museum, photographs of all the objects in the Traveling Trunk Museum were taken by museum

specialists, and an official report confirming that the items were replicas and not originals was prepared.

Sealing of the Traveling Trunk Museum Lock: During customs procedures, the lock mechanisms on the Traveling Trunk Museum were sealed by museum officials to ensure the security of the contents (see figures 9, 10, 11).



Figures 9, 10, 11. Sealing of the Traveling Trunk Museum Lock. (Külük Archive, 2023).

Preparation of Customs Documents: The official documents required for transporting the objects from Turkey to Hungary were prepared. These documents facilitated the process at both Turkish and Hungarian customs.

2. Traveling Trunk Museum Event Content

The Traveling Trunk Museum was prepared in a portable exhibition format showcasing the civilizations of Anatolia. During the workshop, participants were introduced to the following objects and activities:

Cultural Objects: The Traveling Trunk Museum contains 17 replica objects from Anatolian civilizations. As indicated in Document E-83983957-152.11-3664469, a photo-based expert report was prepared by specialists from the Bolu Museum Directorate on March 28, 2023, confirming that the 17 objects in question were replicas (see figures 12,...27). This report was prepared to provide the necessary documentation for the international transportation and customs clearance of these objects.



Figure 12. Two Items Bull Figurine (Hurri / Şerri), Height: 22 cm. Replica Objects.

(Bolu Museum Photographic Archive, 2023.)



Figure 13. Duck-Spouted Libation Jug, Height: 25 cm, Body Diameter: 8.8 cm, Base Diameter: 5cm. Replica Object. (Bolu Museum Photographic Archive, 2023).



Figure 14. Ring-Bodied Vessel, Height: 15.2 cm, Body Diameter: 8.4 cm, Base Diameter: 4.9cm. Replica Object. (Bolu Museum Photographic Archive, 2023).



Figure 15. Zoomorphic Vessel, Length: 17 cm, Width: 11 cm. Replica Object. (Bolu Museum Photographic Archive, 2023.)



Figure 16. Double-Headed Duck-Shaped Vessel, Height: 9.4 cm, Body Width: 10 cm. Replica Object. (Bolu Museum Photographic Archive, 2023.)



Figure 17. Mountain God Figurine, Height: 11.3 cm, Base Diameter: 5.7 cm. Replica Object. (Bolu Museum Photographic Archive, 2023.)

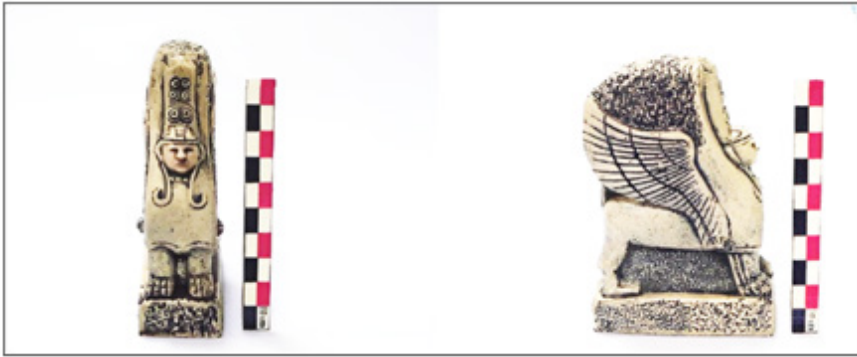


Figure 18. Sphinx Figurine on Pedestal, Height: 10.1 cm, Pedestal Length: 7 cm. Replica Object. (Bolu Museum Photographic Archive, 2023.)



Figure 19. Seated Sun Goddess of Arinna Figurine, Height: 6.4 cm, Width: 3.7 cm. Replica Object. (Bolu Museum Photographic Archive, 2023.)

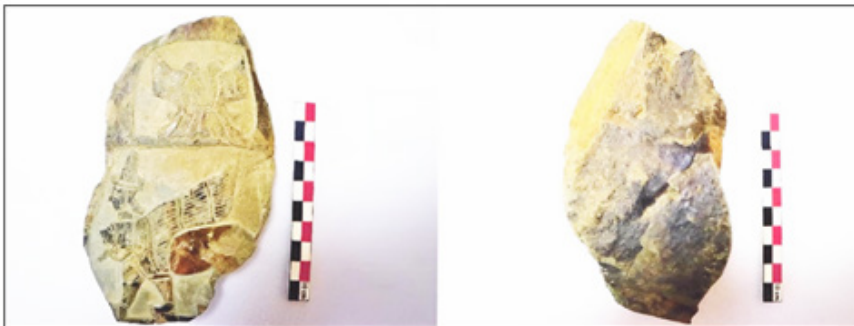


Figure 20. Relief of Double-Headed Eagle and Double-Headed Sphinx, Length: 14.1 cm, Width: 9 cm. Replica Object. (Bolu Museum Photographic Archive, 2023.)



Figure 21. Bull-Head Shaped Stamp Seal, Height: 9.6 cm, Width: 6.9 cm, Seal Diameter: 6.2 cm. Replica Object. (Bolu Museum Photographic Archive, 2023.)



Figure 22. Stamp Seal with Cylindrical Head, Height: 6.8 cm, Seal Diameter: 4.7 cm. Replica Object. (Bolu Museum Photographic Archive, 2023.)

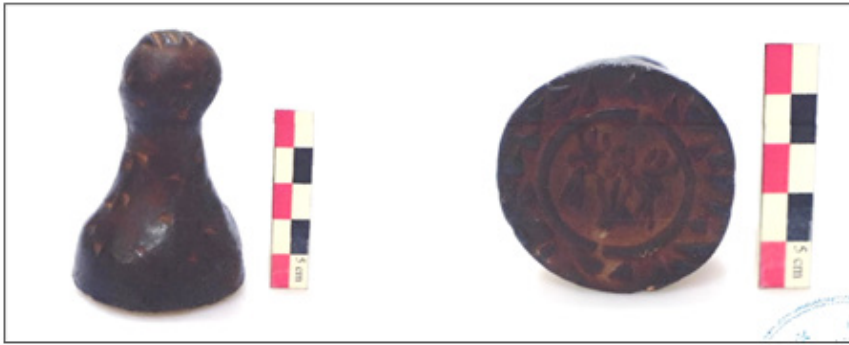


Figure 23. Stamp Seal with Cylindrical Head, Height: 7 cm, Seal Diameter: 4.7 cm. Replica Object. (Bolu Museum Photographic Archive, 2023.)



Figure 24. Stamp Seal with Cylindrical Head, Height: 7.6 cm, Seal Diameter: 4.7 cm. Replica Object. (Bolu Museum Photographic Archive, 2023.)

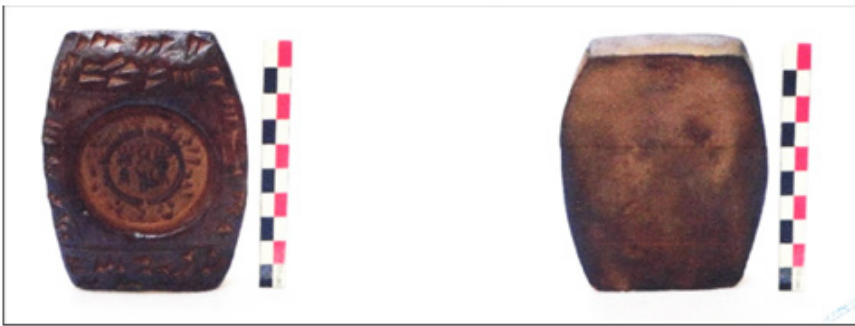


Figure 25. Tablet with Seal Impression, Length: 10.8 cm, Width: 7.8 cm, Seal Diameter: 5.1 cm. Replica Object. (Bolu Museum Photographic Archive, 2023.)

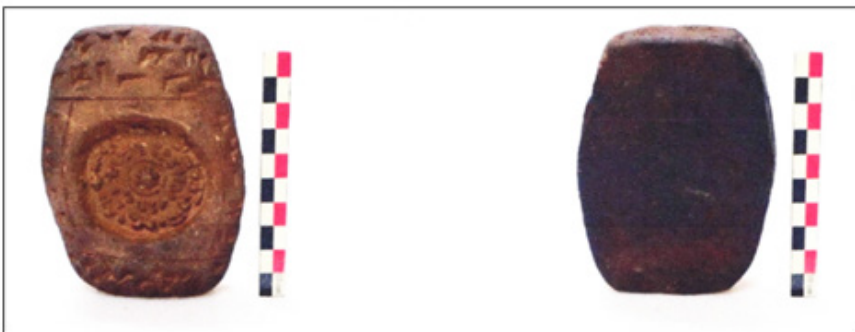


Figure 26. Tablet with Seal Impression, Length: 10.2 cm, Width: 7.7 cm, Seal Diameter: 5.2 cm. Replica Object. (Bolu Museum Photographic Archive, 2023.)



Figure 27. Tablet with Seal Impression, Length: 10.9 cm, Width: 8.2 cm, Seal Diameter: 5.1 cm. Replica Object. (Bolu Museum Photographic Archive, 2023.)

Educational Activities:

Cultural Learning Activity through Digital and Print Materials: As the theme of the Traveling Trunk is Anatolian Civilizations, English video content introducing Archaeology Museums in Turkey was provided through QR code applications. Participants scanned these QR codes with their mobile phones to obtain detailed information about both the archaeology museums in Turkey and the Anatolian civilizations and their artifacts. Additionally, promotional films in English about Turkey, prepared by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, were also shared with the participants, raising awareness about Turkey's cultural and touristic richness. Alongside the QR code applications, information cards containing brief descriptions were also prepared for each item in the Traveling Trunk. These cards served as a printed guide for participants during the examination of replica objects, enriching their learning experience (see figures 28, 29).



Figures 28, 29. Information Retrieval via QR Code Applications. (Külük Archive, 2023).

Hands-on and Minds-on Object Exploration Activity: Each replica in the Traveling Trunk was individually introduced, emphasizing its historical and cultural context. Participants had the opportunity to closely examine the replicas by handling them directly, allowing for a tactile learning

experience. This process helped participants establish a deeper connection with cultural heritage through active, sensory engagement (see figure 30).



Figure 30. Hands-on and Minds-on Object Exploration. (Külük Archive, 2023).

Question and Answer Activity: Following a brief informational session about the artifacts, a question-and-answer activity was held to address topics of curiosity regarding objects. This interactive process encouraged active participation within the group (see figure 31).



Figure 31. Question and Answer Session. (Külük Archive, 2023).

Restoration Activity: Participants were provided with a fragmented Ring-Handled Ceramic Vessel and tasked with performing a small restoration activity. During this session, the fragments of the Ring-Handled Ceramic Vessel were assembled in an attempt to reconstruct the object to its original form. The restoration activity allowed participants to directly interact with cultural objects, exploring the historical context of the artifacts in greater depth (see figures 32, 33, 34).



Figures 32, 33, 34. Restoration Activity. (Külük Archive, 2023).

Storytelling Activity: Creative stories were developed around the objects in the Traveling Trunk, supporting participants in forming a personal connection with cultural heritage. Participants had the opportunity to develop their own creative interpretations regarding the history and use of the artifacts (see figures 35, 36).



Figure 35. Storytelling Activity. (Külük Archive, 2023).



Figure 36. Storytelling Activity. (Külük Archive, 2023).

Process Evaluation Activity: At the end of the event, a debriefing activity was held with the participants. During this session, feedback was shared regarding the knowledge and experiences gained throughout the workshop, suggestions were gathered, and the event was concluded (see figure 37).



Figure 37. Process Evaluation. (Külük Archive, 2023).

Throughout the workshop process, it was observed that participants showed a high level of interest and motivation in the activities. The presence of a researcher from a different country introducing a project representing their own cultural heritage provided an exciting experience for the participants. Particularly, the presentation of archaeological replica objects from the Traveling Trunk, along with the cultural stories surrounding them, sparked curiosity among the participants and encouraged active participation.

It was observed that younger participants, due to their familiarity with technology, were more interested in the video content presented through QR code applications. Younger participants accessed promotional content via their personal mobile devices, while middle-aged participants showed less interest in these digital tools. This observation led to the conclusion that digital content should be further integrated into the Traveling Trunk applications, with the development of innovative methods that specifically engage younger audiences. Additionally, it was noted that preparing the content not only in English but also in the language of the host country, Hungarian, would enhance interaction and accessibility.

One of the aspects that captured the participants' interest the most was the opportunity to touch and closely examine the museum objects. This experience, which is often not possible in traditional museum visits, allowed participants to form a more personal connection with the objects. During the restoration activity, it was observed that some participants actively participated in the process, while others closely followed the activity with interest. This created both a hands-on and observational learning environment.

During the storytelling activity, participants had the opportunity to develop creative stories based on the objects in the Traveling Trunk, thus fostering a personal connection with cultural heritage. However, it was observed that participants with fluent English-speaking abilities took a more active role in this activity. Considering participants with limited English proficiency, it is suggested that having an interpreter present would eliminate the language barrier and create a more inclusive communication environment.

During the question-and-answer session, participants demonstrated a high level of interest. However, it was observed that the language barrier limited participation to some extent, as individuals with higher proficiency in English were more actively engaged in the activity. During the debriefing session held at the end of the process, participants expressed that hosting a Traveling Trunk from Turkey in Hungary was an exciting experience. Getting to know cultural artifacts from Anatolian civilizations and

learning the stories behind these objects was considered a valuable and enriching experience.

Participants suggested that conducting the activities in Hungarian rather than English would have been more efficient and would have helped prevent time losses in certain activities. They also noted that the objects in the Traveling Trunk were interesting, but they proposed that incorporating small drawings or ceramic works as creative artistic applications would be beneficial to the process.

In conclusion, the Traveling Trunk workshop provided a rich and enriching intercultural experience for both sides. For both the participants and the researcher, the process of promoting and sharing cultural heritage created an exciting and meaningful interaction environment.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study demonstrates that the traveling trunk museum approach could be an important tool in international cultural exchange and educational processes. The Traveling Trunk, consisting of replicas of objects from the Anatolian civilizations, was presented during a workshop held in Hungary, creating both an academic and artistic learning environment. Throughout the event, participants had the opportunity to explore cultural heritage, closely examine objects, and understand their historical contexts. Particularly, the ability to physically interact with the objects and hands-on activities such as the restoration process increased the participants' engagement with the activities. Digital content and storytelling activities also supported individuals in forming a personal connection with cultural objects. However, issues such as the language barrier and the adaptation of digital content into the local language were identified as factors limiting the effectiveness of the activities.

To make the activities more effective and inclusive, it is recommended that digital content be adapted into the local language (Hungarian) and that a translator be involved to provide support in the participants' native language. Specifically, diversifying the digital applications that appeal to younger participants and enhancing them with innovative technologies such as augmented reality could further increase the impact of such projects. Based on the feedback from participants, incorporating artistic activities such as ceramic design or drawing into the workshops could enrich the learning experience for the participants. Additionally, promoting and expanding the traveling trunk museum practice could help the cultural heritage of Turkey reach a broader international audience. The Ministry of Culture could encourage the spread of such projects by developing a support program for traveling museum projects. Traveling museums with various themes could

be created to promote the cultural wealth of Anatolia more effectively both nationally and internationally. Furthermore, museums in Turkey could take a more active role in learning processes for different age groups by developing educational-focused traveling museum projects.

Finally, it is recommended to establish structured evaluation processes to better analyze the impact of such events. Surveys or evaluation forms systematically collecting feedback from participants could provide insights into the effectiveness of the activities in greater detail. This study highlights how effective the Traveling Trunk Museum practice could be in promoting and sharing cultural heritage and suggests that the widespread implementation of this practice could make significant contributions to both education and cultural diplomacy.

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CHAPTER 4

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF CHILDREN'S MUSEUMS IN SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

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Introduction

In early childhood education, children's innate characteristics and abilities are developed with the support of their families and environmental stimuli. This development ensures their self-actualization and prepares them to participate beneficially in society as adults (Doğru, 2013). Early childhood education has been shown to significantly contribute to children's psychosocial, cognitive, psychomotor, linguistic, and sexual development. Early childhood education is especially useful for children's transition to primary education (Yavuzer, 2002). Special education enables individuals with special needs to continue their education in public and private preschools, primary schools, secondary schools, and non-formal education institutions alongside their peers without disabilities by providing supportive educational services (MEB, 2013). Thanks to legal regulations for the education of individuals diagnosed with developmental disabilities, people with disabilities in our country can receive early education appropriate for their age group.

Early childhood special education programs aim to increase the competencies of children with special needs and their families. Providing educational opportunities to children with special needs in early childhood is important for accelerating their social and cognitive development as well as reducing problem behaviors. Starting education in early childhood, a critical period in a person's life, also establishes a foundation for future education (Birkan, 2002; Odluyurt, 2002). To ensure the healthy participation of individuals with special needs in society, it is accepted that they should benefit from normal educational environments where their peers receive an education, starting from preschool. In other words, they should participate in mainstreaming practices. Special education services are provided at all levels of education. Children with special needs between the ages of 37 and 66 months are required to attend preschool education. The law stipulates that this period may be extended to 78 months if necessary. Although the number of students in mainstreaming programs has increased over the years, successful implementation of these programs is crucial for students to reap their maximum benefits (Sığıtmaç & Gül, 2018).

Children who participate in successful mainstreaming practices during their early childhood years are more likely to be socially accepted by their typically developing peers in later stages of education (Okyay et al., 2016; MEB, 2012; Batu, 2012). Integration practices prevent the formation of separate classes and schools for students with special needs, as well as negative attitudes toward them. Children with special needs who develop friendships with their typically developing peers are better prepared for life in society and find it easier to adapt to their environment (Acarlar, 2016). Research has shown that early special education effectively improves the

social communication and interaction skills of young children with diagnoses (Mundy & others, 2010).

Educators' attitudes are important for integrating individuals with special needs into their peer groups. Incorporating practices that increase successful peer interaction helps their typically developing peers accept children with special needs. Playing with peers, especially for those diagnosed at an early age, contributes to cognitive development. Play is essential for children's development, learning, and self-regulation. Through play, children also acquire important skills such as sharing, social communication, empathy, problem solving, and creativity. Play is rewarding because it encourages children to take on challenges and learn from more skilled peers (Bodrova, Germeroth, & Leong, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978). All children should have the opportunity to play, but this can be more difficult for children with special needs due to communication or self-regulation challenges. Therefore, it is crucial for professionals in the field to identify children who are not actively playing and understand how to encourage their participation. Those with underdeveloped play skills interpret play in relation to their interests through their behavior in order to play with their peers. Play has become an indispensable element of modern early childhood education programs and teaching processes around the world.

According to Tsao (2002), play is an integral part of early childhood curricula because it facilitates teaching critical developmental skills during this period. As with previous programs, Turkey's Ministry of National Education (MEB) has adopted a play-based approach in its latest program. The basic principles of preschool education and the program's fundamental characteristics emphasize its direct play-based nature. In addition to defining play activities, the program emphasizes that play methods can be used in all activities (MEB, 2013). Similar situations have been observed in early childhood education programs in different countries where play is emphasized. Play is a universal means of learning and teaching. Research on play-based learning is rapidly increasing to support this idea. Additionally, the value placed on play in early childhood education approaches varies, as does the nature and form of play. For instance, the Montessori approach views play as an occupational activity (Montessori, 1912). In contrast, the forest kindergarten approach emphasizes free play and exploration. Games, defined as behavior closely related to children's natural responses to objects, people, living beings, events, and situations, are uniquely valuable in motivating and focusing children during the learning process. Curious, eager, and attentive children can develop many skills through play. According to Bergen (2002), play provides an environment that develops and supports children's academic skills across all developmental areas. Given

this, one could argue that the play process forms the backbone of early childhood education from beginning to end.

Free and structured play are both used in the formal education learning process. In both cases, children acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes. For instance, according to Sutton-Smith (1988), games serve as tools for coping with internal conflicts that arise during socialization, while also providing environments for acquiring cultural and social knowledge. Additionally, game materials contribute to the concretization of games and the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes from various developmental areas through their different qualities. This important distinction between early childhood education and other levels of education is that it provides more effective learning by supporting the child's senses and perceptions in a balanced manner. Play is important for children with typical development in the preschool period and also plays an important role in the development of children with special needs. Through play opportunities provided during their education, children with special needs learn to communicate with those around them, work together, develop peer relationships, and complement each other's strengths and weaknesses. Providing play activities and environments that are appropriate for individuals with different disabilities promotes the development of social skills. In addition to the importance of play for children's development, educational environments that support children's learning and development during early childhood are also necessary. A child's environment equipped with rich materials and tools becomes one of the most important teachers in their education. Play gives children the opportunity to explore and discover their surroundings, recognize objects, and solve problems. They can also learn many concepts through play. Therefore, the quality of the environment in which they play is an important factor in determining what and how much they will learn. Designing an environment that encourages play is crucial for supporting children's learning processes and enhancing their experiences. Children's museums provide such an environment, offering hands-on learning experiences (Adıgüzel, 2006).

1. Children's Museums and Individuals With Special Needs

Museums serve as a bridge between the past and the future. Today, they have evolved from institutions that collect, preserve, and display ancient artifacts to centers that use technology and modern presentations to convey cultural diversity. The development of contemporary museology, conceived as a cultural space different from the static understanding of classical museology, has also changed the needs and definition of museology. Nowadays, museums are regarded as dynamic learning environments and key institutions of public education, fostering the development of ob-

servation, logic, creativity, imagination, and aesthetic appreciation (Buyurgan et al., 2019; Atagök, 2001). New approaches have added meaning and value to museology, and new developments have emerged in museology education. As technology has advanced, classical museology—which encompasses the collection, storage, and preservation of culturally valuable works—has given way to modern or contemporary museology. According to contemporary understanding, effective exhibition and presentation techniques enhance the impact of works on visitors, facilitating the intersection of culture and society. This transformation has led to diverse content and organization in museums around the world. Turkish museology has also been influenced by these developments. In our country, museums covering different disciplines in line with the contemporary understanding are being established, and existing museums are being reorganized to meet the needs of the present day. In a country where archaeological and ethnographic museums predominate, museums are now seen as spaces where people collect and preserve works and objects that reflect scientific and artistic developments. These museums aim to serve different disciplines in line with technological advancements. The variety of presentations and accessibility increases people's interest in museums. While museums that adapt to the modern age are perceived as contributing to society's education and intellectual growth through the dissemination of information, some view them as research centers and intellectual entertainment and leisure venues.

Changes in museological understanding have also contributed to the proliferation of children's museums. Children's museums aim to spark children's interest in life-related topics and provide a fun environment for them to enjoy with their families and friends. Children's museums also provide a free learning environment that offers creative programs to educators. These museums aim to encourage children's interest in science, art, and emerging technologies while increasing their desire to learn. Furthermore, these museums offer activity areas where visitors can stimulate their imagination through play and role-playing (Cleaver, 1988). Children's museums differ from other museums in many ways. They are specifically designed for children, emphasize interdisciplinary education, and use their collections as teaching tools. Gurian (2006) defines these museums as dynamic, innovative, and "bold" institutions that differ from traditional museums in terms of purpose and vision. Children move freely and make their own choices in these museums. Providing children with comfortable spaces to move around in and allowing them to make their own choices fosters a sense of belonging. Works in children's museums are designed to be interactive, engaging, and relevant to popular topics in line with children's developmental characteristics (Regnier, 1987).

Children's museums aim to broaden children's learning horizons, develop their critical thinking and creativity, and preserve their cultural heritage. Thanks to creative programs and interesting exhibition designs, museums can create environments conducive to intergenerational socialization. These institutions produce numerous exhibitions and programs that help children connect with the world around them through play and hands-on experiences. Learning is more effective at children's museums because they emphasize multi-sensory experiences. It's no coincidence that children's museums embody the concept of learning through play and foster a lifelong passion for learning. The relationship between learning theories and museums, especially children's museums, has become a focal point of study to address the complex demands of the 21st century. Recently, the concept of "Museums United with Schools in Education" (MUSE) has emerged as an innovative idea. In the United States, the Discovery Museum and Uxbridge School in Massachusetts offer an example of this concept through their museum-school partnership, which provides an innovative approach to inquiry-based learning.

Children's museums emerged in the early 20th century. In the early 1900s, John Dewey's concept of learning through touch and action, as well as the theories of Maria Montessori and Jean Piaget on effective and lasting learning, emphasized the importance of creating learning environments outside of school. The world's first children's museums opened in the United States. These museums encourage exploration and research through fun, interactive exhibits. These centers research, examine, present, store, and exhibit information and materials that help children understand their society and the world around them. Children's museums promote nontraditional learning and a spirit of discovery and exploration, even for adults.

The first children's museum opened in Brooklyn in 1899. One of this museum's most beautiful features is its exhibition areas, which are suitable for different levels. These exhibits are designed to support elementary school nature studies with content based on various fields, such as geology, botany, human anatomy, history, and zoology. The Brooklyn Children's Museum emphasizes hands-on learning, considers the needs of children, and demonstrates that this approach effectively transforms museums into educational institutions and makes learning fun. Children's museum exhibitions aim to solve the mystery of technological inventions and objects that challenge children's imaginations by showing them how these objects are used. The Boston Children's Museum, founded in 1913 by education volunteers, became the first museum known for its hands-on educational activities. Both museums initially displayed objects and specimens from their collections in unique arrangements through museum bags and tempo-

rary exhibitions. They were recognized as child-centered discovery institutions in the early 1900s (Anderson et al., 2001; Anderson, 2010).

In children's museums, learning is guided by objects and themes. Museum activities are designed within this framework. Play activities in museums are important for children's development in various areas. The Athens Emotions Museum is one example of a play-focused children's museum. It offers an educational experience that uses interactive exhibitions, games, and fairy tales to encourage children and young people to explore their emotional worlds and learn more about themselves and others. Museums aim to raise awareness among adults, parents, and teachers about issues related to children's emotional development and socialization (Güneröz, 2022).

Some children's museums have libraries, theaters, performance spaces, and outdoor exhibitions. Learning in children's museums is generally child-centered, experience-based, and interactive (Mayfield, 2005). Researchers have found that children spend more time at children's museum exhibitions than adults do and show more interest in exhibitions that reflect their experiences (Cleaver, 1992; Anderson et al., 2010).

Hands On!, an international association of children's museums, believes that museums should encourage children's curiosity and imagination. In theory, children's museums provide rich materials and spaces where children can play, explore, and experiment freely. Providing multiple stimuli and opportunities has the potential to develop children's creativity. Children's museums have advantages over formal school environments and other informal educational settings, such as family life, parks, libraries, and traditional museums. First, children's museums give children the freedom and time they need to explore their interests (Wolins, Jensen, & Ulzheimer, 1992). Second, exhibits in children's museums can be arranged in an interactive and engaging way to create an inspiring environment that reflects real-life conditions (e.g., a hospital or a market) (Shine & Acosta, 2000). Third, children's museums provide a natural environment in which children can interact with their parents, educators, peers, and researchers. In short, children's museums provide unique environments in which children can collaborate with their parents and peers to develop their interests and motivation in creative activities.

The educational mission of a children's museum aligns with Froebel's ideas on early childhood education, which emphasize child-centered pedagogy, play, and experience. Children's learning and creative development in a children's museum fundamentally follow the early learning model outlined by Piaget and Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1967). In this model, learning begins with curiosity-driven exploration and leads to concept formation,

imagination, and creation (Shaffer, 2015). As contemporary museum practices evolve, children's museums should be considered spaces not only for typically developing individuals, but also for individuals with special needs. According to the "Equality Policy for People with Disabilities," museums must consider visitors with disabilities when designing their physical facilities, technologies, and exhibitions. Various practices are being implemented in developed countries to enable everyone to interact with museums (Şencan, 2022). Museums should offer equal opportunities to all visitors and ensure that groups with special needs can participate in educational activities and events. In our country, it is important to organize educational activities for visitors who need social protection to make museums accessible. Recently, museums have started implementing applications that combine education, teaching, and entertainment, particularly for visitors with special needs. These applications aim to provide visitors with various experiences (Şencan, 2022). Including children with special needs in activities helps them be accepted by their peers and ensures the successful implementation of integration practices. Additionally, activities in children's museums and access to rich materials contribute to the development of children with special needs.

2. The Contribution of Children's Museums to the Development of Children with Special Needs

The Contribution of Individuals with Special Needs to Cognitive Development

Museums significantly contribute to the cognitive development of individuals with special needs. These contributions become even more pronounced when museums are properly structured in accordance with universal design principles to make them accessible. Providing multisensory learning opportunities (materials that target the auditory, tactile, visual, and olfactory senses) increases the attention span of individuals with special needs and helps them focus. These opportunities offer alternative options for individuals with different learning styles. Active participation in learning activities at museums helps individuals with special needs understand abstract concepts. Playing with experimental exhibits and replicas, for example, allows them to engage directly with information. Active participation in museum activities helps individuals with special needs establish cause-and-effect relationships between historical events, develop problem-solving skills, and improve memory and attention processes. Through museum exhibitions, they learn abstract concepts such as time, space, and history. By comparing objects, they develop cognitive classification skills. Their vocabulary expands as their language skills develop. The fact that museums offer multi-sensory activities demonstrates

their respect for differences in cognitive development. Interaction and rich content stimulate curiosity and develop internal motivation (Çalık et al., 2021; Falk et al., 2013).

Contributing to the Social Communication and Interaction Skills of Individuals with Special Needs

Museums are places where people can acquire knowledge and develop social communication and interaction skills. Drama and play activities organized in children's museums are particularly important for facilitating communication between children and their peers. Museums create an environment in which individuals with special needs can focus their attention on the same objects or experiences as others. Looking at the same exhibition items encourages individuals to focus on a common subject. Interactive exhibitions encourage interaction among children by allowing them to make decisions, take turns, and play games, thereby facilitating communication. Guided tours and group activities help individuals with special needs develop social communication skills, teaching them to understand others' perspectives and develop shared attention. It helps reduce limitations in social communication and interaction skills, particularly in children with autism spectrum disorder. Guided interactions and group games help children establish eye contact, listen to others, and develop social skills, such as asking questions and responding. Museums provide real-life scenarios that offer opportunities to learn practical skills, such as helping others and saying "thank you." Imitating social roles and role-playing teach individuals with special needs how to behave in real life. This ensures that the acquired skills can be generalized to real-life situations. Active participation in museum activities increases self-confidence and self-efficacy. Children's museums provide children with special needs the chance to collaborate with their peers, parents, and others in their environment. These joint activities strengthen family social bonds. Interacting with peers contributes to the development of empathy and emotional expression, which helps foster social acceptance (Abacı, 2005; Wolfberg, 2009).

Contributions to the Physical and Motor Skills of Individuals with Special Needs

Museums designed with accessibility and interactivity in mind positively impact fine and gross motor skills. Activities such as completing puzzles, painting, and creating three-dimensional objects with clay or dough in museum workshops contribute to the development of finger muscles and hand-eye coordination. These activities have therapeutic effects, especially for individuals with developmental coordination disorders. Spacious

museum areas allow children to move around freely and comfortably. These moving activities help individuals with special needs develop balance and coordination. As they plan and control their movements, they develop body awareness. Tactile surfaces, sound and light panels, and movable placement areas support sensory-motor integration. Children with sensory integration issues can develop tolerance to stimuli such as balance, pressure, and movement. Daily living skills related to motor skills, such as handwashing and opening doors, are reinforced in museum environments.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has found that children's museums significantly impact the integration processes and developmental areas of individuals with special needs. These museums provide interactive and supportive environments that enable children with special needs to develop social skills, express emotions more freely, and enhance cognitive abilities.

Special events and exhibitions designed for children with special needs motivate them to learn by appealing to their interests and providing opportunities for self-expression. Visual and tactile elements support the learning processes of children with hearing impairments by facilitating their access to information and providing opportunities for self-expression. Structured activities encourage social interaction among children with special needs, enriching their sensory experiences. These activities play an important role in inclusive education. It helps children with special needs develop healthier relationships with their peers. Research shows that children's museums positively impact the cognitive, emotional, and social development of children with special needs. The interactive learning environments in these museums make learning more enjoyable for children and enable them to develop their social skills. Children's museums are important tools that support the integration of children with special needs into society by encouraging family participation and enabling interaction with the social environment.

In conclusion, children's museums are spaces that contribute significantly to the development of children with special needs and their integration into society. Increasing the opportunities offered by museums and making them more inclusive is important to ensure that all children have equal opportunities to learn and develop.

Future research examining the effects of children's museums on individuals with special needs in greater depth can contribute to the development of practices in this field. Additionally, raising accessibility standards in museums and devising strategies to reach more individuals with special needs are important steps in this process. Expanding the opportunities of-

ferred by children's museums will ensure that all children have equal opportunities to learn and develop.

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CHAPTER 5

SUITCASE MUSEUMS FOR INTANGIBLE HERITAGE: A MOBILE MUSEOLOGY MODEL FOR ARTVIN

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Introduction

Cultural heritage encompasses more than just physical monuments, archaeological artifacts, and traditional attire. At its core, the connections that communities forge with their history and with one another are rooted in intangible dimensions, including songs, folktales, rituals, craftsmanship, oral traditions, and communal celebrations. Referred to as Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), this dynamic repertoire of practices embodies the identity of communities and is sustained through intergenerational transmission (UNESCO, 2003; Oğuz, 2013). In recent years, a shift in heritage preservation has highlighted the limitations of traditional approaches, positioning museology as a key solution. Mobile and travelling museums, in particular, challenge static cultural displays by providing portable and accessible formats that facilitate broader and more inclusive dissemination across different regions (Bricker, 2010; Buonafede, 2011). The region of Artvin serves as a compelling example of cultural transformation, boasting rich natural diversity, a vibrant cultural heritage, and a multiethnic society. It is home to numerous significant Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) elements (Güneş & Satar, 2015; Lakot Alemdağ et al., 2023). However, challenges such as rural depopulation, youth migration, and the disconnect caused by rapid digitalisation pose a threat to the preservation and recognition of these intangible assets.

A Suitcase Museum is a mobile exhibition designed to provide curated collections and educational resources to communities lacking permanent museum access. It is a portable and versatile platform that can be set up in locations such as schools or community centres to make cultural experiences accessible. This study investigates the application of mobile heritage displays in preserving, reinterpreting, and promoting Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in Artvin. The study highlights the potential of mobile museums and travelling exhibits for cultural education and community engagement, and proposes a model tailored to Artvin's unique cultural context, drawing inspiration from similar initiatives in Türkiye (Karadeniz & Okvuran, 2018; Külük, 2025). This research employs a qualitative design based on a descriptive survey model. The study is informed by an extensive literature review, field data analysis, public museum resource evaluation, and examination of practice-based examples. These were interpreted through a reflexive and analytical lens, allowing for a contextualised understanding of how mobile museology can function as a cultural innovation strategy in rural regions.

1. Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH): A Conceptual and Institutional Framework

The concept of cultural heritage has undergone significant expansion since the late 20th century. Initially, it focused on tangible elements such as monuments and artefacts, but now encompasses intangible aspects, including skills, practices, and knowledge passed down through generations. This shift highlights Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) as a crucial component of cultural identity and a means of preserving collective memory (Ouzo, 2007; Singh, 2004). Consequently, safeguarding cultural heritage today involves ensuring the long-term sustainability of living traditions and social practices, rather than merely conserving physical assets. A pivotal moment in this reevaluation occurred with the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which mandated member states to identify, document, and preserve their intangible cultural assets. Following its ratification in 2006, Türkiye established an Intangible Cultural Heritage Department within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and initiated a comprehensive national inventory programme (UNESCO, 2003; Oğuz, 2013). This institutional initiative marked a turning point in the formal recognition and documentation of intangible cultural elements, particularly in rural areas.

Intangible cultural heritage is officially categorized into five main groups: oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, social practices and rituals, knowledge related to nature and the universe, and traditional craftsmanship. The Artvin province in Türkiye is a notable example of this diversity, with numerous instances from all five categories (Başar, 2021; Gündoğdu, 2023). This variety underscores the dynamic and enduring nature of the region's cultural heritage, which is shaped by its unique local knowledge systems and ritual practices. The preservation of intangible cultural heritage cannot be limited to archival documentation alone. There is a growing need to raise public awareness of this heritage through creative and engaging approaches. Contemporary museology plays a crucial role in this endeavour, with museums being reimagined as dynamic spaces for participation, education, and transformation (Brüninghaus-Knubel, 2004; Talboys, 2005). Mobile and travelling museums are particularly effective in bringing heritage closer to local contexts and encouraging direct community engagement (Bricker, 2010; Buonafede, 2011). Within the context of contemporary museology, mobile museums and travelling exhibitions have emerged as innovative tools that facilitate the in-situ preservation of cultural heritage and promote its continuity across generations.

The traditional village performance of “Berobana” (Figure 1), which continues to be actively performed in Şavşat, a district in Artvin, exemplifies a powerful synthesis of oral tradition and ritual expression (Başar,

2021). Nevertheless, mere recognition of such practices is insufficient for their preservation. To ensure the vitality of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), it must be transmitted to younger generations and made experiential through innovative and accessible approaches. Mobile museums and travelling exhibitions have proven effective in supporting these efforts, particularly in areas where geographical dispersion hinders regular access to centralised cultural institutions (Brüninghaus-Knubel, 2004; Talboys, 2005). The in situ documentation, contextual processing, and dissemination of such practices through mobile museum platforms are crucial for maintaining cultural continuity.



Figure 1. *Berobana: A Traditional Village Performance from Maden Village*
(URL-1)

Due to its mountainous terrain, the villages of Artvin have historically been established at higher altitudes. Within the region's rich folkloric framework, village theatrical performances have evolved as vital expressions of communal entertainment. One such performance, still practiced in Maden Village, is Berobana. This play is choreographed with music and dance, and features a dynamic structure where spectators can spontaneously become performers. The narrative incorporates motifs such as resurrection, bride kidnapping, and racial caricatures like Arab/Blackface, reflecting a complex symbolic language within rural storytelling.

Modern museological approaches transcend the mere modification of presentation methods, instead fundamentally altering the understanding and experience of heritage. Through participatory museology, digital technologies, and storytelling-focused curation, audiences are encouraged to transition from passive observers to active participants (Karadeniz & Okvuran, 2018; Külük, 2025). As a result, intangible cultural heritage is no longer perceived solely as a relic of the past but rather as a living cultural resource that influences and informs contemporary social practices. This theoretical and institutional framework serves as the conceptual basis for the subsequent analysis of the mobile museum models presented in

this study. It positions intangible cultural heritage as a dynamic and evolving field of cultural continuity, deeply embedded in localised practices yet responsive to innovative modes of representation and engagement.

1.1. Intangible cultural heritage and contemporary museology: a conceptual, institutional, and interactive framework

The conceptual understanding of cultural heritage has undergone significant expansion since the latter quarter of the 20th century. Initially, cultural heritage was primarily associated with physical items such as monuments, buildings, and artefacts. However, the scope of heritage has since been broadened to encompass intangible elements that are intricately woven into society. These elements are actively preserved and passed down through generations. The concept of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) plays a central role in this evolution, as it is viewed not only as a repository of cultural identity but also as a dynamic process essential for maintaining the continuity of shared memories (Oğuz, 2007; Singh, 2004). Consequently, safeguarding cultural heritage necessitates more than the preservation of physical entities; it requires the sustainable transmission of lifestyles, rituals, and oral traditions. This paradigm gained international recognition following the adoption of UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The convention imposed binding obligations on its member states, requiring them to document, protect, and revitalise intangible cultural heritage within their jurisdiction. Turkey ratified the convention in 2006, which led to the establishment of the Department of Intangible Cultural Heritage and national inventory projects (UNESCO, 2003; Oğuz, 2013). The International Council of Museums (ICOM) revised its definition of museums in 2022. According to ICOM, a museum is a not-for-profit institution that serves society by researching, collecting, conserving, and exhibiting heritage. Museums are open to the public, accessible, and inclusive, promoting diversity and sustainability. They operate ethically, professionally, and with community participation, offering varied experiences for education and knowledge sharing. This revised definition introduces new components, including sustainability, ethics, accessibility, and diversity, reflecting the importance of inclusivity and social engagement in museums.

This institutional framework marked a pivotal development in facilitating the documentation and visibility of cultural diversity in rural areas. The Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of the province of Artvin is categorised under five principal domains: oral traditions and expressions; performing arts; social practices, rituals, and festive events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; and traditional craftsmanship. Similar to other regions in Turkey, Artvin exhibits rich examples in each

of these domains (Başar, 2021; Gündoğdu, 2023). The region's cultural diversity, rooted in localised knowledge systems and ritual practices, is a key contributor to its robust collective memory. Documentation and archival storage of intangible heritage are insufficient; it must be reintroduced into public consciousness through creative and participatory means. At this critical juncture, the principles of modern museology hold significant importance. Museums have evolved from institutions of preservation to dynamic centres for education, community engagement, and social transformation (Brüninghaus-Knubel, 2004; Talboys, 2005). Mobile and travelling exhibitions offer an alternative to traditional museum practices, enabling on-site heritage presentations and facilitating direct interaction with local communities (Bricker, 2010; Buonafede, 2011). Traditional village plays, such as Berobana, still performed in the Şavşat district of Artvin, represent vivid examples of oral traditions intertwined with ritualistic practices (Başar, 2021). The identification of cultural elements is insufficient; it is equally crucial that these elements are effectively transmitted to younger generations and reinterpreted within contemporary life through experiential and innovative channels. This necessity highlights the increasing importance of mobile museum initiatives and travelling exhibitions, which serve as effective tools for maintaining cultural continuity (Brüninghaus-Knubel, 2004; Talboys, 2005).

The on-site documentation, interpretation, and dissemination of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) through mobile museum vehicles significantly enhance its accessibility and sustainability. Contemporary museological approaches not only alter the presentation of heritage but also redefine the underlying frameworks of knowledge through which it is understood. Participatory museology, digital technologies, and narrative-based curatorial strategies collectively create an environment in which audiences shift from passive observers to active cultural participants (Karadeniz & Okvuran, 2018; Külük, 2025). Consequently, ICH is no longer viewed as a nostalgic relic of the past but rather as a vibrant, operative resource within current social practices. The reciprocal interaction between contemporary museology and intangible cultural heritage highlights the evolving role of museums, which extends beyond protecting cultural assets to serving as interactive arenas for reengaging individuals with living traditions. Such museological interventions fulfill vital educational and societal functions in geographically dispersed yet culturally rich areas. Participant-centred, in situ, and digitally mediated museum models enable heritage to be integrated into the fabric of everyday life, rather than being confined to retrospective preservation. This integrated theoretical and applied framework provides the foundation for the subsequent chapter, which will examine the Mobile Suitcase Museum model developed in the context of Artvin-Şavşat.

The case study will be explored in detail, focusing on the design, curatorial structure, and socio-cultural impacts of the model on local communities.

1.2. Traveling suitcase museums: concept, historical development, and implementation cases

Traveling suitcase museums embody a progressive museological philosophy that challenges traditional notions of museum practice by providing a mobile, user-oriented, and participatory platform for the transmission and preservation of intangible cultural heritage (ICH). These institutions are designed to transport cultural heritage to marginalized communities, facilitating sensory-rich experiences that deepen the relevance and transmission of ICH. The conceptual underpinning of suitcase museums reframes the museum as a mobile cultural interface, enabling narratives, practices, and memory to circulate dynamically. The origins of traveling museums date back to early 20th-century Europe and North America, where they were used as tools for post-conflict rebuilding, public education, and educational equality. Their significance increased during the 1960s and 1970s, particularly in educational settings. By the early 2000s, digital advancements had further expanded the scope of mobile museums by incorporating multimedia, interactive elements, and participatory formats that enhanced engagement and accessibility. In Türkiye, mobile museum initiatives have flourished over the last decade through collaborations between governmental bodies, local municipalities, and cultural stakeholders. Notable examples such as “Gezici Eğitim Müzesi,” “Mobil Bilim Tırı,” and “Bavulumda Sanat Var” showcase the diversity in scale, thematic focus, and audience outreach within the suitcase museum typology. These projects often integrate ICH components through interactive storytelling, traditional crafts, performance-based pedagogy, and digital platforms, enabling multi-sensory and inclusive cultural encounters.

The province of Artvin, characterised by its diverse geography and cultural heritage, presents a suitable environment for implementing initiatives that promote cultural preservation and exchange. In locations such as Şavşat, suitcase museums can effectively showcase and disseminate local cultural practices, including the Berobana folk theatre, artisanal woodcraft, regional music traditions, and oral narratives. Ideally, the content development process should be undertaken in close collaboration with local cultural experts to ensure authenticity and community ownership. Traveling suitcase museums serve a purpose beyond merely circulating artefacts or knowledge; they provide insight into lived experiences, facilitate intergenerational connections, and empower local individuals as custodians of their cultural heritage. By delivering curated heritage experiences directly to communities, they promote cultural resilience and stimulate

collective reflection. Ultimately, travelling suitcase museums represent a forward-thinking approach to cultural preservation: one that provides equal access to heritage, revitalises marginalised traditions, and redefines the role of the museum as a flexible, dialogic, and participatory institution. In the context of Artvin's complex cultural landscape, they function not only as educational tools but also as catalysts for cultural renewal and sustainable identity formation.





2. Intangible Cultural Heritage and Local Memory: Designing Portable Heritage for Artvin through Traveling Suitcase Museums




The rich intangible cultural heritage of Artvin should be preserved and transmitted through a multifaceted approach that combines documentation with creative methods. In this context, Travelling Suitcase Museums represent an innovative museological approach, both in terms of content and form. These mobile museums provide a visual and experiential platform for showcasing narratives, photographs, handmade crafts, traditional garments, and cultural artefacts collected from various villages across Artvin.

The infographic below illustrates an exemplary content layout for a suitcase museum kit.



Figure 2. *Artvin Cultural Infographic Map: A Selection from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Elements. (Zekiye Çıldır, 2025).*

-  Traveling Suitcase Museum Content
-  Map: Cultural map of local villages
-  Story Booklet: Narratives from locals
-  Video Archive: Folk dances and rituals
- Audio Recordings: Folktales and laments

-  Handicrafts: Cloth dolls, item samples
-  Traditional Garments: Children/adult sizes
-  Photo Album: Past and present

This implementation model enables community participation as both subject and narrator, establishing a direct cultural link between museum visitors and local residents. Workshops and storytelling sessions tailored for school-age children and youth reinforce the Intangible Cultural Heritage’s educational component. The suitcase museums’ portability allows them to be transported to village schools, community venues, and local festivals, thereby increasing rural communities’ access to cultural heritage. This model can be regarded as a sustainable tool for preserving and transmitting local memory to future generations.

The table below delineates the fundamental distinctions between traditional and mobile museum practices:

Table 1: *Comparative Table Outlines The Core Distinctions Between Conventional and Mobile Museums*

Criteria	Conventional Museums	Mobile Museums
Location	Fixed, urban-centric locations	Flexible, adaptable to rural accessibility
Interaction	Passive spectatorship	Active community engagement
Accessibility	Limited to centralized urban areas	Broad reach to remote and underserved regions
Curatorial Approach	Object-centered	Narrative and experience-based
Educational Involvement	Formal and static	Dynamic, informal, participatory

Artvin is a city celebrated for its rich cultural heritage, natural beauty, and deeply ingrained traditional way of life. The city’s cultural wealth is showcased throughout the year through diverse festivals that provide immersive experiences for both locals and visitors. These festivals serve as vibrant platforms to preserve and sustain local traditions, aiming to conserve nature, culture, and history. The depth of Artvin’s intangible cultural heritage (ICH) should not be limited to archival purposes but also revita-

lised continuously through innovative means. In this context, Travelling Suitcase Museums represent a contemporary museological approach, both in content and form. These mobile museums are enriched with narratives, photographs, handicrafts, traditional clothing, and cultural objects collected from various villages across Artvin. They provide a visual and experiential platform, immersing participants in the region's cultural memory.

The content of these mobile museums is systematically organised according to UNESCO's categories of intangible cultural heritage. For instance, the following categories are represented:

Oral Traditions and Expressions: Narratives of the Berobana play from Şavşat and audio recordings of folktales and legends told by elderly villagers.

Performing Arts: Regional folk dances and traditional musical instruments (e.g., tulum and zurna), presented with performance videos on digital displays.

Social Practices, Rituals, and Festive Events: Transhumance, cooperative labour (imece, meci), and holiday customs are re-enacted through interactive panels and storyboards.

Knowledge and Practices Concerning Nature and the Universe: Indigenous agricultural methods, pastoralist traditions, and ethnobotanical knowledge (e.g., plant-based healing) are documented through texts and visual media.

Traditional Craftsmanship: Local handicrafts such as rug weaving, woodcarving, and traditional women's headgear are displayed alongside sample artifacts.

Artvin-Specific Suitcase Museum Model Proposal

The infographic below illustrates a sample content layout for a localized suitcase museum:

Domain	Sample Content	Suitcase Application
Local Crafts	Kilims, cehri dye, wooden spoons, bagpipe (tulum)	Hands-on workshop kit
Agriculture& Migration	Transhumance, beekeeping rituals	Audio narration + video + tactile materials
Belief & Ritual	Hıdırellez, mevlit recitations, Folk narratives, Berobana play	Story cards, ritual costumes, puppet figures, excerpts from play scripts
Vernacular Architecture	Serender granaries, stone houses	Foldable 3D models
Culinary Heritage	Şavşat flatbread (ketesi), laz böreği, kaldırık (wild chard) pickle	Recipe cards, sensory kits with ingredient samples

Conclusion and Recommendations

The safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in geographically marginalised regions such as Artvin requires a comprehensive approach that goes beyond mere preservation. This involves reanimation, which acknowledges the dynamic and experiential nature of ICH, encompassing stories, performances, rituals, craftsmanship, and environmental knowledge. The limitations of archival practices and static exhibitions in protecting ICH have been demonstrated, highlighting the need for active re-contextualisation, re-performance, and re-living within the communities that nurture it. The Travelling Suitcase Museums model, explored in this study, directly addresses this imperative. Contrary to being a logistical solution for rural inaccessibility, mobile platforms offer a conceptual redefinition of what a museum can be: a living, dialogic space where cultural memory is activated in situ and shared across generations. By transforming the museum into a portable, community-centred interface, the model expands the boundaries of museological practice while maintaining a deeper connection to local realities. In the context of Artvin, characterised by ecological diversity, multiethnic heritage, and intergenerational knowledge systems, the potential of mobile museology is particularly evident. Here, heritage is not a relic but a dynamic rhythm, embedded in seasonal cycles of transhumance, embodied gestures of folk dance, sensory depth of culinary tradition, and oral transmission of legends such as Berobana. Through Travelling Suitcase Museums, these lived dimensions of culture are not only collected and curated but also made meaningfully accessible to youth, visitors, and community members alike.

This inquiry yields a comprehensive understanding of heritage that transcends traditional display methods, instead embracing a renewed epis-

temology that prioritizes participation over observation, process over permanence, and locality over abstraction. The suitcase serves as a multifaceted vessel, carrying the weight of memory, the texture of place, and the potential for dialogue. To further enhance the transformative potential of mobile museology and facilitate its replication in rural and semi-rural settings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Institutional Embedding and Policy Integration** Governmental bodies, particularly the Ministries of Culture, Education, and Rural Development, should formally incorporate mobile museology into national heritage and cultural sustainability frameworks. Suitcase museums should be recognized as integral components of cultural policy, rather than solely as outreach projects.

2. **Co-Creation with Local Stakeholders** The credibility and impact of mobile museums rely heavily on their co-authorship with community members. Local artisans, elders, educators, and youth should be engaged not only as subjects but also as curators and co-designers to ensure authenticity, ethical representation, and deeper cultural resonance.

3. **Digital Synergy and Hybrid Formats** While the suitcase museum's physicality is a significant strength, digital extensions can amplify its reach. Augmented reality (AR), QR-coded oral histories, interactive story maps, and multilingual interfaces can complement tactile exhibits, particularly for diasporic or translocal audiences.

4. **Integration into the Education Ecosystem**

The pedagogical value of suitcase museums should be strategically leveraged within school curricula, youth centres, and teacher training programmes. Tailored modules that focus on ICH themes can foster cultural literacy, critical thinking, and intergenerational continuity among young learners.

5. **Participatory Evaluation and Adaptive Feedback Loops**

Long-term sustainability depends on iterative learning. Continuous monitoring—using qualitative methods such as storytelling workshops, reflective interviews, and community forums—should inform the evolution of the model and highlight emerging needs or gaps.

6. **Scalability and Contextual Adaptation**

Although the Artvin model is deeply rooted in its regional context, its framework is transferable. Other culturally rich yet logistically challenged regions can adapt the model by recalibrating content, format, and delivery in line with local heritage ecologies and community dynamics.

In an era where globalisation often flattens differences and accelerates cultural erosion, models like the Travelling Suitcase Museum offer a counterpoint—a way to hold space for local memory, embodied knowledge and plural narratives. They affirm that heritage is not merely what is remembered but how it is remembered—where, by whom, and for whom. By situating culture within reach and placing communities at the heart of its narration, mobile museology becomes a movement and not just a method.

Finally, through this movement, heritage is not archived—it is activated. It becomes a shared language through which generations converse, create, and carry forward their collective identity. For Artvin and other regions that walk the line between preservation and change, this is not only a museological innovation. It is a cultural necessity.

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