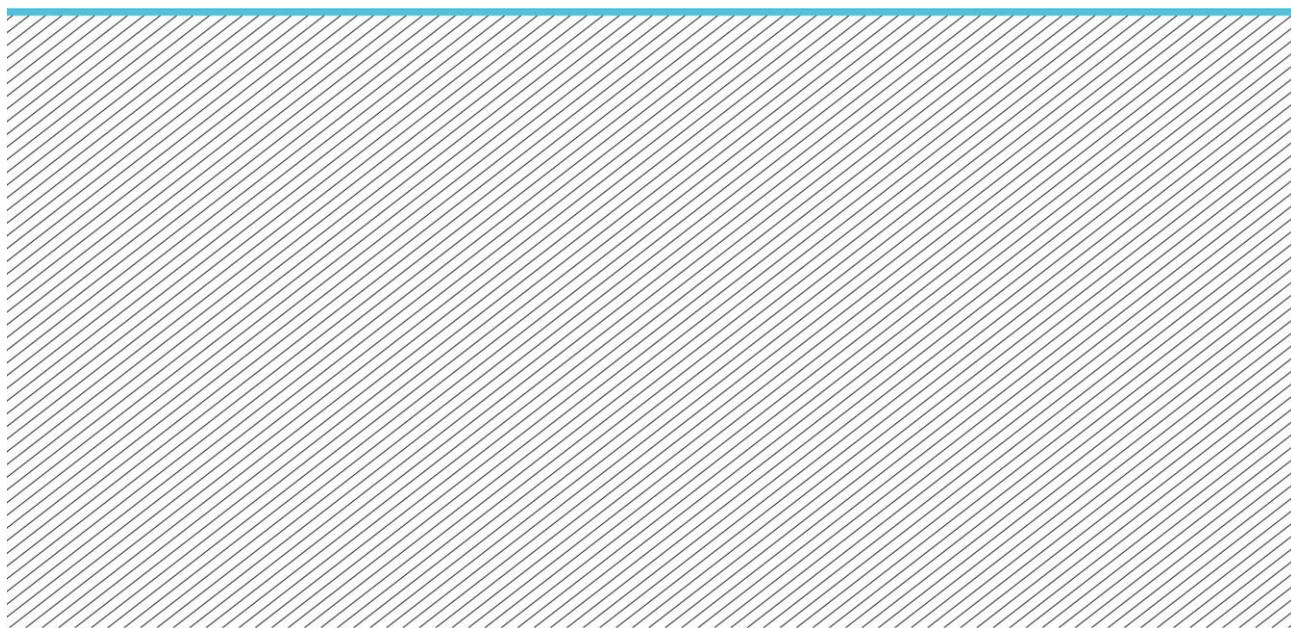MeLa - *European Museums in an age of migrations*

FINAL REPORT

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1. Executive Summary

MeLa - *European Museums in an age of migrations* is a four year multi-disciplinary research project funded by the European Commission within the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) under the Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities.

Adopting the notion of "migration" as a paradigm of the contemporary global and multi-cultural world, the MeLa Project investigated the evolution of European museums as physical places, cultural spaces and processes within the framework of the present political, social and cultural context, characterised by accelerated mobility, fluid circulation of information, ideas and cultures, and the consequent increase of cultural encounters, cross-fertilisation and hybridisation of societies and identities. By exploring the challenges as well as the opportunities resulting from globalisation, augmented mobility and contemporary migrations, MeLa aimed to identify and envision innovative policies and practices which may enhance the role of museums in actively promoting mutual understanding and social cohesion, and thus fostering a sharper awareness of an inclusive European identity.

Building on the complexity of its core topics and the ambition of its objectives, the MeLa Project developed a compound research programme through the collaborative effort of a Consortium of nine Partners from different European countries, including leading research institutions (Politecnico di Milano, operating as the coordinator, Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale", Italy; Newcastle University, University of Glasgow, Royal College of Art, United Kingdom), two museums (Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, France; Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Spain), one national research council (Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Italy) and one small enterprise (Copenhagen Institute of Interaction Design, Denmark). The cooperation among different expertises, competencies and skills allowed for the development of an innovative approach based on the interplay between different disciplines and methodologies, the comparison and coalescence of diverse perspectives, the combination of conventional and experimental procedures, and the implementation of new practices and tools for research in the Social Sciences and Humanities.

The research activities developed by the MeLa Consortium resulted in a significant advancement of knowledge. The best practices, policies and critical suggestions proposed by the investigators were widely presented through the organisation of workshops, seminars and conferences, extensively promoted through the participation in public events, and illustrated through a relevant number of scientific publications – most of which are included in the MeLa Book Series, a wealthy collection of open-access digital volumes. Throughout the development of the Project, constant communication about the Mela activities and outcomes was provided through a wide-ranging use of online platforms; in addition to the Project website and blog, the MeLa Critical Archive offered an overall and inter-disciplinary insight on the main findings and results.

The circulation and promotion of the MeLa outcomes and products are aimed at supporting the scientific community, museum professionals, policymakers and the European Commission in envisioning and fostering the evolution of contemporary museums in this "age of migrations".

2. The MeLa Project Context and Main Objectives

The MeLa Project responded to the EU Call "Reinterpreting Europe's Cultural Heritage: Towards the 21st century library and museum?" (FP7-SSH-2010-5.2-2), soliciting a reconsideration of the relationships between heritage, museums, archives and libraries in the light of the evolved notions of "citizenship", "identities", "multiple coexisting cultures", "ownership" and "participation". MeLa intended to fulfill this objective by developing a critical reflection aimed to investigate the impact of the current political, social and cultural contexts on the underpinnings of museums; to envision their enhanced role as agents of social cohesion and stability, participating in the processes pertaining to the creation and consolidation of the European Union; to individuate the policies and practices which may support museums in developing innovative forms of interaction with wider and more differentiated audiences, and thus in fostering mutual understanding, intercultural dialogue and a sharper awareness of an inclusive European identity.

In order to outline the framework of its research tasks and objectives, MeLa adopted the notion of "migration" as a paradigm of the contemporary global and multicultural world. By referring to the turn of the 21st century as an "age of migrations", the accelerated mobility of people(s), objects, cultures and knowledge is highlighted as a pivotal factor for the definition of the conditions of present-day (post-colonial, post-national, etc.) societies. In fact, although migrations have always accompanied and fostered the development of world civilisations, due to improved possibilities for physical and virtual movement today they have grown in quantity, rapidity and complexity. On the one hand, European nations are experiencing unprecedented mobility patterns, not only in terms of volume but also diversity amongst and within migrant groups. On the other hand, the current political, economic, social and cultural contexts are profoundly influenced also by the accelerated migration of objects, images, ideas and information. Recent advances in transportation and communication technologies and infrastructures have facilitated the circulation of goods in worldwide networks, the ubiquitous spread of imagery and knowledge, the instant and self-selecting access to a multiplicity of information, etc. These phenomena have fostered multicultural encounters, cross-fertilisations and hybridisation of products, ideas, cultures and identities, setting the conditions for a globalised, multicultural and inter-connected world.

This convoluted scenario has produced significant resonances for the institutions involved in the preservation, representation and conveyance of memories and identities, which are requested to confront with new political and cultural dynamics, to interact with restructured social systems, and to acknowledge new means and methods for the production and transmission of knowledge. As institutions historically implicated in identity work and inherently intertwined with societies, cultures and their transformations, museums are particularly solicited by the far-reaching implications of the present contexts. Contemporary migrations raise the imperative to recognise and accommodate blended and intertwined identities; to acknowledge and narrate new dynamics of multiple belonging, diversity and otherness; to unfold and foster a new understanding of civic sense of belonging and citizenship; to explore new relationships between places, peoples and identities; to identify and appraise new connections between global and local stances; to manage and exhibit new concept and forms of migrating heritage; and to represent and respond to an increasingly multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual society.

Building on this context, the objectives of the MeLa Project addressed contemporary museums in:

> Responding to the emerging challenges of representing the complexity and multiplicity of cultures, identities and subjectivities that characterise contemporary societies;
> Promoting culture as a catalyst for creativity, as well as for mutual understanding and inter-cultural dialogue;
> Rethinking their role in fostering social inclusion and stability;
> Enhancing their participation in the construction of an active, democratic and inclusive European citizenship, and in the definition of new models of national and trans-national belonging;
> Advancing a shared vision of heritage through the development of inter-cultural, inter-disciplinary and cross-border approaches, and the acknowledgment of other histories, memories and experiences that have previously been repressed;
> Renovating their strategies, practices and tools in order to represent memory and identity in an inter-cultural perspective;
> Evolving into sites of intercultural dialogue, contaminations and fluxes, and become open forums for cultural, social and civic engagement towards reflective and inclusive societies.

In order to respond to the complexity of the MeLa core topics and objectives, and to efficiently coordinate the work of the multi-disciplinary Consortium, the Project activities were organised in different Research Fields (RF). The thematic articulation of the research work was meant to promote specific in-depth investigations within a unitary framework, drawing on the knowledge and expertise of the different Partners and exploiting the collaboration of external experts, scholars and practitioners from various sectors. Each Research Field was conceived to develop specific tasks and objectives.

RF01 - Museums & Identity in History and Contemporaneity aimed to examine the historical and contemporary relationships between European museum representations and identity, using the focus of "people(s)" and "place" to investigate how fluidity, fragmentation, dislocation and mobility impact on individual and museum constructions of identity and belonging. The main objectives of RF01:

> To investigate aspects of the relationships between museums, places and identities in Europe from the development of nation states (notably in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) to the present day;
> To study the relationship between museums and the multidimensional, potentially shifting "territory" they intend to represent – a territory which is geographical, political and epistemological;
> To examine how museum actions (including collecting and display) have articulated and articulate the relationships between places, people(s) and cultures within geopolitical conceptual frames (e.g. "the nation", the "region", "Europe");
> To study changing practices of representation, interpellation and audience participation in the context of new population dynamics (e.g. migrations, mobility) and flows and diversified

conceptions of place (as both routes and roots), and thus to explore producers' intentions with regard to such representations;

> To study visitors' understanding of these museum representations and to evaluate their congruence or incongruence with visitors' individual sense of identity.

RF02 - Cultural Memory, Migrating Modernity and Museum Practices aimed to explore the complex interactions between cultural formations of memory, belonging and museum practices in the light of contemporary migrations. The main objectives of RF02:

> To investigate the historical nature and contemporary sense of the museum, exploring the crucial role it has played in narrating national identities and cultural belonging, and in addressing, directly and indirectly, comprehension of civic interaction and citizenship;

> To rethink the cultural and historical sense of institutionalised memories, in particular in museum spaces and the public display of the visual arts, and the subsequent response (or lack of) to the postcolonial challenge of rethinking modernity in light of the histories and cultures it has structurally excluded and negated;

> To explore the consequences of the recovery of unregistered histories on the role of the museum as a social and political actor;

> To establish the key nodes in the analysis of the relationship between memory, identities and migrations, and to lay out the terms of a critical revaluation that impinges on institutional practices in the social spaces of museums and public art works.

RF03 - Network of Museums, Libraries and Public Cultural Institutions aimed to investigate the power of cultural networks for supporting European cultural institutions to better address contemporary challenges of globalisation, mobility, cultural dialogue, and the use of Information and Communication Technologies. The main objectives of RF03:

> To investigate experiences and effects of collaboration, partnerships and networks around the core activities of archiving, preserving, displaying history and artifacts, and the associated categories of hierarchies of cultural value and identity;

> To address trans-national and trans-local connections of museums, libraries and public cultural institutions, to allow more flexible and heterogenic connections to be considered within the European/Mediterranean space;

> To explore how trans-national and trans-local connections of museums, libraries and public cultural institutions interact with multi-cultural audiences;

> To propose a coordination framework and suggestions for policies to support networking between European museums, libraries and public cultural institutions around the themes of European cultural and scientific heritage, migration and integration.

RF04 - Curatorial and Artistic Research aimed to examine how the relationship between art, migration and representation is being addressed in contemporary artistic and curatorial practices, and what questions this raises for artists, museums and audiences in terms of traditional concepts of "heritage", "the archive" and "the art object". The main objectives of RF04:

> To evaluate the challenges and the opportunities emerging from globalisation, the evolution of acquisition policies, the use of digital technologies, the transformation of audiences (and audience expectations) and changing patterns of migration, and their impact on artists work, the kind of work they produce, and how it is displayed and collected;
> To analyse paradigmatic experiences of artists and curators working on/with issues of migration;
> To investigate the role and the strategies of museums and galleries collecting and exhibiting this work, and disseminating knowledge of these issues;
> To envision the development of innovative exhibition, display and collection procedures which acknowledge and understand cultural identity in the 21st century as a fluid form of trans-cultural and trans-national subjectivity.

RF05 - Exhibition Design, Technology of Representation and Experimental Actions aimed to analyse the potentialities of innovative museum practices and the role of Information and Communication Technologies mediating and enhancing the relationship between people, objects and spaces in museums. The main objectives of RF05:

> To investigate the potentialities and the challenges ensuing from the experimentation with digital, computational and technological dimensions in museums;
> To develop a practice-based methodology based on the interplay between different disciplines and methodologies (and the coalescence of theory and practice) through the implementation of experimental actions;
> To implement and to test the theoretical outcomes produced by other MeLa Research Fields;
> To explore innovative research tools and practices for the Social Sciences and Humanities, through the design of several prototypes for the production and sharing of knowledge.

RF 06 - Envisioning 21st Century Museums was conceived as the backbone of the MeLa Project − a transversal activity aimed to provide a common ground for collecting, debating and sharing the main outcomes produced by the different MeLa Research Fields. The main objectives of RF06:

> To analyse the evolution of museums as complex systems of knowledge, developing through the intertwining of their practices, contents, spaces, exhibitionary settings and communicative means;
> To investigate how forward-looking communication strategies, the design of museums' spaces and exhibitions, and new museographic models and practices could accommodate and foster new representation, participation and education strategies;
> To identify and eventually envision innovative exhibition strategies, approaches and tools, which may be able to support the revision and enhancement of the role of European museums in this "age of migrations".

Building on the different tasks, resources and programmes of the MeLa Research Fields, the overall objectives of the MeLa Project are:

> To produce a relevant advancement of knowledge, through the development of extensive, comparative and multidisciplinary overviews on: museums studies in relation to migration studies; recent evolutions in museum practices, processes, technologies and design; revision of the roles of museums towards individuals, communities and societies; implementation of new concepts and forms of heritage, the museum and the archive.
> To identify responsible and thought-provoking practices and policies which could effectively support museums in engaging with the challenges and opportunities of 21st century political, social and cultural contexts.
> To foster the identification, experimentation and verification of innovative strategies, practices and tools for research in Social Sciences and Humanities, drawing on the interplay between conventional and experimental methodologies and the development of inter-disciplinary approaches.
> To extensively circulate, share and exploit the advancement of knowledge produced, with the aim to raise awareness on the challenges and opportunities ensuing from the contemporary scenario and to support museum professionals, policy makers and the European Commission in envisioning and promoting a new role for museums in this "age of migrations".

3. The MeLa Project S&T Results

3.I. Fostering Knowledge Advancement: Traditional and Experimental Approaches, Strategies and Methodologies for Social Sciences and Humanities

The MeLa Project aimed to explore the role of museums in 21st century Europe and investigate the evolution of their strategies, practices and tools in the light of the political, economic, social and cultural conditions of the contemporary global and multi-cultural world. In order to respond to the complexity of its core topics and to fulfill its multifarious objectives, the MeLa Project developed its tasks through the implementation of innovative approaches, combining conventional research procedures with experimental practices and tools, and fostering collaboration and interplay between different disciplines and methodologies.

3.I.A. Desk research
The investigators developed an extensive review of relevant critical literature in the different Research Fields – museum studies, cultural and postcolonial studies, art and curatorial practices, museography and exhibition design, cultural heritage management, etc. This work allowed researchers to highlight pivotal thematic nuclei, and contributed to the identification and selection of paradigmatic case studies for more detailed investigations, surveys and visits.

3.I.B. Field research

The on-site research work played a crucial role in the development of the MeLa programme, as it guaranteed to produce detailed analyses and documentation; to consider and compare a wide range of institutions, and thus to build up a thematically and geographically comprehensive research focus; to exchange knowledge and experiences with cultural operators; to raise awareness about the achievements and good practices that several museums are already implementing and experimenting with; to survey the challenges, problems and criticalities experienced by practitioners, and thus to understand the possible gaps between theoretical and practical perspectives; and eventually to explore the behaviours, attitudes, expectations and responses of the visitors. This task included: extensive series of visits to diverse types of museums, galleries and exhibitions all over Europe; in-depth displays analysis; discussions and interviews with directors, curators, archivists, heads of department and officers of education, learning and public programmes; focus groups and semi-structured interviews with different types of visitors (including those with migrant background).

3.I.C. Experimental practice-based research actions

In order to foster new practices and methodologies for research in the field of Social Sciences and Humanities, the MeLa Project promoted the development of practice-based actions. These cross-disciplinary applications were meant to implement, verify and validate the critical elaborations ensuing from the MeLa Research Fields, and to explore and test innovative strategies and tools for the enhancement of contemporary museums' role.

3.I.C.1 "MeLa Experimental Actions"

Some of the theoretical outcomes produced throughout the development of the Project have been implemented through a series of design-based initiatives, ranging from curatorial and artistic practices related to exhibitions, events and performances, to visitor studies, and the implementation of ICT in museums spaces and settings. These actions were conceived as inter-disciplinary research tools, aimed to evaluate the operational effectiveness of the Project's results through their application, as well as to generate further stimuli nurturing the research activities. The innovative character of "MeLa Experimental Actions" lay in the intertwining of several disciplines, methodologies and means, and in the cross-reference between theory and practice, intended to provide new perspectives and ideas on the complex dynamics characterising the evolution of contemporary museums. The actions promoted within the MeLa Project are:

> *Questioning Ethnography Through Artistic Actions*: "Crossing Bodies-Postcolonial Visions," "Impressions d'Afrique-Performing the Ethnographic Museum" Museo Nazionale Preistorico Etnografico "Luigi Pigorini", Rome, Italy (1-15 December 2012, 24-25 May 2013). Curated by Giulia Grechi (Routes Agency and Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale"). Building up a critical approach to the stereotyped and rhetorical visions which usually characterise the study and representation of contemporary migrations and cultural identities, the events "Crossing Bodies" and "Impressions d'Afrique" intended to investigate and unfold postcolonial perspectives on these issues through the setting of a series of artistic actions – videos and photos exhibition, contemporary dance performances, relational artworks – within the spaces of

the Ethnographic Prehistoric Museum "Luigi Pigorini" in Rome. The projects enabled to re-narrating the tale of the past, of history and of memories in the light of the challenges and the voices of a present radically imbued with "otherness". By highlighting the need to "awake" the repressed shared memory and challenge the consolidated view of a European identity, these experimentations demonstrated that museums can play an active role in fostering such process of reappraisal of the collective vision.

> *Experimenting with ICT to Foster Intercultural Dialogue*: "Rethinking Religion Representation in Museums" Museo Diocesano, Milan, Italy (15 October 2013, 12 June 2014). Curated by Rita Capurro, Sara Chiesa, Eleonora Lupo, Davide Spallazzo, Raffaella Trocchianesi (Design Department, Politecnico di Milano) with the contribution of Luca Greci and Claudia Redaelli (ITIA, Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche). The on-site action promoted at Museo Diocesano in Milan was intended to test the potentialities of digital and mobile technologies in supporting the disclosure of multicultural perspectives on religious assets, and fostering dialogue between people with diverse cultural roots. The intertwine of video narrations, performative interaction practices and 3D visualisations with the contents conveyed by five paintings selected within the museum's permanent collection, tested the transformation of a contemplative visitor experience into an interactive and contributory one. The action involved the users in the design process and interrogating the function of religious art in the contemporary multicultural society, triggering an inter-religious debate building on issues of identity and diversity, and enhancing the role of the museum as inclusive social agent.

> *Broadening Perspectives on Mediterranean Migrations Through a Travelling Exhibition*: "The Memory of the Sea" Museo Nazionale Preistorico Etnografico"Luigi Pigorini", Rome, Italy (1-15 December 2012); Galata Museo del Mare, Genoa, Italy (6-28 February 2013); Galleria di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Bergamo, Italy (3-7 July 2013); Centre de Documentation sur les Migrations Humaines, Dudelange, Luxembourg (8 May-27 July 2014); Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Marseille, France (3-30 October 2014). Curated by Anna Chiara Cimoli (Department of Architecture and Urban Studies, Politecnico di Milano). The travelling exhibition "The Memory of the Sea" presented the Sea Memory Museum in Zarzis through the work of photographers Alessandro Brasile and Mattia Insolera, with the aim to participate to the current debate about the representation of contemporary migrations, and to widen the perspective on the southern border of the Mediterranean Sea – as well as beyond the traditional museum networks. The project offered the opportunity to critically reflect on crucial issues related to collecting and exhibiting ongoing phenomena, and to the use of the material traces and "sites of conscience" to bequeath migrants' stories. By complementing images and videos through seminars, guided tours and mediation activities, the action verified the potentialities of temporary exhibitions in enhancing participation, inter-cultural dialogue and awareness about current societal issues.

> *Envisioning New Spaces for Museums and Cultural Institutions*: "Redefining the Lobby of the MACBA Study Center" MACBA - Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Spain (June 2011 – March 2012). Curated by Bartomeu Marí, Isabel Bachs, Mela Dávila Freire, Maite

Muñoz Iglesias, Eric Jiménez (MACBA) and Gennaro Postiglione (Department of Architecture and Urban Studies, Politecnico di Milano). The action aimed to reflect on the potentialities of architectural design to effectively support museums, archives and libraries in enhancing their functions and roles, by verifying how the setting of innovative types of spaces can facilitate the access and the transmission of the knowledge contained in documentary collections to the public at large. The experimentation exploited the in-progress definition of the lobby of the MACBA Study Center as an ideal testing-ground. The ground floor of the institution was conceived as a "friction zone," which shares features with museum exhibition areas, library reading rooms and public spaces. The Call for Proposal allowed to gather several experimental projects from design and architecture students, which were able to advance innovative solutions for reshaping the formal and functional programme and the visibility of the area beyond conventional modes, and to envision a new concept of multi-purpose, flexible, open space fostering interactions with the public inside and outside the building.

> *Exploring New Approaches for Visitors Studies*: "Walkthrough Studies" Copenhagen City Museum, Denmark (March 2012); Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, Denmark (March–May 2012, June 2013); Discovery Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom (March 2014). Curated by Jamie Allen, Jakob Bak, David Gauthier (Copenhagen Institute of Interaction Design) and Chris Whitehead (ICCHS, Newcastle University). Combined with visitors' expectations, movement through a museum space is a usefully restricted laboratory of human experience, allowing for the deeper examination of relationships between subjective perspective and objects within a designed environment. The "Walkthrough Studies" investigated the potential of head-mounted video cameras as a technique for analysing behaviours, physical movements, meanings and memories in exhibition contexts. The experimental actions carried out in different European museums by the researchers of the Copenhagen Institute of Interaction Design in cooperation with Professor Chris Whitehead (Newcastle University), explored the possible gap existing between the display "maps" intended by the curators and visitors' own re-mappings, and thus highlighted how multimedia technology can foster the design of exhibition settings and spaces.

> *Augmented Reality for Knowledge Representation*: "A 3D Prototype for Testing the MeLa* Critical Archive" MeLa experimental action curated by Marco Sacco, Luca Greci, Claudia Redaelli (ITIA, Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche). This 3D prototype of the MeLa Critical Archive drew on the experimentation the field of Virtual and Augmented Reality. It is meant to test and explore the possibilities of virtual technologies towards knowledge production and communication. The new technologies may offer the user a more immersive and credible ride in the space and Augmented Reality seeks to enhance your perception of the real world. In this experimental tool, the different maps of contents of the MeLa Critical Archive can be visualized and navigated in a complex structure, with the aim to create the context for an "ubiquitous learning" action, in which every person learns all the time, wherever they are, how they need to.

3.I.C.2 "Research by Design"

The potentialities of the knowledge advancement produced by the MeLa Project have been tested also in the framework of didactic activities, through the experimentation with groups of students attending Museographic Design Studios in the School of Architecture and Society of Politecnico di Milano. By addressing the main MeLa findings as part of the conceptual framework on which their design activities were based, the resulting projects operated as testing grounds for the Project's outcomes.

3.I.C.3 "Research by Art"

A further practice-based research activity promoted by the MeLa Project addressed the development of new methodologies for artistic and curatorial practices. These actions aimed to examine the changing relationship between art, migration, and representation; to identify points of tension, opportunity and disconnection between the working assumptions and practices of both artists and curators; to explore the role of art in opening different and multiple points of view; to unfold new concepts and forms of heritage, the archive and the museum. This situated, practice-based methodology, developed as a form of knowledge-exchange, drew on several artist/curator collaborations forged in partnership with national museums and galleries in United Kingdom, Spain, the Netherlands, and France (also including further collective professional experience gained in Germany, Portugal, Algeria, the Dutch Caribbean, and across the Middle East Through). The outcomes of these activities resulted in two exhibitions:

> "Not Dressed for Conquering – Ines Doujak's Loomshuttles/Warpaths." Research Exhibition promoted by the Royal College of Art (Royal College of Art Galleries, London, United Kingdom, 13-21 March 2013)
> "Transfigurations." Research Exhibition promoted by the Royal College of Art in collaboration with MACBA - Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA, Barcelona, Spain, 19-24 June 2014)

The coalescence of these research practices and tools allowed for extensive, multi-perspectives and inter-disciplinary investigations about the evolution of museums as physical places, cultural spaces and processes, and the repositioning of their role in 21st century Europe.

3.II. Knowledge Advancement: Collecting, Coalescing and Sharing the Main Findings

The investigations developed within the MeLa Project through the exploitation of several research strategies and the effort of all the Partners resulted in an outstanding amount of findings and critical suggestions. In order to gather and to foster interplay between the outcomes developed within the different MeLa Research Fields, the researchers designed and implemented an innovative digital tool aimed at providing the conceptual and operational framework for assembling, conveying and sharing the main results of the investigations, by overcoming the thematic subdivision of the research activities and yet to valorise and highlight their specific contributions and values. Indeed this online platform, the MeLa Critical Archive, was not conceived as a mere repository of the research

outcomes, but rather as a multipurpose tool. It is a communicative project, intended to represent the complexity of the outcomes and approaches developed by MeLa, and illustrate its findings as a unitary yet multifarious cultural proposal. It is a research instrument, implemented to enhance synergies among the different research activities and results, fostering interdisciplinary cooperation and opening further perspectives. It a digital project, meant to experiment with innovative methodologies and tools for the production, representation and sharing of knowledge.

The scientific project of the Critical Archive was implemented through an experimental and collaborative process, resulting from the joint and inter-disciplinary work of all the Partners. It entailed the coalescence of different research fields and expertise, which was made possible through the cooperation among ICT consultants and interaction designers, archivists, architects and graphic designers.

Within the Critical Archive, the outcomes of the MeLa Project have been organised according to six "Themes", which depict the fields of investigation that have structured the research activities (MeLa Research Fields). The contents included in each "Theme" are organised according to a set of "Clues", which convey the main findings and represent the key-issues (key-words) at the core of the evolution of 21st century museums. All the "Clues" are supported and illustrated by several "Dossiers", using images, essays, interviews or critical readings concerning paradigmatic museums, artworks or exhibitions in order to exemplify, explain and validate the Project results.

MeLa Research Field 01 > Theme: Place, Identity and Museums: focuses on place as an organising force in museums; it addresses the significance of display as a form of representation (both in media and political senses) and the role of time and place in the construction of identities and forms of belonging.

Clues:
1. Identity Places
2. Identity Objects
3. Belonging
4. Constitution Moments
5. Display

MeLa Research Field 02 > Theme: Post-colonial Museum: collects key theoretical articulations and case studies relating to the question of memory and representation in an age of migrations.

Clues:
1. Diasporic Archives
2. Display Politics
3. Citizenship
4. Images, Sounds, Bodies
5. Ethnographic Patrimonies

MeLa Research Field 03 > Theme: Cultural Cooperation and Networking: investigates how cultural cooperation in an age of migrations can operate at the crossroad of policy strategies, legislative frameworks, funding programmes and across domains and borders in Europe and beyond.

Clues:
1. Cultural Cooperation
2. Cultural Cooperation Policy
3. Cultural Network
4. Digital Cultural Heritage
5. Migrating Heritage

MeLa Research Field 04 > Theme: Post-contemporary: views contemporary art as a necessary fiction held together by the vested interest of the art world – if the modern was "international", the contemporary is "global", the post-contemporary is the global negotiation of modernity.

Clues:
1. Performative
2. Immateriality
3. Post-critical
4. Migrating Modernities
5. Subejctivities
6. Archive
7. Document

MeLa Research Field 05 > Theme: Interpretation, Representation and Technologies: looks at the technologies and media relations of people, objects and spaces in museums, building on paradigmatic examples selected among practical, methodological and research investigations.

Clues:
1. Interactive / Interaction
2. Media / Mediated
3. Personal / Social
4. Perspective / Reflective

MeLa Research Field 06 > Theme: Museographical Insights: drawing on the interrelation between the building, its contents and communicative means, it investigates museums' spaces and exhibition design strategies to identify and envision new museographic models and practices in this "age of migrations".

Clues:
1. Architecture as Identity
2. Proactive Spaces
3. Narrative Museum
4. New (Im)materials
5. Entwining Layers
6. The Outreach Museums

The design of the digital platform was developed to provide multiple possibilities in accessing its contents; this task resulted in the implementation of two complementary interfaces, offering different navigation options. The main interface, exploiting the metaphor of a sky map, was conceived to offer an open and unstructured navigation of the contents, which can be reorganized and reconfigured according to the individual explorative experience of each user. The "Map Version" of the Critical Archive portrays a galaxy populated by clusters of stars; these constellations represent the "Themes" and the "Clues" floating around according to thematic proximity rules, or moving according to the connections they develop with other elements of the sky. In order to allow for a streamlined exploration of the contents, the Critical Archive can also be navigated through an "Index Version" which offers the possibility to browse the resources by organising and filtering them according to thematic or analytic categories.

Due to its experimental nature, the Critical Archive is an in-progress tool which is supposed to continuously grow and evolve beyond the conclusion of the MeLa Project.

3.III. Knowledge Advancement: Policies and Practices for 21st Century Museums

In order to provide a comprehensive overview on the outcomes of the MeLa Project, the pivotal findings produced by the different MeLa Research Fields were synthesised in twelve propositions for 21st century museums, addressing the scientific community, museum professionals, policy makers and the European Commission. These propositions were conceived to summarise the best practices and policies identified by the MeLa Consortium, with the aim to draw implications, recommendations, directions and clues to support the envisioning and enhancement of a new role for museums in this "age of migrations".

3.III.A. Rethinking the Museum as a System for Identity Formation and Representation

Museums have always played a crucial role in narrating identities, and have always been involved in their production and construction. The accelerated planetary circulation of people(s), objects, ideas and information, and the increasing encounter and hybridisation of cultures, languages and histories are consistently challenging the traditional understandings of memory, cultural belonging and identity as they have usually been proposed until recently in European museums. In this framework, the politics and practices of museum representation are being questioned in their ability to depict and convey the complexities of present political, social and cultural scenarios, and to efficiently address diversified and multicultural audiences. Contemporary museums should thus engage with a critical revaluation of institutional practices and approaches in order to redefine the relationship to particular topics, and to explore controversial or previously excluded stories and voices.

Proposition 1: museums should acknowledge their potential to construct social values, and take a clear stand about their political, social and cultural positions
In the present age of physical, economic, social and communicative mobility, an increased awareness of an inclusive European identity is essential to enhance social cohesion and reciprocal understanding. Museums can play a strategic role in building this identity, by expanding their

traditional function as repositories of cultural heritage and past histories, and enhancing their role as agents of social change, pro-actively engaged in the issues that are crucial to the development and sustainability of present-day and future socio-cultural systems.

In order to undertake their responsibilities as social actors, not merely reflecting but also participating in the cultural debate on issues of identity, belonging, citizenship and inclusion – and contributing to shaping the views of inhabitants and administrators – museums should further articulate their approach to particular subjects, engage with difficult histories or topics (e.g. migration, integration, cultural diversity) and explore contemporary social differences and tensions.

Proposition 2: representations of identity, memory and belonging should be redefined through a trans-cultural and post-colonial approach

Facing the challenge of representing – and responding to – increasingly globalised and multi-cultural contexts, museums should further explore the emerging conditions of contemporary post-colonial society. This task requires museums to rethink the representation of people(s) and cultures as considered in exclusively national or local terms, and to embrace cultural and historical diversity by acknowledging and assimilating the histories which had been structurally excluded or marginalized, and the narratives pertaining to the other cultures that have come to share the European space.

In order to overcome the instrumental and uncontested use of cultural identity – which knowledge/power structures have often employed as factor of discrimination – museums should rethink the representation of the histories and memories they convey in the light of the post-colonial migrations, by embracing trans-national and trans-cultural perspectives that can flow across previous distinctions, exclusions and boundaries. This approach may solicit museums to include the representation of "the other"; to rethink the interpretation of diversities; to unfold colonial relationships of power; to be clear about whose memories and histories are exhibited, where and how a story is narrated, and by whom. Drawing in extra-territorial and trans-national actors, forces and flows, the development of a post-colonial approach to representation practices can renew and extend understandings of European citizenship, memory and identities.

In this process, contemporary art practices can operate as an anthropological apparatus enabled to question modernist museum practices, break the old boundaries between historicising and displaying, and disclose and accommodate visions and histories that had been ignored or repressed. The collaboration among curators and artists, writers, actors and performers in the production of contents and events as well as in the reinterpretation of ethnological and archival practices, display settings and spaces, has been highlighted as a strategic opportunity for contemporary museums to challenge the dominant Euro-centric understanding of heritage and construction of history and knowledge.

Proposition 3: multiple voices – including oppositional and antagonistic ones – should be integrated into representation practices

Contemporary identities are increasingly being referred to as multiple and competing subjectivities, produced by the condition of transmigration (not exclusively defined by migration, but also by the conditions of globalisation and digital transformations). In order to develop a postcolonial approach to representation practices and to communicate meaning to diversified publics, museums are required to recognise, include and unfold different perspectives and voices, and thus to represent as

well as to address the multiplicity of the identities, experiences and subjectivities that characterise contemporary societies.

A polyvocal approach can have a strategic role in managing the challenges involved in the representation of difficult or controversial topics, such as those pertaining to contemporary diversities and identities – for example through the active involvement of people with different backgrounds (e.g. migrant subjects, communities and groups). This approach still reveals some limits, i.e. the difficulties in reaching representational completeness in regard to highly complex and plural societies; the possibility that polyvocality may flatten inequalities; the necessity to deal with competing pressures relating to the need to prompt empathy on the part of visitors, and to ensure that the visiting experience is generally positive and uplifting (e.g. that it is suitable for families and children, and that tourists are not presented with an overwhelmingly negative view of history). Nevertheless, the inclusion of multiple voices allow museums to work towards the democratisation of display practices, and to engage more fully with the emergence of those generations of "new Europeans" produced by globalisation, migration and the trans-cultural experiences of diaspora and exile.

Proposition 4: migration should not be considered as a prerogative for a "type of museum" but rather as a "topic for museums"

In contemporary Europe, accelerated mobility is having pervasive impact and resonance on all aspects of social, political and cultural life. Within this context, the themes related to the movement of people(s), cultures, borders and heritage have become strategically relevant to a wide range of museums – beyond the immediately obvious (i.e. migration museums). Topics, stories and objects related to migration, mobility and diaspora are being threaded through the displays of several museums across Europe, independently of their scale, type or focus. Integrated into broader historical narratives or isolated as a topic in its own right, historical and contemporary migrations are often represented as part of the "backstory" which enables individuals, communities, regions, cities, nations and Europe as a whole, to develop and express a sense of identity. Presenting migration as a constant in human history, while exploring how the circumstances, legalities and cultures of migration have been subject to change, can be a counter to xenophobic attitudes, and facilitate mutual comprehension and social cohesion. Furthermore, recognising and representing some of the many cultures and identities in a place, including relatively newly incorporated ones, is a useful means of creating progressive senses of belonging.

The focus on place represents a highly strategical approach to the exploration, explanation and localisation of the past and present phenomena that may be socially divisive, such as migration, racisms, social differences and tensions. The representation of people(s) and cultures through a focus on their relationship with the specificity of particular places (be they nations, regions, cities or neighbourhoods) is a valid alternative to reductive and potentially divisive ethnic or sub-cultural categorisations. Drawing on the identification of particular civic places as localised arenas for identity formation, the engagement with place can form the ground for the historical contextualisation of objects and events, and allow us to understand and highlight the complexity and multiplicity of identities and histories by opening up multi-geographical perspectives, experiences and attachments. The reference to the cultural specificity of places could support museums in contributing to greater social awareness and progressive senses of belonging, on the one hand prompting empathetic responses and historical awareness on the part of those who feel

that their lifestyle or beliefs are threatened by influxes of people, on the other facilitating the cultural and historical understandings of people from elsewhere. In order to develop this approach, more inclusive collaborations between museums and migrant communities should be promoted.

An important field for the development of new relationships between migration and representation involves innovative forms of cooperation between curatorial and artistic practices. As contemporary artists seem to grow a fruitful interest towards issues of migration, ongoing experimentations are overcoming traditional patterns, blurring the boundaries between the global and the local, and raising new questions about traditional concepts of heritage, the art object, the archive and constituted practices of collection and display.

3.III.B. Exploring New Design Practices for Museum Settings and Spaces

The overall revision of museum representation policies and practices is to be complemented and supported by advanced exhibition design strategies, which can play a strategic part in enhancing contemporary museums' role, and their ability to produce and convey revised contents, and interact with new audiences.

Proposition 5: museums need to experiment with new communication and exhibition strategies and tools
In order to support the development of new curatorial models, museums should critically review obsolete communication and exhibition strategies and tools, and experiment with innovative forms of engagement with images and objects which could be capable of reflecting the complexity of contemporary cultural heritage, and accommodate innovative representation and fruition modalities. New approaches and practices for the configuration of museum displays and spaces should be aimed at conveying revised contents and forms of negotiations (in the communication of scientific and institutional positions); presenting multi-vocal representations; enabling dialogue with more complex, heterogeneous and differentiated audiences; taking on the high-speed access to knowledge and the mutation of visual culture (resulting from the diffusion of digital technologies, the accelerated circulation of information and imagery, the proliferation of screens in daily life, etc.); enhancing the visitors' experience, by allowing for more engaging and in-depth access to the museum's messages, or facilitating physical and multi-sensorial interactions, and eventually encouraging participation in the production of knowledge and meaning.

The reconfiguration of museum settings may be fostered by the use of new information and communication technologies, although the impact of technologic devices in mediating museum experiences should be further investigated and more critically implemented. Rather than being used to provide additional information and explanations to the display, they should be exploited to facilitate a more resonant and interactive involvement of the users; to offer transversal visions and multiple entry points to the narration; to intertwine different layers of meaning; and to unfold poly-vocal and cross-cultural interpretations in identity construction and representation.

Proposition 6: the design of museum settings and spaces should be conceived as a strategic element to foster museums' societal role
Far from being mere venues, static backgrounds that are passive in relation to what happens inside of them, museum spaces have always highly contributed to shaping the museum experience,

facilitating the conveyance of the contents, and mediating the relationship with the audiences. By construing architecture as a fundamental component of the complex systems of knowledge that museums represent, the organisation, layout and setting of museum spaces should be designed to participate to the upgrade of contemporary institutions as social and cultural actors. In this regard, they should not only meet standards of accessibility, usability and relevance, but also partake in and foster the development of more complex and inclusive practices and activities. In order to interact with the arrival of different modalities of culture and memory making, museums should experiment with more provisional, fluid and informal types of spaces that support collaborative, project-based work, and embrace audience engagement, rather than deflect it. This task entails the implementation of wider room for temporary installations and performances; further platforms for participation (also reaching out to the communities outside the museum walls); and broader social spaces.

3.III.C. Upgrading Acquisition, Collection and Archival Practices

The contemporary context urges a critical reflection on 20th century museum modes of conceiving and managing collections, conservation and archives.

Proposition 7: more inclusive collection and archival practices should be fostered in response to – and in support of – a revised role of museums as social agents
Contemporary museums are widening their traditional function as repositories for the conservation of cultural heritage and past histories, and gradually consolidating their role as social and political actors, strategically participating in the debate on memory, history and identity. The enhancement of their function as interactive spaces, highly connected to the specific present-day cultural needs of inclusion and social cohesion, is also being fostered by the development of new approaches to collections and archives which may be able to overcome the tradition cultural matrix and to include multiple temporalities, histories and fluxes – such as those related to the raising culture of participation. In particular, the involvement of migrant communities and the experimentation with dialogic participatory modes allow museums to widen memory-making practices, offering more inclusive perspectives and engendering encounters with often repressed stories, memories, spaces and times. The transformation of archival practices can play a strategic role in supporting the evolution of museums from repositories of past affairs to exercises of living power and possibilities dealing with vital procedures.

Proposition 8: museums should re-think acquisition, conservation and archival policies and practices in the light of enhanced forms and concepts of heritage
In this "age of migrations", modernist collection and archival practices are challenged by a more "fluid" concept of heritage, which builds on new ways of producing and managing artworks, objects, images and information, ensuing from the development of new forms of memory making, the implementation of immaterial and electronic archives, the evolution of artistic research and languages. These issues bring on the necessity to expand the traditional understanding of a collection, and to develop new modalities, strategies and tools for collecting and archiving, intended to recognise and operate expanding forms of intangible heritage and immaterial memory and art practices, as well as to include previously marginalised forms of heritage (e.g. sounds, orality,

sensations and unscripted memories) and voices (e.g. personal archives of memory, such as memoirs, family photos and recordings).

Digital sciences and technologies can significantly support the upgrade of these practices, since today they an important role in the construction, collection, conservation and fruition of heritage. Digitisation, for example, does not merely allow new forms of increased access, marketing or management for heritage; it has to be understood as an organisational opportunity to re-examine the logic and design of content management systems, fostering more complex interrelations among production, conservation and dissemination, and eventually contributing to heritage formation.

3.III.D. Fostering Networks Among Museums, Libraries and Other Cultural Institutions

The development of networks and collaborations is playing an increasingly important role in supporting European cultural institutions to better address contemporary challenges of globalisation, mobility and cultural dialogue. In the framework of the construction of a common European culture, the development of cultural networks helps to foster holistic and dynamic concepts and practices of cultural heritage; to implement more expansive and progressive configurations of cultural value; and to support initiatives towards social inclusion that are able to break through European geographic, sociological and political borders.

Proposition 9: museums should embrace the emergence of a contemporary migrating heritage, and acknowledge new roles and patterns of cultural networking

Within the ongoing shift from the identity marking heritage of European nations to a contemporary migrating heritage, practices of cultural networking are evolving towards transnational and trans-disciplinary roles, patterns and dynamics – based on a non-territorial approach between cultural institutions engaged with cultural dialogue activities, working across borders and domains. Besides furthering the exploitation of traditional collaborative initiatives (e.g. the loan of objects and records resulting in cooperative research projects and joint exhibitions), cultural networks are exploring the opportunities provided by digital sciences and technologies, which have a strategic role in allowing cultural heritage institutions to share and reframe collections online in trans-national terms, to break down political and cultural barriers, and to work across European borders, generations and cultures. For example, the construction of collaborative digital platforms connecting online collections from libraries, museums and archives, offers inter-disciplinary and international access to digitalised contents (data, literature, paintings, films, objects and archival records). Digital technologies also facilitate the relationship with wider audiences, allowing for the renegotiation of heritage with global and inter-cultural publics, and facilitating the participation of users in acquisition activities and co-production of contents. In these terms, the development of networks and collaborations can support cultural institutions in operating as cultural connectors between local and global communities, and become forums for cultural, social and civic engagement towards open and inclusive societies.

Proposition 10: the migration of people, knowledge and disciplines should be fostered to better address emerging challenges in museums

The evolving landscape of cultural networks does not only relate to migrating heritage, but also to the migration of people, knowledge, technologies and disciplines. In particular, the possibility for

cultural workers to cross boundaries and join forces in partnerships and cooperation initiatives can support the management of the emerging challenges of social inclusion, cultural dialogue, and new models of citizenship and belonging – also though innovative curatorial and artistic practices. Increased communication and knowledge exchange should be encouraged among the practitioners managing European museums and other cultural institutions, as well as between them and the scientific community, in order to foster connection between cultural policies and cultural practices.

3.III.E. Enhancing the Relationship with New Audiences

The commitment of contemporary museums in enhancing their role as agents for social change, unifiers of initiatives and routers for cooperation and dissemination, builds on the possibility of developing more interactive and rooted relationships with contemporary audiences. This task requires the implementation of more direct, cooperative and inclusive approaches, which take into account the challenges as well as the opportunities offered by the development of new social cultural dynamics, and the evolution of the strategies and tools for the production and circulation of knowledge.

Proposition 11: museums should improve knowledge and awareness about contemporary audiences
The possibility for contemporary museums to develop more effective and rooted relationships with new audiences first of all rely on the acknowledgment of their increased complexity and heterogeneity. In this "age of migrations," museum audiences are becoming more and more differentiated, multi- (or trans-) cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, etc. as a consequence of accelerated mobilities and their impact on the composition of local and national communities, but also resulting from a renovation of the experience of migration (through greater access to global media and cheaper travel, which allow to uphold the connection with "home"), the high-speed and self-selecting access to information and imagery, and the evolution of visual culture deriving from the diffusion of digital technologies. In order to better address the renovation of their policies and practices, museums should improve knowledge and awareness about new audiences through an in-depth investigation of their composition, the cultural background, the needs and expectations, the factors that influence their perception and understanding, the weight of what they encounter in journalistic media, political discourse and social media, and the impact of increasing cultural diversity.

Proposition 12: museums should endorse experimentation with innovative ways of engaging with wider audiences
The evolving role of museums as social agents is centred on the development of more interactive and rooted relationships within their own local and national communities. This task is being developed through an array of experimentations with different ways of engaging in cultural dialogue (the museum as a "bridge" between people(s), enabling and promoting education, mutual understanding and citizenship), participation practices (the museum as social catalyst, facilitating the relationship with migrating heritage and cultures) and social welfare activities (the museum as social agent and service provider, especially in addressing culturally diverse and transnational communities).
In order to enhance the relationship with multi-cultural audiences, museums seem to embrace the rise in participatory culture by exploiting technological access to cultural engagement, fostering

experimentation with creative ways for co-creating culture, and testing new opportunities of cooperation in the process. This task relates to the revision of policies and practices focused on the promotion of inter-cultural dialogue in museums in relation to a "fluid", open and inclusive notion of heritage and identity. In this process it is possible to detect some strategies which seem to stand out, such as avoiding the "targeting" of programmes – by addressing activities cross-cultural audiences, rather than to "migrants" or "natives". Indeed the interaction between different groups should not be merely fostered through mutual knowledge and respect, as it should be based on the initiation of new knowledge systems, relationships and perspectives.

Also education is playing a strategic role in the process, since it has an ever more important role in the integration of contemporary societies, where it often affects or decides about inclusion or exclusion. Although the types of learning and knowledge offered by contemporary museums are very different, museums of various scales, types and focus are widening their education programmes and testing their incorporation into curatorial and exhibition activities. In order to effectively enhance education practices, museums should consider: experimental interdisciplinary methods and styles of teaching and learning; the expansion of education strategies and tools (e.g. including gallery talks, storytelling, theatrical workshops, concerts, film screenings, drawing sessions, etc.); the demand for more direct knowledge exchange and interaction with museum's practitioners and collection objects; the increasing importance of lifelong learning; the long-term cognitive effects of new media information technologies; the potentialities of cultural networks.

In order to enhance these strategies, museums should also consider to expand their activities beyond their walls, reaching out to local and national communities and drawing in larger and more differentiated audiences. The development of a distributed museum model may enable the recognition of and the contact with the multiple subjectivities and temporalities which characterise present-day audiences.

4. The MeLa Project Impact and Exploitation of the Results

4.I. Potential Impact of the MeLa Project

The extensive production of findings and results, and the wide-open circulation of knowledge advancements through digital tools as well as scientific and policy-oriented publications are meant to result in several and meaningful impacts addressing different subjects, areas and scales.

4.I.A Potential Impacts on the European Research Area and the Scientific Community

> Through an extensive advancement of knowledge, the MeLa Project has highlighted the emerging challenges and chances posed by the contemporary contexts, individuated critical thematic nuclei, opened new multi-disciplinary perspectives – and thus it has laid the groundwork for future research in the field.

> Through the extensive circulation of its outcomes and the exploitation of different (multi-media, multi-tasking and multi-targeting) communication means, the MeLa Project has raised awareness within the scientific community, the European Commission and the public at large about the impact of political, social and cultural scenarios on contemporary museums, by highlighting the necessity to acknowledge the complexification, hybridisation and multiplicity of their tasks and to envision new roles and practices which may be able to better respond to present-day contexts, needs and expectations.

> The MeLa Project has succeeded in establishing itself as a major reference in the international arena for research on contemporary museums; this is also testified by extensive contacts that young researchers, scholars, museum professionals and committees for new museum projects, have regularly made with MeLa, asking for contributions, joining the MeLa networks, and extensively participating in the MeLa research activities and events.

> By facilitating knowledge exchanges and collaborations among scholars and between academics and practitioners – as well as highlighting the strategic role of cultural networking – the MeLa Project has fostered cooperation and supported the construction of enduring networks that may result into further inter-disciplinary and trans-national activities.

> The outcomes of the MeLa Project are meant to support the European Commission officials and policy makers to evaluate the potential of cultural heritage and museums in contributing to the processes pertaining to the enhancement of a sustainable and inclusive European identity; to envision their strategic role within the EU cultural arena and agenda; and to define tasks, objectives and approaches for the promotion and funding of future research projects.

> The MeLa Project has investigated, experimented and tested new approaches, tools and methodologies for research in Social Sciences and Humanities, which can contribute in enhancing methodological innovation, multi-disciplinary activities and forward-looking objectives within the European Research Area.

4.I.B Potential Impacts on Museums and Cultural Institutions

> The circulation and debate about the MeLa Project outcomes are meant to support museum practitioners in acknowledging the challenges and opportunities of cultural institutions in the contemporary political, social and cultural contexts. Through the identification of best practices and the advancement of responsible and thought-provoking suggestions, recommendations and policies, MeLa aims to support museums in acknowledging and enhancing their social and political value; embracing their societal role as institutionalised arenas for the representation, production and negotiation of new cultural identities and values; unfolding their potential in promoting mutual understanding, intercultural dialogue and social inclusion; raising awareness about new understanding of modernity, civic interactions and European citizenship; fostering the

experimentation with innovative strategies and tools which may have a positive impact on society; improving their relationship with differentiated audiences.

> The MeLa Project aims at helping museums to attract wider and differentiated audiences – with reference to an increased number of visitors as well as to an enhanced involvement of different (multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, etc.) members of the local or national communities.

> Throughout the development of its tasks, the MeLa Project has promoted and activated several contacts, exchanges and collaborations with and among museums and cultural institutions in Europe; by highlighting the strategic role of cooperation and partnership in addressing contemporary challenges of globalisation, migrating heritage and intercultural dialogue, MeLa intended to facilitate the construction of trans-national cultural networks and the development of new collaboration models and strategies.

> The partnerships promoted by the MeLa Project to foster cooperation between museums and research institutions as well as SME (small and medium-sized enterprises) may result into further stimuli for the implementation and exploitation of applied research tools in the field of cultural heritage.

> By highlighting the strategic role of such activities as education and participation for the enhancement of the societal role and impact of contemporary museums, the MeLa Project has promoted the revision and/or implementation of the education and participation programmes in museums and cultural institutions – which may also solicit the cooperation with different professionals and the hiring of new figures from different fields (anthropologists, inter-cultural mediators, visual culture experts, etc.) to support the development of co-creation practices, interplay between curatorial and education activities, etc.

4.II. Exploitation of the MeLa Project Outcomes, Dissemination and Public Awareness

Throughout the whole development of the Project, significant efforts have been dedicated to the presentation, promotion and circulation of the findings, critical suggestions and policies developed within the different MeLa Research Fields through an ambitious and extensive Communication and Dissemination Programme.

Within the framework of the MeLa Project, dissemination activities and tools had multiple tasks and values. In fact, on the one hand, in this "age of migrations" the circulation and the access to knowledge represent essential conditions for the development of democratic and sustainable societies, as they can play a crucial role in affecting or deciding about integration, inclusion or exclusion. On the other hand, dissemination activities were not only meant to present the outcomes produced by the Project, but rather they have been fundamental opportunities for exchanging and debating knowledge advancement, sharing different perspectives and experiences, facilitating collaborations and thus nurturing research activities.

Throughout the four year programme, MeLa developed a rich set of dissemination strategies and tools, which were aimed at promoting several tasks:

4.II.A. Providing information and raising public awareness

> **Leaflet:** A printed flyer which was circulated at conferences and meetings, aimed to provide basic information about the Project, to synthetically present its activities and objectives, and to engender familiarity with the "brand name" of MeLa.

> **Policy-oriented Brochures:** A series of booklets providing a synthetic overview of the main tasks, findings and outcomes of the MeLa Project and its different Research Fields. Building on a policy oriented presentation of the best practices, policies and critical suggestions proposed by the investigators, the booklets include extensive sets of propositions, implications and recommendations addressed to the scientific community, museum professionals, policy makers and the European Commission, aimed to draw directions, provide clues and support the enhancement of the role of museums in this "age of migrations".

   1. MeLa Identity Brochure
   2. RF01 Final Brochure
   3. RF02 Final Brochure
   4. RF03 Final Brochure
   5. RF04 Final Brochure
   6. RF05 Final Brochure
   7. MeLa Midterm Seminar Brochure
   8. MeLa Final Brochure

> **News reports:** The MeLa Project has regularly and promptly provided information about the promoted activities, outcomes (experimental actions, publications, etc.) and events (conferences, exhibitions, etc.) through the release of 10 Newsletter Issues and 18 Bulletins (including more than 120 blog posts). These reports have been forwarded through the MeLa mailing list, composed by more than 600 contacts (including scholars, museum practitioners and policymakers from all over the world).

4.II.B. Illustrating the scientific outcomes

The advancement of knowledge produced has been illustrated and promoted through a relevant number of scientific publications.

> **MeLa Book Series:** A collection of 12 open-access digital publications reporting the findings ensuing from the research activities developed by the different MeLa Research Fields. All the volumes are available on the MeLa website and in several European repositories and libraries.

01_ Basso Peressut, Luca, and Clelia Pozzi, eds. 2012. *Museums in an Age of Migrations. Questions, Challenges, Perspectives*. Milan: Politecnico di Milano.

02_ Whitehead, Christopher, Susannah Eckersley, and Rhiannon Mason. 2012. *Placing Migration in European Museums: Theoretical, Contextual and Methodological Foundations*. Milan: Politecnico di Milano.

03_ Ferrara, Beatrice, ed. 2012. *Cultural Memory, Migrating Modernities and Museum Practices*. Milan: Politecnico di Milano.

04_ Innocenti, Perla, ed. 2012. *European Crossroads: Museums, Cultural Dialogue and Interdisciplinary Networks in a Transnational Perspective*. Milan: Politecnico di Milano.

05_ Allen, Jamie, and Eleonora Lupo, eds. 2012. *Representing Museum Technologies*. Milan: Politecnico di Milano.

06_ Noack, Ruth, ed. 2013. *Agency, Ambivalence, Analysis. Approaching the Museum with Migration in Mind*. Milan: Politecnico di Milano.

07.1-3_ Basso Peressut, Luca, Francesca Lanz, and Gennaro Postiglione, eds. 2013. *European Museums for the 21st Century: Setting the Framework*. Vol. 1,2,3. Milan: Politecnico di Milano.

08_ Whitehead, Christopher, Rhiannon Mason, Susannah Eckersley and Katherine Lloyd. 2013. *"Placing" Europe in the Museum: People(s), Places, Identities*. Milan: Politecnico di Milano.

09_ Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, ed. 2013. *Redefining the Lobby of MACBA Study Center. Selection of Proposals*. Barcelona: MACBA.

10_ Basso Peressut, Luca, Cristina F. Colombo, and Gennaro Postiglione, eds. 2014. *Museum Multiplicities: Field Actions and Research by Design*. Milan: Politecnico di Milano.

11_ Chambers, Iain, Giulia Grechi, and Mark Nash. eds. 2014. *The Ruined Archive*. Milan: Politecnico di Milano.

12_Lupo, Eleonora, and Rita Capurro, eds. 2015. *Designing Multivocal Museums. Intercultural Practices at Museo Diocesano*. Milan: Politecnico di Milano.

> **Further MeLa Publications:** Some of the research outcomes produced within the MeLa Project have coalesced into further scientific publications. All the contributions are available in open-access formats, as digital volumes accessible on the MeLa website or as documents deposited in other European repositories and libraries.

_Chambers, Iain, Alessandra De Angelis, Celeste Ianniciello, Mariangela Orabona, and Michaela Quadraro, eds. 2014. *The Postcolonial Museum. The Arts of Memory and the Pressures of History*. Farnham: Ashgate.

_Innocenti, Perla, ed. 2014. *Migrating Heritage. Experiences of Cultural Networks and Cultural Dialogue in Europe*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

_Walsh, Victoria, Paul Goodwin, and Pamela Sepulveda, eds. 2014. *Transfigurations: Curatorial and Artistic Research in an Age of Migrations*. London: Curating Contemporary Art Programme of the Royal College of Art.

_Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, ed. 2014. *Folding the Exhibition*. Barcelona: MACBA.

_Lanz, Francesca, and Elena Montanari, eds. 2014. *Advancing Museum Practices*. Turin: Allemandi.

_Whitehead, Christopher, Susannah Eckersley, Katherine Lloyd, and Rhiannon Mason, eds. 2015. *Museums, Migration and Identity in Europe*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

_Innocenti, Perla. 2015. *Cultural Networks in Migrating Heritage. Intersecting Theories and Practices across Europe*. Farnham: Ashgate.

> **MeLa Related Publications:** The advancement of knowledge produced was extensively presented and shared through the wealthy publication activities promoted by the MeLa Project, as well as beyond: the researchers have further circulated the main findings and outcomes by contributing to a number of other scientific publications (including edited books, journals, etc.).

4.II.C. Promoting open access policies

The MeLa Project aimed to promote a wide circulation of the advancement of knowledge produced by thoroughly fostering open access policies. Through the cooperative effort of the Partners, all the activities and the results developed within the Project are available as open-access resources, broadly disseminated by means of online digital platforms, repositories and tools.

4.II.D. Exploiting digital tools for the wide-open circulation of the MeLa activities and results

The promotion of wide-open circulation and open access to the results produced by the different MeLa Research Fields was highly enhanced by the implementation of online digital tools, which had a pivotal role in fostering the availability of the outcomes, endorsing visibility to the activities carried out within the Project, and facilitating collaborations and exchanges within and beyond the MeLa Consortium.

> **MeLa Website:** An online platform operating as the repository of all the MeLa results and products, presenting the Project and its development, announcing and reporting on the promoted activities and events, and offering open access to all the publications, including MeLa Newsletters and Bulletins (www.mela-project.eu).

> **MeLa Blog:** A lively online platform intended to launch MeLa related publications and events, to highlight MeLa related activities, and to trigger discussions in a more informal context (www.mela-blog.net).

> **MeLa Critical Archive:** A digital platform aimed at assembling, conveying and sharing the main investigations developed within the MeLa Project through a critical post-reflection. It was not conceived as a mere repository of the research outcomes, but rather as a multipurpose tool. The Critical Archive is a research instrument as well as a communicative project, aimed at representing the complexity of the approaches developed by MeLa, and illustrating its findings as a unitary yet multifarious cultural proposal (www.mela-archive.polimi.it).

4.II.E. Bringing together ideas and people

Relevant efforts have been dedicated to the construction of cultural networking among scholars and with museum practitioners and policymakers.

First of all, the implementation of digital tools enabled the creation and the progressive widening of the **MeLa Network**, aimed at fueling research through the development of active multi-disciplinary and trans-national exchanges, collaborations and partnerships. The MeLa Network consists of three different sections, encompassing:

> Museums, Libraries and Galleries Network (including 27 partnerships)
> Scientific Community Network (including 37 partnerships)
> Individual & Independent Scholars Network (including 16 partnerships)

The advancement of knowledge produced has been widely illustrated, shared and circulated through the participation in several international conferences, workshops and seminars. MeLa supported the circulation of the involved researchers, who participated in more than 70 international conferences to give oral presentations about the in-progress MeLa investigations and results, and attended several other events to introduce the MeLa Project, to meet and exchange knowledge with scholars and practitioners, and to gather further stimuli for the research activities.

Furthermore, throughout its four year development, the MeLa Project has organised and promoted some major **MeLa Events** (3 Brainstorming Sessions, 3 International Conferences, 3 Public Seminars) which were intended to present the in-progress findings to the scientific and the museum community and to the public at large, as well as to trigger critical discussions and exchanges with other museum scholars and practitioners – and thus to fuel research activities:

> "European Museums in an Age of Migrations." MeLa Kick-off Meeting, Public Seminar organised by Politecnico di Milano (Musei Capitoli, Rome, Italy, 9 March 2011)
> "Museums, Migration, Memory and Citizenship." RF02 Brainstorming Session organised by Universita degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale" (PAN - Palazzo delle Arti Napoli, Naples, Italy, 14 March 2012)
> "Museums, Migrations, and Identities." RF01 Brainstorming Session organised by Newcastle University (Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom, 20 April 2012)
> "European Heritages, Migrations and New Media." RF03 Brainstorming Session organised by University of Glasgow (Sir Alwyn Williams Building, Glasgow, United Kingdom, 23 April 2012)
> "Museums for 21st Century Europe." Public Seminar organised by Politecnico di Milano (Post and Tele Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark, 21 May 2012)
> "'Placing' Europe in the Museum: People(s), Places, Identities." RF01 International Conference organised by Newcastle University (Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom, 3-4 September 2012)
> "Migrating Heritage: Networks and Collaborations across Museums, Libraries and Public Cultural Institutions." RF03 International Conference organised by University of Glasgow (Glasgow, United Kingdom, 3-4 December 2012)

> "The Postcolonial Museum: the Pressures of Memory and the Bodies of History" RF02 International Conference organised by Universita degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale" (Palazzo Du Mesnil, Naples, Italy, 7-8 February 2013)
> "Let the Museum Speak." MeLa Midterm Seminar organised by Politecnico di Milano (Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration, Paris, France, 24 September 2013)
> "Envisioning 21st Century Museums." MeLa Final Event organised by Politecnico di Milano (Triennale di Milano and School of Architecture and Society, Politecnico di Milano, Milan, Italy, 21-23 January 2015)

By supporting cross-border mobility of people working within the cultural sector, MeLa has encouraged the transnational circulation of cultural and artistic outputs and critical suggestions, fostered inter-cultural collaborations, and thus facilitated the development of relevant connections between cultural policies and cultural practices.

5. The MeLa Project Identity

Duration: March 2011 - February 2015 (48 months)
Funding scheme: Collaborative Project (small or medium scale focused research project)
Grant Agreement: 266757
Project Coordinator: Politecnico di Milano, Prof. Luca Basso Peressut

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