

Walking and sensing at Faaborg Museum

Atmosphere and walk-along interviews at the museum

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Abstract: *Since 2009 the Danish Agency for Culture has conducted the national museum survey for all national and government approved museums to participate in. The survey has integrated “atmosphere” as an evaluation criterion and has documented that visitors seek and worship such experiences. Atmosphere, however, is intangible and some spaces can evoke atmosphere more than others, due to the way they initiate interplay of the senses beyond language. Museum curators need not know the visitors’ experience of atmosphere in detail to be able to pay attention to atmosphere, but there is a growing need to qualify the understanding of the visitors’ experience of atmosphere to influence the way museums engage in atmosphere as a curatorial means. This article proposes a way to explore the visitors’ experience of atmosphere by combining theories of atmosphere by Gernot Böhme and Juhani Pallasmaa with sensorial anthropology as defined by Tim Ingold and Jo Lee and applying sensory ethnography and the method of the walk-along interview, suggested by Sarah Pink as a method to bring forward the visitors’ experience of atmospheric qualities. Faaborg Museum is used as a case and the analysis is based on four walk-along interviews partaken in 2016.*

Keywords: Atmosphere, presence, multisensory perception, walk-along interviews, sensory knowledge, Faaborg Museum.

As we enter a space, the space enters us, and the experience is essentially an exchange and fusion of the object and the subject... (Pallasmaa 2012: 20)

Faaborg Museum is a place often associated with atmosphere and atmospheric qualities.¹ The question, however, is how exactly atmosphere occurs at Faaborg Museum, as well as at other art museums. How can we

investigate visitor experiences of atmosphere at the museum and how are theories on atmosphere and presence applied and guiding the method of investigating such experiences?

In this article, I present research into visitor experiences of atmosphere by means of walk-along interviews as part of sense-ethnographic methodologies (Pink 2015) using Faaborg Museum as a case. I make use of theories of



Fig. 1. Faaborg Museum, Main Painting Gallery designed by architect Carl Petersen, The Faaborg Chair designed by Carl Petersen and Kaare Klint. Photo: Hélène Binet, 2015.

atmosphere (Böhme 1993, 2003, 2006, 2013, Pallasmaa 2007, 2012, Ingold 2012) and of sensorial anthropology (Ingold & Lee 2006) in conducting and analysing the interviews. I shall discuss the potential and possible bias in such a close theoretical-methodological construct as the article evolves. Furthermore, in the conclusion I reflect on whether the findings at Faaborg Museum can be generalised.

Faaborg Museum is a small regional art museum, which houses the paintings and sculptures of the Funen Painters artist colony. The museum is also a period art museum built in 1915 for the purpose of housing

the collection. The architects Carl Petersen and Kaare Klint designed every detail in the museum with a view to the totality of the building and scholars today discuss Faaborg Museum as a so-called *Gesamtkunstwerk* (Hedin & Hvidberg-Hansen 2015:24). Visitors often express that they sense the atmosphere created by this “wholeness” (fig. 1). It is the aim of this article to present a method of collecting and analysing the experiences behind such statements.

My focus will be on the way the experience of atmosphere is embedded in the experience of the museum space and the architecture of the museum. This focus stems from the involved theories and the way these interpret atmosphere as a multi-sensorial and spatial experience. This, again, has guided the way I have conducted the walk-along interviews, during which the significant stops and observations to be highlighted in the analysis were concerned with spatial effects such as forms, colours and lighting. The interviews had focus on verbalising sensations that came up during the walks and which could be considered atmospheric, though without forcing experiences. In this sense, the article touches on the paradox that atmosphere can be characterised, but is difficult to detect.

COLLECTING TESTIMONIES OF ATMOSPHERE AT THE MUSEUM

Basic research into atmosphere in museum relationships is still scarce and up to now atmosphere has been investigated by researchers and museum curators in particular in relation to historic house museums and ethnographic museums. While Peter Bjerregaard has approached atmosphere in relation to cultural museum exhibitions and ethnographic objects (Bjerregaard 2014, 2015), Pernille Henriette

126 Wiil has been concerned with atmosphere as exemplified by the case of The Museum Bakkekammen 45 (Wiil 2015). Besides from these case studies, the national survey has been conducted in all Danish state-recognised museums by the Danish Agency for Culture since 2009. The survey was launched to provide Danish museums with tools, helping them put visitors into focus as “users” and target exhibitions, activities and events more clearly.² The survey maps out who the museum users are and measures their experience and contentment with the museum. From the start in 2009 the survey used the Gallup-compass as a tool for analysing the Danish population in relation to museums, but since 2012 it has also included John Falk’s and Lynn Dierking’s motivational and learning behaviour types, as the basis for the analysis (Lundgaard & Jensen 2014:26). Interestingly, the overall 2014 survey shows that “atmosphere” is the one parameter that scores the highest and that the cultural history museums are rated *the highest* in this respect at 8.76, whilst natural history museums are rated the lowest at 8.22, and art museums are rated in between at 8.59 (Jensen & Lundgaard 2015:21, 24). When comparing the data for all art museums in 2014 with the data for Faaborg Museum in 2014, the survey further documents that whereas the overall assessment for art museums on atmosphere is 8.59, the rating of Faaborg Museum is higher, namely 8.8 (Jensen & Lundgaard 2015:24).³

The survey leaves no options for respondents to assess atmosphere qualitatively, for example by commentaries, and it does not offer any substantial definition of the term either. It is therefore difficult to use as an outset for communicative action at museums, even if the relatively high score on atmosphere can be taken as evidence of the importance of paying attention to atmosphere. Atmosphere

has in this survey, as well as in the research on museums up to now, not been verbalised much. I compare it to the concept of *doxa* with reference to Pierre Bourdieu, as something already established as a norm, as something unsaid, but present, as something there, but not specifically verbalised (Bourdieu 1977). The aim of this article is to suggest a way to open up to the established norm of *doxa* in atmosphere and approach it through atmosphere-theory and sense-ethnography. First, however, an introduction to the theory of atmosphere.

ATMOSPHERE FROM DIFFERENT THEORETICAL ANGLES

Atmosphere has engaged scholars from a broad range of academic fields from aesthetic philosophy and literature (Böhme 1993, 2003, 2013a, 2013b, Gumbrecht 2012) to anthropology (Ingold 2012) and architecture (Pallasmaa 2007, 2012). In the following, I shall focus on the theoretical contributions of Böhme, Ingold and Pallasmaa, which I have found particularly useful for investigating visitor experiences of atmosphere at the museum.

The philosopher and phenomenologist Gernot Böhme has defined atmosphere as being ontologically indeterminable, but not indeterminable in its specific quality. He considers atmosphere to be something that can fill a space with a certain tone or feeling, like fog or mist. Even if it is difficult to define precisely what this diffuse, foggy atmosphere *is*, it is possible to reason about the character of the atmosphere, which can be serene, melancholic, oppressive, uplifting, commanding or erotic (Böhme 1993:114). As such, atmosphere has to be experienced by somebody. It is neither object nor subject, neither passive nor active, but a non-representational phenomenon, which is sensed and can also to some extent

be expressed. As a continuation of this, Böhme reflects whether atmospheres can be intentionally made up through a manipulation of milieu and stimuli such as light, sound and smell since atmosphere acts more like a floating in-betweenness, something between space, things and subjects (Böhme 2013:3). Atmosphere is like surroundings that breathe; it is materially radiating from things, but felt by subjects in a certain spatial setting; it is a spatial happening.

Böhme has further introduced the concept of “mindful physical presence in space” as a way of expanding on atmosphere (Böhme 2013a). He argues that bodies have been considered material rather than mindful bodies, especially in relation to architecture, and suggests putting focus on the latter. Central to mindful physical presence is, according to Böhme, sensitivity, and mindful physical space is argued to be the modulation or articulation of this. This articulation is what can be objectively handled through certain generators, which can be things, but also non-thing-like, such as light or sound (Böhme 2013a:27). These generators can alter mindful physical space by adjusting, spreading or confining and thereby delimiting or transgressing atmospheres, and atmospheres can conversely be described as mindful sensed spaces of presence. According to Böhme, architecture will have to rethink space and geometry, and consider what it means to be mindfully present in space (2013a:31).

Böhme’s theory of atmosphere highlights how surroundings, things and subjects are mutually constitutive in making atmosphere happen, and thereby also highlights how atmosphere is active, even though it appears inactive. This is clearly of importance to researchers and also curators working with atmosphere, and along with the notion of generators, it was made the basic outset for

my planning and analysis of the walk-along interviews.

In contrast to Böhme, the anthropologist Tim Ingold approaches atmosphere as a purely geo-physical phenomenon, as sky and air. Nevertheless, he ends up with some similar points. He argues how atmosphere can explain the way we as living breathing beings embrace and are embraced by the world around us (Ingold 2012:75). He pinpoints how meteorologists and aestheticians, in spite of their scientific differences, share an assumption of the material world as matter-of-fact, as a pre-condition, and as such also as an abstraction or an absence. He proposes instead to bring air back into presence (Ingold 2012:81). The way this can be done became obvious to him when working with the experience of sky and air, and living creatures as simultaneously being positioned opposite to the sky, namely on the ground, and being in-the-midst-of-air. However, he also underscores how an indoor atmosphere is different, even if still compiled by the bringing together of people and things through a mutual involvement in the environment (Ingold 2012:81). Ingold suggests that atmosphere can be further explored by means of a distinction between striated and smooth worlds, as well as the optic and the haptic eye, referring to the philosophers Deleuze and Guattari. Whereas “striated space” is homogeneous, volumetric and laid out, “smooth space” extends without limits in all directions. The eye in striated space looks *at* things, is optic, whereas in smooth space it roams *among* them, is haptic – the vision being accordingly intense (Ingold 2012:82). Ingold further argues that there is a relationship between the haptic and the atmospheric and that every living being simultaneously stitches itself into the material texture of the world along interwoven lines of

becoming. The flesh is both atmosphere and texture: it is atmosphere on the inhalation and texture on the exhalation (Ingold 2012:85). In other words, atmosphere and texture are two sides to every living-breathing creature. Air is thereby brought back into presence, and atmosphere and texture are brought together as a continuous flow. For Ingold then, atmosphere is related to the physical substance of air, inhalation and exhalation, and the differentiation of indoor and outdoor. Museum research and practice can draw upon such a dynamic understanding of atmosphere as smooth space and haptic sensing, at one and the same time material and immaterial. Ingold's theory is quite different from Böhme's, but their contributions can fertilise each other, as I am going to demonstrate.

A third approach to atmosphere, which involves multi-sensoriality, comes from the architect Juhani Pallasmaa. Like Böhme, Pallasmaa is interested in how architecture and space, in relation to the sensing subject, can create atmosphere. Pallasmaa argues from a historical approach and from the interplay of architecture, the body and the senses. He claims that atmosphere and mood have never been much discussed amongst architects or in schools of architecture, the focus of which has been on scale, form and structure (Pallasmaa 2012:19). He reasons that this tradition has not paid enough attention to what he terms *ambiance* and describes this as an invisible fragrance that adds to the sensory experience (Pallasmaa 2012:24). According to this line of thought, space is not just a visual quality; it is also a multisensory experience, which is grasped instantly. The instantaneous assessment of a place again calls upon an embodiment that transgresses the five Aristotelian senses by involving orientation, gravity, balance, stability and



Fig. 2. Faaborg Museum, facade. Photo: Hélène Binet, 2015.

scale (Pallasmaa 2012:19). Pallasmaa further argues that atmosphere is an interchange between the material qualities of the specific place and our intangible sphere of expectation and imagination. He suggests a definition of atmosphere as the overall perceptual and emotive experience of a space, setting or social situation (Pallasmaa 2012:20) (fig. 2).

Pallasmaa claims that since the Renaissance, the five senses have been thought to form a hierarchical system, from the highest sense of vision down to touch. The hegemonic dominance of sight and the eye, and the curtailment of the other senses, have caused a neglect of how these are used and how important the interaction between the senses is. According to Pallasmaa, though, the dominant eye “wants” to cooperate with the other senses, and this combinatory ambition can again be understood as an extension of the sense of touch. Vision reveals what touch already knows, Pallasmaa writes (2007:42). Even if the eye is the organ of distance and separation, in contrast to touch as the sense of nearness, caress, intimacy and affection, and even if the historical evolvment of

representational techniques depicting space is related to perspectival vision, there is a different kind of vision: an unconscious and unfocused peripheral vision with which atmospheres can be “seen”. Where perspectival space and focused vision leaves the subject as an outside observer, multi-perspectival space and peripheral vision encloses and enfolds the subject in an embrace (Pallasmaa 2012:38). Peripheral perception grasps atmosphere through the combination of the senses: hearing, smelling, touching and being touched by temperature and breeze. In other words, it emerges from the embracement of the senses and their non-directional qualities (Pallasmaa 2012:39).

For my research, Pallasmaa offers focus on the multisensory body and an ability to grasp atmospheres through a peripheral perception, which I again interpret as close to the smooth vision of Ingold. Like Böhme, Pallasmaa suggests a new understanding of how architecture and humans are related. Both Ingold and Pallasmaa propose a different kind of vision, in order to see and approach atmosphere; they define this vision in different ways, but suggest that atmosphere is sensed by means of a different gaze.

THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND WALK-ALONG INTERVIEWS

The theory of atmosphere stresses the fact that the experience of it is individual, multisensorial, dynamic and complex. This presents a challenge when investigating visitor experiences, but informed by Böhme, Ingold and Pallasmaa, in what follows I suggest a method with which it is possible to grasp this complexity.

In the museum space the visitor will be walking either alone or with others. Therefore, anthropological theories on “walking” seemed

appropriate, as discussed by Ingold & Lee (2006). Walking involves the repeated action of putting one foot in front of the other, and necessitates contact with the ground, as well as a state of being attuned to the environment (Ingold & Lee 2006:69). Walking together is a way of *being* with other people. It is through the shared bodily engagement with the environment, a shared rhythm of walking, that a social interaction takes place. People communicate through their posture in movement, involving their whole body (Lee & Ingold:80).

Pallasmaa further argues that architecture is a continuation of nature into man-made areas, supplying the ground for perception and the horizon of experiencing and encountering the world. Architecture is not a unified, isolated construct, but rather a multisensory and combinatory experience (Pallasmaa 2007:41). On the basis of these theoretical reflections, I have chosen a sensorial methodology and the approach developed by ethnographer Pink that focuses on the multi-sensoriality of experience, perception, knowing and practice (Pink 2015).

Pink argues that sensory interviews are social and affective encounters, and she refers to the concept of the research encounter, which relates to the shared moment through which the researcher learns and knows about other people’s experiences and how these moments produce multisensorial and emplaced learning and knowing (Pink 2015:96). Sensory ethnography takes a phenomenological approach to the world and the ways we perceive the environments we engage in. Using a walk-along interview methodology in a museum is appropriate, as sharing a walking rhythm with respondents can lead to closeness and a bond between researcher and researched, as Ingold and Lee also point out (2006:67). Doing



Fig.3. Two visitors sharing the same pace and the same view. Photo: Sven Storm, 2015.

sensory research offers an alternative way to ethnographic learning and knowing, as the researcher participates with others through joint embodied engagement (Pink 2015:115) (fig. 3).

In order to conduct such walk-along interviews, I originally considered approaching visitors that entered the museum, asking them to participate in an interview. However, people who go to a museum are often in a special mind-set, or they are at the museum with friends or family as a social event. According

to The Danish User Survey, the figures from the 2009–2014 survey show that around 90 per cent of museum visitors go to a museum in the company of others (Jensen and Lundgaard 2015:64).

As a consequence, I planned four qualitative walk-along interviews as a pilot, with participants recruited through my personal profile on Facebook, asking my network to share the request for participants for sense-orientated interviews at Faaborg Museum. Out of six responses to the call, three women

(participants 1, 2 and 3) and one couple (female participant 4 and male participant 5) were chosen for these interviews, as their schedules were comparative with the selected interview dates. Though they were recruited through my personal profile, I did not know any of them very well beforehand and none of them knew the aim and focus of my investigation. From the questionnaire that the participants filled in just before the interviews, I realised that participants 1 and 4 had spent considerable time at the museum before this visit, whereas participants 2 and 3 were not familiar with the museum and participant 5 had never been there before, nor had heard of it.

The interviews were conducted as events, during which both parts continued to be active participants using their bodies, senses, available props and the ground under their feet to narrate, perform, communicate and present their experiences (Pink 2015:78). The participants were informed that we were to walk in the museum space together, where they decided what route to take. They were made aware that a mobile would record the interview. In addition to these recordings, I also made field notes during the interviews. Using this participatory research method, I raised simple questions as to the immediate sensorial experience of the collection, the interior and the architecture, seeking to prompt spontaneous answers. The interviews contained questions of sensory elicitation, as material objects can elicit responses or evoke memories through tactile or visual engagements, as described by Pink (2015:88).

From the four interviews, which each lasted around an hour, I will focus on two key locations that brought insights with regard to sensations of atmospheric qualities, as well as researching those experiences. Also, I want to present how the interviews gave

access to two atmospheric experiences; one of them in the one key location – in the Dome Gallery and the other was an experience that came across, throughout the museum under various forms as a time warp. In the analysis, I shall draw not only on the participants' reactions, but also on my own reactions, using the kind of auto-ethnography suggested by Pink (2015:98). Gathering and interpreting sensory data and considering the sensoria of others as well as one's own, however, are both challenging and delicate. According to Pink, it is also important to acknowledge that the multisensorial environments that people are inhabiting are constantly being re-made, and therefore reflexivity is important in both the fieldwork situation and in the process of sorting and analysing the research material (Pink 2015:160).

All interviews started at the Small Painting Gallery where the participants decided our further walk and the two situations to be explored in-depth in the analysis below took place in the Dome Gallery and in the Gallery Bays, respectively. These two locations in the museum will be presented in details below.

THE MUSEUM AS A (TIME) WARP

The long and narrow museum first contains two larger galleries, with the Dome Gallery placed in between; glass panels in the ceiling provide daylight here. Stepping down to the Bay Corridor with the smaller Gallery Bays to the right, windows are placed above human height on the left sidewall, and therefore there is no outside view, besides the sky (fig. 4). During the interviews, participants talked about the experience of a "time warp" in different ways. The metaphor expresses the sense of being transposed to another time, or time being frozen. This is an experience often

related to historical museums, as this type of museum, through its setting, presents a time that is different from the time of the visitor.⁴ In this case, it is an experience of being cocooned when walking in the museum, due to the fact that there is only a limited sense of any outside. The visitors are moving in the enclosure in between the interior and the artworks, which are all part of the *stage*, the script for the museum (Houlberg Rung 2013:22). The following are descriptions of this subtle phenomenon of the time warp, which came up during the walk-alongs.

Example 1, participant 1: As we entered the Small Painting Gallery, the participant decided she would rather start in the Dome Gallery and we went there. Here she explained how they normally visited the museum when they lay at berth in the town and compared it to a “warp” and called it a peaceful place.

Example 2, participant 1: As a mobile phone rang in the Large Painting Gallery, we both reacted to the sound and I questioned the sound in the room and she responded: “I think it is fine when there are only a few people in here, but just with a mobile phone... it means a lot where you are.” With the opportunity to talk about digital equipment being taken, she commented: “When you look at the colours here and then if you suddenly see a mobile screen or something else... The eyes have gotten a bit sensitive, so you can tune into the details.” The participant had earlier characterised the museum as “a time warp” and as I mentioned this, she said: “Yes, you have to be careful that you don’t pollute it [the experience, my note] in some ways...Because it is so delicate, I mean, something that can be holy in some ways, and not disturbed.”

Example 3, participant 1: In the Bay Corridor, I asked the participant an elicitation question about the changing room sizes

and she responded positively, that to her it indicated variation, that something happened all the time. She added that she liked the changing colours as well, as it held a repeating, recognisable rhythm: The first gallery is ochre-coloured the next is dodenkop, next again ochre and so forth. The colour change helps the sense of separation of the galleries and adds to the feeling of retreating into separated small warps.

Example 4, participant 1: The participant noticed the mosaic floor pattern in the Gallery Bay and how it characterised the Bay: “But this continues. This is really nice.” She added how she liked that the floor patterns were different in each different Gallery Bay, and different from the long line in the Bay Corridor, and how it made each of the rooms delimited. “Yes, it is actually right, so it is delimited. It becomes a room in the room in some ways.” Later, during the interview, she added that it was like a room to retreat into (fig. 5).

Example 5, participant 1: The participant suddenly looked out of the window, as she caught sight of a very tall industrial chimney rising outside the window and she commented on how she was reminded of the fact that the museum was located in the urban setting of Faaborg. This “recent” chimney being the only visible sign from the outside pinpoints the architectural feeling of being in a time warp.

Example 6, participant 5: As we entered the Gallery Bays I also asked participant 4 and 5 the elicitation question about the changing room sizes. Participant 5 first said he did not have an opinion about it, but after we had walked to the end of the Bay Corridor, he responded: “OK, when you come all the way to the other end, after you asked me about the rooms... Then actually, it makes, it makes good sense”... “That it changes”... “Because then it breaks all the time”... “You expect the same, but it changes.”



*Fig. 4. The Gallery Corridor with Gallery Bays and windows in the side façade.
Photo: Tina Anette Madsen, 2015.*



Fig. 5. One of the various floor mosaics in an ochre Bay. Photo: Hélène Binet, 2015.

Example 7, participant 5: At the last Gallery Bay, the Archive Room is located. The room is said by participant 5 to be: “Pause room” and explained as: “It also gives... it invites you as a pause room.”

Not all participants answered with an explicit allusion to the “time warp” in response to my elicitation questions about the changing colours and room sizes. However, in a different way, they reacted to aspects of both Ingold’s and Pallasmaa’s notions of atmosphere. Pallasmaa argues how the atmosphere of a place can be developed by a strong sense of materiality, but stresses that the characteristic atmospheric quality might also be a scent or even weather conditions (Pallasmaa 2012:35). Furthermore, he suggests that when we experience architecture, it is always a multi-sensory experience, where all elements “are measured equally by the eye, ear, nose, skin, tongue, skeleton, muscles” (Pallasmaa 2007:41). As is clear from the participants’ sensorial reactions, examples 2, 3 and 5 are attendant to the materiality of the setting, as they respond to both floor patterns

and change of room colour etc. These elements may also be characterised as generators and are here recognised not only as things, but also as non-things, as defined by Böhme. The generators can cause visitors and participants to act in certain ways and give access to a space in the space, as seen in examples 3, 4 and 6. With the words of Ingold: “To be sure, the indoor atmosphere is created by the coming together of people and things, but only because of their common immersion in the medium” (Ingold 2012:81). Being in a time warp is an immersion in the medium, and as the time warp is an enclosed space, it holds atmosphere as spatiality.

Also, the issue of noise and silence in architecture can be drawn forward, as example 2 illustrates. Pallasmaa suggests that experiencing significant architecture can exclude surrounding noise, and experiencing architecture as all art can open up an existentialistic solitude (2007:52). Furthermore, architecture can hold another time; “time of architecture is a detained time; in the greatest of buildings, time firmly stands

still" (2007:52). With this in mind, participant 1's statement makes good sense, as she claimed that it was better if there was just a few people in the gallery, which opens up the capability to experience a kind of existentialistic solitude; an experience that is not "polluted".

The above invites two sets of reflections: the first on the method of walk-along-interviews and the second on the digital devices in the museum. Before the interviews I had not considered the "time warp" or "rooms in the room"; it came up spontaneously as a response to rather simple questions, but can nevertheless be seen as a result of the particular focus of the sensorial, phenomenological perception and actions. Thus, the metaphor came as a serendipitous insight, called forth by the methodology, and in particular in the case of participant 1, who engaged the most in the interview and was able to verbalise her sensations.

Interviews shall be seen as a social, sensorial and affective encounter and it is important to understand that doing sensory ethnographic methodology shall be understood as participation, not just observation (Pink 2007:75). Just before the interview situation, the participants had been informed about the project's focus on atmosphere, and in our joined walk it gave a different bond and interview situation between "researcher" and "researched". The sensory subjectivity shifted in the encounter and this enabled knowledge, not previously available in this context, to be drawn out.

Böhme suggests that to really be there, as in mindful physical present, means experiencing the resistance of things (Böhme 2013a:27–29).

As to the digital devices and screens, it came up in particular in the interview with participant 1, in example 1 and 4. Furthermore, it was an issue in the initial small-scale survey

at the museum, where visitors commented on the presence of digital screens for a current exhibition, which they disliked; there was a clear wish not to have mediating tablets or projectors in the galleries. The topic is most relevant today and my findings can point out some of the difficulties for curators in including digital devices in period museums. Pink writes how digital media has by now become part of everyday activities and how human experiences are generally digitally mediated (2015:119–121). In this situation, historical period museums can be seen as a "sacred" place for retreat and literally a time warp in which the opportunity arises to disconnect from the digital humdrum of the everyday and find space for reflection. I suggest that visitors' resistance to digital devices in the galleries can be explained by the peripheral perception or smooth vision, which is also the perception of atmosphere that they generate, and which is appreciated. Moreover, when following Pallasmaa it can be suggested that the warp shall be seen as a sensory time warp, where time and room become one, where time stands still and allows for subjects to dwell in this space. However, there might be a discrepancy here, as the participants were all mature adults; participant 1 and 5 in their mid-thirties, participant 2, 3, 4 mid-forties, and judging the age-range from the handwriting of the visitor-notes, they were fifty plus. Younger visitors-participants might not have had the same resistance towards inclusion of digital devices, but there is no data to prove this included in the research material.

THE DOME GALLERY AND THE UNEVEN COLOUR

The blue Dome Gallery is the second room in the museum, in between the two main

galleries. It is entered through two pillars and a step down from the red distemper-coloured Small Painting Gallery. It is an octagon-shaped room, with a dome ceiling, that houses a big sculpture of the patron Mads Rasmussen and a large painting, *Adam and Eve* by Kristian Zahrtmann. The Gallery is the only room painted with al fresco colour, and the squares with slight colour differences are the evident result of the fresco process (fig. 6).

The participants responded to the Dome Gallery in different ways, but all with subtle attentiveness to the forms, colours and play of light and shadow. Through all the verbalisations, there was a recurring theme of transformation. According to *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, to transform is to “change the form of”, to “change into another form or shape”, to “metamorphose” (1971:3380).

Example 1, participant 1: “This is simply such a wonderful room...” “Well, yes, then you are... at these walls [the participant looked at the walls in the gallery], ... it gives some peace, you get away from the street. I think... and then a room like this, you get such a... you land and then you can go on in and see... and there is like time to look... So it might be good to start here.”

Example 2, participant 1: “There is a lot to look at, [In the Small Painting Gallery, my note] so it might be, that when you come in here, then you are ready to... to really look... It is also that to really look... Then I come to think of the colour. The colours are really strong, I think personally that it is rather impressive.”

Example 3, participant 1: “But it is also the fact that the colour is alive, in some way. It is not like it is the same colour all over [the room]. It gives...it gives a play of colours in some ways.” When I mentioned the painting

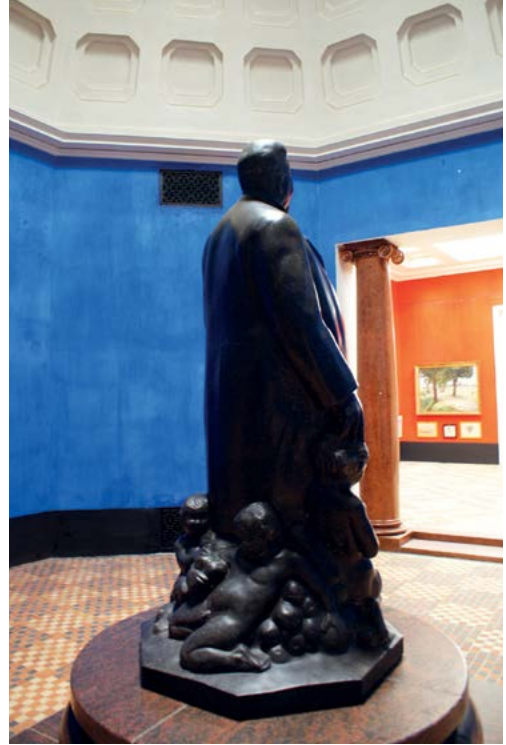


Fig. 6. The Dome Gallery with the Small Painting Gallery in the background. Photo: Tina Anette Madsen, 2016.

Adam and Eve by Kristian Zahrtmann, the participant commented: “But I think that when you stand and look, that it complements really nicely here... it can easily carry it... so big a painting here... But I think that when it was all blue without, [the painting, my note] that gave something as well. Knowing that the eye can wander without being disturbed.”

Example 4, participant 3: “This is indeed such a beautiful room, I absolutely love that blue colour on the wall. I just want to say... I have great difficulty with, I get really annoyed with the sculpture there” [The sculpture of Mads Rasmussen, my note]. Later, when I

asked how she liked the colour in the room, she said: "I love it... Clear blue. And I like the way it is painted.... It looks like distemper."

Example 5, participant 2: "Yes, it is such a pompous room really and he does something [Mads Rasmussen, my note] and I don't even know who he is, but I think he must be... somebody quite important". "But it had not been such a pompous room" [if the room had been used for paintings, my note]. "No, it hadn't. And that's why I think he is allowed to stand on his own."

Example 6, participant 5: Responding about the Dome Gallery: "I really like the ceiling.... It is like it disappears... with the shadows there are being formed naturally it is helping create such a..." [He did not finish the sentence, unable to find words].

Example 7, participant 5: On the light and the painting in the Dome Gallery (fig. 7): "I think it's a bit annoying with the light up there [skylight, my note], I think it ruins the picture if you want to come close to it... It makes it a bit annoying, because it's actually a really nice picture... And does the blue colour behind it make it bluer, or would another background make the picture clearer?"

All participants spent a considerable amount of time in the octagon Dome Gallery, and they all responded and sought to verbalise their sensory encounter with the room. At no point did the participants use the exact word "atmosphere", but as they had been informed about the research beforehand, it had created an established purpose and bond; that they were aware of the focus on the verbalisation of their senses, but that experiences not experienced, should not be forced. As is clear with examples 2, 3 and 4, there is a focus on the architectural form, the colour, the ceiling and the light and shadow. These factors can, through the theory of Böhme be suggested

generators, which can both be things but also non-things.

Böhme and Pallasmaa both argue how the living and sensing body has to be reconsidered in architecture. Böhme further argues in favour of a mindful physical presence and sensitivity and that this ability can be trained. The above examples show how some participants had easier access to such a sensual experience than others, but also that they all in some respect felt a particular quality of the room. With Böhme's notion of the mindful physical presence, Pallasmaa's notion of the peripheral vision and Ingold's notion of the smooth space, we are given the means to analyse the fascination with the Dome Gallery. Pallasmaa further elaborates on vision and the way humans react to shadows and light. He argues how the shadows give shape and life to the object and "how imagination and daydreams are stimulated by dim light and shadows" (2007:46).

The above leads to two sets of reflections on the qualities of the Dome Gallery and the art works, respectively. As commented upon in examples 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, the gallery was sensed to hold qualities that can be approached by means of the concepts of peripheral vision and the embracing gesture. The octagon architecture, the dome ceiling and the al fresco colour add to these sensorial qualities. The shape of the room, for instance, can be said to correspond to multi-perspectival space, which allows the subject to walk around the statue of Mads Rasmussen. The blue colour becomes a material object and transforms from a colour on a flat wall to a material of substance, and it can be suggested that the distemper colour, the room formation, the dome ceiling, the light and the shadows add to the room's ability to act as a place for a transformation, before entering the next hall. Also the dome ceiling

138 that resembles the hollow upper half of a sphere has architectural abilities that may also help activate this transition.⁵ The dome-shaped architecture, which resembles the geophysical sky and air and the hemisphere, can be a generator for transformation alongside the other elements. I suggest, along Böhme, Pallasmaa and Ingold, that this particular space performs atmospheric qualities and through these, calls forth a subjective transformation.

This leads to further reflection on the peripheral perception, which seems to be present in examples 1, 2, 3 and 4, where there is a focus on the blue colour and a sense of transformation, of “landing” and entering another mode, by “knowing that the eyes can wander”. This comes very close to the theories presented above and I will suggest that for sensitive bodies this space gives access to mindful physical presence and the opportunity to enter peripheral vision. In evaluating my walk-along method, it is interesting that some participants in this room were able to verbalise their sensations that in a way come close to atmosphere as described through the theories. Some participants responded easily to what has here been conceptualised as multi-perspectival space, as with participant 1 and to some extent participant 5.

The second reflection regards the sculpture and the painting. As mentioned in examples 4, 6 and 7, some felt a disharmony or “irritation” caused by these elements, in particular in relation to the effects of light and shadow and the glass ceiling, which can be explained with Pallasmaa’s elaborations on lights and shadows; he suggests that dim light stimulates daydreaming and the imagination and this can explain example 6 and participant 5’s fascination with the light and shadows in the Dome Gallery, which he was unable to explain. Later, in response to the (dark and



Fig. 7. The painting *Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden* from 1892 by Kristian Zahrtmann. The painting has been hung in the Dome Gallery for a current exhibition. Photo: Tina Anette Madsen, 2016.

dim) painting, he reacted with irritation, as the dim light did not allow him to properly see the painting. To a certain extent, this could also explain example 4’s frustration with the sculpture in the gallery: There is a conflict between the ability for transformation in the room, and the artworks [especially the dark painting] that calls for a different way of looking. Pallasmaa suggests that uniform bright light weakens the imagination, just as standardised space flattens the experience of being (2007:46). Thus, these experiences also demonstrate that such a room can open up (serendipitous) issues. This again can be of use for other museums and an argument for

experiments with atypical rooms. Rooms such as stairwells or walkways might be used for creating alternative rooms for picture hanging and for creating extraordinary experiences at art museums.

CONCLUSION – ATMOSPHERE AND SENSORIAL EXPERIENCES AT THE MUSEUM

Approaching the conclusion, it is necessary to bring the key questions forward again: How is atmosphere present, or rather, how does it occur to visitors in the art museum and how can we investigate it? Can theory on atmosphere inform a method of investigating these experiences?

The first attempt to get access to atmosphere through the national Danish user survey, as well as the small-scale survey at Faaborg Museum, was meant to open the search for verbalised atmosphere. However, the national user survey reduces atmosphere to numbers on a scale, and the small-scale survey did not give the hoped-for results either, as only a few visitors were enthusiastic about their experience of atmosphere.

In order to investigate visitor experiences of atmosphere and as an approach to open up to situations where atmospheres appear, sensory walk-along interviews were chosen as a methodology by the theories and concepts of Böhme, Ingold and Pallasmaa. This type of walk-along interview combined with sense-ethnography has not previously been used in museology and was therefore conducted as a pilot study. Even if still at a small scale, the findings indicate that the method of sensorial walk-alongs is a possible way to explore atmospheric qualities through sense carried experiences and try to articulate its substance. Walk-along interviews mean sharing a walking

rhythm, the same (tiles) under your feet and breathing the same air, sharing the visions to be disclosed and adjusting to each other. As mentioned, the interview situation with information on the purpose of the interview given beforehand, created a special bond between the “researcher” and “researched”, as there was an awareness of the focus on atmosphere during the interviews, but also on the fact that experiences not experienced should not be forged. In this, connection the verbalisations shall be seen as sense-orientated assessments. If attending to sensory experiences, an opportunity to analyse from new perspectives the verbalisations and activities, which might on the surface seem standard and often everyday familiar (Pink 2007:103). The participants were verbalising the material and physical reality that they experienced visually, but during the walk, both they and I were aware of the situation and used means to capture and verbalise sense-borne impressions through our conversation. The research seems to prove that the participants experienced atmosphere when they were trying to express their sensed impressions of the physical frame of the museum. The research has been conducted as a pilot study and as the results are delicate and subtle, the further use of sense-ethnographic methods has to be refined and re-tested.

The analysis of the two key situations revealed that the blue Dome Gallery holds qualities that appear to evoke atmosphere through multi-perspectival, smooth space and peripheral, haptic perception, the generators so far being ascribed to the colour, the dim light and the room’s multi-perspectival shape. This adds knowledge to how museums can use irregular spaces for exhibitions.

Recall Ingold, as he argues how people and objects create the indoor atmosphere, as they

are immersed in the medium. In the museum, objects and people are immersed in the museum space and thereby interact in the creation of atmosphere. Following Pallasmaa's and Böhme's arguments about peripheral perception, multi-perspectival space and the sensitivity of mindful bodies, the Gallery Bays and Corridor can then be said to enact atmospheric qualities through light, the rhythm of colours, the mosaic-floor-pattern etc. This knowledge proves the theories of architecture and atmosphere by Pallasmaa, and is new in the sense that it has not previously been verbalised in the context of Faaborg Museum. The sense-borne verbalisation of "rooms in the rooms" can as such be used in curatorial relations for future exhibitions and at other museums with comparative architecture.

As to the methodology, there might have been a certain bias, in particular with regard to the way the method enhances a confusion between "researcher" and "the researched" experience. This intersubjectivity in the encounter between "researcher" and "researched" has been important to reflect upon, in order to understand how my own sensory subjectivity shifts in the research encounter. Such reflections have been a main concern throughout the research and still are. The theoretical and methodological reflections thus lead to the conclusion that even on a small scale, the sense-orientated methods used in this research have given results that enable conceptualisations of atmosphere, and this method can provide additional knowledge with regard to visitor experiences of atmospheric qualities.

NOTES

1. Projektet er et samarbejde mellem Syddansk Universitet og Faaborg Museum og er støttet af VeluxFondens Museumssatsning.
2. I use the terms "visitor" and "participant" in rela-

tion to the people who came to visit the museum or took part in the interviews. The terms "user" or "guest" are only being used in connection with the Danish National Survey.

3. The Annual Survey for Faaborg Museum 2014, p. 10: https://slks.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/0_SLKS/Dokumenter/Museer/Fakta_om_museerne/Statistik_om_museer/Brugerundersoegelse/Udstillingssteder_og_afdelingsrapporter_2014/Faaborg_Museum_for_Fynsk_Malerkunst_Afd_205.pdf (accessed 27 October 2017)
4. Examples of the use of the word 'time warp' in describing historical museums: <http://www.feline.dk/artikler/ringkobing-museum>, <http://natmus.dk/museerne/>, <http://www.greenland.com/da/providers/groenlands-nationalmuseum/> (accessed 27 October 2017)
5. <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/dome> (accessed 27 October 2017)

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- The Danish National User Survey: <http://slks.dk/museer/fakta-om-museerne/statistik-om-museer/brugerundersoegelse/>

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