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### **Abstract**

My thesis examines the role of technologies in the constitution of experiences and relations between visitors and cultural history in exhibition spaces. It presents museums as non-neutral institutions that frame and orient particular perspectives and possibilities for action through their spatial and material communication, i.e. communication design. Exhibitions are described as hybridly mediated spaces of experience, which are established through the actions and experiences that occur in the interaction between visitors and exhibition design.

The central analytical concept is technological mediation, which is described and applied analytically in accordance with the positions of post-phenomenology and actor network theory in philosophy of technology. The thesis shows how the function of technologies cannot be separated from their use, and how technologies mediate experiences and are dependent on the interplay between both human and non-human actants in the exhibition. It is argued that the visitors' experience of relevance is not primarily determined by the exhibition theme, but also by how the visitors may inhabit that theme (spatially, materially and practically).

The thesis defends a performative museology, arguing that museums could embrace their interpretative and constructive role as cultural history institutions. By being explicit about their processes of knowledge construction and interpretation museums could create more concrete and situated environments for experience and invite visitors to take part in the knowledge process rather than assume a semi-neutral sender position.

The thesis theory is informed by current museological discussions, including representational critique, experience communication, increasing mediatization and the potential of digital technologies to enhance the relevance of museums. It is argued that digital technologies offer different relations and experiences than analogue technologies, but that the crucial point is not their disparate functions, but rather the interrelations and possibilities for interaction that they afford. An ongoing argument is that neither analogue nor digital technologies interfere with the visitors and cultural history, but those experiences and relations are mediated through the interplay with technologies. Therefore, exhibitions as spaces of experience must be examined as unities of practice, rather than evaluating technological artefacts as tools in their own right.