Transitioning Historic Houses to a Virtual Experience

Deadline: Nov 30, 2020

Karen Shelby, Baruch College, City University of New York

History Dis-placed: Transitioning Historic Houses to a Virtual Experience

History Dis-placed: Transitioning Historic Houses to a Virtual Experience concentrates on the unique histories and challenges of house-museums. In addition to being historic landmarks, house-museums can be sites of civic engagement and reflection; centers for activism and cultural discourse; and places for public events and gatherings. In the digital age, house-museums have had to renegotiate these identities and interactions with contemporary audiences through innovative practices. This was further challenged when museums across the globe were suddenly forced to pivot to, for many, an unfamiliar online discourse during the 2020 Covid-19 crisis. Many of the educational tropes utilized to great affect by house-museums – including living history and other direct contact strategies with an active audience – had to be jettisoned for online engagement. Museum staff were challenged to create content, develop educational recourses, and provide access to collections with little preparation and amidst severe budget cuts. There has, perhaps, never been a greater challenge to museums around the globe, and historic homes are among the hardest hit in these unprecedented times.

This edited volume asks for submissions that address, but are not limited to, the tactics taken by house-museums after February 2020, when it was clear that closing was imminent and re-opening in the near future was not an option. How do museums that strive to bring in-person encounters to life continue to do so through an online presence? How can these site-specific museums re-create or re-produce an aura or indexicality of space and place – a interaction that differs somewhat from other types of museums? What types of decisions need to be made when re-creating the museum collection for online perusal, which, for most house museums, are traditionally and fully experienced through the domestic spaces in which the collection is housed and the site-specificity of the museum? How do those at house-museums envision these decisions to move content online affect the future engagement of the museums with visitors and educators?

We invite submissions for scholars, students, and those personally involved with the day-to-day operations of a house-museum that reflect upon of the strategies undertaken for both historical and financial survival in the precarious position that house-museums find themselves during and after 2020.

Submission Guidelines
Please send abstracts of no more than 500 words to Karen Shelby (karen.shelby@baruch.cuny.edu) and Emily Stokes-Rees (ewstokes@syr.edu) by November 30, 2020 with the subject heading

“House Museum Submission.” Abstracts and a two-page CV should be sent as one PDF and titled with the author’s last name. Editors will respond to submissions by December 15. Final papers will be due June 15, 2021. Papers should range from 6,000-8,000 words in length.

Reference:
CFP: Transitioning Historic Houses to a Virtual Experience. In: ArtHist.net, Oct 8, 2020 (accessed Nov 21, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/23668>.