

Call for Papers

„Translation and interpretation in museum settings”

A thematic issue edited by Olga Mastela

The museum is a space of multidimensional communication. Museum collections are assembled, stored and presented for various purposes, so the target audience of museum content can be both specialists in any field (depending on the subject of a given museum or exhibition) and laypeople – of different ages, with different levels of general knowledge, sometimes with different levels or types of disabilities. Visitors to museums are often tourists from different cultures, speaking different languages at different levels of proficiency.

The topic of translation and interpretation in museums and the issue of mediation in museum communication still seem to be underexplored, although internationally museum translation and interpretation have recently been focused on from various perspectives, including reception, memory, communication, international tourism, multimodality (see Mertens & Decroupet 2024, Neather 2022, Chrobak & Paleczna 2021, Podpora & Gołuch 2025, Ravelli 2006, Liao 2025 and others). From the point of view of ethnography or postcolonial research, the institution of the museum itself is sometimes presented as translation (cf. Sturge 2007). Interesting conclusions have been drawn also from analysing translations of titles of paintings (Walkiewicz 2019). More and more research is also being conducted in the area of accessibility, especially audio description of artwork and museum settings (see, e.g., Więckowski 2014, Perego 2019, Wendorff 2023 and many others). There has also started a discussion on the education of future translators of museum content (e.g. Manfredi 2024) and on the role that interpreters working at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum play in education for intercultural dialogue (see Paleczna 2019 and 2022).

Who, then, are translators or interpreters in museums? Are they guides? Intermediaries in intercultural communication? Educators? Or, as Barbara Walkiewicz (2024), proposes, ambassadors of art? Or, maybe, they play all these roles simultaneously?

We invite you to undertake a reflection on the essence of the translation and interpretation process and its reception in the museum setting, as well as a search for multiple answers to the following questions: Who translates or interprets in a museum? What is translated or interpreted in a museum? Why, how and for whom?

The call for papers is addressed at translation and interpretation scholars, art historians, museologists, museum guides, people providing interpretation, written or audiovisual translation services to museums, as well as at representatives of such areas as media, language and communication, museum management, accessibility services (including the application of plain language standards) and other fields.

Papers for review, written in Polish or English, should be sent by 30th April 2026 to the following address: olga.mastela@uj.edu.pl. The publication is planned for the first quarter of 2027.

Bibliography

- Chrobak, Marzena & Marta Paleczna. 2021. "Communication en langues étrangères avec les visiteurs d'un lieu de mémoire : un sujet périphérique des études de traduction." *Romanica Wratislaviensia* 68: 57–68.
- Liao, Min-Hsiu. 2025. *Translation on Display: Multilingual Texts in Multimodal Museum Space*. New York: Routledge.
- Manfredi, Marina. 2024. "Training museum translators through linguistics theory, practical experience and civic engagement: A case-study." *Journal of International Museum Education* 6 (1): 93–106. <https://doi.org/10.51637/jimuseumed.1564971>.
- Mertens, Irmak & Sophie Decroupet. 2024. "Conceptualizing museum translation. Cultural translation, interlingual processes and other perspectives." *Babel* 70 (5): 593–614.
- Neather, Robert. 2022. "Translation, memory, and the museum visitor." In *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Memory* (1st ed.) edited by Sharon Deane-Cox and Anneleen Spiessens, 155–169. London: Routledge.
- Paleczna, Marta. 2019 "Przekład ustny w Państwowym Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau (PMAB): warunki pracy, problemy i profil tłumacza". *Politeja* 16 (3/60): 167–82.
- Paleczna, Marta. *Tłumaczenie wyjątkowej lekcji. Przekład ustny dla obcokrajowców zwiedzających Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau*. [An unpublished PhD thesis written under the supervision of Prof. Marzena Chrobak, defended at the Jagiellonian University in 2022].
- Perego, Elisa. 2019. "Into the language of museum audio descriptions: a corpus-based study." *Perspectives* 27 (3): 333–349.
- Podpora, Agnieszka & Dorota Gołuch. 2025. "Rola przekładu w budowaniu narracji w miejscach pamięci Holokaustu w Polsce. Wstępne wnioski z badania pilotażowego w Państwowym Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau i dalsze perspektywy". *Przekładaniec* 50–50!: 53–64.
- Ravelli, Louise J. 2006. *Museum Texts: Communication Frameworks*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Sturge, Kate. 2007. *Representing Others: Translation, Ethnography, and the Museum*. Manchester: St. Jerome.
- Walkiewicz, Barbara. 2019. "Autour de la traduction des titres de tableaux." *Neophilologica* 31: 415–434.

Wendorff, Anna. 2023. *Sztuka dostępna dla niewidomych i niedowidzących odbiorców w londyńskich muzeach / Accessible Art for the Blind and Visually Impaired in London Museums*. Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.

Więckowski, Robert. 2014. "Audiodeskrypcja piękna." *Przekładaniec* 28: 109–123.