

its presentation at the Generalitat de Catalunya (the regional government), I hesitated; I removed the adjective 'Anthropophagic' and thus emphasised the contemporary art collection of the *Davis Museum*. Although the adjective in the title is absent, the idea of 'swallowing an alien culture' indirectly persists.

What criteria do you usually use to select the works?

The quality of work and the ideas are very important. The pieces should be able to create a dialogue with other works from the collection, and must be contemporary in form and content. The 'style' of having been produced by the end of the 20th century and early 21st.

How do you decide how to display the Davis Museum?

Just like the *Boîte-en-valise* and *Galerie Légitime*, the Davis Museum is a museum in miniature and is portable. However the *Davis Museum* is a 'fluid' museum which can take infinite forms such as cardboard toys (*DTAM I, Davis Art Toy Museum I*), a plastic toy (*DTAM II, Davis Art Toy Museum II*), a sculpture of lead (*DLM, Davis Lead Museum*), a pedestal (*DTWM, Davis Tower Museum*) or a rock (*DRM, Davis Rock Museum*). So for me, the challenge is to constantly adapt the museum to changing environments.

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DAVIS MUSEUM

The Davis Lisboa Mini-Museum
of Contemporary Art in Barcelona

The smallest contemporary art museum in the world!

www.davismuseum.com

Museum Show
24 Sep – 19 Nov 2011
Arnolfini
Bristol, UK
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“MY ART IS TO LEAVE A SPACE TO BE OCCUPIED BY ARTISTS WHERE THEY CAN SHINE FOR THEMSELVES”

David Lisboa defines his art in this way. He is the creator and director of the *Davis Museum – The Davis Lisboa Mini-Museum of Contemporary Art*. Since 2009, the ‘smallest museum in the world’ has organised exhibitions of contemporary art in a plexi-glas ballot box of 7.8 x 7.8 x 7.8 inches. Designed as a low cost institution, with low cost production and shipping of works, it exhibits artists from as far afield as Brazil, Iran, US and France.

What are the components of the *Davis Museums* projects?

The project has a physical aspect and virtual one. The first includes the display of the permanent collection in museums, biennials, galleries or at the *Davis Museum’s* showroom in Barcelona. Here the *Davis Tower Museum*, a ballot box on a white pedestal is displayed. Every four months a miniature work by a different artist is exhibited.

How is the virtual side of the museum developed?

In the virtual sphere, we include the installations in 3D at the *Karura Art Centre Museum* located in Second Life. Interviews, photos, events and the online flyers are sent to the mailing list of the *Davis Museum*. A video is published on YouTube on the occasion of each exhibition; this video works as a shared creation between the exhibiting artists and myself creating the video. This information forms an open archive of works of art by a selection of artists of the late 20th and early 21st century.

Describe the genesis of the *Davis Museum*?

After twelve years studying Fine Arts at the University of Barcelona, I decided to take some time to read all those books that I had not had the time to read so far. One of those books was *Art since 1900, modernism, antimoderism, postmodernism* by

Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois and Benjamin H.D. Buchloh. In that book, I noticed how the work *Boîte-en-valise* by Marcel Duchamp opened an un-explored field and how 30 years later, Robert Filliou worked to advance this approach to art. I was just reading about his *Galerie Légitime* when I had a ‘revelation’. In a few seconds, a whole series of ideas for the *Davis Museum* came to my mind, like a waterfall. If the *Boîte-en-valise* contained miniature works by Duchamp, and *Galerie Légitime* exhibited works by artist friends of Filliou, then the *Davis Museum* would exhibit works by artists in both a physical form and a virtual one. It would be a kind of social art network that would highlight its contemporary context.

What was the logic of choosing a ballot box as the museums ‘architecture’?

It’s clear that the ‘architecture’ of the *Davis Museum* is a ready-made, a slightly modified industrial object that flirts with minimalism and (dangerously) with advertising. But overall, I would like to pose a political reading of the art system which does nothing but prevent the direct involvement of artists in institutions. My intention was to propose a new way of organising a museum of contemporary art through a citizen’s initiative using digital communication platforms, and thus collectively create public value. The museum is a ballot box so when an artist decides to donate a work, this, in a sense, gives a vote of confidence to the *Davis Museum’s* project and fulfils its social function, disseminating the art of artists involved.

Could you explain the relationship between the *Davis Museum* and the Brazilian anthropophagy movement?

At the beginning, the museum was called *The Anthropophagic Davis Lisboa Museum of Contemporary Art* and this was a way to update a tendency in the modern Brazilian art tradition. A museum that “symbolically devours the work and metabolises it in order to transform it into a new culture.” This idea has been misunderstood by most of the exhibiting artists. So for